



The Gender Gap Attitudes on Public Policy Issues

The “gender gap” refers to differences between women and men in political attitudes and voting choices. A gender gap has been apparent in voting behavior, party identification, evaluations of performances of recent presidents, and attitudes toward some public policy issues.

A gender gap is apparent in the way women and men respond to a variety of contemporary issues. Among many issues gender gaps have been observed, recent polls have found that, compared with men, women are:

- more likely to favor a more activist role for government;
- more supportive of programs to guarantee health care and basic social services;
- more supportive of restrictions on firearms;
- more supportive of same-sex marriage; and
- more likely to favor legal abortion without restrictions.

In addition to these issue-based trends, there is also a gender gap evident in how men and women feel about the outlook for the country. Recent polls have found that, compared with men, women are slightly more optimistic and/or satisfied with the direction in which the country is going.

Government

I am going to mention four phrases and ask you which one best describes how you feel about the way the federal government works.

	Women	Men
Enthusiastic	4	4
Satisfied but not enthusiastic	28	21
Dissatisfied but not angry	44	44
Angry	24	30

Washington Post/ABC News, September 26-29, 2012

Do you think government programs to help the poor do more to make people dependent on such assistance or do more to help people in need get back on their feet?

“the poor”	Women	Men
Make People Dependent	47	55
Help People in Need	47	37

“the unemployed”	Women	Men
Make People Dependent	36	49
Help People in Need	60	44

Washington Post/ABC News, September 26-29, 2012

Which comes closer to your view, government should do more to solve national problems or government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals.

	Women	Men
Should do more	44	37
Doing too much	47	58
DK/NA	9	5

Quinnipiac University, September 25-30, 2012

Do you think the federal government should or should not pursue policies that try to reduce the gap between wealthy and less well-off Americans?

	Women	Men
Should pursue policies	54	50
Should not pursue policies	39	48

Washington Post/ABC News, September 26-29, 2012

Which of these comes closer to your opinion? The 1. The United States is more successful when the government emphasizes self-reliance and individual responsibility, OR 2. The United States is more successful when the government emphasizes community and shared responsibility.

	Women	Men
Self-reliance	37	46
Community	55	48
DK/NA	8	7

CBS/NYTimes Poll, September 8-12, 2012

Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements. After I read each pair, please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.

	Women	Men
We need to limit the power of Wall Street and the big banks if we are to make the changes the country needs.	51	39
We need to shift power from the federal government to states and local communities if we are to make the changes the country needs.	41	56

Democracy Corps, September 8-12, 2012

Fiscal Policy

Many people who don't pay income taxes include seniors on social security, people on disability, students, the unemployed, and the working poor. Should they pay:

	Women	Men
Should pay some income taxes	38	41
Fair that they do not pay income taxes	60	54

Washington Post/ABC News, September 26-29, 2012

Which comes closest to your view about the tax cuts passed in 2001 and 2003? 1. The tax cuts should be continued for everyone, OR 2. They should continue for households earning less than \$250,000 a year, OR 3. the tax cuts should expire for everyone?

	Women	Men
Continue for all	35	33
For incomes under \$250k	47	46
Expire for all	10	17
DK/NA	9	4

CBS/NYTimes Poll, September 8-12, 2012

What do you think is the bigger problem – unfairness in the economic system favoring the wealthy, or over-regulation of the free market that interferes with growth and prosperity?

	Women	Men
Unfairness in the economic system	54	42
Over-regulation of the free market	35	49

Washington Post/ABC News, September 26-29, 2012

Thinking about the gap between the wealthy and the rest, do you think this gap is larger than it's been historically, smaller, or about the same?

	Women	Men
Larger	55	60
Smaller	5	5
About the same	35	34
No opinion	5	2

Washington Post/ABC News, September 26-29, 2012

Do you think the federal government's economic stimulus program has helped the national economy, hurt the national economy, or hasn't made much difference?

	Women	Men
Helped the national economy	28	28
Hurt the national economy	25	29
Hasn't made much difference	44	41
No opinion	2	1

Washington Post/ABC News September 26-29, 2012

When you think about the US budget deficit, which of the following solutions comes closest to your opinion?

	Women	Men
Cutting existing programs	17	20
A mix of both, but with more spending cuts than tax increases	33	37
A mix of both, but with more tax increases than spending cuts	18	15
Raising taxes	11	7
Unsure	17	16
DK/NS	5	5

Reuters-Ipsos, September 7-10, 2012

Social Policy

Abortion

Do you think abortion should be legal under any circumstances, legal under only certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?

	Women	Men
Legal under any circumstances	39	31
Legal under only certain circumstances	45	50
Illegal in all circumstances	15	14
No opinion	-	4

CNN/Opinion Research Corporation, August 22-23, 2012

Which of these comes closest to your view? 1. Abortion should be generally available to those who want it; OR 2. Abortion should be made available but under stricter limits than it is now; OR 3. Abortion should not be permitted?

	Women	Men
Generally available	46	38
Available but limits	33	38
Should not be permitted	19	21
DK/NA	3	4

CBS/NYTimes Poll, September 8-12, 2012

Same-Sex Marriage

Do you think it should be legal or not legal for same-sex couples to marry?

	Women	Men
Legal	50	46
Not legal	42	46
DK/NA	8	8

CBS/NYTimes Poll, September 8-12, 2012

Do you think marriages between gay and lesbian couples should or should not be recognized by the law as valid, with the same rights as traditional marriages?

	Women	Men
Should	56	52
Should not	42	43
No opinion	2	5

CNN/Opinion Research Corporation, May 29-31, 2012

When you think about the rights of same-sex couples, which of the following comes closest to your personal opinion?

	Women	Men
Same-sex couples should not be allowed to marry or form any kind of civil union	20	25
Same-sex couples should be allowed to form civil unions, but not to marry in the traditional sense	26	26
Same-sex couples should be allowed to marry legally, with all the same rights as traditional marriages	46	42
Unsure	6	4
DK/NS	2	3

Reuters-Ipsos, September 7-10, 2012

Guns

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

	Women	Men
No restrictions on owning guns	8	19
Minor restrictions	30	45
Major restrictions	48	27
Illegal except authorized personnel	14	7
No opinion	1	2

CNN/Opinion Research Corporation, August 7-8, 2012

Immigration

As you may know, the Obama administration has announced a new policy in which young illegal immigrants who came to the country as children will be able to obtain work permits and will not face deportation. Do you support or oppose this new policy?

	Women	Men
Support	59	50
Oppose	33	45
DK/NA	7	4

Quinnipiac University, July 1-8, 2012

As you may know, in 2010 the state of Arizona passed a law that requires police to verify the legal status of someone they have already stopped or arrested if they suspect that the person is in the country illegally. Do you approve or disapprove of Arizona's immigration law?

	Women	Men
Approve	61	67
Disapprove	35	30
DK/NA	4	3

Quinnipiac University, July 1-8, 2012

As you may have heard, President Barack Obama announced the government will stop deportation and grant work permits for certain illegal immigrants under the age of thirty who were brought to the United States as children. Do you favor or oppose this change to immigration policy?

	Women	Men
Favor	56	53
Oppose	34	39
DK	10	8

Fox News, June 24-26, 2012

In 2010, Arizona passed an immigration law that requires people to show documents proving their immigration status, if government officials have reasonable cause to ask for them, and allows police to detain anyone who cannot prove their immigration status. Setting aside this week's Supreme Court ruling, do you favor or oppose this law?

	Women	Men
Favor	57	61
Oppose	32	35
DK	10	5

Fox News, June 24-26, 2012

Health Care

Which of these two descriptions comes closer to your view of what Medicare should look like in the future?

	Women	Men
Medicare should continue as it is today, with the government guaranteeing all seniors the same set of health insurance benefits (or)	58	53
Medicare should be changed to a system in which the government guarantees each senior a fixed amount of money to help them purchase coverage either from traditional Medicare or from a list of private health plans (or)	35	40
Other	2	1
DK/Refused	6	6

Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll, September 13-19, 2012

As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally (favorable) or generally (unfavorable) opinion of it? [GET ANSWER THEN ASK: Is that a very (favorable/unfavorable) or somewhat (favorable/unfavorable) opinion?]

	Women	Men
Favorable	47	45
Unfavorable	38	44
DK/Refused	16	12

Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll, September 13-19, 2012

From what you have heard or read, do you approve or disapprove of the health care law that was enacted in 2010?

	Women	Men
Approve	45	39
Disapprove	44	56
DK/NA	12	5

CBS/NYTimes Poll, September 8-12, 2012

Do you think Congress should try to repeal the health care law, or should they let it stand?

	Women	Men
Should repeal it	45	52
Should let it stand	44	41
DK/NA	10	6

Quinnipiac University, July 1-8, 2012

The Supreme Court has heard a challenge to the health care law and voted to uphold it. Do you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court decision to uphold the health care law?

	Women	Men
Agree	48	48
Disagree	43	48
DK/NA	8	5

Quinnipiac University, July 1-8, 2012

Do you support requiring people to have health insurance?

	Women	Men
Support	50	45
Oppose	45	50
DK/NA	5	5

Quinnipiac University, July 1-8, 2012

Foreign Policy

Do you think the US is doing the right thing by fighting the war in Afghanistan now, or should the US not be involved in Afghanistan now?

	Women	Men
Right thing	27	35
Should not be involved	61	59
DK/NA	12	6

Quinnipiac University, July 1-8, 2012

Political Outlook

Do you feel things in the country are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten off on the wrong track?

	Women	Men
Right Direction	42	35
Wrong Track	49	59
Unsure	8	6

Politico/GWU Battleground Poll, October 1 – 4

Do you think things in this country are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

	Women	Men
Right Direction	40	36
Wrong Track	58	62

Washington Post/ABC News, September 26-29, 2012

In general, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in the nation today; are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

	Women	Men
Very Satisfied	10	8
Somewhat Satisfied	33	24
Somewhat Dissatisfied	18	18
Very Dissatisfied	38	48
DK/NA	1	1

Quinnipiac University, September 25-30, 2012