

How The Gender Gap Shaped Election 2000

Feminist Majority Foundation Preliminary Report

January 24, 2001

The gender gap - the difference between the voting patterns of men and women - proved crucial in presidential, Congressional, and statewide races. Overall, Gore enjoyed a 12-point gender gap in the nationwide Voter News Service exit polling, with 54% of women voting for Gore but only 42% of men. Women voters favored Gore by larger margins than men voters in every demographic category, including marital status, race, income, age, party, and education.

In 16 of the 21 states where Gore won the electoral votes, he won only because of the gender gap and the votes of women. In these states, he had the support of the majority of women voters, but did not have majority support among men. In five other states, a slim majority of men voters joined solid majorities of women voters to produce victory. In Florida, the gender gap also would have been decisive. Women voters supported Gore by larger margins than men voters in every state. (See Appendix 1.)

The gender gap and women's votes were decisive for nine Democratic U.S. Senate victories, including all 6 of the Democratic pick-up seats, and in key gubernatorial races. Women voters also disproportionately voted for Democratic House candidates.

The impact of the gender gap on election outcomes is especially significant because women are registered to vote and turnout to vote in greater numbers than men. In 2000, women comprised 52% of the electorate and men only 48%.

The gender gap is fueled by issues such as gun control, abortion rights, women's rights, and human services. Higher percentages of women than men support abortion rights in all age groups, with young women of ages 18-29 the strongest supporters. Pro-choice women were more likely than pro-choice men to vote for Gore, producing a gender gap of 16-points. A 20-point gender gap exists between women and men on the gun control issue, with 70% of women and 50% of men supporting stricter gun control measures.

Women Carry Gore States

In 16 out of the 21 states carried by Gore, women voters provided the margin of difference: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin. (See Chart A.) Gender gaps ranged from 20 points in Delaware to 6 points in Illinois. In 19 of the 21 states plus Florida, the gender gap was 10 points or higher.

Chart A. Gender Gaps in Gore States

States Where Gender Gap Decisive

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Gender Gap for Gore</u>
California	59%	47%	12-point
Connecticut	62%	48%	14-point
Delaware	64%	44%	20-point
Hawaii	62%	49%	13-point
Iowa	54%	44%	10-point
Maine	55%	42%	13-point
Maryland	65%	47%	18-point
Michigan	56%	46%	10-point
Minnesota	52%	43%	9-point
New Mexico	54%	44%	10-point
New Jersey	62%	49%	13-point
Oregon	53%	40%	13-point
Pennsylvania	58%	43%	15-point
Vermont	56%	45%	11-point
Washington	56%	44%	12-point
Wisconsin	55%	40%	15-point

States Where Gender Gap Influential

Illinois	57%	51%	6-point
Massachusetts	67%	52%	15-point
New York	65%	53%	12-point
Rhode Island	67%	54%	13-point
Washington, D.C.	90%	80%	10-point

State Where Gender Gap Would Have Been Decisive

Florida	53%	42%	11-point
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Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.

The largest gender gap was in the Delaware race in which Gore won 64% of women's votes, compared with 44% of men's. In only Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Illinois, New York and the District of Columbia – where Gore also enjoyed large gender gaps – did the majority of both women and men vote for Gore.

Gender Gap Key Regardless of Age, Race, Marital Status, and Education

Women voters favored Gore in all major demographic categories. (See Chart B.) The largest gender gaps were between unmarried women and men and college-educated women and men.

Chart B. Gender Gaps for Gore By Demographic Characteristics

% of 2000 Vote		Women	Men	Gender Gap for Gore
Total				
	Total	54%	43%	11-point
65%	Married	48%	38%	10-point
35%	Unmarried	63%	48%	15-point
43%	Suburban	52%	41%	11-point
5%	Without HS Diploma	60%	57%	3-point
21%	HS Graduates	52%	43%	9-point
32%	Some College	50%	40%	10-point
42%	College Graduates	57%	39%	18-point
35%	Republican	9%	7%	2-point
27%	Independent	51%	39%	12-point
39%	Democrat	87%	85%	2-point
17%	18-29 years old	53%	41%	12-point
33%	30-44 years old	54%	42%	12-point
28%	45-59 years old	53%	41%	12-point
22%	60 and older	56%	44%	12-point
82%	White	48%	36%	12-point
10%	Black	94%	85%	9-point
7%	Under \$15,000	61%	51%	10-point
16%	\$15,000-29,999	59%	47%	12-point
24%	\$30,000-49,999	54%	43%	11-point
25%	\$50,000-74,999	50%	42%	8-point
13%	\$75,000-99,999	53%	38%	15-point
15%	\$100,000 or more	50%	37%	13-point

Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.

Unmarried women were among Gore’s strongest supporters. Gore won 63% of the votes of unmarried women, and only 48% of the votes of unmarried men – for a 15-point gender gap. Unmarried women comprise an increasingly significant one-fifth (19%) of the electorate; unmarried men are 16% of the electorate.

Among college graduates, 57% of women and 39% of men supported Gore, producing the largest – a whopping 18-point – gender gap. College graduates comprise 42% of the electorate. Gore’s support among women without high school diplomas was even slightly higher at 60%. The gender gap, however, was smaller because 57% of men

without high school diplomas said that they voted for Gore. Voters without high school diplomas are 5% of the electorate.

Despite overwhelming support for Gore among both Black women and men, Black women supported Gore at a higher rate than Black men – for a 9-point gender gap. Almost every Black women voter – 94% -- supported Gore.

Support for Gore by age and gender also showed significant gender gaps, with 53% of young women (18-29 years old) voting for Gore and only 41% of young men – for a 12-point gender gap. Among older voters (60+ years old), 56% of women voted for Gore and only 44% of men for the same 12-point gender gap.

Independent women were key to Gore’s vote. Gore won support from 51% of independent women, and only 39% of independent men. However, only 9% of Republican women and 7% of Republican men crossed party lines to vote for Gore. Increased visibility of the abortion issue in the election also could have increased the support of Republican women for Gore.

The gender gap persisted across income levels. The gender gap was largest at higher income levels, with a 15-point gap among women and men with household incomes of between \$75,000 and \$99,999 and a 13-point gender gap between women and men with incomes over \$100,000.

Gender gaps in the states in which Gore won electoral votes as well as in Ohio and New Hampshire are analyzed across income, age, marital status, and party in Appendices B, C, D, and E, respectively.

Gender Gap Influences Election Outcome Independent of Race

The gender gap exercised an influence on Gore state-level victories that was independent of race. While African American votes were essential to Gore wins and almost unanimous support among Black women for Gore helped fuel the gender gap, an analysis of the gender gap between white women and white men reveals that Gore also could not have won his electoral votes without the votes of white women. In every state that Gore carried, he won the majority of white women’s votes. In fact, white women’s votes compensated for extraordinarily low levels of support from white men. Only in Washington, D.C. did Gore win the majority of white male votes, along with the majority of votes of white women, women of color, and men of color. (See Chart C.)

Chart C. Gender Gap Between White Women and White Men

	<u>White Women</u>	<u>White Men</u>	<u>Gender Gap for Gore</u>
California	54%	42%	12-point
Connecticut	60%	47%	13-point
Delaware	58%	38%	20-point
Florida	44%	35%	9-point
Hawaii	55%	37%	18-point
Illinois	51%	44%	7-point
Iowa	53%	44%	10-point
Maine	55%	43%	12-point
Maryland	56%	35%	21-point
Massachusetts	65%	49%	16-point
Michigan	51%	42%	9-point
Minnesota	51%	43%	8-point

New Mexico		44%	30%	14-point
New Jersey		58%	44%	14-point
New York		59%	46%	13-point
Oregon	53%		38%	15-point
Pennsylvania		54%	40%	14-point
Rhode Island		67%	52%	15-point
Vermont		56%	45%	11-point
Washington		54%	42%	12-point
Washington, D.C.		71%	65%	6-point
Wisconsin		54%	39%	15-point

Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.

Support for Gore Among Working Women Strong

Gore’s support among working women was strong, with 58% supporting him nationally. Support among working women was even stronger among women in the states in which Gore won electoral votes. Support among working women was highest – 65% or more – in Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey. (See Chart D.)

Chart D. Working Women for Gore

California	63%
Connecticut	*
Delaware	65%
Florida	59%
Hawaii	*
Illinois	*
Iowa	*
Maine	*
Maryland	67%
Massachusetts	*
Michigan	57%
Minnesota	56%
New Mexico	*
New Jersey	65%
New York	*
Oregon	58%
Pennsylvania	62%
Rhode Island	*
Vermont	*
Washington	58%
Washington, D.C.	*
Wisconsin	57%

Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.

Abortion and Election 2000

Fifty-six percent of all voters believe that abortion should be legal (23%) in all cases or in most cases (33%). Of those who believe that abortion should always be legal, 70% voted for Gore. Of those who believe that abortion should be legal in most cases, 58% voted for Gore. Abortion rights supporters comprised 74% of Gore’s vote nationally.

Higher percentages of women than men in all age groups took a pro-choice position. Young women were the strongest supporters, with 62% stating that abortion either should be legal in all cases (30%) or legal in most cases (32%). Support between men and women over 60 was the least strong, at 50% for women and 49% for men. (See Chart E.)

Chart E. Abortion Should Be Legal In Either All Cases Or Most Cases

	Women	Men	Gender Gap
All	58%	55%	3-point
18-29	62%	57%	5-point
30-44	60%	57%	3-point
45-59	58%	56%	2-point
60+	50%	49%	1-point

Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.

Arguably, the case can be made from the data that pro-choice women were more likely than pro-choice men to vote for Gore. Of those who felt abortions should be legal in all cases, 77% of women and 61% of men voted for Gore – for a 16-point gender gap which was greater than the overall gender gap of 12-points. Of those voters who believe that abortions should be legal in most cases, 50% of men and 65% of women voted for Gore – for a 15-point gender gap. (See Chart F.)

Chart F. Voters By Sex and Abortion Position

% of 2000 Vote Total	Gore			Bush		
	Women	Men	Gender Gap	Women	Men	Gender Gap
23% All Legal	77	61	16	33	-14	
33% Most Legal	65	50	15	45	-13	
27% Most Illegal	35	23	12	75	-12	
13% Always Illegal	26	18	8	77	5	

Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.

Gun Control and the Gender Gap

Gun control remains one of the most significant components of the gender gap. A solid majority – 60% -- of all voters favor stricter gun control laws. Of women, however, 70% supported stricter gun control laws, compared with 50% of men – for a huge 20-point gender gap. (See Chart G.) Women’s strong support for stricter gun control laws crosses all age groups, with support strongest among women under 45 and slightly weaker among women 45 or older. Of those who favored stricter gun control laws, 62% supported Gore.

Chart G. Voters Who Favor Stricter Gun Laws

	Women	Men	Gender Gap
All	70%	50%	20-point

18-29	71%	51%	20-point
30-44	72%	49%	23-point
45-59	67%	47%	20-point
60+	68%	53%	15-point

Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.

Gender Gap Elects Democratic Senators

The gender gap also was responsible for Democratic U.S. Senate victories. All 6 of the U.S. Senate races in which Democrats picked up seats were a the result of women's votes. Feinstein won with a 13-point gender gap, Stabenow (D-MI) with a 10-point gender gap, Bill Nelson (D-FL) with an 11-point gender gap, Carper (D-DE) with a 12-point gender gap, Dayton (D-MN) with a 10-point gender gap, Cantwell with an 11-point gender gap, and Carnahan (D-MO) with a 6-point gender gap. In all of these races, women's votes were the deciding factor. Gender gaps were also decisive in the election of newly elected Senators John Corzine (13-point gender gap) and Hillary Clinton (11-point gender gap). Miller also won his elections with substantial gender gaps, but he also won a slim majority of male voters. (See Chart H.)

Chart H. Gender Gaps in Key U.S. Senate Races

Senate Races Where Gender Gap Decisive

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Gender Gap</u>
Feinstein (D-CA)	62%	49%	13-point
Corzine (D-NJ)	56%	43%	13-point
Carper (D-DE)	61%	49%	12-point
Nelson (D-FL)	56%	45%	11-point
Stabenow (D-MI)	56%	46%	10-point
Dayton (D-MN)	54%	44%	10-point
Clinton (D-NY)	60%	49%	11-point
Cantwell (D-WA)	55%	44%	11-point
Carnahan (D-MO)	53%	47%	6-point

Senate Race Where Gender Gap Influential

Miller (D-GA)	64%	51%	13-point
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Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.

Women's votes and the gender gap also shaped the outcome of key gubernatorial races. In New Hampshire, Governor Jean Shaheen won a difficult re-election battle with a decisive 14-point gender gap, winning 5% of women's votes and 42% of men's. Ruther Minner in Delaware won her gubernatorial contest with 68% of women's votes and 50% of men's votes – for an 18% gender gap. Women voters also disproportionately supported Democratic House candidates, with 53% of women and only 44% of men voting Democratic.

Appendix A

How The Gender Gap Shaped Election 2000

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Preliminary Report

ALL STATES/GENDER GAP GORE

STATE	MEN	WOMEN	GENDER GAP	WHITE MEN	WHITE WOMEN	GENDER GAP
Alabama	36%	48%	12%	23%	30%	7%
Alaska	24%	38%	14%	21%	36%	15%
Arizona	41%	49%	8%	34%	41%	7%
Arkansas	42%	49%	7%	38%	44%	6%
California	47%	59%	12%	42%	54%	12%
Colorado	39%	46%	7%	31%	42%	11%
Connecticut	49%	62%	13%	47%	60%	13%
Delaware	44%	64%	20%	38%	58%	20%
D. C.	80%	90%	10%	65%	71%	6%
Florida	42%	53%	11%	35%	44%	9%
Georgia	37%	48%	11%	21%	30%	9%
Hawaii	49%	62%	13%	37%	55%	18%
Idaho	21%	36%	15%	20%	36%	16%
Illinois	51%	57%	6%	44%	51%	7%
Indiana	35%	46%	11%	32%	42%	10%
Iowa	44%	54%	10%	43%	53%	10%
Kansas	36%	41%	5%	32%	38%	6%
Kentucky	37%	45%	7%	33%	42%	9%
Louisiana	39%	49%	10%	21%	29%	8%
Maine	42%	55%	13%	43%	55%	12%
Maryland	47%	65%	18%	35%	56%	21%
Massachusetts	52%	67%	15%	49%	65%	16%
Michigan	46%	56%	10%	42%	51%	9%
Minnesota	43%	52%	9%	43%	51%	8%
Mississippi	32%	48%	16%	13%	21%	8%
Missouri	43%	51	8%	38%	45%	7%
Montana	28%	37%	9%	27%	37%	10%
Nebraska	30%	35%	5%	29%	33%	4%
Nevada	41%	50%	9%	35%	45%	10%
New Hampshire	40%	53%	13%	39%	52%	13%
New Jersey	49%	62%	13%	44%	58%	14%
New Mexico	44%	54%	10%	30%	44%	14%
New York	53%	65%	12%	46%	59%	13%
North Carolina	38%	47%	9%	28%	34%	6%
North Dakota	31%	34%	3%	31%	32%	1%
Ohio	39%	53%	14%	34%	47%	13%
Oklahoma	36%	40%	4%	33%	40%	7%
Oregon	40%	53%	7%	38%	53%	15%
Pennsylvania	43%	58%	15%	40%	54%	14%

STATE	MEN	WOMEN	GENDER GAP	WHITE MEN	WHITE WOMEN	GENDER GAP
Rhode Island	54%	67%	13%	52%	67%	15%
South Carolina	35%	45%	10%	20%	31%	11%
South Dakota	30%	43%	13%	30%	41%	11%
Tennessee	42%	50%	8%	32%	40%	8%
Texas	30%	45%	15%	20%	28%	8%
Utah	18%	34%	16%	18%	30%	12%
Vermont	45%	56%	11%	45%	56%	11%
Virginia	37%	51%	14%	30%	43%	13%
Washington	44%	56%	12%	42%	54%	12%
West Virginia	42%	50%	8%	41%	48%	7%
Wisconsin	40%	55%	15%	39%	54%	15%
Wyoming	21%	34%	13%	20%	32%	12%

Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.

Appendix B

How The Gender Gap Shaped Election 2000

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Gore Voters By Income and Sex

	75-100K		Less Than 15K Over 100K			15-30K		30-50K		50-75K	
	M	F	M	F	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
			M	F		M	F	M	F	M	F
California	48	52	38	49	61	59	69	46	64	50	55
Connecticut	62	57	41	63	50	44	56	51	67	50	66
Delaware	45	56	36	75	66	45	74	47	62	46	62
Florida	38	41	27	69	58	53	63	44	53	39	50
Hawaii	46	53	32	50	84	56	69	59	63	49	64
Illinois	53	51	45	81	64	54	60	48	61	51	54
Iowa	48	60	42	46	57	56	60	38	55	41	47
Maine	27	47	33	53	73	53	46	40	53	44	57
Maryland	37	65	50	48	70	52	68	43	70	47	63
Massachusetts	55	59	42	15	76	65	60	60	71	56	64
Michigan	48	56	51	66	58	48	65	44	51	41	53
Minnesota	34	65	35	60	48	54	51	38	43	48	62
New Mexico	46	62	50	24	59	38	60	44	49	45	51
New Jersey	42	59	48	57	79	50	55	49	67	52	54
New York	45	63	52	59	67	60	64	54	67	55	64
Oregon	44	44	41	41	62	40	55	42	55	36	55
Pennsylvania	46	52	25	49	68	51	63	46	56	42	53
Rhode Island	48	66	52	62	68	67	76	58	68	50	67
Vermont	51	51	35	56	48	51	62	48	52	37	59
Washington	37	65	41	61	59	48	54	43	55	48	51

Washington, DC	77	96	85	95	89	93	80	91
85	76	63	73					
Wisconsin	78	51	53	65	37	56	36	56
29	40	32	58					
Ohio	46	61	47	63	36	53	48	53
30	52	29	37					
New Hampshire	65	49	46	59	39	50	41	56
42	52	39	49					

Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.

Appendix C

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Gore Voters By Age and Sex

45-59		18-29				30-44			
F	GG	M	F	60+ GG	GG	M	F	GG	M
California		42	60	18		54	62	8	46
60	14		44	55	11				
Connecticut		50	62	12		51	65	14	51
64	13		41	53	12				
Delaware		36	72	26		47	64	17	46
61	15		45	65	20				
Florida		49	60	11		38	55	17	44
53	9		42	49	7				
Hawaii		55	67	12		44	63	19	47
54	7		56	65	9				
Illinois		50	55	5		51	57	6	52
62	10		47	54	7				
Iowa		34	59	15		38	53	14	51
54	3		50	50	0				
Maine		32	53	21		38	53	15	50
56	6		42	58	16				
Maryland		44	67	23		40	67	27	48
64	16		56	66	10				
Massachusetts		54	55	1		53	68	15	49
68	19		52	71	19				
Michigan		47	58	11		45	53	8	49
58	9		46	58	12				
Minnesota		42	48	6		35	57	12	53
48	-5		46	55	9				
New Mexico		29	59	30		41	56	15	48
53	5		45	46	1				
New Jersey		50	58	8		53	63	10	46
63	17		46	63	17				
New York		55	71	16		54	66	12	50
64	14		53	61	8				
Oregon		45	49	4		34	57	13	40
48	8		44	59	15				
Pennsylvania		40	59	19		42	52	10	41
56	15		47	64	14				
Rhode Island		50	71	21		52	68	16	55
65	10		58	63	5				
Vermont		43	54	11		46	59	13	44
54	10		46	54	8				
Washington		32	63	31		36	48	12	55
61	6		47	55	8				

Washington, DC	73	90	17		81	91	10	78
91 13		87	87	0				
Wisconsin	38	52	14		36	54	18	41
57 16		49	55	6				
Ohio	35	55	20		34	49	15	40
53 13		49	55	6				
New Hampshire	45	59	14		34	56	22	42
43 1		43	59	16				

Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.

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2000*

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Gore Voters By Marital Status and Sex

	Married		Gender Gap	M
	Unmarried			
	F	F		
	Gender Gap			
California	43	52	9	51
68	17			
Connecticut	*	*	*	*
*	*			
Delaware	42	62	20	50
68	18			
Florida	39	46	7	47
65	18			
Hawaii	*	*	*	*
*	*			
Illinois	45	55	10	62
64	2			
Iowa	*	*	*	*
*	*			
Maine	*	*	*	*
*	*			
Maryland	43	57	14	52
78	26			
Massachusetts	*	*	*	*
*	*			
Michigan	43	50	7	52
65	13			
Minnesota	43	53	10	43
50	7			
New Mexico	*	*	*	*
*	*			
New Jersey	50	58	8	50
69	19			
New York	54	61	7	57
71	14			
Oregon	34	49	15	52
62	10			
Pennsylvania	38	52	14	54
64	10			
Rhode Island	*	*	*	*
*	*			
Vermont	*	*	*	*
*	*			

Washington	43	50	7	45
64	19			
Washington, DC	*	*	*	*
*	*			
Wisconsin	40	50	10	41
63	22			
Ohio	*	*	*	*
*	*			
New Hampshire	*	*	*	*
*	*			

Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.

Appendix E

How The Gender Gap Shaped Election 2000

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Gore Voters By Party and Sex

State	Gender Gap	Democrat			Gender Gap	Republican		
		M	F	F		M	F	F
California		88	91		3	10	12	2
	42	56	14					
Connecticut		85	91		6	14	16	2
	44	61	17					
Delaware		83	94		11	13	14	1
	33	59	26					
Florida		84	87		3	10	6	-4
	41	56	15					
Hawaii		80	85		5	7	13	6
	40	47	7					
Illinois		92	84		-8	8	15	7
	49	51	2					
Iowa		85	87		2	8	8	0
	44	53	0					
Maine		82	88		6	5	12	7
	43	51	8					
Maryland		88	91		3	6	13	7
	38	44	6					
Massachusetts		87	85		2	5	10	5
	49	63	14					
Michigan		86	91		5	9	14	5
	43	51	8					
Minnesota		83	83		0	5	10	5
	43	54	11					
New Mexico		81	82		1	7	6	-1
	35	55	20					
New Jersey		89	91		2	10	15	5
	49	56	7					
New York		86	92		6	19	20	1
	49	58	9					
Oregon		85	87		2	4	10	6
	38	52	14					
Pennsylvania		81	86		5	11	22	11
	43	55	12					
Rhode Island		86	86		0	10	14	4
	48	65	17					
Vermont		86	85		-1	9	14	5
	47	90	13					

Washington		86	87	1	5	12	7
	41	53	12				
Washington, DC		93	97	4	35	39	4
	59	63	4				
Wisconsin		87	91	4	6	6	0
	37	52	15				
Ohio		88	88	0	5	13	8
	36	41	5				
New Hampshire		90	93	3	11	14	3
	42	49	7				

Source: Data from Voter News Service. Analysis by Feminist Majority Foundation.