



CAWP

Women's Vote Watch

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www.cawp.rutgers.edu/WomensVoteWatch/

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Gender Gap Evident in the 2008 Election Women, Unlike Men, Show Clear Preference for Obama over McCain

New Brunswick, NJ—Women's votes were a significant factor in Senator Barack Obama's victory, with a sizable gender gap evident in the election results, according to an analysis of exit poll data by the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University.

Women strongly preferred Obama to Senator John McCain (56 percent for Obama, 43 percent for McCain), unlike men, who split their votes about evenly for the two presidential candidates (49 percent for Obama, 48 percent for McCain).

Defined as the difference in the proportions of women and men voting for the winning candidate, the gender gap was 7 percentage points in 2008, with 56 percent of women versus 49 percent of men voting for Obama. The gender gap this year is consistent with other presidential elections, where gender gaps have ranged from a high of 11 percentage points in 1996 to a low of 4 percentage points in 1992. There was a similar 7-point gender gap in the final vote in 2004.

Obama fared notably better with women voters in 2008 than did John Kerry in 2004. Obama won the support of a clear majority of women voters (56 percent) compared with Kerry's very slim majority among women's voters (51 percent). In contrast, McCain did worse with women voters, attracting only 43 percent of their votes, compared with the 48 percent of women's votes that George W. Bush won in 2004.

With Obama winning the votes of 46 percent of white women but only 41 percent of white men, a gender gap among white voters was clearly apparent. Obama's share of white women voters in 2008 also exceeded Kerry's in 2004 (44 percent). A gender gap was also evident among Latinos, where 68 percent

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of women versus 64 percent of men cast votes for Obama. An overwhelming majority of both black women (96 percent) and black men (95 percent) supported Obama.

Data cited in this release are from Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International Exit Polls.

Additional state and national polling data are available at www.cawp.rutgers.edu/WomensVoteWatch

This release is part of Women's Vote Watch, a joint effort by The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) and the Communications Consortium Media Center (CCMC) to provide a gender gap analysis of the women's vote from key polls conducted on the presidential race at the national level and in battleground states.

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.

About CCMC

The Communications Consortium Media Center (CCMC) is a public interest media center dedicated to helping nonprofit organizations use media and new technologies as tools for policy change. It seeks to influence the public debate in ways that respect and support individual rights, healthy families, cultural diversity and a sustainable environment. Its mission is to use communications strategies for policy change. CCMC is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization.

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