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She Votes: Women's Voices at the Forefront

New Poll Reveals the Issues That Are Most Important to Women Voters

CAMBRIDGE, MA (March 8, 2023)— As the 2024 election comes into focus, women across the country are more interested in political issues and more motivated to get involved in politics at a local, state, or federal level, according to a new online survey released today by [Gender on the Ballot](#), a partnership between the [Women & Politics Institute](#) at American University's School of Public Affairs and the [Barbara Lee Family Foundation](#). The survey, conducted by [Benenson Strategy Group](#), reveals that women are engaged in politics, supportive of women elected officials, and tuned into conversations about hot-button issues such as reproductive rights and inflation. However, women are also burnt out, financially strained, and increasingly concerned about extremism in politics.

Despite recent increases in women's representation in elected office, a majority of women said they still want to elect more women, and believe women leaders will do a better job understanding the challenges they are facing.

"Our new poll shows that the vast majority of women voters understand the importance of women serving in elected office," said Barbara Lee, President and Founder of the Barbara Lee Family Foundation. "I expect that women will run for office and turn out to vote in historic numbers in 2024!"

"Women are often the backbone of our families, our workplaces, and our communities—so it's no surprise that women are acutely aware of the biggest challenges in our country right now, from financial insecurity to political division," said Betsy Fischer Martin, Executive Director of the Women & Politics Institute. "Consider *She Votes* a roadmap to understanding the American zeitgeist as we head into the 2024 election."

"This research shows that women across the country are engaged and ready for 2024 – whether because of extreme politicians taking away their rights or the gridlock they feel that women leaders can break through," said Lindsay Vermeyen, Senior Vice President at Benenson Strategy Group. "Many are tuned in and motivated to get involved."

Key Findings:

There is a greater sense of dread and worry among women this year, stemming from worsening personal financial situations and inflation. Women have cut back on entertainment and luxuries, and almost half have cut back on necessities such as groceries. With these financial challenges, financial goals of security and saving or affording retirement seem out of reach for many women. "Inflation" is the number one issue women cited as the "most important problem facing this country today." Sixty percent of women polled indicated pessimism about the economy. Fifty six percent said that their personal financial situation has gotten worse over the last few years—a rising share compared to 39% in 2021, and 50% in 2022.

Women are feeling even more burnt out this year—particularly Black women and moms of young children. Sixty percent of women overall said they have felt more burned out than usual. That share rises to 68% for women under 40, and 69% for parents of young kids.

Looking ahead to 2024, women are feeling more engaged in politics. About 1 in 3 women who were polled talk to their friends and family about politics weekly, and the majority of women think next year's election will be more important than most elections. Among women who discuss politics and current events at least monthly, 2 in 3 say they are more motivated to get involved in politics on the local, state, or federal level--but only 1 in 3 has actually become involved.

In light of the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision last year, women are highly concerned about reproductive rights and tuned into conversations about abortion and other healthcare services. The vast majority of women who were polled personally support the right to an abortion and believe it should be legal and available (53%), or that the government should not prevent someone from making an abortion decision for themselves (29%).

With increasing partisanship around every corner, a plurality of women are concerned about extremism on both sides of the ideological spectrum. There is deep skepticism among Republican women about U.S. regulatory institutions and the election system, with nearly half of Republican women (45% of Republican women and 1 in 4 of all women polled) saying they don't trust the results of national elections.

"Women on Wednesdays" Virtual Panel on *She Votes: Women's Voices at the Forefront*

American University's Women & Politics Institute Executive Director Betsy Fischer Martin, Barbara Lee Family Foundation Executive Director Amanda Hunter, *USA Today* National Political Reporter Mabinty Quarshie, and Benenson Strategy Group Senior Vice President Lindsay Vermeyen will discuss this survey's findings on during a virtual panel, [*She Votes: Women's Voices at the Forefront*](#) on Wednesday, March 29, 2023, at 6 p.m. EST.

About *Gender on the Ballot*

The Barbara Lee Family Foundation and the American University's Women & Politics Institute are proud partners on *Gender on the Ballot*, a nonpartisan project that examines and contextualizes gender dynamics in American politics. As the conversation and culture around running for office in the US continues to evolve, *Gender on the Ballot* contributes to the dialogue on gender and politics through accessible content from experts and practitioners.

About The Barbara Lee Family Foundation

The Barbara Lee Family Foundation works to advance women's equality and representation in American politics through political research, strategic partnerships, and grants and endowments. The Foundation's work is guided by its core belief that women's voices strengthen our democracy and enrich our culture.

About the Women & Politics Institute at American University's School of Public Affairs

The mission of the Women & Politics Institute is to close the gender gap in political leadership. WPI provides practical and academic training that encourages women to become involved in the political process and facilitates research by faculty and students that enhances our understanding of the challenges and opportunities women face in the political arena.

About Benenson Strategy Group

Benenson Strategy Group delivers game-changing strategies to help clients navigate tough issues and develop winning campaigns. BSG uses innovative and provocative techniques that probe deeply on core beliefs, attitudes, and emotions to uncover the hidden architecture of opinion.

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