

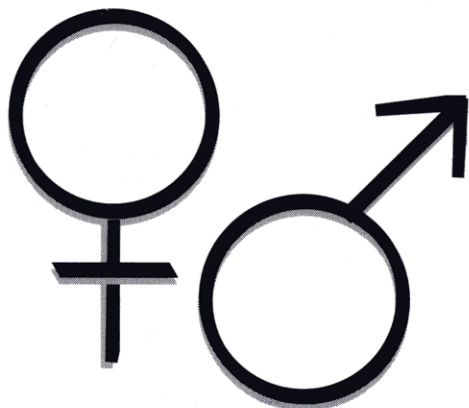
When Rudy Meets Hillary

Nearly 20 years ago in New York, a liberal Democratic woman lawyer who had never previously run for statewide office challenged a local Brooklyn-born pol. When the votes were counted in the 1980 three-way contest, the Republican, Al D'Amato, eked out a one percentage point victory over Elizabeth Holtzman. Time will tell whether the Senate contest in the Empire State next year will resemble the 1980 race, but if past voting patterns are a guide, two things are likely to happen: women will vote differently from men, and they will be more supportive than men of the Democratic woman.

Since 1980, discussion of gender differences in our politics has exploded. In race after race, women have tilted in the Democratic direction, men in the Republican one. Because women make up more than half of the electorate and because they have been voting at higher rates than men since 1980, much of the press commentary on this new alignment in our politics has focused on women.

In all five presidential elections since 1980, women have been more Democratic than men, although they haven't always

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voted for the Democratic candidate. In 1980, 1984, and 1988, women supported the Republican candidate, but by a less robust margin in each election than men did. Bill Clinton received a plurality of women's votes in 1992, and a majority in 1996.

Neither women nor men constitute monolithic voting blocs, of course. In the late 1970s, in his pioneering work on women's political inclinations and preferences, Richard Wirthlin, Ronald Reagan's pollster, segmented women into more than 20 different groups based on demographic and attitudinal variables. More recently, Democratic pollsters Celinda Lake and Stan Greenberg, in their 1996 work for pro-choice political action committee Emily's List, tracked the preferences of 15 different audiences of women. Soccer moms, waitress moms, and angry white males are products of the kinds of segmentation both parties employ, a kind of political shorthand for the differences among women and between men and women.

Many examples could be provided to illustrate the complexity of women's voting patterns. To take just one, majorities of unmarried women have voted for Democratic presidential contenders since the exit pollsters began tracking their behavior in 1984. Married women, by contrast, voted Republican in 1984 and 1988. In 1992, however, they split their votes evenly between Clinton and Bush, and in 1996, a plurality of them voted for Bill Clinton.

The voting patterns of women and men in Senate and gubernatorial races have not been examined as systematically as those in presidential contests. In the summer of 1992, in part because of the substantial media attention being given the 11 women running in Senate contests, one of the authors of this article reviewed exit poll data from contests in which women ran in the 1980s to look at male and female voting patterns. In a subsequent article, the other author developed the argument further. Here, we update the findings. The exit pollsters are now providing almost full coverage of Senate and gubernatorial contests, which was not the case in the early 1980s. In the 1980 election, for example, in which five women ran for 34 Senate seats, the national exit pollsters covered only one of these contests—the New York race among Al D'Amato, Elizabeth Holtzman and Jacob Javits.

Women vote for women, of course. But an interesting question is whether they vote in disproportionate numbers to their own sex. Of the five election years between 1980 and 1988, exit poll data are available for 13 Senate contests. In one of those contests, women were at least 10 percentage points more likely than men to vote for the female candidate; in six of them, women were at least 5

percentage points more likely to vote for the female candidate. In the same period, there were 10 gubernatorial contests in which women ran and for which exit poll data are available. Of them, seven met the 5 percentage-point test.

A closer look at some of the contests in the 1980s reveals another pattern. Not only do women favor Democrats in general; they also appear to favor Democratic women in particular. In the 1980 contests, Democratic women candidates ran an average of 6.2 percentage points ahead among women. Republican women candidates ran 2.3 points behind among women. Like Elizabeth Holtzman in 1980, Democrat Harriet Woods in Missouri did slightly better among women than men in 1982, though she lost her race to Jack Danforth. Democrat Madeline Kunin, running in her first race for Vermont governor, ran 6 points better among women in 1982. She lost that race; but she improved her position among women in her next three races, and she won each time. Crusty septuagenarian Republican Millicent Fenwick in New Jersey did less well with women than men, and lost her Senate race in 1982. In 1986, Florida Republican Paula Hawkins, running unsuccessfully for re-election to the Senate, did better among men, a pattern like Fenwick's. Harriet Woods ran considerably better among women than men (54 to 42%) in 1986 in Missouri, but still lost to Kit Bond.

The five election years between 1990 and 1998 provide additional evidence of female preference for Democratic women. In 11 of the 40 Senate races in which a woman ran and for which exit poll data exist, women were at least 10 percentage points more likely to vote for the female candidate (see Table 1 for full results). In 32 of them, women were 5 points more likely to vote for the female candidate. In 11 of the 33 gubernatorial races from the 1990s in which a woman ran and for which we have data, women were at least 10 percentage points more likely to vote for the female candidate. Eighteen of those contests met the 5-point threshold.

In the five elections of the 1990s, Democratic women candidates did even better among women (an average of 8.2 percentage points) than they had done in the 1980s. Republican women candidates ran worse among women voters (-3.7 points) than they did in the 1980s.

In 1990, 78% of Kansas women and 69% of men voted for Nancy Kassebaum (now Kassebaum-Baker) for US Senate, making her one of the few Republican women to run significantly better among women than men. That same year, Republican newcomer Christine Todd Whitman nearly defeated Bill Bradley in the Senate contest in New Jersey, in part because of her strength among men. In the always high profile

gubernatorial contest in California, 58% of women voted for Dianne Feinstein and 42% for Pete Wilson. Men's votes were a mirror image of women's in that race, and Wilson eked out a victory. Ann Richards won the Texas governorship by swamping her opponent among women, 59 to 41%.

In 1992, 11 women ran in 35 Senate contests. Five of them, all Democrats, won. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer in California, Carol Moseley-Braun in Illinois, Barbara Mikulski in Maryland, and Patty Murray in Washington all ran at least 7 points better among women than men. Democrat Lynn Yeakel ran 10 percentage points better among women than among men, but this wasn't enough to overcome Arlen Specter's strength among men. That year, all the Democratic women who ran for the Senate or for governor, even those not thought to have a real chance of winning, did better among women than among men.

“Since 1980, discussion of gender differences in our politics has exploded. In race after race, women have tilted in the Democratic direction, men in the Republican one.”

In 1994, eight women ran for the Senate. Once again, the Democratic women who ran did better among women than men. Two Republican women, Olympia

Snowe of Maine and Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas, won large identical shares (60%) of the votes of men and women in their Senate races. As in the Senate contests, Democratic women in governors' races did better among women than men, although not always well enough to propel them over the top. Ann Richards in Texas, who had won nearly 60% of the votes of women in her 1990 contest, won 50% this time, not enough to defeat George W. Bush. Republican Ellen Sauerbrey in Maryland won 56% of the votes of men and 43% of women's votes, coming close to Parris Glendening, who rode to victory with 57% of women's votes and 43% of men's.

In 1996, six Democratic and three Republican women ran for Senate seats. Three of the Democratic women ran better among women. Six women ran in governors' races that year, and only one, Democrat Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, won, garnering 63% of women's votes and 53% of men's.

In the eight Senate contests for which we have data in 1998, Democratic women did better among women than men. That advantage wasn't enough to turn the tide in the Democratic direction in three high profile races—Dottie Lamm's in Colorado, Carol Moseley-Braun's in Illinois and Mary Boyle's in Ohio—but it did help put California's Barbara Boxer over the top. All six Democratic women running for governor in 1998 fared better among women than men, but only one, Jeanne Shaheen in New Hampshire again, was victorious. Like Olympia Snowe and Kay Bailey Hutchison before her, Republican Jane Dee Hull won a solid 60% majority among men and women to become Arizona's governor.

Two contests in the 1980s and one in the 1990s pitted women against women. In all three, the Democrat had an edge among women. In the 1986 Maryland Senate contest, Republican Linda Chavez won 40% of the male vote but only 30% of the female vote. The victor Barbara Mikulski won majorities of both sexes. Also in 1986, in the Nebraska governor's race, Republican Kay Orr, running against Democrat Helen Boosalis, did better among males than females, and this was enough to propel her to victory. In 1998 in Washington state, Democratic incumbent Senator Patty Murray won a majority of the votes of

“Not only do women favor Democrats in general; they also appear to favor Democratic women in particular.”

men and women, though her margin over Republican Linda Smith was considerably stronger among women (61 to 38%) than it was among men (53 to 45%).

Although it is too early to say how many women will run in 2000, we know a little about how they will fare. In 1994, Jody Newman, then executive director of the National Women's Political Caucus, looked at the actual experience of men and women who were candidates in general elections for the state legislature in 1986, 1988, 1990 and 1992, and for the US House, the Senate, and governor since 1972. She compared the success rates of male and female candidates in a massive data base of 50,563 candidates. Her conclusion: “When women run, women win as often as men do.” Later, when she updated her analysis, Newman again found no difference between the success rate for men or women in these general election contests. The problem isn't that women don't win; the problem is getting women to run.

The data above suggest that Democratic women candidates have an advantage among women. It remains to be seen whether their support will push Hillary Rodman Clinton over the top if she decides to become an official candidate, or whether, as in 1980, the Republican candidate's strength among men will neutralize this advantage. ●

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Table 1

Tracking Gender Differences and Voting Patterns

1990

33 Senate races, 8 women, 6 exit polls
33 gubernatorial races, 8 women, 6 exit polls

In 1990, Nancy Kassebaum successfully defended her Senate seat, but there were no other female Senate winners. Women won gubernatorial seats in Texas, Kansas, and Oregon.

Senate

Colorado

	<i>Josie Heath (D)</i>	<i>Hank Brown (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	46%	51%	51%
Men	38	61	50

Delaware

	<i>Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D)✓</i>	<i>M. Jane Brady (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	66%	33%	38%
Men	58	40	39

Hawaii

	<i>Daniel K. Akaka (D)✓</i>	<i>Patricia F. Saiki (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	54%	44%	52%
Men	54	45	51

Kansas

	<i>Dick Williams (D)</i>	<i>Nancy Kassebaum (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	21%	78%	54%
Men	31	69	51

New Jersey

	<i>Bill Bradley (D)✓</i>	<i>Christine Whitman (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	54%	46%	43%
Men	49	51	41

Rhode Island

	<i>Claiborne Pell (D)✓</i>	<i>Claudine Schneider (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	61%	39%	53%
Men	62	37	53

Governor

California

	<i>Dianne Feinstein (D)</i>	<i>Pete Wilson (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	58%	42%	44%
Men	42	58	41

Kansas

	<i>Joan M. Finney (D)✓</i>	<i>Mike Hayden (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	49%	44%	54%
Men	50	44	51

Oregon*

	<i>Barbara Roberts (D)✓</i>	<i>Dave Frohnmayer (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	56%	29%	56%
Men	38	47	42

*Al Mobley, the Independent candidate, received 14% of the vote from women, 13% from men.

Nebraska

	<i>E. Benjamin Nelson (D)✓</i>	<i>Kay A. Orr (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	48%	49%	59%
Men	49	49	57

Pennsylvania

	<i>Robert P. Casey (D)✓</i>	<i>Barbara Hafer (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	66%	33%	42%
Men	68	32	43

Texas

	<i>Ann W. Richards (D)✓</i>	<i>Clayton W. Williams, Jr. (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	59%	41%	42%
Men	44	56	41

1992

35 Senate races, 11 women, 11 exit polls
12 gubernatorial races, 3 women, 3 exit polls

In 1992, 5 women won a Senate race and no women won the race for governor.

Senate

Arizona

	<i>Claire Sargent (D)</i>	<i>John McCain (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	33%	56%	55%
Men	31	57	45

California

	<i>Dianne Feinstein (D)✓</i>	<i>John Seymour (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	64%	33%	53%
Men	50	46	47

California

	<i>Barbara Boxer (D)✓</i>	<i>Bruce Herschensohn (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	57%	37%	52%
Men	43	51	48

Illinois

	<i>Carol Moseley-Braun (D)✓</i>	<i>Rich Williamson (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	57%	40%	52%
Men	50	47	48

Iowa

	<i>Jean Lloyd-Jones (D)</i>	<i>Charles E. Grassley (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	34%	66%	53%
Men	22	78	47

Kansas

	<i>Gloria O'Dell (D)</i>	<i>Robert Dole (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	35%	60%	54%
Men	29	67	46

Maryland

	<i>Barbara A. Mikulski (D)✓</i>	<i>Alan Keyes (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	74%	24%	51%
Men	66	34	49

Missouri

	<i>Geri Rothman-Serot (D)</i>	<i>Christopher S. (Kit) Bond (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	48%	50%	54%
Men	39	58	46

Pennsylvania

	<i>Lynn Yeakel (D)</i>	<i>Arlen Specter (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	52%	45%	51%
Men	42	54	49

South Dakota

	<i>Thomas A. Daschle (D)✓</i>	<i>Charlene Harr (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	63%	35%	49%
Men	69	28	51

Washington

	<i>Patty Murray (D)✓</i>	<i>Rod Chandler (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	58%	41%	50%
Men	51	49	50

Governor

Montana

	<i>Dorothy Bradley (D)</i>	<i>Marc Racicot (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	51%	49%	55%
Men	47	53	45

New Hampshire

	<i>Deborah A. Arnesen (D)</i>	<i>Steve Merrill (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	45%	53%	51%
Men	35	60	49

Rhode Island

	<i>Bruce Sundlun (D)✓</i>	<i>Elizabeth Ann Leonard (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	63%	37%	53%
Men	65	35	47

1994

35 Senate races, 8 women, 6 exit polls
36 gubernatorial races, 11 women, 9 exit polls

In 1992, 3 women won a Senate race and no women won the race for governor.

Senate

California

	<i>Dianne Feinstein (D)✓</i>	<i>Michael Huffington (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	52%	38%	50%
Men	41	52	50

Maine

	<i>Thomas H. Andrews (D)</i>	<i>Olympia J. Snowe (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	37%	60%	52%
Men	36	60	48

Minnesota

	<i>Ann Wynia (D)</i>	<i>Rodney D. Grams (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	50%	45%	51%
Men	38	54	49

Nebraska

	<i>Robert Kerrey (D)✓</i>	<i>Jan Stoney (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	59%	41%	50%
Men	51	49	50

New York

	<i>Daniel Patrick</i>	<i>Bernadette</i>	
	<i>Moynihan (D)✓</i>	<i>Castro (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	56%	39%	50%
<i>Men</i>	54	44	50

Texas

	<i>Richard.</i>	<i>Kay Bailey</i>	
	<i>Fisher (D)</i>	<i>Hutchison (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	38%	61%	53%
<i>Men</i>	38	61	47

Governor

California

	<i>Kathleen</i>	<i>Pete</i>	
	<i>Brown (D)</i>	<i>Wilson (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	46%	50%	50%
<i>Men</i>	36	60	50

Connecticut*

	<i>Bill.</i>	<i>John G.</i>	
	<i>Curry (D)</i>	<i>Rowland (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	34%	33%	53%
<i>Men</i>	31	39	47

*Eunice Groark and Tom Scott ran as independents.

Illinois

	<i>Dawn Clark</i>	<i>Jim</i>	
	<i>Netsch (D)</i>	<i>Edgar (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	37%	61%	52%
<i>Men</i>	32	66	48

Iowa

	<i>Bonnie</i>	<i>Terry</i>	
	<i>Campbell (D)</i>	<i>Branstad (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	43%	56%	54%
<i>Men</i>	40	59	46

Maine*

	<i>Joseph E.</i>	<i>Susan</i>	
	<i>Brennan (D)</i>	<i>Collins (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	36%	23%	52%
<i>Men</i>	31	23	48

*Angus King, the Independent candidate, received 34% of the vote from women, 38% from men.✓

Maryland

	<i>Parris N.</i>	<i>Ellen R.</i>	
	<i>Glendening (D)✓</i>	<i>Sauerbrey (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	57%	43%	52%
<i>Men</i>	43	56	48

Pennsylvania*

	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Tom</i>	
	<i>Singel (D)</i>	<i>Ridge (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	42%	43%	53%
<i>Men</i>	38	47	47

*Peg Luksik, the Independent candidate, received 13% of the vote from women, 13% from men.

Texas

	<i>Ann W.</i>	<i>George W.</i>	
	<i>Richards (D)</i>	<i>Bush (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	50%	49%	53%
<i>Men</i>	41	58	47

Wyoming

	<i>Kathy</i>	<i>Jim</i>	
	<i>Karpan (D)</i>	<i>Geringer (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	44%	55%	51%
<i>Men</i>	36	62	49

1996

34 Senate races, 9 women, 9 exit polls
11 gubernatorial races, 6 women, 6 exit polls

In 1996, 2 women won a Senate race and one woman won her race for governor.

Senate

Alaska

	<i>Theresa</i>	<i>Ted</i>	
	<i>Obermeyer (D)</i>	<i>Stevens (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	14%	70%	50%
<i>Men</i>	17	72	50

Kansas

	<i>Sally</i>	<i>Pat</i>	
	<i>Thompson (D)</i>	<i>Roberts (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	39%	59%	53%
<i>Men</i>	30	66	47

Kansas

	<i>Jill</i>	<i>Sam</i>	
	<i>Docking (D)</i>	<i>Brownback (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	47%	50%	53%
<i>Men</i>	40	58	47

Louisiana

	<i>Mary</i>	<i>Woody</i>	
	<i>Landrieu (D)✓</i>	<i>Jenkins (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
<i>Women</i>	54%	45%	56%
<i>Men</i>	45	55	44

Maine

	Joseph E. Brennan (D)	Susan Collins (R)✓	Voted
Women	48%	43%	51%
Men	39	56	49

Michigan

	Carl Levin (D)✓	Ronna Romney (R)	Voted
Women	63%	34%	51%
Men	52	46	49

Rhode Island

	Jack Reed (D)✓	Nancy Mayer (R)	Voted
Women	65%	35%	53%
Men	63	36	47

West Virginia

	John D. (Jay) Rockefeller IV (D)✓	Betty Burks (R)	Voted
Women	79%	20%	50%
Men	73	26	50

Wyoming

	Kathy Karpan (D)	Mike Enzi (R)✓	Voted
Women	42%	53%	51%
Men	42	55	49

Governor

Delaware

	Thomas R. Carper (D)✓	Janet Rzewnicki (R)	Voted
Women	70%	29%	50%
Men	67	31	50

Missouri

	Mel Carnahan (D)✓	Margaret Kelly (R)	Voted
Women	58%	39%	52%
Men	54	42	48

Montana

	Judy Jacobson (D)	Marc Racicot (R)✓	Voted
Women	22%	78%	51%
Men	19	80	49

New Hampshire

	Jeanne Shaheen (D)✓	Ovide Lamontagne (R)	Voted
Women	63%	34%	49%
Men	53	45	51

Washington

	Gary Locke (D)✓	Ellen Craswell (R)	Voted
Women	64%	35%	52%
Men	52	48	48

West Virginia

	Charlotte Pritt (D)	Cecil Underwood (R)✓	Voted
Women	48%	51%	49%
Men	44	53	51

1998

34 Senate races, 9 women, 8 exit polls
36 gubernatorial races, 10 women, 9 exit polls

In 1998, 4 women won a Senate race and two women won their race for governor. Washington's senate race had two women pitted against one another.

Senate

Arkansas

	Blanche Lambert Lincoln (D)✓	Fay Boozman (R)	Voted
Women	58%	39%	53%
Men	53	46	47

California

	Barbara Boxer (D)✓	Matt Fong (R)	Voted
Women	57%	39%	51%
Men	48	48	49

Colorado

	Dottie Lamm (D)	Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R)✓	Voted
Women	41%	58%	51%
Men	29	69	49

Illinois

	Carol Moseley-Braun (D)	Peter Fitzgerald (R)✓	Voted
Women	50%	47%	51%
Men	43	55	49

Maryland

	Barbara A. Mikulski (D)✓	Ross Pierpont (R)	Voted
Women	77%	23%	54%
Men	63	37	46

North Dakota

	<i>Byron L. Dorgan (D)✓</i>	<i>Donna Nalewaja (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	69%	30%	47%
Men	57	40	53

Ohio

	<i>Mary Boyle (D)</i>	<i>George V. Voinovich (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	47%	52%	51%
Men	39	60	49

Washington

	<i>Patty Murray (D)✓</i>	<i>Linda A. Smith (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	61%	38%	52%
Men	53	45	48

Governor**Arizona**

	<i>Paul Johnson (D)</i>	<i>Jane Dee Hull (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	37%	60%	50%
Men	35	61	50

Colorado

	<i>Gail Schoettler (D)</i>	<i>Bill Owens (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	55%	43%	51%
Men	41	55	49

Connecticut

	<i>Barbara B. Kennelly (D)</i>	<i>John G. Rowland (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	37%	61%	51%
Men	33	64	49

Maryland

	<i>Parris N. Glendening (D)✓</i>	<i>Ellen Sauerbrey (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	60%	40%	54%
Men	50	50	46

Nevada

	<i>Jan Jones (D)</i>	<i>Kenny Guinn (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	45%	48%	52%
Men	39	55	48

New Hampshire

	<i>Jeanne Shaheen (D)✓</i>	<i>Jay Lucas (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	71%	28%	51%
Men	60	35	49

Oklahoma

	<i>Laura Boyd (D)</i>	<i>Frank A. Keating (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	45%	54%	51%
Men	36	63	49

Rhode Island

	<i>Myrth York (D)</i>	<i>Lincoln C. Almond (R)✓</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	46%	50%	47%
Men	38	53	53

Vermont

	<i>Howard Dean (D)✓</i>	<i>Ruth Dwyer (R)</i>	<i>Voted</i>
Women	56%	40%	51%
Men	55	43	49

Note: Data provided by the Roper Center. In some contests in which women ran, no exit poll data were available.

Source: Surveys by Voter Research & Surveys, 1990-1992, and Voter News Service, 1994-1998.