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Women Voters Less Likely Than Men to Support Republican Women Candidates; Gender Gap Remains a Force in Election 2010

Despite the attention to Republican women candidates in this year's elections, polls show that the presence of a Republican woman candidate in a race has not eliminated the gender gap or reversed its direction. In most 2010 races, as in past elections, women are more likely than men to prefer the Democratic candidate regardless of the gender of the candidates. The gender gap – a measurable difference in the percentage of women and the percentage of men favoring or voting for a given candidate – remains a significant force in this year's elections.

The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, examined recent polls in races for U.S. senator and governor and found gender gaps as great as 15 percentage points. CAWP found notable gender gaps in high-profile races involving Republican women candidates, with women less likely than men to support the Republican woman candidate:

State and Race	Candidates	Gender Gap (% points)	Source
CA Governor	Meg Whitman (R) vs. Jerry Brown (D)	5	LA Times/Greenberg Quinlan Research
CT U.S. Senate	Linda McMahon (R) vs. Richard Blumenthal (D)	13	Suffolk University
NH U.S. Senate	Kelly Ayotte (R) vs. Paul Hodes	15	WMUR-University of New Hampshire
NV U.S. Senate	Sharron Angle (R) vs. Harry Reid (D)	11	Las Vegas Review-Journal/Mason-Dixon
SC Governor	Nikki Haley (R) vs. Vincent Sheheen (D)	4	Insider Advantage

“With many prominent women candidates this year – and particularly highly visible Republican women – pundits keep looking for evidence that female voters lean toward women candidates,” notes CAWP director Debbie Walsh. “But the typical pattern remains in force this year; women as a group are more likely than men to favor the Democrat, even when the Republican candidate is a woman.”

Gender gaps are also apparent in other critical U.S. Senate and gubernatorial races, with women less likely than

men to support the Republican candidate:

State and Race	Candidates	Gender Gap (% points)	Source
CA U.S. Senate	Carly Fiorina (R) vs. Barbara Boxer (D)	5	LA Times/Greenberg Quinlan Research
CO U.S. Senate	Kenneth Buck (R) vs. Michael Bennet (D)	11	Denver Post/9 News (Survey USA)
FL Governor	Rick Scott (R) vs. Alex Sink (D)	11	CNN/TIME/Opinion Research
IL Governor	Bill Brady (R) vs. Pat Quinn (D)	12	Mason-Dixon/Post Dispatch
IL U.S. Senate	Mark Kirk (R) vs. Alexi Giannoulias (D)	12	Suffolk University
OH Governor	John Kasich (R) vs. Ted Strickland (D)	6	CNN/TIME/Opinion Research
OR Governor	Chris Dudley (R) vs. John Kitzhaber (D)	10	Daily Kos/Public Policy Polling
PA U.S. Senate	Pat Toomey (R) vs. Joe Sestak (D)	6	Muhlenberg College/Morning Call
WA U.S. Senate	Dino Rossi (R) vs. Patty Murray (D)	14	McClatchy/Marist Poll
WI U.S. Senate	Ron Johnson (R) vs. Russ Feingold (D)	8	CNN/TIME/Opinion Research

In some races, both women and men favor the Republican candidate, but women do so at a lower rate than men. For example, in the New Hampshire Senate race, both women and men prefer Republican Kelly Ayotte, but women are 15 points less likely to favor Ayotte than are men.

A more detailed table of selected polling data showing gender gaps is appended to this release.

About CAWP

The Center for American Women and Politics, a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is a university-based research, education and public service center. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women's changing relationship to politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life. CAWP is a leading authority in its field and a respected bridge between the academic and political worlds.

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Gubernatorial Contests

State	Candidates	Overall	Women	Men	Gender Gap (% points)	Source and Poll Dates
CA	Meg Whitman (R)	37	33	42	5	LA Times/Greenberg Quinlan Research (Oct. 13 – Oct. 20)
	Jerry Brown (D)	49	51	46		
FL	Rick Scott (R)	49	44	55	11	CNN/Opinion Research (Oct. 15 – Oct. 19)
	Alex Sink (D)	46	49	42		
GA	Nathan Deal (R)	45	44	46	2	Insider Advantage (Oct. 18)
	Roy Barnes (D)	40	40	39		
IL	Bill Brady (R)	44	38	50	12	Mason-Dixon/Post Dispatch (Oct. 18 – Oct. 20)
	Pat Quinn (D)	40	43	37		
MA	Charlie Baker (R)	39	32	46	12	Boston Globe/University of New Hampshire (Oct. 17 – Oct. 22)
	Deval Patrick (D)	43	49	37		
MD	Robert Erlich (R)	38	34	43	7	Baltimore Sun/Opinion Works (Oct. 15 – Oct. 20)
	Martin O'Malley (D)	52	55	48		
MN	Tom Emmer (R)	34	32	36	5	Minnesota Star Tribune (Oct. 18 – Oct. 21)
	Mark Dayton (D)	41	43	38		
OH	John Kasich (R)	47	43	52	6	CNN/Opinion Research (Oct. 15 – Oct. 19)
	Ted Strickland (D)	48	51	45		
OR	Chris Dudley (R)	47	40	53	10	Daily Kos/Public Policy Polling (Oct. 16 - Oct. 17)
	John Kitzhaber (D)	48	53	43		
SC	Nikki Haley (R)	51	49	53	4	Insider Advantage (Oct. 19)
	Vincent Sheheen (D)	37	37	38		
VT	Brian Dubie (R)	44	39	49	10	Mason-Dixon/VPR (Oct. 11 - Oct. 13)
	Peter Shumlin (D)	43	51	35		
WI	Scott Walker (R)	52	46	58	12	CNN/TIME/Opinion Research (Oct. 8 - Oct. 12)
	Tom Barrett (D)	44	51	37		



U.S. Senate Contests

State	Candidates	Overall	Women	Men	Gender Gap (% points)	Source and Poll Dates
CA	Carly Fiorina (R)	40	35	45	5	LA Times/Greenberg Quinlan Research (Oct. 13 – Oct. 20)
	Barbara Boxer (D)	48	50	45		
CO	Ken Buck (R)	47	40	53	13/11	Denver Post/9 News (Survey USA) (Oct. 19 – Oct. 21)
	Michael Bennet (D)	47	53	42		
CT	Linda McMahon (R)	39	32	46	13	Suffolk University (Oct. 19 – Oct. 20)
	Richard Blumenthal (D)	57	63	50		
IL	Mark Kirk (R)	42	36	48	12	Suffolk University (Sept. 30 – Oct. 3)
	Alexi Giannoulias (D)	41	43	38		
NH	Kelly Ayotte (R)	50	43	58	15	WMUR-University of New Hampshire (Oct. 7 – Oct. 12)
	Paul Hodes (D)	35	38	31		
NV	Sharron Angle (R)	47	42	53	11	Las Vegas Review-Journal/Mason-Dixon (Oct 11 - Oct. 12)
	Harry Reid (D)	45	48	41		
PA	Pat Toomey (R)	46	43	49	6	Muhlenberg College/Morning Call (Oct. 24)
	Joe Sestak (D)	43	47	39		
WA	Dino Rossi (R)	47	41	53	14	McClatchy/Marist (Oct. 14 – Oct. 17)
	Patty Murray (D)	48	55	41		
WI	Ron Johnson (R)	52	48	56	8	CNN/TIME/Opinion Research (Oct. 8 - Oct. 12)
	Russ Feingold (D)	44	48	41		
WV	John Raese (R)	44	39	49	10/9	CNN/TIME/Opinion Research (Oct. 8 - Oct. 12)
	Joe Manchin (D)	44	49	40		