

THE WOMEN'S VOTE

# The Women's Vote

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## Abstract

The Women's Vote, a phrase used frequently in political debates, news articles, and many other forms of media as the length of time between now and the 2024 presidential election shrinks. Despite the phrase being confidently thrown around, few know what it truly means, and oftentimes the phrase is used in an incorrect manner. The women's vote is the percentage advantage that one candidate has over the other in relation to women voters. (1) However, the phrase is often taken directly at face-value, and to some, implies that women vote as a collective bloc. This is simply untrue as women have historically voted as a result of a myriad of interior and exterior factors such as race, age, sex of candidate, community that the voter resides in, and political party's stances on topics such as abortion and the pay gap. This paper will delve into each of the elements that influence the vote of women all over the United States. It will prove that the women's vote is not made up of a statistic that was formed by participating in 'follow the leader' but rather was established by a culmination of elements that affect the vote of each and every woman.

## Race of Women Voters

The race/ethnicity of each female voter affects the presidential election in a monumental manner. It is historically proven that women of all races tend to vote in a predictable manner. For example, Black women are likely to vote Democratic. Black people, in general, have overwhelmingly supported the Democratic party since they took a pro-civil rights stance and their political counterparts, the Republican party, took an anti-civil rights stance in terms of the Civil Rights Act. (2) Additionally, Black women feel that it is their civic duty to vote, and are more politically active than Black men and white women. So their tendency to lean towards the Democratic party, means that the Democratic party can almost always count on the majority of Black women to vote in their favor. An example of this is seen in the 2016 presidential election, where 94% of Black women voted for Hillary Clinton, a Democratic party candidate. Democratic party loyalty can once again be seen in the 2020 election where about 93% of Black women voted for Joe Biden (Democrat) while a small sum of 6% voted for Donald Trump (Republican). (4)

Similar to Black women, white women also vote in a specific manner. They tend to vote Republican, especially white married women. (2) White women do, however, vote Democratic more than their white male counterparts. (3) Regardless, Republican candidates can, on most occasions, be confident that they will have the support of the majority of white women. This is seen in the 2020 election where 52% of white women voted for Donald Trump (Republican) while 47% voted for Joe Biden (Democratic), indicating a clear preference for the Republican party rather than the Democratic. (4) This is also seen in the 2016 election where white women once again preferred the Republican party candidate, Donald Trump, to the Democratic party candidate, Hillary Clinton, 52% to 43%, providing the Republican candidate with a clear majority among this demographic. (5)

Latina/Hispanic women voted Democratic in both the 2016 and 2020 elections, with Hillary Clinton getting 69% of the votes to Donald Trump's 25% in 2016 (5), and Joe Biden receiving 66% of votes, a majority in comparison to Donald Trump's 32%. (4) Latinx/Hispanic people in general hold the belief that the Democratic party has their best interests at heart, and feel rather strongly that the Republican party does not, contributing to their Democratic-leaning vote. (7) Asian-American women seem to follow the habits of many of their female counterparts, in the sense that they too vote Democratic. In the 2016 and 2020 election, the Democratic candidate had a 62% and 41% leg up over the Republican candidate, due to the votes of Asian-American women. (6) Asian-Americans have voted Republican for numerous election cycles, but during the 2000 election, approximately 55% of the Asian-American population voted for Al Gore, a Democratic party candidate. Since then a majority of Asian-Americans have favored Democratic party over the Republican party, a shift caused largely due to economic reasons. (8)

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In essence, it is clear that parties can count on the votes of certain groups of female voters, and practically predict them by looking at past trends. It can be assumed that Black women will continue to vote for Democrats and that white women will proceed to vote for Republicans. However, there is a possibility that white women may occasionally give the Democrats their majority vote due to the slim margin in which the Republicans have won their vote in the past two election cycles. It can also be assumed that both Asian-Americans and Latina/Hispanic women voters will continue to vote for the Democratic party unless there is a massive change in Republican party policy, either economically or in terms of public interest.

Fig. 1: Distribution of women's votes according to race in the 2016 election.

	Black Women	White Women	Latina/Hispanic Women	Asian-American Women	Average
Hillary Clinton (D)	94%	43%	69%	79%	71%
Donald Trump (R)	2%	52%	25%	17%	24%
Independent	4%	5%	6%	4%	5%

Fig. 2: Distribution of women's votes according to race in the 2020 election.

	Black Women	White Women	Latina/Hispanic Women	Asian-American Women	Average
Joe Biden (D)	93%	47%	66%	69%	69%
Donald Trump (R)	6%	52%	32%	28%	28%
Independent	1%	1%	2%	3%	2%

1. <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/research/women-voters-and-gender-gap>
2. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/8372A741075812D0AC7ACDDA5C871E19/S1743923X23000417a.pdf/black-women-keepers-of-democracy-the-democratic-process-and-the-democratic-party.pdf>
3. [https://www.voanews.com/a/usa\\_all-about-america\\_women-outnumber-and-outvote-men-they-dont-vote-alike/6205437.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/usa_all-about-america_women-outnumber-and-outvote-men-they-dont-vote-alike/6205437.html)
4. <https://www.foxnews.com/elections/2020/general-results/voter-analysis>
5. <https://edition.cnn.com/election/2016/results/exit-polls>
6. <https://latinodecisions.com/polls-and-research/2016-election-eve-poll/>
7. <https://www.pewresearch.org/2022/09/29/hispanics-views-of-the-u-s-political-parties/>
8. <https://prospect.org/civil-rights/asian-americans-became-democrats/>

### Age of Women Voters

The age of women voters also affects the manner in which they vote, as shown by graphs that have blue decreasing and red increasing as the age of the voter increases. It's clear that a majority of younger generations, both men and women, are Democratic. A majority of non-white 18-29 year olds tend to tick off the Democratic on their voting ballots without a second thought. (1) This action is largely influenced by their surroundings, and the fact that they are raised in a more diverse environment. However, non-white 18-29 year

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olds aren't the only ones voting democratic in the past few election seasons. Since 2008, more and more white 18-29 year olds have been seen leaning towards the Democratic party, a shift potentially caused by their dislike of policies enacted in the Bush campaign and the appeal of Obama, a young candidate. While the number of white 18-29 year olds has decreased in the following elections, data shows that they favor the Democratic party over the Republican party. (1) Overall, both men and women between the ages 18-29 are more likely to vote for the Democratic party, the women simply feel more strongly about it. In the 2020 election, 67% of women between the ages of 18-29 voted for Joe Biden (Democratic), as opposed to the 32% that voted for Donald Trump (Republican). Meanwhile, 52% of men between the ages of 18-29 voted for Biden, while 41% voted for Trump. The Democratic to Republican ratio in the women's and men's vote is evidently different, with women, between the ages 18-29, favoring the Democratic party far more intensely than men. This can be seen once again in the 2016 election where 63% of women voted for Hillary Clinton (Democratic) while 30% voted for Trump (Republican). And once again, showed a much smaller difference with 47% voting for Clinton (Democratic) while 41% voted for Trump (Republican). (2) Unfortunately, the 2024 election is rather complex, Kamala Harris taking Joe Biden's place in the presidential election makes it harder to make a prediction. During the Biden administration, many young voters were displeased with Biden's actions and policies, and he'd lost quite a few of his strong supporters. (3) Therefore, it could be possible that now that Biden is gone, Kamala Harris will be able to reclaim those lost young votes for the Democratic party, or maybe they will remain unrecovered. For the 2024 election it is safe to assume that if the young voters rally towards the Democratic party like they have in the past, under Harris's campaign that women between the ages of 18-29 will vote for Kamala Harris (Democrat) over Donald Trump (Republican). However, if Harris is unable to influence those young voters, Donald Trump may have a leg up among our nation's youth.

For the 2020 election and the 2016 election, voters between the ages of 30-44 were clear about their political stance: they were Democratic through and through. There are numerous factors that contributed to their Democratic partisanship. The fact that they were younger and more diverse compared to older generations, and the reality that many of the Democratic stances on healthcare, climate change, and racial equality aligned with their beliefs, all contributed to their Democratic vote. (4) In the 2020 election, women voters who ranged from the ages 30-44 voted Biden to Trump, 56% to 42%, and in the 2016 election they voted Hillary to Trump, 58% to 35%. (2) They once again had a more intense alliance towards the Democratic party than their male counterparts did, with male voters between ages 30-44 having shown a minor difference between the Democratic and Republican votes. It's possible that the pattern shall continue and that Kamala Harris (Democrat) will receive a majority of votes from women between the ages of 30 and 44 this election cycle. However, as mentioned previously, the Democratic party lost the votes of many young citizens, making the upcoming election cycle a gamble for this age range as well.

Voters ranging from 45-64 had different statistics for 2020 and 2016, with practically non-existent similarities. In the 2020 election, 56% of women voted for Biden (Democrat) while 43% voted for Trump (Republican), only a minor change from the 56:42 ratio seen amongst the 30-44 year olds that same year. However, in the 2016 election, only 49% of women voted for Clinton (Democrat) and 39% voted for Trump (Republican). Suddenly, women between the ages 45-64 aren't voting in the same way as their younger peers are. Similar behavior is seen in the 2012 election, where 56% of women between the ages 30-44 voted for Barack Obama while only 42% voted for Mitt Romney (Republican). Then when seeing the data for 45-64 year old women voters in that same election year, only 47% voted for Obama (Democrat) while 51% voted for Romney. Once again, sticking with the theme of differing from their counterparts. In addition to that, voters between this particular age range have flip flopped between both parties one election after the other. This ever-changing pattern continues in the 2008 election, where 53% of women voters between the ages of 45-64 voted for Barack Obama while only 46% voted for John McCain. (2) It's easy to wonder what is causing

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these changes in party pride. The truth is that the votes of women over the age of 50 constantly vary, and for a good reason. They have more needs, have more life experience, and are in want of certain things that some political parties may be providing in one election but not necessarily in the next. Matters such as the cost of living and our nation's current political stability, and more issues contribute to their constant concerns, and rightfully so. In reality, it is of utmost importance that the presidential candidates attempt to land their vote as they make up about 25% of all registered voters. (5) Overall, the voting behaviors of women between the ages of 45-64 are extremely difficult to predict due to a lack of a clear pattern, but this particular group of voters tends to ignore party loyalty and partisanship, and votes with the candidate whose campaign and personality align with their vision.

Lastly, data informs us that women voters over the age of 65 seem to be leaning towards a Democratic vote and away from the usual Republican vote. In the 2020 election, 52% of women voters over the age of 65 voted for Biden (Democrat) while 47% voted for Trump (Republican). In the 2016 election, 50% voted for Clinton (Democrat) and 47% voted for Trump (Republican). This differs from the election cycle of 2008 and 2012 where the majority of women over the age of 65 voted for the Republican party. (2) This is simply caused by aging. Today's seniors are much more liberal than those 5-10 years ago. So the image of conservatism that is often associated with those who are older than 65, is a false association, formed due to past patterns. (6) It can be assumed that the women voters over the age of 65 will be voting for the Democratic party once again this year, as they have for the past two presidential election cycles.

Fig. 3: Partial distribution of women's votes according to age in the 2008 election

	Barack Obama (D)	John McCain (R)	Independent
45-64	53%	46%	1%
65+	46%	51%	3%

Fig. 4: Partial distribution of women's votes according to age in the 2012 election

	Barack Obama (D)	Mitt Romney (R)	Independent
45-64	47%	51%	2%
65+	48%	51%	1%

Fig. 5: Distribution of women's votes according to age in the 2016 election

	Hillary Clinton (D)	Donald Trump (R)	Independent
18-29	63%	30%	7%
30-44	58%	35%	7%
45-64	49%	47%	4%
65+	50%	47%	3%

Fig. 6: Distribution of women's votes according to age in the 2020 election

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	Joe Biden (D)	Donald Trump (R)	Independent
18-29	67%	32%	1%
30-44	56%	42%	2%
45-64	56%	43%	1%
65+	52%	47%	1%

1. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/168125/young-americans-affinity-democratic-party-grown.aspx>
2. <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/gender-gap-voting-choices-presidential-elections>
3. <https://www.npr.org/2024/06/05/nx-s1-4987296/young-voters-biden-gaza-inflation-abortion-trump-genforward-poll>
4. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/older-voters-may-secure-a-biden-victory-in-2020s-swing-states/>
5. <https://press.aarp.org/2024-2-22-Women-Age-50-Are-Biggest-Wild-Card-Vote-2024-Election-New-AARP-Poll>
6. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/04/06/upshot/older-voters.html>

### The Women's Vote & Sex of Presidential Candidates

It is a known fact that before the 1980s women voted with their husbands, or didn't vote at all. This was the standard for women at the time. So, when their husbands ticked the box for the Democratic candidate, the women followed suit. But now, men are ticking Republican, so why are women checking off the Democratic box on the ballot? Since 1992, the Democratic party has had the majority of women's votes, and it is because of the attention the Democratic party has consistently paid to women's needs that have contributed to this monumental shift. The Democratic party focuses on women's issues such as abortion rights, family leave, the pay gap, and more, directly influencing the results of every presidential election cycle post 1992. (5)

In 1992 Bill Clinton (Democrat) had 45% of women's votes, a majority over Goerge Bush (Republican) who had 38%. In 1996, Bill Clinton (Democrat) once again won the majority women's vote 54% to 38% against Bob Dole (Republican). (1)The 2000s saw more of the same pattern, with the Democratic candidate getting the women's vote in every presidential election. In the year 2000 it was 54% to 43%, Al Gore (Democrat) to George Bush (Republican)(1); then came the 2004 election where John Kerry (Democrat) had 51% of the votes while George Bush had only 48%. (2) In 2008 Barack Obama (Democrat) won against John McCain (Republican) 56% to 43%. In 2012, the numbers were nearly identical to the 2008 election, with women giving Barack Obama (Democrat) 55% of their vote and handing 44% off to Mitt Romney. (2) The announcement of the presidential candidates for the 2016 election was a monumental moment for all women in America. For the first time in the history of the United States, a woman was running for president. Women voted the traditional way, Democratic, as they had been for the past 16 years. Hillary Clinton (Democrat) received 54% of women's votes and Donald Trump (Republican) managed 41%. (3) The 2020 election was not much of a surprise as it followed past trends all too well. Joe Biden (Democrat) got around 55% of the women's vote and Donald Trump (Republican) got 43% of said vote. (4) It is assumable that the women's vote will be the same for the 2024 election—in favor of the Democratic party. Additionally, there is a high probability that Kamala Harris, a woman, running for president, will not have a drastic effect on women voters. As seen in the 2016 election, Hillary Clinton being a woman did not dramatically increase the number of votes she received, and therefore, the same may happen for Kamala Harris. Moreover, it's evident that the sex of the candidates does not matter. Whether woman or man, women show a clear preference for the Democratic candidate over the Republican candidate.

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Fig. 7: Distribution of women's votes in presidential elections from 1992 to 2020

	Democrat (D)	Republican (R)	Independent
1992	45%	38%	17%
1996	54%	38%	8%
2000	54%	43%	3%
2004	51%	48%	1%
2008	56%	43%	1%
2012	55%	44%	1%
2016	54%	41%	5%
2020	55%	43%	2%

1. <https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/ipoll/study/31098701>
2. <https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/ipoll/study/31093284>
3. <https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/another-look-back-at-2016/>
4. <https://www.foxnews.com/elections/2020/general-results/voter-analysis>
5. <https://time.com/5903399/gender-gap-politics/>

### Residence of Women Voters

The community type of each residential voter impacts the manner in which they vote to a great degree. The women voters who dwell in urban communities/states tend to vote Democratic. Urban areas are densely populated territories with plenty of resources and numerous job opportunities. (1) Some examples of the most populated urban cities are Los Angeles, CA; San Francisco, CA; San Jose, CA; New York, NY; and Honolulu, HI. (2) According to data from the 2020 presidential election, approximately 64% of women voters who lived in urban areas voted for Joe Biden (Democrat) and around 35% voted for Donald Trump (Republican). (3) Women living in suburban areas, which are defined as a location with a smaller population that divides its residential and commercial areas, were also more inclined to vote for the Democratic candidate. (4) A few examples of suburban cities are Carmel, IN; Brookline, MA; Clayton, MI; Fishers, IN; and Frankville, TN. (7) For the 2020 election, around 56% of women living in suburban areas voted for the Democratic candidate, Joe Biden, while 43% voted for his Republican counterpart, Donald Trump. (3) Rural areas, the last of the three communities types, are defined as a mildly-populated area with lots of open land and few homes/buildings located far away from each other. (5) A few examples of rural areas are Lincoln County, ME; Loving County TX, Arthur County, NE; and Cass County, MN. (6) For the 2020 election, around 50% of suburban women voters voted for Joe Biden (Democrat), and approximately 50% voted for Donald Trump (Republican). (3) Overall, there is a high chance that these percentages stay the same for the 2024 election, in the sense that the manner in which women vote in relation to their residence remains nearly identical to the 2020 election. However, more individuals have been moving from urban to rural areas since 2020. (8) This could contribute to the votes of women living in rural areas having a larger impact than before because of their increased population.

Fig. 8: Distribution of women's votes according to their residential area

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	Joe Biden (D)	Donald Trump (R)
Urban	55%	35%
Suburban	56%	43%
Rural	50%	50%

1. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html#:~:text=The%20Census%20Bureau's%20urban%2Drural,non%2Dresidential%20urban%20land%20uses.>
2. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2022/urban-rural-populations.html>
3. <https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/exit-polls/president/national-results>
4. <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/environmental/healthy-places/healthy-places/land-use/lu/suburban-areas.html#:~:text=Suburban%20areas%20are%20lower%20density,get%20to%20work%2C%20suburbs%20grew.>
5. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/rural-area/>
6. <https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/storymaps/collections/189aa1dbd64c4c81b3b4a2b71124f6c6?item=1>
7. <https://www.fiftygrande.com/guide/coolest-suburbs-in-america/>
8. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2024/february/net-migration-spurs-renewed-growth-in-rural-areas-of-the-united-states/#:~:text=The%20chart%20below%20shows%20that,locations%20continued%20in%202021%E2%80%9322.>

### Stances on Abortion, and What Women Think of Them

Each political party has its own clear stance on whether abortion should be legal or not, and their actions throughout the past few years have made these stances crystal clear. The Republican party, represented by Donald Trump in the 2024 election cycle, seems to be in favor of eliminating abortion rights for all/many women in the United States of America. The Democratic party, headed by Kamala Harris, believes that every woman should be permitted to legally get an abortion. Naturally, the topic is much more nuanced than that. A poll taken in 2024 indicates the percent of adults in the United States who support abortion by political party. The results of the poll are summarized in the table below:

Fig. 9: Share of adults in the U.S. who support abortion in 2024, by political party. (1)

	Abortions should always be legal, and there should be no restrictions.	Abortion should be legal, but with some restrictions (for minors or late-term abortions).	Abortion should only be legal in special conditions.	Abortion should be illegal. It shouldn't be allowed.
Republican	6%	28%	50%	16%
Independent	30%	35%	24%	11%
Democrat	42%	35%	18%	4%

As seen in the data table above, about 16% of Republicans support making adoption entirely illegal, a large number compared to the mere 4% of Democrats who feel the same way. Additionally, only 6% of Republicans think abortion should always be legal, a small number compared to the 42% of Democrats who agree with that statement. The table above is proof that a near majority of the Democratic party believes that women should have the right to abortion, while a large number of the Republican party disagrees with the same sentiment. Now, according to data mentioned previously in this paper, it is clear that women tend to vote Democratic rather than Republican. Therefore, it is only fair to assume that it is in part due to the Democrats stance on the legality of abortion. In 2023, approximately 40% of women believed that abortion



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should be legal under any circumstances. (2) The reason this number is so high is because numerous women cannot afford a baby, do not want to be single mothers, do not want to negatively impact their career, or because they simply are not ready to have a child. (3) Therefore, it's safe to say they want to have the option to get an abortion without committing an illegal act, influencing their voting decisions. Essentially, unless the Republican party makes it clear that they are for legalizing adoption, it is likely that the Democratic party will gain the women's vote in this matter as well.

1. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1079467/abortion-support-party-level-legalization-us/>
2. <https://19thnews.org/2023/06/record-amounts-women-abortion-legal-poll/>
3. <https://www.gutmacher.org/journals/psrh/2005/reasons-us-women-have-abortions-quantitative-and-qualitative-perspectives>

### Minimum Wage

Women make up the majority of the workers who would benefit from an increase in minimum wage. (1) Currently the federal minimum wage is \$7.25. A few states contain minimum wage laws, and when the state wage is higher than the federal wage, the employee is paid the state wage. (2) However, not all states have such laws in place. And not all women are given fair pay for the jobs they work. Additionally, women who are tipped workers may not even get the \$7.25 promised to them for each hour of work. Many employers pay their employees with the tips they receive while working, tips that average to \$2.13 per hour. (3) Evidently, raising the minimum wage is essential for most women across America, and therefore, many women voters place emphasis on picking candidates with stances that support increasing the federal minimum wage. The Democratic Party is responsible for establishing the first minimum wage in 1938, and has since then focused on ensuring the minimum wage is high enough for families to live on. (4) The Republican Party does not have a clear stance on this topic, but has been making efforts to increase the minimum wage as well as they are concerned about the needs of working-class Americans. (5) Overall, the topic of minimum wage is predicted to be highly important in the 2024 presidential election, and each party stands to gain the vote of many women should they decide to promote an increase of federal minimum wage.

1. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/raising-minimum-wage-transformative-women/>
2. <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/wages/minimumwage#:~:text=The%20federal%20minimum%20wage%20for.oP%20the%20two%20minimum%20wages.>
3. <https://nwlc.org/resource/women-and-minimum-wage-state-state/>
4. <https://www.democrats.senate.gov/abetterdeal/higher-wages-and-better-jobs>
5. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/26/us/politics/republicans-minimum-wage.html>

### Conclusion

As proven by this paper, women vote for the candidate that represents their ambitions and needs, not for supporting the likely winner, and definitely not in a collective manner. The votes of each and every women voter are influenced by their race, their age, the sex of the candidate, their area of residence, and the party's stances on issues such as abortion and minimum wage. Overall, it's hard to predict who will receive the women's vote in the 2024 presidential election, where Donald Trump, a Republican, goes head to head with Kamala Harris, a Democrat. However, an accumulation of the data presented in this paper implies that Kamala Harris will be receiving the women's vote this year. Not because she is a woman running for office, or because she is a minority, but because she is a Democrat, and the women of America seem to have been standing behind the Democratic party for decades.