

## THE GENDER GAP

### Voting Choices In Presidential Elections <sup>1</sup>

A gender gap in voting refers to a difference between the percentage of women and the percentage of men voting for a given candidate, generally the winning candidate. Even when women and men favor the same candidate, they may do so by different margins, resulting in a gender gap. In every presidential election since 1980, a gender gap has been apparent, with a greater proportion of women than men preferring the Democrat in each case.

A sizable 11 percentage-point gender gap was evident in the 2016 presidential election, with 42 percent of women and 53 percent of men voting for Trump. The 2016 gender gap was larger than in any year except 1996, when the gender gap for President Bill Clinton in his race with Senator Robert Dole was also 11 percentage points. Other presidential elections since 1980 have seen gender gaps ranging from four to 10 percentage points.

In every presidential election since 1996, a majority of women have preferred the Democratic candidate. Moreover, women and men have favored different candidates in presidential elections since 2000, with the exception of 2008 when men were almost equally divided in their preferences for Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain. In 2016, a majority of women favored the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, while a majority of men voted for the Republican victor, Donald Trump.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Presidential Candidates</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Gender Gap Percentage)</u>	<u>Source</u> <sup>2</sup>
<b>2016</b>	Donald Trump (R)	41%	52%	11 pts.	Edison Research
	Hillary Clinton (D)	54%	41%		
<b>2012</b>	Barack Obama (D)	55%	45%	10 pts.	Edison Research
	Mitt Romney (R)	44%	52%		
<b>2008</b>	Barack Obama (D)	56%	49%	7 pts.	Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International
	John McCain (R)	43%	48%		
<b>2004</b>	George W. Bush (R)	48%	55%	7 pts.	Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International
	John Kerry (D)	51%	44%		
<b>2000</b>	George W. Bush (R)	44%	54%	10 pts.	Voter News Service <sup>3</sup>
	Al Gore (D)	54%	43%		
	Ralph Nader (Green)	2%	3%		
<b>1996</b>	Bill Clinton (D)	55%	44%	11 pts.	Voter News Service
	Bob Dole (R)	38%	45%		
	Ross Perot (Reform)	7%	10%		
<b>1992</b>	Bill Clinton (D)	45%	41%	4 pts.	Voter News Service
	George Bush (R)	38%	38%		
	Ross Perot (Reform)	17%	21%		
<b>1988</b>	George H. W. Bush (R)	50%	57%	7 pts.	CBS News/ <i>New York Times</i> <sup>4</sup>
	Michael Dukakis (D)	49%	41%		
<b>1984</b>	Ronald Reagan (R)	56%	62%	6 pts.	CBS News/ <i>New York Times</i>
	Walter Mondale (D)	44%	37%		
<b>1980</b>	Ronald Reagan (R)	47%	55%	8 pts.	CBS News/ <i>New York Times</i>
	Jimmy Carter (D)	45%	36%		
	John Anderson (I)	7%	7%		

<sup>1</sup> For information on the gender gap on public policy issues, see CAWP's fact sheet "The Gender Gap: Attitudes Toward Public Policy Issues."

<sup>2</sup> All exit poll results for the years 1992-2016 are consistent with those reported by the Roper Center at Cornell University, where the exit poll data are archived. Results from 1980, 1984, and 1988 are consistent with those reported by the New York Times, the cosponsor of the polls we cite for those elections.

<sup>3</sup> *Voter News Service* is the service which was known as *Voter Research and Surveys* until 1993. It is referred to on this fact sheet by the newer name.

<sup>4</sup> From 1980 to 1988 major media outlets conducted separate exit polls. While not presented here, exit polls conducted by ABC News/Washington Post and NBC News showed gender gaps of similar magnitude to those evident in the CBS/*New York Times* poll results.

**A note to users of our fact sheets: Please credit the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University.**