

# Democrat Candidates Republican Candidates Equal Pay (detailed)

## Democrats seize on equal pay as a midterm issue

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/03/28/politics/democrats-midterms-equal-pay/index.html> December 09, 2014

Texas race points to key issue for Democratic candidates ; Equal pay issue used ... GOP backs equal pay for equal ... women deserve equal pay for equal ...

Washington (CNN) -- On March 9, Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, the state's Republican candidate for governor, appeared on a Dallas television station and was asked a straightforward question.

Would he veto, as Gov. Rick Perry did last year, the Texas version of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, a bill that would allowed women to file equal pay claims in state courts?

Abbott wouldn't say. Instead, he smiled and held forth for a few moments about the importance of women being paid the same wages as men.

The campaign of his Democratic opponent, state Sen. Wendy Davis, quickly roared to life. Davis, who shepherded the equal pay bill through the Texas legislature, accused Abbott of dodging the question and demanded a hard answer. Abbott equivocated for 10 days, then said he would veto the bill, handing Davis fresh ammo.

"We need a governor who will fight for economic opportunity for all Texans," Davis said at a rally in Austin this week, where supporters waved campaign-sponsored signs reading #EqualPay. "We need a governor who will fight for that regardless of someone's gender or their race."

The equal pay fight has consumed the Texas race for a better part of a month now, injecting the Davis campaign with fresh energy and a much-needed dose of optimism. For the first time in the race, Davis is playing offense on a policy issue.

The flurry of activity in Texas has called attention to a key issue for Democratic candidates this midterm cycle as they try to change the subject from an unpopular President and thorny issues like the Affordable Care Act: wage fairness for women in the workplace.

"It's extremely potent," said Democratic pollster Celinda Lake. "It's the No. 1 issue that gets single women out to vote, but it also unites men and women."

"We were recently conducting focus groups in Michigan with beefy, 50-year old, white auto workers, and one guy said, 'If the little lady doesn't get paid equally, I have to get overtime, and I can't get that anymore,'" Lake said. "While that might not be the most feminist articulation of the policy, men are wildly in favor of equal pay."

One equal pay statistic has become a well-worn talking point for Democrats: Women earn 77 cents for every dollar a man earns.

President Barack Obama slipped the data point into his 2014 State of the Union speech when he demanded that Congress pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would strengthen the 1963 Equal Pay Act signed by President John F. Kennedy. Obama called the income disparity between genders an "embarrassment" and proclaimed that "women

deserve equal pay for equal work." It was one of his biggest applause lines of the evening.

### Hardly new fodder for Democrats

The gender pay gap is not attributable to discrimination alone. Studies show that women often take lower-paying jobs than men, and they work fewer hours. Still, while pay disparities vary depending on the occupation -- female teachers make 91 cents on the male dollar, for instance -- men generally take home bigger paychecks than women.

The gender pay issue is hardly new fodder for Democrats, who have relied on women voters -- especially unmarried women -- to pull them over the finish line in recent elections. In the Virginia governor's race last fall, Democrat Terry McAuliffe unleashed a sustained assault on his Republican opponent's views on women's health issues. McAuliffe narrowly won the race -- but he won the single women demographic by a staggering 42-point margin.

The issue flared during the 2008 presidential campaign, when Obama hammered John McCain and Senate Republicans for blocking the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. After Obama's victory, the legislation became the first bill he signed as president.

The fair pay debate surfaced again in 2012, when Obama's re-election campaign hammered Mitt Romney for dodging a question about whether he would have signed the Ledbetter Act. Like many Republicans, Romney said he supported the concept of equal pay but questioned whether federal legislation would solve the problem.

But this year's midterm election is a different beast. With Democratic turnout expected to tumble in a non-presidential year, party strategists are seizing on equal pay as a way to galvanize the base, raise money and once again paint Republicans as tone deaf on women's issues.

"It's just an incredibly important issue for women," said Stephanie Schriock, the president of EMILY's List, a group that backs Democratic women candidates. "We see it in our polling, but also in everyday life, that it's an economic hurt for families. And right now we have a Republican party that is so disinterested in winning over women voters that they are floundering on no-brainer issues like supporting equal pay."

Schriock pointed to a February survey by American Women, an EMILY's List partner, that showed wide majority support among both men and women for "ending gender discrimination" in the workplace and passing the Paycheck Fairness Act.

### Others trying to make equal pay an issue

Davis is the most famous Democrat to make equal pay a centerpiece of her campaign, but smaller-scale efforts are underway in campaigns up and down the ballot, in local and federal races.

Democratic Senate candidates in Republican-leaning states, such as Alison Lundergan Grimes in Kentucky, Natalie Tennant in West Virginia, and Michelle Nunn in Georgia, have raised the issue in campaign fundraising e-mails and list-building petitions. A volley of them were fired off in January, on the five-year anniversary of the Ledbetter Act signing.

"Mitch McConnell had a chance to be a part of history five years ago, too," Lundergan Grimes wrote in one fundraising e-mail chiding her Republican opponent. "Instead, he did what he's done for nearly 30 years when called upon to lead: he refused to answer -- failing to stand for Kentucky's women and families by voting against the legislation."

By keeping the issue in the news, Democrats hope to benefit in the long term by showcasing GOP presidential hopefuls who oppose equal pay protections. One of them, Rick Perry, vetoed the equal pay legislation that Davis has been touting in the governor's race. This week, Perry called the war of words over equal pay "nonsense" -- a remark that Democrats will almost certainly use against him if he becomes the GOP presidential nominee in 2016.

Several likely 2016 Republican candidates have come out against equal pay protections, mostly on the grounds that they would encourage lawsuits and cripple the ability of private businesses to set their own pay scales based on merit. Yet while Republicans in Washington have counseled candidates on how to speak more carefully about women's health issues like abortion and contraception, there seems to be no messaging playbook when it comes to equal pay.

In the heat of the last presidential race, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio waved off the Ledbetter Act as "an effort to help trial lawyers collect their fees and file lawsuits." Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul said the Paycheck Fairness Act would interfere with the free market, comparing it to the way the Soviet Politburo set the price of bread.

On the local level, Republican governors like Perry have derided state equal pay laws as redundant given the federal protections already on the books. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker repealed a pay discrimination law in 2012 for much the same reason.

Katie Packer Gage, a former Romney campaign adviser who co-founded Burning Glass Consulting, a firm that advises Republicans on how to appeal to women voters, said Democrats are using equal pay "to distract women from real issues."

But Gage urged Republican candidates to be more sensitive when rebutting the issue.

"Look, women view this as a problem," she said. "When you talk to women, and you see this in focus groups, they feel it's a problem. They have anecdotal experience, they feel it, but they don't have very specific data. Our party's response has been to push back on it and say it's not a problem."

"I have advised clients when you are asked your position on this, your response needs to be, 'Duh, of course men and women should be paid the same for equal work!,'" Gage added. "This was settled law back in 1963, and Republicans voted for it. Our party is not quick enough to push back on the fact that we already have a law in this country that requires equal pay for equal work."

## **Democratic women candidates make equal pay a top issue in midterm elections**

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/she-the-people/wp/2014/03/20/democratic-women-candidates-make-equal-pay-a-top-issue-in-midterm-elections/> December 09, 2014

Democratic women candidates make equal pay a top issue in midterm elections. Sign In ... two prominent Republican women in Texas strayed from those talking points; ...

In a week when the Republican Party marked the one-year anniversary of its reset strategy with women, Democratic candidates, particularly women, are hammering their male opponents over equal pay and other women's issues, hoping to drive up turnout and support among "breadwinner moms," a key voting bloc in high profile races across the country. In Texas, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Wendy Davis held a press conference Wednesday blasting her opponent, Attorney General Greg Abbott (R), for his opposition to the Texas Equal Pay Act. Davis sponsored the bill, which Abbott said he

would veto, just as Gov. Rick Perry (R) did in June. Sen. Kay Hagan, running in a closely watched race in North Carolina where her opponent has yet to emerge from the GOP primary, tweeted this:

This comes as President Obama has stepped up his focus on women and is set to travel Thursday to Orlando, where he will meet with women at Valencia College and detail a women's and working families economic agenda in advance of a series of regional events and a June summit at the White House.

Also on Thursday, Heather Mizeur, the only woman in the Democratic gubernatorial primary in Maryland, is set to get a jump on her male competitors by being the first to release a woman's platform, an agenda that calls for a state version of the Paycheck Fairness Act, a living wage and paid family leave.

Sixty percent of the primary voters in Maryland are women. Aides to Lt. Anthony Brown, who leads the race by 20 points and has not released a women's agenda, stressed that Maryland has one of the smallest gender pay gaps in the country, and that there would likely be little difference on the issues between the Democrats competing in the race. Yet Mizeur said the difference is on the emphasis her campaign is placing on these issues.

"We are all carving out and showing what our priorities would be as governor and I have made these issues that are central to women's economic equality key to creating a Maryland that lives up to her full potential," said Mizeur, who is a distant third in the race according to the latest poll. "The question is not whether you support something in theory. The question is whether you make it a priority. I would make it a priority as governor. This is about economic inequality, and it must be addressed with urgency. When women run for higher office, these issues get addressed."

The focus on gender economics is yet another offensive in the so-called "war on women," a political narrative that in 2012 focused primarily on abortion and contraception, playing up off-color comments by conservative candidates and their allies. An issue like equal pay, unlike abortion, doesn't come with baggage, which is helpful in more conservative states where Democrats are vulnerable and in some cases facing long odds.

"If Davis is going to run a competitive race, she needs to convince Anglo women, two-thirds of whom have in recent years voted Republican, to cross over. Hammering Abbott on his equivocal stance [against] a Lone Star Lilly Ledbetter law is not a bad strategy," said Mark Jones, who heads the political science department at Rice University. "Especially compared to attacking Abbott for his position on women's reproductive rights, which could likely do the Davis campaign as much harm as good."

For their part, Republicans have argued that existing state and federal laws are adequate to ensure equal pay for women. This week, two prominent Republican women in Texas strayed from those talking points; one suggested that women are too busy to focus on equal pay and another said women need to become better at negotiating for higher salaries. Aides to Abbott distanced themselves from those comments, saying that as governor, Abbott would make sure state and federal equal pay laws are enforced. "He believes it's inappropriate to ever blame the victim of discrimination and that's why he remains focused on ensuring greater prosperity and opportunity for all women and Texans," said Matt Hirsch, a campaign spokesman.

More broadly, Republicans have struggled to craft a unified counter argument for the Democrat's "war on women," which has been used by groups like Emily's List to swell their donor rolls and mailing lists. Celinda Lake, a Democratic pollster said the focus on equal pay could help mobilize voters because it resonates particularly well with swing voters and

unmarried women voters, a key part of the Obama coalition — the president won single women in 2012 by 38 points over Republican nominee Mitt Romney — but a group that backed Republicans in greater numbers in 2010.

“We haven’t seen it this focused in a long time,” Lake said, of the heavy emphasis on women’s economic issues. “This can help mobilize turnout.”

With the refocus from abortion to paychecks, the debate highlights a cultural shift powered by the women’s movement that finds more women in the workforce and more women heading households. In 1960, women were the sole or primary breadwinner in 11 percent of households; now that figure stands at 40 percent, according a recent report. Yet Republicans, have argued that more laws like the Paycheck Fairness Act, or the Lilly Ledbetter Act, means more litigation, not equality. “The Lilly Ledbetter Act will inspire more lawsuits than fair pay from the onset of a woman’s career,” said Lisa Camooso Miller, a Republican strategist. “Republicans believe in equal pay for equal work; we don’t believe that legislation will resolve the issue of pay equality. Any Democratic effort to turn this into a campaign issue would be strictly political theater.”

In Kentucky, Democratic Senate candidate Alison Lundergan Grimes sent supporters a letter in November from Ledbetter, asking for \$5 donations and highlighting Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell’s opposition to the 2009 bill. This month, in a similar e-mail, the Grimes campaign highlighted McConnell’s opposition to the Violence Against Women Act. And Michelle Nunn, a Democrat who is running for Senate in Georgia, has called on Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, highlighting statistics that show women earn 81 cents for every dollar men earn in Georgia.

Here’s a look at how other states compare to Georgia, which ranks 12th. The darker colored states are closer to gender parity: In countering Democratic attacks, Republicans have said that for everyone, men and women, the economy is bad, and it’s because of failed Democratic policies that have led to stagnant wages. “Democrats like Mary Landrieu, Kay Hagan and Mark Udall have created an environment where opportunity is minimal, job availability is scarce, and workers’ hours are reduced, which is bad for women and all workers,” said Brook Hougesson, spokeswoman for the National Republican Senatorial Committee. “Republicans are focused on growing opportunity for women and all workers.”

## **Republican Lt. Gov. candidates take positions on equal pay**

<http://www.wfaa.com/story/news/politics/2014/08/21/14185576/> December 09, 2014

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DALLAS The two Republican candidates for lieutenant governor both addressed equal pay in separate visits to North Texas Thursday afternoon.

Lt. Governor David Dewhurst had lunch with the Republican Women of Arlington and bragged about the state's economic track record since he took office in 2003. Dewhurst also asked voters who supported Todd Staples and Jerry Patterson to join his team.

In an interview with News 8 after the event, Dewhurst was asked whether he would like to see an equal pay bill which passed last year come up in the Senate next legislative session.

'I think we've already addressed it,' he said of his chamber.

When pressed on what he would do if another bill is re-introduced next year, Dewhurst said, 'If it has the votes to go ahead and get out of committee, then we'll bring it to the

floor.'

State Sen. Dan Patrick spent the afternoon raising money with former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee in the Park Cities.

Patrick was also asked why he opposes a state law for equal pay.

'I believe women should be paid the same as a man,' Patrick said, 'but I don't believe government should enforce it. There are a lot of variables that could go into any company making a decision to pay a man or a woman a certain salary. I just don't believe government should interfere with the free market.'

Both Republican candidates will appear together for the first time on Friday in a candidates' forum in Kerrville, outside San Antonio.

They face each other in a Republican runoff on May 27.

Equal pay has become an issue in the gubernatorial race over the last couple weeks. Democratic nominee Wendy Davis supports a state law modeled after the federal Lilly Ledbetter Act, but legislation without a statute of limitations. She was the Senate sponsor of the bill that Governor Perry vetoed last year.

Republican nominee Greg Abbott told WFAA-TV's Inside Texas Politics that he supports equal pay for women, but added that existing law is sufficient.

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## **Senate GOP blocks Democrats' equal pay bill**

<http://news.yahoo.com/senate-gop-blocks-democrats-equal-pay-bill-185521302.html> December 09, 2014

... Senate Republicans on Tuesday blocked a Democratic bill calling for equal pay ... the presumptive Republican ... She filed a charge with the Equal ...

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans on Tuesday blocked a Democratic bill calling for equal pay in the workplace. But President Barack Obama and his congressional allies aren't finished appealing to women on the No. 1 concern for all voters: the cash in their wallets on the heels of recession.

As expected, the pay equity bill failed along party lines, 52-47, short of the required 60-vote threshold. But for majority Democrats, passage wasn't the only point. The debate itself was aimed at putting Republicans on the defensive on yet another women's issue, this one overtly economic after a government report showing slower-than-expected job growth.

"It is incredibly disappointing that in this make-or-break moment for the middle class, Senate Republicans put partisan politics ahead of American women and their families," Obama said in a statement after the vote.

"Even Mitt Romney has refused to publicly oppose this legislation," added Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. "He should show some leadership."

Unlike past taunts over access to contraception and abortion, Republicans this time didn't take the bait.

In Fort Worth, Texas, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee focused instead on unemployment among Hispanics.

"Of course Gov. Romney supports pay equity for women," said Romney spokeswoman Amanda Henneberg. "In order to have pay equity, women need to have jobs, and they have been getting crushed in this anemic Obama economy."

The device for the choreographed showdown in Washington was a Senate debate over the "Paycheck Fairness Act," a measure that aims to strengthen the Fair Labor Standards Act's protections against pay inequities based on gender.

The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., would require employers to prove that differences in pay are based on qualifications, education and other "bona fides" not related to gender. It also would prohibit employers from retaliating against employees who ask about, discuss or disclose wages in response to a complaint or investigation. And it would make employers who violate sex discrimination laws liable for compensatory or punitive damages. Under the bill, the federal government would be exempt from punitive damages.

Proponents of the bill say it is the next step after the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which Obama signed into law in 2009. The law effectively overturned a Supreme Court decision that had strictly limited workers' ability to file lawsuits over pay inequity. Ledbetter said she didn't become aware of her own pay discrepancy until she neared the end of her 1979-1988 career at a Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. plant in Gadsden, Ala.

Near the end of her career, she received an anonymous tip that she was earning less than her male colleagues. She filed a charge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. A jury initially awarded her more than \$3 million in back pay and punitive damages, a sum that a judge later reduced to \$300,000.

Ledbetter herself attended the vote and scolded Republicans for their filibuster.

"Do not let these Republicans keep us from getting paycheck fairness," she told reporters, Reid at her side and a letter from her to Romney posted online by the Obama campaign.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell spoke instead on the looming fight over student loan interest rates. Asked if he was concerned about alienating women with the GOP filibuster, the Kentucky Republican said the bill opened the door to more lawsuits against employers.

"We don't think America suffers from a lack of litigation," McConnell said. "We have a jobless problem. We have a debt problem. We have a deficit problem. We got a lot of problems. Not enough lawsuits is not one of them."

Democrats intend to test that discipline in the coming months by raising hubbubs nationally and in House and Senate races over several issues that disproportionately affect women, or just matter greatly to this group of voters that leans heavily toward their party. Independent women voters in exurbs and suburbs of states like Colorado, Virginia and North Carolina are particular targets, said these officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss strategy.

First up in this category is the looming Senate debate over preventing student loan interest rates from rising next month. Look, too, for hubbubs over raising the minimum wage, extending the Bush-era tax cuts, preserving Medicare and Social Security and access to women's health care, including contraception, the officials said.

The paycheck bill was aimed in part at putting Senate Republicans in tough races in the hot seat over a key women's issue. One, Massachusetts Sen. Scott Brown, issued a statement

emphasizing his support for pay equity but calling the legislation "the right cause but the wrong bill."

"On the heels of last week's dismal jobs report, the last thing we should be doing is putting more job-killing burdens on small businesses and employers," he said.

Tweeted challenger Elizabeth Warren: "Scott Brown voted NO on Paycheck Fairness, telling MA women he thinks it's ok that they continue to earn less than men."

## **Republican candidate opposes easier equal pay lawsuits**

[http://article.wn.com/view/2014/03/04/Republican candidate opposes easier equal pay lawsuits/](http://article.wn.com/view/2014/03/04/Republican_candidate_opposes_easier_equal_pay_lawsuits/)  
December 09, 2014

... would not sign a measure to make it easier for women to bring pay discrimination ...  
Republican candidate opposes easier equal pay ...

AUSTIN — Greg Abbott rode into the governor's office Tuesday on a red tide of Republican dominance that swept an entire slate of new GOP leaders into every state post. In a bruising defeat of Wendy Davis, Abbott led early and big and drowned Democrats' hopes of resurgence after almost two decades in the political wilderness. In his victory speech, Abbott dismissed the acrimonious partisanship of the campaign and extended his hand to Democrats, saying the needs of Texas "are bigger than any political party." "Tonight, Texans sent a message," Abbott said. "You voted for hope over fear — for unity over division. For the majesty of what Texas is and what it can be." Davis, while wishing Abbott well, told supporters in her concession speech to keep pressing and not grow discouraged. "Your work is not in vain. The only way we will have lost tonight is if we stop fighting," she said. By record and rhetoric, the 56-year-old attorney general promises to be a conservative governor, even more so than Rick Perry. Abbott pledged throughout the campaign to keep taxes low and government small. In ads and stump speeches, he vowed to strengthen border security, invest in roads and work to improve public education. But his biggest applause line was always an attack on the unpopular policies of President Barack Obama: He had sued Obama 30 times as attorney general, he would say, and as governor he would carry on the battle against "federal overreach" on issues such as the environment and health care. Abbott will attempt to guide a state Legislature in January that has lurched rightward. The new lieutenant governor is tea party leader Dan Patrick. He will lead a Senate newly dominated by bedrock conservatives. Rice University political science professor Mark Jones said Tuesday's election showed Texas voters are satisfied with the economy and embrace the GOP mantra of limited government. "In many ways, this is a status quo election and can be seen as a referendum on the policies the Republicans have implemented in the past two decades," Jones said. He pointed out that Abbott's style is unknown because the governor-elect lacks experience with the Legislature and in the give-and-take of shaping policy. With Republicans talking about cutting spending and slashing taxes, Jones said, Abbott must be mindful that grand experiments in fiscal retreat don't disrupt the engines of economic growth. "The fundamental priority is keeping the ship on course and not doing anything to harm the Texas model of limited government, low regulation and pro-business policies," Jones said. Getting started In the two months before he takes office, Abbott must pull together a transition team, plan his inauguration, set his legislative priorities and move into an office that has been in the hands of Perry for the past 14 years. Abbott will inherit Perry's appointees, who will continue to serve on state boards and commissions until their terms expire, some not for years. He told supporters Tuesday to celebrate, but added that on Wednesday, the work begins. "Now more than ever we must show that Texas-style conservative leadership provides real solutions to problems Texans face. Better schools, more opportunity for all, and safer communities," he said. Even with the party-building efforts of Battleground Texas, Davis, a 51-year-old Fort Worth



state senator, failed to push Democratic numbers into competitive territory. Exit polls show that Davis' outreach to women and Hispanics fell short. While 47 percent of female voters supported her — better than Democrat Bill White did four years ago against Perry — she fared worse among the traditional Democratic constituency of Latinos.

## **The GOP on Equal Pay: “Unacceptable”**

<http://www.floridadems.org/news/the-gop-on-equal-pay-unacceptable> December 09, 2014

The GOP on Equal Pay: ... Rick Scott Deploys 5 Men to Condemn Equal Pay. ... Not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.

Sometimes you just can't make these things up. Rick Scott's campaign today condemned Charlie Crist's proposal for equal pay for women, featuring five men — and not one woman — in a press release. FDP Chair Allison Tant made the following statement:

“Today, Charlie Crist called for fairness in the governor's office. Unsurprisingly, Rick Scott's campaign and their allies issued a statement denouncing proposals supported by the overwhelming the majority of Floridians, from raising the minimum wage to ensuring equal pay for equal work and stopping workplace discrimination.

“I'll tell Rick Scott what's truly unacceptable: having five men condemn equal pay while they get paid more than women do. Scott's campaign sure has a knack for frequently managing to insult minorities. But then again, Rick Scott has never stood up for Florida's women, and he's never been on the side of Florida's middle class.”

Gaetz, Gardiner, Weatherford, Crisafulli and Thrasher Say Charlie Crist's Plan

Comes Straight From President Obama's Playbook

TALLAHASSEE – Today, Senate President Don Gaetz, Senate President-Designate Andy Gardiner, House Speaker Will Weatherford, House Speaker-Designate Steve Crisafulli and Rick Scott for Florida Chairman John Thrasher released a joint statement on Charlie Crist's plans to circumvent the legislature with five executive orders:

“Charlie Crist says he is a ‘man of the people’ but his actions don't match his rhetoric. Crist is lifting a dangerous page from President Obama's playbook, saying he will do an end-run around the people's elected representatives and single-handedly mandate policies through executive order. Such declarations should give Floridians great concern.

“Charlie Crist is not above the constitution and the law. Florida needs a Governor who will work with the Legislature and not force his personal agenda on Floridians with the stroke of a pen.”

POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT PAID FOR AND APPROVED

BY RICK SCOTT, REPUBLICAN, FOR GOVERNOR

## **Equal Pay Takes Center Stage as a Democratic Campaign Issue**

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/politics/equal-pay-takes-center-stage-as-a-democratic-campaign-issue-20140408> December 09, 2014

Equal Pay Takes Center Stage as a Democratic Campaign Issue Here's what female Democratic candidates are saying about equal pay. Spoiler: It's a united ...

Nothing riles the Republic like disputes over equal pay. And Democratic politicians, thinking

they have the edge in the argument, have been diving into those conversations—first in Texas, then in Washington, and now all across the country as midterm elections heat up.

Last week Democratic gubernatorial candidate Wendy Davis excoriated her Republican competitor Attorney General Greg Abbott for opposing legislation that would help workers file wage-discrimination claims. This week the Obama White House announced executive actions to help federal female contractors while top Democrats touted the Paycheck Fairness Act. And Tuesday, more than a dozen Democratic women added their names to the list of candidates stressing their allegiance to fighting for paycheck-fairness legislation. (The rub: Women make 77 to 82 percent of what men make, depending on the metric you use.)

"This is exactly the kind of thing that really hurts our kids and our future," said Amanda Rentería, a congressional candidate in California's 21st District, on a Tuesday conference call with reporters. "And it couldn't be more different between Congressman [David] Valadao and I when it comes to fighting for women and for making sure our families can really provide for their families and for our future."

Leticia Van de Putte, a candidate for lieutenant governor of Texas, echoed that sentiment. "Why would anyone want their sons to get paid more for the same job, for the same work?" she asked. "We love our children equally."

A quick survey of candidates supported by EMILY's List, the group that helps fund and groom female candidates who back abortion rights, shows such rhetoric is nearly universal. "Equal Pay Day has drawn a clear outline of the difference between the two parties," EMILY's List spokeswoman Marcy Stech told National Journal in a statement. "In state after state EMILY's List candidates are out on the trail talking to voters who know that it's well past time to end gender discrimination in pay while Republicans are fumbling the ball on a commonsense solution."

One such candidate is Ann Callis, a Democrat running for office in Illinois' 13th district. In a Tuesday interview with WCIA 3's Cynthia Bruno, she urged lawmakers to vote yes on the Paycheck Fairness Act and raise the minimum wage. Another is Hawaii's Colleen Hanabusa, who's running for U.S. Senate. In a Tuesday op-ed, Hanabusa argued pay equity and a higher minimum wage will help women, families, communities, and the nation.

Emily Cain, a Democrat running in Maine's 2nd District, similarly sounded her support. "Republicans in Congress have blocked equal-pay legislation and mocked the basic fairness and equality that working women and their families deserve," Cain said in a statement posted Tuesday. "We need to end this gender discrimination in pay and start rewarding equal work with equal pay immediately."

In the North Carolina Senate race, Democratic incumbent Kay Hagan made her feelings known and contrasted them with her likely opponent Thom Tillis's position. "Given Tillis's actions on the state equal-pay measure, North Carolinians can only assume that he opposes the Paycheck Fairness Act and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which is already law," she wrote Tuesday. "As more and more families rely on women's income as the primary or co-breadwinner, this isn't just an issue that affects women—it has an impact on middle-class families and children in every corner of our state where women earn just 82 cents to the dollar that men earn."

In California's 31st District, Eloise Gomez Reyes called it "a fight to improve economic security for millions of children in America living in households that depend on the mothers' earnings to make ends meet." In Florida's 2nd, Gwen Graham called Republican recalcitrance on the issue "exactly the kind of thing North Floridians can't stand about

Washington's out-of-touch priorities." And in Iowa's 3rd, Staci Appel vowed to "fight to end gender discrimination in pay in Congress and build an economy that works for all of Iowa's families."

Kentucky Senate candidate Alison Lundergan Grimes went on offense, noting her opponent, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, had twice voted to prevent women from seeking recourse for the pay discrimination.

These women are just a handful of the Democratic candidates hoping to mobilize female voters, an important voting block in 2014 and beyond. While many have noted the vested interest Democrats have in wooing female voters (in 2012, President Obama won women voters by 11 points), others have gone even further, suggesting the effort is nothing more than a "desperate" election ploy.

Lily Adams, deputy communications director for the Democratic National Committee, dismissed the notion. "It's not about scoring political points," she told reporters on Tuesday's call. "It's about basic fairness."

Update: An earlier version of this story contained a comment from Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell that Talking Points Memo had construed as criticism of the Democrats' focus on pay equity issues. As TPM is now reporting, McConnell's office has since said that TPM misconstrued his comments and that he was actually talking about the Democrats' focus on the Koch brothers. As a result, McConnell's comment has been removed from this story.

## **Idaho Democratic Congressional Candidates Support Fair Pay**

<http://idahodems.org/news/idaho-democratic-congressional-candidates-support-fair-pay/> December 09, 2014

Meridian—Idaho's GOP congressmen do not support equal pay for equal work. Idaho's Democratic congressional candidates support women in the workplace and see ...

Meridian—Idaho's GOP congressmen do not support equal pay for equal work. Idaho's Democratic congressional candidates support women in the workplace and see economic fairness as a basic step to rebuilding middle class prosperity.

Both of Idaho's U.S. Senators, Jim Risch and Mike Crapo, voted to block the Paycheck Fairness Act yesterday. Another version awaits action in the GOP-controlled House, though both U.S. Reps. Mike Simpson and Raul Labrador have been hostile to equal pay issues. Simpson voted against the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 and Labrador is a reliable vote against bills that lack a tea party stamp of approval.

"Today, Idaho ranks 43rd in the nation for how much more a man is paid compared to what a woman doing the same job is paid for the same work," said 2nd Congressional Candidate Nicole LeFavour. "Unlike Congressman Simpson, I support the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and ALL efforts to advance equal pay and respect for women. Fair wages improve our economy and keep families independent and strong!"

"In many Idaho families, women provide the only paycheck—workplace discrimination should not mean their families are forced to get by on less than others," said 1st Congressional District Candidate Jimmy Farris. "As a congressman, I will stand up for all Idaho families."

The Paycheck Fairness Act would increase potential damages to plaintiffs in pay-discrimination suits and increase the legal burden on employers to show that pay disparities

aren't gender-based. It would create a grant program to train women on how to negotiate with employers on their pay.

## **GOP Blocks Equal Pay Bill in Senate**

[http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/04/09/gop\\_blocks\\_equal\\_pay\\_bill\\_in\\_senate\\_122224.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/04/09/gop_blocks_equal_pay_bill_in_senate_122224.html)  
December 09, 2014

... Equal Pay Bill in Senate GOP ... Republican congressional candidates are likely to hear that theme repeated and will draw flak from Democratic ...

Senate Republicans voted Wednesday to block the Paycheck Fairness Act, legislation designed by Democrats to mobilize women voters in the midterm elections.

The bill, which would require employers to be more transparent about wages and prohibit them from retaliating against workers who raise concerns about pay, failed to get the 60 votes needed to move forward with debate. The vote comes a day after a well-publicized, coordinated push on equal pay by the White House and congressional Democrats. But the latter aren't bothered by that failure -- they expected it, and the rejection allows them to keep hitting Republicans on the issue moving toward November.

"For some unknown reason, Senate Republicans do not appear to be interested in closing the wage gap for working women," Majority Leader Harry Reid said before the vote, which fell mostly on party lines. (Angus King, an independent from Maine who caucuses with Democrats, voted against the bill.)

Republicans, though, seem unbothered by recording a vote against this bill, which they have dismissed as a political ploy to benefit Democrats in an election year. GOP senators argued that it's already illegal to discriminate against women in the workplace, and that the legislation regarding pay regulation would open the doors to frivolous lawsuits.

GOP Senate leader Mitch McConnell has criticized Democrats' push for the bill as a way to move voters' focus away from the health care law.

Democrats, on the other hand, believe they have reached a turning point on Obamacare after enrollment numbers hit 7.1 million at the end of last month (polling now shows Americans more supportive of fixing the law than gutting it). As such, the "potency" of the health care law is starting to wear off, Sen. Chuck Schumer said. And that, combined with Republican Rep. Paul Ryan's budget outline and the Democrats' "fair shot" issues of pay equity, minimum wage, and others intended to energize key parts of the electorate, will rally Democrats in the midterm, he said.

Women voters helped propel Democrats to victories in the 2008 and 2012 presidential races, and more recently in the Virginia governor's race.

Following the 53-44 vote, President Obama issued a statement lamenting that "Republicans in Congress continue to oppose serious efforts to create jobs, grow the economy, and level the playing field for working families."

Republican congressional candidates are likely to hear that theme repeated and will draw flak from Democratic opponents for Wednesday's defeat -- whether they actually cast a vote or not -- especially in tough races. All Democrats voted for the bill, even though it wasn't likely to pass, signaling that the most vulnerable ones see it as an advantage. The issue has also energized Texas gubernatorial candidate Wendy Davis, as Republican Gov. Rick Perry recently vetoed an equal pay bill passed by the state legislature.

The fact that no Republicans voted for the bill signals they believe they can withstand the coming attacks. But GOP lawmakers also know the issue is a politically delicate one.

“I think it’s really important that Republicans say strongly, we’re against discrimination, we acknowledge that on any number of fronts there is still a problem out there, and that’s why we need good strong laws, but we don’t want laws that would discourage work,” Sen. Rob Portman, a vice chair of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, told RCP.

Update: An earlier version of this story mischaracterized a comment by Mitch McConnell as critical of Democrats' efforts to pass the paycheck fairness bill. McConnell was speaking of Harry Reid's "bizarre obsession" with GOP donors Charles and David Koch when the minority leader added: “The percentage of Americans in the workforce is at an almost four-decade low, and Democrats chose to ignore serious job-creation ideas so they could blow a few kisses to their powerful pals on the left.”

## **GOP blocks equal pay for women, again**

<http://www.woodburydems.com/gop-blocks-equal-pay-for-women-again/> December 09, 2014

We work to elect Democratic candidates to offices in Woodbury County, State and National offices. We promote Democratic ideals and greater participation by every ...

This week the GOP again blocked a bill by Democrats in Congress to require employers to pay women and men in an equitable manner.

“Senate Republicans derailed a Democratic bill on Monday aimed at pressuring employers to pay women the same as men, a vote Democrats knew they would lose but scheduled in hopes of attracting support from female voters in November’s elections.

GOP senators blockaded the legislation in April and with the support of business groups like the Chamber of Commerce opposed it again Monday. They say that by making it easier for workers to successfully win legal damages in court, the bill would make it harder for employers to defend themselves against pay disparities that are justified — such as when a worker accepts lower pay in exchange for more flexible hours.”

“The Paycheck Fairness Act would ban employers from retaliating against employees who share salary information with each other, impose harsher penalties for pay discrimination and require employers to be able to show that wage gaps between men and women are based on factors other than gender.”

Maybe it is time to send people to Congress that would support all individuals in this country. Getting the vote this election is important to all Democrats. Everyone needs to step up and talk with their friends and family and encourage them to support candidates who support the middle and working class. Volunteer to help the local Democratic candidates become elected, and to help our Congressional candidates take our well being to Washington.

## **GOP women in midterm races say Obamacare trumps equal pay**

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/she-the-people/wp/2014/03/31/gop-women-in-midterm-races-say-obamacare-trumps-equal-pay/> December 09, 2014

Democratic women are running hard on equal pay as an issue that could drive women ... Republican and Democratic women ... candidates, especially Democratic women, ...

Democratic women are running hard on equal pay as an issue that could drive women to the polls in this fall’s elections for U. S. Senate and House. But Republican women think

they have an equally emotionally-charged issue that resonates with voters, particularly women: the Affordable Care Act.

In contests in Michigan, West Virginia and elsewhere, candidates are calling attention to consumer's complaints with the health care law, noting that women are particularly impacted because they often are in charge of making health care decisions for their families.

Yet, Republican women are not emphasizing their gender as they ask for voters support, even in races where they could make history.

Joni Ernst, who is running for the GOP nomination for Senate in Iowa, describes herself on her campaign bio page as "Mother. Soldier. Conservative for U.S. Senate."

Even though Iowa has never elected a female member of Congress, Ernst, currently a state senator who also serves in the Iowa National Guard, said she is not running on gender.

"It would be historical, but it's not part of my pitch," she said of potentially becoming Iowa's first female senator. "I don't believe we should vote for somebody based on gender, we vote for the right person and I'm the right person to go to Washington, D.C."

"Of course I'm always very diplomatic in the way that I attack any issue and I think that's appealing to women. Be straight-forward about [issues], but be compassionate, show them that this is something that really matters to Iowans, not just female but also males," she said.

Ernst has been endorsed by former Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney and RightNow Women PAC, a group that aims to boost the engagement level and electoral chances of young Republican women.

She is one of a half dozen GOP women in high profile races that could tip the balance of the Senate. Her run comes as Republicans are grappling with closing a gender gap that is particularly pronounced among single women, a demographic that proved crucial in the 2012 campaign and in the Virginia gubernatorial election in November 2013.

The Senate race in West Virginia, where Secretary of State Natalie Tennant and Rep. Shelley Moore Capito will likely face each other — a rare general election match-up between two women candidates — highlights the different ways that Republican and Democratic women are campaigning.

Tennant, the Democrat, has slammed Republican Capito for her votes against legislation like the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. In February, the Tennant campaign launched "Women for Natalie," framing her as a champion for women and families and highlighting her support for Social Security, equal pay legislation and a minimum wage hike.

Democrats see equal pay as one of the clearest ways to distinguish themselves from Republicans, who generally do not support laws that would guarantee women earn the same as men in comparable jobs.

"There are few issues that show the contrast between Democrats and Republicans as clearly as equal pay," said Stephanie Schriock, president of Emily's List. "Democratic candidates, especially Democratic women, are running for office to give women and families a fair shot. Republicans are not only opposed to improving the gap, they are actively repealing equal pay legislation. Their stance on equal pay exposes just how out-of-touch Republicans really are."

Chuck Flannery, Capito's political director, said the West Virginia congresswoman has been long supportive of women's issues, and her campaign in the Senate carries on the same tradition. Capito has pointed to Obamacare as particularly harmful to women in West Virginia as well as environmental restrictions on coal.

"To put it simply, women's issues are West Virginia's issues. It's about energy, healthcare, jobs, education and a better economy," Flannery said. "Our goal should be to providing opportunity, a better future for women, their families and their children."

The troubled roll out of the Affordable Care Act is an issue that GOP candidates believe they can use to return fire on the criticism that the party is hostile to women.

In Michigan, Republican Terri Lynn Land, running in a close race for another open Senate seat, marked the anniversary of the Affordable Care Act and stressed her opposition by highlighting the voices and stories of women who said they were negatively impacted by the law. That strategy also is being used by Americans For Prosperity, a conservative nonprofit backed by the Koch brothers, that has also used women as the face of their ads attacking the health care law.

Jennifer Stefano, regional director for Americans for Prosperity, said they have run ads designed to appeal to women because "women carry the burden of failed economic policies."

"It's not just dropping an ad, we are backing up with a real grassroots effort," she said. "We are doing the ads to do some level of education for women on what is happening, particularly with Obamacare and how it's negatively impacting their lives, but then we follow it up with how they can do something about it."

Republican Mia Love, who could face Democrat Doug Owens for an open House seat in Utah and has two challengers for the GOP nomination, said that in conversations she has had with women, the Affordable Care Act invariably comes up, with women telling stories of being kicked off insurance plans. But Love said she is approaching her race "wholistically," and not just focusing on "women's issues." She is however quietly making a specific push tailored to women.

"I go out and tell them they should have a seat at the table and that there are too few women involved... We have to have equal involvement. I tell women that if they don't get involved and stand up and get involved in the process, they run the risk of somebody inferior making the decisions for them and someone who might not be able to relate," she said. "As we get more women involved, we will find the solutions to the problems that affect all of us."

Republican pollster Kellyanne Conway said reminding both genders of the problems with the Affordable Care Act would trump Democratic attacks on the equal pay issue.

"Republicans recognize that this is also the Democratic party's latest attempt to cry 'squirrel!' so women in this country, who control two out of every three health care dollars that are spent and are disproportionately health care consumers and providers... divert their attention from the unspooling of Obamacare," Conway said.

## **Democratic women candidates make equal pay a top issue in midterm elections, European Union News**

<http://www.easybranches.eu/democratic-women-candidates-make-equal-pay-a-top-issue-in-midterm-elections-1602790/> December 09, 2014

... a candidate in Maryland's Democratic ... a week when the Republican Party marked the one ... News Democratic women candidates make equal pay a top ...

In a week when the Republican Party marked the one-year anniversary of its reset strategy with women, Democratic candidates, particularly women, are hammering their male opponents over equal pay and other women's issues, hoping to drive up turnout and support among "breadwinner moms," a key voting bloc in high profile races across the country. In Texas, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Wendy Davis held a press conference Wednesday blasting her opponent, Attorney General Greg Abbott (R), for his opposition to the Texas Equal Pay Act. Davis sponsored the bill, which Abbott said he would veto, just as Gov. Rick Perry (R) did in June. Sen. Kay Hagan, running in a closely watched race in North Carolina where her opponent has yet to emerge from the GOP primary, tweeted this:

This comes as President Obama has stepped up his focus on women and is set to travel Thursday to Orlando, where he will meet with women at Valencia College and detail a women's and working families economic agenda in advance of a series of regional events and a June summit at the White House.

Also on Thursday, Heather Mizeur, the only woman in the Democratic gubernatorial primary in Maryland, is set to get a jump on her male competitors by being the first to release a woman's platform, an agenda that calls for a state version of the Paycheck Fairness Act, a living wage and paid family leave.

Sixty percent of the primary voters in Maryland are women. Aides to Lt. Anthony Brown, who leads the race by 20 points and has not released a women's agenda, stressed that Maryland has one of the smallest gender pay gaps in the country, and that there would likely be little difference on the issues between the Democrats competing in the race. Yet Mizeur said the difference is on the emphasis her campaign is placing on these issues.

"We are all carving out and showing what our priorities would be as governor and I have made these issues that are central to women's economic equality key to creating a Maryland that lives up to her full potential," said Mizeur, who is a distant third in the race according to the latest poll. "The question is not whether you support something in theory. The question is whether you make it a priority. I would make it a priority as governor. This is about economic inequality, and it must be addressed with urgency. When women run for higher office, these issues get addressed."

The focus on gender economics is yet another offensive in the so-called "war on women," a political narrative that in 2012 focused primarily on abortion and contraception, playing up off-color comments by conservative candidates and their allies. An issue like equal pay, unlike abortion, doesn't come with baggage, which is helpful in more conservative states where Democrats are vulnerable and in some cases facing long odds.

"If Davis is going to run a competitive race, she needs to convince Anglo women, two-thirds of whom have in recent years voted Republican, to cross over. Hammering Abbott on his equivocal stance [against] a Lone Star Lilly Ledbetter law is not a bad strategy," said Mark Jones, who heads the political science department at Rice University. "Especially compared to attacking Abbott for his position on women's reproductive rights, which could likely do the Davis campaign as much harm as good."

For their part, Republicans have argued that existing state and federal laws are adequate to ensure equal pay for women. This week, two prominent Republican women in Texas strayed from those talking points; one suggested that women are too busy to focus on equal pay and another said women need to become better at negotiating for higher salaries.



Aides to Abbot distanced themselves from those comments, saying that as governor, Abbott would make sure state and federal equal pay laws are enforced. “He believes it’s inappropriate to ever blame the victim of discrimination and that’s why he remains focused on ensuring greater prosperity and opportunity for all women and Texans,” said Matt Hirsch, a campaign spokesman.

More broadly, Republicans have struggled to craft a unified counter argument for the Democrat’s “war on women,” which has been used by groups like Emily’s List to swell their donor rolls and mailing lists. Celinda Lake, a Democratic pollster said the focus on equal pay could help mobilize voters because it resonates particularly well with swing voters and unmarried women voters, a key part of the Obama coalition — the president won single women in 2012 by 38 points over Republican nominee Mitt Romney — but a group that backed Republicans in greater numbers in 2010.

“We haven’t seen it this focused in a long time,” Lake said, of the heavy emphasis on women’s economic issues. “This can help mobilize turnout.”

With the refocus from abortion to paychecks, the debate highlights a cultural shift powered by the women’s movement that finds more women in the workforce and more women heading households. In 1960, women were the sole or primary breadwinner in 11 percent of households; now that figure stands at 40 percent, according a recent report.

In Kentucky, Democratic Senate candidate Alison Lundergan Grimes sent supporters a letter in November from Ledbetter, asking for \$ 5 donations and highlighting Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell’s opposition to the 2009 bill. This month, in a similar e-mail, the Grimes campaign highlighted McConnell’s opposition to the Violence Against Women Act. And Michelle Nunn, a Democrat who is running for Senate in Georgia, has called on Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, highlighting statistics that show women earn 81 cents for every dollar men earn in Georgia.

Here’s a look at how other states compare to Georgia, which ranks 12th. The darker colored states are closer to gender parity:

## **Texas GOP candidate opposes easier equal pay suits**

[http://article.wn.com/view/2014/03/19/Texas\\_GOP\\_candidate\\_opposes\\_easier\\_equal\\_pay\\_suits\\_n/](http://article.wn.com/view/2014/03/19/Texas_GOP_candidate_opposes_easier_equal_pay_suits_n/) December 09, 2014

Gallery: Texas GOP candidate opposes easier equal pay suits Travel Deals \$949 & up -- Vallarta: 6-Nt. All-Incl. Riu Vacation from Philly See ...

## **GOP So Desperate That Chuck Norris Is On The Campaign Trail**

Walker, Texas Ranger returned to the Lone Star State on Wednesday, but not to fight bad guys. He’s swooped in to lend a helping hand to Republican gubernatorial candidate Greg Abbott. “Chuck Norris doesn’t campaign with Greg Abbott,” Abbott’s campaign spokesman Avdiel Huerta said. “Greg Abbott campaigns with Chuck Norris.” “Together,” Huerta added, “they plan to give Texas voters a good roundhouse kick in the direction of their local polling places.” With the first week of early voting underway in Texas, both Abbott and his challenger, Democratic State Sen. Wendy Davis, are increasing their get-out-the-vote activities, and Abbott is counting on a little star power. Norris will join Abbott at stops in Corpus Christi and San Antonio. Join #FOWLERNATION!!

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## **Female GOP Senate Candidate Said Women Want Job Flexibility More Than Equal Pay**

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/08/terri-lynn-land-equal-pay\\_n\\_5113386.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/08/terri-lynn-land-equal-pay_n_5113386.html) December 09, 2014

A 2010 video of Michigan's likely Republican Senate candidate surfaced on Equal Pay ... Senate Democrat Wants To ... Republican Senate candidate ...

A 2010 video of Michigan's likely Republican Senate candidate surfaced on Equal Pay Day on Tuesday. The video shows Land, then Michigan's secretary of state, telling an audience that women aren't actually interested in fighting for equal pay.

American Bridge 21st Century PAC had sent the speech to media outlets earlier Tuesday.

"Well, we all like to be paid more and that's great, but the reality is that women have a different lifestyle," Land said at the 2010 Senior Women's Club event. "They have kids. They have to take them to get dentist appointments, doctors appointments, all those kinds of things. And they're more interested in flexibility in a job than pay."

Women make 74 cents to every dollar a man makes for work in Michigan, according to a 2013 study conducted by the National Women's Law Center. In that study, Michigan is ranked 45 out of 50 states and the District of Columbia in terms of how much women are paid compared with men.

"Equal Pay Day serves as a grim reminder of Terri Lynn Land's failure to support paycheck fairness and her starring role in ensuring that Michigan women still face a 26 percent wage gap," Regan Page, spokeswoman at the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, said in a Tuesday statement.

Land and her biggest rival for Michigan's available U.S. Senate seat, Rep. Gary Peters (D-Mich.), have both attracted dollars from national groups in what's been called one of the country's hottest midterm campaigns. Their race could decide which party has a majority in the Senate after midterms.

American Bridge 21st Century, which publicized the video, is a liberal super PAC that conducts opposition research on behalf of Democratic candidates and liberal issues, according to FactCheck.org. The fundraising group itself was created by MediaMatters founder David Brock. Its largest donors include George Soros, Loral Space & Communications, Bonanza Oil and several labor unions.

Americans for Prosperity, an alleged "dark money" nonprofit affiliated with the Koch brothers, spent over a million dollars on an ad buy accusing Peters of "hurting American

families" by supporting Obamacare.

Not to be deterred, the liberal Senate Majority PAC debuted an ad in February accusing Land of "helping the powerful at our expense." Reporting by The Huffington Post raised questions over whether Land's campaign improperly communicated with political action committees.

Although many polls of the race between Peters and Land have been close, Land may be winning when it comes to fundraising. The Detroit News reported that Land raised \$1.5 million in the first three months of 2014, including a \$100,000 donation to her own campaign. Peters did not disclose his fundraising numbers to the publication.

## **Texas gubernatorial candidates court Hispanic vote in debate**

<http://news.yahoo.com/texas-gubernatorial-candidates-court-hispanic-vote-debate-062832431.html>

December 09, 2014

... Texas gubernatorial candidates Republican Greg Abbott and Democrat Wendy ... Texas gubernatorial candidates Republican Greg ... equal pay and her ...

(Reuters) - Heading into the final weeks of the campaign, Texas gubernatorial candidates Republican Greg Abbott and Democrat Wendy Davis held their first debate in a Rio Grande Valley border town as they targeted support from Hispanic voters.

Friday's televised debate in Edinburg, Texas, gave both a chance to appeal to Hispanics, an increasingly important voting bloc in a solidly Republican state that has not elected a Democrat to statewide office in two decades.

Abbott, the state attorney general, holds a commanding lead in polling and fundraising over Davis, a state senator who drew national attention with an ultimately unsuccessful filibuster which sought to stop legislation restricting abortion.

Edinburg is in Hildago County, which is 91 percent Hispanic and where about one in three people live in poverty.

Among the contentious issues covered in the debate were voter ID laws, and the management of a border crisis that in recent months saw thousands of unaccompanied children from Central America crossing into Texas from Mexico, thrusting the Rio Grande Valley into the national spotlight.

"I'm in favor of requiring voter IDs," said Abbott. "Voter fraud is real and the voter IDs is the only way to stop it."

Davis accused her opponent of defending "a law to suppress minority voting," referring to federal court rulings that the state's voter ID regulations and changes to the redrawing of electoral boundaries that were defended by Abbott are discriminatory toward Hispanics.

She has focused her campaign on education, women's rights, equal pay and her personal story of overcoming poverty to attend Harvard Law School.

Both parties know the booming Hispanic population in Texas could upend Republican dominance by 2030 when Hispanics, who are Democrat-leaning, become a majority in the state.

Abbott and Davis both have campaigned in south Texas and their campaigns have Spanish-language websites. Democratic Latina State Senator Leticia Van de Putte is

running for lieutenant governor and Abbott has made his Hispanic wife, Cecilia, a prominent part of his campaign.

Abbott's first television commercial was produced in English and Spanish, and featured an endorsement by his Hispanic mother-in-law, Mary Lucy Phalen.

"The Hispanic vote is very important to both parties for different reasons," Republican strategist Bill Miller said. "Democrats need a very big turnout if they hope to win, and Republican are trying to hold their own."

## **Senate GOP blocks Democrats' equal pay bill – USATODAY.com**

<http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/washington/story/2012-06-05/equal-pay-women-senate-vote/55400316/1> December 09, 2014

Senate GOP blocks Democrats' equal pay bill. ... on Tuesday blocked a Democratic bill calling for equal pay in the ... with the Equal Employment ...

WASHINGTON (AP) – Senate Republicans on Tuesday blocked a Democratic bill calling for equal pay in the workplace. But President Obama and his congressional allies aren't finished appealing to women on the No. 1 concern for all voters: the cash in their wallets on the heels of recession.

As expected, the pay equity bill failed along party lines, 52-47, short of the required 60-vote threshold. But for majority Democrats, passage wasn't the only point. The debate itself was aimed at putting Republicans on the defensive on yet another women's issue, this one overtly economic after a government report showing slower-than-expected job growth.

Unlike past taunts over access to contraception and abortion, Republicans this time didn't take the bait.

In Fort Worth, Texas, presumptive Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney focused instead on unemployment among Hispanics.

"Of course Gov. Romney supports pay equity for women," said Romney spokeswoman Amanda Henneberg. "In order to have pay equity, women need to have jobs, and they have been getting crushed in this anemic Obama economy."

The device for the choreographed showdown in Washington was a Senate debate over the "Paycheck Fairness Act," a measure that aims to strengthen the Fair Labor Standards Act's protections against pay inequities based on gender.

The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., would require employers to prove that differences in pay are based on qualifications, education and other "bona fides" not related to gender. It also would prohibit employers from retaliating against employees who ask about, discuss or disclose wages in response to a complaint or investigation. And it would make employers who violate sex discrimination laws liable for compensatory or punitive damages. Under the bill, the federal government would be exempt from punitive damages.

Proponents of the bill say it is the next step after the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which Obama signed into law in 2009. The law effectively overturned a Supreme Court decision that had strictly limited workers' ability to file lawsuits over pay inequity. Ledbetter said she didn't become aware of her own pay discrepancy until she neared the end of her 1979-1988 career at a Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. plant in Gadsden, Ala.

Near the end of her career, she received an anonymous tip that she was earning less than her male colleagues. She filed a charge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. A jury initially awarded her more than \$3 million in back pay and punitive damages, a sum that a judge later reduced to \$300,000.

Ledbetter herself attended the vote and scolded Republicans for their filibuster.

"Do not let these Republicans keep us from getting paycheck fairness," she told reporters, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid at her side and a letter from her to Romney posted online by the Obama campaign.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell spoke instead on the looming fight over student loan interest rates. Asked if he was concerned about alienating women with the GOP filibuster, the Kentucky Republican said the bill opened the door to more lawsuits against employers.

"We don't think America suffers from a lack of litigation," McConnell said. "We have a jobless problem. We have a debt problem. We have a deficit problem. We got a lot of problems. Not enough lawsuits is not one of them."

Democrats intend to test that discipline in the coming months by raising hubbubs nationally and in House and Senate races over several issues that disproportionately affect women, or just matter greatly to this group of voters that leans heavily toward their party. Independent women voters in exurbs and suburbs of states like Colorado, Virginia and North Carolina are particular targets, said these officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss strategy.

First up in this category is the looming Senate debate over preventing student loan interest rates from rising next month. Look, too, for hubbubs over raising the minimum wage, extending the Bush-era tax cuts, preserving Medicare and Social Security and access to women's health care, including contraception, the officials said.

The paycheck bill was aimed in part at putting Senate Republicans in tough races in the hot seat over a key women's issue. One, Massachusetts Sen. Scott Brown, issued a statement emphasizing his support for pay equity but calling the legislation "the right cause but the wrong bill."

"On the heels of last week's dismal jobs report, the last thing we should be doing is putting more job-killing burdens on small businesses and employers," he said.

Tweeted challenger Elizabeth Warren: "Scott Brown voted NO on Paycheck Fairness, telling MA women he thinks it's ok that they continue to earn less than men."

## **Republican Slams Dems' Equal Pay Push As 'Condescending' To Women [UPDATE]**

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/08/equal-pay-republicans\\_n\\_5111730.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/08/equal-pay-republicans_n_5111730.html) December 09, 2014

Republican Slams Dems' Equal Pay Push As ... We strongly support equal pay for equal ... Republicans were hoping the Democrat Majority Leader would ...

WASHINGTON -- Democrats' push for pay equity between men and women is "condescending," one of the top women in the House Republican leadership argued Tuesday, suggesting that the campaign for equal pay for equal work reflects a lack of understanding of women's contributions to the workforce.

Rep. Lynn Jenkins (R-Kan.), the GOP conference's vice chair, made her comments flanked by her fellow leaders in the House at their weekly news conference, and suggested that the campaign for equal pay for equal work reflects a lack of understanding of women's contributions to the workforce.

"Please allow me to set the record straight. We strongly support equal pay for equal work, and I'm proud that I live in a country where it's illegal to discriminate in the workplace thanks to the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964," said Jenkins. "Some folks don't understand that women have become an extremely valuable part of the workforce today on their own merit, not because the government mandated it."

Jenkins went on to belittle Democratic efforts on the issue.

"Many ladies I know feel like they are being used as pawns, and find it condescending [that] Democrats are trying to use this issue as a political distraction from the failures of their economic policy," Jenkins said.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), speaking on the Senate floor Tuesday morning, appeared to slam the Democrats' push as cheap political showmanship and accuse Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), who had just addressed the issue, of playing games.

"Yesterday, here in the Senate, Republicans were hoping the Democrat Majority Leader would finally work with us to pass a job creation package that contains ideas from many of our members — legislation with provisions several key Democrats support too," McConnell said. "But that's not what the Majority Leader chose to do. Instead of focusing on jobs, he launched into another confusing attack on the Left's latest bizarre obsession. Democrats chose to ignore serious job-creation ideas so they could blow a few kisses to their powerful pals on the left."

However, shortly after this story was posted, McConnell's office said his remarks were being misconstrued. Spokesmen pointed to his use of the word "yesterday," and said that he had been referencing Reid's Monday speech targeting the billionaire Koch brothers, rather than his procedural motion, also on Monday, to begin work on the Democrats' Fair Pay Act.

According to many independent assessments, women who do the same job as a man are often paid significantly less, on average earning just 77 cents to a man's dollar. Even when many of the factors that lead women to make different job choices are controlled for, significant gaps remain.

Jenkins did not address the issue of women getting paid less for the same job, but suggested that women simply tend to choose different jobs.

"When it comes to employment, the fact is many women seek jobs that provide more flexibility for their family over more money, which is the choice that I made as a young working mom," Jenkins said.

Jenkins' and McConnell's opinions notwithstanding, women overwhelmingly backed the Democratic ticket in the last election, running up the largest gender gap in the history of Gallup polling. Women supported President Barack Obama over GOP nominee Mitt Romney by a 12-point margin.

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) chose his words more carefully than his colleagues at the press event when asked whether there was anything in terms of

legislation that Republicans would consider doing to address the gap.

Though Cantor demurred from offering new ideas, he did tweak the White House, noting reports that women working there get paid about 88 cents on the dollar, compared to men.

He said a better idea than passing new laws was trying to enforce the old ones.

"I point to the White House, and say what it is that they're doing? They've got a problem in the White House," said Cantor. "Let's put the politics aside."

He suggested that repealing part of Obamacare would help, and pointed to a bill the House GOP passed last week that would change the definition of full-time work in the law from 30 hours a week to 40.

"If you look to see those most impacted, it's women. Sixty-three percent of those impacted by the 30-hour workweek rule are women," Cantor said. "If the Senate Democrats would pick [the bill] up, we could help women right now."

Under the Affordable Care Act, employers must provide health insurance for full-time workers, currently defined as people employed more than 30 hours per week. Republicans argue that because of that, employers are pushing people -- in this case, mostly women -- into part-time work, although independent fact-checkers have found that claim to be false.

This article was updated after a spokesman for McConnell clarified the intended meaning of his remarks.

Michael McAuliff covers Congress and politics for The Huffington Post. Talk to him on Facebook.

## **Democratic group takes Terri Lynn Land's comments on equal pay out of context**

<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2014/sep/02/democratic-senatorial-campaign-committee/democratic-organization-takes-terri-lynn-lands-com/> December 09, 2014

Terri Lynn Land, the Republican Senate candidate from Michigan, doesn't think women should have guaranteed equal pay, says the Democratic Senatorial ...

Says Michigan U.S. Senate candidate Terri Lynn Land "said guaranteeing equal pay for women who do the same job as men is not a good idea."

Terri Lynn Land, the Republican Senate candidate from Michigan, doesn't think women should have guaranteed equal pay, says the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

The committee recently attacking Land, who is running against Democratic Rep. Gary Peters in a tight race for Michigan's open Senate seat. The ad takes clips from one of -- where she says that as a woman, she knows more about women's issues than Peters -- and alternates them with claims about Land's positions on women's issues.

Such as: "Terri Lynn Land said guaranteeing equal pay for women who do the same job as men is not a good idea."

We've looked into equal pay before, checking the oft-cited claim that women make 77 cents for every dollar men earn. The accuracy of statements about gender and pay depends a lot on how they're phrased. But when speaking of the pay gap overall, it's .

So we decided to figure out whether Land really said that it's a bad idea to guarantee equal pay. We found that the DSCC twisted her words.

The claim refers to an interview regarding pay equality that Land gave to the back in April, in which she did say the phrase: "I don't think that's a good idea." But the ad takes that quote out of context.

The Journal asked Land if she would have voted for the , which failed to pass the Senate that . Land -- like others in her party, including Republican women -- said she supports equal pay but not that legislation in particular.

The legislation is built off of the Equal Pay Act and would have required employers to prove that pay differences are not gender-based, and it would have prevented employers from punishing employees who inquire or complain about pay concerns. Additionally, employers would have been liable to civil action law suits, which was a concern among Republicans.

Land incorrectly told the Journal that her problem with the legislation is that it would require businesses to publicly disclose individuals' pay. (The law such a provision.)

Land has said that existing law already protects equal pay for women; in her , she pointed to the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Some Republicans have argued that the Paycheck Fairness Act is redundant because discriminatory pay is already illegal.

On this year's Women's Equality Day -- Aug. 26 -- Land once again supporting the Equal Pay Act and criticizing Peters for supposedly unequal pay in his own office.

This isn't the first time that Land has had to defend her position on equal pay during this race.

In April -- before Land's interview with the Journal -- American Bridge 21st Century, a liberal political action committee, circulated a 20-second speaking to a women's club in 2010. The isolated clip makes it seem that Land believes women aren't interested in seeking out equal pay.

"Well, we all like to be paid more, and that's great. But the reality is that women have a different lifestyle," Land said in the video. "They have kids, they have to take them to get dentist appointments, doctors appointments all those kinds of things, and they're more interested in flexibility in a job than pay."

We found and were able to put the short clip in context.

She was talking about her experience as a county clerk and union leader in Kent County, Mich., where she noticed that male leaders often negotiated for pay raises. Instead, she chose to negotiate for more job flexibility for her and the female employees she represented (such as making it easier for parents to take time off to care for sick children).

"About 85 percent of my employees were women. Well, the (union) is a little male organization, have you ever noticed that?" she said. "And of course, they always negotiated for money, for raises. Well, we all like to be paid more and that's great but the reality is that women have a different lifestyle. They have kids, they have to take them to get dentist appointments, doctors appointments all those kinds of things, and they're more interested in flexibility in a job than pay -- although pay is important, too. So we went out and fought those issues for them."



The Democratic Senatorial Congressional Committee said "Terri Lynn Land said guaranteeing equal pay for women who do the same job as men is not a good idea."

The ad twisted Land's words -- she said the Paycheck Fairness Act was "not a good idea," not the general concept of guaranteeing equal pay for women. We can't read Land's mind to know whether or not she truly believes in equal pay for women, but as far as we can tell, she never said publicly that it's a bad idea.

We rate this claim Mostly False.

## **Republicans dismiss equal pay and abortions for rape as minor issues; Dems pounce**

<http://trailblazersblog.dallasnews.com/2014/09/republicans-dismiss-equal-pay-and-abortions-for-rape-as-minor-issues-dems-pounce.html/> December 09, 2014

Republicans have no female candidates for ... and GOP lieutenant governor candidate Dan Patrick ... On the equal pay issue, Texas Democratic Party ...

Democrats and support groups are slamming comments made independently by Republicans this weekend that they believe show the GOP has turned a deaf ear towards serious women's issues.

Republicans have no female candidates for statewide office on the ballot, and Democrats have been waiting for any potential gaffes from the nearly all-white male line-up.

In separate appearances, a Republican political consultant called the low number of rape and incest victims a "minor issue" in the abortion debate, and GOP lieutenant governor candidate Dan Patrick dismissed the idea that government should be involved in pay disparity issues for women.

Both Democratic governor nominee Wendy Davis and lieutenant governor nominee Leticia Van de Putte sent out fundraising pleas on Monday, citing the GOP male statements.

Patrick was asked about the problem of unequal pay for women at a public forum and responded, "I don't think it is a problem."

"I don't think government should tell businesses how to pay their staff," he said.

On the equal pay issue, Texas Democratic Party spokeswoman Lisa Paul said Patrick's dismissal shows that he is out-of-touch with the realities that women face in the workplace.

"Despite Dan Patrick's nonchalance and insensitivity, Texas women know they deserve equal pay for equal work," she said, citing statistics that show that Texas women make 79 cents on the dollar for the same work as men.

"If Dan Patrick wants to lead Texas he should be ready to tell our young women that if they work hard, they can expect a fair paycheck and equality in the workplace. Instead he plans to sit by and pretend this is not an issue that affects every family in Texas," Paul said.

In an appearance on Lone Star Politics on KXAS-TV (NBC5), GOP consultant Matt Mackowiak was asked about Greg Abbott's belief that abortion should be outlawed, even in cases of rape and incest.

"We can get into minor issues that are one or two percent of the problem, but ultimately Texas is a strong pro-life state," Mackowiak said.

When challenged whether victims of those crimes would consider it minor, Mackowiak clarified, "It's minor in terms of the percentage of the cases."

Yvonne Gutierrez, executive director of Planned Parenthood Texas Votes, said no sexual assault survivor would call their experience "minor."

She also called Mackowiak's comment "demeaning and offensive."

In her press release, Gutierrez claimed Mackowiak is an adviser to the Greg Abbott campaign for governor, but he is not.

Davis and Van de Putte said they plan to speak further on the flare-up at a joint appearance in Dallas on Tuesday for Annie's List, a group that raises money for women candidates who are for abortion rights.

## **EMILY's List Ranks 2012 Republican Candidates**

<http://www.rollcall.com/news/EMILYs-List-Ranks-2012-Republican-Candidates-211276-1.html> December 09, 2014

... a look at how the GOP candidates rank on issues of ... overhauling Medicare and their positions on equal pay ... Democratic Leaders Court Candidate for ...

EMILY's List today released its first-ever presidential scorecard, a look at how the GOP candidates rank on issues of importance to its membership.

Not surprisingly, the campaign organization that backs Democratic women who support abortion rights judged the Republicans' stances on Democratic-supported measures. For example, the candidates were dinged for opposing President Barack Obama's health care law or his jobs act or for opposing funding for Planned Parenthood. They were ranked on their support for Budget Chairman Paul Ryan's budget overhauling Medicare and their positions on equal pay legislation, family and medical leave legislation or the Equal Rights Amendment.

EMILY's List also evaluated the candidates' stances on unemployment benefits and the minimum wage.

The group affixed the "worst" label to former Speaker Newt Gingrich (Ga.). From worst-to-best in the rest of the pack were Rep. Michele Bachmann (Minn.), former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, Rep. Ron Paul (Texas), former Sen. Rick Santorum (Pa.) and former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman. Texas Gov. Rick Perry ranked the highest.

"On each issue, candidates were given strikes for their rhetoric, actions and consistency," the site reads. "Women voters are key to any candidate hoping to win in November 2012, and we want to make sure that voters know the truth about the Republican candidates. We encourage voters to learn more about the candidates' records and to explore how their views would impact their home states."

EMILY's List will spend some money on Web ads in the early voting states of Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina and will update the scorecard throughout the 2012 campaign.

## **GOP Senate Candidate: Equal Pay Laws Are 'Campaign Gimmicks'**

[http://www.cwa-union.org/news/entry/gop\\_senate\\_candidate\\_equal\\_pay\\_laws\\_are\\_campaign\\_gimmicks/](http://www.cwa-union.org/news/entry/gop_senate_candidate_equal_pay_laws_are_campaign_gimmicks/) December 09, 2014

North Carolina House Speaker Thom Tillis, the GOP nominee running against Democratic Senator Kay Hagan, is making sorry excuses for his opposition to equal pay laws.

North Carolina House Speaker Thom Tillis, the GOP nominee running against Democratic Senator Kay Hagan, is making sorry excuses for his opposition to equal pay laws.

North Carolina House Speaker Thom Tillis, the GOP nominee running against Democratic Senator Kay Hagan, is making sorry excuses for his opposition to equal pay laws.

This week, in his second debate against Hagan, Tillis struggled to explain why he blocked the Paycheck Fairness Act in North Carolina's state legislature.

He said, "Let's enforce the laws that are on the books versus some of the campaign gimmicks that are going to put more regulations and make it more difficult."

That's the language candidates use when they don't want to address measures like equal pay, wage and hour laws, workers' rights and other issues. In April, Senate Republicans blocked legislation that would have helped restore pay fairness for women; Kay Hagan was a co-sponsor of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and a strong supporter of the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Hagan responded: "Speaker Tillis, I think you need to read reports. Women in North Carolina earn 82 cents on the dollar. I didn't raise my two daughters to think that they were worth 82 cents on the dollar."

CWA activists are talking to co-workers and working to get out the vote. But we need more volunteers. Contact your local.

## **WV & OR-Sen: Meet The Two Female GOP Candidates Who Really Don't Support Equal Pay**

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2014/08/13/1321248/-WV-OR-Sen-Meet-The-Two-Female-GOP-Candidates-Who-Really-Don-t-Support-Equal-Pay> December 09, 2014

"Women absolutely deserve equal pay for equal ... candidate, had this to say about Equal Pay: ... a Democrat replaced our previous Republican ...

This is a short one about Equal Pay so I decided to combine the Senate races in one diary. First in West Virginia you have Rep. Shelley Moore Capito (R. WV) who is looking like she's going to be West Virginia's next U.S. Senator. West Virginia women should know this about her:

The latest flare-up came after an MSNBC interview was published Monday in which the congresswoman, seen as a favorite to take Democrat Jay Rockefeller's Senate seat in 2014, once again expressed her support for equal pay for women. "Women absolutely deserve equal pay for equal work. Equal pay is the law. In order to ensure women and men have access to the same opportunities we need to grow our economy and create jobs, and we must invest in job training and skill development," she said. The problem is that Capito voted repeatedly against legislation that would bolster laws against gender discrimination in workplace pay. The seven-term congresswoman voted against the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in 2007 and again in 2009, before it was ultimately signed into law by President Barack Obama. Moreover, she voted against the Paycheck Fairness Act -- which would add further protections to the Equal Pay Act of 1963 -- in 2008, 2013 and 2014. - Huffington Post, 8/12/14

The National Women's Law Center, which show that West Virginia women earn just 70

cents on the dollar compared to men. Democrats like Capito's opponent, Secretary of State Natalie Tennant (D. WV), have used these statistics to hit Capito on her hypocrisy. It should be noted that the DSCC has not yet given up on this race so we will need to see how it plays out.

Now in Oregon you have Dr. Monica Wehby (R. OR), the Koch Brothers and George Will's favorite candidate, had this to say about Equal Pay:

Monica Wehby said such legislation aimed at providing women the same opportunities as men would deny them careers. "I would be concerned that it would make it more difficult for businesses to hire women because of the fear of lawsuits. They would tend to steer away. And I think that that's an unintended consequence of laws like this that increase regulation and legislation," she said Sunday during an interview with a local news station in Portland. Senate Republicans in April rejected the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would have held employees responsible for wage discrimination against women and would have required the U.S. Department of Labor to collect wage data from supervisors. Wehby said she supports equality for women in the workplace, but thinks there are flaws in the bill. "I would absolutely favor any legislation that supports equal pay for women, but this was a flawed piece of legislation," she said. "It did not take into account experience, hours worked, education." - MSNBC, 8/12/14

Republicans have variously said the legislation is a "political distraction" and an election-year stunt by Democrats, that existing laws already prevent pay discrimination and that the bill would result in frivolous lawsuits. The numbers don't appear to bear out Republican fears: Complaints filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which handles claims of wage discrimination at the federal level, didn't increase substantially after President Barack Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in 2009, which was a bill narrower in scope. - Huffington Post, 8/12/14

Wehby has tried to attack her opponent, Senator Jeff Merkley (D. OR) on this issue:

The bill that Senator Merkley supports adds additional regulations, documentation and other administrative requirements that will have a harmful effect on women in the workplace. Senator Merkley's answer to this issue is typical of career politicians – more regulation, more red tape, and more government interference on small businesses. A bill like this will encourage job creators to look for labor substitution. This is an issue that I have encountered firsthand in my life, and I know it well enough to make creating real equality a priority when I'm in Washington. However, as is often the case with Senator Merkley – his intentions here result more in political optics than actual solutions. Work equality will be a top priority for me, but this bill will not come anywhere near accomplishing that goal. I would have voted no based on my workplace experiences and knowledge of how this legislation would have hurt women in the workplace. - The Oregonian, 7/18/14

Merkley's campaign of course has fired back: Merkley has a double digit lead over Wehby but of course the Koch brothers are spending big to try and defeat him. Click here to donate and get involved with Tennant and Merkley's campaigns:

## 2014 Election Results: Here's Why Democrats Lost the Senate to GOP

<http://www.newrepublic.com/article/120138/2014-election-results-heres-why-democrats-lost-senate-gop>  
December 09, 2014

... a state law requiring equal pay. A host of Republican candidates, ... Democratic candidates ... Democrats benefited by facing a Republican who reeked ...

Barack Obama has been elected president twice, but his party has now gotten drubbed in

the two midterm elections held during his presidency. He will face a Republican Senate and House. Because the Democrats will be able to block Republican initiatives in the Senate with forty votes, and because, if necessary, Obama can exercise a veto, he can prevent the evisceration of the Affordable Care Act and the Dodd-Frank financial reform bill, but he and the Democrats won't be able to pass any initiatives of their own; and he will have a very difficult time getting his nominations and appointments confirmed. Gridlock? That's probably too mild a description of what America has in store over the next two years.

Did it have to happen—particularly given that in repudiating the president and the Democrats, voters were reacting to the palsied state of Washington politics? A president's party rarely does well in midterm elections, and that's been particularly true in a president's second term. And the country has still not fully recovered from the Great Recession. Employment is up, but not wages, and that may have hurt the Democrats. But midterm losses don't have to be as severe as those that the Democrats have suffered under Obama. In 1998, resident Clinton and the Democrats actually added five seats in the House, broke even in the Senate, and won a governorship. Obama himself has to take some blame and his Republican opponents some credit for what happened yesterday.

Here are the key factors that contributed to this year's Democratic debacle.

In midterm elections, turnout is generally far lower than in presidential years. In 2010 and 2014, some of those groups of voters that had helped Obama and the Democrats win in 2008 and 2012 turned out in disproportionately smaller numbers than those voters who had supported Republicans in 2008 and 2012. Take younger voters. In 2012, voters between 18 and 29 years old made up 19 percent of the electorate and voted for Obama by 60 to 37 percent. Voters from 30 to 44 years old made up 27 percent and backed Obama 52 to 45. That's almost half the electorate. In the preliminary exit polls yesterday (the exit polls are adjustment to reflect the final results), these voters made up only 32 percent of the electorate. The 18- to 29-year-olds backed Democrats by 55 to 42 percent and the 30- to 44-year-olds backed Democrats by 52 to 46 percent.

Now look at the flipside. Voters 45-to-64 and 65 and over went for Mitt Romney in 2012 and for Republicans this year. They made up 54 percent of the electorate in 2012 but a whopping 67 percent on Tuesday. If the proportions of the vote had been similar to those of presidential years, the Democrats might have had a better chance in the elections. Take the North Carolina race, where Thom Tillis defeated incumbent Democratic Senator Kay Hagan. According to the exit polls, Hagan won 18- to 29-year-olds 54 to 39 percent and 30- to 44-year-olds 56 to 39 percent and lost 45- to 64-year-olds 48 to 50 percent and 65 and over 44 to 54 percent. But the 18- to 44-year-olds only made up 36 percent of the vote. Democrats faced a similar problem with the Hispanic vote, which was important in Florida and Colorado. But turnout wasn't the only problem the Democrats faced.

The Republican candidates this year tied their opponents to Obama and to his policies, and the tactic worked. Public disapproval of Obama's presidency, which has remained high, rubbed off on Democratic candidates. In a Pew poll taken in mid-October, 32 percent of voters said that they considered their vote for Congress as a vote against Barack Obama; 20 percent thought of it as a vote for Obama. These figures are usually understated—people don't like to say their vote for one individual is based on their feelings about another. The significance of the 12-point margin and of a third of the electorate saying that their vote was directed against the president becomes clear when one compares 2014 with 2010. In that year, 28 percent said they were voting against Obama and 26 percent for. In 1994, another big Republican midterm victory, only 21 percent of the electorate said they were voting against Clinton. The only midterm election where the vote was similarly directed against the president was 2006, when Americans cast a vote against George W. Bush. Like that election, this one was a referendum on the president.

Could Obama and the Democrats have avoided the voters' wrath? I think there was an opportunity to do so in the fall of 2013 when many Americans blamed the Republicans for the shutdown of the government. In a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll from October 7-9, 2013, Obama's approval rate was 47 percent and his disapproval rate 48 percent, and registered voters said by 47 to 39 percent that they would prefer that Democrats control the next Congress. By the next poll on December 13, Obama's approval was at 43 percent and his disapproval at 54 percent and voters now preferred a Republican congress by 44 to 42 percent. A Washington Post poll registered the same trends. The bottom fell out of Obama's approval and of Democrat prospects for November 2014 sometime in mid-October 2013. What happened during October was the administration's failed rollout of the Affordable Care Act. That was Obama's Katrina, and it turned out to be the Democrats' as well. Of course, the administration subsequently repaired the program, but the political damage was lasting. It occurred at just that time when the issues of the coming election were being defined. Obama's and the Democrats' popularity never recovered.

Obama didn't help matters in the year to come. While he has brought his substantial political skills to bear on his presidential campaigns, he has remained detached from the midterm elections in 2010 and 2014, insisting last month that his policies would speak for themselves. But by withdrawing from the struggle—and not attempting to frame the 2010 or 2014 elections—Obama allowed voters to blame him and the Democrats for whatever continues to ail America. And the Republicans did a good job in this election of turning the voters' attention on Obama and away from their own lack of a program for the country.

In 2010 and again in 2012, the Republicans squandered their chances in Senate races by nominating far-right candidates like Richard Mourdock and Christine O'Donnell who proved unpalatable even to some Republican voters. After the Tea Party-led shutdown in the fall of 2013, the Republican leadership kept their troops in line. There were no more shutdowns. Republican business groups and organizations like Karl Rove's Crossroads also made an effort to nominate candidates who could move to the center. And most of the candidates attempted to smooth off their rough edges.

Colorado Republican Cory Gardner, who took Mark Udall's Senate seat, repudiated his support for "personhood" bills that would have banned contraception and even came out for over-the-counter contraception. Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker ran an ad backing equal pay for women after previously signing a bill that repealed a state law requiring equal pay. A host of Republican candidates, including Bruce Rauner in Illinois, Tom Cotton in Arkansas, and Dan Sullivan in Alaska, suddenly decided they supported an increase in the minimum wage. North Carolina Senate candidate Thom Tillis decided he supported expanding Medicaid in his state. By moving to the center, the Republicans neutralized Democratic efforts to paint them as extremists.

If there is a silver lining in the awful results of this year's election, it lies in the fact that if the turnout had been similar to 2012 or 2008, the Democrats would have done much better. As The New York Times' Nate Cohn has argued, that could bode well for 2016, which is not only a presidential year, but a year when the Republicans' vulnerable Senate class of 2010 will come up for re-election. If you look at how the different groups voted, the Democrats preserved their edge among younger voters, African Americans (whose turnout seems to have been pretty good), Hispanics, single women, and professionals. Almost all the Democratic candidates did well, for instance, among voters with post-graduate degrees. In Georgia, Michelle Nunn won these voters by 53 to 46 percent. So that's a consolation of sorts.

But in 2016 and in future midterm elections, the Democrats will still have to do better among those parts of the electorate that have flocked to the Republicans: older voters and

white working-class voters. The numbers for the latter in this election were singularly dispiriting. In Florida, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Charlie Crist lost whites without college degrees by 32 to 61 percent; in Virginia, Senator Mark Warner's near-death experience was due to losing these voters by 30 to 68 percent. In Colorado and Iowa, they held the key to Republican Senate victories. In 2012, the Democrats benefited by facing a Republican who reeked of money and privilege and displayed indifference toward the 47 percent. Romney lost the white working class in states like Ohio. Democrats may not have that luxury of a Mitt Romney in the next election. And in that case, they will have to do considerably better among these voters, or else 2016 could turn out to be another nightmare election for the Democrats.

## **Democratic candidates outnumbered their Republican counterparts at forum**

<http://www.toledoblade.com/Politics/2012/09/18/Democratic-candidates-outnumbered-their-Republican-counterparts-at-forum.html> December 09, 2014

Democratic candidates ... Democratic candidates outnumbered their Republican counterparts in a candidates' forum ... said she supported pay ...

Democratic candidates outnumbered their Republican counterparts in a candidates' forum focused on women's issues tonight and attended by about 100 people.

The local chapters of two women's organizations - the American Association of University Women and the League of Women Voters - along with several other organizations sponsored the event, held at Scott Park Campus of the University of Toledo.

U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D., Toledo), who is seeking re-election in the 9th Congressional District, said she supported pay equity and other issues backed by the women's organizations. She also said the Democratic Party is more reflective of women, saying all 16 Republicans running for Congressional seats in Ohio are men, while seven of the 16 on the Democratic side are women.

Ms. Kaptur's opponent, Republican Joe Wurzelbacher of Springfield Township, was invited but did not respond, according to Michelle Radtkin, president of the Toledo chapter of the AAUW.

Angela Zimmann, the Democratic candidate for the 5th Congressional District, blasted her absent opponent, U.S. Rep. Bob Latta (R., Bowling Green), saying he opposed a bill guaranteeing equal pay for equal work for women, is "anti-choice," and opposed the 2009 bailout of the auto industry.

"So there is a clear choice," said Ms. Zimmann, of Springfield Township.

Mr. Latta was attending a Van Wert Farm Bureau dinner and candidate's reception, according to his spokesman.

The Libertarian candidate for the 5th District, Eric Eberly, disagreed with Ms. Zimmann on government support for Planned Parenthood for fiscal reasons.

"I promise to fully support individual freedoms, work to eliminate class and gender preferences in law, and encourage all women to take responsibility for their own lives, and oppose any government intervention in choices involving their own bodies," Mr. Eberly said.

Ms. Zimmann said she does support federal funding of Planned Parenthood and has the endorsement of the national Planned Parenthood organization.

Asked how they would address violence in the Middle East, Mr. Eberly called for a lower U.S. profile.

"Our interventionist policies of picking their leaders is a big problem. We have a federal government that gives billions of dollars to hostile governments every year. We shouldn't be building roads and bridges in countries that are hostile to us," Mr. Eberly said.

Ms. Zimman said, "violence is never the answer. Here in the United States our leaders need to model tolerance, acceptance, and nonviolent behavior."

The audience also heard from three candidates for Lucas County commissioner - Democrats Tina Skeldon Wozniak and Pete Gerken and independent Kevin Haddad.

Jeff Bunck (D., Monclova Township), who is running against Republican State Rep. Barbara Sears (R., Monclova Township), said he opposes term limits and supports the proposed measure to put the drawing of congressional and statehouse districts in the hand of an appointed independent panel.

"I don't like that the politicians through gerrymandering get to pick their voters rather than the voters picking their politicians," Mr. Bunck said. Ms. Sears was not present.

David Kissinger of Maumee, the only Republican to appear on the nine-person panel, opposed the creation of a redistricting panel, saying the government that governs best is the one closest to the people.

"We have the ability to elect and choose who our representatives are. I don't believe we should just throw out the current system because some people did not like how the results turned out," Mr. Kissinger said. His opponent, state Rep. Matt Szollosi, was absent.

Schuyler Beckwith, Mr. Gerken's executive assistant, represented U.S. Sherrod Brown (D., Ohio) who was not present. The two-hour forum was moderated by WTVG-13 news anchor Kristian Brown.

## **Democrats highlight equal pay in political push – CNN Political Ticker**

<http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2014/04/07/democrats-highlight-equal-pay-in-political-push/> December 09, 2014

"The DSCC's 'GOP PAY GAP' campaign will hold Republican Senate candidates accountable ... deserve equal pay for equal work." Democratic strategists ...

Washington (CNN) - From the White House to Capitol Hill to the campaign trail, Democrats are planning an across-the-board push on paycheck equality on Tuesday, the party's first large-scale coordinated effort on the issue ahead of November's midterm elections.

The full-court press by the White House, congressional Democrats and party officials, comes on National Equal Pay Day, which reflects how far into the current year women must work to match what men earned in the previous year.

President Barack Obama on Tuesday will go back to the first law he signed as President, addressing equal pay with two new executive actions that satisfy both policy and political priorities within the White House.

According to a White House official, Obama's executive actions will focus on "pay secrecy," the idea that women who are paid less than their male counterparts may not know it because they don't know what other employees are making.



"If women do not even know that they are underpaid, they cannot take steps to remedy the pay gap," said the official. "For example, Lilly Ledbetter was paid less than her male co-workers for decades without realizing it until someone took a risk and slipped her an anonymous note."

When Obama entered the White House in 2009, the first law he signed was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, a law named for the Alabama grandmother who became a champion for equal pay after men in her Goodyear plant doing similar work had been paid up to 40% more.

The law allowed a victim of pay-based discrimination to file a complaint to the government within 180 days of their most recent paychecks, as opposed to within 180 days of the first "unfair" paycheck.

The first executive order Obama will sign will prohibit "federal contractors from retaliating against employees who choose to discuss their compensation," according to the White House official. The second order will ask the secretary of labor to establish new requirements for federal contractors to submit summaries of pay data, including a breakdown of sex and race.

"The Department of Labor will use the data to encourage voluntary compliance with equal pay laws, and allowing more targeted enforcement by focusing efforts where there are discrepancies, reducing burdens on other employers," the official added.

Even the White House acknowledges it is not immune to pay inequity. Asked by reporters about a recent American Enterprise Institute study finding female White House staffers make 88 cents for every dollar their male counterparts earn, Carney did not deny the administration has its own challenge with the issue.

"At the 88 cents that you cite, that is not 100, but it is better than the national average," Carney said.

Carney noted there are several women in key roles at the White House, from National Security Adviser Susan Rice to Communications Director Jennifer Palmieri.

"When it comes to the bottom line that women who do the same work as men have to be paid the same, there is no question that that is happening here at the White House at every level," Carney said.

In coordination with the events at the White House, the Democratic National Committee is putting out a video on equal pay, as well as making a push on social media.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee says it will run web, Twitter and Facebook ads using the hashtag #GOPPayGap to "highlight instances in which GOP Senate candidates have come out as opposed to equal pay."

"The DSCC's 'GOP PAY GAP' campaign will hold Republican Senate candidates accountable for their baseless and partisan opposition to equal pay for equal work," said Regan Page, DSCC spokeswoman.

And Emily's List, a major outside group that's dedicated to electing pro-Democratic female candidates, says it will be "engaging our EMILY's List network of 3 million with a petition," on equal pay and will team up with the DNC and Hispanic leaders to "highlight the Latina paygap – 54 cents on the dollar."

On Capitol Hill, the Democratic-controlled Senate is expected to vote on the Paycheck Fairness Act on Wednesday. While the legislation has a fair chance of passing the Senate, the bill that has no chance of making it through the Republican-dominated House of Representatives.

The push is just as much about politics as policy.

Democrats feel that equal pay is a winning issue in the 2014 midterm elections. The President worked the issue into his last State of the Union address when he demanded Congress pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. Obama called the income disparity between genders an "embarrassment" and proclaimed that "women deserve equal pay for equal work."

Democratic strategists also see equal pay as a way to galvanize the base and raise money in a midterm election that will see less turnout and excitement than a presidential election year. By keeping the issue in the news, Democrats hope to benefit in the long term by showcasing GOP presidential hopefuls who oppose equal pay protections.

According to CNN national exit polls, Democrats won the female vote 56%-43% in the 2008 presidential election and by 55%-44% in Obama's 2012 reelection. But the GOP narrowly edged out the Democrats among women 49%-48% in the 2010 midterms, when Republicans, thanks to a landslide 63-seat pick up, won back the House, and made a major dent in the Democrats' Senate majority.

The Republican National Committee points out that it supports equal pay.

"All Republicans support equal pay for equal work. And while we all know workplace discrimination still exists, we need real solutions that focus on job creation and opportunity for women. The truth is the 'Paycheck Fairness Act' is a desperate political ploy and Democrats are cynically betting that Americans aren't smart enough to know better. The 'Paycheck Fairness Act' doesn't provide paycheck fairness for women, instead it cuts flexibility in the work place for working moms and ends merit pay that rewards good work-the very things that are important to us," RNC spokeswoman Kirsten Kukowski told CNN.

And many in the GOP see laws like the Lilly Ledbetter Act and Paycheck Fairness Act as an effort to "help trial lawyers collect their fees and file lawsuits," as Florida Sen. Marco Rubio said in 2012 about the Ledbetter law. Another 2016 hopeful, Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, said the Paycheck Fairness Act would interfere with the free market.

CNN's National Political Reporter Peter Hamby and CNN Senior Congressional Producer Ted Barrett contributed to this report.

## **Democrat vs Republican - Difference and Comparison**

[http://www.diffen.com/difference/Democrat vs Republican](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Democrat_vs_Republican) December 09, 2014

This comparison examines the differences between the policies and political positions of the Democratic and Republican ... or pay a fine, (2 ... Democratic candidates ...

This comparison examines the differences between the policies and political positions of the Democratic and Republican parties on major issues such as taxes, the role of government, entitlements (Social Security, Medicare), gun control, immigration, healthcare, abortion and gay rights. These two parties dominate America's political landscape but differ greatly in their philosophies and ideals.

The Democratic Party traces its origins to the anti-federalist factions around the time of

America's independence from British rule. These factions were organized into the Democrat – Republican party by Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and other influential opponents of the Federalists in 1792.

The Republican party is the younger of the two parties. Founded in 1854 by anti-slavery expansion activists and modernizers, the Republican Party rose to prominence with the election of Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican president.

Since the division of the Republican Party in the election of 1912, the Democratic party has consistently positioned itself to the left of the Republican Party in economic as well as social matters. The economically left-leaning activist philosophy of Franklin D. Roosevelt, which has strongly influenced American liberalism, has shaped much of the party's economic agenda since 1932. Roosevelt's New Deal coalition usually controlled the national government until 1964.

The Republican Party was founded in 1854 by anti-slavery expansion activists and modernizers, it rose to prominence with the election of Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican president. The party presided over the American Civil War and Reconstruction and was harried by internal factions and scandals towards the end of the 19th century. Today, the Republican Party supports a pro-business platform, with further foundations in economic libertarianism and a brand of social conservatism increasingly based on the viewpoints of the Religious Right.

While there may be several differences in opinion between individual Democrats and Republicans on certain issues, what follows is a generalization of their stand on several of these issues. A Democrat is typically known as a supporter of a broader range of social services in America than those advocated by Republicans. Republican philosophy is based on a limited influence of government and a dominant foreign policy.

Republicans are considered on the "right" end of the political spectrum while Democrats are on the "left." The far right generally is pro-religion, anti-bureaucracy, pro-military, pro-business and pro-personal responsibility.

Republicans, are usually considered conservative (fiscally as well as socially), maybe a little pious, pro-business and against the bureaucracy often associated with big government. They see big governments as wasteful and an obstacle to getting things done. Their approach is Darwinian in that the strong shall survive, cream rises to the top, etc.

To the far left of the spectrum are the extreme liberal, or the most extreme democrats. Democrats are considered more liberal. Democrats tend to favor an active role for government in society and believe that such involvement – be it environmental regulations against polluting or anti-discrimination laws – can improve the quality of people's lives and help achieve the larger goals of opportunity and equality. On the other hand, Republicans tend to favor a limited role for government in society and believe that such reliance on the private sector (businesses and individuals) – be it avoiding unnecessary environmental regulations or heavy-handed anti-discrimination laws – can improve economic productivity and help achieve the larger goals of freedom and self-reliance

Republican philosophy leans more towards individual freedoms, rights and responsibilities. In contrast, Democrats attach greater importance to equality and social/community responsibility.

The Democrats and Republicans have varying ideas on many issues, some of which are listed below. These are broadly generalized opinions; it must be noted that there are many politicians in each party who have different and more nuanced positions on these issues.

Republicans: Prefer increasing military spending and have a more hard line stance against countries like Iran, with a higher tendency to deploy the military option.

Democrats: Prefer lower increases in military spending and are comparatively more reluctant to using military force against countries like Iran, Syria and Libya.

Democrats favor more gun control laws e.g. oppose the right to carry concealed weapons in public places. Republicans oppose gun control laws and are strong supporters of the Second Amendment (the right to bear arms) as well as the right to carry concealed weapons.

Democrats support abortion rights and keeping elective abortions legal. Republicans believe abortions should not be legal and that Roe v. Wade should be overturned. Some Republicans go so far as to oppose the contraception mandate i.e. requiring employer-paid health insurance plans to cover contraception.

A related point of divergence is embryonic stem cell research - Democrats support it while Republicans do not.

Democrats tend to favor equal rights for gay and lesbian couples e.g. the right to get married and adopt children. Republicans believe that marriage should be between a man and a woman so they do not support gay marriage or allowing them to adopt children.

Opponents of the death penalty form a much higher fraction of the Democratic Party when compared to the GOP.

Democrats support progressive taxes i.e. they want high-income individuals to pay taxes at a higher rate. They support higher taxes on the wealthy to pay for public programs. Republicans support tax cuts for everyone (rich and poor alike). They consider higher tax rates on the rich a form of class warfare.

Democrats favor increase in the minimum wage to help workers. Republicans oppose raising the minimum wage because it hurts businesses.

One of the fundamental differences between Democratic and Republican party ideals is around the role of government. Republicans favor a small government — both in terms of the number of people employed by the government and in terms of the roles and responsibilities of government in society. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is a government agency that many Republican presidential candidates love to deride as an example of "useless" government agencies that they would shut down.

Another example is the food stamps program. Republicans in Congress are demanding cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (or SNAP), while Democrats want to expand this program. Democrats argue that with unemployment rate high in the economy, many families need the assistance provided by the program. Republicans argue that there is a lot of fraud in the program that is wasting taxpayer dollars. They also want to institute clauses that force beneficiaries of the program to take more personal responsibility through measures such as mandatory drug testing, and looking for a job.[1]

Abraham Lincoln belonged to the Republican Party, so the roots of the party are in individual freedom and the abolition of slavery. Indeed, 82% of the Republicans in the U.S. Senate voted in favor of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 while only 69% of Democrats did. The Southern wing of the Democratic party was vehemently opposed to civil rights legislation.

However, after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, there was a sort of role reversal. Todd

Purdum, author of *An Idea Whose Time Has Come*, a book about the legislative maneuvering behind the passage of the Civil Rights Act, says this in an interview with NPR:

Republicans believe that Purdum's point of view is misleading because Goldwater supported previous attempts at passing a Civil Rights act, and desegregation, but did not like the 1964 Act because he felt it infringed on States' rights.

In any case, the present dynamic is that minorities like African Americans and Hispanics are more likely to vote Democratic than Republican. However, there are prominent African American Republicans like Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Herman Cain, Clarence Thomas, Michael Steele and Alan West, as well as Hispanics like Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz, Alberto Gonzales and Brian Sandoval.

Civil liberties groups like the ACLU criticize the GOP for pushing for voter ID laws — Republicans believe these laws are necessary to prevent voter fraud while Democrats claim that voter fraud is virtually non-existent and that these laws disenfranchise black and Hispanic voters who tend to be poorer and unable to obtain ID cards.

Due to the TV coverage during some of the presidential elections in the past, the color Red has become associated with the Republicans (as in Red states – the states where the Republican presidential nominee wins) and Blue is associated with the Democrats.

The Democratic Party, once dominant in the Southeastern United States, is now strongest in the Northeast (Mid-Atlantic and New England), Great Lakes Region, as well as along the Pacific Coast (especially Coastal California), including Hawaii. The Democrats are also strongest in major cities. Recently, Democratic candidates have been faring better in some southern states, such as Virginia, Arkansas, and Florida, and in the Rocky Mountain states, especially Colorado, Montana, Nevada, and New Mexico.

Since 1980, geographically the Republican "base" ("red states") is strongest in the South and West, and weakest in the Northeast and the Pacific Coast. The Republican Party's strongest focus of political influence lies in the Great Plains states, particularly Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska, and in the western states of Idaho, Wyoming, and Utah.

Republicans have controlled the White House for 28 of the last 43 years since Richard Nixon became president. Famous Democrat Presidents have been Franklin Roosevelt, who pioneered the New Deal in America and stood for 4 terms, John F. Kennedy, who presided over the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban missile crisis, and was assassinated in Office; Bill Clinton, who was impeached by the House of Representatives; and Nobel Peace Prize winners Barack Obama and Jimmy Carter.

Famous Republican Presidents include Abraham Lincoln, who abolished slavery; Teddy Roosevelt, known for the Panama Canal; Ronald Reagan, credited for ending the Cold War with Gorbachev; and the two Bush family Presidents of recent times. Republican President Richard Nixon was forced to resign over the Watergate scandal.

This graphic shows which party controlled the White House since 1901. You can find the list of Presidents on Wikipedia.

## **Why Democrats are hammering social issues in U.S. campaigns**

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/why-democrats-are-hammering-social-issues-in-u-s-campaigns-1.2730440>  
December 09, 2014

Former president Bill Clinton joins U.S. Democratic Senate candidate ... He doesn't believe women deserve equal pay for equal ... Republican candidate ...

In Colorado, where a tough battle is underway for this fall's U.S. Senate election, Democrat Mark Udall is accusing his opponent Cory Gardner of having a radical agenda on abortion and birth control, and so far in the campaign he's also emphasized gay rights, immigration and other divisive social issues.

Republicans have taken note of the strategy. "Udall is running his entire campaign on social issues," Brad Dayspring, a strategist with the National Republican Senatorial Committee, told the New York Times earlier this week. "All they talk about is birth control, 'personhood,' abortion."

New York Times writer John Harwood predicted many other Democrats will join Udall in talking up those issues in advance of November's midterm elections. Democrats are at risk of losing control of the Senate, which makes races like the one in Colorado critical to the party's overall fortunes.

Kentucky is another attention-grabbing race, where 35-year-old Democrat Alison Lundergan Grimes is trying to unseat the Senate's minority leader, Mitch McConnell, 72. In a blistering speech on Aug. 2, she said if he were a TV show, McConnell would be Mad Men because of his unfair treatment of women and because he's "stuck in 1968." He doesn't believe women deserve equal pay for equal work, she said in her attack on the longtime senator, who was seated a few feet away.

That Udall and other Democratic candidates are highlighting divisive social issues shows that the politics of those issues is shifting, Harwood noted in the New York Times piece. Whereas Republicans for decades were able to use certain issues as political ammunition and to rally voters around them, the wedge issues are now cutting the other way, for Democrats.

American demographics have changed and along with them, attitudes on social issues including same-sex marriage, contraception and marijuana, which means Democrats and Republicans have been forced to re-evaluate their election strategies. How much or how little should they emphasize social issues in their appeals to voters?

The answer depends on where the race is and who is running, according to Justin Barasky, national press secretary for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

In Colorado, Republican candidate Gardner's support for measures to restrict access to birth control is a "huge liability," Barasky said in an interview.

"It's not surprising to me that the [Republican senatorial committee] is upset that we're talking about it there," he said.

If Democrats seem to be talking more about social issues in this election cycle compared to previous ones, it's not just because of changing attitudes but because of who they are up against, Barasky suggested.

"I think the country is shifting, but it is also much more of a reflection of the fact that the Republican Party is shifting and it's shifting away from where the rest of the country is," he said.

Abortion and contraception, for example, didn't feature as prominently the last time around, Barasky said, because there weren't as many Republican candidates supporting the "personhood" movement — which seeks to give rights to a fertilized human egg.

"This cycle they're all pro-personhood," he said. "It's a much more conservative, right-wing,

extreme slate of Senate candidates than we've ever seen."

Gardner in Colorado actually backed away from his past support of personhood once he entered the Senate race, but Udall isn't dropping the issue and has already released two television attack ads related to it.

The ongoing debate about contraception and abortion was given new life a few weeks ago when the Supreme Court ruled that the company Hobby Lobby Stores Inc. could opt out of health insurance coverage of some birth control for its employees because of religious objections.

The ruling provided an opportunity for Democrats and Republicans to define themselves on the issue and Democrats used it to boast that they are the ones who care more about women and women's issues.

In recent elections, Democrats have fared better with women than Republicans, and Dan Hopkins, a political scientist at Georgetown University, said in an interview that Democratic strategists are using social issues to broadly appeal both to women and young voters.

"I think the Democrats are trying to find ways to say to the female voters, to young voters, 'We are the party that shares your values,' " he said. "Given the particular strategic choices that these candidates face, social issues are often productive for them as a way to say to a group of voters, 'You're more on my side than on my opponent's side.' "

Same-sex marriage laws, for example, have been changing through the courts and at the state levels, yet candidates running for Senate seats might still use the issue of gay rights as a symbolic one.

"Candidates will use those kinds of issues as symbols of affinity," Hopkins said.

Some Republicans say their party isn't interested in making same-sex marriage a campaign issue and it's the Democrats who are trying to stir controversy.

"I'm not saying it's not important," Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, who is up for re-election, told The Associated Press. "But Republicans haven't been talking about this. We've been talking about economic and fiscal issues. It's those on the left that are pushing it."

The economy, while it's improving, is an issue the Democrats are likely not ready to tether themselves to in an election, Hopkins explained, which could be another reason for the emphasis on social issues. Add to that the fact that foreign policy isn't at the forefront of voters' minds the way it was when thousands of Americans were fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Democrats are exuding confidence that they are on the right side of the social issues and they're trying to portray Republicans as out of touch with Americans' attitudes, especially when it comes to women.

"I do think that the Republican Party is struggling to keep pace with the times," said Barasky, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee spokesman.

Democrats' greater popularity with women works in their favour, but the party doesn't necessarily have to do much to take advantage of that, he said, because Republicans are essentially shooting themselves in the foot.

"Whether it's equal pay, or access to birth control, there are Republican Senate candidates across the map — whether we're in a blue state or a red state — that are hostile to

women's issues. And that certainly, without a doubt, helps Democrats."

## Why You Should Support Republican Candidates This Election

<http://www.cosmopolitan.com/politics/news/a32751/why-you-should-vote-republican/> December 09, 2014

On this discussion of equal pay, ... with women about where we stand and where the Democratic Party ... Republican candidates should young women be ...

Election Day is here, and across the country, Republicans and Democrats are running neck-and-neck. Kirsten Kukowski, press secretary for the Republican National Committee, talked with Cosmopolitan.com about what Republicans are doing for women, the issues that matter to Republicans the most, and why young female voters should support Republican candidates in the election.

There's been a lot of talk about how much the women's vote matters this election. How does your party's platform benefit women?

Women are a very, very important share of the overall electorate in each of these races, and we have a lot of interesting candidates who present a contrast to the Democrats, which is why I think it's coming down to the wire in a lot of these races. You have candidates talking about the economy, talking about how we need to be giving women opportunities to have better-paying jobs, and opportunities to rise up the ladder if that's what women want to do. We've had a really interesting debate in a lot of these states about what the priorities are for women, where the Republican Party stands on a lot of these issues, and how we help women and Americans in general have more opportunities when it comes to their jobs, when it comes to their health care, etc.

We have dozens of pieces of legislation on the floor of the Senate that Harry Reid and a lot of Democrats have stepped in the way of. A lot of it has to do with how we put people back in charge of their own small businesses and the businesses they want to create. How do we deregulate a lot of what this government has blown up to be? How do we start focusing on access to health care, which has been a big issue a lot of Americans are facing under Obamacare? There are frankly a lot of things that we as a party have not been able to have a conversation with Americans about because Democrats in the Senate have been acting as a stopgap to the president.

Raising the minimum wage is on the ballot in four states this election and will likely be an issue in Congress next year. Two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women. But overall, members of the GOP have opposed increases. What's the GOP plan for low-wage workers?

I'm going to take this conversation back a step and say we went into the field and did some polling and message testing to get a feel for where women were in these key states, and one of the issues we polled was minimum wage. We came out with an interesting result: It said that over half of women in this country are more likely to agree with our point, which is that we need to push forward policies that will serve as stepping stones for people to get off of minimum wage jobs and to higher-paid jobs and get more experience and training for the type of jobs that all Americans and all women want to achieve. Instead of focusing on keeping women and Americans in minimum wage jobs, how do we use this as an opportunity to talk about more training, more opportunity, and more stepping stones to get women further ahead?

A vote on the Paycheck Fairness Act has been blocked by Republicans multiple times. What's the Republican Party plan for achieving pay equity?



On this discussion of equal pay, there's been a lot of rhetoric, and I think we need to break through that, which is why we as a party decided that we needed to enter the conversation and have an honest conversation with women about where we stand and where the Democratic Party stands. We took a very aggressive approach, knowing that having gone in and looked at how women see equal pay, it's not as white and black as Democrats would like everyone to believe. We as a party stand for equal pay for equal work, and that is something that the Democratic policies on the books and that they are trying to push have not accomplished. We need to go above and beyond more government regulations and more government input on this. There is a problem. We are dedicated to help fix it. We do not agree with the Democratic Party that the only way to do that is government influence. We should look at best practices in the private sector. What I don't want to see is this conversation to be one-sided, which Democrats continue to try to have.

So what has the Republican Party done to improve pay equity?

There's a lot of legislation on flexibility time. Basically, legislation that puts women in a better position to have what they want to have — have more flexibility, to have opportunity, to have the things that they want in their work-life balance. There are lots of pieces of legislation that have been submitted by a lot of our senators and in the House of Representatives waiting for Democrats to move on them. For instance, there is Deb Fisher from Nebraska, who has Workplace Advancement Amendment; Mitch McConnell had flextime legislation he was trying to push; Mike Lee has the Working Families Flexibility Act.

We recently did a roundtable with five women who are pro-choice Republicans, and they said it's difficult for them to find a place in the current political universe. Does the Republican Party welcome pro-choicers?

I know that this tends to be a divisive issue and some of your readers aren't going to agree with our platform, but I will say that we as a party need to do a better job, and we're starting to have this conversation with voters, that our 80 percent friend is not our enemy. We want to be able to have those conversations with those women regardless of where they stand on this issue. In terms of this conversation about reproductive rights, I think it's unfortunate that the Democrats continue to have what they believe is a one-sided conversation and not talk about what we all actually agree on. We're all for making adoptions easier in this country. It's a very expensive process, and I think we as a party and a country need to do a better job talking about that.

Public health experts mostly agree that the best way to lower the abortion rate is through wide access to affordable or free contraception. What is the GOP doing legislatively to expand access to birth control and family planning tools?

You have a lot of candidates who are talking about over-the-counter birth control, and as a party we're the only ones who are out there talking about this. A lot of Republican candidates are having an honest, good conversation about this.

The GOP platform supports a Human Life Amendment. What would that mean for young women?

I think that the Republican Party is a pro-life party. We've had a lot of discussions over the past few years about what that means, but as a matter of policy, it's unfortunate that this has become a very divisive white and black issue. I think that where women stand on reproduction — on life — is all very different. I think that we've seen in a lot of polling that a lot of women — actually majority of women — want to see some sort of limits on late-term abortion. So should we have a conversation on what that looks like? I think unfortunately that for a lot of people with the labels — like personhood and like the labels "pro-choice"

and "pro-life" – I think this conversation has been too generalized. I think a lot of that has to do with how the Democrats have framed this over the last few years. To be honest with you, a lot of it was because we weren't fighting back. We got put on the defensive on reproductive rights and on life issues, and we didn't go out there and stand confidently and say, "We're going to have this conversation with America" because we actually know, and believe, there are a lot more women out there with us than what the Democrats are trying to create as a situation and as a country.

Should female voters be concerned about the 100-some Republicans who have signed onto federal personhood legislation?

As I said before, I know that this is a divisive issue and there are some of you out there who are not going to agree on the platform. Each of these candidates is going to have a conversation with their constituents, just like our candidates are right now, and that's really the beauty of our government, and I think we've seen that play out in the midterms.

Which female Republican candidates should young women be watching to stand up for our interests?

There are a lot. We have Joni Ernst in Iowa who is doing fantastic work, and I think she is going to be victorious on Tuesday, and she's going to be a leader in our party. We have great candidates in New York running for Congress, one of whom will be the youngest woman elected to Congress if she's successful on Tuesday. We are dedicated to having people like Joni Ernst, like Elise Stefanik, like Shelley Moore Capito out there as leaders in this party.

What policies are those candidates prioritizing that would be particularly good for women?

I don't work for any of their campaigns so I can't get into granular detail on specific policies, but having paid attention to this election for so long, I do know that we as a party — and each of these candidates — has talked about primarily jobs and the economy and how is that for six years of this stagnant economy under President Obama and the Democrats that we have not been able to lift these people out of unemployment? I also do think that it has been health care, Obamacare. It's about how we can manage the direction of our health care system and ensure that the government and bureaucracy are not making decisions about people's health care. Health care is a very personal thing between doctors and their patients, and I think under Obamacare there has been a concern that that relationship has been put in jeopardy and also that access to good care has been put into jeopardy as well as costs.

With elections around the corner, what's the message you would like to send to young women?

I think that we as a Republican Party have a lot of great candidates that are running in various races across the country doing great things, and that the Republican Party has been and will continue to be about getting more women involved, from the staff level to the candidate level to getting more women out there volunteering for all of our candidates. I think the Democrats have been thinking that they had women to themselves, and they're simply taking women for granted. We as a Republican Party were not at the table, and we allowed that narrative to sink in, and we're not giving up on that.

Anything else Cosmopolitan readers should know?

I am a 30-year-old woman who has worked the Republican politics for a very long time. I have seen parties not communicate very well with my peers. And we've started this election

cycle last year — we basically brought in all of the Republican committees, like the committee that's in charge of Senate and the committee that's in charge of Congress and state legislators, and we all sat in a room and said, "OK, we have a problem in how we communicate with women — especially young women. How do we change that?" There were a series of things that came out of those meetings last year that I think have put us in a better place. We went out and very aggressively started talking about equal pay, because we had gone out in the field and did polling and focus groups and said, "You know what, on a lot of these issues about equal pay and minimum wage, the women are not where the Democrats say they are." I cannot stress enough that what this committee and what our party is trying to do to be more aggressive, to have a better conversation, to get more women like me out working on campaigns so that they're sitting at the table when a Cory Gardner is making decisions and is going to talk to people. Where is he going? What events is he going to? What are his remarks? So those kind of things — the party needs leadership in this, and that is what we worked very hard on to do.

This interview has been edited and condensed.

This is part of Cosmopolitan.com's midterm election coverage. Share this article with #CosmoVotes and make sure to vote on November 4.

## **Democratic candidates working hard to get women to the polls**

<http://www.latimes.com/local/politics/la-me-pol-democrats-women-20140929-story.html> December 09, 2014

Democratic candidates working ... records on such signature Democratic issues as equal pay for ... he accused Republican candidate Carl DeMaio of ...

When Rep. Julia Brownley aired the first television ad of her fall reelection campaign, she aimed the 30-second spot directly at women.

"I believe we are strongest when women are in charge of their own decisions," the Westlake Village Democrat says in the ad, which is airing on local cable stations.

"That's why," Brownley continues, gazing straight into the camera, "I will always fight for equal pay for equal work and defend your right to choose."

As Democratic leaders struggle to keep control of the U.S. Senate and minimize losses of House seats this fall, Brownley's pitch is key. She and other Democratic candidates are focusing on women, who have strongly favored the party in recent elections and helped President Obama keep his job two years ago.

But many of those women stay home when the presidency is not at stake. So Democrats are making a special effort to draw them to the polls this fall.

"Women voters and women's issues are key for House races ... no question about it," said Kelly Ward, executive director of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. "We know Democratic voters drop off in midterm elections more than Republican voters do, and women are a big part of that."

It's especially true of single women, according to research by the nonpartisan Voter Participation Center and the consulting firm Lake Research Partners. About 22 million fewer unmarried women voted in 2010, a nonpresidential year, than in 2008, when Obama first ran. For married women, the drop was 10 million.

In California, despite Democrats' 43%-28% registration edge, the lack of competitive races at the top of the ticket this year has party leaders worried that their voters will take a pass

on the Nov. 4 election.

That could enable Republicans, with their consistently better turnout rates, to make some gains, even taking back at least a couple of the four California congressional seats they lost in 2012, some analysts say.

Enter ROSIE, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee's new voter outreach project formally titled Re-engaging Our Sisters in Elections. Intentionally evocative of Rosie the Riveter of World War II, it's a computer model that identifies unmarried female voters so the party can reach out to them.

Campaign messages can be tailored to those women and the issues they have been shown to care most about, including pay equity, child care, domestic violence, and access to healthcare, abortion and other reproductive rights.

The campaign of Rep. Ami Bera (D-Elk Grove) has used ROSIE data for phone banks. Female volunteers call targeted voters to talk about the differences between their candidate and his Republican challenger, former Rep. Doug Ose of Sacramento, on issues of particular interest to women.

Others emphasize women's economic matters in their campaign mail and highlight House Republicans' records on such signature Democratic issues as equal pay for equal work.

Some of the pitches come in TV ads like Brownley's; others show up in fundraising appeals or on the campaign trail.

Democrat Amanda Renteria, challenging Rep. David Valadao (R-Hanford), chose Women's Equality Day last month to announce her endorsement from the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce.

Bera, who is locked in a fierce fight to hold the seat he won in 2012 by defeating a Republican incumbent, recently addressed the annual gathering of the National Partnership for Women and Families. A physician, Bera said he has worked "to keep politics out of the exam room."

The Inland Empire battle to succeed retiring Rep. Gary Miller (R-Rancho Cucamonga) is arguably the Democrats' best hope for wresting a seat from Republicans. Redlands' Democratic mayor, Pete Aguilar, joined female small-business owners and members of his "Women for Pete" coalition to mark Women's Equality Day.

Aguilar supporters also have publicized his Republican opponent's opposition to abortion and his endorsement from the National Right to Life, an anti-abortion group.

A campaign spokesman for the opponent, military veteran Paul Chabot, who finished first in the primary in the Democrat-leaning district, cited its "large conservative Catholic Latino population" as one of several factors he believes will give Chabot the edge on election day.

The two other strongly challenged freshman congressmen, Reps. Scott Peters (D-San Diego) and Raul Ruiz (D-Palm Desert), also have made special appeals to women.

Joined by scores of women, Peters held a news conference at which he accused Republican candidate Carl DeMaio of having an "anti-women agenda."

Among other things, he cited DeMaio's support for a proposal that would make prescription contraceptives available over the counter, saying such a plan would "make birth control less affordable" (health insurance coverage typically does not extend to over-the-counter

drugs).

DeMaio said nonprescription birth control would save women the trouble of a doctor's appointment.

In Palm Desert, Democratic activists demonstrated in front of the campaign headquarters of Ruiz's Republican challenger, Assemblyman Brian Nestande. They were protesting Nestande's vote against a state bill, now signed into law, requiring most health plans to cover birth control measures.

Nestande explained his rationale to the Desert Sun newspaper, saying "Obamacare has inserted the government into private medical decisions."

Ken Goldstein, a professor of politics at the University of San Francisco, said it makes sense for Democrats to focus on women this year, especially in close races, but increasing turnout won't be easy.

"Democrats are getting very good," Goldstein said, at finding which voters to talk to and sending the right messages. "But there is only so much you can do to get people who don't feel like voting to vote."

### **Third time is not a charm for the GOP on equal pay**

<http://blog.chron.com/txpotomac/2014/03/third-time-is-not-a-charm-for-the-gop-on-equal-pay/> December 09, 2014

... Texas' Attorney General and GOP candidate Greg Abbott ... would have vetoed the equal pay bill that Democratic candidate Wendy ... equal pay for equal work and ...

In the past two weeks, the Texas GOP has been on the defensive about equal pay for women.

On Monday, Beth Cubriel, the executive director of the state's Republican Party, said in a TV interview that women "need to be better negotiators" instead of depending on new laws for pay equity.

It was the latest in a string of televised comments that have given Democrats new ammunition in the gender-charged gubernatorial race.

Last week, Texas' Attorney General and GOP candidate Greg Abbott skirted the question of whether or not he, like Gov. Perry, would have vetoed the equal pay bill that Democratic candidate Wendy Davis sponsored in the state Senate last year.

And on Sunday, Cari Christman, the director of RedState Women, a new Republican women's PAC intended to gain support from women voters, said that a law wasn't the right way to gain equal pay before stumbling over her words as she called Texas women "busy."

With just over seven months until Election Day, Davis has been quick to use these instances to fuel her campaign's rhetoric that Abbott is not the candidate who will best represent his female constituents.

"Voters, whether they're Democrats or Republicans, find it offensive that Greg Abbott fought against equal pay in the courtroom at the same time he accepted a 62% taxpayer funded pay raise as attorney general," said Rebecca Acuña, a spokesman for the Davis campaign. "Texans want a governor who will fight for economic fairness for all hardworking families, not more of Greg Abbott's business-as-usual hostility to fair pay legislation."

Polls show Abbot holds a steady lead in the race, although they also show a significant gender gap, with Davis leading among Texas women. A recent Rasmussen poll showed Abbott with a 53-41 percent lead overall among likely voters, by virtue of a 66-29 percent lead among likely male voters. Likely female voters favored Davis, 53-41. Rasmussen is a GOP-affiliated pollster.

Marcy Stech, national press secretary for EMILY's List, a Washington, D.C.-based PAC that helps elect pro-choice, Democratic women to office, pointed to the most recent string of comments on equal pay as a representation of Abbott's policies and platform.

"I think what remains clear is that Abbott remains desperately out of touch with the needs of working women in Texas and he's clueless about how to make up for it," she said. "His team spouts their beliefs trying to justify his opposition to equal pay...and what's worst about this is that Team Abbott has blamed women who don't receive equal pay by calling them busy or poor negotiators."

Jenn Brown, executive director of Battleground Texas, a PAC intended to make Texas into a swing state, also insisted these three incidents were not mistakes or political gaffes, but real reflections of Abbott's political platform.

"The scary thing is that these were not gaffes," Brown said. "They didn't misspeak. They legitimately believe that women are too busy to fight for fair pay and are just not as good of negotiators as men. Greg Abbott even went to court to defend income inequality against women. "

But RedState Women insisted Abbott's stance on Davis' equal-pay bill has nothing to do with his desire to limit opportunity for women, and that the issue has become more of a liberal talking point than anything else.

"The Republican agenda is one of expanded opportunity for all: equal opportunity for women and men to live and work free from cumbersome government intervention, bureaucracy and red tape," the PAC's Christman said Tuesday. "Without question women deserve equal pay for equal work and current law protects women from sex-based wage discrimination. This issue is simply a red herring to distract from the Democrats' anti-growth, anti-opportunity agenda that limits opportunity for middle and low income families, and the women who run them."

But Democrats refuse to accept this explanation from the GOP, pointing to Abbott's campaigning with Ted Nugent, a retired rock star who has admitted to having sex with underage girls, as further proof of where he stands on women's issues.

"Texas women are paying attention," Stech said. "We've seen from Ted Nugent to now equal pay, it's clear Greg Abbott is on the wrong side of this and it's going to give their campaign busy days from here on out."

Abbott's campaign did not return request for comment Tuesday.

## National Equal Pay Day

[http://www.democrats.org/news/blog/national\\_equal\\_pay\\_day](http://www.democrats.org/news/blog/national_equal_pay_day) December 09, 2014

Today is National Equal Pay Day. ... Paid for by the Democratic National Committee ... This communication is not authorized by any candidate or candidate's ...

Today is National Equal Pay Day. Each year the date of this commemoration reflects how far into the current year women must work to match what men earned in the previous year.

President Obama marked the occasion by issuing a presidential proclamation:

Generations of women have fought for the advancement of their sisters, daughters, and themselves in acts of great courage—reaching for and winning the right to vote, breaking barriers in America's universities and boardrooms, and flooding the modern workforce with skilled talent. While our nation has come far, obstacles continue to exist for working women, who still earn less on average than working men.

Women are more likely than men to attend and graduate college and yet earn 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man. This economic and social inequity affects families and over a lifetime decreases the earning benefits of women. And although the income disparity gap between men and women has decreased since the signing of the Equal Pay Act in 1963, we must rededicate ourselves to the fight for economic equality for all.

President Obama has demonstrated clearly that he is committed to equal pay:

That is why one of my first acts as President was to sign the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, a law that empowers women who have been discriminated against in their salaries to have their day in court to make it right. I established the National Equal Pay Enforcement Task Force to identify persistent challenges to equal pay enforcement and ensure equal pay laws are vigorously enforced throughout our country. My administration also published Women in America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being, the first comprehensive federal report on the status of American women in almost 50 years, which documents that although women have higher graduation rates than men at all academic levels, the wage gap still persists. We are pursuing these efforts because of the simple fact that when women are paid fairly, our whole nation will benefit.

## Republican candidates?

<https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20070907113037AAAd8rr4> December 09, 2014

Give a solid reason that I should vote for any of the republican candidates ... for a republican, rather than a democratic this ... you pay for such a ...

Amnesty - I'm not sure why people seem to think that all democrats support amnesty and all republicans are opposed o it. Immigrant workers have been granted amnesty under every president at least since Reagan, If you take a count that includes 3 republicans and 1 democrat.

Taxes - Wow the Ron Paul supporters touting that he has never voted to raise taxes. Do you think he actually looks at the bills before he votes for them. I seem to get the impression that he sees taxes and just votes no. It would be my opinion that a voting record liek this over 20 years would mean 1 thing. He doesn't vote to raise taxes just so he can say he doesn't vote to raise taxes. Certainly at some point in the past 20 or so years there has been 1 tax incrase which may have been a good bill and may have been needed. For example we can't afford the "War on Terror" now, Do you think we could have afford it if there hadn't been any tax increases the past 20 years.

Additionally F. Thompson did not serve a full 2 terms in the US Senate his time serving in the US Senate would be equal to that of Hillary's right now.

I liked the opinion on Rudy of being an outside the establishment type of candidate though I disagree with it. Rudy has become very much within the establishment since he left the Mayor's office. Additionally take a look at presidential history. Those who come into office as a "Washington Outsider", tend to have a very difficult time accomplishing anything there first term. It happened to GWB (before 9/11), it happened to Clinton, it happened to

Reagan, etc. Though eventually they become a part of the Washington establishment and tend to get things accomplished then.

## Democratic Party (United States)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic\\_Party\\_\(United\\_States\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)) December 09, 2014

... increased wages, equal pay, ... voting for Republican presidential candidates. ... the Democratic Party because Democratic positions on issues ...

The Democratic Party is one of the two major contemporary political parties in the United States, along with the younger Republican Party. Tracing its origins back to the Democratic-Republican Party, the modern Democratic Party was founded around 1828.[6] There have been 15 Democratic presidents, the first being Andrew Jackson, who served from 1829 to 1837; the most recent is the current president, Barack Obama, who has served since 2009.

Since the 1930s, the party has promoted a social-liberal platform, supporting a mixed economy and social justice.[3][7] The party's philosophy of contemporary American liberalism advocates civil and political rights and liberties along with social justice.[8] It pursues a mixed economy by providing government intervention and regulation in the economy.[9] These interventions, such as universal health care, labor protection, social programs, equal opportunity, consumer protection, and environmental protection, form the party's economic policy basis.[10] Until the late 20th century the party had a powerful conservative and populist wing based in the rural South, which over time has greatly diminished. Today its Congressional caucus is composed mostly of progressives and centrists.[11]

In the 114th Congress, following the 2014 elections, the Democratic Party will hold a minority of seats in the House of Representatives as well as in the United States Senate. The party also holds a minority of state governorships and control of a minority of state legislatures.

The Democratic Party evolved from the Jeffersonian Republican or Democratic-Republican Party organized by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in opposition to the Federalist party of Alexander Hamilton and John Adams. The party favored republicanism, a weak federal government, states' rights, agrarian interests (especially Southern planters) and strict adherence to the Constitution; it opposed a national bank, close ties to Great Britain, and business and banking interests. The Party came to power in the election of 1800.

After the War of 1812, the Federalists virtually disappeared and the Jeffersonian party split into factions. They split over the choice of a successor to President James Monroe, and the party faction that supported many of the old Jeffersonian principles, led by Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, became the Democratic Party. As Norton explains the transformation in 1828:

Opposing factions led by Henry Clay helped form the Whig Party. The Democratic Party had a small but decisive advantage over the Whigs until the 1850s, when the Whigs fell apart over the issue of slavery. In 1854, angry with the Kansas–Nebraska Act, anti-slavery Democrats left the party and joined Northern Whigs to form the Republican Party.[13][14]

Behind the platforms issued by state and national parties stood a widely shared political outlook that characterized the Democrats:

The Democrats split over the choice of a successor to President James Buchanan along Northern and Southern lines; factions of the party provided two separate candidacies for



President in the election of 1860, in which the Republican Party gained ascendancy. Southern Democrats, after some delegates followed the lead of the Fire-Eaters by walking out of the Democratic convention at Charleston's Institute Hall in April 1860, and were subsequently joined by those who, once again led by the Fire-Eaters, left the Baltimore Convention the following June when the convention would not adopt a resolution supporting extending slavery into territories whose voters did not want it, nominated the pro-slavery incumbent Vice-President, John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, for President and General Joseph Lane, former Governor of Oregon, for Vice President. The Northern Democrats proceeded to nominate Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois for President and former Governor of Georgia Herschel V. Johnson for Vice-President, while some southern Democrats joined the Constitutional Union Party, backing its nominees (who had both been prominent Whig leaders), former Senator, Speaker of the House, and Secretary of War John Bell of Tennessee for President and the politician, statesman, and educator Edward Everett of Massachusetts for Vice-President. This fracturing of the Democrats led to a Republican victory, and Abraham Lincoln was elected the 16th President of the United States.

As the American Civil War broke out, Northern Democrats were divided into War Democrats and Peace Democrats. The Confederate States of America, whose political leadership, mindful of the welter prevalent in antebellum American politics and with a pressing need for unity, largely viewed political parties as inimical to good governance; consequently the Confederacy had none, or at least none with the wide organization inherent to other American parties. Most War Democrats rallied to Republican President Abraham Lincoln and the Republicans' National Union Party in the election of 1864, which featured Andrew Johnson on the Republican ticket even though he was a Democrat from the South. Johnson replaced Lincoln in 1865 but stayed independent of both parties. The Democrats benefited from white Southerners' resentment of Reconstruction after the war and consequent hostility to the Republican Party. After Redeemers ended Reconstruction in the 1870s, and following the often extremely violent disenfranchisement of African Americans led by such white supremacist Democratic politicians as Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina in the 1880s and 1890s, the South, voting Democratic, became known as the "Solid South." Though Republicans won all but two presidential elections, the Democrats remained competitive. The party was dominated by pro-business Bourbon Democrats led by Samuel J. Tilden and Grover Cleveland, who represented mercantile, banking, and railroad interests; opposed imperialism and overseas expansion; fought for the gold standard; opposed bimetallism; and crusaded against corruption, high taxes, and tariffs. Cleveland was elected to non-consecutive presidential terms in 1884 and 1892.[16]

Agrarian Democrats demanding Free Silver overthrew the Bourbon Democrats in 1896 and nominated William Jennings Bryan for the presidency (a nomination repeated by Democrats in 1900 and 1908). Bryan waged a vigorous campaign attacking Eastern moneyed interests, but he lost to Republican William McKinley. The Democrats took control of the House in 1910 and elected Woodrow Wilson as president in 1912 and 1916. Wilson effectively led Congress to put to rest the issues of tariffs, money, and antitrust that had dominated politics for 40 years with new progressive laws. The Great Depression in 1929 that occurred under Republican President Herbert Hoover and the Republican Congress set the stage for a more liberal government; the Democrats controlled the House of Representatives nearly uninterrupted from 1931 until 1995 and won most presidential elections until 1968. Franklin D. Roosevelt, elected to the presidency in 1932, came forth with government programs called the New Deal. New Deal liberalism meant the regulation of business and the promotion of labor unions, as well as federal spending to aid to the unemployed, help distressed farmers, and undertake large-scale public works projects. The opponents, who stressed opposition to unions, support for business, and low taxes, started calling themselves "conservatives." [17]

Issues facing parties and the United States after World War II included the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement. Republicans attracted conservatives and white Southerners from the Democratic coalition with their use of the Southern strategy and resistance to New Deal and Great Society liberalism. African Americans had traditionally supported the Republican Party because of the anti-slavery agenda of Abraham Lincoln and successors such as Ulysses Grant. But they began supporting Democrats following the ascent of the Franklin Roosevelt administration, the New Deal, the integration of the military and embrace of proposed civil rights legislation by President Harry Truman in 1947–48, and the postwar Civil Rights movement. The Democratic Party's main base of support shifted to the Northeast, marking a dramatic reversal of history. Bill Clinton was elected to the presidency in 1992, governing as a New Democrat. The Democratic Party lost control of Congress in the election of 1994 to the Republican Party. Re-elected in 1996, Clinton was the first Democratic President since Franklin Roosevelt to be elected to two terms. Following twelve years of Republican rule, the Democratic Party regained majority control of both the House and the Senate in the 2006 elections. Some of the party's key issues in the early 21st century in their last national platform have included the methods of how to combat terrorism, homeland security, expanding access to health care, labor rights, environmentalism, and the preservation of liberal government programs.[18] In the 2010 elections, the Democratic Party lost control of the House, but kept a small majority in the Senate (reduced from the 111th Congress). It also lost its majority in state legislatures and state governorships. However, the 2012 elections which re-elected President Obama represented a partial reversal of the results of the 2010 midterm vote, increasing the Democratic majority in the Senate and reducing the Republican majority in the House.

The Democratic Party traces its origins to the inspiration of the Democratic-Republican Party, founded by Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and other influential opponents of the Federalists in 1792. That party also inspired the Whigs and modern Republicans. Organizationally, the modern Democratic Party truly arose in the 1830s, with the election of Andrew Jackson. Since the division of the Republican Party in the election of 1912, it has gradually positioned itself to the left of the Republican Party on economic and social issues.

Until the period following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—which was championed by a Democratic president but faced lower Democratic than Republican support in Congress—the Democratic Party was primarily a coalition of two parties divided by region. Southern Democrats were typically given high conservative ratings by the American Conservative Union while northern Democrats were typically given very liberal ratings. Southern Democrats were a core bloc of the bipartisan conservative coalition which lasted through the Reagan-era. The economically activist philosophy of Franklin D. Roosevelt, which has strongly influenced American liberalism, has shaped much of the party's economic agenda since 1932, and served to tie the two regional factions of the party together until the late 1960s. In fact, Roosevelt's New Deal coalition usually controlled the national government until the 1970s.[19]

Based on a poll conducted in 2014, Gallup found that 30% of Americans identified as Democrats, 23% as Republicans, and 45% as Independents.[20] In the same poll a survey of registered voters stated that 47% identified as Democrats or leaned towards the party; the same poll found that 40% of registered voters identified as Republicans or leaned towards the Republican party.

Initially calling itself the "Republican Party," Jeffersonians were labeled "Democratic" by the opposition Federalists, with the hope of stigmatizing them as purveyors of democracy or mob rule.[25] By the Jacksonian era, the term "The Democracy" was in use by the party; the name "Democratic Party" was eventually settled upon[26] and became the official name in 1844.[27]

The term "Democrat party" has also been in local use but has usually been used by opponents since 1952 as an epithet.

The most common mascot symbol for the party has been the jackass, or donkey.[28] Andrew Jackson's enemies twisted his name to "jackass" as a term of ridicule regarding a stupid and stubborn animal. However the Democrats liked the common-man implications and picked it up too, so the image persisted and evolved.[29] Its most lasting impression came from the cartoons of Thomas Nast 1870 in Harper's Weekly. Cartoonists followed Nast and used the donkey to represent the Democrats, and the elephant to represent the Republicans.

In the early 20th century, the traditional symbol of the Democratic Party in Midwestern states such as Indiana, Kentucky, Oklahoma and Ohio was the rooster, as opposed to the Republican eagle. This symbol still appears on Oklahoma, Kentucky, Indiana, and West Virginia[30] ballots. In New York, the Democratic ballot symbol is a five-pointed star.[31] For the majority of the 20th century, Missouri Democrats used the Statue of Liberty as their ballot emblem. This meant that when Libertarian candidates received ballot access in Missouri in 1976, they could not use the Statue of Liberty, their national symbol, as the ballot emblem. Missouri Libertarians instead used the Liberty Bell until 1995, when the mule became Missouri's state animal. From 1995 to 2004, there was some confusion among voters, as the Democratic ticket was marked with the Statue of Liberty (used by Libertarians in other states) and the Libertarians' mule was easily mistaken for a Democratic donkey.

Although both major political parties (and many minor ones) use the traditional American red, white, and blue colors in their marketing and representations, since election night 2000 the color blue has become the identified color of the Democratic Party, while the color red has become the identified color of the Republican Party. That night, for the first time, all major broadcast television networks used the same color scheme for the electoral map: blue states for Al Gore (Democratic nominee) and red states for George W. Bush (Republican nominee). Since then, the color blue has been widely used by the media to represent the party. This has caused confusion among non-American observers because blue is the traditional color of the right and red the color of the left outside of the United States. For example, in Canada red represents the Liberals, while blue represents the Conservatives. In the United Kingdom, red denotes the Labour Party and blue symbolizes the Conservative Party. Blue has also been used both by party supporters for promotional efforts — ActBlue, BuyBlue, BlueFund, as examples — and by the party itself in 2006 both for its "Red to Blue Program", created to support Democratic candidates running against Republican incumbents in the midterm elections that year, and on its official website.

In September, 2010, the Democratic Party unveiled its new logo, which featured a blue D inside a blue circle. It was the party's first official logo, as the donkey logo had only been semi-official.

Jefferson-Jackson Day is the annual fundraising event (dinner) held by Democratic Party organizations across the United States.[32] It is named after Presidents Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson, whom the party regards as its distinguished early leaders.

The song "Happy Days Are Here Again" is the unofficial song of the Democratic Party. It was used prominently when Franklin D. Roosevelt was nominated for president at the 1932 Democratic National Convention and remains a sentimental favorite for Democrats today. For example, Paul Shaffer played the theme on the Late Show with David Letterman after the Democrats won Congress in 2006. "Don't Stop" by Fleetwood Mac was adopted by Bill Clinton's presidential campaign in 1992, and has endured as a popular Democratic song. Also, the emotionally similar song "Beautiful Day" by the band U2 has become a favorite theme song for Democratic candidates. John Kerry used the song during his 2004

presidential campaign, and several Democratic Congressional candidates used it as a celebratory tune in 2006.[33][34] Aaron Copland's Fanfare for the Common Man is traditionally performed at the beginning of the Democratic National Convention.

The Democratic National Committee (DNC) is responsible for promoting Democratic campaign activities. While the DNC is responsible for overseeing the process of writing the Democratic Platform, the DNC is more focused on campaign and organizational strategy than public policy. In presidential elections, it supervises the Democratic National Convention. The national convention is, subject to the charter of the party, the ultimate authority within the Democratic Party when it is in session, with the DNC running the party's organization at other times. The DNC is chaired by Florida congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz.[35]

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) assists party candidates in House races; its current chairman (selected by the party caucus) is Rep. Steve Israel of New York. Similarly, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), headed by Senator Patty Murray of Washington, raises large sums for Senate races. The Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (DLCC), chaired by Mike Gronstal of Iowa, is a smaller organization with much less funding that focuses on state legislative races. The DNC sponsors the College Democrats of America (CDA), a student-outreach organization with the goal of training and engaging a new generation of Democratic activists. Democrats Abroad is the organization for Americans living outside the United States; they work to advance the goals of the party and encourage Americans living abroad to support the Democrats. The Young Democrats of America (YDA) is a youth-led organization that attempts to draw in and mobilize young people for Democratic candidates, but operates outside of the DNC. In addition, the recently created branch of the Young Democrats, the Young Democrats High School Caucus, attempts to raise awareness and activism amongst teenagers to not only vote and volunteer, but participate in the future as well. The Democratic Governors Association (DGA), chaired by Governor Peter Shumlin of Vermont, is an organization supporting the candidacies of Democratic gubernatorial nominees and incumbents. Likewise, the mayors of the largest cities and urban centers convene as the National Conference of Democratic Mayors.

Each state also has a state committee, made up of elected committee members as well as ex-officio committee members (usually elected officials and representatives of major constituencies), which in turn elects a chair. County, town, city, and ward committees generally are composed of individuals elected at the local level. State and local committees often coordinate campaign activities within their jurisdiction, oversee local conventions and in some cases primaries or caucuses, and may have a role in nominating candidates for elected office under state law. Rarely do they have much funding, but in 2005, DNC Chairman Dean began a program (called the "50 State Strategy") of using DNC national funds to assist all state parties and pay for full-time professional staffers.[36]

Since the 1890s, the Democratic Party has favored liberal positions (the term "liberal" in this sense describes modern liberalism, not classical liberalism). In recent exit polls, the Democratic Party has had broad appeal across all socio-ethno-economic demographics. [37][38][39]

Historically, the party has favored farmers, laborers, labor unions, and religious and ethnic minorities; it has opposed unregulated business and finance, and favored progressive income taxes. In foreign policy, internationalism (including interventionism) was a dominant theme from 1913 to the mid-1960s. In the 1930s, the party began advocating welfare spending programs targeted at the poor. The party had a fiscally conservative, pro-business wing, typified by Grover Cleveland and Al Smith, and a Southern conservative wing that shrank after President Lyndon B. Johnson supported the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The major influences for liberalism were labor unions (which peaked in the 1936–1952 era), and the African American wing, which has steadily grown since the 1960s. Since the 1970s, environmentalism has been a major new component.

In recent decades, the party has adopted a centrist economic and socially progressive agenda, with the voter base having shifted considerably to the right. Democrats began to advocate for more social justice, affirmative action, a balanced budget, and a market economy tempered by government intervention (mixed economy). The economic policy adopted by the modern Democratic Party, including the former Clinton administration, has been referred to as "Third Way".[40][unreliable source?]

The Democratic Party, once dominant in the Southeastern United States, is now strongest in the Northeast (Mid-Atlantic and New England), Great Lakes region, and the Pacific Coast (including Hawaii). The Democrats are also very strong in major cities (regardless of region).

Social liberals (modern liberals) and progressives constitute the majority of the Democratic voter base. Liberals thereby form the largest united demographic within the Democratic base. According to the 2012 exit poll results, liberals constituted 25% of the electorate, and 86% of American liberals favored the candidate of the Democratic Party.[41] White-collar college-educated professionals were mostly Republican until the 1950s; they now compose perhaps the most vital component of the Democratic Party.[42]

A large majority of liberals favor universal health care, with many supporting a single-payer system. A majority also favor diplomacy over military action, stem cell research, the legalization of same-sex marriage, stricter gun control, and environmental protection laws as well as the preservation of abortion rights. Immigration and cultural diversity is deemed positive; liberals favor cultural pluralism, a system in which immigrants retain their native culture in addition to adopting their new culture. They tend to be divided on free trade agreements and organizations such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Most liberals oppose increased military spending and the mixing of church and state.[43]

This ideological group differs from the traditional organized labor base. According to the Pew Research Center, a plurality of 41% resided in mass affluent households and 49% were college graduates, the highest figure of any typographical group. It was also the fastest growing typological group between the late 1990s and early 2000s.[43] Liberals include most of academia[44] and large portions of the professional class.[37][38][39]

Progressives are a reformist faction within the party.[45][46] Many progressive Democrats are descendants of the New Left of Democratic presidential candidate Senator George McGovern of South Dakota; others were involved in the presidential candidacies of Vermont Governor Howard Dean and U.S. Representative Dennis Kucinich of Ohio. In 2014, progressive senator Elizabeth Warren set out her "11 Eleven Commandments of Progressivism", being tougher regulation on corporations, affordable education, scientific investment and environmentalism, network neutrality, increased wages, equal pay, collective bargaining rights, defending safety-net programs, marriage equality, immigration reform, and unabridged access to reproductive healthcare.[47][48] Progressives generally favor a mixed economy and the welfare state.[49] Today many progressives have made the fight against economic inequality their top priority.[50] Progressives are generally considered to be synonymous with Liberals, however the two groups differ on a variety of issues.[51][52]

The Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) is a caucus of progressive Democrats, and is the single largest Democratic caucus in the House of Representatives. Its current chairs are Keith Ellison of Minnesota and Raúl Grijalva of Arizona. Its members have included Representative Dennis Kucinich of Ohio, Representative John Conyers of Michigan,

Representative Jim McDermott of Washington, Representative John Lewis of Georgia, Representative Barbara Lee of California, and the late Senator Paul Wellstone of Minnesota. Senators Sherrod Brown of Ohio, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, and Ed Markey of Massachusetts were all members of the caucus when in the House of Representatives. Today, no Democratic Senators belong to the Progressive Caucus, however Independent senator Bernie Sanders is a member. America Votes and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights are liberal umbrella organizations that push for progressive causes.

Though centrist Democrats differ on a variety of issues, they typically foster a mix of political views and ideas. Unlike other Democratic factions, they tend to be supportive of the use of military force, including the war in Iraq, and are more willing to reduce government welfare, as indicated by their support for welfare reform and tax cuts.[53] One of the most influential factions was the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), a nonprofit organization that advocated centrist positions for the party. The DLC hailed President Bill Clinton as proof of the viability of "Third Way" politicians and a DLC success story, the DLC disbanded in 2011. Much of the former DLC is now represented in the think tank Third Way. [citation needed] Centrist Democrats form the New Democrat Coalition in the House of Representatives and Senate.[citation needed]

In the House of Representatives, the Blue Dog Coalition, a caucus of fiscal conservatives, social conservatives and moderates forms much of the Democratic Party's current faction of conservative democrats. They have acted as a unified voting bloc in the past, giving their members some ability to change legislation and broker compromises with the Republican Party's leadership. Historically, southern democrats were generally much more ideologically conservative than conservative democrats are now. In 1972, the last year that a sizable number of conservatives dominated the southern wing of the Democratic Party, the American Conservative Union gave higher ratings to most southern Democratic Senators and Congressmen than it did to Republicans.

There was a split vote among many conservative Southern Democrats in the 1970s and 1980s. Some supported local and statewide conservative Democrats while simultaneously voting for Republican presidential candidates.[54]

Some libertarians support the Democratic Party because Democratic positions on issues such as civil rights and the separation of church and state are more closely aligned to their own than those of the Republican Party. They oppose gun control, the "War on Drugs," protectionism, corporate welfare, government debt, and an interventionist foreign policy. The Democratic Freedom Caucus is an organized group of this faction, whose economic program involves shifting existing taxes to mainly land and natural resources.

Some civil liberties advocates also support the party because of their support of habeas corpus for unlawful combatants, opposition to torture of suspected terrorists, extraordinary rendition, warrantless wiretapping, indefinite detention without trial or charge, the Patriot Act, the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and what they see as the erosion of the protections of the Bill of Rights.[55]

The party espouses a mixed economy, which tempers a free market economy by providing government intervention in an effort to reduce economic inequality.[76] This is also known as a social market economy. The party sees increased wages, labor unions, tax cuts for small businesses and low-earners, public welfare, government regulated health care and public education as tools to create a balanced and fair economy. They support infrastructure development and other government sponsored programs in an effort to achieve economic development and job creation, while stimulating private sector job creation.[77] However since the 1990s the party has at times supporting neoliberal

economic reforms, which cut the size of government and reduced market regulations.[78] The party has continuously rejected laissez-faire economics as well as socialist economics, instead favoring Keynesian economics within a capitalist market-based system.[79]

Democrats support a more progressive tax structure to provide more services and reduce economic inequality by making sure that the wealthiest Americans pay the highest amount in taxes.[80] Democrats support more government spending on social services while spending less on the military.[81][82] They oppose the cutting of social services, such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and various other welfare programs,[83] believing it to be harmful to efficiency and social justice. Democrats believe the benefits of social services, in monetary and non-monetary terms, are a more productive labor force and cultured population, and believe that the benefits of this are greater than any benefits that could be derived from lower taxes, especially on top earners, or cuts to social services. Furthermore, Democrats see social services as essential towards providing positive freedom, i.e. freedom derived from economic opportunity. The Democratic-led House of Representatives reinstated the PAYGO (pay-as-you-go) budget rule at the start of the 110th Congress.[84]

The Democratic Party favors raising the minimum wage and believes that all Americans have the right to a fair wage. They call for a \$10.10 an hour national minimum wage and think the minimum wage should continue be adjusted regularly.[85] The Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 was an early component of the Democrats' agenda during the 110th Congress. In 2006, the Democrats supported six state ballot initiatives to increase the minimum wage; all six initiatives passed.[86]

Democrats call for "affordable and quality health care," and many advocate an expansion of government intervention in this area. Democrats favor national health insurance or universal health care in a variety of forms to address the rising costs of modern health insurance. Some Democrats, such as Representatives John Conyers and John Dingell, have called for a single-payer program of Medicare for All. The Progressive Democrats of America, a group operating inside the Democratic Party, has made single-payer universal health care one of their primary policy goals.[87] The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, signed into law by President Obama on March 23, 2010, has been one of the most significant pushes for universal health care to become a reality. As of April 2014, more than 10 million Americans have enrolled in healthcare coverage since the launch of the Affordable Care Act.[88]

Democrats favor improving public education and increasing government spending on all forms of learning.[86] Democrats have the long-term aim of having low-cost, publicly funded college education with low tuition fees (like in much of Europe and Canada), which should be available to every eligible American student, or alternatively, with increasing state funding for student financial aid such as the Pell Grant or college tuition tax deduction.[89] [90]

Democrats believe that the government should protect the environment and have a history of environmentalism. In more recent years, this stance has had as its emphasis alternative energy generation as the basis for an improved economy, greater national security, and general environmental benefits.[91]

The Democratic Party also favors expansion of conservation lands and encourages open space and rail travel to relieve highway and airport congestion and improve air quality and economy; it "believe[s] that communities, environmental interests, and government should work together to protect resources while ensuring the vitality of local economies. Once Americans were led to believe they had to make a choice between the economy and the environment. They now know this is a false choice." [92]

The most important environmental concern of the Democratic Party is climate change. Democrats, most notably former Vice President Al Gore, have pressed for stern regulation of greenhouse gases. On October 15, 2007, he won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to build greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and laying the foundations for the measures needed to counteract these changes asserting that "the climate crisis is not a political issue, it is a moral and spiritual challenge to all of humanity." [93]

Democrats have supported increadomestic renewable energy development, including wind and solar farms, in an effort to reduce carbon pollution. The party has supported higher taxes on oil companies and increased regulations on coal power plants, favoring a policy of reducing long-term reliance on fossil fuels. [94][95]

Many Democrats support fair trade policies when it comes to the issue of international trade agreements, although some in the party have started supporting free trade in recent decades. [96] In the 1990s, the Clinton administration and a number of prominent Democrats pushed through a number of agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Since then, the party's shift away from free trade became evident in the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) vote, with 15 House Democrats voting for the agreement and 187 voting against. [97][98]

The Democratic Party supports equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, or national origin. Many Democrats support affirmative action programs to further this goal. Democrats also strongly support the Americans with Disabilities Act to prohibit discrimination against people based on physical or mental disability. As such, the Democrats pushed as well the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, a legal expansion that became law. [99]

The party is very supportive of improving voting rights as well as election accuracy and accessibility. [100] They support increasing voting time and ending voter ID laws. They support reforming the electoral system as well as passing comprehensive campaign finance reform. [71] The party supported the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and as a party have often been pioneers for democracy in the United States. [73]

The Democratic Party believe that all women should have access to birth control, and support public funding of contraception for poor women. The Democratic Party, in its national platforms from 1992 to 2004, has called for abortion to be "safe, legal and rare" — namely, keeping it legal by rejecting laws that allow governmental interference in abortion decisions, and reducing the number of abortions by promoting both knowledge of reproduction and contraception, and incentives for adoption. The wording changed in the 2008 platform. When Congress voted on the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act in 2003, Congressional Democrats were split, with a minority (including current Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid) supporting the ban, and the majority of Democrats opposing the legislation. [101]

The Democratic Party opposes attempts to reverse the 1973 Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*, which declared abortion covered by the constitutionally protected individual right to privacy under the Ninth Amendment, and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, which lays out the legal framework in which government action alleged to violate that right is assessed by courts. As a matter of the right to privacy and of gender equality, many Democrats believe all women should have the ability to choose to abort without governmental interference. They believe that each woman, conferring with her conscience, has the right to choose for herself whether abortion is morally correct.

Current Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid self-identifies as 'pro-life', while President Barack Obama and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi self-identify as 'pro-choice'.



Groups such as Democrats for Life of America represent the pro-life faction of the party, while groups such as EMILY's List represent the pro-choice faction. A Newsweek poll from October 2006 found that 25% of Democrats were pro-life while a 69% majority was pro-choice.[102]

Many Democratic politicians have called for systematic reform of the U.S. immigration system such that residents that have come into the U.S. illegally have a pathway to legal citizenship. President Obama remarked on November 2013 that he felt it was "long past time to fix our broken immigration system", particularly to allow "incredibly bright young people" that came over as students to become full citizens. The Public Religion Research Institute found in a late 2013 study that 73% of Democrats supported the pathway concept, compared to 63% of Americans as a whole.[103]

In 2013, Democrats in the Senate passed S.744, which would reform immigration policy to allow citizenship for illegal immigrants in the US and improve the lives of all immigrants currently living in the United States.[104]

The Democratic Party is supportive of LGBT rights. Most support for same-sex marriage in the United States has come from Democrats, although some favor civil unions instead or oppose same-sex marriage. Support for same-sex marriage has increased in the past decade according to ABC News. An April 2009 ABC News/Washington Post public opinion poll put support among Democrats at 62%, [105] while a June 2008 Newsweek poll found that 42% of Democrats support same-sex marriage while 23% support civil unions or domestic partnership laws and 28% oppose any legal recognition at all. [106] A broad majority of Democrats have supported other LGBT-related laws such as extending hate crime statutes, legally preventing discrimination against LGBT people in the workforce, and repealing Don't ask, don't tell. A 2006 Pew Research Center poll of Democrats found that 55% supported gays adopting children with 40% opposed while 70% support gays in the military with only 23% opposed. [107] Gallup polling from May 2009 stated that 82% of Democrats support open enlistment. [108]

The 2004 Democratic National Platform stated that marriage should be defined at the state level and it repudiated the Federal Marriage Amendment. [109] The 2008 platform, while not stating support of same-sex marriage, called for repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act, which banned federal recognition of same-sex marriage and removed the need for interstate recognition, supported antidiscrimination laws and the extension of hate crime laws to LGBT people, and opposed the don't ask, don't tell military policy. [110] The 2012 platform included support for same-sex marriage and for the repeal of DOMA. [111]

President Barack Obama became the first sitting U.S. president to say he supports same-sex marriage, announcing his position on May 9, 2012. [112][113] Previously, he had opposed restrictions on same-sex marriage such as the Defense of Marriage Act, which he promised to repeal. [114] California's Prop 8, [115] and a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage (which he opposed saying that "decisions about marriage should be left to the states as they always have been." [116]) but also stated that he personally believed marriage to be between a man and a woman and that he favored civil unions that would "give same-sex couples equal legal rights and privileges as married couples". [114] Earlier, when running for the Illinois Senate in 1996, he said that he "unequivocally support(ed) gay marriage" and "favor(ed) legalizing same-sex marriages, and would fight efforts to prohibit such marriages." [117] Senator John Kerry, Democratic presidential candidate in 2004, did not support same-sex marriage. Former President Bill Clinton and former Vice President Al Gore said in 2009 that they now support gay marriage. [118][119]

With a stated goal of reducing crime and homicide, the Democratic Party has introduced various gun control measures, most notably the Gun Control Act of 1968, the Brady Bill of

1993, and Crime Control Act of 1994. However, some Democrats, especially rural, Southern, and Western Democrats, favor fewer restrictions on firearm possession and warned the party was defeated in the 2000 presidential election in rural areas because of the issue.[120] In the national platform for 2008, the only statement explicitly favoring gun control was a plan calling for renewal of the 1994 Assault Weapons Ban.[121]

The Democratic Party supports the death penalty far less than the Republican Party. Though most Democrats in Congress have never seriously moved to overturn the rarely used federal death penalty, both Russ Feingold and Dennis Kucinich have introduced such bills with little success. Democrats have led efforts to overturn state death penalty laws, particularly in New Jersey and in New Mexico. They have also sought to prevent reinstatement of the death penalty in those states which prohibit it, including Massachusetts and New York. During the Clinton administration, Democrats led the expansion of the federal death penalty. These efforts resulted in the passage of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, signed into law by President Clinton; the law heavily limited appeals in death penalty cases.

In 1992, 1993, and 1995, Democratic Texas Congressman Henry González unsuccessfully introduced the Death Penalty Abolition Amendment which prohibited the use of capital punishment in the United States. Democratic Missouri Congressman William Lacy Clay, Sr. cosponsored the amendment in 1993.

During his Illinois Senate career, now-President Barack Obama successfully introduced legislation intended to reduce the likelihood of wrongful convictions in capital cases, requiring videotaping of confessions. When campaigning for the presidency, Obama stated that he supports the limited use of the death penalty, including for people who have been convicted of raping a minor under the age of 12, having opposed the Supreme Court's ruling in *Kennedy v. Louisiana* that the death penalty was unconstitutional in child rape cases.[122] Obama has stated that he thinks the "death penalty does little to deter crime", and that it is used too frequently and too inconsistently.[123]

Many Democrats are opposed to the use of torture against individuals apprehended and held prisoner by the U.S. military, and hold that categorizing such prisoners as unlawful combatants does not release the U.S. from its obligations under the Geneva Conventions. Democrats contend that torture is inhumane, decreases the United States' moral standing in the world, and produces questionable results. Democrats largely spoke out against waterboarding.[citation needed]

Torture became a very divisive issue in the party after Barack Obama was elected president. Many centrist Democrats and members of the party's leadership supported the use of torture while the liberal wings continued to be steadfastly opposed to it.[124]

Many Democrats are opposed to the Patriot Act, however when the law was passed most Democrats were supportive of it and all but two Democrats in the U.S. Senate voted for the original Patriot Act legislation in 2001. The lone nay vote was from Russ Feingold of Wisconsin; Mary Landrieu of Louisiana did not vote. In the House the Democrats voted for the Act by 145 yea and 62 nay. Democrats split on the renewal in 2006. In the Senate, Democrats voted 34 for the 2006 renewal, and 9 against. In the House, Democrats voted 66 voted for the renewal, and 124 against.[125]

The Democratic Party believes that individuals should have a right to privacy. For example, many Democrats have opposed the NSA warrantless surveillance of U.S. citizens.

Some Democratic officeholders have championed consumer protection laws that limit the sharing of consumer data between corporations. Most Democrats oppose sodomy laws

and believe that government should not regulate consensual noncommercial sexual conduct among adults as a matter of personal privacy.[126]

In 2002, Congressional Democrats were divided on the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq; 147 voted against it (21 in the Senate and 126 in the House) and 110 voted for it (29 in the Senate, 81 in the House). Since then, many prominent Democrats, such as former Senator John Edwards, have expressed regret about this decision, and have called it a mistake, while others, such as Senator Hillary Clinton have criticized the conduct of the war but not repudiated their initial vote for it (though Clinton later went on to repudiate her stance during the 2008 primaries). Referring to Iraq, in April 2007 Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid declared the war to be "lost" while other Democrats (especially during the 2004 presidential election cycle) accused the President of lying to the public about WMDs in Iraq. Amongst lawmakers, Democrats are the most vocal opponents of Operation Iraqi Freedom and campaigned on a platform of withdrawal ahead of the 2006 mid-term elections.

A March 2003 CBS News poll taken a few days before the invasion of Iraq found that 34% of Democrats nationwide would support it without United Nations backing, 51% would support it only with its backing, and 14% would not support it at all.[127] The Los Angeles Times stated in early April 2003 that 70% of Democrats supported the decision to invade while 27% opposed it.[128] The Pew Research Center stated in August 2007 that opposition increased from 37% during the initial invasion to 74%.[129] In April 2008, a CBS News poll found that about 90% of Democrats disapprove of the Bush administration's conduct and want to end the war within the next year.[130]

Democrats in the House of Representatives near-unanimously supported a non-binding resolution disapproving of President Bush's decision to send additional troops into Iraq in 2007. Congressional Democrats overwhelmingly supported military funding legislation that included a provision that set "a timeline for the withdrawal of all US combat troops from Iraq" by March 31, 2008, but also would leave combat forces in Iraq for purposes such as targeted counter-terrorism operations.[131][132] After a veto from the president, and a failed attempt in Congress to override the veto,[133] the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 was passed by Congress and signed by the president after the timetable was dropped. Criticism of the Iraq War subsided after the Iraq War troop surge of 2007 led to a dramatic decrease in Iraqi violence. The Democratic-controlled 110th Congress continued to fund efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Presidential candidate Barack Obama advocated a withdrawal of combat troops within Iraq by late 2010 with a residual force of peacekeeping troops left in place. [134] He stated that both the speed of withdrawal and the amount of troops left over would be "entirely conditions-based." [134]

On February 27, 2009, President Obama announced, "As a candidate for president, I made clear my support for a timeline of 16 months to carry out this drawdown, while pledging to consult closely with our military commanders upon taking office to ensure that we preserve the gains we've made and protect our troops ... Those consultations are now complete, and I have chosen a timeline that will remove our combat brigades over the next 18 months." [135] Around 50,000 non-combat related forces will remain.[135] Obama's plan drew wide bipartisan support, including that of defeated Republican Presidential candidate Senator John McCain.[135]

The Democratic Party has been very skeptical of Iran and has supported ending the Iranian nuclear weapon program. In 2013 the Democratic led administration reached a diplomatic agreement with the government of Iran to halt the Iranian nuclear program in exchange for economic sanction relief. As of 2014 the agreement has been successful and the Democratic party has called for more cooperation with Iran in the future.[136][137]

Democrats in the House of Representatives and in the Senate near-unanimously voted for the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Terrorists against "those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States" in Afghanistan in 2001, supporting the NATO coalition invasion of the nation. Most elected Democrats continue to support the Afghanistan conflict, and some, such as a Democratic National Committee spokesperson, have voiced concerns that the Iraq War shifted too many resources away from the presence in Afghanistan.[138][139][140] Since 2006, Democratic candidate Barack Obama has called for a "surge" of troops into Afghanistan and, since 2008, Republican candidate John McCain has also called for a "surge".[140] As President, Obama sent a "surge" force of additional troops to Afghanistan. Troop levels were 94,000 in December 2011, and are falling, with a target of 68,000 by fall 2012. Obama plans to bring all the troops home by 2014.[141]

Support for the war among the American people has diminished over time, and many Democrats have changed their opinion and now oppose a continuation of the conflict.[142] [143] In July 2008, Gallup found that 41% of Democrats called the invasion a "mistake" while a 55% majority disagreed; in contrast, Republicans were more supportive of the war. The survey described Democrats as evenly divided about whether or not more troops should be sent—56% support it if it would mean removing troops from Iraq and only 47% support it otherwise.[143] A CNN survey in August 2009 stated that a majority of Democrats now oppose the war. CNN polling director Keating Holland said, "Nearly two thirds of Republicans support the war in Afghanistan. Three quarters of Democrats oppose the war." [142] An August 2009 Washington Post poll found similar results, and the paper stated that Obama's policies would anger his closest supporters.[144]

The Democratic Party has both recently and historically supported Israel.[145][146] Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in 2009, "When it comes to Israel, Republicans and Democrats speak with one voice." [147] A 2008 Gallup poll found that 64% say that they have a favorable image of Israel while only 16% say that they have a favorable image of the Palestinian Authority.[145] Democratic National Committee chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz said in 2014 that the perception of a split within the party on the topic of Israel is unfounded.[148] Within the party, the majority view is held by the Democratic leadership although some members such as John Conyers Jr., George Miller, Nick Rahall, Dave Obey, Pete Stark, Dennis Kucinich, and Jim McDermott as well as former President Jimmy Carter are less or not supportive of Israel.[146] The party leadership refers to the few Democrats unsympathetic to Israel as a "fringe".[146]

The 2008 Democratic Party Platform acknowledges a "special relationship with Israel, grounded in shared interests and shared values, and a clear, strong, fundamental commitment to the security of Israel, our strongest ally in the region and its only established democracy." It also included:

A January 2009 Pew Research Center study found that, when asked "which side do you sympathize with more", 42% of Democrats and 33% of liberals (a plurality in both groups) sympathize most with the Israelis. Around half of all political moderates and/or independents sided with Israel.[150]

The party pursues a Russia policy that recognizes that country's importance and advances the core U.S. security interests at stake in Russia's historic transformation, beginning with cooperative work to secure vulnerable stockpiles of nuclear weapons and materials. The party has also urged more diplomacy and a following of international law between Russia and its neighbor states.[151]

Democrats supported the Obama administrations loans to the government of Ukraine in the

aftermath of the 2014 Ukrainian revolution.[152] In response to the post-revolution Russian backlash, the party endorsed sanctions against parts of the Russian economy.[153]

The Democratic Party has expressed its support for the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico to exercise their right to self-determination.[109][154][155][156]

Professionals, those who have a college education, and those whose work revolves around the conceptualization of ideas have supported the Democratic Party by a slight majority since 2000. Between 1988 and 2000, professionals favored Democrats by a 12-percentage point margin. While the professional class was once a stronghold of the Republican Party, it has become increasingly split between the two parties, leaning in favor of the Democratic Party. The increasing support for Democratic candidates among professionals may be traced to the prevalence of social liberal values among this group.[157]

A study on the political attitudes of medical students, for example, found that "U.S. medical students are considerably more likely to be liberal than conservative and are more likely to be liberal than are other young U.S. adults. Future U.S. physicians may be more receptive to liberal messages than current ones, and their political orientation may profoundly affect their health system attitudes." [158] Similar results are found for professors, who are more strongly inclined towards liberalism and the Democratic Party than other occupational groups.[44] The Democratic Party also has strong support among scientists, with 55% identifying as Democrats, 32% as Independents, and 6% as Republicans and 52% identifying as liberal, 35% as moderate, and 9% as conservative.[159]

Academics, intellectuals, and the highly educated overall constitute an important part of the Democratic voter base. Academia in particular tends to be progressive. In a 2005 survey, nearly 72% of full-time faculty members identified as liberal, while 15% identified as conservative. The social sciences and humanities were the most liberal disciplines while business was the most conservative. Male professors at more advanced stages of their careers as well as those at elite institutions tend to be the most liberal.[44] Another survey by UCLA conducted in 2001/02, found 47.6% of scholars identifying as liberal, 34.3% as moderate, and 18% as conservative.[160] Percentages of professors who identified as liberal ranged from 49% in business to over 80% in political science and the humanities.[44] Social scientists, such as Brett O'Bannon of DePauw University, have claimed that the "liberal" opinions of professors seem to have little, if any, effect on the political orientation of students.[161][162] As of July 2008 the Students for Academic Freedom arm of the David Horowitz Freedom Center, a conservative organization, posted a list of 440 student complaints, most of which pertain to perceived liberal bias of college professors.

Those with graduate education, have become increasingly Democratic beginning in the 1992,[163] 1996,[163] 2000,[37] 2004,[38] and 2008[164] elections. Intellectualism, the tendency to constantly reexamine issues, or in the words of Edwards Shields, the "penetration beyond the screen of immediate concrete experience," has also been named as an explanation why academia is strongly democratic and liberal.[165][166]

In the past, a self-identified Republican was more likely to have a 4-year college degree; however, according to some recent surveys, similar percentages of Republicans and Democrats are likely to have 4-year college degrees, and Democrats are more likely to hold post-graduate degrees.[167]

An analysis of 2008 through 2012 survey data from the General Social Survey, the National Election Studies, and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press led to a slightly different assessment of the overall educational status of self-identified Democrats and Republicans:

Studies have shown that younger voters tend to vote mostly for Democratic candidates in recent years. Despite supporting Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, the young have voted in favor of the Democratic presidential candidate in every election since Bill Clinton in 1992, and are more likely to identify as liberals than the general population.[169] In the 2004 presidential election, Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry received 54% of the vote from voters of the age group 18–29, while Republican George W. Bush received 45% of the vote from the same age group. In the 2006 midterm elections, the Democrats received 60% of the vote from the same age group.[38][39] Polls suggest that younger voters tend to be more liberal than the general population and have more liberal views than the public on same-sex marriage and universal healthcare, helping Barack Obama carry 66% of their votes in 2008. The Young Democrats of America are an affiliated organization of members of the party younger than 36 that advocates for youth issues and works for youth voter turnout.

Since the 1930s, a critical component of the Democratic Party coalition has been organized labor. Labor unions supply a great deal of the money, grass roots political organization, and voting base of support for the party. Democrats are far more likely to be represented by unions, although union membership has declined, in general, during the last few decades. This trend is depicted in the following graph from the book, *Democrats and Republicans — Rhetoric and Reality*. [170] It is based on surveys conducted by the National Election Studies (NES).

The historic decline in union membership over the past half century has been accompanied by a growing disparity between public sector and private sector union membership percentages. The three most significant labor groupings in the Democratic coalition today are the AFL-CIO and Change to Win labor federations, as well as the National Education Association, a large, unaffiliated teachers' union. Both the AFL-CIO and Change to Win have identified their top legislative priority for 2007 as passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. Other important issues for labor unions include supporting industrial policy (including protectionism) that sustains unionized manufacturing jobs, raising the minimum wage and promoting broad social programs such as Social Security and universal health care.

While the American working class has lost much of its political strength with the decline of labor unions,[171] it remains a stronghold of the Democratic Party and continues as an essential part of the Democratic base. Today, roughly a third of the American public is estimated to be working class with around 52% being either members of the working or lower classes.[172][173] Yet, as those with lower socioeconomic status are less likely to vote, the working and lower classes are underrepresented in the electorate. The working class is largely distinguished by highly routinized and closely supervised work. It consists mainly of clerical and blue-collar workers.[172] Even though most in the working class are able to afford an adequate standard of living, high economic insecurity and possible personal benefit from an extended social safety net, make the majority of working class person left-of-center on economic issues. Most working class Democrats differ from most liberals, however, in their more socially conservative views. Working class Democrats tend to be more religious and likely to belong to an ethnic minority. Socially conservative and disadvantaged Democrats are among the least educated and lowest earning ideological demographics. In 2005, only 15% had a college degree, compared to 27% at the national average and 49% of liberals, respectively. Together socially conservative and the financially disadvantaged comprised roughly 54% of the Democratic base.[43] The continued importance of the working class votes manifests itself in recent CNN exit polls, which shows that the majority of those with low incomes and little education vote for the Democratic Party.[37][38][39]

Although the "gender gap" has varied over many years, women of all ages are more likely than men to identify as Democrats. Recent polls have indicated that 41% of women identify as Democrats while only 25% of women identify as Republicans and 26% as independents, while 32% of men identify as Democrats, 28% as Republicans and 34% as independents. Among ethnic minorities, women also are more likely than males to identify as Democrats. Also, American women that identified as single, living with a domestic partner, divorced, separated, or widowed are more likely than men in these categories to vote Democratic, in contrast to married Americans, which split about equally between Democrat and Republican. Again, women in these categories are significantly more likely than males in these categories to vote Democratic.[174] The National Federation of Democratic Women is an affiliated organization meant to advocate for women's issues. National women's organizations that often support Democratic candidates are Emily's List and the National Organization for Women.

Americans that identify as single, living with a domestic partner, divorced, separated, or widowed are more likely to vote Democratic, in contrast to married Americans, which split about equally between Democrat and Republican.[174]

GSS surveys of more than 11,000 Democrats and Republicans conducted between 1996 and 2006 came to the result that the differences in fertility rates are not statistically significant between these parties, with the average Democrat having 1.94 children and the average Republican having 1.91 children.[175] However, there is a significant difference in fertility rates between the two related groups liberals and conservatives, with liberals reproducing at a much lower rate than conservatives.[175]

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans typically vote Democratic in national elections within the 70-77% range, according to national media exit polling. In heavily gay precincts in large cities across the nation, the average was higher, ranging from 85-94%. This trend has continued since 1996 when Bill Clinton won 71% of the LGBT vote compared to Bob Dole's 16% and 13% for others. In 2000 Al Gore won 70% to George W. Bush's 25% with 5% for others, in 2004 John Kerry won 77% to George W. Bush's 23%, in 2008 Barack Obama won 70% to John McCain's 27% with 3% to others and in 2012 Barack Obama won 76% to Mitt Romney's 22% with 2% to others. Patrick Egan, a professor of politics at New York University specializing in LGBT voting patterns, calls this a "remarkable continuity." Saying "about three-fourths vote Democratic and one-fourth Republican from year to year." [176] Notable LGBT Democrats include current Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and current Representatives Jared Polis of Colorado and David Cicilline of Rhode Island. The late activist and San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk was a Democrat as is former Representative Barney Frank of Massachusetts. The National Stonewall Democrats is an LGBT advocacy group associated with the Democratic Party. The LGBT Equality Caucus is a congressional caucus of 97 Democrats and 3 Republicans that work and advocate for LGBT rights within the House of Representatives.[178]

From the end of the Civil War, African Americans primarily favored the Republican Party due to its overwhelming political and more tangible efforts in achieving abolition, particularly through President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.[179] The south had long been a Democratic stronghold, favoring a state's right to legal slavery. In addition, the ranks of the fledgling Ku Klux Klan were composed almost entirely of white Democrats angry over poor treatment by northerners and bent on reversing the policies of Reconstruction.[180] However, African Americans began drifting to the Democratic Party when Franklin Roosevelt was elected president.[179] Support for the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s by Democratic presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson helped give the Democrats even larger support among the African-American community, which consistently vote between 85-95% Democratic.[179]

Prominent modern-day African-American Democratic politicians include Jim Clyburn, Ed Towns, Elijah Cummings, Maxine Waters, John Lewis, Deval Patrick, Charles Rangel, John Conyers, and the current President of the United States, Barack Obama, who managed to net over 95% of the African-American vote in the 2008 election.[181] Despite being unaffiliated, the NAACP often participates in organizing and voter turnout drives and advocates for progressive causes, especially those that affect people of color.[182] Within the House of Representatives, the Congressional Black Caucus, consisting of 44 black Democrats, serves to represent the interests of African Americans and advocate on issues that affect them.

The Hispanic population, particularly the large Mexican American population in the Southwest and the large Puerto Rican and Dominican populations in the Northeast, have been strong supporters of the Democratic Party. In the 1996 presidential election, Democratic President Bill Clinton received 72% of the Hispanic vote.[183] In following years, however, the Republican Party gained increasing support from the Hispanic community, especially among Hispanic Protestants and Pentecostals. With his much more liberal views on immigration, President Bush was the first Republican president to gain 40% of the Hispanic vote (he did so in the 2004 presidential election). Yet the Republican Party's support among Hispanics eroded in the 2006 midterm elections, dropping from 44% to 30%, with the Democrats gaining in the Hispanic vote from 55% in 2004 to 69% in 2006. [38][39] Democrats increased their share of the Hispanic vote in the 2008 presidential election, with Barack Obama receiving 67%. According to exit polls by Edison Research, Obama increased his support again in 2012, winning 71% of Hispanic voters.[184]

Cuban Americans still tend to vote Republican, though there has been a noticeable change starting with the 2008 elections. During the 2008 elections Barack Obama received 47% of the Cuban American vote in Florida.[185] According to Bendixen's exit polls, 84% of Miami-Dade Cuban American voters 65 or older backed McCain, while 55% of those 29 or younger backed Obama,[186] showing that the younger Cuban-American generation has become more liberal.

Throughout the decade of the 2000s, 60% or more of Hispanic Roman Catholics who were registered to vote identified as either Democratic or leaning towards the Party.[187]

Unaffiliated Hispanic advocacy groups that often support progressive candidates and causes include the National Council of La Raza and the League of United Latin American Citizens. In the House of Representatives, the Democratic caucus of Hispanic Americans is the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

The Democratic Party also has strong support among the Native American population, particularly in Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Carolina. Though now a small percentage of the population (virtually non-existent in some regions), most Native American precincts vote Democratic in margins exceeded only by African-Americans.[188]

Jewish American communities tend to be a stronghold for the Democratic Party, with more than 70% of Jewish voters having cast their ballots for the Democrats in the 2004 and 2006 elections.[38][39] Al Gore received 79% of the Jewish votes in 2000, and Barack Obama won about 77% of the Jewish vote in 2008.[189] Support tends to vary among specific sectarian groups. For example, only 13% of Orthodox Jews supported Barack Obama in 2008 while around 60% of Conservative Jews and Reform Jews did so.[190] A 2010 poll by the Pew Research Center found that 60% of self-described Jews identified as Democratic or leaning towards the party, compared to 33% with those feelings towards Republicans. [187]



Jews as an important Democratic constituency are especially politically active and influential in large cities such as New York City, Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago; and play critical roles in large cities within presidential swing states, such as Philadelphia, Miami, and Las Vegas. Many prominent national Democrats in recent decades have been Jewish, including Chuck Schumer, Carl Levin, Abraham Ribicoff, Ben Cardin, Henry Waxman, Martin Frost, Joseph Lieberman, Bernie Sanders, Dianne Feinstein, Barney Frank, Barbara Boxer, Paul Wellstone, Rahm Emanuel, Russ Feingold, Herb Kohl, and Howard Metzenbaum.[190]

Arab Americans and Muslim Americans have leaned Democratic since the Iraq War.[191] Zogby found in June 2007 that 39% of Arab Americans identify as Democrats, 26% as Republicans, and 28% as independents.[191]

Arab Americans, generally socially conservative but with more diverse economic views, historically voted Republican until recent years, having supported George W. Bush over Al Gore in 2000.[192]

The 2012 poll found that 68% of Muslim Americans surveyed support Barack Obama.[193]

The Democratic Party also has strong support in the small but growing Asian American population. The Asian American population had been a stronghold of the Republican Party through the United States presidential election of 1992 in which George H. W. Bush won 55% of the Asian American vote, compared to Bill Clinton winning 31%, and Ross Perot winning 15% of the Asian vote. Originally, the vast majority of Asian Americans consisted of anti-communist Vietnamese refugees, Chinese Americans, Korean Americans, and socially conservative Filipinos who fled Ferdinand Marcos in the 1960s through the 1980s. The Democratic party made gains among the Asian American population starting with 1996 and in 2006, won 62% of the Asian American vote. Exit polls after the 2008 presidential election indicated that Democratic candidate, Barack Obama won 62% of the Asian American vote nationwide.[194] In the 2012 Presidential election, 73% of the Asian American electorate voted for Obama's re-election.[195] This is due to demographic shifts in the Asian American community, with growing numbers of well educated Chinese and Asian Indian immigrants that are typically economic centrist and social progressives.

Barack Obama has the support of 85% of Indian Americans, 68% of Chinese Americans, and 57% of Filipino Americans.[196] The Asian American community's increasing number of young voters has also helped to erode traditionally reliably Republican voting blocs such as Vietnamese and Filipino Americans, leading to an increase in support for Democrats. Prominent Asian-American Democrats include Senators Daniel Inouye, Daniel Akaka and Mazie Hirono, former Governor and Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke, and Representatives Mike Honda, Judy Chu, Doris Matsui, and Norman Mineta.

## Missouri Republicans Oppose Equal Pay For Women

<http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2012/06/05/495187/missouri-senate-republican-equal-pay/> December 09, 2014

"All Three Missouri Republican Senate Candidates Oppose Equal Pay Legislation" Share: Republicans Rep. Todd Akin, John Brunner, ...

As the Senate prepares to consider the Paycheck Fairness Act , Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO) has strongly backed the important measure, which would expand protections for women who face gender discrimination in the workplace.

But the three top Republicans seeking to challenge her this November unanimously expressed opposition to the bill, the Kansas City Star reports, suggesting that efforts like

this to reduce the significant wage gap between pay for men and women are not necessary:

With women still making just 77 cents for every dollar, the Paycheck Fairness Act would represent a much-needed step toward gender equity.

## **GOP candidate: Equal pay laws would deter businesses from hiring women**

<http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/gop-candidate-monica-wehby-businesses-would-steer-away-hiring-women>  
December 09, 2014

... said businesses would "steer away" from hiring women if equal pay measures were enacted. ... GOP candidate: Equal pay laws would deter businesses from hiring women

A Republican Senate candidate from Oregon expressed her belief that businesses wouldn't hire women if equal pay laws were implemented.

Monica Wehby said such legislation aimed at providing women the same opportunities as men would deny them careers.

"I would be concerned that it would make it more difficult for businesses to hire women because of the fear of lawsuits. They would tend to steer away. And I think that that's an unintended consequence of laws like this that increase regulation and legislation," she said Sunday during an interview with a local news station in Portland.

Senate Republicans in April rejected the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would have held employees responsible for wage discrimination against women and would have required the U.S. Department of Labor to collect wage data from supervisors. Wehby said she supports equality for women in the workplace, but thinks there are flaws in the bill.

"I would absolutely favor any legislation that supports equal pay for women, but this was a flawed piece of legislation," she said. "It did not take into account experience, hours worked, education."

The battle for equal pay continues to be a dividing issue in states around the country, as Democrats try to raise state minimum wages, enhance sick leave for women, and increase access to affordable childcare. Republicans blame their counterparts, though, for using equal pay measures as a distraction during an election year. Nationwide, women made 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man in 2012, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

Previously, during an interview with msnbc, Wehby expressed her surprise at the unbalanced treatment of women.

"It's hard to believe that in 21st-century America, women are still undervalued by employers," Wehby said. If elected, she would become the first woman senator from the Beaver State in 47 years.

"The race I want to run is the one that would be ran regardless of what gender I am, because the most important issues are the ones that affect us all," she added.

'30 in 30': Women Candidates to Watch in 2014

Wehby, the first woman to enroll and graduate from the UCLA neurosurgeon program, is currently a Portland pediatric neurosurgeon. She will challenge Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley in the state's Senate election on Nov. 4. A recent Huffington Post poll showed

Merkley leading Wehby by more than 14 percentage points.

## Senate Republicans Block Bill on Equal Pay

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/10/us/politics/senate-republicans-block-bill-on-equal-pay.html> December 09, 2014

Senate Republicans Block Bill on Equal Pay. ... salaries and by requiring the Equal Employment Opportunity ... against a female candidate in ...

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans on Wednesday blocked legislation meant to close the pay gap between men and women, framing an election-year fight between the parties over whose policies are friendlier to women.

The bill was an attempt by Democrats to press what they see as their electoral advantage among women in the coming midterm elections, but they fell short of the 60 votes they needed to prevent a filibuster and advance the legislation.

“For reasons known only to them, Senate Republicans don’t seem to be interested in closing wage gaps for working women,” Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, the majority leader, said in a floor speech.

Republican lawmakers have said that given existing anti-discrimination laws, the legislation is redundant and is a transparent attempt by Democrats to distract from President Obama’s much-criticized health care law.

Supporters of the bill, called the Paycheck Fairness Act, say it would bring transparency to worker pay by making it illegal for employers to penalize employees who discuss their salaries and by requiring the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to collect pay information from employers.

Mr. Obama signed executive measures on Tuesday that imposed similar requirements on government contractors.

Republican leaders assailed Democrats’ attempt to paint them as unsympathetic to women in the work force. The Senate Republican Conference on Wednesday called the pay equity legislation “the latest ploy in the Democrats’ election-year playbook.”

Senator Mitch McConnell, the minority leader who is fighting for re-election against a female candidate in Kentucky, said in a floor speech on Wednesday that women had lost ground on Mr. Obama’s watch, with declining wages and growing numbers in poverty.

“In other words,” he said, “when it comes to American women over all, what we’ve seen over the past five and a half years is less income and more poverty. That’s the story Senate Democrats don’t want to talk about.”

The pay equity bill is part of a broader Democratic strategy to appeal to low- and middle-income voters with pocketbook legislation like an increase in the federal minimum wage and an extension of long-term unemployment benefits. Neither of those measures is expected to pass a divided House.

The vote to proceed on the pay equity bill was 53 to 44, six votes short of a filibuster-proof majority after accounting for a no vote by Mr. Reid, a procedural move allowing him bring the bill to the floor again.

## Obama stumps for Democratic Senate candidate

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2014/11/01/obama-senate-campaign-gary-peters/18330717/>  
December 09, 2014

... a rally for a U.S. Senate candidate. Obama, ... promoting equal pay ... a specific Senate candidate. Some Democratic Senate candidates have been ...

DETROIT — President Obama spent Saturday night in a unique venue for him this campaign year, a rally for a U.S. Senate candidate.

Obama, whose 2014 campaigning has been confined mostly to fundraisers and governor's races, told backers at a loud college gym that the election of Gary Peters to the Senate will make it easier for Democrats to pursue their economic agenda.

As Democrats and Republicans across the country battle for control of the Senate, Obama told a boisterous group of Michigan Democrats at Wayne State University: "I need your vote."

Obama, who has been shunned by some Democratic Senate candidates because of his low poll ratings, said too many Republicans just say no to programs devoted to raising the minimum wage, promoting equal pay for women, and helping young people re-pay student loans.

"They don't have an agenda for the middle class!" Obama shouted as a crowd of several thousand cheered. "They don't have an agenda for Detroit! They don't have an agenda for Michigan!"

In an appearance geared largely to promoting voter turnout, Obama urged supporters to walk precincts, knock on doors, and make calls in order to get Democrats to the polls on Tuesday.

"I'm not worried about you," Obama told the crowd. "I need you to grab a friend."

As at previous events, Obama said the country has created jobs and forged economic growth since the financial collapse of 2008, and he particularly stressed the comeback of the crucial-to-Michigan auto industry. But there is "more work to do" for people have yet to feel the benefits, he said.

The Wayne State rally also feature gubernatorial candidate Mark Schauer, a former congressman who is challenging Republican incumbent Rick Snyder. Polls indicate a close contest.

Peters, a U.S. current House member, enjoys a big poll lead in his Senate race against Terri Lynn Land, a former Michigan secretary of state.

As the crowd cheered, Peters — a Wayne State graduate — welcomed Obama's appearance, and stressed the bailout of the auto industry.

"Thank God, our president stood up for American workers," said Peters, who also pointed out that his election could determine control of the Senate.

While control of the Senate is very much at stake in Tuesday's election, Obama has campaigned mostly for gubernatorial candidates. The president has appeared with Democratic Senate candidates at fundraisers and policy speeches, but this was the only rally of the last campaign week to feature a specific Senate candidate.

Some Democratic Senate candidates have been publicly reluctant to embrace the

president's agenda, especially in southern states where Obama has particularly low approval ratings.

Like Republican candidates across the country, Land has tried to make Obama a major campaign issue. On Saturday, she and Snyder — the Republican governor seeking re-election — began what they called a "Stop Obama" bus tour across the state.

Heather Swift, a spokeswoman for the Land campaign, said Obama's "job-killing regulations" have hurt Michigan. She added that "Peters' choice to bring Obama to our state" shows that "we cannot trust Gary Peters to be an independent voice in Washington."

Supporters who gathered for Obama at Wayne State said they didn't blame candidates in other states for not wanting the president to campaign for them.

"Those are more red states, aren't they?" said Linda Hayes, 64, a retired bumper inspector for Ford. Hayes added, however, that she thinks Obama would be a net plus for any Democratic candidate: "He's the president of the United States. I mean, c'mon."

Thomas Hicks, 62, a retired corrections officer from Detroit, said Senate candidates in other states are "just trying to hold on to their jobs." He said Obama can and has helped many candidates, especially when it comes to turning out the African-American vote.

Michigan Democrats expressed confidence about Peters' Senate race. They seemed less confident about whether the Democrats can retain a majority of Senate seats after this election season.

"If things go the way we want them to, I think they will," said Janee Ayers, 33, vice president of the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO. "I would say I'm 60% confident."

## **Democratic National Committee chairwoman challenges Republican Lt. Gov. candidate Karyn Polito's position on marriage equality**

[http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2014/10/democratic\\_national\\_committee\\_1.html](http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2014/10/democratic_national_committee_1.html) December 09, 2014

... for Democratic candidates. ... authenticity of Republican Karyn Polito's changed ... is equal pay for equal work. Criticizing Republican ...

BROOKLINE - In town to raise money for Bay State Democrats on Wednesday, Democratic National Committee Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz joined lieutenant governor candidate Stephen Kerrigan on the trail where the duo questioned the authenticity of Republican Karyn Polito's changed position on marriage equality and highlighted her past links to the Tea Party.

Polito, a former state representative, is running for lieutenant governor with GOP nominee for governor Charlie Baker. While in the Legislature, Polito opposed same-sex marriage, but backed civil unions for gay couples at time when her advisers say civil unions were unpopular among Republicans. Polito now says she supports marriage equality, a change in position that angered social conservatives early in the campaign.

"I'd just like to know when that moment happened. That's why I've challenged her to six debates and I'd love to be on a stage with her to be able to talk to her about when all these evolutions and magical changes of opinion happened," Kerrigan said.

Wasserman Schultz joined Kerrigan and Democratic nominee for treasurer Deb Goldberg at Zaftigs Delicatessen in Coolidge Corner Wednesday morning to greet diners. They were

joined by state Democratic Party Chairman Tom McGee and Rep. Frank Smizik, D-Brookline.

The Florida congresswoman and Kerrigan later attended a private fundraiser for the state party at the Boston public relations and lobbying firm Rasky Baerlein. She was also scheduled to attend another fundraiser in the 6th Congressional District for Democrat Seth Moulton.

Kerrigan, who is gay, suggested Polito's evolving position on marriage equality was forced by her decision to join the Baker ticket. Baker supports gay marriage and has run advertisements featuring the story of how his brother came out to him as a gay man.

"The Attorney General and Steve Kerrigan have nothing to say about their plans for the future of Massachusetts, so regrettably they're throwing around more falsehoods and half-truths and hoping the voters aren't smart enough to see through it," said Tim Buckley, spokesman for the Baker-Polito campaign.

"Karyn has a real record in public service as a pro-choice, pro-marriage equality candidate with a history of advocating for families, small businesses, and women. We're confident that people of Massachusetts are smarter than to believe a hyper-partisan Florida politician sent here to do the Attorney General's and Steve's dirty work," he said.

While Kerrigan took issue with Polito's evolution on the issue of marriage equality, Martha Coakley's running mate has worked in the past for both President Barack Obama and Attorney General Tom Reilly, two men who also changed their positions on gay marriage.

"There's a difference between a change of heart after soul-searching and a forced conversion to get on the ticket. Steve would welcome a further discussion on the issue if Karyn would accept his challenge to six debates around the state," Kerrigan spokesman David Guarino said.

Polito has agreed to one televised debate on New England Cable News this month, and the Baker-Polito campaign says it is considering other invitations.

Wasserman Schultz and Kerrigan also drew attention to Polito's appearance shortly before she signed on to Baker's campaign at a fundraiser in Stoughton with former Tea Party Congressman Alan West, of Florida. Polito was presented with the "Citizen Patriot" award and was quoted on a local news website crediting West with having a "good message" while she said the Republican National Committee has "no message."

"This is a man whose politics are way off the charts to the right and she was emulating that a year ago and then changed her positions when she became the running mate of the much friendlier, happier, smilier Charlie Baker that we're all supposed to believe in now. I don't buy it. I don't think the average voters in Massachusetts buy it," Kerrigan said.

Wasserman Schultz praised Kerrigan's work running the 2014 Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., for President Obama and expressed her dismay, as a representative of a coastal district, about reports that Baker once allowed for the possibility that climate change was not caused by humans.

"No one knows better than those living on the coastline what sea level rise does to our communities. We want to make sure that one day I'm not representing Orlando and that folks here on the coastline aren't representing Lenox," she said.

Wasserman Schultz said it's important to elect Democrats in Massachusetts to continue the

work of Gov. Deval Patrick to implement health care reform and invest in transportation infrastructure.

Asked about the focus of candidates in Massachusetts on appealing to women voters, Wasserman Schultz said as she travels the country the number one issue for women is equal pay for equal work.

Criticizing Republican governors like Scott Walker, of Wisconsin, and Chris Christie, of New Jersey, for erecting road blocks to equal pay legislation, Wasserman Schultz said, "I assume Charlie Baker also doesn't think that equal pay for equal work needs enforcement."

Buckley called her comments "wildly inaccurate," and said Baker supports the current law to pay women equal wages.

### **3 Democratic candidates for R.I. governor sign 'People's Pledge' deal on outside money**

<http://www.providencejournal.com/breaking-news/content/20140428-3-democratic-candidates-for-r.i.-governor-sign-peoples-pledge-deal-on-outside-money.ece> December 09, 2014

... Monday when three candidates in the Democratic primary for governor bound themselves to pay penalties if ... historically endorses Republican candidates, ...

PROVIDENCE — A new wrinkle in Rhode Island electioneering emerged Monday when three candidates in the Democratic primary for governor bound themselves to pay penalties if outside political money intervenes on their behalf.

Under a "People's Pledge" contract, signed by General Treasurer Gina Raimondo, Clay Pell and Mayor Angel Taveras of Providence, each would contribute an amount to charity equal to the amount spent by any outside group to bolster them or detract from their opponent or opponents.

Common Cause Rhode Island was the broker for the agreement. John M. Marion, executive director of the organization, called the pact "a watershed moment in Rhode Island and politics."

Marion, who spoke in interviews and issued a news release, said the agreement covers only the period up to the primary election in September, not the general election in November, when single candidates from each of the two major parties face off.

But, "there is a possibility that we could have [a similar agreement] in the general election," Marion said. "Historically in Rhode Island, the biggest outside spending I've seen has been in the general election, not the primary. In 2006, the Republican Governors Association spent heavily on Don Carcieri's campaign — in the neighborhood of \$600,000 in outside money."

Marion said a 2010 Supreme Court decision constituted the driving force behind the birth of the People's Pledge.

"The whole reason this exists is that the Supreme Court in Citizens United said you can't place limits on outside spending," he said. "As the U.S. Supreme Court continues to dismantle our campaign finance system, candidates need to take it upon themselves to fight the negative, undisclosed super PAC spending unleashed by Citizens United, and the People's Pledge is our best hope.

" Under the People's Pledge, whenever an outside group spends to support or oppose a

candidate in the primary by purchasing TV, radio or Internet advertisements, the candidate that benefits pays a fine.”

He said the concept has its roots in the 2012 contest for U.S. Senate in Massachusetts between Elizabeth Warren, a Democrat, and Scott Brown, a Republican, when the pair agreed to a similar arrangement.

“They came up with the idea that you have a contract just between the two candidates, and it is up to the candidates themselves to police it. The government can’t step in.”

If there is a violation, the candidates “will draw attention to the violation and there will be public pressure because they signed this document.” He said that under the terms of the agreement, the parties would select a referee in advance, and candidates can appeal to that person if they believe there has been a violation.

“This is rare, a new idea,” Marion said. “In a normal contract, you have the courts enforce the contract.”

He doubted that any outside influence would see the People’s Pledge as a way to sabotage a candidate by contributing to that person’s campaign or attacking an opponent.

“We haven’t seen instances where groups have tried to sort of help their candidate by camouflaging what they are doing,” Marion said. “It could in theory happen.” He said the agreement deals with the possibility by noting that if a group that historically endorses Republican candidates, say, intervenes in the Democratic primary, “The Democratic candidates are off the hook — they wouldn’t be subject to the penalty in that case.”

In a written statement, Pell emphasized a commitment to transparency. “That’s why I pledged not to accept contributions from PACs or state lobbyists, and why I took the unprecedented step of releasing five years of my tax returns to The Providence Journal. And it’s why I’m proud to be a part of this historic agreement to limit unaccountable and frequently negative outside spending,” he said.

In a fundraising email with the subject line “missed opportunity,” Raimondo called the People’s Pledge “an important first step to ensuring that our elections aren’t hijacked by outside spending.” But, Raimondo said, “I’m disappointed my opponents didn’t sign the stronger pledge I offered — one that would have allowed outside groups and powerful special interests to spend a grand total of \$0. With the pledge we signed, they can still spend unlimited amounts of money.”

And Taveras, also in a written statement, said “Rhode Islanders deserve to have an election where their voice is the one that matters.”

## 2012 Republican Presidential Candidates

<http://2012.republican-candidates.org/> December 09, 2014

♦ Republican Candidate Comparisons ... can trace its roots back to the United States Democratic-Republican ... Comment on the Republican Candidates ...

After a bruising two-year battle (let’s face it, the presidential race effectively commenced immediately after the 2010 Congressional elections), an estimated cumulative \$6 billion in campaign expenditures, dozens of Letterman’s Top Ten Lists, and several thousand hours’ worth of political ads (remember

One more time, in case anyone missed it: \$6,000,000,000.



This is larger than the entire annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the 54 smallest economies in the world. It's even larger than the 2011 GDP of the Principality of Monaco, where billionaires spend their summers watching \$7 million F1 race cars zooming around town. It's larger than the combined 2010 and 2011 GDP of the Cayman Islands. It's larger than Grenada's last ten years' GDP, where Clint Eastwood once famously led an American invasion force. Wait, that was

Was it worth it? You bet. Every single cent was worth it, regardless of how one looks at it. We are, after all, speaking about electing the leader of the most powerful country in the entire recorded human history, either relative or absolute.

However, President Obama's victory doesn't appear to be banishing the sense of uncertainty that is enveloping the nation. America appears to be more divided than ever in the backdrop of the most challenging economic climate in living memory. The \$16 trillion albatross hanging around the country's metaphorical neck only adds to the growing anxiety of the populace. Congress is still split between the Republican-controlled House and the Democrat-controlled Senate.

And to top it all off, perhaps the sight of what many consider as the most contentious, spiteful and fractious presidential election ever, between two equally forceful candidates, has led many Americans to look at the future with a little trepidation. There seems to be a growing culture of hatred in the national political discourse.

Surely the country has never faced anything even remotely similar to this, right? Wrong.

Compared to what the nation experienced in the third presidential election between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, what we are seeing now is child's play.

When George Washington indicated his preference for John Adams to be his Vice President in 1789, such was his stature, the Confederation Congress and state electors fell in line and voted accordingly, despite concerns over his volatile temperament. So when Washington declined to run for a third term in office, and spend his retirement in Mount Vernon, there was a scramble for the presidency.

The most influential Federalist in Philadelphia, Alexander Hamilton, was fearful that Vice President Adams might decide to back off from running in favor of his good friend, the genius Thomas Jefferson.

Everyone still remembered that Adams was the main reason why Jefferson was tasked with drafting the Declaration of Independence a decade earlier. After the death of his wife, Martha, Jefferson sought companionship with Adams and his wife, Abigail, and became a frequent guest at their home. Jefferson even developed a strong platonic friendship with Abigail Adams. In fact, Jefferson had a habit of buying presents for Abigail during his travels.

Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams (Paris, Sep. 25, 1785)

"Mr. Short's return the night before last availed me of your favour of Aug. 12. I immediately ordered the shoes you desired which will be ready tomorrow. I am not certain whether this will be in time for the departure of Mr. Barclay or of Colo. Franks, for it is not yet decided which of them goes to London. I have also procured for you three plateaux de dessert with a silvered ballustrade round them, and four figures of Biscuit."

Hamilton and his allies, advocates of a strong, centralized federal Republic, were fearful of Jefferson's populist, small and regionalized government concept. So Hamilton began a

character assassination campaign against the popular and well respected Jefferson. Explosive stories about a colored harem in his Virginia estate became the talk of town, courtesy of widely distributed poison-pen letters. Jefferson's private statements about equal rights for the slaves drew gasps of horror. Most damaging though, was the allegation that he fathered a child with his black concubine, Sally Hemings. Adams, by virtue of his Vice Presidency and being the public face of the Federalist faction, took the blame for most of Hamilton's machinations.

Hamilton, who was holding a grudge against Jefferson for publicizing his affair with a married woman several year earlier, was hell bent on destroying Jefferson's public standing and his friendship with Adams. Even as their relationship deteriorated, Jefferson and Adams fully understood the role that Hamilton played. So much so, Jefferson referred to Hamilton as the devil several times in public, while Adams called him a 'fiend' in private. Nonetheless, their friendship waned, and both men ran for the presidency in 1796.

Despite Jefferson's early favorite status, he was ultimately defeated by Adams in the election. However, he received enough electoral votes to become Vice President. At the time, the person with the second highest Electoral College count is automatically appointed Vice President.

And thus, the stage was set for a rematch in 1800. This time, Jefferson, aided by his right-hand man, James Madison (another future president), marshaled the Democratic-Republican Party (the granddaddy of the present Democratic and Republican Party), and went after Adams and Hamilton with a vengeance.

Jefferson and his allies discreetly hired fugitive Scottish writer, James Callender, to write a whole series of poison-pen letters aimed at destroying the reputation of both Adams and Hamilton. Jefferson, at the time, was not aware that Callendar was also hired by Hamilton four years earlier, and was the one who broke the Sally Hemings story.

Adams, concerned with Jefferson's growing popularity, pushed for the creation of a Grand Committee, a five-man body purported to “

During a fiery debate in Congress Hall, Vermont Representative Matthew Lyon, one of Jefferson's strongest allies, spat tobacco juice in the face of the Federalist' Connecticut Representative Roger Griswold. Griswold then picked up a cane and charged at Lyon, who quickly grabbed a pair of fire tongs from the fireplace to defend himself. They were of course separated.

Over the next one year, Jefferson and Adams went after each other mercilessly, ridiculing one another at every opportunity (monarchist was an often used term), right up to Election Day.

Jefferson, by virtue of his position as Vice President, was responsible for counting the Electoral College ballots received from the states. With only Georgia to go, Jefferson was leading Adams by 69 to 65 votes. The four Georgia electors had voted in favor of Adams, which tied the contest.

However, Jefferson realized that the Georgia electoral ballots did not fulfill the requirements laid out in the Constitution:

Article II, Section 1.

The Electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot for two persons, of whom one at least shall not lie an Inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they

shall make a List of all the Persons voted for, and of the Number of Votes for each; which List they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the Seat of the Government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate.

Jefferson promptly awarded the ballots to himself, and with no opposition from any of the legislators present in Congress, declared victory. And thus ended the most acrimonious presidential campaign in the history of the United States. Amidst the resulting cries and criticisms, there were strong fears that the young nation would crumble under the weight of the unrelenting infighting.

But instead, the nation healed, and entered into a period of political and economic stability, as evidenced by the election of three consecutive two terms presidents (Jefferson, Madison and James Monroe). And Thomas Jefferson is now widely recognized as one of the greatest American Presidents ever.

Have faith, electorates. These United States of America will emerge stronger from this.

Note: Thirteen years later, Adams wrote a letter to Jefferson.

“You and I ought to not die, before we have explained ourselves to each other.”

And at the bottom of the letter, Abigail added a little note for her old friend.

“I have been looking for some time for a space in my good Husbands Letters to add the regards of an old Friend, which are still cherished and preserved through all the changes and vicissitudes which have taken place since we first became acquainted, and will I trust remain as long as... A. Adams”

Sadly, while they began to write to one another again, their friendship never really recovered.

Note 2: On Tuesday night, President Obama and Gov. Romney spoke of each other during their respective speeches.

### President Obama's Victory Speech

“I just spoke with Governor Romney, and I congratulated him and Paul Ryan on a hard-fought campaign. We may have battled fiercely, but it's only because we love this country deeply, and we care so strongly about its future. From George to Lenore to their son Mitt, the Romney family has chosen to give back to America through public service, and that is the legacy that we honor and applaud tonight. In the weeks ahead, I also look forward to sitting down with Governor Romney to talk about where we can work together to move this country forward.”

### Gov. Mitt Romney's Concession Speech

“I have just called President Obama to congratulate him on his victory. His supporters and his campaign also deserve congratulations. I wish all of them well, but particularly the president, the first lady and their daughters. This is a time of great challenges for America, and I pray that the president will be successful in guiding our nation.”

After a bruising two-year battle (let's face it, the presidential race effectively commenced immediately after the 2010 Congressional elections), an estimated cumulative \$6 billion in campaign expenditures, dozens of Letterman's Top Ten Lists, and several thousand hours' worth of political ads (remember this ?), the 2012 United States Presidential Election finally concluded with President Barack Obama securing a second term in office. One more time,

in case anyone missed it: \$6,000,000,000. This is larger than the entire annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the 54 smallest economies in the world. It's even larger than the 2011 GDP of the Principality of Monaco, where billionaires spend their summers watching \$7 million F1 race cars zooming around town. It's larger than the combined 2010 and 2011 GDP of the Cayman Islands. It's larger than Grenada's last ten years' GDP, where Clint Eastwood once famously led an American invasion force. Wait, that was Heartbreak Ridge. Was it worth it? You bet. Every single cent was worth it, regardless of how one looks at it. We are, after all, speaking about electing the leader of the most powerful country in the entire recorded human history, either relative or absolute. However, President Obama's victory doesn't appear to be banishing the sense of uncertainty that is enveloping the nation. America appears to be more divided than ever in the backdrop of the most challenging economic climate in living memory. The \$16 trillion albatross hanging around the country's metaphorical neck only adds to the growing anxiety of the populace. Congress is still split between the Republican-controlled House and the Democrat-controlled Senate. And to top it all off, perhaps the sight of what many consider as the most contentious, spiteful and fractious presidential election ever, between two equally forceful candidates, has led many Americans to look at the future with a little trepidation. There seems to be a growing culture of hatred in the national political discourse. Surely the country has never faced anything even remotely similar to this, right? Wrong. Compared to what the nation experienced in the third presidential election between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, what we are seeing now is child's play. When George Washington indicated his preference for John Adams to be his Vice President in 1789, such was his stature, the Confederation Congress and state electors fell in line and voted accordingly, despite concerns over his volatile temperament. So when Washington declined to run for a third term in office, and spend his retirement in Mount Vernon, there was a scramble for the presidency. The most influential Federalist in Philadelphia, Alexander Hamilton, was fearful that Vice President Adams might decide to back off from running in favor of his good friend, the genius Thomas Jefferson. Everyone still remembered that Adams was the main reason why Jefferson was tasked with drafting the Declaration of Independence a decade earlier. After the death of his wife, Martha, Jefferson sought companionship with Adams and his wife, Abigail, and became a frequent guest at their home. Jefferson even developed a strong platonic friendship with Abigail Adams. In fact, Jefferson had a habit of buying presents for Abigail during his travels. "Mr. Short's return the night before last availed me of your favour of Aug. 12. I immediately ordered the shoes you desired which will be ready tomorrow. I am not certain whether this will be in time for the departure of Mr. Barclay or of Colo. Franks, for it is not yet decided which of them goes to London. I have also procured for you three plateaux de dessert with a silvered ballustrade round them, and four figures of Biscuit." Hamilton and his allies, advocates of a strong, centralized federal Republic, were fearful of Jefferson's populist, small and regionalized government concept. So Hamilton began a character assassination campaign against the popular and well respected Jefferson. Explosive stories about a colored harem in his Virginia estate became the talk of town, courtesy of widely distributed poison-pen letters. Jefferson's private statements about equal rights for the slaves drew gasps of horror. Most damaging though, was the allegation that he fathered a child with his black concubine, Sally Hemings. Adams, by virtue of his Vice Presidency and being the public face of the Federalist faction, took the blame for most of Hamilton's machinations. Hamilton, who was holding a grudge against Jefferson for publicizing his affair with a married woman several years earlier, was hell bent on destroying Jefferson's public standing and his friendship with Adams. Even as their relationship deteriorated, Jefferson and Adams fully understood the role that Hamilton played. So much so, Jefferson referred to Hamilton as the devil several times in public, while Adams called him a 'fiend' in private. Nonetheless, their friendship waned, and both men ran for the presidency in 1796. Despite Jefferson's early favorite status, he was ultimately defeated by Adams in the election. However, he received enough electoral votes to become Vice President. At the time, the person with the second highest Electoral College

count is automatically appointed Vice President. And thus, the stage was set for a rematch in 1800. This time, Jefferson, aided by his right-hand man, James Madison (another future president), marshaled the Democratic-Republican Party (the granddaddy of the present Democratic and Republican Party), and went after Adams and Hamilton with a vengeance. Jefferson and his allies discreetly hired fugitive Scottish writer, James Callender, to write a whole series of poison-pen letters aimed at destroying the reputation of both Adams and Hamilton. Jefferson, at the time, was not aware that Callendar was also hired by Hamilton four years earlier, and was the one who broke the Sally Hemings story. Adams, concerned with Jefferson's growing popularity, pushed for the creation of a Grand Committee, a five-man body purported to "adjudicate any disputes in the election of the president." The move was interpreted by many as an overt attempt to prevent a Jefferson presidency. A year earlier, the Adams' administration even engineered the passing of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, which sought to suppress public criticisms of his administration, especially those made by Jefferson's Democratic-Republican Party. During a fiery debate in Congress Hall, Vermont Representative Matthew Lyon, one of Jefferson's strongest allies, spat tobacco juice in the face of the Federalist' Connecticut Representative Roger Griswold. Griswold then picked up a cane and charged at Lyon, who quickly grabbed a pair of fire tongs from the fireplace to defend himself. They were of course separated. Over the next one year, Jefferson and Adams went after each other mercilessly, ridiculing one another at every opportunity (monarchist was an often used term), right up to Election Day. Jefferson, by virtue of his position as Vice President, was responsible for counting the Electoral College ballots received from the states. With only Georgia to go, Jefferson was leading Adams by 69 to 65 votes. The four Georgia electors had voted in favor of Adams, which tied the contest. However, Jefferson realized that the Georgia electoral ballots did not fulfill the requirements laid out in the Constitution: The Electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot for two persons, of whom one at least shall not lie an Inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a List of all the Persons voted for, and of the Number of Votes for each; which List they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the Seat of the Government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate. Jefferson promptly awarded the ballots to himself, and with no opposition from any of the legislators present in Congress, declared victory. And thus ended the most acrimonious presidential campaign in the history of the United States. Amidst the resulting cries and criticisms, there were strong fears that the young nation would crumble under the weight of the unrelenting infighting. But instead, the nation healed, and entered into a period of political and economic stability, as evidenced by the election of three consecutive two terms presidents (Jefferson, Madison and James Monroe). And Thomas Jefferson is now widely recognized as one of the greatest American Presidents ever. Have faith, electorates. These United States of America will emerge stronger from this. Note: Thirteen years later, Adams wrote a letter to Jefferson. "You and I ought to not die, before we have explained ourselves to each other." And at the bottom of the letter, Abigail added a little note for her old friend. "I have been looking for some time for a space in my good Husbands Letters to add the regards of an old Friend, which are still cherished and preserved through all the changes and vicissitudes which have taken place since we first became acquainted, and will I trust remain as long as... A. Adams" Sadly, while they began to write to one another again, their friendship never really recovered. Note 2: On Tuesday night, President Obama and Gov. Romney spoke of each other during their respective speeches. "I just spoke with Governor Romney, and I congratulated him and Paul Ryan on a hard-fought campaign. We may have battled fiercely, but it's only because we love this country deeply, and we care so strongly about its future. From George to Lenore to their son Mitt, the Romney family has chosen to give back to America through public service, and that is the legacy that we honor and applaud tonight. In the weeks ahead, I also look forward to sitting down with Governor Romney to talk about where we can work together to move this country forward." "I have just called President Obama to congratulate him on his victory. His supporters and his campaign also deserve congratulations. I wish all

of them well, but particularly the president, the first lady and their daughters. This is a time of great challenges for America, and I pray that the president will be successful in guiding our nation.”

President Obama overcome with emotion, cries while thanking campaign staff

## **Analysis: Miscues on women’s pay could thwart GOP in governor’s race**

<http://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/headlines/20140319-analysis-miscues-on-womens-pay-could-thwart-gop-in-governors-race.ece> December 09, 2014

... Greg Abbott and his supporters have fumbled the questions on pay equity for women. ... over equal pay while ... GOP governor candidates have ...

AUSTIN — Recognizing Democrat Wendy Davis’ appeal to female voters, Republican foe Greg Abbott and his supporters have worked to highlight GOP answers of opportunity for women.

But instead of a suave courtship, it’s been more like a bumbling dancer who steps on toes.

In the past two weeks, seeking to dismiss Davis’ efforts to open Texas courtrooms to pay inequity claims, Abbott surrogates have said no new laws are needed.

But then they went on to say women sometimes suffer lower pay because they aren’t as good as men at negotiating and that they are too busy to pursue legal remedies.

Democrats roundly criticized those remarks as being out-of-touch.

At issue is a measure Davis sponsored last year to change Texas law so that it mirrors the protections in the federal Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

The bill passed with bipartisan support, but Gov. Rick Perry vetoed it, citing concerns over lawsuit abuse.

Wednesday, Abbott’s campaign told The Associated Press that he, too, would have rejected the bill because women who face discrimination can find relief in federal court.

Abbott also fought back after it was pointed out that his attorney general’s office in 2012 had a woman’s pay discrimination suit dismissed from state courts by successfully arguing that Ledbetter protections don’t exist in state law.

He said Davis is hypocritical because one of her law firm’s clients also raised the same issue in a pay discrimination suit.

The client is the Tarrant Regional Water District. When it was sued for pay discrimination in 2010, another law firm handled the claim. It got the suit dismissed, citing the same legal arguments that the attorney general’s office has used: State law doesn’t have the Ledbetter

protections.

Davis and her firm were not connected to the discrimination suit.

Still, Abbott spokesman Matt Hirsch said, "Senator Wendy Davis has now mastered the Texas two-step as she continues to launch attacks over equal pay while shielding her own record of defending gender discrimination."

When Abbott won his separate case in 2012, he was defending the state, not pay discrimination, his campaign said.

Davis spokesman Zac Petkanas called Abbott's attack on Davis a "pathetic distraction." Davis represents the water district only as its bond counsel, he said.

"Further, the fact that the state court threw out the case because the federal Lilly Ledbetter Act didn't apply is proof" that Davis' equal pay act is needed, he said.

The fracas was heightened by a San Antonio Express-News story Wednesday that Abbott's office has been paying its female assistant attorneys general less, on average, than men in the same position.

The average salary for the 343 male assistant attorneys general in Abbott's office is \$79,464, while the average salary for the 379 women is \$73,649, records show.

Abbott's office attributed the disparity to the men having had their law licenses longer and more months of service.

All of this comes on the high heels of the newly formed RedState Women rolling out a GOP rah-rah wagon last week to underscore their connection with female voters.

Then, in a TV interview, executive director Cari Christman caught flak for suggesting that women were "too busy" to lodge legal fights for equal pay.

Soon afterward, Beth Cubriel, the state GOP executive director, said that the problem of unequal pay boils down to, "Men are better negotiators."

For more than a decade, Texas GOP governor candidates have far outpaced the Democrats in attracting female voters. But now, it seems that's up for negotiation.

## **Why You Should Support Democratic Candidates This Election**

<http://www.cosmopolitan.com/politics/news/a32752/why-you-should-vote-democrat/> December 09, 2014

From fighting for equal pay for women to ensuring ... Which female Democratic candidates should young women be ... You look at the Republican Party at ...

Election Day is here, and across the country, Democrats and Republicans are running neck-and-neck. Lily Adams, deputy communications director of the Democratic National Committee, talked with Cosmopolitan.com about what Democrats are doing for women, the issues that matter to Democrats the most, and why young female voters should support Democratic candidates in the election.

There's been a lot of talk about how much the women's vote matters this election. How does your party's platform benefit women?

The Democratic Party platform benefits women at all levels. From fighting for equal pay for women to ensuring access to affordable health care, Democrats have continued to fight for

expanded opportunities for all women. You see a marked contrast in this election. Republicans have consistently tried to roll back progress that has been gained for women. Democrats have continued to push for more progress. Sometimes these things get deemed "women's issues," but they are really so much more than that. They are economic issues that are critical to the success of women and their families — issues like equal pay, access to affordable health care, investments in education. At every level, Democrats have continually had the best interests of women at heart, whereas Republicans have fought for the very few at the top. I think that contrast will play itself out on Election Day.

Raising the minimum wage is on the ballot in four states this election and will likely be an issue in Congress next year. Two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women. The Republicans say raising the minimum wage would actually have the effect of putting more people out of work, hurting women's economic interests. Why does the Democratic party support raising the minimum wage?

The claim that raising the minimum wage would hurt the economy is simply untrue. If you look at the 13 states that have raised the minimum wage, they've added jobs faster than states that haven't raised the minimum wage. Raising the minimum wage is good for our economy, and it's especially good for women. It puts more money in the pockets of women and families, which they in turn spend at their local businesses, which stimulates the economy. It doesn't take a Nobel Prize-winning economist to figure that out. You just have to look at the data.

Despite a decades-old Equal Pay Act, the pay gap still exists. What's the Democratic Party plan for achieving pay equity?

We've already done a lot, and we will continue to fight. The first bill the president signed was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which empowered women to fight against pay discrimination. And Democrats have been working doggedly to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, and have been blocked at every turn by Republicans who in many cases would filibuster the bill and be unwilling to even discuss it. Republicans have called it a waste of time or irrelevant legislation, and it's not. It gives women the tools they need to identify wage discrimination and address it. We know that women still experience wage discrimination, which can yield hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost income for their families over their lifetime.

Republicans say we already have protections in the Equal Pay Act, and the Paycheck Fairness Act is just to score political points and could lead to frivolous lawsuits.

The Republican Party has not offered any substantive, effective policy to ensure equal pay for women. In fact, they have blocked numerous proposals to ensure equal pay. What we've heard from the Republican Party is a lot of excuses and a lot of blocking measures that we know would help women and families. Democrats are going to continue to bring those policies up and continue to try to pass them. I hope Republicans will come to their senses and join us.

Contraception has been a huge issue in this election, with several Republicans saying they support over-the-counter birth control. In the wake of the Hobby Lobby Supreme Court decision, is over-the-counter contraception a potential solution to make birth control more accessible?

Over-the-counter contraception by itself does not ensure easier access or more access to contraception. What it does is allow insurance companies to stop covering contraception. What Democrats have done through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is that 48 million women have access to preventative care, including birth control, without a copay. In the first year



alone, that saved American women \$483 million. That's 483 million real dollars in women's pockets that they have saved because of this important birth control benefit in the ACA. What I think you see from Republicans is a desperate attempt to try to distract from a long history and a long record of opposing access to health care for women. Everything from personhood to support of the Hobby Lobby case to support for the Blunt Amendment, there is a long track record of Republicans trying to infringe upon women's rights to make their own health care decisions with their doctors, as opposed to with a boss or a politician.

So what's the Democratic Party plan to make birth control more accessible?

You've seen part of it in the ACA. If you look at medical groups — and being a Democrat, I like to listen to experts and doctors as opposed to politicians — many have supported birth control being covered by health insurance and being over the counter. I don't think it's an either/or scenario. But the fact of the matter is that Republicans are trying to pass the buck to women and families as opposed to requiring insurance companies to pay for what is basic health care access for women.

In the past three years, there have been more abortion restrictions passed than in the past decade. How would electing Democrats change the reproductive rights landscape?

Democrats fundamentally trust American women to make the best health care decisions for themselves and their families, full stop. What you've seen is that while Republicans have tried to criminalize health care decisions in pushing for things like personhood that could outlaw common forms of contraception, Democrats have worked to increase access to health care and to put decision-making power back in the hands of women and their families as opposed to the hands of people's employers or politicians in Congress.

What pieces of federal legislation should women be watching in the next year?

I hope women will continue to pressure members of Congress to support common-sense legislation like the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would increase the tools women have in their tool belts to fight for equal pay. As we've seen, the House of Representatives, which is controlled by Republicans, has an unlimited imagination when it comes to restricting women's access to health care, and I hope women will hold them accountable for that. I hope women will push Congress to pass a common-sense increase in the minimum wage. Two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women, and I think sometimes people in politics forget that a fair minimum wage is important to women and families, and is a women's issue.

Which female Democratic candidates should young women be watching to stand up for our interests?

We are blessed in the Democratic Party to have a deep bench of fantastic women on our side. There are many folks on the ballot this cycle, including Jeanne Shaheen, Kay Hagan, and Mary Landrieu who have been great advocates for women. There's the governor of New Hampshire, Maggie Hassan, a fierce advocate for women. Continuing to support these women is really important.

What policies are those candidates prioritizing that would be particularly good for women?

These women have been champions of many of the bills I've mentioned, like the Paycheck Fairness Act and measures to fix the Hobby Lobby decision, which would increase opportunity for all American women.

With elections around the corner, what's the message you would like to send to young

women?

It's important to get involved, to make sure you get to the polls, and to encourage your friends to get to the polls. Sitting out the election is a vote. Not making your voice heard is incredibly detrimental to the process. We need more young women involved in politics at every level, from people running for office to people voting in the elections, so we are encouraging women to get involved, to learn about the candidates in their area, and to show up on Election Day.

Anything else Cosmopolitan readers should know?

A core principle of the Democratic Party has always been to expand access to affordable health care rather than restrict it. You look at the Republican Party at every level, from statehouses to Congress, and they seem to feel that politicians belong in very personal decisions between women and their doctors. That's not something we support or believe. While it's important to fight back against bad pieces of legislation in the states and in Congress, it's equally as important for Democrats to propose proactive pieces of legislation like the Affordable Care Act, which expanded access for women. We can't just play defense on these issues.

This interview has been edited and condensed.

This is part of Cosmopolitan.com's midterm election coverage. Share this article with #CosmoVotes and make sure to vote on November 4.