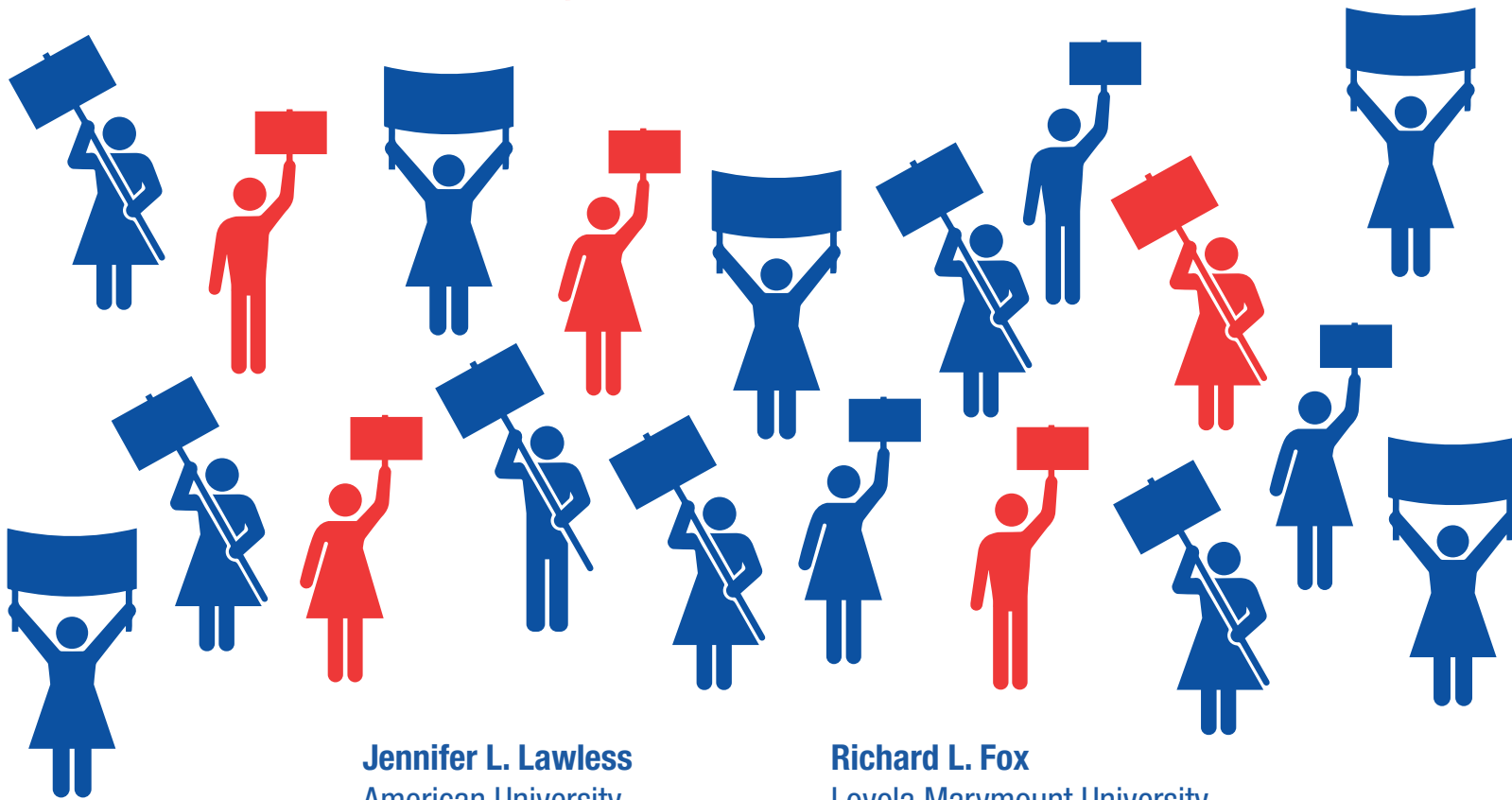


THE TRUMP EFFECT

*Results from a Politico / American University /
Loyola Marymount University
Survey of Potential Candidates*



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The day after Donald Trump took the oath of office, hundreds of thousands of women traveled to Washington, DC, to demonstrate their opposition to the new president. Nonprofit organizations opposed to Trump's agenda reported a surge in donations. And organizations that recruit women to work on campaigns, or even run for office themselves, started to see a record number of people at their training events. This groundswell of activism almost immediately led to widespread reporting that Trump's victory was inspiring a large new crop of female candidates across the country.

There's certainly something going on out there – even a casual observer of U.S. politics would draw that conclusion. But is Donald Trump's ascension to the presidency really pushing women everywhere to throw their hats into the political ring? Is Donald Trump such a shock to the political system that he's able to spark the kind of political activism and ambition that previous political candidates and major political events simply could not?

This report, based on a May 2017 national survey of “potential candidates” – college educated women and men who are employed full-time – begins to provide systematic answers to these questions. We divide the results into four sections:

- 1. Donald Trump Makes My Skin Crawl.** The survey results demonstrate – in lots of different ways – that many more potential candidates find Trump offensive and his victory appalling than are excited and energized by him. Democratic women, however, are particularly dismayed and offended by the Trump presidency.
- 2. I Have To Do Something, Anything, To Stop Donald Trump.** The findings reveal that Democrats' political engagement in the Trump Era is far greater than their levels of political activity prior to 2016. This activism is especially prevalent among women.
- 3. Well Maybe Not Anything; I'm Still Not So Interested in Running for Office.** Despite heightened political activism, we find that the gender gap in political ambition remains dramatic on both sides of the political aisle. For a small portion of Democratic women, however, Trump's victory and presidency may be triggering thoughts of running for office.
- 4. Even If I Have Thought about Running, I'm Not Actually Going To Do It.** The data lead us to conclude that the overwhelming majority of potential candidates – including the Democratic women who are the most upset, active, and newly ambitious – have no plans to throw their hats into the ring, now or sometime down the road.

All told, the results reveal that Democrats – especially women – hold very negative feelings for Trump, and that those feelings have indeed generated more political interest and activity. This activism, however, has not been accompanied by a commensurate surge in interest in running for office. In fact, the overall gender gap in political ambition today doesn't look dramatically different than it has over the course of the last 15 years. Notably, though, about one quarter of the female Democrats who are interested in running for office first started thinking about it only after Trump was elected. Very few report actual plans to run, though. The political activity spurred on by Trump is a necessary ingredient for women (and men) to emerge as candidates. But we should certainly be cautious – especially in the early stages of the Trump presidency – when predicting the extent to which this new activism will translate into candidacies.

THE TRUMP EFFECT

The day after Donald Trump took the oath of office, hundreds of thousands of women traveled to Washington, DC, to demonstrate their opposition to the new president. They marched to condemn what they perceived to be Trump's sexist statements, anti-immigrant policies, Islamophobia, and hate mongering. They listened as speakers championed a far-reaching progressive policy agenda: health care for all Americans, funding for Planned Parenthood, protections of civil rights and civil liberties, policies to address climate change, the list goes on and on. An estimated three million women participated in similar marches and rallies on the same day in 550 cities and towns throughout the United States.¹

Marching wasn't the only way that women began speaking out against the new president and his administration. Nonprofit organizations opposed to Trump's agenda reported a surge in donations.² Organizations that recruit women to work on campaigns, or even run for office themselves, started to see a record number of people at their training events.³

This groundswell of activism almost immediately led to widespread reporting that Trump's victory was inspiring a large new crop of female candidates across the country. Just a few days after the Women's March, *Voice of America* ran the headline, "After March, More Women Ready to Run for Office."⁴ A few weeks later, *National Public Radio's All Things Considered* aired a segment entitled, "Trump Election Drives More Women to Consider Running for Office."⁵ By March and April, stories like this started popping up regularly. The *Chicago Tribune* ("More Women Exploring Political Careers after Trump Election"⁶), *CNN* ("These Women Marched against Trump. Now They're Running for Office"⁷), the *Huffington Post* ("Donald Trump's Presidency Has Inspired 11,000 Women to Run for Office"⁸), and *Fortune* magazine ("Donald Trump Keeps Inspiring Women to Run for Office"⁹) were only a handful of the outlets covering the phenomenon.

We surveyed more than 2,000 potential candidates to determine whether Donald Trump has sparked their political activism and ambition.

There's certainly something going on out there – even a casual observer of U.S. politics would draw that conclusion. But is Donald Trump's ascension to the presidency really pushing women everywhere to throw their hats into the political ring? That would be quite a feat, as the gender gap in political ambition has persisted for decades, with women significantly less likely than men to be interested in running for office.¹⁰ And the gap has remained stable across generations¹¹ and throughout an ever-changing political landscape.¹² In fact, it's one of the main reasons that women continue to be so under-represented in U.S. political institutions (the 115th Congress actually ranks 101st in the world in the percentage of women serving in the national legislature¹³). Is Donald Trump such a shock to the political system that he's able to spark the

kind of political activism and ambition that previous political candidates and major political events simply could not?

Although media accounts and anecdotal evidence can shed light on these questions, only a national survey allows for a systematic assessment of the extent to which Trump's election and early presidency have inspired more women to run for office. So we conducted one. We surveyed a national sample of "potential candidates" – college educated women and men who are employed full-time. This type of sample – which represents roughly 40% of the adult population between the ages of 25 and 64 – is more appropriate than a national sample of the general public

when it comes to assessing political ambition. After all, the overwhelming majority of people who run for office have college degrees and full-time jobs or careers. That's not to say, of course, that people who fall outside of this group haven't been affected or activated by the Trump presidency. But a survey of potential candidates allows for a better sense of who is interested in running for office and whether Trump has helped close the enduring gender gap in political ambition.

From May 5 – 11, 2017, GfK (formerly Knowledge Networks) assembled the sample and carried out the survey (a description of the sample design and a demographic breakdown of the respondents appears in the appendix). In the pages that follow, we report the results of completed surveys from 2,062 potential candidates (1,061 men and 1,001 women).¹⁴ We divide the results into four sections:

1. **Donald Trump Makes My Skin Crawl.** The survey results demonstrate – in lots of different ways – that many more potential candidates find Trump offensive and his victory appalling than are excited and energized by him. Democratic women, however, are particularly dismayed and offended by the Trump presidency.
2. **I Have To Do Something, Anything, To Stop Donald Trump.** The findings reveal that Democrats' political engagement in the Trump Era is far greater than their levels of political activity prior to 2016. This activism is especially prevalent among women.
3. **Well Maybe Not Anything; I'm Still Not So Interested in Running for Office.** Despite the heightened political activism of the potential candidates we surveyed, we find that the gender gap in political ambition remains dramatic on both sides of the political aisle. For a small portion of Democratic women, however, Trump's victory and presidency may be triggering thoughts of running for office.
4. **Even If I Have Thought about Running, I'm Not Actually Going To Do It.** The data lead us to conclude that the overwhelming majority of potential candidates – including the Democratic women who are the most upset, active, and newly ambitious – have no plans to throw their hats into the ring, now or sometime down the road.

All told, the results reveal that Democrats – especially women – hold very negative feelings for Trump, and that those feelings have indeed generated more political interest and activity. This activism, however, has not been accompanied by a commensurate surge in interest in running for office. In fact, the overall gender gap in political ambition today doesn't look dramatically different than it has over the course of the last 15 years. Notably, though, about one quarter of the female Democrats who are interested in running for office first started thinking about it only after Trump was elected. Very few report actual plans to run, though. The political activity spurred on by Trump is a necessary ingredient for women (and men) to emerge as candidates. But we should certainly be cautious – especially in the early stages of the Trump presidency – when predicting the extent to which this new activism will translate into candidacies.

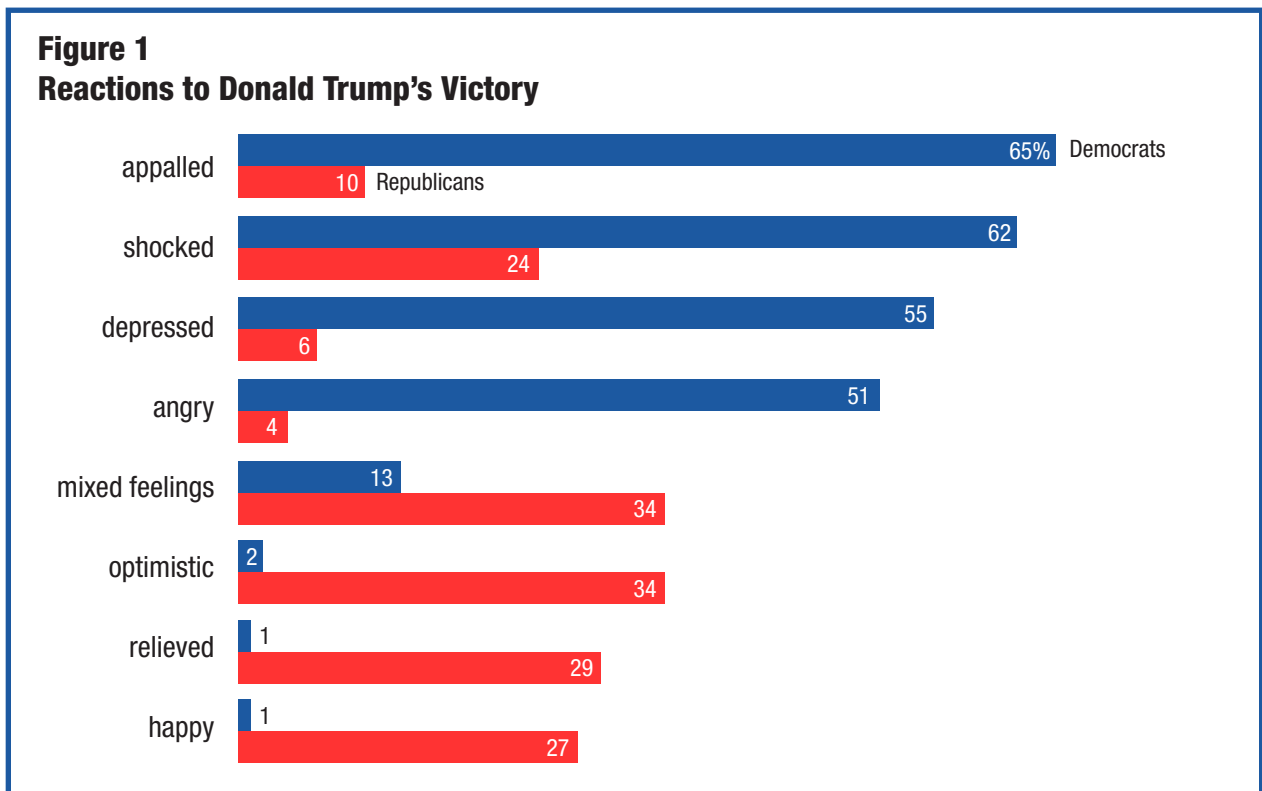
PART 1: DONALD TRUMP MAKES MY SKIN CRAWL

If Trump is leading more women to engage politically, then it's likely because of the negative reactions he incites. So, that's where we begin: What do potential candidates think about Trump winning the presidency? And are women especially perturbed?

We assessed reactions among our sample of potential candidates in three ways: First, we presented respondents with eight adjectives and asked them to check off all the words that capture how they feel when they think about Trump winning the election. The list was balanced, so respondents had multiple ways to express both positive and negative reactions. Second, we provided respondents with a series of statements about Trump’s character and asked them to tell us the extent to which they agreed with each. Third, we offered a few hypothetical scenarios pertaining to Trump and asked respondents to share how they’d react.

We begin with the adjectives respondents associated with Trump’s win. Put simply, attitudes toward Donald Trump’s victory are decidedly negative. More than three times as many people reported being “appalled” or “depressed” as did “happy” with the outcome. Twice as many were “angry” as were “optimistic.” And only one out of every eight people expressed relief that Trump defeated Hillary Clinton.

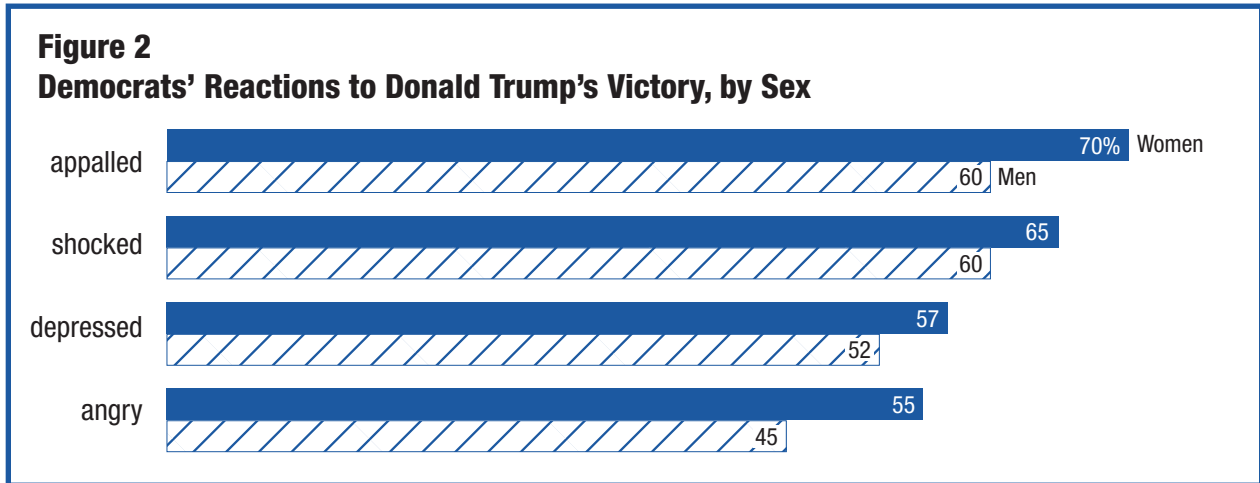
When we break the sample down by party affiliation, there are few surprises. Democrats’ feelings are far more negative than Republicans’ (see Figure 1). Importantly, though, these differences aren’t a mere reflection of the partisan breakdown in the sample. Indeed, almost twice as many Democrats associated negative words with Trump’s win as Republicans did positive words.



Note: Bars represent the percentage of respondents who reported that the word described how they feel when they think about the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. Democrats and Republicans include independents who “lean” Democratic or Republican. Bars do not total 100% because people could check off multiple words as capturing their reactions. Total sample size = 2,021 (1,160 Democrats and 861 Republicans).

Particularly important for our purposes is that these negative attitudes are disproportionately concentrated among Democratic women. Although a majority of Democrats were appalled, shocked, and depressed by Trump’s victory, women were significantly more likely than men to feel that way. Moreover, whereas a majority of Democratic women reported being angry about Trump’s victory, a majority of Democratic men did not (see Figure 2). We don’t

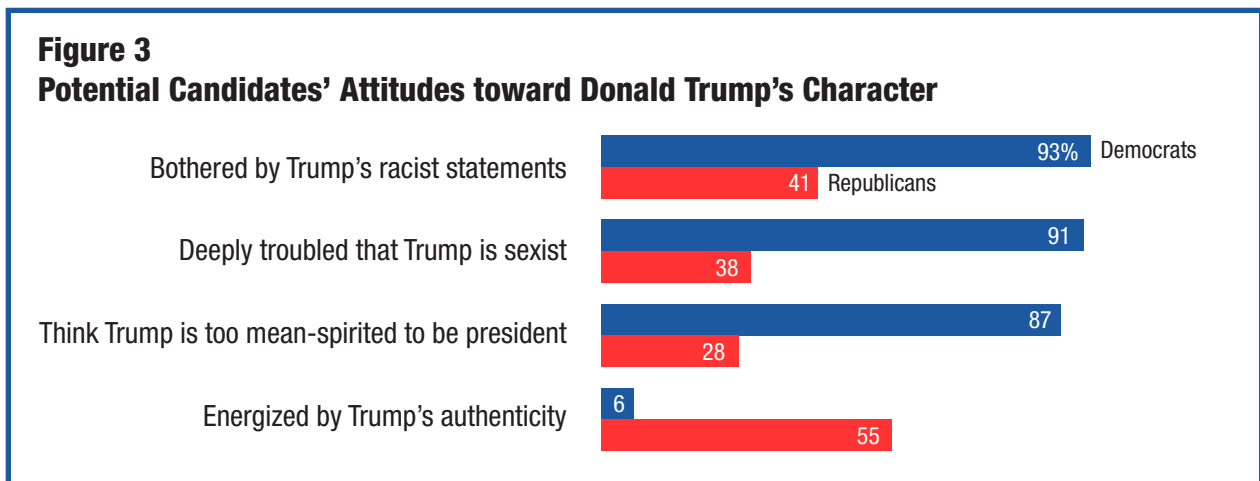
display the percentages of Democrats who expressed positive reactions to Trump because for no adjective does that number cross the 3% threshold.



Note: Bars represent the percentage of Democratic and Democratic leaning respondents who reported that the word described how they feel when they think about the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. Bars do not total 100% because people could check off multiple words as capturing their reactions. Sample size = 1,160 (645 women and 515 men).

The story is similar when we turn to our second gauge of opinions toward Trump: attitudes about his behavior and character. Overall, seven out of 10 people in the full sample – not just Democrats – were bothered by statements Trump made that they perceived to be racist. Large majorities (more than 60%) were troubled by what they perceived as sexism and mean-spiritedness on Trump's part. The 27% of potential candidates who felt energized by Trump's authenticity paled in comparison.

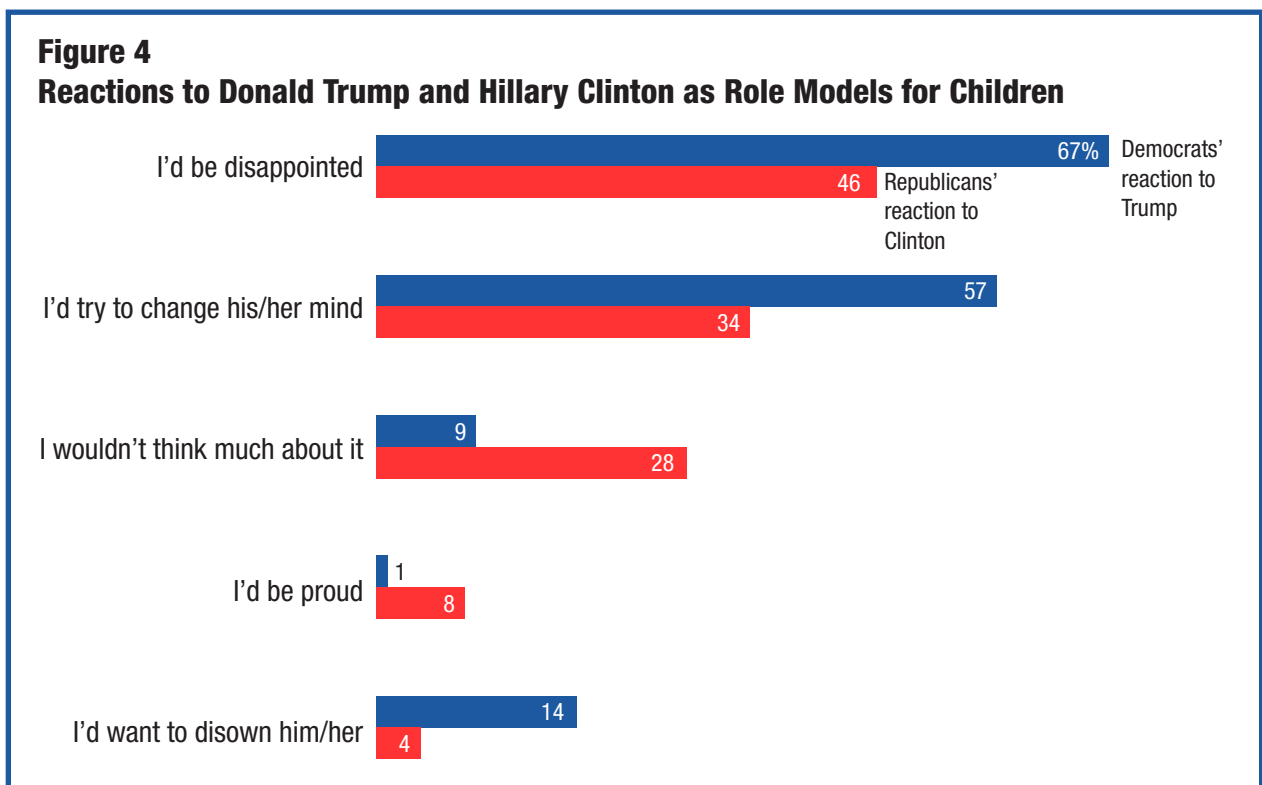
But here, too, a greater portion of Democrats agreed with statements about Trump's racism, sexism, and mean-spiritedness than Republicans eschewed them. Figure 3, which divides reactions based on party affiliation, reveals that roughly nine out of 10 Democratic men and women reported high levels of disdain and concern. We don't break the data down by sex because Democrats almost uniformly saw Trump the same way. Note that on any given indicator, at least one-quarter of Republicans voiced concern about Trump's character or behavior as well.



Note: Bars represent the percentage of respondents who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement. Democrats and Republicans include independents who "lean" Democratic or Republican. Sample sizes vary from 1,147 to 1,153 for Democrats and 852 to 854 for Republicans, as some people did not respond to every question.

To gauge more visceral reactions to Trump – and to do it in a somewhat playful way – we next presented respondents with a few scenarios. The first asked them to imagine how they’d react if their son (real or hypothetical) came home and told them that Donald Trump was his role model. The blue bars in Figure 4 present the results for Democratic respondents. As we’d expect, most women and men would be disappointed, and a majority would try to change their sons’ minds. But that more Democrats would want to disown their son than not give it much thought demonstrates just how deeply-seated their negative feelings toward Trump really are.

To put these reactions into perspective, take a look at the red bars in Figure 4. These represent responses to the same question posed to Republicans about Hillary Clinton. Republican parents wouldn’t be thrilled if their real or hypothetical daughters considered Clinton a role model, which is what we’d anticipate. But less than half would be disappointed. Nearly 30% wouldn’t think much about it. And twice as many Republicans (9% of women and 7% of men) would be proud of their daughters than want to disown them (2% of women and 5% of men).



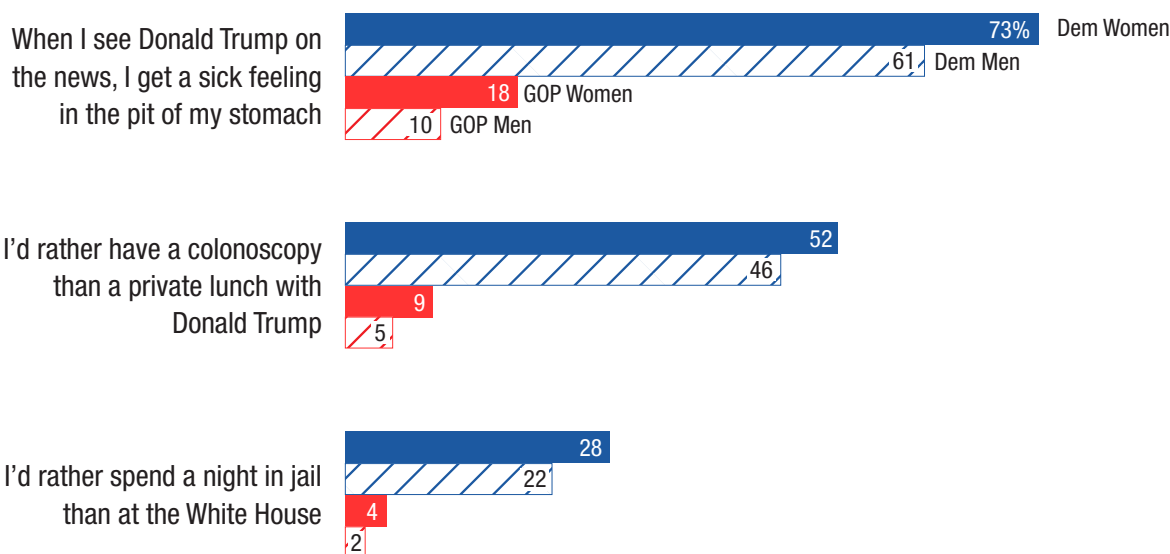
Note: Blue bars represent how Democratic and Democratic leaning respondents would feel if they learned that their son (real or hypothetical) considered Donald Trump a role model. Red bars indicate how Republican and Republican leaning respondents would feel if they learned that their daughter (real or hypothetical) considered Hillary Clinton a role model. Bars do not total 100% because people could check off multiple statements as capturing their attitudes. Sample size = 2,021 (1,160 Democrats and 861 Republicans).

Our final set of questions sought to capture the depths of utter disdain that some potential candidates hold for Donald Trump. The results we’ve presented thus far certainly tap into those sentiments, but we wanted to gain a handle on just how visceral some people’s reactions toward Trump truly are. Figure 5 presents the results.

The top set of bars in Figure 5 indicates the percentage of people – broken down by sex and party – who agreed with the statement, “When I see Donald Trump on the news, I get a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach.” More than 70% of Democratic women fell into this category.

It's hard to overstate Democratic women's dismay with the president. When asked whether they'd rather have a colonoscopy or a private lunch with Trump, more than half of female Democrats chose the colonoscopy. But that's not all. More than a quarter of Democratic women would rather spend a night in jail than at the Trump White House. Republicans' reactions are far less negative, but notice that almost 20% of Republican women said that seeing Trump on the news makes them sick, too. It's difficult to envision a more damning set of feelings directed at a national political figure.¹⁵

Figure 5
Visceral Reactions to Donald Trump



Note: Bars represent the percentage of respondents who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with each statement. Democrats include Democratic and Democratic leaning respondents; Republicans include Republican and Republican leaning respondents. Sample size = 2,021.

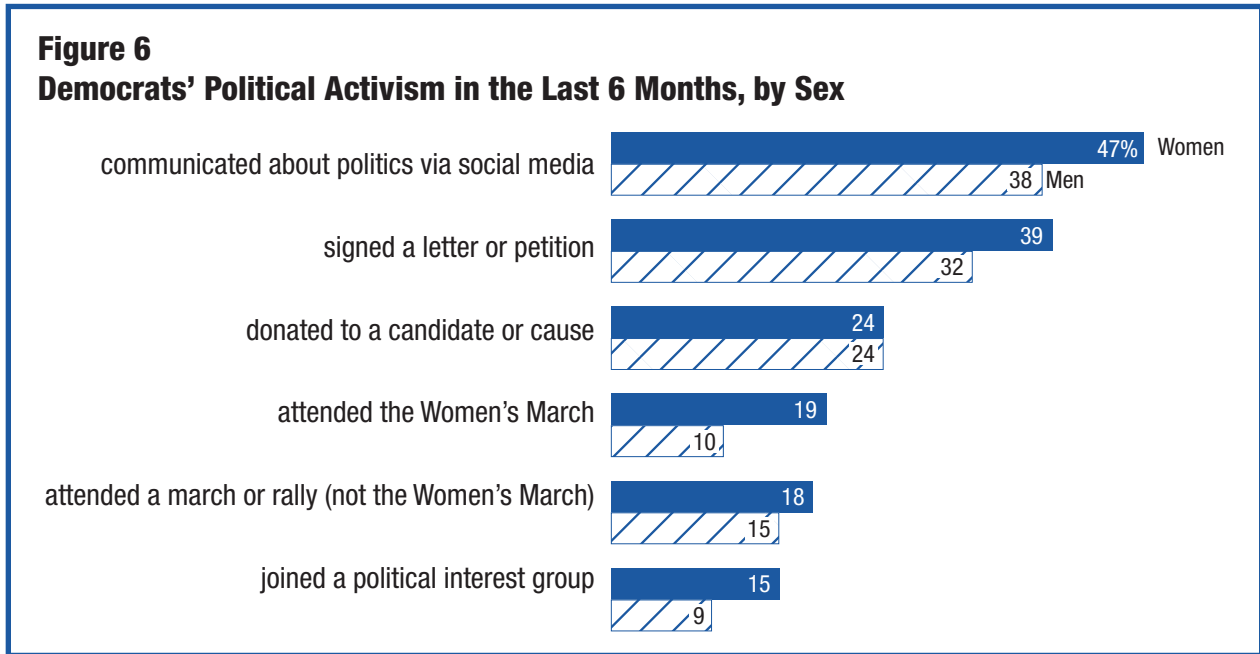
PART 2: I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING, ANYTHING, TO STOP DONALD TRUMP

Our second set of analyses examines whether the negative reactions to Trump's victory and early presidency have motivated people to become more politically active. Here, we rely on survey questions focusing on (1) political participation in the months since Trump's win; (2) the relationship between political activism and people's reactions to Trump's victory and policy agenda; and (3) self-reported changes in political engagement.

We begin with political participation in the six months following Trump's election. We asked potential candidates to tell us whether they engaged in six specific political activities since the election. The responses reveal a high degree of activism. Roughly 30% of people reported that they signed a political letter or petition; and nearly the same number said they communicated about politics via social media. Donations, attendance at marches and rallies – including the Women's March – and interest group memberships were less common, but not rare (7 – 16% of respondents engaged in each).

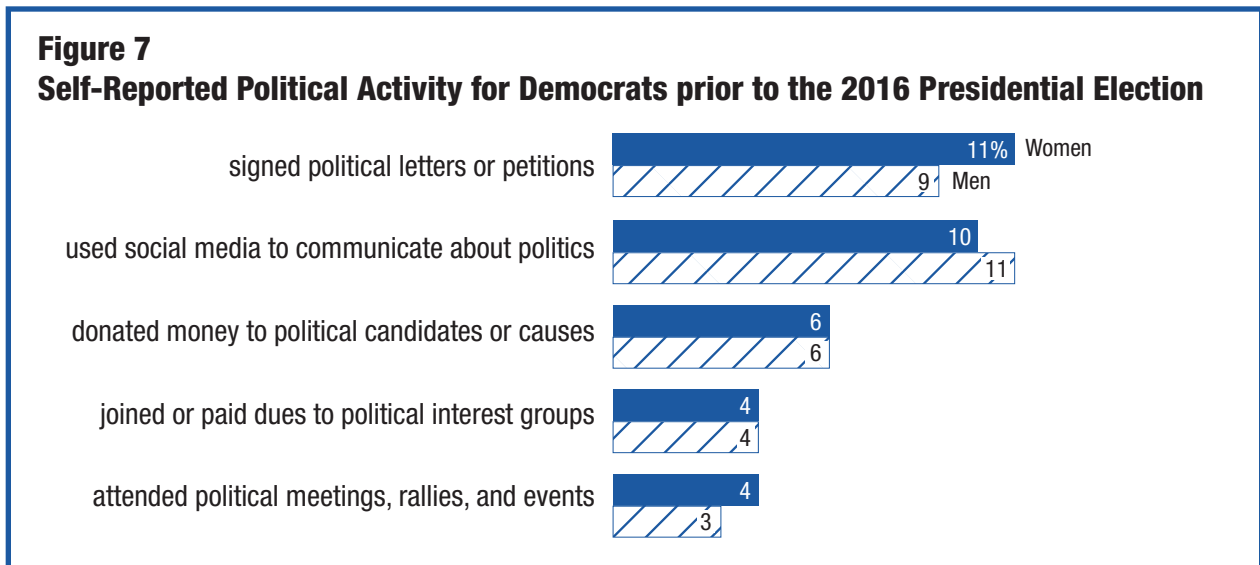
If Trump is motivating this political activity, then the lion's share of it should be concentrated on the Democratic side of the aisle – especially among women. And it is. Except for donating to a candidate or cause, female

Democrats participated at higher rates than male Democrats did (see Figure 6).



Note: Bars represent the percentage of Democratic and Democratic leaning respondents who reported engaging in each activity sometime in the last six months (since Donald Trump was elected). Total sample size = 1,160 (645 women and 515 men).

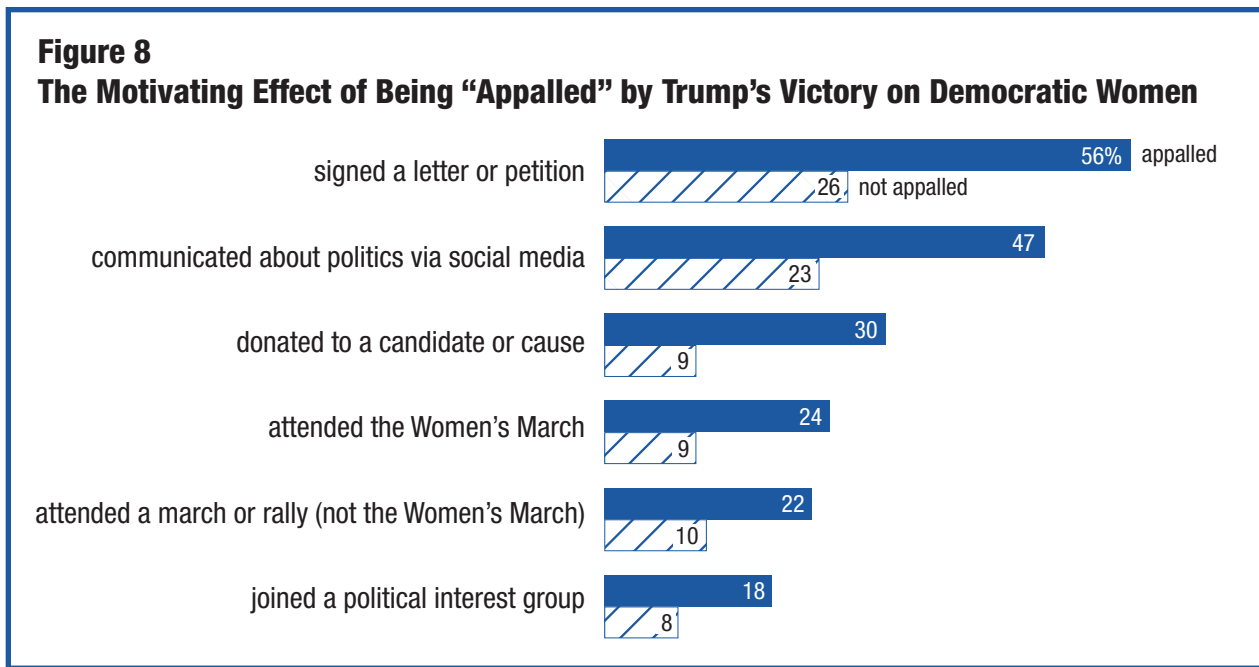
What's more is that these levels of political activity are not typical. These same women and men were three to four times less likely to engage in each activity prior to Election Day 2016, and there were no notable gender differences (see Figure 7). Thus, the post-2016 data provide one clear piece of evidence of a Trump effect: Activism is up among all Democrats, but particularly women.



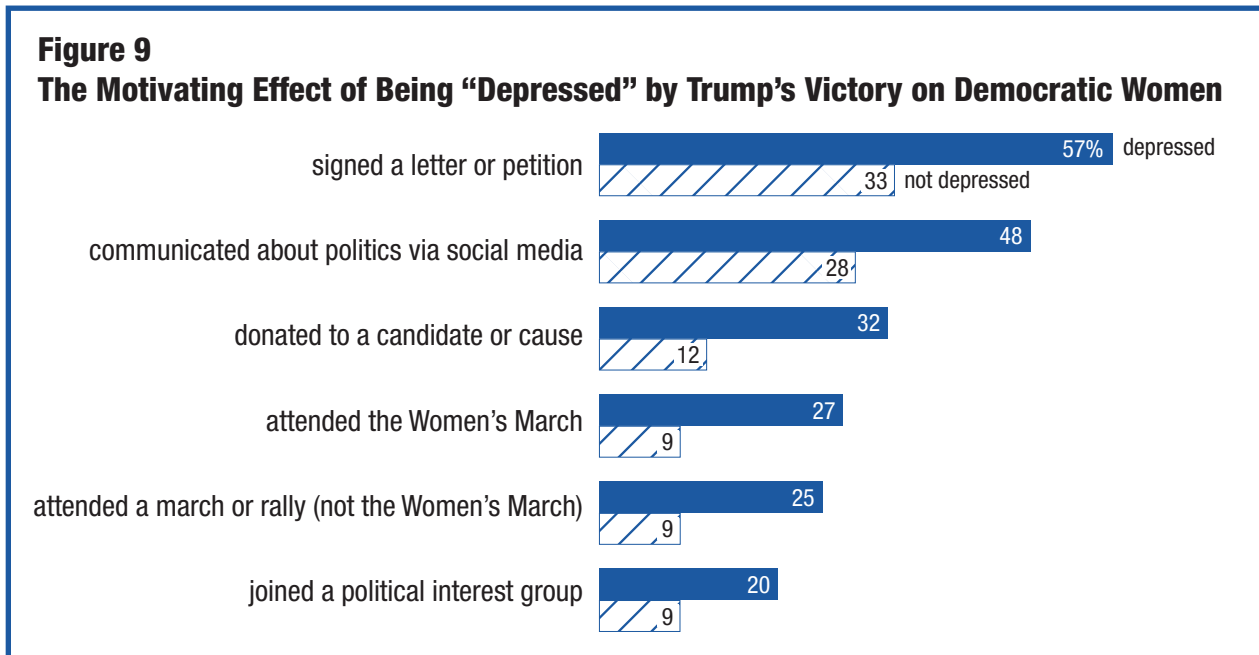
Note: Bars represent the percentage of Democratic and Democratic leaning respondents who reported regularly engaging in each activity before Donald Trump was elected. Total sample size = 1,160 (645 women and 515 men).

The second piece of evidence for a Trump effect emerges when we determine which Democrats are now most politically active. Who are they? The women who detest Trump, both on a personal and policy level.

Just consider the relationship between negative reactions to Trump and political participation in the six months following his victory. Two reactions to Trump’s win – “appalled” and “depressed” – stand out as factors that significantly motivated Democratic women’s activism.¹⁶ Figure 8 compares Democratic women who reported being appalled by Trump’s victory to Democratic women who did not find the election result appalling. Figure 9 presents similar data, but compares Democratic women who were depressed by the outcome to those who were not. Notice that for each of the six types of political participation, twice as many women with negative reactions engaged in the activity.¹⁷

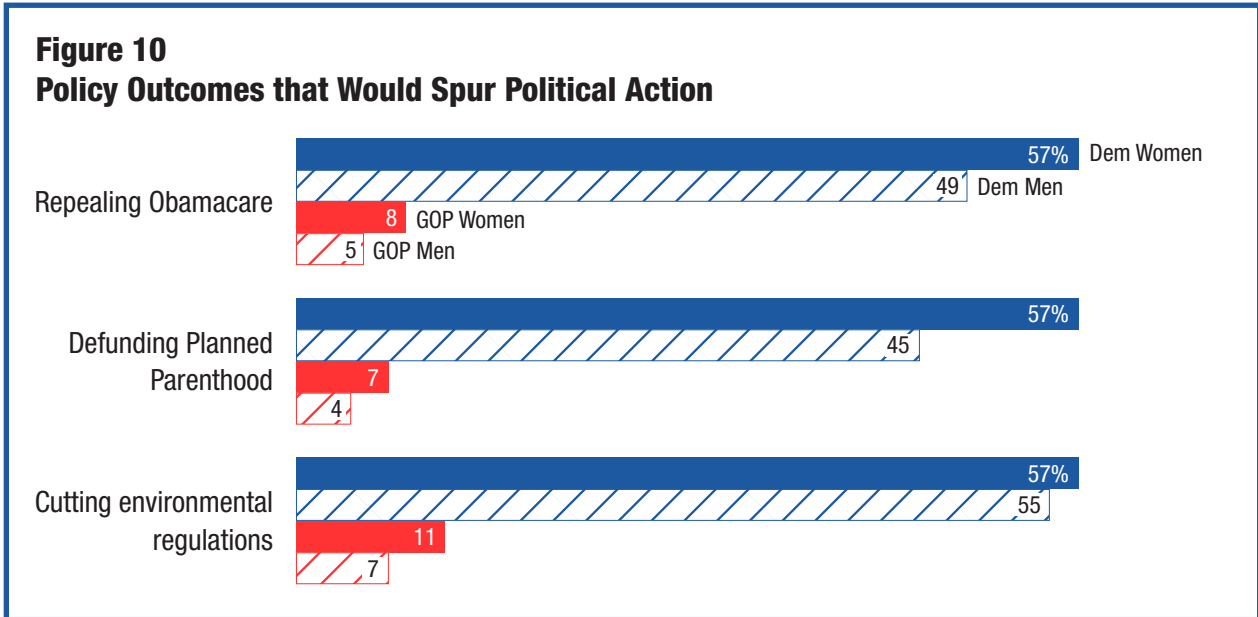


Note: Bars represent the percentage of Democratic and Democratic leaning women who reported engaging in each activity, broken down by whether they said they were “appalled” by Trump’s win. Sample size = 645.



Note: Bars represent the percentage of Democratic and Democratic leaning women who reported engaging in each activity, broken down by whether they said they were “depressed” by Trump’s win. Sample size = 645.

Negative reactions to Trump’s policy agenda also appear to motivate Democratic women. Figure 10 presents the results of survey questions that focused on how respondents would react if Trump succeeds in achieving his stated goals of: (1) repealing Obamacare; (2) defunding Planned Parenthood; and (3) cutting environmental regulations. Would they be happy? Would they be upset? Would they be willing to take action?



Note: Bars reflect the percentage of respondents – by sex and party – who reported that if Trump succeeds enacting each policy, they would “be so upset that they’d take political action (i.e., donate to a candidate, attend a rally, contact an elected official).” Sample size = 2,021.

Many more Republicans than Democrats support these policies, so activism to combat them should take place predominantly on the Democratic side. And it does, with more than half of all Democrats reporting that they’d do something (such as donate to a candidate, contact an elected official, or attend an event) if Trump succeeds. On



two of the three policies, though, Democratic women are significantly more likely than Democratic men to say they’d be motivated to act. For the one policy where there’s no gender gap, nearly six out of 10 women and men would take political action. The gap closes, therefore, not because women are less motivated, but rather, because men are more driven by environmental concerns than they are by health care or reproductive rights.

The final piece of evidence we rely on to conclude that Trump has driven up political activism comes from two survey questions that asked respondents directly whether their political engagement changed since the election. When it comes to following national news, all groups of potential candidates – men and women, Democrats and Republicans – said that they have become more attentive since Trump won the presidency (see top of Table 1).

That heightened attentiveness, however, isn't uniform. Nearly half of Democratic women, but only one-third of Democratic men, and just roughly one-quarter of Republican women and men, reported following the national news more regularly after Trump was elected.

Table 1
Self-Reported Changes in Political Interest and Activity since the Election of Donald Trump

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Following National News				
More attentive	47%	33%	27%	25%
Less attentive	14	13	9	5
No change	39	54	63	70
Levels of Political Activity				
More active	40	34	8	10
Less active	4	5	4	4
No change	56	61	88	87
Sample size	645	515	339	522

The same is true for changes in political activity (see the bottom half of Table 1). Democrats were more likely than Republicans to report being motivated to political action in the last six months, but women were more likely than men to fall into this category.

PART 3: WELL, MAYBE NOT ANYTHING; I'M STILL NOT SO INTERESTED IN RUNNING FOR OFFICE

There seems to be little question that Trump's election has been met with increased political engagement among Democrats, particularly women. Whether the effect extends to interest in running for elective office is less clear.

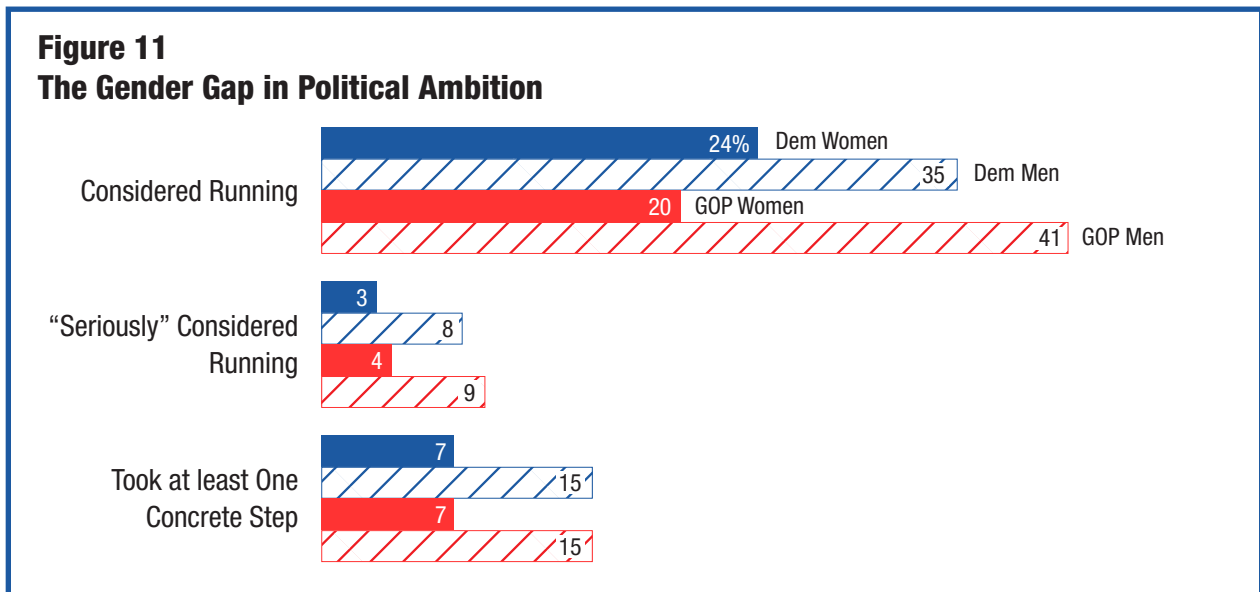
To examine Trump's impact on political ambition, we included in the survey several measures, three of which we've used when surveying potential candidates dating back to 2001: Whether a respondent (1) ever considered running for office; (2) seriously considered a candidacy; or (3) took a concrete step toward running for office. Concrete steps include talking to family members or friends about a potential candidacy, speaking with potential supporters, attending a candidate training, or speaking with candidates about their experiences.

On all three measures, and for both political parties, we uncovered a large gender gap in political ambition. Take first, the "considered running" measure. Overall, the gender gap is 15 percentage points (23% of women, compared to 38% of men, have considered running for office). This gender gap is nearly identical to the 16-point gender gap we uncovered in political ambition in studies of potential candidates from 2001 and 2011. Like in

previous studies, the survey results also indicate that men are more than twice as likely as women (8% compared to 3%) to say that they’ve “seriously” considered running, or that they have taken any of the concrete steps that often precede a candidacy (15% of men, but only 7% of women, reported doing so). Generally speaking, then, it’s hard to make the case that Trump has fundamentally affected the gender gap in political ambition.¹⁸

When we move beyond the overall sample and compare the gender gap in ambition among Democrats to Republicans, the evidence does point to a potential, albeit small, Trump effect. Figure 11 presents the three measures of political ambition broken down by sex and party. When it comes to considering a candidacy, the gender gap is nearly twice as large among Republicans (21 points) as it is among Democrats (11 points).

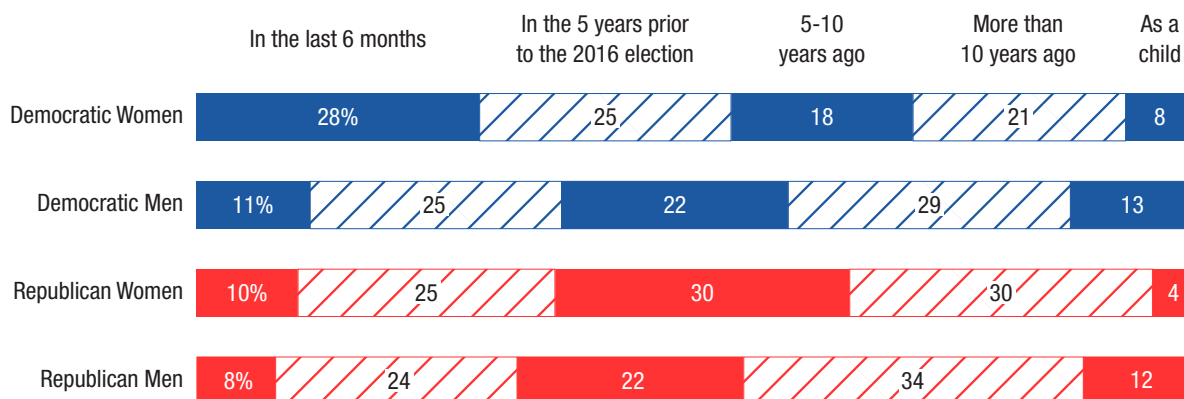
We want to stress the importance of considering this piece of data carefully, though. It does not simply mean that Trump has cut the gender gap in half among Democrats. It’s more complicated than that. After all, Democratic men are 6 percentage points less likely than Republican men to have considered running for office. So 60% of the difference in the two gaps is driven entirely by men’s behavior. That said, Democratic women are 4 percentage points more likely than Republican women to have considered running for office. It’s possible that some of that difference can be accounted for by Donald Trump. But it’s also important to note there are no partisan differences in the other two indicators of political ambition, both of which represent more fleshed out measures of interest in running for office.



Note: Bars reflect the percentage of respondents – by sex and party – who fall into each category. “Concrete Steps” include speaking to party leaders, talking with family members and friends, talking with potential supporters, speaking with candidates about their experiences, and attending a candidate training. Sample size = 2,021.

A second piece of suggestive evidence for a Trump bump in political ambition among Democratic women emerges when we consider potential candidates’ recollections of when they first thought about running for office (see Figure 12). Keep in mind that this analysis is restricted to the portion of the sample that has considered running for office (so only 23% of women and 38% of men are included). Still, among this group of people, more than a quarter of Democratic women first thought about running for office in the last six months. This makes them almost three times as likely as male Democrats, or male and female Republicans, to have begun contemplating a candidacy only recently.

Figure 12
The First Time Running for Office Crossed Politically Ambitious People's Minds



Note: Sample size restricted to the 620 Democratic and Republican respondents who have considered running for office. Bars represent the breakdown, within each group, of when the thought of running for office first occurred to the respondent. The 28% of Democratic women who first considered running within the last 6 months, for example, amounts to 43 people.

Although the gender gap in political ambition remains large, even among Democrats, the survey data suggest that a small group of Democratic women have, for the first time, considered throwing their hats into the ring. This group includes just a sliver of women. The 28% who thought about it for the first time in the last six months amounts to just 43 people. But still, their notions of becoming a candidate date back only to the election of Donald Trump.

PART 4: EVEN IF I HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT RUNNING, I'M NOT ACTUALLY GOING TO DO IT

Whether this newfound political activism or nascent interest in running for office will actually result in more female candidates in the near future is the final question we address. On balance, the evidence suggests that very few women will emerge from the overall pool of potential candidates.

To draw this conclusion, we rely first on the data presented in Table 2. We asked people – even those who had never thought about running for office – about their future plans. Most notably, the overwhelming majority of respondents – roughly 90% – did not envision ever becoming a candidate. This group includes people who have no interest in running now, as well as those who are confident that they will absolutely never run. This is true on both sides of the political aisle. Men, however, are more than twice as likely as women to report definite plans to run for office, and almost twice as likely to say that they are open to running even if they wouldn't seek out the opportunity.

On balance, the evidence suggests that very few women will emerge from the overall pool of potential candidates.

Table 2
Future Plans to Run for Office

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Definitely plan to run	2%	5%	1%	6%
Open to running, but wouldn't seek out an opportunity	8	13	7	14
No interest in running, but wouldn't rule it out forever	39	38	40	45
Would absolutely never run	51	44	53	36
Sample Size	645	515	339	522

To highlight the disconnect between widespread political activism and political ambition, we present in Table 3 the raw number of people in our sample of 2,062 who report definite plans to run for office. Notice that only 12 women – 12! – are sure they'll throw their hats into the ring. Almost five times as many men (58) fall into this category. Incidentally, only one of the 43 women who first considered running after Trump was elected is part of this group of 12 women who definitely plan to run; the other 42 have no definite plans to run for office. When we home in on the 12 women, we see that just four of them plan to run in 2018 (compared to 18 men).

Table 3
Raw Number of Likely Candidacies in 2018, 2020, and Beyond

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Number who definitely plan to run	10	27	2	29
Plan to run in 2018	4	8	0	10
Plan to run in 2020	5	6	0	9
Plan to run at some point down the road	1	13	2	10

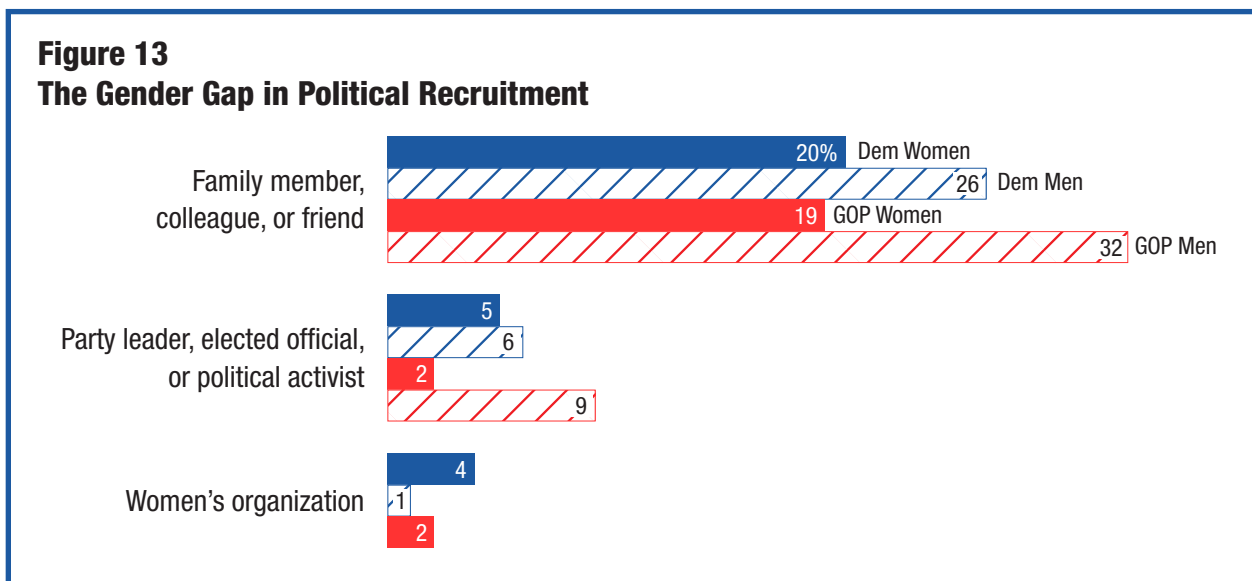
Note: Entries represent the raw number of people who fall into each category. Data are restricted to the 70 people (3% of the overall sample) who reported "definite" plans to run for office in the future. Entries don't total 70 because one independent man plans to run in 2018 and one independent man plans to run at some point down the road.

There are, however, two reasons to believe that, among this very small number of women, Trump is at least partially responsible for their interest in running for office.

First, consider patterns of political recruitment. One of the most important predictors of whether someone is willing to run for office is whether he or she has ever been encouraged or recruited to run. As we see in Figure 13, although men are more likely than women to receive that suggestion to run for office, the gender gap is much smaller among Democrats than Republicans. When it comes to being recruited to run for office from a family

member, colleague, or friend, a 6 percentage point gender gap among Democrats more than doubles (to 13 points) among Republicans.

Democratic women are also roughly equally as likely as Democratic men to report being recruited to run by a party leader, elected official, or political activist. Not so among Republicans, where the gender gap is more than four times the size. And women's organizations, which tend to have progressive policy agendas, are targeting Democratic women more than Republicans.¹⁹ It could very well be the case that Democratic party leaders and organizations are seizing on Trump's character and agenda to target a greater than usual proportion of female candidates.



Note: Bars reflect the percentage of respondents – by sex and party – who reported being recruited or encouraged to run for office from each source. Sample size = 2,021.

Second, we asked all potential candidates, regardless of their interest in running for office, what might motivate them to run. Democrats were more likely than Republicans to say that they'd be motivated by concerns over a particular politician. When we focus on the sub-sample of Democrats who have considered running for office, 52% of women, compared to 38% of men, who named a politician's poor performance as a motivator named Trump.

CONCLUSION

It's still too early to know for sure how Donald Trump's election and presidency will shape the political landscape in the short, medium, and long term. But our survey results do make several things clear:

- Negative reactions to Trump are widespread and deep among Democrats, especially women.
- These negative reactions have motivated Democrats, especially women, to be more politically engaged and active.

- Heightened interest and activity do not translate directly into candidacies for public office. Indeed, a large gender gap in political ambition, even among Democrats, remains. Very few women in our national sample of potential candidates plan to run for office ever, let alone anytime soon.
- Even with the substantial gender gap in political ambition, there may well be short-term gains in the number of Democratic female candidates running for office in 2018 and 2020. Targeted recruitment efforts by political activists and organizations – which appear to be underway – could generate a record number of female candidates. Because there are no similar systematic efforts on the GOP side of the aisle, there’s no reason to expect a significant uptick in the number of female Republican candidates.
- Alongside the potential record number of female Democratic candidates in coming election cycles might be a record number of Democratic men whose activism and engagement have also been sparked by Trump, and who already have a greater propensity to run for office.

Despite our somewhat cautious appraisal of the extent to which the early days of the Trump presidency have closed the gender gap in political ambition, we’ll end this report with some optimism: The Trump effect has the potential to boost women’s candidate emergence, at least on the Democratic side of the aisle, over the long run. If more women become politically active because of Donald Trump, then there’s a larger pool of potential candidates from which gatekeepers can recruit. In fact, as the headlines we opened this report with attest, we might already be seeing this phenomenon. Many political organizations are trying to capitalize on women’s dismay with Trump, encouraging more women to turn their concerns into candidacies.

Certainly, increased political engagement and proximity to the political system are key ingredients to foster political ambition. But other factors that impede women’s political ambition – in particular, their self-assessments of whether they’re qualified to run for office – are longstanding and deeply embedded. As such, it is important to keep in mind that cultivating widespread interest in running for office likely takes more than Donald Trump and the impressive grassroots surge in political activism he’s generated.

APPENDIX: DATA COLLECTION AND THE SAMPLE

We conducted our survey of potential candidates through GfK Custom Research LLC (formerly Knowledge Networks), a top survey research firm that is frequently used for political science research because it relies on a probability-based online non-volunteer access panel. KnowledgePanel members are recruited using a statistically valid sampling method with a published sample frame of residential addresses that covers approximately 98% of U.S. households. Samples are drawn from among active members using a probability proportional to size weighted sampling approach.

In our case, GfK employed customized stratified random sampling based on level of education and employment status; only college educated citizens who are employed full-time were eligible to participate. The response rate for men was 58% and for women 55%. Table A1, which provides basic demographics of the respondents, demonstrates that the sample is comprised of a broad cross-section of potential candidates.

Appendix Demographics of the Sample

	Women	Men
Party Affiliation		
Strong Democrat	27 %	18 %
Democrat	19	11
Independent, leaning Democrat	18	20
Independent	2	2
Independent, leaning Republican	11	20
Republican	12	12
Strong Republican	11	17
Race		
White	72	75
Black	10	6
Latino / Hispanic	8	7
More than Two Races or Other	11	11
Household Income		
Less than \$50,000	15	10
\$50,001 - \$74,999	15	13
\$75,000 - \$99,999	19	15
\$100,00 - \$199,000	43	47
At least \$200,000	9	15
Highest Degree Received		
Bachelor's degree	56	57
Master's degree	32	30
Doctorate or professional degree	12	13
Age		
18 – 29	18	15
30 – 44	31	30
45 – 59	32	34
60 or older	19	20
Region		
Northeast	23	21
Midwest	23	20
South	32	34
West	23	26
Sample Size	1,001	1,061

Note: Entries are based on raw (unweighted) data.

ENDNOTES

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⁹ Claire Zillman, “Donald Trump Keeps Inspiring Women to Run for Office,” *Fortune*, March 22, 2017. Accessed at: <http://fortune.com/2017/03/22/trump-women-run-for-office/> (May 26, 2017).

¹⁰ Lawless, Jennifer L. and Richard L. Fox. 2010. *It Still Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don’t Run for Office*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

¹¹ Lawless, Jennifer L. and Richard L. Fox. 2013. *Girls Just Wanna Not Run: The Gender Gap in Young Americans’ Political Ambition*. Washington, DC: Women & Politics Institute.

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¹³ “Women in National Parliaments.” *Interparliamentary Union*, May 1, 2017. Accessed at: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> (May 29, 2017).

¹⁴ The survey was jointly funded by American University, Loyola Marymount University, and *Politico*.

¹⁵ Because of the way we compiled the sample, there are limited demographic differences to examine; all respondents are college educated and employed full-time. When we break the data down within party by age and race, the findings are consistent with the overall data we present in the report.

¹⁶ In more complex statistical analyses, we considered a range of possible factors motivating political activity. For Democrats, “appalled” and “depressed” by the 2016 election outcome were independent predictors of heightened political activism, even after we accounted for respondents’ previous levels of political activity. Other reactions to Trump – i.e., “shocked” and “angry,” as well as assessments of whether Trump is racist, sexist, or mean-spirited – did not consistently predict political activity. The same results emerged among Republicans, but only a handful reported being appalled or depressed.

¹⁷ In more sophisticated models, women’s heightened activity withstood controls for their previous levels of activism and whether they were “appalled” or “depressed.” This means that it’s not only these reactions to Trump that are spurring Democratic women’s activism; it’s likely Trump’s policy agenda as well.

¹⁸ For more on the gender gap in political ambition among potential candidates in 2001 and 2011, see Lawless, Jennifer L. and Richard L. Fox. 2012. *Men Rule: The Continued Under-Representation of Women in U.S. Politics*. Washington, DC: Women & Politics Institute; and Lawless, Jennifer L. and Richard L. Fox. 2010. *It Still Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don’t Run for Office*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁹ These results are different from previous studies. A 2002 Knowledge Networks (now GfK) survey, restricted just to the 396 college educated respondents who were employed full-time (for comparison purposes) found that men in both parties were more than four times as likely as women to report receiving the suggestion to run from a political gatekeeper, such as a party leader, elected official, or political activist. Our 2011 survey of potential candidates found the same thing: a 10-percentage point recruitment gap among Democrats and an 11-point gap among Republicans.

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