

Gender equality

American Women: Representation vs Reproductive Health

Women in the US are more represented than ever; their reproductive health outcomes vary greatly by state.

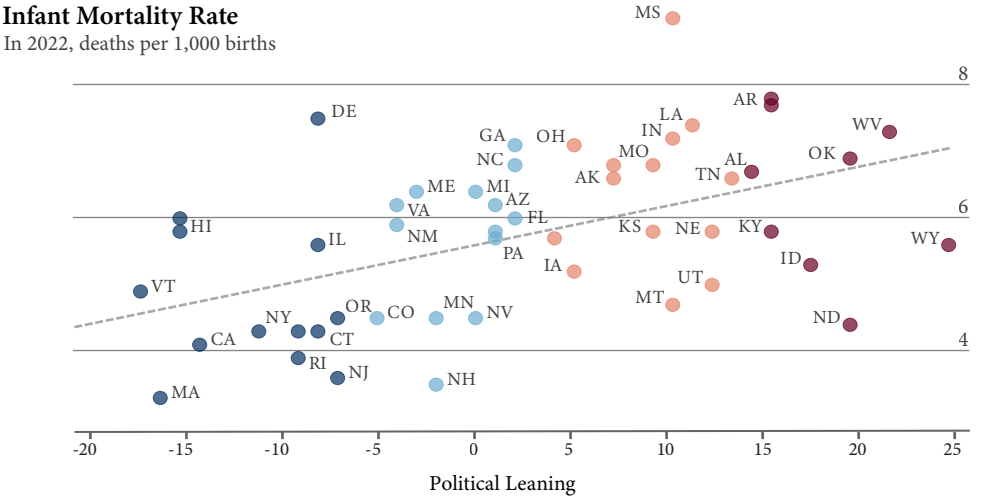
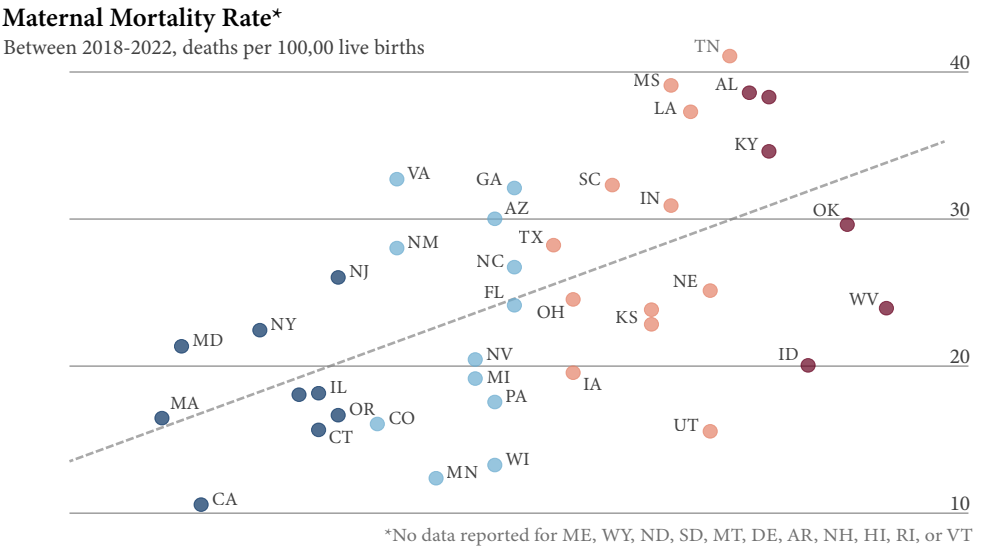
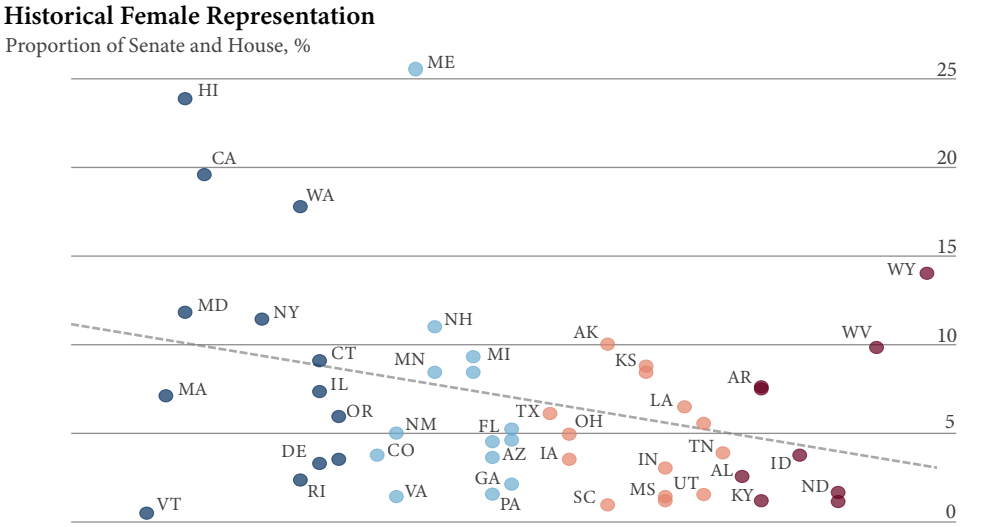
Since enfranchisement in the United States in 1920, American women’s involvement in legislation has steadily increased over time. In theory, better representation of women should lead to improved reproductive health outcomes, as women are the main recipients of reproductive care. Does that theory hold up? Depends on the dominant political party in your state.

Blue states reflect higher rates of female representation, historically. When comparing these states’ reproductive health outcomes, blue states tend to fare better in regards to maternal mortality rates and infant mortality rates—primary indicators of overall reproductive health of a population. In regards to red states, the trend is reversed, with lower representation overall and much poorer reproductive health outcomes, particularly for mothers. There is a stark trend of higher maternal mortality in these states.

While reproductive health outcomes may be confounded by other factors, such as poverty, education, and access to healthcare facilities and resources, there is a clear correlation between more female representatives in office and improved health outcomes. Reliably blue-leaning states in recent history, and the democratic party in general, boast much higher rates of female representation.

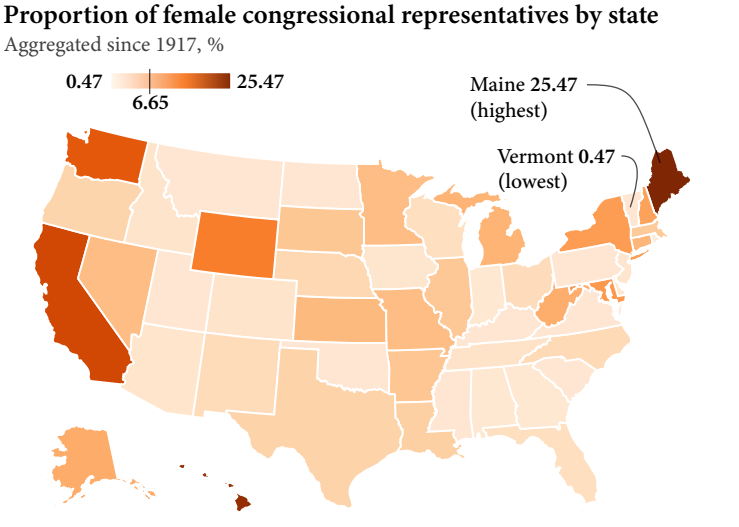
Overall, women are better represented and fewer children are being born in the US in recent history, with abortions down as well. So why is care for mothers and infants still so party dependent? The health of a country is a measure of its whole, not its strongest parts. ■

More Democratic representatives correlates to healthier reproduction

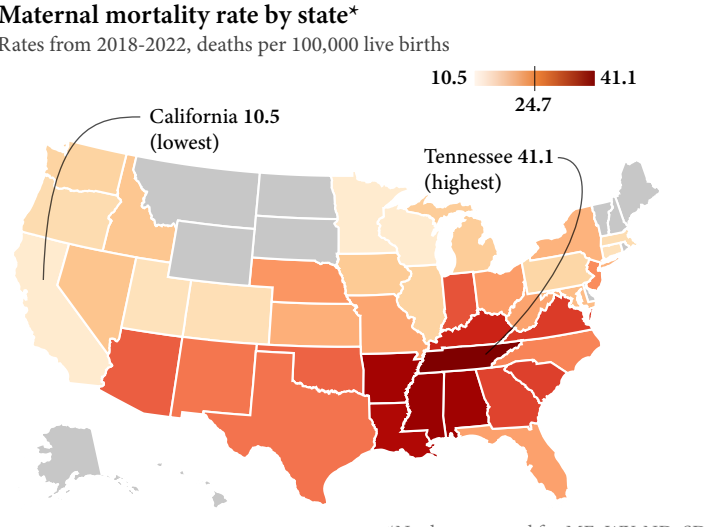


Source: CDC, CAWP, Cook Partisan Voting Index, 2016-2020

Higher representation, better health outcomes for mothers



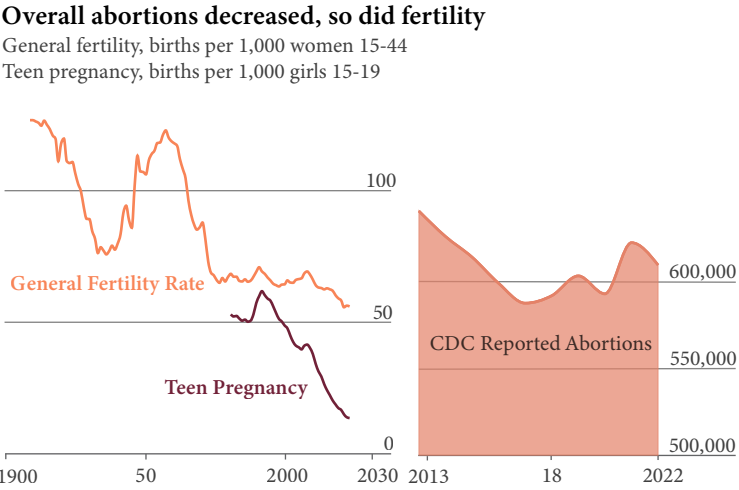
Source: CAWP



*No data reported for ME, WY, ND, SD, MT, DE, AR, NH, HI, RI, or VT

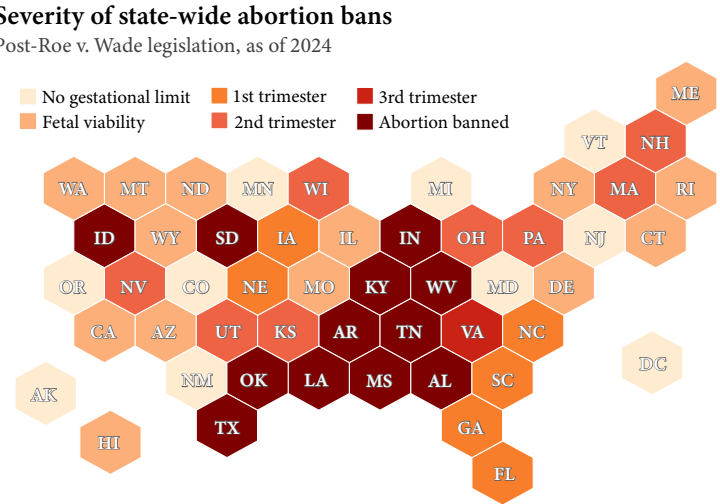
Source: KFF, CDC, NCHS

Fertility rates decreased overall, so did abortions



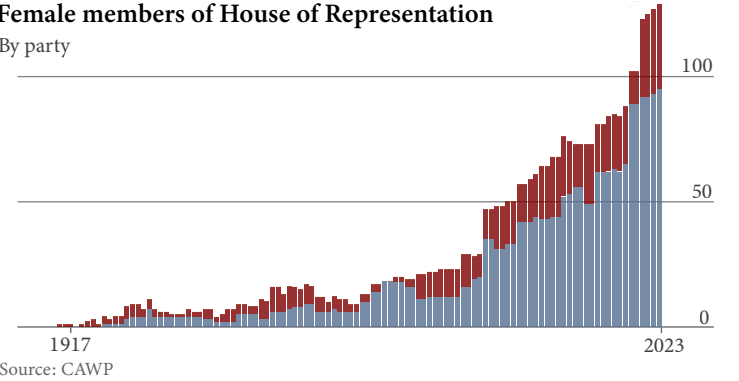
Source: KFF, CDC, NCHS

Severe abortion bans indicate danger for mothers



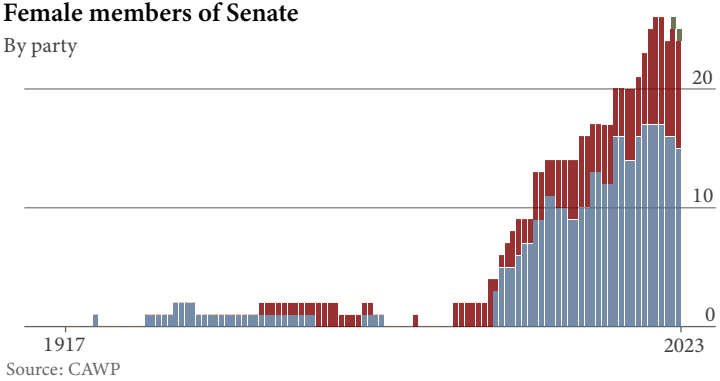
Source: KFF, CDC, NCHS

Democrats outpace Republicans in representation...



Source: CAWP

...though, the margin is shrinking in Senate



Source: CAWP