Why Women Don’t Run for Office and What Happens When They Do

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Women’s Representation in the United States

- U.S. Senators: Women 20%, Men 80%
- U.S. Representatives: Women 19%, Men 81%
- Governors: Women 12%, Men 88%
- State Legislators: Women 25%, Men 75%
- Big City Mayors: Women 10%, Men 90%
# Worldwide Rankings of Women in the National Legislature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>64 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reasons for Women’s Under-Representation

- Situational factors
- Structural barriers
- Gender gap in political ambition
The Gender Gap in Political Ambition: Previous Interest in Running for Office
Reasons for Women’s Under-Representation

- Structural barriers
- Situational factors
- Gender gap in political ambition
- Bias and discrimination (sort of)
  - Female candidates must overcome obstacles from the media and voters that men don’t encounter
June 2008

“Of course there is sexism. We all know that. It’s a given.”
“One of the lessons of the Clinton campaign is the continued and accepted role of sexism in American life, particularly in the media.”
February 2014

“Many voters aren’t ready for a female president.”
“The political pundits, the media, the Harrisburg establishment couldn’t believe a woman could serve as governor – couldn’t even imagine it.”
“Oh, Katie. Would you ask a male candidate that question?”
March 2015

“I was fascinated by how people are so judgmental about how women look, and male politicians don’t get that . . . A change of hairstyle often gets more attention than legislation they’re trying to put forth.”
Election 2016

Hillary Clinton’s qualifications were no match for sexism

Hillary Clinton has failed, writes Anne Kingston—as do the dreams of suffragettes with her

Anne Kingston
November 9, 2016

President Obama Calls Out a Sexist Double Standard for Hillary Clinton: ‘We’re Just Not Used to’ Ambitious Women

By Tierney McAfee - @TierneyMcAfee
Donald Trump’s Victory Proves That America Hates Women

By Michelle Goldberg
The misogyny apocalypse: Turns out being white and male counts for more than intelligence, grace or decency

It was unimaginable that America would self-destruct rather than elect a female president. But that's what happened
After all . . .

“If Hillary Clinton can’t satisfy her husband, what makes her think she can satisfy America?”
After all . . .

“Look at that face! Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president?!”
After all . . .

“If Hillary Clinton were a man, I don’t think she would get 5% of the vote . . . The way she is, she would get virtually no votes . . . Without the woman’s card, Hillary would not even be a viable person who could even run for a city council position.”
Perceptions of Female Candidates’ Experiences

- Media Focus Too Much on Appearance: 60%
- Subjected to Sexist Media Coverage: 58%
- Must Be More Qualified Than Men to Win: 48%
- Face Bias from Voters: 47%
- Don't Win as Often as Men: 31%
- Raise Less Money Than Men: 30%
Where did Joni Erin get her camo shoes?
Donald Trump dons a new look days before the election

Hairdressers reveal the secret

Amy Lasch, a TV and film hairstylist for the show, shared that Trump visited her salon on Saturday for some final touches before the big day. Lasch said she spent about two hours working on Trump’s hair, adding some extra volume and layers to help him look his best for the final debate and on election night.

“We did some extra volume on top and some layers underneath to give him more lift and movement,” Lasch said. “We also made sure to add some extra shine to give his hair a polished look.”

Trump was seen wearing a dark suit and tie during the visit, and Lasch said she used a combination of products to create a sleek and sophisticated style.

“Trump likes his hair to be sleek and smooth, so we used a combination of a texturizer and a light hold hair spray to give him the perfect look,” Lasch said.

The visit was kept under wraps, and Lasch said she could not reveal any more details about what was discussed during the hair appointment.

Trump’s hair has been a topic of discussion throughout his campaign, with many people admiring his signature “Don” look. The hairstylist said she was honored to be a part of helping Trump prepare for the final stretch of his campaign.

“I was thrilled to be able to work with Trump and help him get ready for the final debate,” Lasch said. “It was a honor to be a part of his campaign.”

The visit to Lasch’s salon comes just days before the election, and many people are wondering what the final look will be for Trump. The hairstylist said she is excited to see how the final product will turn out.

“I can’t wait to see how Trump will look on election night,” Lasch said. “I’m sure he will be looking his best.”

Trump has been known to change his style up in the past, and many people are wondering if he will make any changes in the days leading up to the election. The hairstylist said she is keeping her fingers crossed that Trump will continue to look as sharp as he did during the visit to her salon.

“I hope Trump continues to look polished and sharp in the days leading up to the election,” Lasch said. “He’s looked great so far, and I’m sure he will continue to deliver.”

The visit to Lasch’s salon is just one of many behind-the-scenes glimpses into Trump’s campaign. The hairstylist said she is grateful to be a part of the campaign and to be able to help Trump look his best.

“I’m excited to be a part of Trump’s campaign and to be able to help him look his best,” Lasch said. “It’s been an honor to work with him, and I’m looking forward to seeing what the final product will be.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>GOP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>89 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John McCain</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>92 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mitt Romney</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Hillary Clinton</td>
<td>89 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donald Trump</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
"Hayes and Lawless tackle the conventional wisdom about bias against females in political campaigns and find that women actually do as well as men when they run. The problem is getting them to seek office because when they run, female candidates are very successful at raising money, conducting professional campaigns, getting media attention, and attracting votes. This is a smart and carefully researched analysis by two leading scholars of American elections.”

Darrell M. West, Brookings Institution

"Relying on new data and careful analysis, Hayes and Lawless demonstrate the gap between perception and reality and make compelling arguments about the sources of that gap. Anyone who wants to understand the impact of candidate sex and gender in U.S. elections needs to read this book.”

Kathleen Doherty, Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

“A lot of what we think we know about gender and electoral politics in the U.S. is based on intuition. In Women on the Run, Hayes and Lawless provide a welcome corrective. Relying on a variety of novel empirical data sets, the authors craft a thoughtful, engaging, and compelling story of how sex and gender shape female candidates’ lives and their electoral prospects in recent American elections. Political scientists and political scholars who want to understand how female candidates have created the level playing field we usually dismissed as out of reach. In telling this story, Hayes and Lawless show us how political scientists everywhere aspire to, but rarely achieve. They tell us something we didn’t know about relevant political questions.”

Daron Shaw, Distinguished Teaching Professor and Frank C. Erwin Jr. Chair in State Politics, University of Texas at Austin

“As the President of a national organization dedicated to recruiting and training Democratic women to run for office, I have spoken with countless women who are hesitant to run because they fear harsh media scrutiny. Finally, we have an important and thoroughly researched book that demonstrates that the ‘novelty’ of female politicians, as well as party polarization, have significantly leveled the playing field. When we encourage women to run for office, we can give them confidence that the media will not treat them any better or worse than their male counterparts. Eliminating this psychological obstacle can have a tremendous impact on women who are considering a potential bid for political office.”

Andrea Deyo Steele, President and Founder of EMILY’s List
Overview of the Data

▪ **Candidate Communications**
  ▪ 500,000 campaign ad airings from 2010
  ▪ 56,000 candidate tweets from 2014

▪ **Media Coverage**
  ▪ 10,709 local newspaper articles from all 435 U.S. House districts in 2010 and 2014

▪ **Voter Attitudes**
  ▪ 3,000 respondents in 2010 and 2014 Congressional Cooperative Election Study

▪ **Elite Interviews**
  ▪ 75 journalists, campaign managers, and party officials
What did we find?

- **Candidate Communications**
  - No gender differences in words used or issues addressed – either in campaign ads or tweets

- **Media Coverage**
  - No gender differences in volume or substance of media coverage
What do appearance mentions look like?
What did we find?

- **Candidate Communications**
  - No gender differences in words used or issues addressed – either in campaign ads or tweets

- **Media Coverage**
  - No gender differences in volume or substance of media coverage

- **Voter Attitudes**
  - No gender differences in perceptions of male and female candidates strengths or issue competencies
Why the disconnect?

- Media Focus Too Much on Appearance: 60%
- Subjected to Sexist Media Coverage: 58%
- Must Be More Qualified Than Men to Win: 48%
- Face Bias from Voters: 47%
- Don't Win as Often as Men: 31%
- Raise Less Money Than Men: 30%
Viewing Politics through a National Lens

![Graph showing views of Clinton-Palin bias scale and gender bias in elections scale.](image-url)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How qualified are you to run for public office?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Qualified</td>
<td>21 %</td>
<td>33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Qualified</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not at all Qualified</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How qualified are you to hold public office?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Qualified</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>40 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Qualified</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not at all Qualified</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Skills and Characteristics</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know a lot about public policy issues.</td>
<td>46 %</td>
<td>59 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have relevant professional experience.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a good public speaker.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have connections to the political system.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have or could raise enough money.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a good self-promoter.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have thick enough skin.</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Recruitment from Political Gatekeepers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party Affiliation</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>48 %</td>
<td>54 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Background</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Leader</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Activist</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N 916 1,102
And the future is bleak, too . . .

Have you ever considered running for office?

- 2001 Potential Candidates (mean age: 48 years)
- 2011 Potential Candidates (mean age: 51.5 years)
- 2012 College Students (mean age: 21 years)
But what about Donald Trump?
Donald Trump Gets Elected
Democrats React: They March
Democrats React: They Donate

Nonprofits Opposed to Trump’s Ideology See a Surge in Donations

The Trevor Project, the American Civil Liberties Union, Planned Parenthood and others have reported a spike in donations since the presidential election.

NYTIMES.COM
Democrats React: They Run for Office
May 2017 Survey of Potential Candidates

• The overall gender gap in political ambition is the same size now as it was in 2001, 2008, and 2011.

• Women are 15 percentage points less likely than men ever to have considered running for office.

• Men are twice as likely to report that they’ve “seriously” considered a candidacy.
Why Women Don’t Run for Office and What Happens When They Do

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