



# CAWP

## *Election Watch*

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### **Gender Gap in the 2000 Elections**

Gender gaps among voters were evident in most of the races this year, including the presidential contest as well as Senate, House and gubernatorial elections.

#### **Gender Gap in the Presidential Race**

Gender played a major role in providing a margin of victory for President Bush. According to the nationwide election day voter polls conducted by Voter News Service (VNS), a 10 percentage point gender gap was evident in support for the Republican candidate, with 53% of men and 43% of women voting for George W. Bush. Similarly, a 12 percentage point gender gap was evident in support for the Democratic candidate, with 54% of women and 42% of men voting for Al Gore.

The gender gap in the 2000 presidential race was of the same magnitude as the 11 percentage point gender gap in the 1996 presidential race and much larger than the 4 percentage point gender gap evident in the 1992 presidential race. (See CAWP Fact Sheet entitled "The Gender Gap.")

Men and women were clearly divided in their preferences for president, with a majority of women (54%) voting for Al Gore and a majority of men (53%) voting for George W. Bush.

There was a gender gap among white women and white men of the same magnitude as for women and men overall. White women were evenly divided between the two presidential candidates (48% for Gore and 49% for Bush) while white men overwhelmingly preferred Bush to Gore (36% for Gore and 60% for Bush).

Working women overwhelmingly preferred Gore to Bush (58% for Gore and 39% for Bush).

#### **The Gender Gap in Races for Women U.S. Senate Candidates**

Six women were candidates for election to the U.S. Senate in 2000. Of these, one, Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), sought an open seat, and two, Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA), challenged incumbents. Sizeable gender gaps were apparent in all three of these races.

Women voters provided the margin of victory for Hillary Rodham Clinton. Men split their votes evenly between Clinton and her opponent (49% for Clinton and 49% for Lazio) while women overwhelmingly preferred Clinton to Lazio (60% for Clinton and 39% for Lazio).

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Women voters similarly provided the margin of victory for Debbie Stabenow. A majority of women (54%) voted for Stabenow while an equally large majority of men (54%) voted for her opponent.

The same pattern was apparent in Maria Cantwell's race. A majority of women (54%) voted for Cantwell while an equally large majority of men (54%) voted for her opponent.

Of the three incumbents who were re-elected, one, Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), is a Democrat. A 14 percentage point gender gap was apparent in her race, although a majority of men (51%) as well as women (65%) voted for her.

Of the two Republican incumbents who were re-elected, Olympia Snowe (R-ME) received equal proportions of votes from women (69%) and men (68%) while Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) received a slightly larger proportion of men's votes (68%) than of women's votes (63%).

### **The Gender Gap in Races for Women U.S. Gubernatorial Candidates**

Three women were elected governors of their states in the 2000 elections. Women voters provided the margin of victory in Jeanne Shaheen's (D-NH) re-election. Shaheen won 56% of women's votes but only 42% of men's votes. A large gender gap was also apparent in Ruth Minner's (D-DE) winning race in Delaware, with 68% of women voting for her compared with 50% of men. While a gender gap was apparent in Judy Martz's (R-MT) successful bid for governor of Montana, she received stronger support from men (55%) than from women (47%).

Two candidates, Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and Ruth Dwyer (R-VT), were defeated in races to become governor of their states. Heitkamp received slightly stronger support from women (47%) than from men (43%) while Dwyer was more strongly supported by men (44%) than by women (33%).

### **The Gender Gap in U.S. House Races**

A 9 percentage point gender gap was apparent in U.S. House races. Nationally, 53% of women compared with 44% of men voted for the Democratic congressional candidate in their district.

A majority of women (53%) voted for Democratic U.S. House candidates while an equally large majority of men (53%) voted for Republican U.S. House candidates.

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