

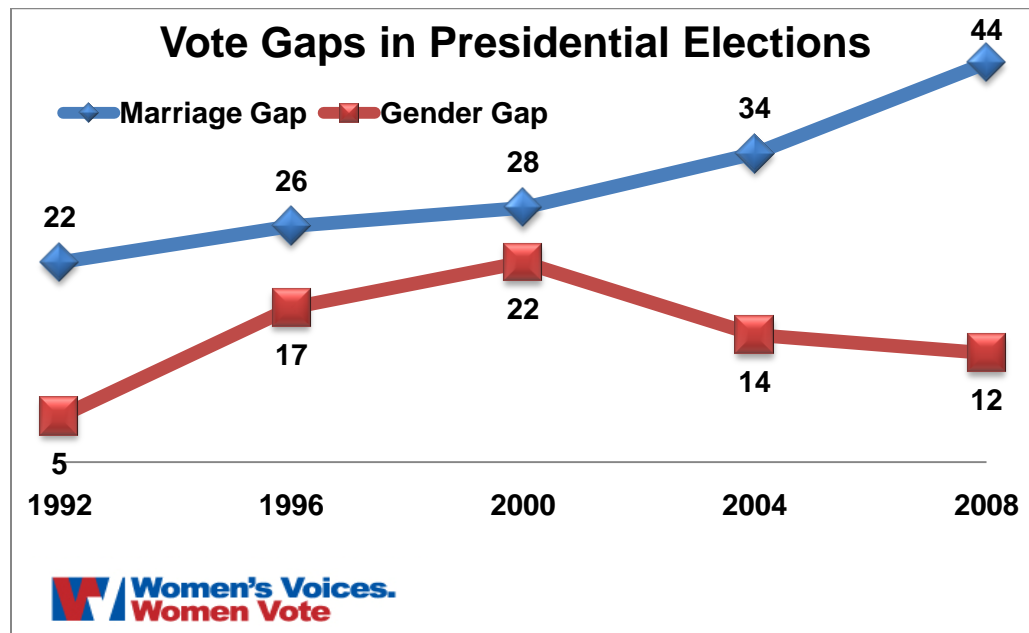


## **Unmarried Women in the Electorate: Behind the Numbers**

- If current trends continue there will soon be more unmarried than married women in the United States.
- Currently, the majority of all households are headed by an unmarried person and unmarried people are on the path to becoming a majority of adult Americans.
- Between 1960 and 2006, the percentage of unmarried people – women and men – in the voting-eligible population increased from 27 percent to 47 percent.
- While unmarried women are increasing their participation in electoral politics, they are still under-represented in relation to their percentage of the voting-eligible population.
- In 2008, unmarried women came closer to voting in proportion to their presence in the population, casting 23% of all votes. This continues an upward trend in voter participation among unmarried women who increased their share of the total electorate from 19% in 2000 to 22.4% in 2004.
- In 2008, unmarried women registered and voted in unprecedented numbers. These women also drove the increase in participation among other under-represented groups: African Americans, Latinos, and young people. Unmarried women accounted for 48 percent of the overall increase in total voter turnout in 2008 over 2004.

- Unmarried women are at significant risk of “dropping off” in the 2010 midterm elections---meaning they may not vote after having voted in the 2008 elections.
  - ✓ Based on our nation-wide projections, there are likely to be 35.3% fewer unmarried women voting in 2010 than in 2008. That’s 10.8 million voters.
  - ✓ By contrast, we project there will be 19.4% fewer married women voting in 2010 or 7.8 million fewer voters.
- The “marriage gap.” Women’s Voices. Women Vote discovered the marriage gap as a key dynamic in America today, with marital status being a strong predictor of whether one registers and votes.
- WWVW has conducted research over the past five years documenting the difference in voter participation and voting behavior between unmarried and married women.
- In 2004, unmarried women trailed married women by 9.4 percentage points in voter registration and by 13 percentage points in actual voting.
  - In 2004, married women registered at 78% (43,059,516), while unmarried women registered at 69% (32,603,778)
  - In 2004, married women voted at 71% (39,423,134), while unmarried women voted at 59% (27,857,568)
- In 2008, unmarried women trailed married women by 8 percentage points in registration, and by 11 percentage points in actual voting.
  - In 2008, married women registered at 77% (43,172,223), while unmarried women registered at 69% (34,897,075).
  - In 2008, married women voted at 71% (39,960,132), while unmarried women voted at 60% (30,454,383).

- Marriage gap vs. the “gender gap.”
  - ✓ The gender gap is a descriptive term, whereas the marriage gap is a phenomenon that is predictive.
  - ✓ In presidential elections since 2000, the gender gap has been decreasing while the marriage gap has been increasing.



- ✓ In 2004, unmarried women voted for Kerry over Bush 62-37.  
In 2008, unmarried women voted for Obama over McCain 70-29.