



## **Unmarried Women in the 2004 Presidential Election<sup>1</sup>**

**Report  
by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research**

**January, 2005**

In the 2004 election, unmarried women participated in larger numbers than ever before and voted for change. In a year characterized by high turnout, unmarried women voted in higher numbers, and were one of the few demographic groups that significantly increased their share of the electorate. They participated despite their doubts about the effectiveness of politics and the fact that they did not hear politicians speak to them about the issues they care about most passionately. Unmarried women voted because they believe voting is an important civic responsibility, they knew the stakes in the 2004 election were particularly high and they wanted change. These women share a progressive agenda and have the power to decide elections.

Women's Voices. Women Vote is the first nonpartisan organization created to increase the number of unmarried women registering and voting in elections. WVWV recognized that unmarried women were the largest group of people on the sidelines of our democracy – 22 million women ignored until this year by traditional voter registration and get out the vote efforts. To that end, over the past 18 months, WVWV commissioned the most extensive research ever undertaken on unmarried women and developed a groundbreaking effort to register unmarried women and get out their vote. In 16 key states, WVWV developed lists of both registered and unregistered unmarried women. These women were contacted by WVWV directly or by a partner organization. These states and this demographic were chosen to increase the participation rates among the most under-represented group in our democracy, unmarried women.

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<sup>1</sup> WVWV wants to thank the Barbara Lee Family Foundation for all of its support and for fully funding the research that allowed us to conduct this evaluation research.



This report examines data from four post-election studies of the unmarried women's vote and, because each addresses different questions, extensive analysis is possible on a number of subjects. These four studies include: national exit polling data<sup>2</sup>; state exit polling data in 10 of the 16 states in which Women's Voices, Women Vote (WVWV) conducted programs; an oversample of unmarried women in the Democracy Corps post-election survey; and a post-election survey of unmarried women in the 16 states in which WVWV conducted a variety of programs. All four studies show a remarkably consistent picture: Unmarried women had a distinct change agenda and were not distracted by other issues.

Exit poll data allow comparison of election results for unmarried women with those of other major groups.<sup>3</sup> A large sample size allows for conclusions about unmarried women by race. Exit poll data also permits state-level analysis of unmarried women in 10 key states. Democracy Corps post-election data offers the ability to draw conclusions about the marital gap in this election, thus placing the unmarried women's vote in the larger context of the general electorate. Finally, the WVWV 16 state survey allows discussion of the unmarried women's policy agenda and the degree to which the WVWV target audience heard their message.

### **Main Findings**

- In a year with high turnout, unmarried women increased their numbers, and were one of the few demographic groups to increase their share of the electorate. As a percentage of the electorate, they moved from 19 percent in 2000 to 22.4 percent

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<sup>2</sup> This report is based on four data sources. First, the National Election Pool's Exit Polls were conducted by Edison/Mitofsky on Election Day. Nationally, they interviewed 13,660 respondents, 3,062 of which were unmarried women. Unmarried women estimates carry a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points. Second, we also examined the available state-level data for 10 of the 16 states in which WVWV conducted programs: Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Unmarried women estimates in the individual states carry a margin of error of +/- 7 percentage points. Third, Democracy Corps conducted a national post-election survey of 2,000 voters, 410 of whom were unmarried women. These data were collected November 2-3, 2004 and carry a margin of error of +/- 2.2 percentage points. Finally, the WVWV 16 state survey interviewed 1,067 unmarried women voters under 65. The survey was conducted November 2-4, 2004 in the 16 states in which WVWV conducted voter registration and GOTV efforts: Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin. Developed and conducted by GQR, this survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points.

<sup>3</sup> The 2004 exit polls afford us the opportunity to examine the "definitive" unmarried women's vote. The early releases of the data on Election Day, which incorrectly showed promising results for the challenger, did a disservice to the exit poll data. Some cases can come in earlier than others, as some groups are more willing to talk to interviewers than others. Only at the end of the day, when all the cases are in and the results have been weighted to the actual vote, does the data have internal validity, enabling us to examine the patterns behind the vote and what drove it.



in 2004, an increase of roughly 7 million votes. Unmarried women constituted as large a share of the electorate as African Americans, Latinos and Jews combined.

- The marriage gap is one of the most important cleavages in electoral politics. Unmarried women voted for Kerry by a 25-point margin (62 to 37 percent), while married women voted for President Bush by an 11-point margin (55 percent to 44 percent). Indeed, the 25-point margin Kerry posted among unmarried women represented one of the high water marks for the Senator among all demographic groups.
- The marriage gap is a defining dynamic in today's politics, eclipsing the gender gap, with marital status a significant predictor of the vote, independent of the effects of age, race, income, education or gender. Marital status had a significant effect on the way in which these voters performed, whereas a voter's gender did not.<sup>4</sup> This was true of all age groups. Younger unmarried women supported Kerry while younger married women supported President Bush. Unmarried 18-29 year olds gave Kerry a 25 point margin, while younger married women, like their older counterparts, gave President Bush an 11 point margin.
- The 2004 election brought many new unmarried women to the polls. Nineteen percent were voting for the first time, versus only 6 percent of married women.
- Unmarried women acknowledged the high stakes of this election. Throughout the year, WVWV tracked an unusually high degree of interest in this election, confirmed on Election Day, when unmarried women voted in record numbers.
- WVWV engaged in a first of a kind multifaceted effort to reach unmarried women, including contact to register voters, increase early voting and absentee voting, Get-Out-the-Vote and same day registration on Election Day. These and other efforts worked. Nearly one-third of unmarried women said they had heard something about unmarried women and voting this year.
- White voters supported President Bush overall, but Kerry performed well among white unmarried women. White voters generally supported President Bush in the election (58 percent to 41 percent), but Kerry performed strongly among white unmarried women (55 percent to 44 percent).
- Unmarried women are social and economic progressives advancing a tolerant set of values. They believe government should play a role in providing affordable health care, a secure retirement, equal pay, and education opportunities for themselves and their children. They support a woman's right to choose and gay rights, including marriage.

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<sup>4</sup> Based on regression analysis. See Appendix A for the full regression results.

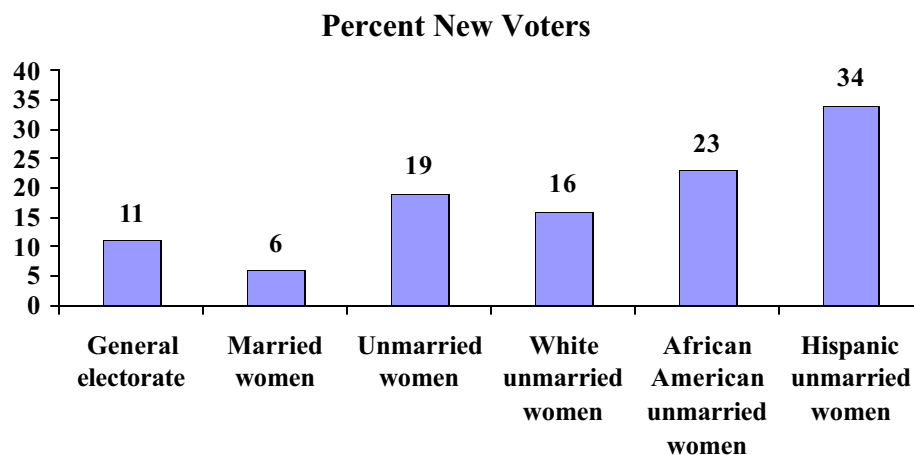


- Unmarried women were [PWF3] strongly opposed to the war in Iraq. They believe that the Bush Administration's pursuit of the war made America less safe, not more secure. This is the opposite conclusion from that drawn by many blue-collar voters.
- Unmarried voters, and unmarried women in particular, represent a source for enormous growth and support for those with a progressive agenda that speaks to the issues of importance to them.

### **Turnout and Interest: Unmarried Women Voted in Great Numbers**

In 2004, unmarried women voted not only in higher numbers, they also increased their share of the electorate. According to the exit polls, in 2000, unmarried women comprised 19 percent of electorate. In 2004, this number climbed to 22.4 percent, an increase of roughly 7 million unmarried women voters. Unmarried women became a larger segment of the electorate in 2004 despite the fact that this was a year where [PWF4] all demographic groups voted in higher total numbers.

This election brought millions of new voters to the polls, many of whom were unmarried women. Roughly 11 percent of the electorate was voting for the first time, up from 9 percent in 2000. In 2004, 19 percent of unmarried women were voting for the first time, versus only 6 percent of married women. Among unmarried women, women of color constituted many of the new voters, with exit poll data showing that nearly a quarter of African-American unmarried women (23 percent) and more than a third of Hispanic unmarried women (34 percent) voted for the first time. White unmarried women also outperformed both the general population as well as married women.



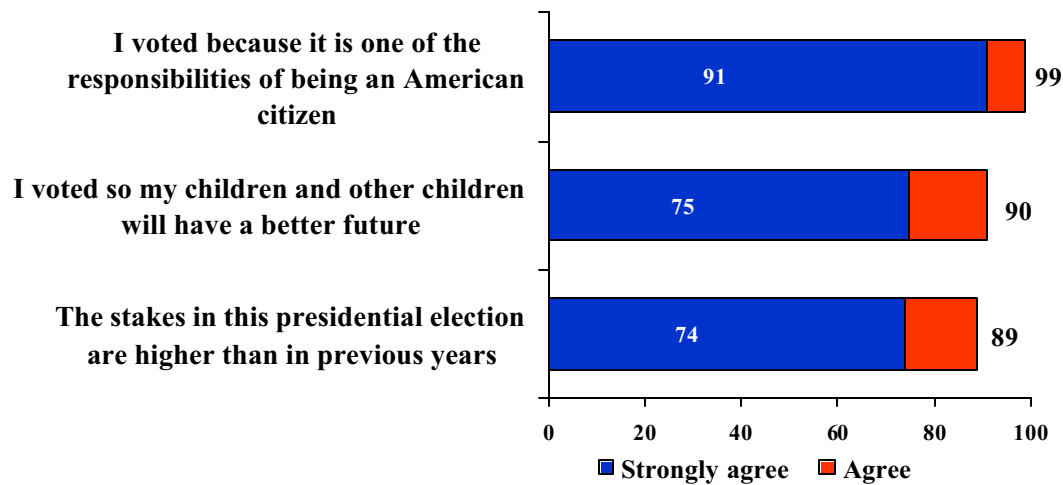
*Source: National Election Pool's Exit Polls, 11/2/04*



Given the turnout numbers, it is not surprising that unmarried women were more active in this election. In the WVWV 16-state survey, more than three quarters (77 percent) of unmarried women rated their interest in this year's election a 10 out of 10. In contrast, only 48 percent had an interest level this high in other elections. Unmarried women who were new voters (12 percent of unmarried women in the WVWV 16-state survey) were also engaged in this election as never before. Only a quarter of unmarried women who were new voters said that in past elections they have been extremely interested (a 10 out a 10), while in 2004, 68 percent said they were extremely interested.

Unmarried women voted because they took the responsibilities of citizenship seriously, and nearly all of these change voters said that voting is one of the responsibilities of being an American citizen (91 percent strongly agree). They knew the stakes were high this year (74 percent strongly agree) because so many of the important issues bore directly on their lives and their children's lives. Many unmarried women felt compelled to vote so their children could have a better future (75 percent strongly agree). Increases in voting also directly related to programs to target them as well as the national communications effort to reach them (see below).

#### **Attitudes Toward Voting**



*Source: WVWV 16-State Post-Election Survey, 11/2-11/4, 2004*

Unmarried women voted despite the fact that only 27 percent said they felt the campaigns and candidates were speaking directly to them and the issues they care about most deeply. Furthermore, fewer than half of unmarried women strongly felt that the candidates talked about the issues important to them (46 percent strongly agree).



The presidential race itself was another motivating factor for unmarried women. Many of these new voters only voted in the national contest. Nearly a fifth (17 percent) of unmarried women new voters said they did not vote in any down-ballot races such as the House of Representatives, Senate, or Governor, compared with 8 percent of unmarried women in general.

### **WVWV -- Getting Out the Vote**

WVWV engaged in a multi-faceted effort to reach unmarried women including a voter registration program and outreach designed to increase early voting and absentee voting as well as Get-Out-The-Vote on Election Day.<sup>5</sup> These efforts included mail, phone calls and television public service announcements, as well as an extraordinary amount of earned media. Moreover, other organizations worked to reach unmarried women. The evidence is clear; these efforts worked. To judge the impact of the WVWV programs, we conducted a survey of unmarried women in the 16 states for which the WVWV lists were developed.

Many unmarried women in the 16 states, particularly the marginal propensity voters that WVWV targeted, heard the WVWV message about voting, and many responded to it. WVWV's message garnered impressively high recognition, especially considering that in many of the WVWV states voters were bombarded with nonstop political advertising for nearly a year.

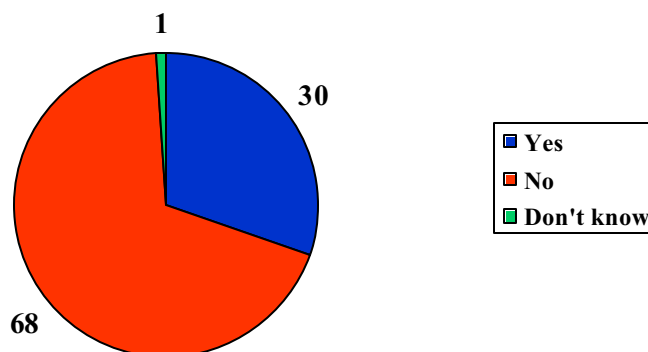
In 2004, for the first time, unmarried women heard about themselves as a politically relevant group. Nearly one-third (30 percent) of unmarried women said they heard something this year about unmarried women and voting.

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<sup>5</sup> These efforts were facilitated by lists WVWV developed of registered and unregistered unmarried women voters.



### Heard About Unmarried Women and Voting



Source: WVWV 16 State Post-Election Survey, 11/2-11/4, 2004

WVWV succeeded in reaching both its target groups of disengaged unmarried women and the unmarried women engaged in the political process. As part of the WVWV program and list development, WVWV assigned a score based on past voting experience and demographic factors to unmarried women, indicating their likelihood of voting in 2004.<sup>6</sup> Voters were divided into three categories: low likelihood of voting, moderate likelihood of voting and high likelihood of voting. WVWV concentrated much of its efforts on unmarried women with moderate propensities to vote.

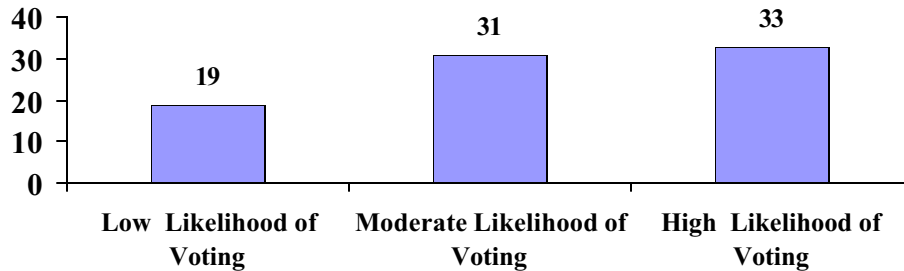
WVWV mobilized voters with moderate chances of voting. In the 16 states where WVWV operated, 31 percent of women with a moderate likelihood to vote heard something about unmarried women. This is almost as high as the group of voters highly engaged in the process (33 percent). WVWV did not target voters with a low likelihood of voting as significantly due to constrained resources, and far fewer of these voters reported hearing something about unmarried women (19 percent).

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<sup>6</sup> This score was developed from the voter file based on a number of factors, including demographic data and past vote performance. Each case was then assigned a score between 0 and 1 of likelihood of voting in 2004, where 0 was not at all likely and 1 was very likely. Registered voters with a low likelihood of voting received a 0 to .34, voters with a moderate likelihood of voting received between a .35 to .80, highly likely voters scored between .80 and 1.



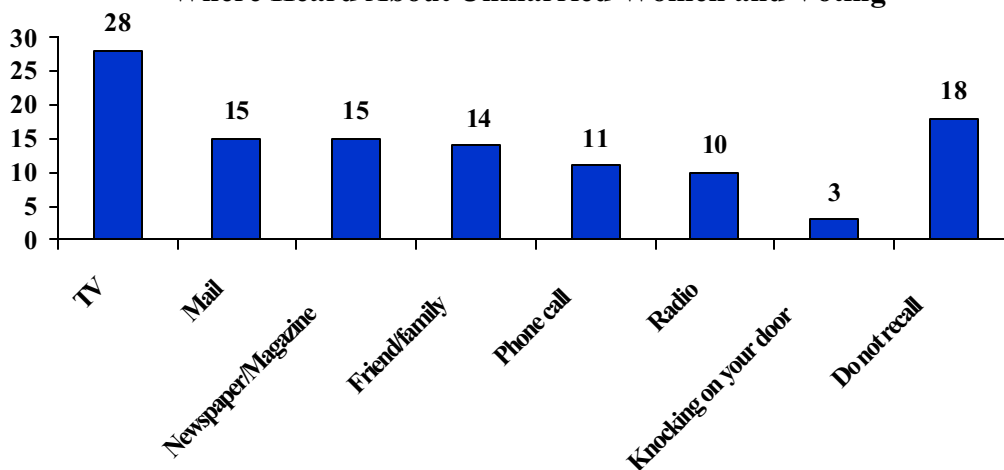
### Heard About Unmarried Women and Voting, by Likelihood to Vote



Source: WVWV 16 State Post-Election Survey, 11/2-11/4, 2004

WVWV had an impact beyond the activities for which they were directly responsible, such as direct mail, cable public service announcements, and targeted phone calls. The advocacy and outreach of the WVWV campaign introduced unmarried women as a group to the general public, opinion leaders, candidates and incumbent office holders, voter engagement organizations, and the news media, so that unmarried women became a focus of attention. More than a quarter (28 percent) of unmarried women remembered seeing something about unmarried women and voting on television, such as a news story or public service announcement. More than 1 in 7 (15 percent) women in the 16 states in which WVWV operated remembered getting a piece of mail on the subject. And more than 1 in 10 (11 percent) of unmarried women remembered receiving a phone call.

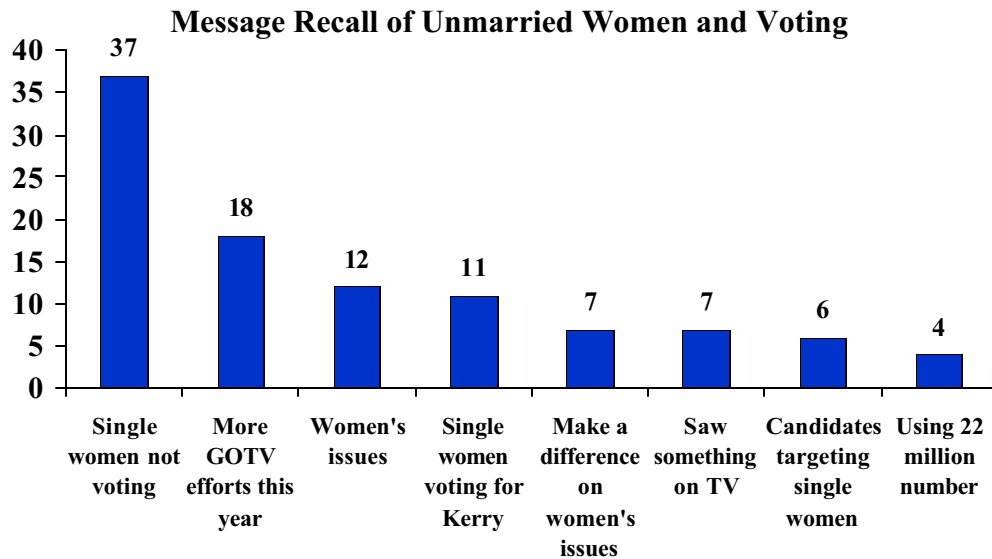
### Where Heard About Unmarried Women and Voting



Source: WVWV 16 State Post-Election Survey, 11/2-11/4, 2004



Finally, and perhaps most importantly, WVWV's message penetrated the election din. Among the women who had heard something about unmarried women and voting, a remarkable percentage accurately recalled what they heard. Unmarried women were asked open-ended questions about what specifically they had seen or heard about unmarried women and voting. More than one third (37 percent) heard that unmarried women voted in fewer numbers than married women in 2000. Nearly 1 in 5 (18 percent) mentioned that they had heard about increased efforts this year to get unmarried women to vote. Four percent even correctly used the 22 million number – in other words, the number of eligible unmarried women who did not vote in 2000 – which was an important part of the WVWV message because as unmarried women understood they were part of a larger, more powerful group, they were more likely to vote. Among first time unmarried women voters, fully 8 percent mentioned the 22 million number without prompting. All of this was achieved without paid advertising.



*Source: WVWV 16 State Post-Election Survey, 11/2-11/4, 2004*

### **The Presidential Contest**

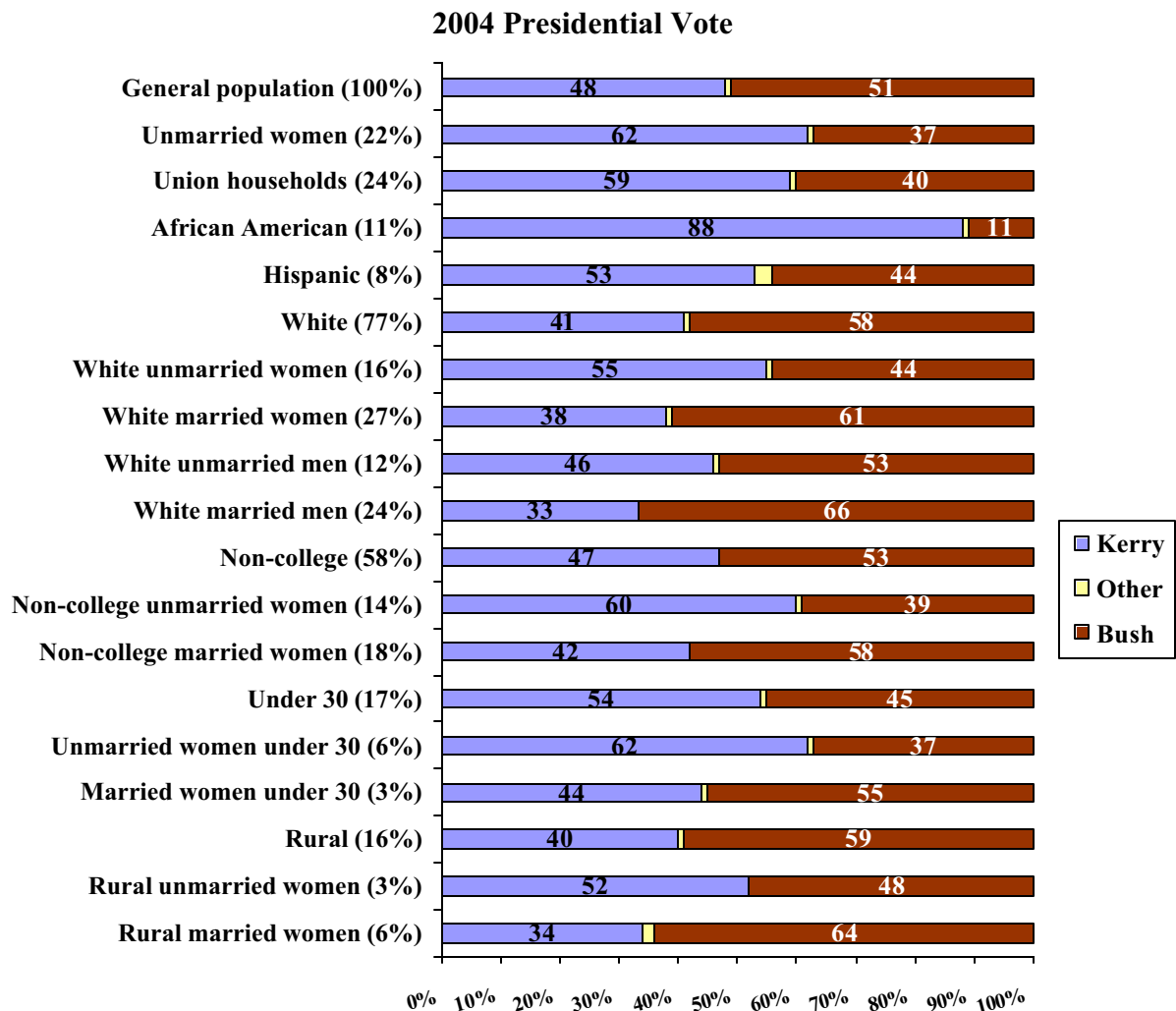
As can be judged given their performance in both 2000 and 2004, unmarried women should be considered among some of the most progressive voters in the electorate. The exit polls show that unmarried women voted for Kerry by a 25-point margin (62 percent to 37 percent). Very few groups surpassed this margin. Kerry also performed particularly well among white unmarried women (55 percent to 44 percent), even though white voters supported President Bush this year (58 percent to 41 percent).



## Women's Voices. Women Vote Unmarried Women in the 2004 Election

Erosion among blue-collar voters was one of the most important factors in President Bush's victory in November. Voters without college degrees comprise 58 percent of the electorate. In 2000, Gore lost this group by only 2 percent (47 percent to 49 percent). Kerry, however, lost non-college voters by 6 points (47 percent to 53 percent). Unmarried women who did not have college degrees (an economically marginal group with 42 percent earning less than \$30,000 per year) did not drop off for Kerry. He won them by 21 points (60 percent to 39 percent).

In rural America, for example, exit polls show that Kerry won unmarried women by 4 points (52 percent to 48 percent) while rural married women went strongly for President Bush (64 percent to 34 percent).



Source: National Election Pool's exit polls, conducted by Edison/Mitofsky, November 2004



**Women's Voices. Women Vote  
Unmarried Women in the 2004 Election**

Even in those states that Kerry ultimately lost he consistently carried unmarried women with strong margins. For example, in Missouri where Kerry lost by 8 points, he won unmarried women by 8 points (54 percent to 46 percent), and in Ohio where Kerry lost by 2 points, he won unmarried women by 30 points, 65 to 35 percent.

<b>2004 PRESIDENTIAL VOTE IN 10 STATES, BY MARITAL/GENDER</b>									
<i>(Percent responding)</i>									
	<u>Total Population</u>			<u>Unmarried Women</u>			<u>Married Women</u>		
	Kerry	Bush	<b>Differ- ence</b>	Kerry	Bush	<b>Differ- ence</b>	Kerry	Bush	<b>Differ- ence</b>
Iowa	49	50	<b>-1</b>	58	42	<b>+16</b>	48	52	<b>-4</b>
Michigan	51	48	<b>+3</b>	64	34	<b>+30</b>	45	55	<b>-10</b>
Minnesota	51	48	<b>+3</b>	61	38	<b>+23</b>	48	50	<b>-2</b>
Missouri	46	54	<b>-8</b>	54	46	<b>+8</b>	40	59	<b>-19</b>
New Hampshire	50	49	<b>+1</b>	62	37	<b>+25</b>	50	49	<b>+1</b>
Nevada	48	51	<b>-3</b>	58	41	<b>+17</b>	48	51	<b>-3</b>
Ohio	49	51	<b>-2</b>	65	35	<b>+30</b>	40	60	<b>-20</b>
Oregon	52	48	<b>+4</b>	65	34	<b>+31</b>	55	45	<b>+10</b>
Pennsylvania	51	49	<b>+2</b>	60	40	<b>+20</b>	49	50	<b>-1</b>
Wisconsin	50	49	<b>+1</b>	62	37	<b>+25</b>	47	53	<b>-6</b>

*Source: National Election Pool's Exit Polls, conducted by Edison/Mitofsky, 11/2/04*

WVWV increased the role of unmarried women in the electorate, despite relatively limited resources for the entire program. Exit poll data available in 10 of the 16 WVWV states indicates that unmarried women increased as a share of the electorate in 2004. Unmarried women increased their share of the electorate in nine out of ten states. In four out of these 10 states, unmarried women increased their share of the electorate by more than 3 percent (the national average). In 4 of these 10 states, the exits report that unmarried women represented a larger share of the 2004 electorate than their share of the November 2000 population. WVWV partnered with US Action Education Fund in Nevada and Wisconsin for a door-to-door program to supplement WVWV's mail and phone programs. In these two states, unmarried women represented a larger share of this year's electorate than their share of the November 2000 population.



<b>2004 PRESIDENTIAL VOTE IN 10 STATES, BY MARITAL/GENDER<sup>7</sup></b>				
<i>(Percent responding)</i>				
	2000 Unmarried Women Share of the Population	2000 Unmarried Women Share of the Electorate	2004 Unmarried Women Share of the Electorate	Difference 2004 – 2000
Iowa	19.6	17.3	18.7	1.4
Michigan	22.4	18.6	22.5	3.9
Minnesota	20.2	17.9	19.0	1.1
Missouri	23.6	20.8	21.3	0.5
New Hampshire	20.5	18.7	17.7	-1
Nevada	21.6	19.5	22.6	3.1
Ohio	25.1	21.3	21.8	0.5
Oregon	21.6	19.4	25.0	5.6
Pennsylvania	24.2	20.8	22.7	1.9
Wisconsin	20.8	17.2	21.4	4.2

Source: National Election Pool's Exit Polls, conducted by Edison/Mitofsky, 11/2/04

### **The Marriage Gap: Marital Status Outweighs Gender**

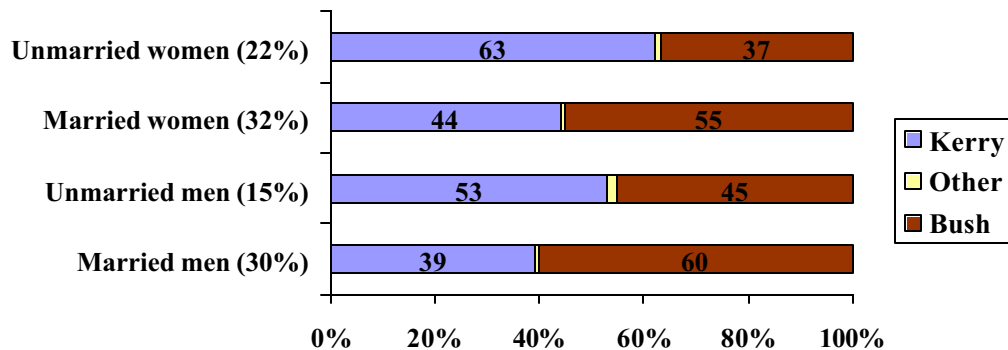
As the large differences in the vote between married and unmarried women demonstrate, the marriage gap is one of the most important cleavages in electoral politics. The marriage gap also matters among men, as unmarried men remain the only group of non-minority men won by John Kerry. In short, marriage is one of the most important divisions in American politics, and, as we will show with multivariate analysis, marital status strongly predicts the vote, after controlling for other factors such as partisanship and religiosity.

As we have seen, there were huge differences in the 2004 vote between unmarried and married women. Overall, unmarried women voted for Kerry by a 25-point margin this year. In contrast, married women opted for the incumbent (55 percent to 44 percent). The marriage gap also existed among men. While Kerry won unmarried men (53 percent to 45 percent), President Bush handily won married men (60 percent to 37 percent).

<sup>7</sup> The November 2000 Current Population Study of the U.S. Census Bureau provides data on the share of the population represented by unmarried women in each of the 10 states in 2000, as well as the reported share of the electorate that unmarried women represented in November 2000.



### 2004 Presidential Vote, by Marital Status and Gender



Source: National Election Pool's exit poll, conducted by Edison/Mitofsky, November 2004

[PWF7]

Using Democracy Corps data, we were able to determine the relative strength of marital status as a predictor of the vote. Marital status was a statistically significant predictor of likelihood to vote for Kerry in regression analysis. This is true even when controlling for other demographic and behavioral factors such as gender, age, race, gun ownership, union household membership, party identification, education, income, and church attendance. Controlling for all these other variables, **the odds of voting for Kerry were 1.56 times greater if the voter was unmarried** than if the voter was married. In contrast, once other demographic and behavioral factors were controlled for, **a voter's gender had no significant effect** on their likelihood to vote for the Democrat.<sup>8</sup>

### Looking for Change, While Others Voted for the Status Quo

One critical paradox of the national election in 2004 is that while voters wanted change, they settled for the incumbent.<sup>9</sup> Unmarried women felt deeply frustrated with the nation's direction, and it was reflected in their vote. For these women, 2004 was a referendum on the incumbent and his stewardship of the country. Unmarried women were change voters with an intensity nearly unmatched in the electorate. Their economic challenges, anger about the war in Iraq and progressive values punctuated for them that the stakes were higher in this election than in previous years.

As we saw in research leading up to the election, unmarried women were deeply dissatisfied with the direction of the country. In the exit polls, 60 percent of unmarried women worried that the country was headed on the wrong track, compared to 43 percent of married women and 46 percent of the total electorate. White unmarried women were

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix A for the full regression results.

<sup>9</sup> See "Solving the Paradox of 2004" by Stan Greenberg and James Carville at [www.democracycorps.com](http://www.democracycorps.com)

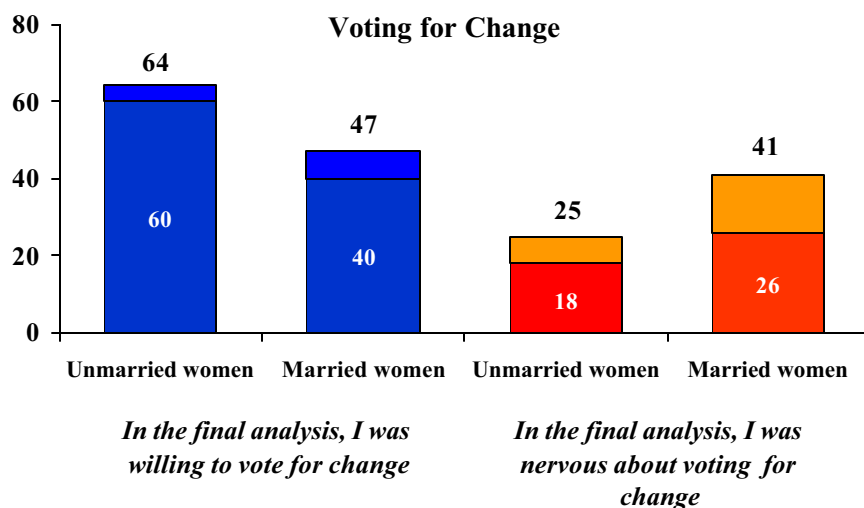


also more likely than the general electorate to see the nation as on the wrong track (56 percent, versus 46 percent).

<b>DIRECTION OF COUNTRY</b> <i>(Percent Responding)</i>				
	TOTAL	Unmarried Women	Married women	White Unmarried Women
Generally going in the right direction	49	37	53	42
Seriously off on the wrong track	46	60	43	56

*Source: National Election Pool's Exit Polls, conducted by Edison/Mitofsky, 11/2/04*

Driven by a strong dissatisfaction with the Bush administration, most unmarried women voted for change. Democracy Corps data show that nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of unmarried women said that, in the final analysis, they were willing to vote for change, versus 47 percent of married women. They voted to oust the incumbent despite the fact that the country is at war, an impressive result given the strength of incumbency in periods of international crisis.



*Source: Democracy Corps, 11/2-11/3, 2004*



### The Unmarried Women's Platform – Founded on Progressive Values

The great paradox of the 2004 election is that an electorate looking for change ultimately opted for the incumbent. Unmarried women and married women alike voiced concerns about Iraq and the state of the economy. In addition to highlighting their differences on character and leadership, the Bush campaign unleashed a cultural attack on Kerry that added abortion and gay marriage to the debate. Driven by concerns of John Kerry's resolve and character, married women, along with many others, voted for safety and values.

Unmarried women held a set of progressive values that stood in clear contrast to those prompted by the Bush campaign. Instead of being swayed by the culture wars and issues such as abortion and gay marriage, unmarried women were polarized by them. They found President Bush's cultural values to be another reason it was imperative to elect a different candidate to the highest office; they wanted a candidate who shared their priorities and views of America. While unmarried and married women alike voiced doubts about the Bush Administration's policies in Iraq (36 and 31 percent, respectively) and the economy, such as the tax cuts to the wealthy (28 and 24 percent, respectively), unmarried women were more likely than married women to be concerned with President Bush's stance on women's rights, including abortion (20 percent versus 12 percent for married women).

<b>DOUBTS ABOUT BUSH</b>			
<i>(Percent Responding)</i>			
	TOTAL	Unmarried Women	Married women
The Iraq war	32	36	31
Big tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations	25	28	24
Job losses, outsourcing and little income growth	24	22	27
Rising budget deficits	19	16	15
Favors big corporate interests over middle class	18	16	20
Limits on stem cell research	14	12	14
Social security privatization	13	15	12
Health care problems	12	10	13
Women's rights, including abortion position	12	20	12

Source: Democracy Corps, 11/2-11/3, 2004

Unmarried women did not vote on safety and security as did other financially strapped, lower income voters. According to the exit polls, roughly 42 percent of unmarried women had a family income of less than \$30,000 in 2003, and only 15 percent

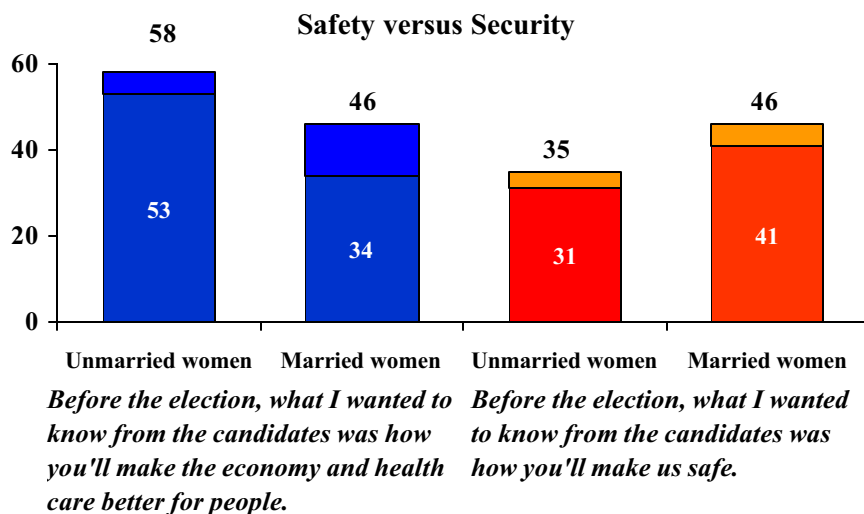


made more than \$75,000. Many of these women live on a financial razor's edge, with little or no margin protecting them from job loss or rising healthcare costs. Concerns for economic security undoubtedly motivated their desire for change, and at no time was the Bush campaign able to distract them from the administration's economic record. Democracy Corps data show that unmarried women were most concerned with the economy and jobs (29 percent) and the war in Iraq (29 percent). Married women, in contrast, believed terrorism and security (36 percent) were more important than economy and Iraq (24 and 27 percent, respectively).

<b>WHICH ONE ISSUE MATTERED MOST IN VOTE FOR PRESIDENT</b>			
<i>(Percent Responding)</i>			
	TOTAL	Unmarried Women	Married women
Terrorism and security	33	25	36
Economy/Jobs	28	29	24
Iraq	26	29	27
Healthcare	8	10	8

*Source: Democracy Corps, 11/2-11/3, 2004*

For unmarried women, economic issues trumped all others, including national security. Unmarried women are decidedly not “security moms.” Even among unmarried women with children, issues of safety and security were secondary to economic concerns. Democracy Corps data show that unmarried women were much more likely than married women to say they wanted to know how the candidates would make the economy and health care better for people, rather than how they would make us safe (58 percent versus 46 percent). In contrast, married women were more concerned than unmarried women with how the candidates would make us safe (46 percent versus 35 percent).



Source: Democracy Corps, 11/2-11/3, 2004

### ***Economy and the Role of Government***

Unmarried women share a progressive worldview, which supports an active government to assist them and all Americans solving real-life problems. In part, this view comes from a distinct set of attitudes about how they believe the world should work, and in another part, it comes from economic need. While the economy affects all voters, a single income and paucity of family support makes unmarried women—particularly single moms—disproportionately sensitive to economic cycles. Unmarried women look to the government to give them a chance to succeed, not with a hand out, but with a chance. [PWF8]

Unmarried women agree that the government needs to be more active in solving the nation's problems. As the exit polls show, a majority (54 percent) of unmarried women said the "government should do more to solve problems" while only 39 percent agreed the "government is doing too many things." Married women divide more evenly (49 percent too involved, 46 percent needs to do more).



**GOVERNMENT ROLE IN SOLVING PROBLEMS**

*(Percent Responding)*

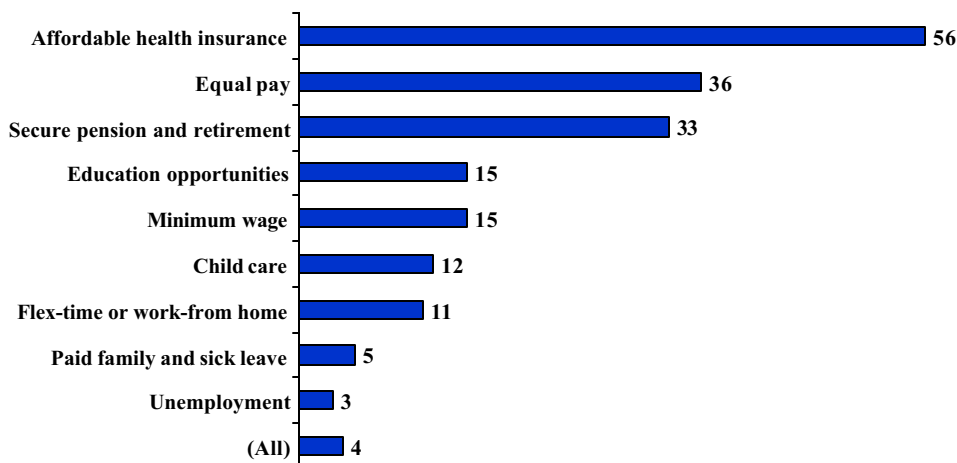
	TOTAL	Unmarried Women	Married women	White Unmarried Women	AA Unmarried Women	Hispanic Unmarried Women
Government should do more to solve problems	46	54	46	49	71	58
Government is doing too many things	49	39	49	42	27	38

*Source: National Election Pool's Exit Polls, conducted by Edison/Mitofsky, 11/2/04*

Unmarried women want the government to pursue an aggressive economic agenda, starting with affordable health insurance. They want a little help in their lives, and believe the government can provide it. In particular, they believe the government can help them get health insurance or help slow premium increases they have to pay. In the WVWV 16-state survey, more than half (56 percent) of unmarried women say that affordable health insurance would most help them in their lives. Unmarried women also would like additional protections on their income, either directly or indirectly. Many unmarried women also want to see actions taken to guarantee equal pay between men and women (36 percent) and to develop secure pension and retirement plans (33 percent). Unmarried women also are likely to want policies that would contribute to a higher income, such as increased education opportunities or increasing the minimum wage (15 percent each).



### Economic Agenda Items Which Would Most Improve Unmarried Women's Lives



Source: WVWV 16 State Post-Election Survey, 11/2-11/4, 2004

Exit polls reveal that unmarried women, unlike other voters, clearly did not view President Bush as the candidate to trust on addressing their agenda. Despite being the first president to lose jobs, the national electorate gave President Bush a 3-point *advantage* on the economy (37 percent to 40 percent). Married women, for one, were more likely to trust President Bush than Kerry on the economy (46 percent versus 32 percent who trusted Kerry). Unmarried women, however, held President Bush accountable; 50 percent of unmarried women said they trusted John Kerry to handle the economy, compared to just 29 percent who claimed they trusted the President.

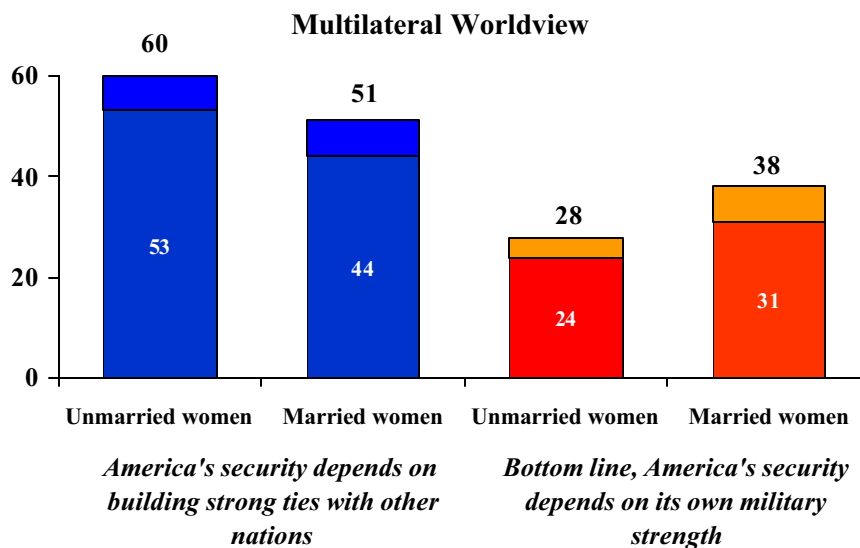
#### *Iraq*

Unmarried women did share other voters' concerns about terrorism, but unlike other groups, these fears did not translate into votes for the incumbent. This outcome reflects in part the primacy these voters place on economic security, rather than national security. But, it also illustrates that unmarried women do not believe that the war in Iraq is the major front in the war on terrorism, as the Administration argued. Focus group research earlier in the year made clear unmarried women regard Iraq as President Bush's war. They supported more multilateral action in Iraq and continue to believe the United States must work with our allies to get our troops out of there.

Unmarried women held a multilateral worldview, which posits that America should work with other countries to address problems like terrorism. Democracy Corps data show that they believe the key to America's security rests in working with other countries (53 percent strongly agree), not in building the strongest military (only 24

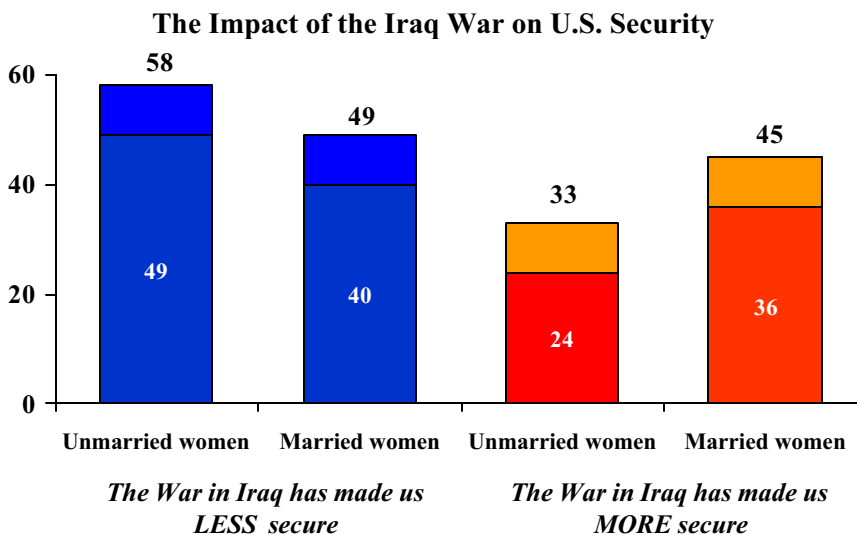


percent strongly agree). Forty-four percent of married women share this viewpoint, compared to 31 percent who strongly agree that building a strong military is the answer. This helps to explain their relatively mixed feelings on Iraq.



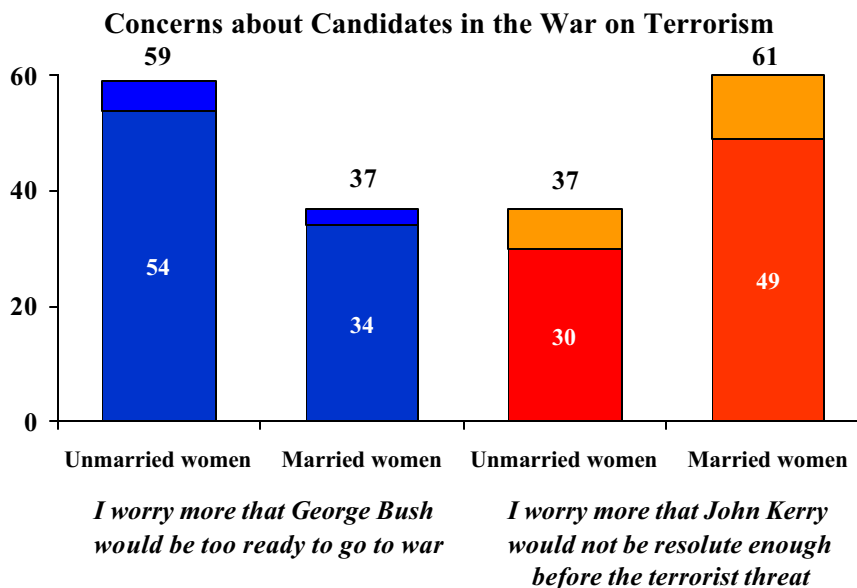
*Source: Democracy Corps, 11/2-11/3, 2004*

Unmarried women also differed sharply from married women in terms of whether the Bush Administration's unilateral action in Iraq has made us safer. Half of all unmarried women strongly felt the war in Iraq has made us less secure, not more secure (49 percent versus 24 percent). This sets them apart from married women who had more mixed views on Iraq: 40 percent strongly agree the war made us less versus 36 percent who strongly agree the war made us more secure.



Source: Democracy Corps, 11/2-11/3, 2004

Unmarried women were far more concerned that President Bush (54 percent strongly agree) is too willing to lead the country to war than that Kerry lacked resolve (30 percent strongly agree). While married women, on the other hand, were mixed about the consequences of war in Iraq on their security, they worried more about Kerry's lack of resolution under terrorist threat (49 percent strongly agree).



Source: Democracy Corps, 11/2-11/3, 2004



### *Choice*

Progressivism takes many forms — belief in an active role for government in economic policies, a multilateral worldview, and, attitudes toward social policies. As focus groups have shown, unmarried women cherish their rights as women, especially their right to choose. Unmarried women did not take kindly to the culture wars of 2004.

Like the economy and foreign policy, choice is another issue where unmarried women seek a more progressive agenda. Exit polls show that unmarried women were more likely than married women to support legalized abortion (60 percent versus 51 percent). Also, as previously noted, it was a hot button issue more likely to affect the vote of unmarried than of married women; 20 percent of all unmarried women cited women's rights as a reason not to vote for President Bush, versus only 12 percent of all married women.

<b>VIEW OF ABORTION</b> <i>(Percent Responding)</i>				
	TOTAL	Unmarried Women	Married women	White Unmarried Women
Legal in all cases	21	26	20	25
Legal in most cases	34	34	31	37
Illegal in most cases	26	21	29	21
Illegal in all cases	16	15	16	13

*Source: National Election Pool's Exit Polls, conducted by Edison/Mitofsky, 11/2/04*

### *Gay Marriage*

The differences on choice were relatively modest compared to the gap that opened between unmarried and married women on the issue of gay marriage. Exit polls demonstrated that unmarried women are far more likely to support legalizing gay marriage (38 percent) than are married women (22 percent). Married women were more likely than unmarried to adopt the civic union stance, but even so, 67 percent of unmarried women support either gay marriage or civil unions versus 59 percent of married women.



<b>VIEW OF GAY AND LESBIAN COUPLES</b>				
<i>(Percent Responding)</i>				
	TOTAL	Unmarried Women	Married women	White Unmarried Women
Should be allowed to legally marry	25	38	22	40
Should be allowed civil unions, but not marriage	35	29	37	31
Their should be no legal recognition	37	30	38	25

*Source: National Election Pool's Exit Polls, conducted by Edison/Mitofsky, 11/2/04*

## Conclusion

Wrought from seismic societal transitions that began in the 1960s, unmarried women are a growing demographic, one that is here to stay, one that is growing [PWF10], and one that must be taken seriously as a voting bloc. This year, WVWV worked for the first time to target unmarried women and bring them to the electoral table. Unmarried women turned out in record numbers despite a debate that largely overlooked the issues that matter most to them. These women were included in the conversation and began to understand the importance and the power of their vote. In so doing, they demonstrated their commitment to change and established themselves as a key constituency of a progressive base. It is critical that our political system continue to work to ensure that in future years their participation as voters increases so that their proportion of the electorate equals their proportion of the population. We must continue to educate and inform unmarried women on the importance of their vote and bring the process of voting to them. The first step to increasing the size of this group in the electorate is addressing their economic and social agenda.



Appendix A:

<b>LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF VOTING FOR KERRY</b>		
<b>Variable</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Odds Ratio</b>
<b>Women</b>	<b>0.105</b>	<b>1.110</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>1.933**</b>	<b>6.910</b>
<b>Gun ownership</b>	<b>-0.481*</b>	<b>0.618</b>
<b>Unmarried</b>	<b>0.444*</b>	<b>1.559</b>
<b>Union household</b>	<b>0.400*</b>	<b>1.491</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>-0.201</b>	<b>0.818</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>0.693*</b>	<b>1.999</b>
<b>Party ID</b>	<b>6.048**</b>	<b>423.213</b>
<b>Church attendance</b>	<b>-1.163**</b>	<b>0.312</b>
<b>Low income</b>	<b>-0.938*</b>	<b>0.391</b>
<b>Age 18-29</b>	<b>-0.001</b>	<b>0.999</b>
<b>Age 30-39</b>	<b>-0.648*</b>	<b>0.523</b>
<b>Age 40-49</b>	<b>-0.286</b>	<b>0.751</b>
<b>Age 65+</b>	<b>0.029</b>	<b>1.029</b>
<b><i>Constant</i></b>	<b>-2.588**</b>	<b>0.075</b>

Source: Democracy Corps, 11/2-11/3, 2004  
\* p<0.05  
\*\*p<0.001