



**CAWP**

*Women's Vote Watch*

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[www.cawp.rutgers.edu/wvwatch](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/wvwatch)

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### **Women's Votes Decisive in 2012 Presidential Race**

New Brunswick, NJ—Women's votes were decisive in Barack Obama's victory, according to an analysis of exit poll data 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. A majority of women (55%) cast their ballots for President Barack Obama, while a majority of men (52%) voted for Governor Mitt Romney, according to Edison Research.

Defined as the difference in the proportions of women and men voting for the winning candidate, a sizable gender gap was evident in the election results. The gender gap was 10 percentage points in 2012, with 55 percent of women, but only 45 percent of men, voting for Obama. The gender gap in this year's presidential race is larger than in any year except 1996, when it was 11 percentage points. There was a 7-point gender gap in the final vote in both 2004 and 2008.

Obama won about the same proportion of women voters in 2012 (55 percent) as he won 2008 (54 percent). Romney's support among women voters in 2012 (44 percent) was about the same as women's support for Senator John McCain in 2008 (43 percent). What was different this year was that Romney fared much better among men (52 percent) than McCain did in 2008 (48 percent).

Even though Romney won a majority of white women's votes (56 percent), a gender gap was clearly apparent among white voters. Forty-two percent of white women, compared with 35 percent of white men, voted for Obama. Unlike white women, majorities of both black women and Latinas voted for Obama. However, as with the vote among whites, a gender gap was apparent for both blacks (96 percent of women versus 87 percent of men voted for Obama) and Latinas (76 percent of women versus 65 percent of men voted for Obama).

In addition to the gender gap in the national vote, a gender gap was apparent in 8 of the 9 battleground states. In each of these 8 states, a majority of women voted for Obama (see table below).

Additional state and national polling data are available at [www.cawp.rutgers.edu/WomensVoteWatch](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/WomensVoteWatch).

#### **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: Presidential Vote in Battleground States**

<b>State</b>	<b>Overall Results</b>	<b>Gender Gap</b>	<b>Women's Vote</b>	<b>Women for Romney</b>	<b>Men for Romney</b>	<b>Women for Obama</b>	<b>Men for Obama</b>
<b>IA</b>	<b>Obama 52%</b> Romney 46%	15 pts.	+19% Obama	40%	53%	59%	44%
<b>NH</b>	<b>Obama 52%</b> Romney 46%	11 pts.	+16% Obama	42%	51%	58%	47%
<b>NV</b>	<b>Obama 52%</b> Romney 46%	10 pts.	+14% Obama	42%	51%	56%	46%
<b>OH</b>	<b>Obama 50%</b> Romney 48%	10 pts.	+11% Obama	44%	53%	55%	45%
<b>WI</b>	<b>Obama 53%</b> Romney 46%	10 pts.	+15% Obama	42%	51%	57%	47%
<b>FL</b>	Obama 50% Romney 49%	7 pts., 6 pts.	+7% Obama	46%	52%	53%	46%
<b>VA</b>	<b>Obama 51%</b> Romney 48%	7 pts.	+9% Obama	45%	51%	54%	47%
<b>NC</b>	Obama 48% <b>Romney 51%</b>	5 pts.	+2% Obama	49%	54%	51%	45%
<b>CO</b>	<b>Obama 51%</b> Romney 47%	0 pts.	+1% Obama	49%	46%	50%	50%