



To: Interested Parties
From: Change Research
Date: May 6, 2024
Re: “F— You, Pay Me”: American Women on Fear, Freedom, and Feminism

Why We Did This Research

Change Research polled 2,745 registered voters nationwide from April 17-22, 2024¹ to gauge how they view women in the United States today—their opportunities, challenges, and hopes. This memo offers guidance on how to appeal to women voters ahead of the 2024 presidential election using our women’s freedom and fairness framework. This approach centers messaging on abortion access as part of the larger women’s agenda that includes access to abortion, economic and employment fairness, physical and online safety, and healthcare quality, comprehensiveness, and access. The ultimate goal of this research is to gain political power: to elect leaders who support women’s freedom and fairness, who will enact policies to make our country fairer for *all* women.

Key Findings

Men and women have fundamentally different perceptions of women’s experiences in the U.S. today. Women cite major, pressing problems; men largely miss the forest for the trees.

- **Women feel less valued than men.** 70% of women feel women are valued less than men; 81% feel they are *personally* valued less than men. These figures are even higher for Black women and young (18-34) women.
- **Women feel pessimistic about where their rights and opportunities are, and where they’re headed.** 2 in 3 women voters say either that women have *always* been lesser than men or that the gap between women and men was closing, but now it’s widening again. By contrast, the plurality of men (37%) say women today have the same basic rights as men have.
- **These different realities spell huge differences in what women and men see as problems facing our country today.** One such example: 60% of women say that women losing rights is a problem. Just 43% of men say the same. Further, while losing bodily autonomy is among the top problems women identify, it’s far from the only thing women see as problematic. At least half of all women see the gender pay gap, workplace discrimination, and too-short parental leave policies as national problems.
- **Women’s understanding of why the gender pay gap exists differs dramatically from men’s understanding.** 64% of women say that a major reason why the pay exists is because employers treat women differently than men; 38% of men say the same. 61% of

¹ Change Research polled 2,745 registered voters nationwide from April 17-22, 2024. The modeled margin of error is 2.0%. Post-stratification was performed on age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, and 2020 presidential vote. You can see [a full methodology statement and question wording](#), which complies with the requirements of AAPOR’s Transparency Initiative. Members of the Transparency Initiative disclose all relevant details about our research, with the principle that the public should be able to evaluate and understand research-based findings, in order to instill and restore public confidence in survey results.



women say employers' lack of transparency around pay is a major reason contributing to the gender pay gap; 43% of men say the same. Women endorse each of the reasons we listed for why the pay gap exists at higher rates than men do, with two exceptions. More men than women say that women simply prefer jobs that pay less and that men and women have different career ambitions.

Voters think Trump is to blame for the end of Roe and they perceive his stance on abortion to be dangerous, unpredictable, and driven by politics. As he tries to both take credit and evade blame, depending on his audience, Democrats must define him for what he is.

- 49% of voters believe Trump had a lot or all the responsibility for the fall of Roe, and among voters who support abortion rights, the figure is 66%. 1 in 2 voters (men and women) think his position on abortion is driven by politics; 46% of women and 35% of men think his position on abortion is dangerous, and 38% of women and 37% of men think it's unpredictable.
- 42% of women and 35% of men think it's likely that Trump will change his position on abortion in a significant way in the next 12 months. Just 9% of women and 12% of men say the same of Biden.

As he attempts to both take credit for this triumph with anti-abortion voters—a minority of the electorate—and avoid being punished at the polls by the pro-choice *majority* of voters, he makes statements on abortion that are difficult to pin down into policies, beliefs, or likely outcomes. Democrats must define that prevarication as proof that he is unpredictable and dangerous, bought and paid for by right-wing anti-abortion groups but afraid to face the voters and own the consequences. Conversely, they must portray Biden as a steadfast, reliable champion for women's rights.

When it comes to women's rights slipping away, voters identify some clear outcomes that they perceive as most grave *and* most likely to happen.

We asked voters how likely a list of possible events are to happen in at least some parts of the country over the next five years, and how much they support/oppose those potential items. The outcomes that garnered the most opposition and that voters perceive are most likely to happen are:

- Tying doctors' hands so that they can't provide life-saving care for pregnant women.
- Criminal proceedings against healthcare providers that *do* provide life-saving care, and against grieving patients who lose pregnancies.
- Travel bans and invasive technological monitoring for pregnant women.
- Medication abortion restrictions that are tantamount to bans for certain states.

These are the outcomes to emphasize when communicating about the slippery slope of eroding women's rights.



Strategic Guidance

Acknowledge women's fear and frustration. Recognize this is not a "some women" problem.

The gulf between women and men's realities and perceptions of women's experiences is profound. To put it in perspective, it's about the size of the difference between how liberals and conservatives view the world. The problems women are experiencing are grave and profound. It is incumbent on us to meet the moment with urgency.

DO talk to women about abortion. Don't ONLY talk to women about abortion. Center women's freedom and fairness in GOTV and persuasion communications.

What we see in this poll is that abortion messaging is necessary but insufficient when it comes to appreciating the full spectrum of women's fears, wants, and needs. Our imperatives are:

- **Keep abortion rights salient** and convey the frightening uncertainty of how Trump would dismantle those rights, highlighting the threats that women identify as most plausible.
- **Use a women's freedom and fairness agenda that strengthens the link between women's everyday fears and frustrations and election outcomes.** Women are intensely concerned about the very issues of unfairness that Trump exacerbated while president: from Day 1, his administration used every tool available to chip away at women's employment and economic security, women's health and safety, and women's rights overall. He eroded equal pay by halting data collection on the trend, limited an increase in the overtime threshold, eliminated key nondiscrimination protections in healthcare, and weakened Title IX which put students at greater risk of sexual harassment and assault.

Target the most efficient segments of the women electorate for direct voter contact. Siphon off right-of-center voters strategically and efficiently.

29% of Republicans say abortion should be legal in most/all cases. Of these, just 12% say they will not vote for a candidate who has a view of abortion different than theirs. That's a tiny slice of the electorate, but they certainly matter for races that will be won or lost on the margins. Target the women who are inclined to support Trump for economic reasons, and center the ways that Republicans' economic policies spell unfair outcomes for women.



METHODOLOGY

Change Research surveyed 2,745 voters nationwide from April 17-22, 2024.

We used the following sources to recruit respondents:

- targeted advertisements on Facebook and Instagram (2,187 respondents)
- text messages sent, via the Switchboard platform, to cell phone numbers listed on the voter file for individuals who qualified for the survey's sample universe based on their voter file data (557 respondents)

Regardless of which of these sources a respondent came from, they were directed to a survey hosted on SurveyMonkey's website.

Ads placed on social media targeted all adults. Anyone who indicated they were not registered to vote was terminated. As the survey fielded, Change Research used dynamic online sampling: adjusting ad budgets, lowering budgets for ads targeting groups that were overrepresented and raising budgets for ads targeting groups that were underrepresented, so that the final sample was roughly representative of the population across different groups. The survey was conducted in English.

The survey was conducted online by Change Research. Post-stratification was performed on age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, and 2020 presidential vote. Weighting parameters were based on the demographic composition of all registered voters, obtained from the voter file. That is, if a given age bracket or gender group represented x% of all registered voters on the voter file, then that same group would be weighted to x% in this survey." 2020 presidential results were based on numbers released by the Secretaries of State.

The modeled margin of error* for this survey is +/-2.0%, which uses effective sample sizes** that adjust for the design effect of weighting.

* We adopt The Pew Research Center's convention for the term "modeled margin of error"⁽¹⁾ (mMOE) to indicate that our surveys are not simple random samples in the pure sense, similar to any survey that has either non-response bias or for which the general population was not invited at random. A common, if imperfect, convention for reporting survey results is to use a single, survey-level mMOE based on a normal approximation. This is a poor approximation for proportion estimates close to 0 or 1. However, it is a useful communication tool in many settings and is reasonable in places where the proportion of interest is close to 50%. We report this normal approximation for our surveys assuming a proportion estimate of 50%.

** The effective sample size adjusts for the weighting applied to respondents, and is calculated using Kish's approximation (2).

(1) <https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/2018/01/26/for-weighting-online-opt-in-samples-what-matters-most/>

(2) Kish, Leslie. *Survey Sampling*, 1965.

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