

FOR RELEASE SEPTEMBER 20, 2018

# Women and Leadership 2018

*Wide gender and party gaps in views about the state of female leadership and the obstacles women face*

**BY** *Kim Parker, Juliana Horowitz and Ruth Igielnik*

**FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:**

Kim Parker, Director, Social Trends Research  
Juliana Horowitz, Associate Director, Research  
Jessica Pumphrey, Communications Associate

202.419.4372

[www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org)

**RECOMMENDED CITATION**

Pew Research Center, September 2018, "Women and Leadership 2018"



## About Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It does not take policy positions. The Center conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social science research. It studies U.S. politics and policy; journalism and media; internet, science and technology; religion and public life; Hispanic trends; global attitudes and trends; and U.S. social and demographic trends. All of the Center's reports are available at [www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org). Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

© Pew Research Center 2018

## Table of Contents

<b>About Pew Research Center</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Views on the state of gender and leadership and obstacles for women</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2. Views on leadership traits and competencies and how they intersect with gender</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>47</b>

# Women and Leadership 2018

## *Wide gender and party gaps in views about the state of female leadership and the obstacles women face*

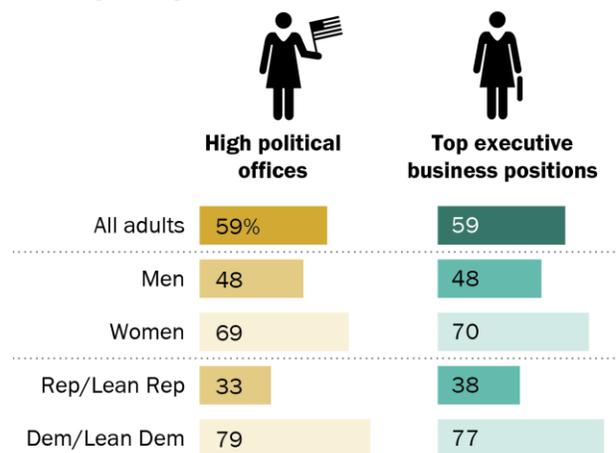
Two years after Hillary Clinton became the first woman to win the presidential nomination of a major U.S. political party, and with a record number of [women running for Congress](#) in 2018, a majority of Americans say they would like to see more women in top leadership positions – not only in politics, but also in the corporate world – according to a new Pew Research Center survey. But most say men still have an easier path to the top and that women have to do more to prove their worth. And the public is skeptical that the country will ever achieve gender parity in politics or in business.

Republicans and Democrats have widely different views about where things stand today and what factors are holding women back. Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents are more than twice as likely as Republicans and those who lean Republican to say there are too few women in high political offices (79% vs. 33%). And while 64% of Democrats say gender discrimination is a major reason why women are underrepresented in these positions, only 30% of Republicans agree.

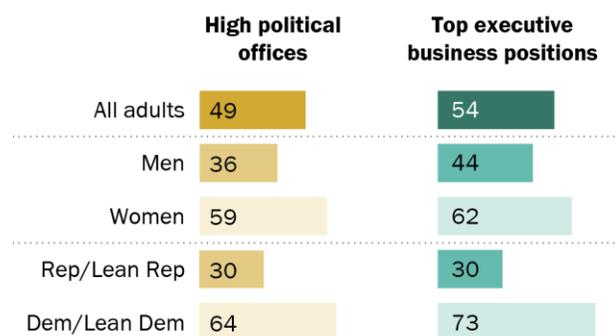
There are also wide gender gaps in views about women in leadership. About seven-in-ten women say there are too few women in high political offices and in top executive business positions; about half of men say the same. And women are far more likely than men to see structural barriers and uneven expectations holding women back from these positions. About

### Wide gender and partisan gaps in views on women in leadership

*% saying there are too few women in \_\_\_ in the country today*



*% saying gender discrimination is a major reason why there aren't more women in ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018. "Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

seven-in-ten women – vs. about half of men – say a major reason why women are underrepresented in top positions in politics and business is that they have to do more to prove themselves. And while about six-in-ten women say gender discrimination is a major obstacle to female leadership in each of these realms, smaller shares of men say this is the case in the corporate world (44%) or in politics (36%).

To a large degree, these gender gaps persist within parties. Among Republicans and Democrats, women are more likely than men to say there are too few women in political and corporate leadership positions, and there are substantial gender differences, particularly among Republicans, in views on the obstacles holding women back from these positions.

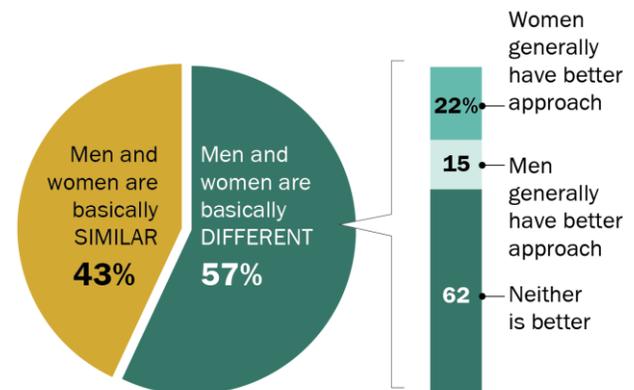
Despite the surge of female candidates this year, women are increasingly doubtful that voters are ready to elect more female leaders. A growing share cite this as a major reason why women are underrepresented in high political offices: 57% of women now say voters not being ready to elect women is a major reason, compared with 41% in 2014. Men remain much less likely to see this as a major impediment (32% of men do so).

The survey also finds that Americans largely see men and women as equally capable when it comes to some key qualities and behaviors that are essential for leadership, even as a majority (57%) say men and women in top positions in business and politics tend to have different leadership styles. Among those who say men and women approach leadership differently, 62% say neither is better, while 22% say women generally have the better approach and 15% say men generally have the better approach.

Still, there are areas where the public sees female leaders as having an advantage. In both business and politics, majorities say women are better than men when it comes to being compassionate and empathetic, and substantial shares say women are better at working out compromises and standing up for what they believe in. Similarly, more adults say female political leaders do a better job of serving as

### Among those who say men and women have different leadership styles, most say neither has a better approach

*% saying that when it comes to the leadership styles of people in top positions in business and politics ...*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
"Women and Leadership 2018"

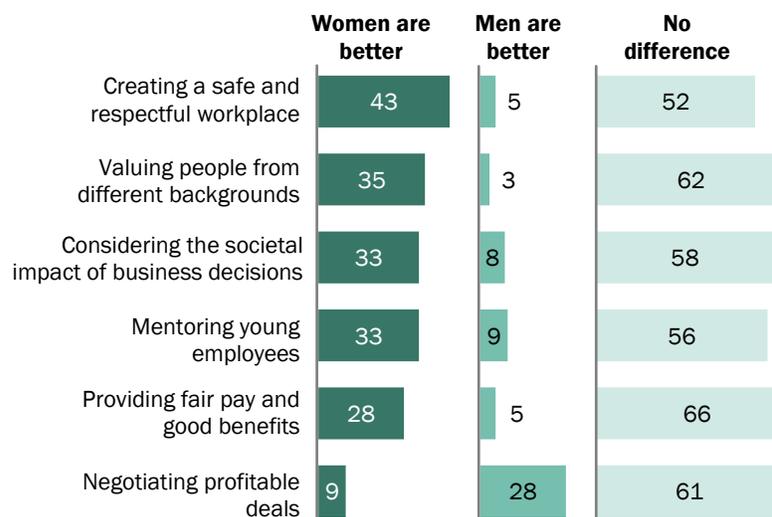
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

role models for children (41%) and maintaining a tone of civility and respect (34%) than say the same about men. In each of these cases, only about one-in-ten or fewer give men the advantage. Male leaders are seen as better than their female counterparts when it comes to willingness to take risks; about four-in-ten say men in top executive positions and in high political offices are better than women in this regard.

Looking specifically at corporate leadership, 43% say women are better at creating a safe and respectful workplace; 52% say there is no difference, while just 5% say men are better at this. And while majorities say there is no difference between male and female leaders when it comes to valuing people from different backgrounds, considering the impact of business decisions on society, providing guidance and mentorship to young employees, and providing fair pay and good benefits, those who do see a difference tend to give women the advantage.

### On several aspects of corporate leadership, many give women the edge

*% saying women/men in top executive business positions are better at each of the following*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.

"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

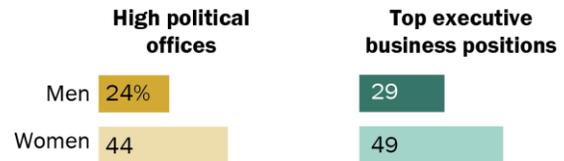
Overall, the public sees benefits to female leadership. Majorities say having more women in top positions in business and government would improve the quality of life at least somewhat for all Americans (69%) and for women (77%) and men (57%) specifically. Women are far more likely than men to say having more women in top leadership positions would be beneficial. Two-thirds of women say having more female leaders would improve the quality of life for men at least somewhat, compared with 47% of men. And while majorities in both groups say this would improve the quality of life for all Americans, women are far more likely than men to say this is the case (78% vs. 59%).

The nationally representative survey of 4,587 adults was conducted online June 19-July 2, 2018,

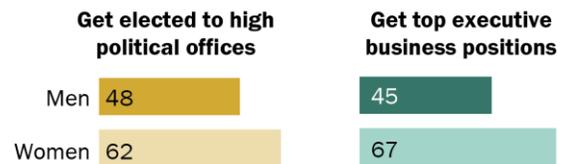
## Among Republicans, wide gender gaps in views on women in leadership

*% of Republicans and Republican leaners saying ...*

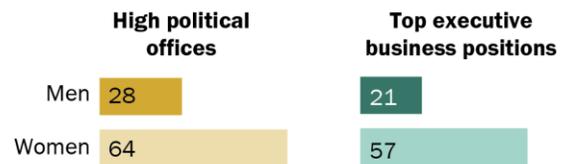
There are too few women in \_\_\_ in the country today



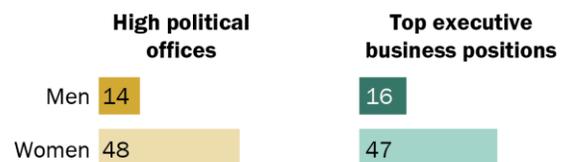
It is easier for men to ...



Women having to do more to prove themselves than men is a major reason why there aren't more women in ...



Gender discrimination is a major reason why there aren't more women in ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018. "Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

with support from Pivotal Ventures, using Pew Research Center's [American Trends Panel](#).<sup>1</sup> Among the key findings:

### **Gender gaps on views of women in leadership are particularly wide among Republicans**

By 20 percentage points, Republican women are more likely than their male counterparts to say there are too few women in high political offices (44% of GOP women vs. 24% of GOP men) and in top executive positions in business (49% vs. 29%) in the U.S. today. And while most Republican women say it's easier for men to get these positions, closer to half of GOP men say the same.

Republican women are also far more likely than Republican men to point to uneven expectations and structural barriers as major reasons why women are underrepresented in political and corporate leadership. For example, a majority of Republican women (64%) – vs. 28% of GOP men – say women having to do more to prove themselves is a major reason why there are fewer women than men in high political offices. About half of Republican women point to many Americans not being ready to elect women (50% vs. 18% of GOP men), gender discrimination (48% vs. 14%) and women getting less support from party leaders (45% vs. 27%) as major reasons.

Among Democrats, majorities of women and men say there are too few women in political and business leadership positions, but this view is even more pronounced among women. And there are significant gaps in the shares of Democratic women and men who point to women not being encouraged to be leaders from an early age (63% of women vs. 42% of men) and to sexual harassment (56% vs. 41%) as major obstacles for women in politics.

### **Younger women less satisfied than older women with the number of female leaders and more likely to see gender discrimination as a major obstacle to reaching top positions**

---

<sup>1</sup> For more details, see the [Methodology](#) section of the report.

Majorities of women across age groups say there are too few women in high political offices and in top executive business positions and that it's generally easier for men to get these positions, but these views are more prevalent among women younger than 50. About three-quarters of women ages 18 to 49 (74%) say there are too few women in top political offices, compared with 63% of women ages 50 and older. And while eight-in-ten women younger than 50 say it's easier for men to get elected to high political offices, 68% of women in the older group say the same. The patterns are similar for business.

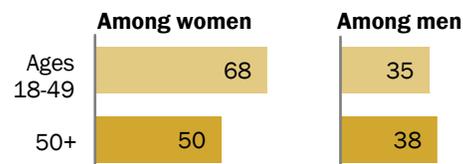
The age gap among women is also sizable when it comes to views about the role gender discrimination plays in the underrepresentation of women in politics. About seven-in-ten women ages 18 to 49 (68%) say gender discrimination is a major reason why there aren't more women in high political offices, compared with 50% of older women.

Men's views do not differ as much by age – younger men are no more likely than older men to say that there are too few women in top leadership positions in politics or business, that discrimination is holding women back, or that it's easier for men to get top positions than it is for women.

---

### Younger women more likely than older women to see gender discrimination as a barrier to leadership

*% of women saying gender discrimination is a major reason why there are fewer women than men in high political offices*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

---

## About half of Americans want gender parity in political and business leadership; few want women to overtake men

A majority of Americans (59%) say there are too few women in top leadership positions in politics and in business today, with about half saying, ideally, there would be equal numbers of men and women. Much smaller shares say there should be more women than there are now but still not as many women as men or that women should outnumber men in these positions.

About a third of adults say the number of women in political and corporate leadership positions is about right, and fewer than one-in-ten say there are currently too many women in top leadership positions.

### Majorities of women, Democrats say there are too few women in top leadership positions

*% saying there are \_\_\_\_ in high political offices in the country today*

	All adults	Men	Women	Rep/Lean Rep	Dem/Lean Dem
<b>Too many women</b>	6	8	4	9	3
<b>Too few women</b>	59	48	69	33	79
Ideally there would be ...					
<i>More women than now, but still not as many women as men</i>	5	3	6	5	4
<i>Equal number of women and men</i>	48	39	56	27	64
<i>More women than men</i>	6	5	7	2	11
<b>About the right number of women</b>	34	43	26	57	17

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Women are more likely than men to say there should be equal numbers of men and women in top leadership positions. This is particularly true of Democratic women: 68% of Democratic women say that, ideally, there would be equal numbers of men and women in high political offices (and a similar share say the same about top corporate positions).

Still, many Americans are skeptical that women will ever be able to overcome the obstacles keeping them from achieving gender parity in business and political leadership. About half (48%) say men will continue to hold more high political offices in the future, even as more women run for office, and a similar share (46%) say men will continue to hold more top executive positions in business, even as more women move into management roles. Men are more likely than women to say the U.S. will eventually reach gender parity in top political and corporate leadership positions.

## Majorities of men and women say that men have an easier path to leadership positions

Two-thirds of Americans say it is generally easier for men to get elected to high political offices (67%); just 5% say it is easier for women, and 27% say there is not much difference. Views are nearly identical when it comes to top executive positions in business.

Majorities of both men and women say it is easier for men to get top leadership positions in politics and business, but this view is particularly prevalent among women. About three-quarters of women say it is easier for men to get elected to high political offices and to get top executive positions in business (74% each), compared with about six-in-ten men who say the same. Relatively few men or women say it is easier for women to get these positions.

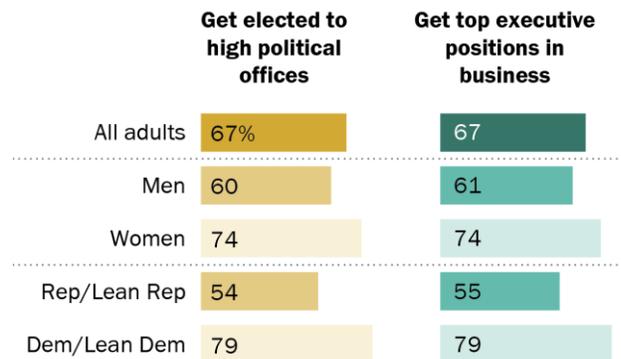
Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say men have an easier time getting top leadership positions. Democratic men and women are fairly united in their views on this, whereas there is a sizable gender gap among Republicans. Two-thirds of Republican women say it's easier for men to get top positions in business, compared with 45% of Republican men. Among Democrats, 77% of men and 81% of women hold this view. (The patterns are similar for political leadership.)

## Most say women having to do more to prove themselves is a major barrier to female leadership

Americans see similar obstacles for women who are seeking top leadership positions in politics and in the corporate world. About six-in-ten say a major reason why women are underrepresented in high political offices and top executive positions in business is that women have to do more to prove themselves than men. About half say gender discrimination is a major barrier for women in each of these realms. Substantial shares also say that many businesses are not ready to hire women for top executive positions (47%) and that many Americans are not ready to elect women to higher offices (45%).

### Most Americans say it is easier for men to get top leadership positions in politics and business

*% saying it is generally easier for men to ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018. "Women and Leadership 2018"

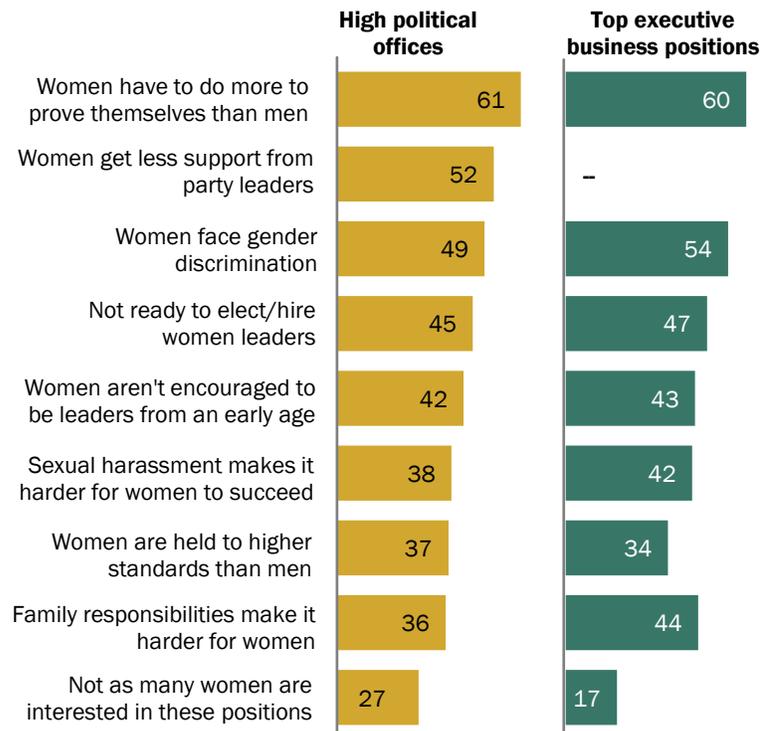
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Perceptions of what contributes to the underrepresentation of women in political and business leadership positions vary widely across genders. At least seven-in-ten women, but closer to half of men, cite women having to do more to prove themselves as a major reason why there are fewer women than men in top business and political positions.

A majority of women also point to gender discrimination and voters not being ready to elect women as major barriers for women in politics. In contrast, roughly one-third of men see each of these as major reasons why there aren't more women in higher office. In turn, men (31%) are more likely than women (23%) to say women simply aren't as interested in holding top leadership positions in politics.

## Many see uneven expectations, gender discrimination as major obstacles for women seeking leadership roles

*% saying each is a major reason why there aren't more women in ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018. "Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Majority of Americans say women and men have different leadership styles, but few think either gender has a better overall approach**

A majority of Americans (57%) think men and women in top positions in business and politics are basically different when it comes to their leadership styles; 43% say they are basically the same.

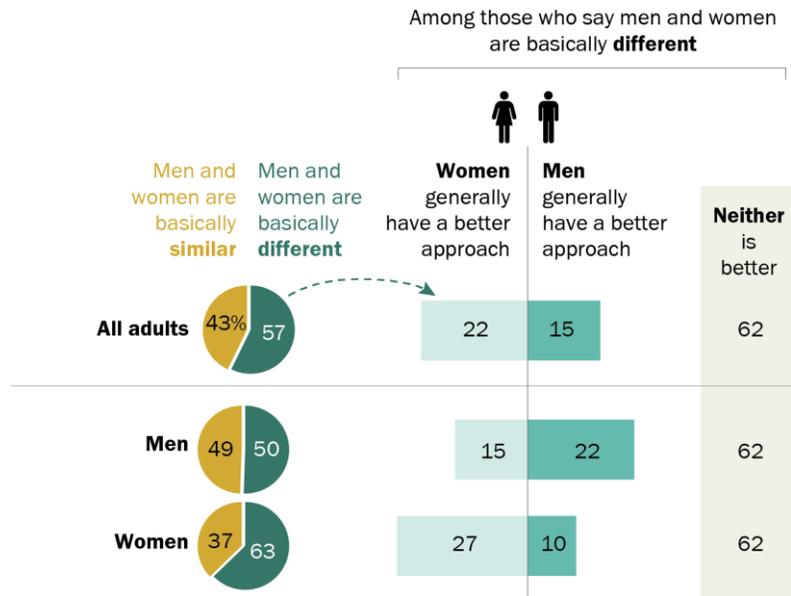
Among those who see a difference between men and women in this regard, most (62%) don't think either gender is better; 22% say women have a better approach and 15% say men do.

Again, views on this differ significantly by gender. Women are more likely than men to see a gender difference in leadership styles (63% vs. 50%). Among those who see a difference, about one-in-four women (27%) say that women have a better approach, while 10% say men are better. Men are more evenly divided on this: 22% say men have a better approach, 15% say women do.

Among Republicans, men and women have substantially different views on this issue. Roughly a third of Republican men (32%) who see a gender gap in leadership styles say men have the better approach, while only 6% say women have a better approach. Republican women are more evenly split: Among those who say men and women are basically different, 15% say women have a better approach and 18% say men do.

**Men and women who see a gender gap in styles of leadership differ on who has a better approach**

*% saying that when it comes to the leadership styles of people in top positions in business and politics ...*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
 "Women and Leadership 2018"

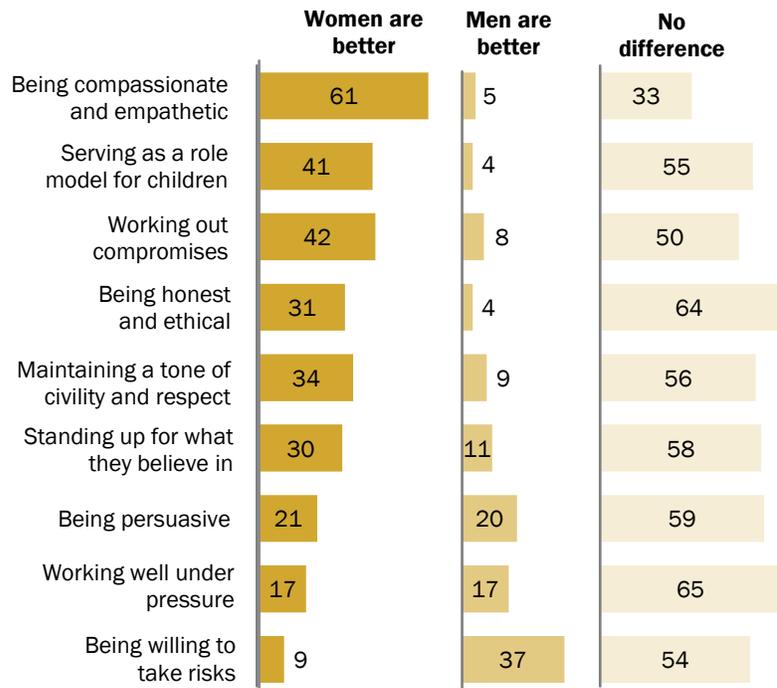
## Many see men and women as equals on key leadership qualities, but those who see a difference tend to say that women are stronger in most areas

Majorities of Americans see little difference between men and women on a range of specific qualities and competencies that may be required for effective leadership. Among those who do see a difference, however, women are perceived to be stronger in most areas in both politics and business. Being compassionate and empathetic and being able to work out compromises are prominent examples of this. For their part, men are seen as having a relative advantage in being willing to take risks and negotiating profitable deals.

Among the traits Americans see as most essential to being a good business leader – creating a safe and respectful workplace and being honest and ethical – higher shares point to women as having the upper hand rather than men. Still, many say there is no difference between men and women in both cases.

### Women have a relative advantage over men on several aspects of political leadership

*% saying women/men in high political offices are better at ...*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Women are more likely than men to say female leaders outperform men on several leadership dimensions. For example, 71% of women say that women in political leadership are more compassionate and empathetic than men, while 50% of men say this is the case. Similarly, women are more likely than men to say that women in high political offices are better at maintaining a tone of civility and respect (41% vs 27%). For their part, men are more likely than women to say gender doesn't make any difference for these and several other aspects of leadership.

When it comes to business, there are wide gender gaps on two items that relate directly to workplace culture. Women are significantly more likely than men to say that female business leaders are better than their male counterparts at creating a safe and respectful workplace and providing mentorship to young employees.

### **Most say women and men are equally capable of handling key policy areas and running companies across industries**

Americans see only modest differences when asked about men's and women's abilities to run different types of companies. Still, many in the public associate some industries more with one gender than the other. Roughly three-in-ten adults (31%) say a woman would do a better job running a major retail chain. Only 6% say a man would do a better job at this. And the public is about twice as likely to say a woman would do a better job running a major hospital (19%) than to say the same about a man (8%). Men have a relative advantage when it comes to views of running a professional sports team – 45% say a man would do a better job at this, while 2% say a woman would be better.

The public doesn't see either gender as having a significant advantage over the other in handling several key policy issues. On immigration, gun policy, the economy and the budget deficit, majorities of Americans say there's no difference between male and female political leaders in their abilities. And among those who do see a difference between men and women in these areas, opinions are fairly evenly divided. There are two exceptions, however. By a margin of 42% to 4%, the public says women in politics do a better job handling social issues such as education and health care. The opposite pattern holds for dealing with national security and defense – 35% say men are better on these issues, while 6% point to women.

### **Americans have different ideas on what traits might be helpful (or harmful) to men and women seeking leadership positions**

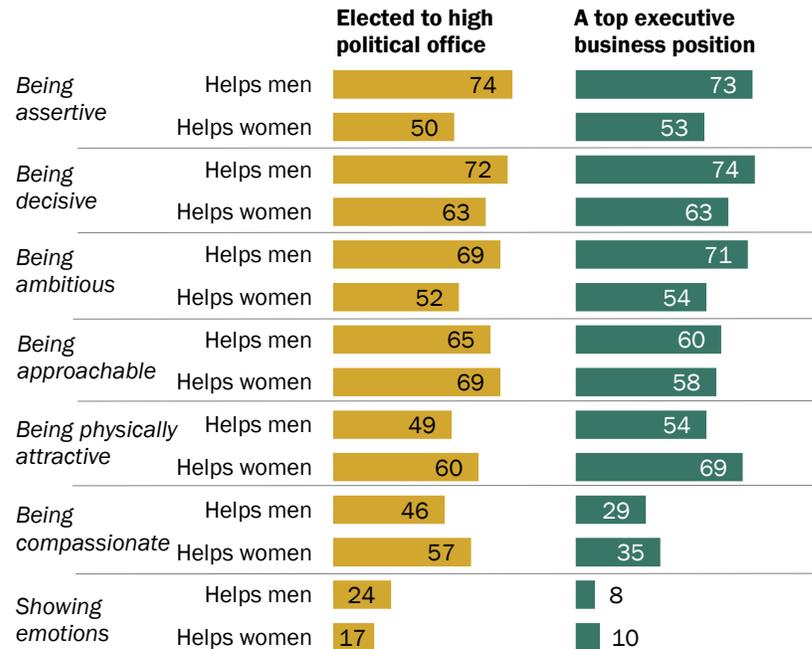
When asked whether certain personal traits or characteristics would mostly help or mostly hurt men and women seeking to succeed in business or in politics, about seven-in-ten adults say being assertive and ambitious would mostly help a man's chances in both realms. Closer to half see these traits as helpful to women who are trying to get to the top. In fact, about a quarter say being assertive and ambitious mostly hurts a woman's chances of getting ahead in politics and business.

An attribute that's viewed as more helpful to women than to men is being physically attractive. Six-in-ten adults say this helps women get ahead in politics, and an even higher share say it helps women succeed in business. Fewer say being attractive is helpful to men.

Showing emotions is seen, on balance, as being more harmful than helpful to both men and women. Still, more say this hurts female leaders than male leaders. About half (52%) say showing emotions hurts women in politics, 39% say this about men. Smaller shares say this *helps* men (24%) and women (17%) in getting elected to higher office. The patterns are similar for business leaders.

## More say being assertive and being ambitious help men get ahead than say the same for women

*% saying each of the following mostly helps a man's/woman's chances of getting ...*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# 1. Views on the state of gender and leadership and obstacles for women

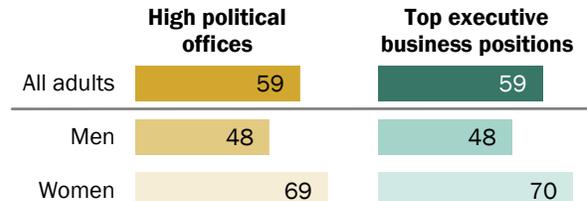
A majority of Americans would like to see more women in leadership positions in business and politics, but many are skeptical that there will ever be gender parity in these positions, even as more women move into management roles and run for office.

The public largely says it's easier for men than it is for women to get top executive positions in business and to get elected to high political offices – a majority of men and women say this is the case – but there is little consensus between the two genders about what is holding women back from these positions. For example, 72% of women – vs. 48% of men – point to women having to do more to prove themselves as a major reason why their gender is underrepresented in higher political offices. And while about six-in-ten women (59%) see gender discrimination as a major obstacle for women in politics, 36% of men share this view. These patterns are repeated when the public is asked why there aren't more women in top executive positions in business.

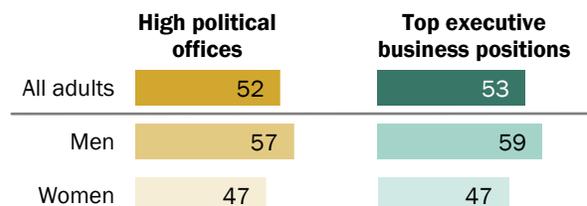
Women are also more likely than men to see benefits to female leadership for Americans overall and for women and men in particular. Large majorities of men (71%) and women (82%) say that having more women in top leadership positions in business and government would improve the quality of life for women at least some, but while two-thirds of women see some positive impact for men as well, a far smaller share of men (47%) do. When it

## Wide gender gaps in views on women in leadership

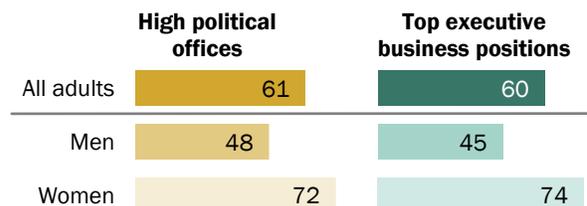
*% saying there are too few women in \_\_\_ in the country today*



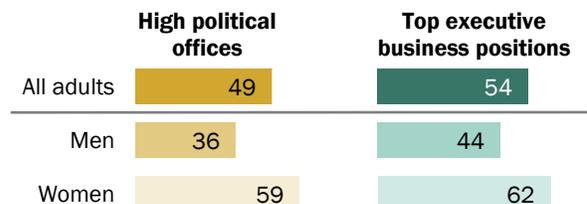
*% saying as more women run for office/move into management roles, it is only a matter of time before there are as many women as men in ...*



*% saying women having to do more to prove themselves than men is a major reason why there aren't more women in ...*



*% saying gender discrimination is a major reason why there aren't more women in ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018. "Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

comes to the impact a growing number of women in leadership positions would have on the lives of all Americans, 78% of women say it would have at least some positive impact, compared with 59% of men who say this is the case.

The survey also finds that there are large partisan gaps in views of where the country stands when it comes to the number of women in leadership positions as well as the obstacles women face in getting these positions. In some cases, the gap between Republicans and Democrats is even more pronounced than the gap between men and women. For example, while there is a 21-percentage-point gap in the share of women (69%) and men (48%) saying there are too few women in high political offices, there is a 46-point gap between Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (79% say there are too few women in these positions) and Republicans and those who lean Republican (33%). Democrats are also far more likely than Republicans to point to structural barriers, such as gender discrimination, as major reasons why women are underrepresented in business and political leadership.

## A majority of Americans would like to see more women in leadership positions in politics and business

About six-in-ten Americans say there are too few women in high political offices (59%) and in top executive positions in business (59%) in the U.S. today; about a third say there is about the right number of women in political (34%) and business (35%) leadership positions, and small shares say there are too many women in these roles (6% and 4%, respectively).

Women are far more likely than men to say there are too few women in top leadership positions in the country these days. Roughly seven-in-ten women (69%) say there are too few women in high political offices, compared with about half of men (48%) who say the same. This is nearly identical to the share of women

### About six-in-ten Americans say there are too few women in top leadership posts

% saying there are too few women in \_\_\_\_ in the country today

	High political offices	Top executive business positions
All adults	59	59
Men	48	48
Women	69	70
Bachelor's degree+	72	72
Some college or less	53	54
Rep/Lean Rep	33	38
Dem/Lean Dem	79	77
<i>Among Republicans and Republican leaners</i>		
Men	24	29
Women	44	49
<i>Among Democrats and Democratic leaners</i>		
Men	73	69
Women	84	83

Note: Some college or less includes those with an associate degree.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

(70%) and men (48%) who say there are too few women in top executive positions in business.

The partisan gap in views about the number of female leaders is even wider than the gender gap. Fully 79% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say there are too few women in high political offices, compared with 33% of Republicans and those who lean Republican. A majority of Republicans (57%) say there is currently the right number of women in these positions; just 17% of Democrats share this view.

Democratic and Republican women are more likely than their male counterparts to say there are too few women in leadership. Some 44% of Republican women think there are too few women in high political offices, compared with 24% of Republican men. Among Democrats, majorities of men (73%) and women (84%) say there are too few women in these positions.

Among those who say there are too few women in top leadership positions in politics and business, about eight-in-ten say that, ideally, there would be equal numbers of men and women in these positions. Relatively small shares say that there should be more women than there are now but still not as many women as men, or that there should be more women than men in leadership positions.

Majorities of Democrats and Republicans who say there are too few women in top leadership positions see gender parity as the ideal situation. However, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say there should be more women in these positions than there are now but still not as many women as men. When it comes to business leadership, 23% of Republicans who say there should be more women in top executive positions in business say the ideal situation would be for women to continue to hold a minority of these positions; just 8% of Democrats say this is the case.

## Most men and women say it is easier for men to get elected to high political offices and to get top executive positions in business

Two-thirds of Americans (67%) say it is generally easier for men to get elected to high political offices; just 5% say it is easier for women, and 27% say there is not much difference. Views are nearly identical when it comes to top executive positions in business: 67% say it is easier for men to get these positions, while 6% say it is easier for women and 26% don't think there is much difference.

Majorities of men and women say it is easier for men to get top leadership positions in business and politics, but this view is particularly prevalent among women. About three-quarters of women say it is easier for men to get elected to high political offices and to get top executive positions in business (74% each), compared with about six-in-ten men who say the same.

The gender gap in views of who has a better shot at being elected to higher office is evident among those ages 18 to 34, 35 to 49, and 50 to 64. The pattern is somewhat different when it comes to top executive positions in business. In this case, only among those younger than 50 is there a significant difference in the shares of men and women who think it is easier for men to get these positions. About eight-in-ten women ages 18 to 34 (80%) and 35 to 49 (78%) say this is the case, compared with fewer men in these age groups (65% and 56%, respectively).

Women younger than 50 are more likely than older women to say men have it easier when it comes to getting top leadership positions in politics and business, although large majorities in each group say this is the case. About eight-in-ten women ages 18 to 49 say it's easier for men to get elected to high political offices (80%) and to get top executive positions in business (79%).

### Most Americans say it is easier for men to get top leadership positions in politics and business

*% of men and women in each group saying it is generally easier for men to ...*

		Get elected to high political offices	Get top executive positions in business
All adults	Men	60	61
	Women	74	74
Ages 18-34	Men	65	60
	Women	80	80
35-49	Men	56	61
	Women	80	78
50-64	Men	58	56
	Women	70	64
65+	Men	61	67
	Women	65	73
Rep/Lean Rep	Men	48	45
	Women	62	67
Dem/Lean Dem	Men	75	77
	Women	82	81

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018. "Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

About two-thirds of women ages 50 and older share this view (68% when it comes to both political and business leadership).

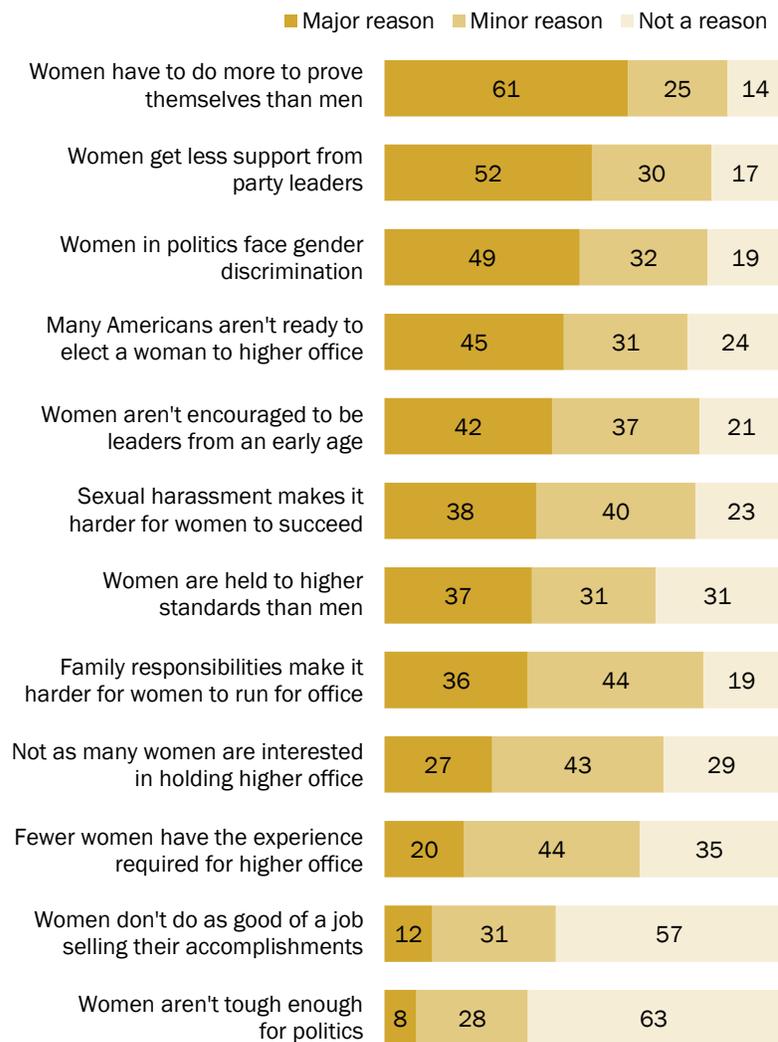
Republican men are far less likely than Republican women, as well as Democratic men and women, to say it is easier for men to get top leadership positions. About half of Republican men (48%) say men have a better shot at getting elected to high political offices, and a similar share (45%) say it's easier for men to get top executive positions in business. In contrast, about two-thirds of Republican women say it's easier for men to get top leadership positions in politics and business; among Democrats, about three-quarters of men and about eight-in-ten women say the same.

### Many Americans see gender discrimination and uneven expectations as barriers to female leadership in business and politics

Americans see similar obstacles for women in politics and business. For example, about six-in-ten say that women having to do more to

### Many see structural barriers and uneven expectations holding women back from high political offices

*% saying each is a major reason, minor reason or not a reason why there are fewer women than men in high political offices*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
 "Women and Leadership 2018"

prove themselves than men is a major reason why women are underrepresented in high political offices (61%) and in top executive positions in business (60%). About half say gender discrimination is a major barrier for women in each of these realms (49% and 54%, respectively); a similar share (52%) cite women getting less support from party leaders as a major reason why there are fewer women than men in high political office.

Other items cited by about four-in-ten Americans as major reasons why women are underrepresented in high political offices include voters not being ready to elect women to these positions (45%), women not being encouraged to be leaders from an early age (42%), sexual harassment making it harder for women to succeed (38%), and women being held to higher standards than men (37%). Similar shares see these as major barriers for women in business.

When it comes to the major obstacles for women seeking top executive positions in business, about a quarter point to women not having access to the same kinds of personal connections and networks as men (27%), women having fewer opportunities to interact with people in senior positions outside of work (24%) and women being less likely to ask for promotions and raises (24%).

### Family responsibilities are seen as more of a barrier for women in business than in politics

Americans are more likely to cite family responsibilities as a major reason why there aren't more women in top leadership positions in business (44%) than as a major reason why women are underrepresented in high political offices (36%), and they also have different ideas of how having children might impact women in each realm.

About half of the public (51%) says that, in general, it's better for a woman who wants to reach high political office to have children before entering politics; 26% say it would be better to wait until she is well-established in her political career, while 19% say it would be better

### About a third say women aspiring to top leadership positions in business are better off not having children

*% saying it's better for a woman who wants to reach high political office or a top executive position in business to ...*

	Have children before entering politics/early in her career	Waiting until she's well-established in her career	Not have children
High political office	51	26	19
Top executive position in business	23	41	34

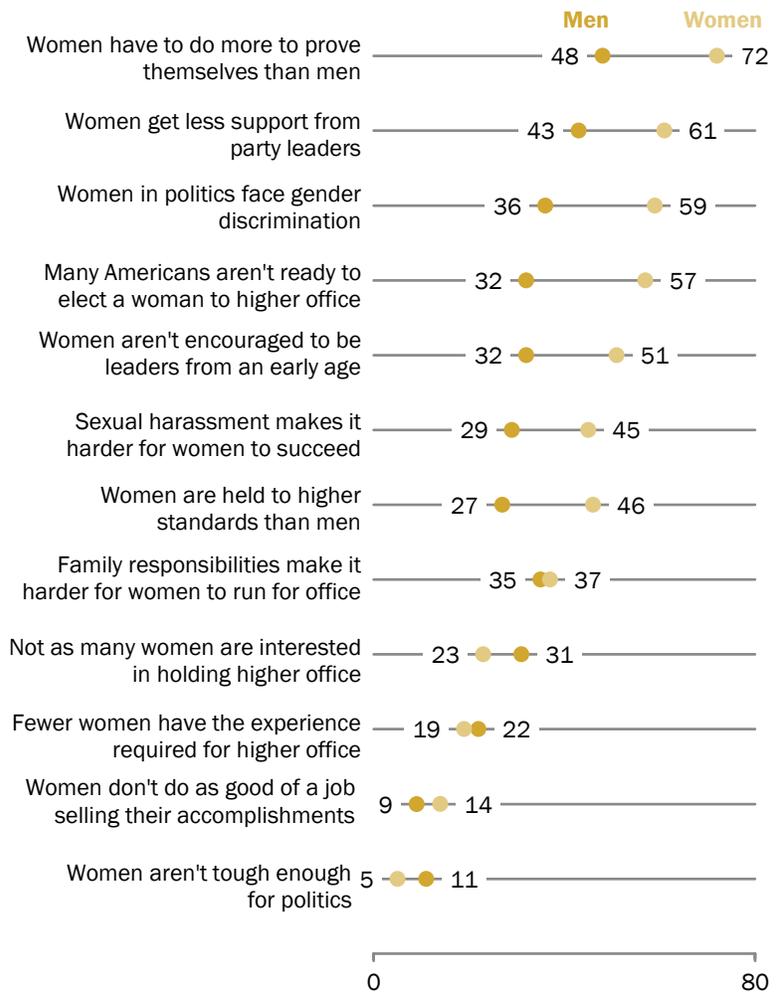
Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

for a woman who aspires to higher office to not have children at all.

### Women are far more likely than men to see structural barriers for women in politics

*% of men and women saying each is a major reason why there are fewer women than men in high political offices*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018. "Women and Leadership 2018"

When asked about women  
who want to reach a top

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

---

executive position in business,

about a quarter (23%) say it's better for them to have children early on in their career, 41% say they are better off waiting until they are well-established, and 34% say it's better for them to not have children at all. Those who see family responsibilities as a major barrier to female business leadership are particularly likely to say women who aspire to these positions are better off not having children: 39% say this, compared with about three-in-ten of those who see family responsibilities as a minor reason (29%) or not a reason (30%) why women are underrepresented in top executive business positions.

## Wide gender gaps in views about barriers to female leadership

Perceptions of what contributes to the underrepresentation of women in political and business leadership positions vary widely across genders. For example, while at least seven-in-ten women cite women having to do more to prove themselves as a major reason why there are fewer women than men in high political offices (72%) and in top executive positions in business (74%), about half of men say the same (48% and 45%, respectively).

A majority of women also point to women getting less support from party leaders (61%), gender discrimination (59%) and voters not being ready to elect women (57%) as major barriers for women in politics. In contrast, fewer than half of men see each of these as major reasons why there aren't more women in higher office (43%, 36% and 32%, respectively).

By double digits, women are also more likely than men to point to women not being encouraged to be leaders from an early age (a 19-percentage-point difference), sexual harassment making it harder for women to succeed (16 points), and women being held to higher standards than men (19 points) as obstacles for women in politics.

In turn, men are more likely than women to say women simply aren't as interested in holding top leadership positions in politics and business. About three-in-ten men (31%) – vs. 23% of women – say this is a major reason why there are fewer women than men in high political offices. And while 22% of men say not as many women are interested in top executive business positions, 13% of women say the same.

**Women are far more likely than they were four years ago to say voters aren't ready to elect a woman for higher office**

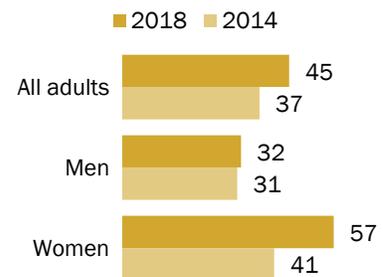
Some 45% of Americans say that voters not being ready to elect a woman to higher office is a major barrier to female political leadership, up from 37% in 2014.

This change has come almost entirely among women. Now, 57% of women say this is a major reason why there are fewer women than men in high political offices; four years ago, about four-in-ten women (41%) said the same. Among men, the share citing voters not being ready to elect women to higher office as a major reason is virtually unchanged from four years ago (32% now and 31% in 2014).

---

### More now say voters aren't ready to elect women to higher office

*% saying many Americans not being ready to elect a woman to higher office is a major reason why there are fewer women than men in these positions*



Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018 and Nov. 12-21, 2014.

“Women and Leadership 2018”

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

---

**Wide gaps between Republican men and women in views of what's holding women back**

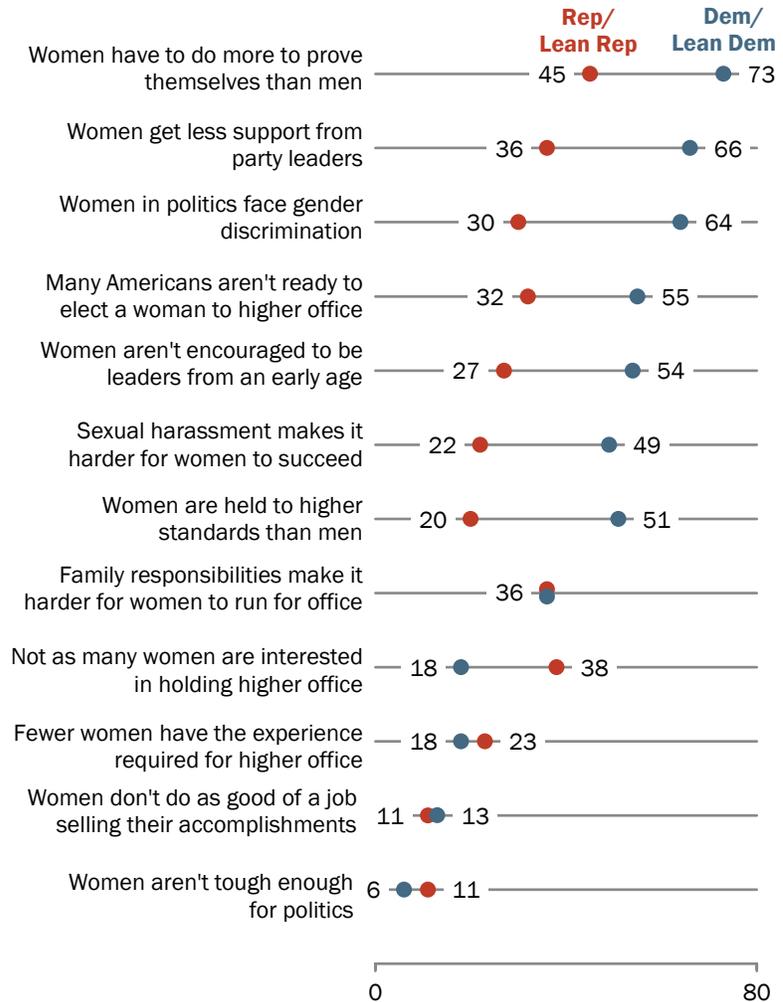
Republicans and Republican-leaning independents are less likely than Democrats and those who lean Democratic to see structural barriers for women in business and politics. This gap is driven in part, but not exclusively, by the views of Republican men.

Overall, about three-quarters of Democrats (73%) say women having to do more to prove themselves is a major reason why there aren't more women in high political offices, compared with 45% of Republicans. Half or more Democrats also point to women getting less support from party leaders (66% vs. 36% of Republicans), gender discrimination (64% vs. 30%), Americans not being ready to elect women (55% vs. 32%), and women not being encouraged to pursue leadership positions from an early age (54% vs. 27%) as major barriers for women in politics.

Partisan gaps are also pronounced when it comes to views of why there aren't more women in top executive business positions. For example, about eight-in-ten Democrats (78%) point to women having to do more to prove themselves, compared

**Republicans and Democrats have different views of why women are underrepresented in politics**

*% of **Republicans** and **Democrats** saying each is a major reason why there are fewer women than men in high political offices*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018. "Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

with 38% of Republicans. And while 73% of Democrats say gender discrimination is a major obstacle for women in business, 30% of Republicans say the same.

The gender gap in views of what's holding women back is particularly wide among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. A majority of Republican women (64%), as well as most Democratic men (68%) and women (78%), cite women having to do more to prove themselves as a major reason why women are underrepresented in high political offices; just 28% of Republican men say this is a major reason. And while about half of Republican women say voters not being ready to elect women (50%) and gender discrimination (48%) are major obstacles for women in politics, about one-in-five or fewer Republican men say the same (18% and 14%, respectively).

## Republican women are more likely than GOP men to see structural barriers for women in politics

*% saying each is a major reason why there are fewer women than men in high political offices*

	Among Rep/ Lean Rep		Among Dem/ Lean Dem	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Women have to do more to prove themselves than men	<b>28</b>	<b>64</b>	68	78
Women get less support from party leaders	<b>27</b>	<b>45</b>	60	70
Women in politics face gender discrimination	<b>14</b>	<b>48</b>	58	68
Many Americans aren't ready to elect a woman to higher office	<b>18</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>61</b>
Women aren't encouraged to be leaders from an early age	22	33	<b>42</b>	<b>63</b>
Sexual harassment makes it harder for women to succeed	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>56</b>
Women are held to higher standards than men	<b>11</b>	<b>33</b>	45	55
Family responsibilities make it harder for women to run for office	35	37	34	38
Not as many women are interested in holding higher office	<b>44</b>	<b>31</b>	17	18
Fewer women have the experience required for higher office	24	21	19	18
Women don't do as good of a job selling their accomplishments	11	10	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>
Women aren't tough enough for politics	13	7	8	4

Note: Bolded numbers indicate a statistically significant difference between men and women in each party.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.

"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The gender gap is generally less pronounced among Democrats and those who lean Democratic, but there are some significant differences between Democratic men and women. For example, about six-in-ten Democratic women say women not being encouraged to be leaders from an early age (63%) and voters not being ready to elect women (61%) are major reasons why there aren't more women in high political offices; smaller shares of Democratic men say the same (42% and 46%, respectively).

## Public is skeptical that there will ever be gender parity in top leadership positions in business or politics

Many Americans are skeptical that women will ever be able to overcome the obstacles keeping them from achieving gender parity in business and political leadership. About half of Americans (52%) say that, as more women run for office, it is only a matter of time before there are as many women as men in high political offices; a similar share (48%) say that, even as more women run for office, men will continue to hold more of these positions in the future. Similarly, 53% expect to see gender parity in top executive positions in business as more women move into management roles, while 46% say men will continue to hold these positions in the future.

Women express more skepticism than men about the possibility of gender parity in top leadership positions in business and politics. About half of women say men will continue to hold more high political offices (53%) and top executive positions in business (52%) in the future. Among men, a majority say it is only a matter of time before there are as many women as men in top positions in politics (57%) and business (59%).

---

### Americans are divided on whether there will ever be gender parity in political and business leadership positions

*% saying that, as more women **run for office** ...*

<b>Men will continue to hold more high political offices in the future</b>	<b>It is only a matter of time before there are as many women as men</b>
--	--



*% saying that, as more women move into **management roles** ...*

<b>Men will continue to hold more top executive positions in the future</b>	<b>It is only a matter of time before there are as many women as men</b>
---	--



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

---

## More see increased numbers of women in leadership as having a positive impact for women than for men

A majority of the public says that having more women in top leadership positions in business and politics would improve life for all Americans – and, specifically, for women and men – at least some, but relatively small shares see the potential for a large positive impact. About seven-in-ten Americans say having more women in leadership positions would do a lot (29%) or some (40%) to improve the quality of life for all Americans. Smaller shares say having more women in leadership roles would not do much (21%) or would do nothing at all (10%) to improve life for Americans.

When asked about the impact on each gender, Americans are twice as likely to say a growing number of women leaders would do a lot to improve the quality of life for women (36%) than to say it would do the same for men (18%).

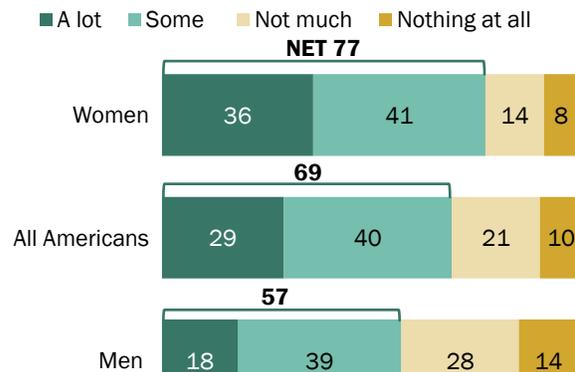
Perhaps unsurprisingly – considering that women are more likely than men to say there are too few women in leadership positions – there is a gender divide in how people see the impact of more women holding these positions. About four-in-ten women (41%) say this would do a lot to improve the quality of life for women, compared with 31% of men who say the same. There are also double-digit differences in the shares of women and men saying more women in leadership would do a lot to improve life for all Americans (17 percentage points) and for men (10 points).

Partisans are also deeply divided. Half of Democrats say that having more women leaders would do a lot to improve things for women in this country, compared with 19% of Republicans who say this. By a 43% to 11% margin, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say having more women in leadership positions would do a lot to benefit all Americans. And while about a quarter of Democrats (27%) see this doing a lot to improve life for men, just 7% of Republicans agree.

## More now say a greater number of female leaders would improve women’s lives in America

### Large majorities think more women in top leadership would improve life for women, all Americans

*% saying having more women in top leadership positions in business and government would do \_\_\_ to improve the quality of life for ...*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

More than one-in-three Americans (36%) say that more women in leadership positions would do a lot to improve the quality of life for women in America, up from 29% in 2014.

The bulk of that change has come from Democratic men, who are now roughly twice as likely as they were four years ago to say more women in leadership would improve women's lives. In 2014, one-quarter of Democratic men said that more women in leadership would do a lot to improve the lives of women in America; today that number is 46%. By contrast, opinions of Republican men, Republican women and Democratic women on this issue have remained relatively stagnant.

---

**Democratic men are more likely than they were four years ago to say that more women in leadership would improve women's lives**

*% saying having more women in top leadership positions in business and government would do a lot to improve the quality of life for women*

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Difference</b>
All adults	29	36	+7
Men	19	31	+12
Women	38	41	+3
Rep/Lean Rep	20	19	-1
Dem/Lean Dem	36	50	+14
<i>Among Rep/Lean Rep</i>			
Men	12	16	+4
Women	28	23	-5
<i>Among Dem/Lean Dem</i>			
Men	25	46	+21
Women	47	53	+6

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018, and Nov. 12-21, 2014.

"Women and Leadership 2018"

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

---

## 2. Views on leadership traits and competencies and how they intersect with gender

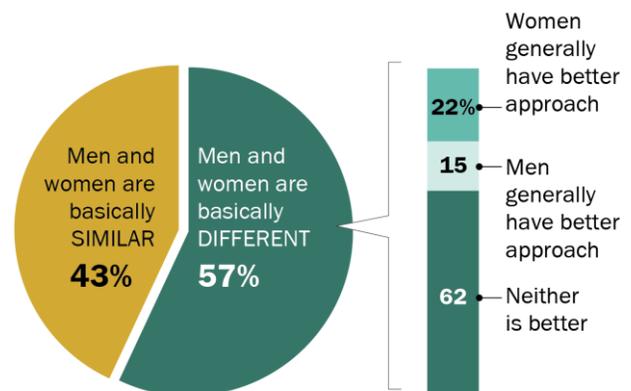
Many, if not most, Americans see men and women as equally capable when it comes to some of the key qualities and behaviors that are essential for leadership. Being honest, holding up under pressure and standing up for what they believe in are some examples of traits that are viewed as essential for leaders in both politics and business and areas where majorities of the public say neither gender has the upper hand. In addition, while a majority of adults say male and female leaders have different leadership styles, relatively few think one gender has a better overall approach than the other.

Even so, those who *do* see a difference between male and female leaders across a range of leadership traits and behaviors perceive women to be stronger in most areas, both in politics and business. Being compassionate and empathetic and being able to work out compromises are prominent examples of this. For their part, men are seen as being more willing to take risks.

Among the public, men and women have somewhat different views about which leadership qualities are most important and about whether male or female leaders best embody those qualities. There are also wide partisan gaps. Women and Democrats are more likely to view female leaders as stronger than their male counterparts on a range of leadership qualities in both the political and business realms.

### Among those who say men and women have different leadership styles, most say neither has a better approach

*% saying that, when it comes to the leadership styles of people in top positions in business and politics ...*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

### Few think one gender has a better leadership approach than the other, even though majority sees a difference in styles

A majority of Americans (57%) think men and women in top positions in business and politics are basically different when it comes to their leadership styles; 43% say they are basically the same.

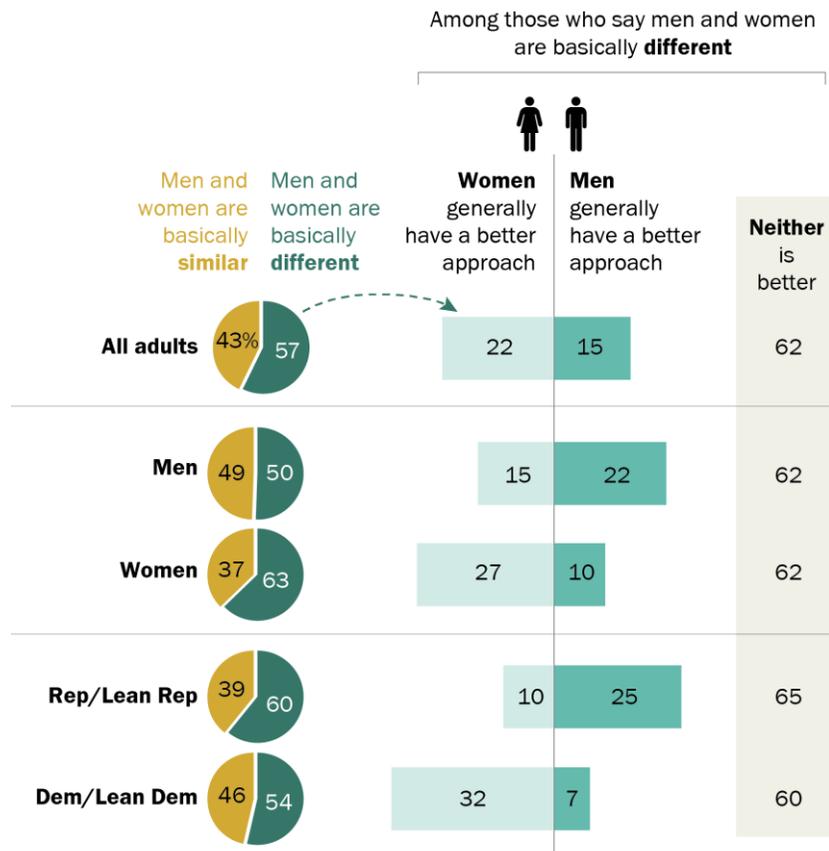
Among those who see a difference between men and women in this regard, most (62%) don't think either gender is better than the other; 22% say women have a better approach and 15% say men do.

Views on this differ significantly by gender and party. Women are more likely than men to see a gender gap in leadership styles (63% vs. 50%). But among both men and women who see a difference, majorities (62%) in each group say neither gender has a better approach to leadership. About one-in-four women (27%) say that women have a better approach than men, while 10% say men are better. Men are more evenly divided on this: 22% say men have a better approach, while 15% point to women.

Republicans and Republican-leaning independents are somewhat more likely than Democrats and those who lean Democratic to say that men and women have different leadership styles (60% vs. 54%). Among Republicans who see a difference, 25% say men have a better approach, 10% say women do and 65% say neither is better. Democrats who say that men and women have different leadership styles lean more heavily toward women in their assessments: 32% say women have a better approach, 7% say men are better and 60% say neither is better.

### Women, Republicans more likely to say men and women have different leadership styles

% saying that, when it comes to the leadership styles of people in top positions in business and politics ...



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
 "Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Among Republicans, men and women have substantially different views on this issue. Among Republican men who see a gender gap in leadership styles, roughly a third (32%) say men have the better approach and only 6% say women have a better approach (62% say neither is better). Republican women are more evenly split: Among those who say men and women are basically different, 15% say women have a better approach and 18% point to men (67% say neither is better). Democratic men and women are more united in their views.

## **Female leaders seen as more compassionate, empathetic than men**

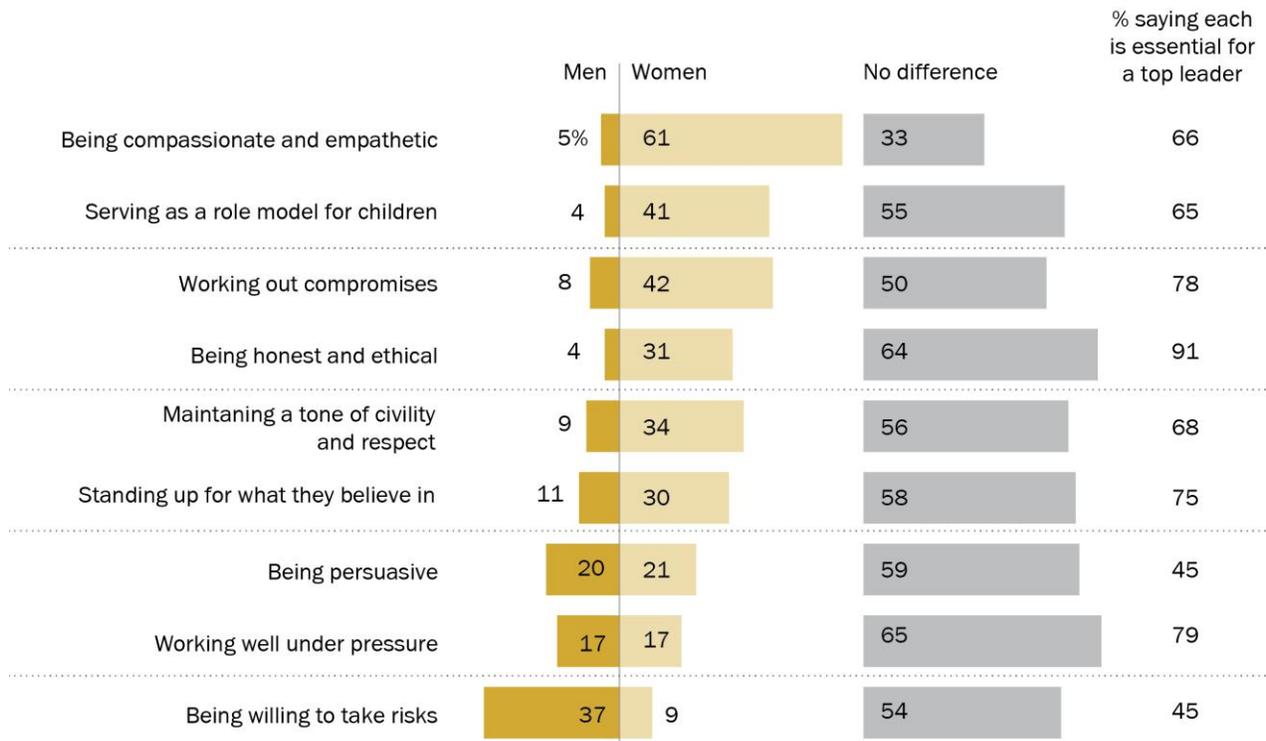
Majorities of Americans see little difference between men and women on a range of specific qualities and competencies that may be required for effective leadership. There are a few exceptions to this, however. For example, most do see a gender difference when it comes to being compassionate and empathetic, and about half make a distinction between men and women in their ability to work out compromises. In each case female leaders are viewed as having an advantage over their male counterparts. Roughly six-in-ten adults (61%) say female political leaders do a better job at being compassionate and empathetic, and a similar share (59%) say the same about female business leaders. By contrast, only 5% say male political leaders are stronger on this dimension, and 4% say the same about men who lead in the corporate realm.

Women are also viewed by those who see a gender difference as having an advantage over men in working out compromises: 42% of all adults say women in high political offices are better at this than their male counterparts, while 8% say men are better. Women have gained ground in this area since 2014. At that time, 34% of Americans said female leaders did a better job than men working out compromises, while 9% gave the edge to men. The pattern is similar for business: 42% say female executives are better at working out compromises, and 11% say men have an advantage in this area.

For most of the other qualities tested in the survey, majorities of adults say there isn't any difference between men and women. But among those who do see a difference, women tend to be viewed as stronger than men on most qualities. Two examples that apply to both politics and business are being honest and ethical and standing up for what they believe in. Roughly three-in-ten adults say female leaders do a better job than men at being honest and ethical (31% in politics and 30% in business), while relatively few say men do a better job than women (4% in politics, 3% in business). Similarly, about three-in-ten adults say women are better at standing up for what they believe in (30% for politics, 32% for business), while roughly one-in-ten say men are better (11% for politics, 10% of business).

## Many see no gap between male and female political leaders on key leadership qualities; among those who see a difference, women have the edge on most

*% saying men/women in high political offices are better at each of the following*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.

"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The public is more evenly divided over who does a better job working well under pressure. When it comes to politics, equal shares point to men and women (17% for each). And in business, men have a slight edge over women (22% say men are better, 14% say women). On risk taking, men are seen as stronger by a substantial margin in both politics and business among those who see a gender difference. Roughly four-in-ten adults say men are more willing to take risks (37% in politics, 41% in business), while about one-in-ten say women are better at this (9% in politics, 8% in business).

**In politics, women are much more likely than men to be viewed as better role models; in business more see them as better able to create a safe and respectful workplace**

Three of the qualities tested in the survey pertain more directly to politics than to business, and on two of the three, women are perceived as having an advantage over men. Roughly four-in-ten adults (41%) say women in high political offices are better than men at serving as role models; 4% say men are better at this. Women are also seen as better able to maintain a tone of civility and respect: 34% say female political leaders are better at this, while 9% point to men. When it comes to being persuasive, those who see a difference between men and women are evenly divided over who does a better job.

Other qualities included in the poll were more relevant for business leaders than for politicians. Again, among those adults who see a difference between men and women in these areas, most tend to have more confidence women's abilities. One of the largest gaps is on creating a safe and respectful workplace: 43% say female business leaders do a better job at this; only 5% say male leaders are better in this area.

Female business leaders are also seen as having a relative advantage over their male counterparts when it comes to valuing people from different backgrounds (35% say women are better at this, 3% say men are better), considering the impact business decisions have on society (33% vs. 8%), providing guidance or mentorship to young employees (33% vs. 9%) and providing fair pay and good benefits (28% vs. 5%). Men have a relative advantage over women in negotiating profitable deals (28% say men are better at this, 9% say women are better).

**Some qualities and competencies matter more to the public than others**

It's important to point out that the public prioritizes these leadership qualities differently. While most are viewed by the vast majority of Americans as important for a leader, not all are seen as *essential*. In both politics and business, being honest and ethical is viewed as an essential leadership quality by an overwhelming majority of adults (91% say this is essential for political leadership, and 89% say it's essential for corporate leaders). In business, creating a safe and respectful workplace is on par with honesty and ethics; 89% say it's essential for a business leader to be able to do this. On both of these essential qualities, those who see a difference between men and women view women as better equipped.

The area where women are viewed as having the greatest advantage over men – being compassionate and empathetic – is seen as less important by the public. About six-in-ten adults (58%) say it's essential that a business leader has this quality, and 66% say the same about political leaders. The public places even less importance on being willing to take risks – the one

area where men are seen as having a relative advantage over women. About four-in-ten adults (42%) say it's essential that a business leader is willing to take risks; 45% say this is essential in politics.

## Views on the relative strengths and weaknesses of men and women in leadership positions differ by gender and party

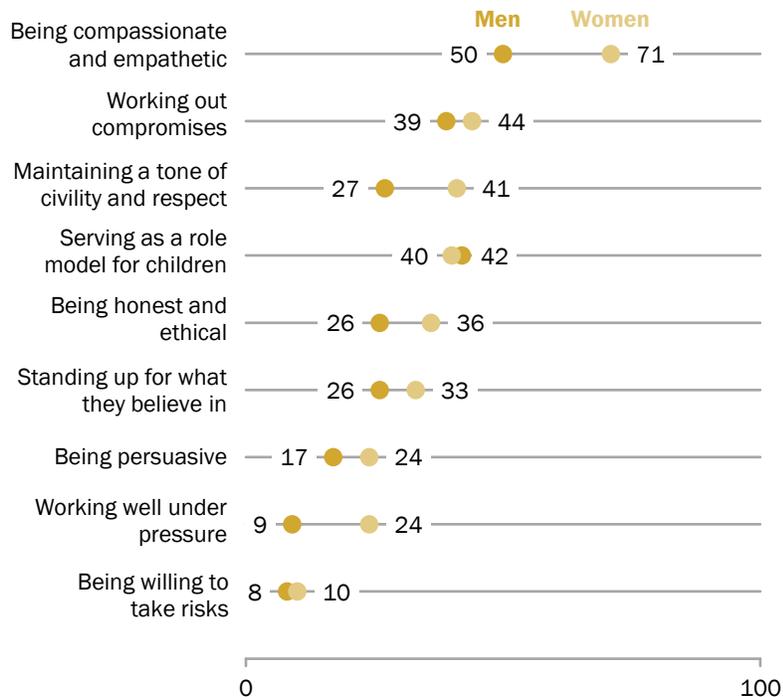
Men and women have different views on the extent to which male and female leaders excel on specific leadership qualities. In several cases, women are more likely than men to say that female leaders perform better, while men are more likely to say there isn't any difference. When it comes to political leadership, the gap is particularly wide on assessments of which gender does a better job at being compassionate and empathetic: 71% of women say female leaders in politics are better at this, while only half of men agree. For their part, men

are more likely than women to say there's no difference between male and female leaders on compassion and empathy – 44% of men say this compared with 24% of women.

The pattern is similar when it comes to maintaining a tone of civility and respect, being honest and ethical and being persuasive. In each case, women are more likely than men say that female

### Women see female political leaders outperforming men on several key leadership dimensions

*% of men and women saying women in high political offices are better than men at each of the following*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

political leaders do a better job, while higher shares of men than women say there isn't any difference.

In assessing who does a better job in the political realm working well under pressure, women are significantly more likely than men to say that female leaders do a better job in this regard, while men are somewhat more likely than women to say that men are stronger in this area. Women are also more likely than men to say that female leaders are better than male leaders at standing up for what they believe in, despite political pressure – 33% of women say this compared with 26% of men. On three of the nine dimensions tested in the poll – working out compromises, serving as a role model for children and being willing to take risks – there is no significant gender gap in the share saying that female leaders are better than their male counterparts.

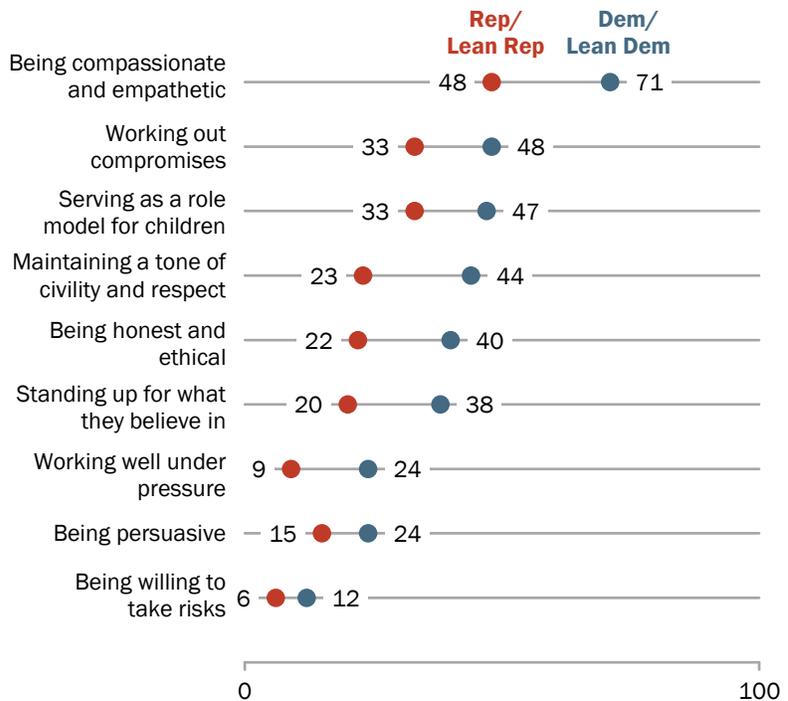
**Wide party gaps in views about male and female political leaders**

Across a wide range of qualities and behaviors, Democrats are significantly

more likely than Republicans to say female political leaders do a better job than men. The partisan gaps in views about male and female leaders are more consistent, and in some cases wider, than the gender gaps. On each of the nine items included in the survey, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say that female political leaders do a better job than male leaders.

**Democrats more likely than Republicans to see women in politics as stronger than men across a range of key leadership qualities**

*% of **Republicans** and **Democrats** saying women in high political offices are better than men at each of the following*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018. "Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

One of the largest gaps is in views on compassion and empathy. Roughly seven-in-ten Democrats (71%) say female leaders are better than male leaders at being compassionate and empathetic, while only about half (48%) of Republicans agree.

Democrats are also more likely than Republicans to say female political leaders have an edge over male leaders when it comes to maintaining civility (44% of Democrats, vs. 23% of Republicans). It's worth noting, however, that Republicans are much less likely than Democrats to say that these two qualities are essential to good leadership. Roughly three-in-four Democrats say compassion (76%) and civility (77%) are essential to good leadership, compared with smaller shares of Republicans.

For their part, Republicans place more importance than Democrats on a leader's ability to work well under pressure and stand up for what he or she believes in, despite political pressure. On each of these dimensions Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say male leaders do a better job than their female counterparts.

#### *Party gaps in views of female leadership persist among women and men*

In many cases these party differences persist even after controlling for gender. Democratic and Republican women have significantly different views on these issues, and the same can be said of Democratic and Republican men. For example, while 80% of Democratic women say that female leaders in politics are better at being compassionate and empathetic, only 56% of Republican women agree with this assessment. The pattern is similar when it comes to being honest and ethical, standing up for what they believe in, working well under pressure, being persuasive, and maintaining a tone of civility and respect. On each dimension, Democratic women are more likely than Republican women to say female political leaders do a better job than their male counterparts.

### Women and men are divided along party lines on key leadership qualities

*% saying women in high political offices are better than men at each of the following*

	Among women		Among men	
	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem
Being compassionate and empathetic	<b>56</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>60</b>
Maintaining a tone of civility/respect	<b>28</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>36</b>
Working out compromises	42	44	<b>26</b>	<b>54</b>
Serving as a role model for children	32	44	<b>33</b>	<b>51</b>
Being honest and ethical	<b>28</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>37</b>
Standing up for what they believe in	<b>23</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>34</b>
Working well under pressure	<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>
Being persuasive	<b>17</b>	<b>27</b>	14	20
Being willing to take risks	7	12	5	11

Note: Republicans and Democrats include independents who say they lean toward that party. Bolded numbers indicate a statistically significant difference between men and women across parties. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018. "Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

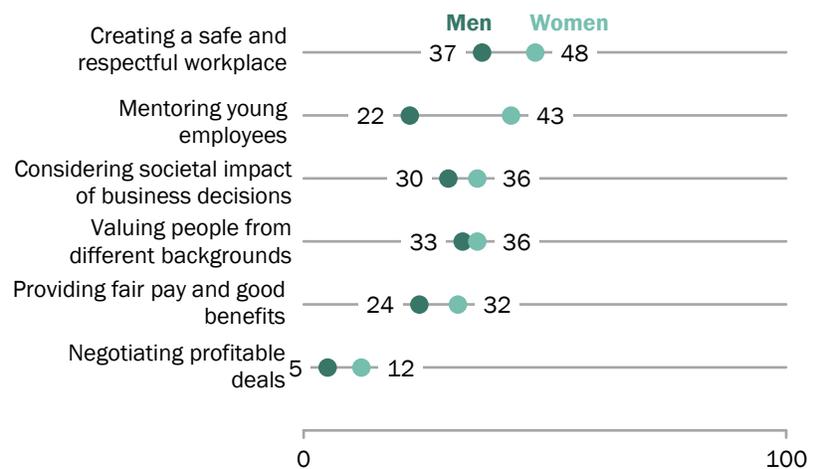
Similarly, there are gaps between Democratic and Republican men on seven of the nine leadership qualities tested in the poll. One of the larger gaps among men can be seen in which gender is better able to work out compromises: 54% of Democratic men, compared with 26% of Republican men, say female political leaders do a better job than their male counterparts in this area.

## Women more likely than men to rank female executives higher on a range of competencies

As is the case with political leadership, women are consistently more likely than men to say that female leaders in business are better than their male counterparts across a range of qualities and behaviors. The gap is especially wide on one item that relates specifically to corporate culture: providing guidance or mentorship to young employees. Women are roughly twice as likely as men to say that female executives do a better job mentoring young employees (43% of women say this, compared with 22% of men). Men are somewhat more likely than women to say male leaders do a better job of this (14% vs. 6%), but most men (63%) say there isn't any difference.

### Roughly half of women say female business leaders do a better job than male leaders creating safe workplaces, fewer men share this view

*% of men and women saying women in top executive business positions are better at each of the following*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018. "Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

About half of women (48%) say that female leaders do a better job creating a safe and respectful workplace; fewer men (37%) share that assessment. Again, a majority of men say there isn't any difference between men and women on this dimension.

On other qualities and behaviors relating directly to business culture, there are not significant gaps in the shares of men and women saying that female leaders do a better job than male leaders. For example, when it comes to considering the impact of business decisions on society, roughly equal

shares of men (30%) and women (36%) say that female executive do a better job. Large shares of both men (62%) and women (55%) say there's no difference.

## No clear advantage for men or women on key policy issues

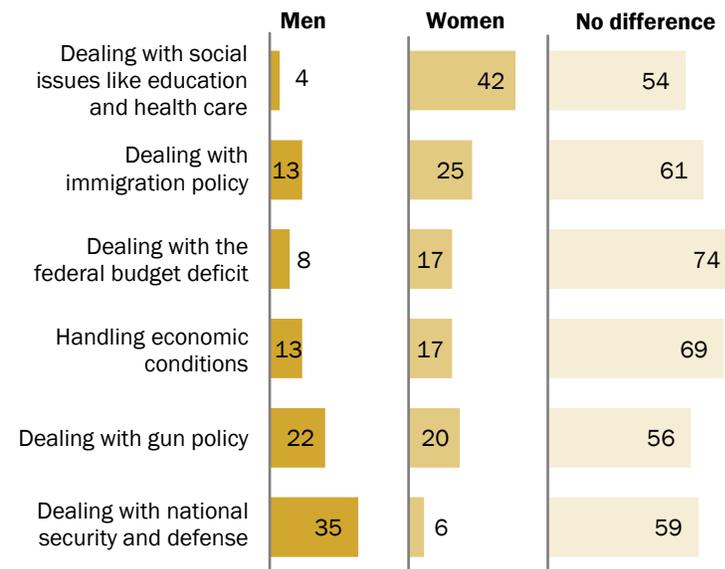
Just as many Americans see little difference between men and women when it comes to their leadership abilities, majorities say male and female leaders are equally capable of handling several specific policy areas. The state of the economy is consistently among the public's [top policy priorities](#), and on this important issue, Americans see little daylight between men and women in top political leadership positions. Roughly seven-in-ten Americans (69%) say there is no difference between men and women when it comes to handling economic conditions. Smaller shares say women do a better job in this area (17%), while 13% point to men.

Men are somewhat more likely than women to say male political leaders do a better job handling the economy (17% vs. 10%), and women are somewhat more likely to favor female leaders on this issue (24% vs. 10%), but large

majorities of both women and men say there's no difference. Similarly, while Republicans are more likely than Democrats to point to men as being stronger on this issue and Democrats are more likely to point to women than Republicans, at least two-thirds of each group say there isn't any difference.

### Majorities see little difference between men and women on several key policy issues

*% saying men/women in high political offices are better at each of the following policy areas*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.

"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

When it comes to the federal budget deficit, 74% of Americans say there is no difference between men and women in high political offices in terms of their ability to deal with this policy issue. Those who do see a difference, on balance, say that women do a better job than men.

Half or more of the public sees no difference between male and female leaders on the remaining four policy issues tested in the poll. Among those who do see differences, women have a slight advantage when it comes to dealing with immigration. Overall, 25% of adults say female leaders are better at handling this issue, while 13% say men are better. On gun policy, those who see a gender difference are split about evenly over who does a better job.

On both of these issue areas – immigration and guns – there are large party gaps in views about which gender does a better job. Roughly one-in-four Republicans (26%) say men in political office do a better job on immigration, while virtually no Democrats hold that view (3% say men do a better job). About four-in-ten Democrats (39%) say women do a better job on this issue, compared with only 9% of Republicans.

Views are similarly split along party lines when it comes to who does a better job on gun policy. Republicans are about three times as likely as Democrats to say men in political leadership do a better job on this issue (35% vs. 12%), and Democrats are roughly five times as likely as Republicans to say women do a better job on this (32% vs. 6%).

When it comes to dealing with social issues such as education and health care, very few Americans (4%) see this as a strong suit for male leaders. Roughly four-in-ten (42%) say women do a better job on these issues (54% see no difference). The opposite pattern holds for dealing with national security and defense – only 6% of adults say women can do a better job in this area, while 35% say men are better on these issues (59% see no difference).

## **Americans see men and women as equally capable of leading across industries, but some see gender differences**

While women are not equally represented in the top leadership ranks of America's largest corporations, majorities of adults say they are as capable as men of running major companies or organizations in the technology, banking and finance, health care, oil and gas and retail industries. And about half of adults (52%) don't see either gender as better able to run a professional sports team.

Still, many Americans tend to associate some industries with a specific gender. Roughly three-in-ten adults (31%) say a woman would do a better job than a man running a major retail chain. Only 6% say a man would do a better job at this. And the public is about twice as likely to say a woman would do a better job running a major hospital (19%) than to say the same about a man (8%).

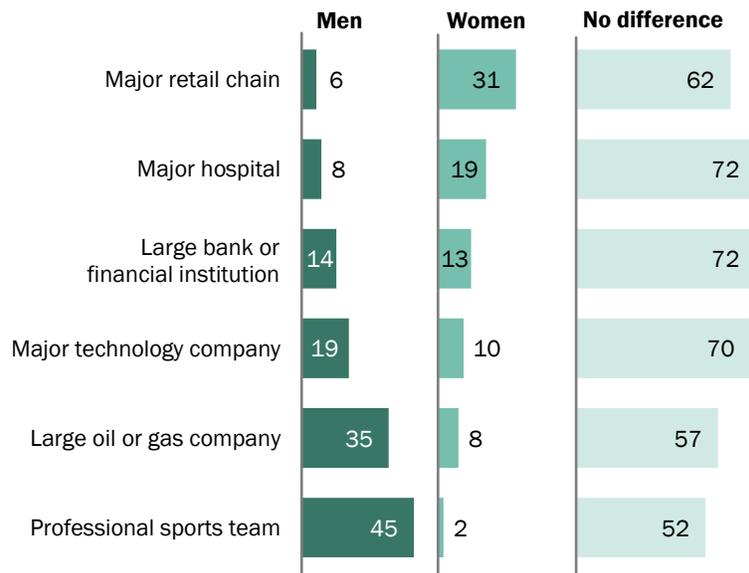
Men are seen as having a relative advantage in running a large oil or gas company: 35% say a man would do a better job at this, while 8% say a woman would be better. The gap is even wider when it comes to running a professional sports team: 45% say a man would be better at this and 2% say a woman would be better.

The views of men and women are nearly identical on these measures.

Assessments do not vary much by age, with one exception. Adults ages 50 and older are significantly more likely than their younger counterparts to say that a man would do a better job than a woman running a professional sports team. About half (49%) of those ages 50 to 64 and 60% of those 65 and older hold this view, compared with 36% of those younger than 50. There is no age gap in the share saying a woman could do a better job running a professional sports team, but adults younger than 50 are significantly more likely than those 50 and older to say there isn't any difference (60% vs. 43%).

### Majorities see no difference between men and women on running companies across several major industries, with the exception of professional sports

*% saying men/women would do a better job running each of the following type of companies*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.  
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Americans see different traits as being more beneficial for men than women who aspire to leadership positions

In addition to the qualities and competencies that help leaders carry out their jobs, there are inherent traits that may help or hurt them on their climb to the top. Just as the public has very different views about [what society values most](#) in men and in women, the public sees some traits as being more beneficial for men than for women who aspire to leadership positions. More Americans see traits like ambition, decisiveness and assertiveness as helpful for men in both politics and business, while more say that physical attractiveness helps women than say it helps men. And the public sees being compassionate as more helpful for women than men in politics, though they don't make a distinction when it comes to business.

Roughly three-quarters of adults (74%) say that being assertive mostly helps a man's chances of getting elected to high political office; half of all adults say it helps women. In fact, one-quarter

### Americans see assertiveness, ambition as more helpful to men than women seeking higher political office

% saying each of the following \_\_\_\_ a man's/woman's chances of getting elected to high political office

		Mostly helps	Mostly hurts	Not much difference
<i>Being assertive</i>	A man's chances	74	5	21
	A woman's chances	50	23	25
<i>Being decisive</i>	A man's chances	72	5	22
	A woman's chances	63	12	24
<i>Being ambitious</i>	A man's chances	69	6	23
	A woman's chances	52	23	24
<i>Being approachable</i>	A man's chances	65	4	30
	A woman's chances	69	8	22
<i>Being physically attractive</i>	A man's chances	49	3	48
	A woman's chances	60	6	33
<i>Being compassionate</i>	A man's chances	46	14	38
	A woman's chances	57	17	25
<i>Showing emotions</i>	A man's chances	24	39	37
	A woman's chances	17	52	29

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.

"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

(23%) say that being assertive mostly *hurts* women in politics, compared with just 5% who say this about men. The results are nearly identical when it comes to men and women in business.

There are large party differences in views about how being assertive impacts women politically: 61% of Republicans say being assertive helps women in politics, while about four-in-ten Democrats (41%) say the same. There is also a gender gap, with women more likely than men to say that being assertive hurts women in politics (29% of women say this vs. 16% of men).

There are two additional characteristics that the public sees as more helpful for men trying to reach leadership roles in politics and business than for women with similar aspirations: ambition and decisiveness. Roughly seven-in-ten adults say ambition is a helpful trait for a man to have, while closer to half say being ambitious helps women get ahead. About one-in-five say that being ambitious mostly hurts women in both politics and business. When it comes to being decisive, roughly seven-in-ten adults say being decisive helps men to succeed in either politics or business, while 63% say this about women.

One quality most adults see as helpful for both men and women seeking leadership roles is being approachable. In politics, 65% say this quality is helpful for men and 69% say it's helpful for women. The results are similar for business.

Perceptions about how physical appearance impacts men and women on their way to top leadership positions follow a different pattern. The public is more likely to see being physically attractive as an asset for women than for men. Six-in-ten adults say that being physically attractive helps women succeed in politics, and an even higher share (69%) say this helps women advance in the corporate world. Only about half say being attractive helps men get ahead (49% in politics, 54% in business). Higher shares say being physically attractive makes no difference for men than say the same for women.

### **Showing emotions seen as more of a liability for women than men**

Only one trait is seen, on balance, as being more harmful than helpful to both men and women: showing emotions. Still, more say this hurts women seeking leadership positions than it does men. Roughly half (52%) say showing emotions hurts women in politics, and an even higher share (65%) say it hurts women in business; 39% say this hurts men in politics, 58% in business.

There is a gender divide in how the public sees displays of emotions. Women are more likely than men to say that showing emotion is a liability for women. For example, about six-in-ten women (61%) say showing emotions mostly hurts women trying to get ahead in politics, while about four-

in-ten men (42%) say this is the case. Women hold this view regardless of party. Similar shares of women in both parties believe that showing emotions hurts women seeking higher political office. Six-in-ten Republican women (60%) and Democratic women (62%) hold this view. And the gender gap persists in both parties. Just 39% of Republican men say showing emotions hurts women in politics – a 21-point difference from Republican women.

There are significant differences in how Americans view being compassionate in the workplace and the political arena. While 46% of Americans see compassion as a positive trait for men in politics, only 29% say it mostly helps men in business. Instead, nearly half of the public (47%) says being compassionate makes no difference in helping a man get ahead, and 22% say it hurts men in the workplace. A similar pattern exists for women.

## Acknowledgments

This report, based on a survey conducted with support from Pivotal Ventures, an investment and incubation company created by Melinda Gates, was issued by Pew Research Center. The Center retained final editorial control over the questionnaire, the analysis of the survey data, and the contents of this report.

Pew Research Center received invaluable advice in developing the questionnaire and exploring gender and leadership from Deborah Walsh (Director), Kira Sanbonmatsu (Senior Scholar), Kelly Dittmar (Scholar), Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University; Laura Liswood, Secretary General, Council of Women World Leaders, UN Foundation; Sabrina Schaeffer, Leadership Circle Chair, Independent Women’s Forum; Missy Shorey, Executive Director, Maggie’s List; and Catherine Tinsley, Professor of Management, Georgetown University’s McDonough School of Business and Executive Director, Georgetown University Women’s Leadership Institute.

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Find related reports online at [pewresearch.org/socialtrends](https://pewresearch.org/socialtrends)

Kim Parker, *Director, Social Trends Research*  
Juliana Horowitz, *Associate Director, Research*  
Ruth Igielnik, *Senior Researcher*  
Anna Brown, *Research Analyst*  
Anthony Cilluffo, *Research Assistant*  
Nikki Graf, *Research Associate*  
Claudia Deane, *Vice President, Research*  
Molly Rohal, *Communications Manager*  
Jessica Pumphrey, *Communications Associate*  
Michael Keegan, *Information Graphics Designer*  
David Kent, *Copy Editor*  
Travis Mitchell, *Digital Producer*

## Methodology

### The American Trends Panel Survey Methodology

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults recruited from landline and cellphone random-digit-dial surveys. Panelists participate via monthly self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by GfK.

Data in this report are drawn from the panel wave conducted June 19-July 2, 2018, among 4,587 respondents. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 4,587 respondents is plus or minus 2.4 percentage points.

Members of the American Trends Panel were recruited from several large, national landline and cellphone random-digit-dial (RDD) surveys conducted in English and Spanish. At the end of each survey, respondents were invited to join the panel. The first group of panelists was recruited from the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey, conducted Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014. Of the 10,013 adults interviewed, 9,809 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 5,338 agreed to participate.<sup>2</sup> The second group of panelists was recruited from the 2015 Pew Research Center Survey on Government, conducted Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015. Of the 6,004 adults interviewed, all were invited to join the panel, and 2,976 agreed to participate.<sup>3</sup> The third group of panelists was recruited from a survey conducted April 25 to June 4, 2017. Of the 5,012 adults interviewed in the survey or pretest, 3,905 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 1,628 agreed to participate.<sup>4</sup>

The ATP data were weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 some panelists were subsampled for invitation to the panel. Next, an adjustment was made for the fact that the propensity to join the panel and remain an active panelist varied across different groups in the sample. The final step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on a number of dimensions. Gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin

---

<sup>2</sup> When data collection for the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey began, non-internet users were subsampled at a rate of 25%, but a decision was made shortly thereafter to invite all non-internet users to join. In total, 83% of non-internet users were invited to join the panel.

<sup>3</sup> Respondents to the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey who indicated that they are internet users but refused to provide an email address were initially permitted to participate in the American Trends Panel by mail, but were no longer permitted to join the panel after February 6, 2014. Internet users from the 2015 Pew Research Center Survey on Government who refused to provide an email address were not permitted to join the panel.

<sup>4</sup> White, non-Hispanic college graduates were subsampled at a rate of 50%.

and region parameters come from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey. The county-level population density parameter (deciles) comes from the 2010 U.S. decennial census. The telephone service benchmark comes from the July-December 2016 National Health Interview Survey and is projected to 2017. The volunteerism benchmark comes from the 2015 Current Population Survey Volunteer Supplement. The party affiliation benchmark is the average of the three most recent Pew Research Center general public telephone surveys. The internet access benchmark comes from the 2017 ATP Panel Refresh Survey. Respondents who did not previously have internet access are treated as not having internet access for weighting purposes. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the Hispanic sample in the American Trends Panel is predominantly native born and English speaking.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	4,587	2.4 percentage points
Men	2,284	3.5 percentage points
Women	2,303	3.3 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

The June 2018 wave had a response rate of 84% (4,587 responses among 5,482 individuals in the panel). Taking account of the combined, weighted response rate for the recruitment surveys (10.1%) and attrition from panel members who were removed at their request or for inactivity, the cumulative response rate for the wave is 2.4%<sup>5</sup>.

© Pew Research Center, 2018

<sup>5</sup> Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves are removed from the panel. These cases are counted in the denominator of cumulative response rates.