



CAWP

Election Watch

For immediate release
November 9, 2012

Contact: Dr. Susan Carroll
732/932-9384, ext. 235
Debbie Walsh
732/932-9384, ext. 227

Gender Gap Evident in All 2012 Gubernatorial Races

Gender gaps in voting were evident in all seven 2012 gubernatorial races where exit polls were conducted by Edison Research, according to an analysis by the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Gender gaps – defined as measurable differences in the proportions of women and men who voted for the winning candidates – ranged from 3 to 11 points in these races (see table below).

The largest gender gap was in New Hampshire, where the sole female gubernatorial candidate this year, Democrat Maggie Hassan, defeated Republican Ovide Lamontagne. Women were 11 percentage points more likely than men to vote for Hassan, while men favored Hassan over her opponent by only one percentage point.

Women voters preferred the Democratic candidates over the Republican candidates in six of the seven gubernatorial contests. The lone exception was the North Carolina race, in which a majority of women (and an even larger majority of men) voted for the winning Republican candidate.

Women's votes were responsible for Democratic victories in three states. In Indiana and Montana, majorities of women voted for the winning Democratic candidates while majorities of men voted for the losing Republican candidates. In the highly-competitive contest in Washington, women preferred the victorious Democrat Jay Inslee, while men's votes were evenly split between Inslee and Republican Rob McKenna.

In addition to the gender gaps in gubernatorial contests, gender gaps also were evident in the 2012 presidential race (10 percentage points) and in 22 of the 23 U.S. Senate contests (5 to 13 percentage points) where exit polls were conducted. Only 11 gubernatorial seats were up for election this year; 36 seats will be contested in 2014.

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THE STATE UNIVERSITY
OF NEW JERSEY

Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics
191 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8557
Phone: (732) 932-9384 • Fax: (732) 932-6778
www.cawp.rutgers.edu

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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2012 Exit Poll Data: Gubernatorial Races

State	Candidate	Party	Overall	Gender Gap	Women's Vote	Women	Men
IN	Mike Pence	R	50%	5 pts.	+5% Cragg	47%	52%
	John Cragg	D	46%			52%	41%
MO	Dave Spence	R	42%	3 pts.	+14% Nixon	42%	44%
	Jay Nixon	D	55%			56%	53%
MT	Rick Hill	R	47%	8 pts.	+10% Bullock	43%	52%
	Steve Bullock	D	49%			53%	45%
NH	Ovide Lamontagne	R	42%	11 pts.	+22% Hassan	38%	48%
	Maggie Hassan	D	55%			60%	49%
NC	Pat McCrory	R	55%	4 pts.	+9% McCrory	54%	58%
	Walter Dalton	D	43%			45%	40%
VT	Randy Brock	R	38%	10 pts.	+29% Shumlin	33%	44%
	Peter Shumlin	D	58%			62%	52%
WA	Rob McKenna	R	49%	4 pts.	+8% Inslee	46%	50%
	Jay Inslee	D	51%			54%	50%

NOTES: The gender gap shown for each poll is based on the responses for the winning candidate. Contest winners are in boldface. Exit polls were only conducted in 31 states.