



CAWP

Women's Vote Watch

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CAWP Launches Women's Vote Watch 2012, Tracks Gender Differences in Presidential Polls

The women's vote may well determine the outcome of the presidential race in 2012. The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, will provide data on the gender gap and the women's vote from now until Election Day using key national and battleground state polls on the presidential race conducted since the two parties' conventions.

To access the most up-to-date information, visit [Women's Vote Watch 2012](#).
Data on the women's vote in the 2008 presidential race are also [available](#), allowing for over-time comparison.

Polls show that the gender gap persists in 2012. While it has varied in size and strength since the two parties' conventions, nearly all polls analyzed by CAWP reveal that women voters support the Democratic ticket more strongly than men do. According to exit polls, the average gender gap in voting in presidential elections from 1980 to 2008 was 7.5 points, with a greater proportion of women than men preferring the Democrat in each case.

The **gender gap** is the difference in the percentage of women and men who support a given candidate, generally the leading or winning candidate. It is the gap *between* the genders not *within* a gender. Even if women and men favor the same candidate, they may do so by different margins, resulting in a gender gap.

The gender gap is different from the frequently reported measure of the **women's vote**, which is the percentage point advantage that one candidate has over the other among women voters – that is, the difference in support for the major party candidates among women voters only.

For more information, see "[The Gender Gap: Voting Choices in Presidential Elections](#)" and "[Gender Differences in Voter Turnout](#)."

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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