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NORC
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The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

WOMEN IN POLITICS, THE WORKPLACE, AND FAMILY LIFE

A collaborative analysis by The AP-NORC Center and the GSS staff using the 2018 General Social Survey shows attitudes trending toward greater gender equality in politics, the workforce, and at home. In politics, 84 percent of Americans believe women are just as suited emotionally for politics as men—an all-time high. While members of both parties increasingly share this view, more Republicans (17 percent) than Democrats (9 percent) say that women aren't as well-suited as men for politics.

Americans are also largely supportive of working women, though some still express reservations. The majority of Americans—75 percent—disagree with the belief that it is best for men to work and women to stay in the home, another all-time high. Similarly, 74 percent agree that being a working mother doesn't negatively impact her relationship with her child. But differences still emerge by education: Americans without a college degree express more skepticism on these measures.

In the workforce, however, Americans' opinions about gender equality haven't changed much. Sixty-four percent of Americans say women should not receive any preferential hiring or promotion to make up for past discrimination, a number that hasn't moved much over the last two decades. Meanwhile 9 percent of women report facing gender discrimination in the workplace, with college-educated women particularly likely to say so.

Americans still remain sharply divided on abortion, with about equal shares supporting and opposing access to legal abortion because of concerns about having too many children, having enough money to support the child, or for any reason at all. Since the 1990s, the public has become increasingly divided along partisan lines on this issue.



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Three Things To Know

From the 2018 General Social Survey
Among American adults:

- 1) Eighty-four percent disagree that men are better suited for politics than women—an all-time high.
- 2) Women with college degrees are more likely than women without college degrees to report facing gender discrimination in the workplace (13 percent vs. 6 percent).
- 3) Attitudes on abortion rights have become more polarized along partisan lines: an all-time high of 64 percent of Democrats support access to legal abortion for any reason compared to only 35 percent of Republicans.

Today more Democrats continue to favor abortion rights while Republican support remains at low levels.

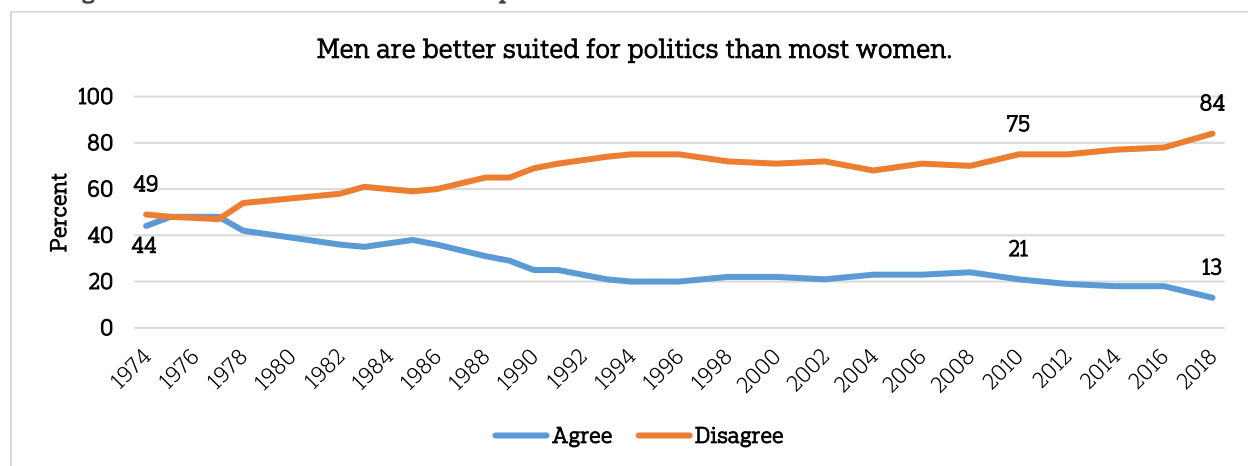
Additional key findings include:

- Republicans are less likely than Democrats to say women are just as suited for politics as men (80 percent vs. 89 percent), though a greater share of both parties says so compared to 2014.
- Attitudes toward affirmative action for women differ by political party. Republicans are more likely to oppose such practices than Democrats (75 percent vs. 54 percent). The number of Democrats who oppose affirmative action has declined—down from 65 percent since 2016.
- Nine percent of women say they have faced gender discrimination in the workplace, and the rate is higher among women with a college degree (13 percent) compared to those without a college degree (6 percent).
- College graduates are more likely than non-college graduates to reject the notion that it’s better for women to stay home while men work (16 percent vs. 30 percent). While only 17 percent of college graduates believe that working mothers can’t have as good a relationship with their kids as non-working mothers, 31 percent of non-college graduates believe this to be true. Likewise, most college graduates (79 percent) believe that preschool children will not suffer if their mother works compared to 68 percent of non-college graduates.
- Since 2016, American attitudes about access to legal abortions have grown more favorable. More Americans say women should have access for any reason (up from 44 percent to 49 percent), because she is married and does not want any more children (up from 44 percent to 49 percent), or because she can’t afford to have more children (up from 43 percent to 48 percent).

LARGE MAJORITIES SEE MEN AND WOMEN AS EQUAL IN POLITICS.

Overall, the percentage of Americans who believe that men are better suited emotionally for politics than women has been declining, especially since 2010. In 2018, the percent of Americans who say men are better suited for politics than women reached an all-time low at 13 percent. Currently 84 percent disagree with the sentiment, a nine percentage point increase since 2010. Men and women hold similar views on how suited women are for politics.

Few agree that men are better suited for politics.



Question: Tell me if you agree or disagree with this statement: Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women.

Source: GSS, the latest survey conducted April 12–November 10, 2018.

Republicans are less likely than Democrats to think women are just as suited for politics as men (80 percent vs. 89 percent), though a greater share of both parties says so compared to 2014.

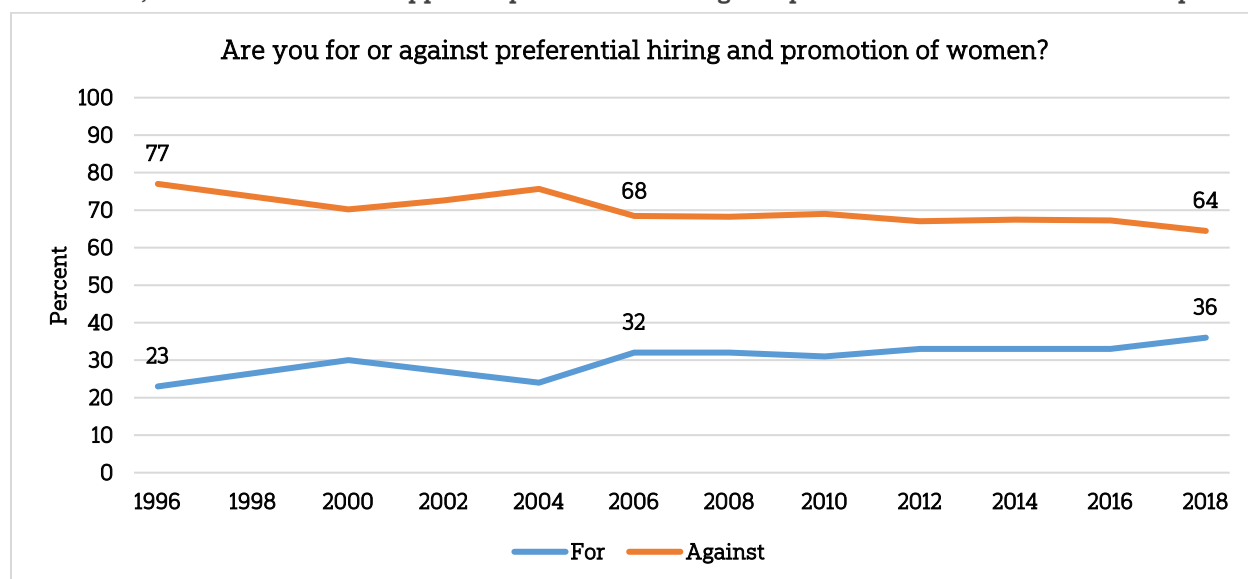
Nearly everyone says they would vote for a women president if she were qualified for the job. In 2010, the last time the question was asked, 95 percent reported they would vote for a female candidate if she was nominated by their party. This was true across Republicans and Democrats.

A MAJORITY ARE AGAINST PREFERENTIAL HIRING AND PROMOTION OF WOMEN TO MAKE UP FOR PAST GENDER DISCRIMINATION.

Only a third of Americans support preferential hiring and promotion of women to compensate for past discrimination. Since 2006, the trend has remained stable with about 1 in 3 Americans in favor of affirmative action for women. In 2018, 36 percent support preferential hiring, while 64 percent oppose. About a third of both men and women are in favor of affirmative action for women.

Americans are more likely to support preferential hiring for women than for blacks, however. Just 23 percent support affirmative action for blacks to make up for past discrimination.

Since 2006, about a third have supported preferential hiring and promotion of women in the workplace.

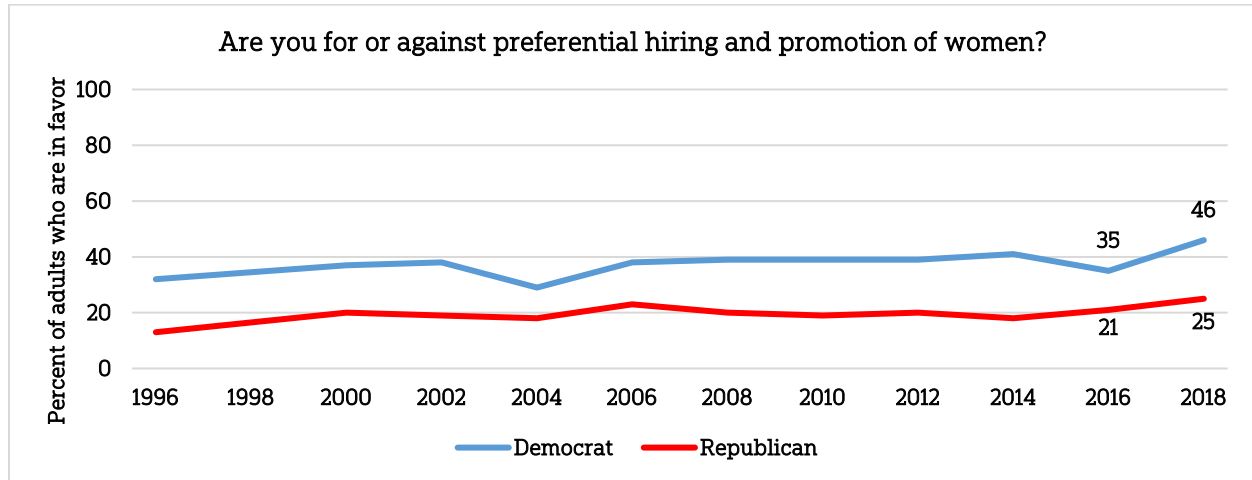


Question: Some people say that because of past discrimination, women should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of women is wrong because it discriminates against men. What about your opinion - are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of women?

Source: GSS, the latest survey conducted April 12-November 10, 2018.

Attitudes toward affirmative action for women differ by political party. Democrats are more likely to support such practices than Republicans. The proportion of Democrats who support it increased 11 percentage points between 2016 and 2018.

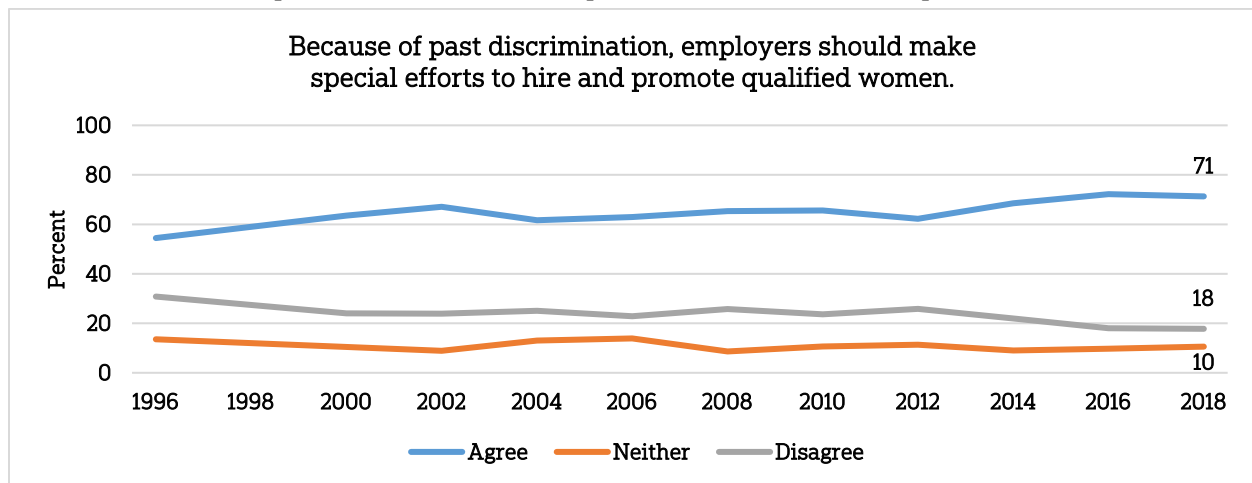
Democrats are more likely to support affirmative action for women in the workplace, with the share who support it increasing since 2016.



Question: Some people say that because of past discrimination, women should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of women is wrong because it discriminates against men. What about your opinion - are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of women?
 Percentages for Democrats and Republicans include independents who say they lean toward either party.
 Source: GSS, the latest survey conducted April 12-November 10, 2018.

The GSS asks another version of the affirmative action question that receives greater support. In 2018, 71 percent believe employers should make “special efforts” to hire and promote qualified women. Support has consistently been higher for these “special efforts” compared to affirmative action, but support in 2018 is near an all-time high. Again, men and women again hold similar views.

More are in favor of “special efforts” to hire and promote women in the workplace.



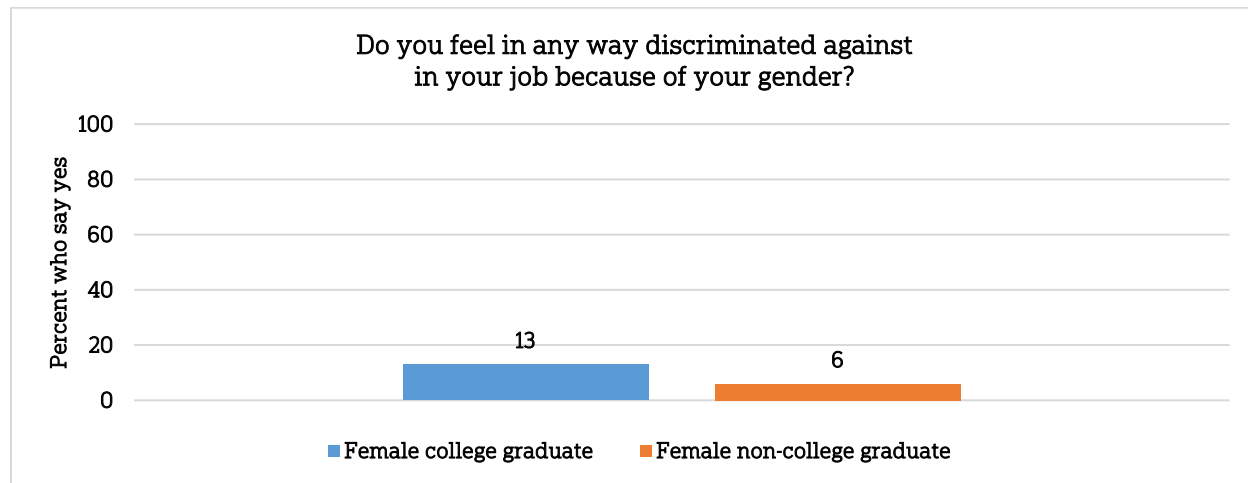
Question: Because of past discrimination, employers should make special efforts to hire and promote qualified women.
 Source: GSS, the latest survey conducted April 12-November 10, 2018.

WOMEN WITH HIGHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION ARE MORE LIKELY TO FEEL DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN THEIR JOBS.

Overall, levels of gender discrimination in the workplace have remained constant since the last time they were measured. As before, women continue to report facing more discrimination than men. In 2018, 9 percent of women report feeling discriminated against in their job compared to just 3 percent of

men. Women who graduated college are more likely to report discrimination due to their gender than those with lower educational attainment.

College-educated women are more likely to report gender discrimination in the workplace.



Question: Do you feel in any way discriminated against on your job because of your gender?
 Source: 2018 GSS conducted April 12-November 10, 2018.

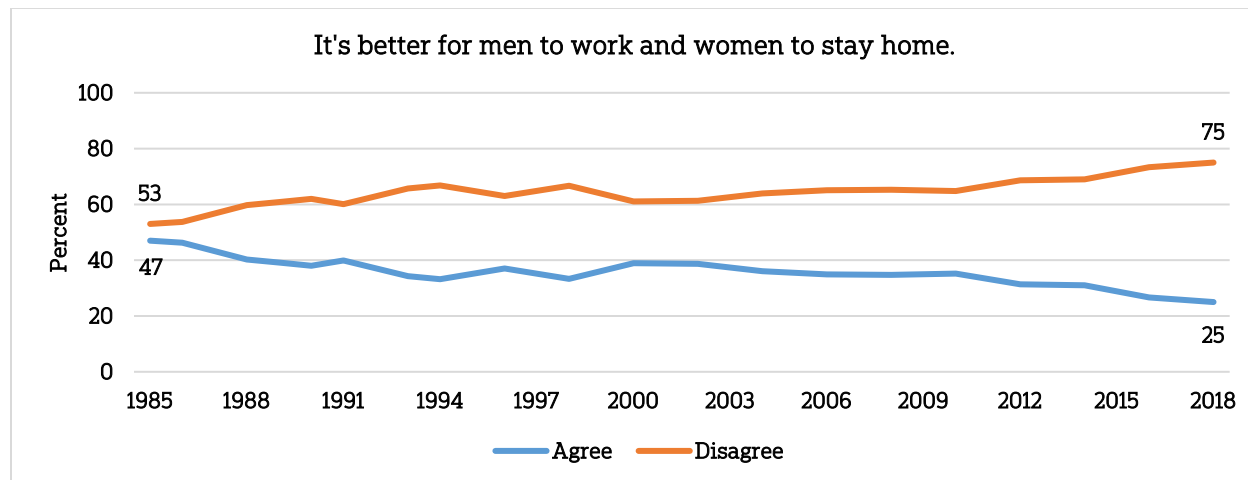
The level of reported sexual harassment in the workplace has remained stable since 2002. As of 2018, 3 percent of Americans say they were sexually harassed on their jobs.

ATTITUDES ON WORKING AND MOTHERHOOD HAVE SHIFTED IN THE LAST DECADE.

Overall, Americans are supportive of working women, and their support has increased in recent years.

When it comes to the working lives of married couples, 25 percent of Americans believe that it is better for men to work and women to stay home—an all-time low. By comparison, when the question was first asked in 1985, 47 percent said it was better for men to work and women to stay home.

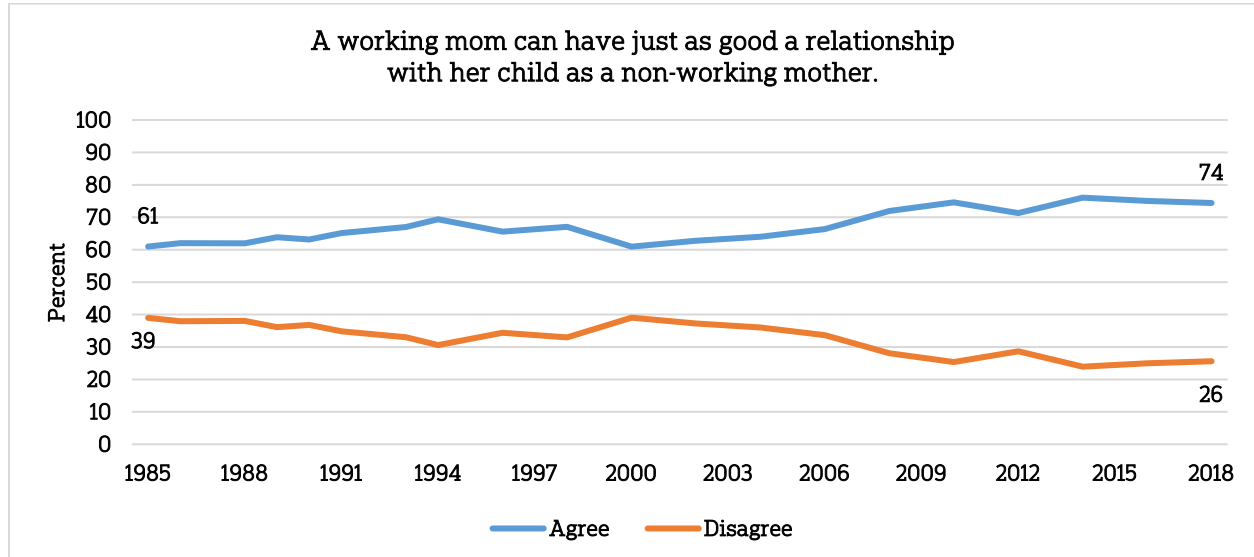
Fewer Americans than ever say men should work while women stay home.



Question: Now I'm going to read several more statements. As I read each one, please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with it. For example, here is the statement: It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.
 Source: GSS, the latest survey conducted April 12-November 10, 2018.

Few see issues with working mothers, either. In 2018, 74 percent of adults agree that a working mother can have just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who doesn't work. Only 26 percent disagree. These rates have not changed much since 2010.

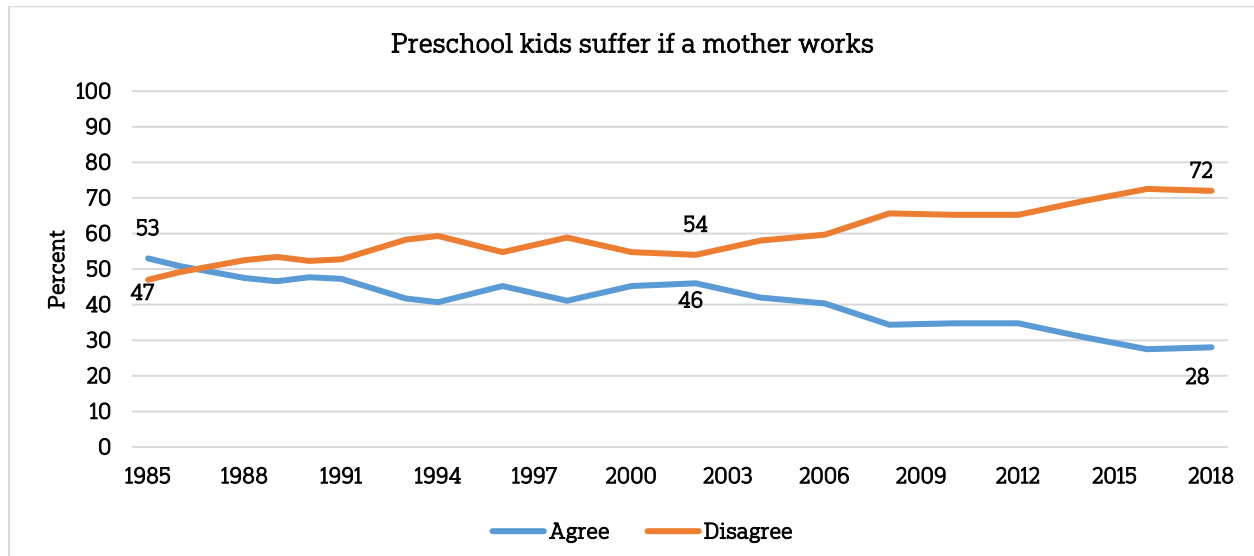
Three-quarters say a working mom can have just as good a relationship with her child as a non-working mom.



Question: Now I'm going to read several more statements. As I read each one, please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with it. For example, here is the statement: A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.
 Source: GSS, the latest survey conducted April 12-November 10, 2018.

In addition, few agree that preschool children suffer if their mother works, with that proportion decreasing since 2002. In 2018, 28 percent agree that preschool children suffer if their mother has a job compared to 72 percent who disagree.

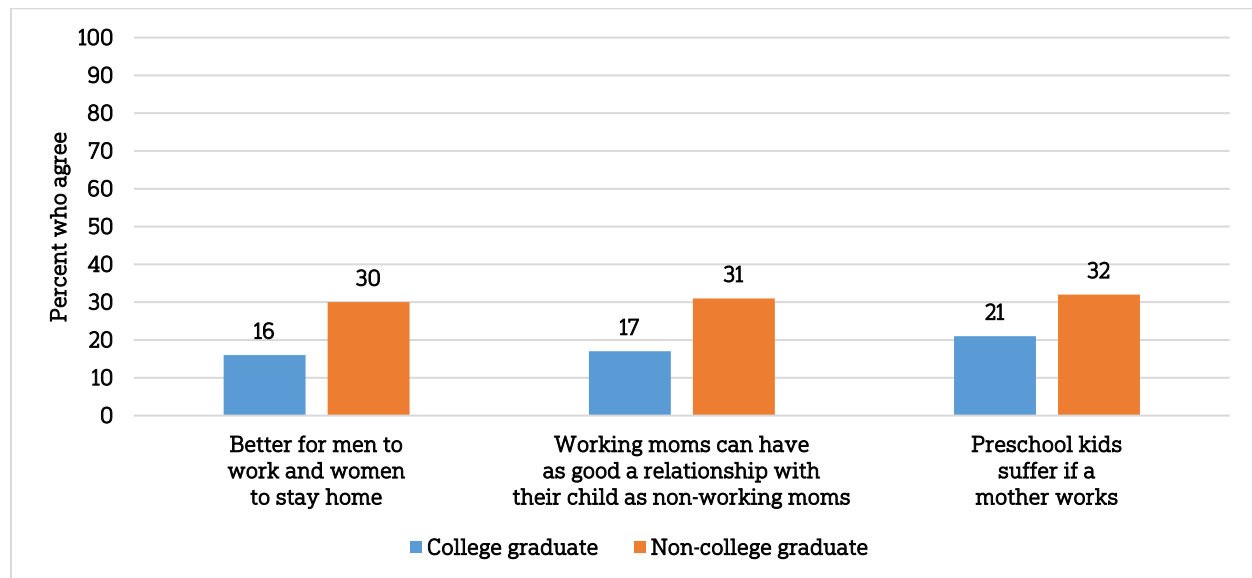
Most Americans disagree that preschool children suffer if their mother works.



Question: Now I'm going to read several more statements. As I read each one, please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with it. For example, here is the statement: A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.
 Source: GSS, the latest survey conducted April 12-November 10, 2018.

College graduates are more supportive of mothers balancing their work and family life. They are less likely than non-college graduates to say that women should stay home while men work (16 percent vs. 30 percent), that working mothers can't have as good a relationship with their kids as non-working mothers (17 percent vs. 31 percent), or that preschool kids suffer if their mother works (21 percent vs. 32 percent).

Those without a college degree express more concerns about working women and moms compared to those with a college degree.



Questions: Now I'm going to read several more statements. As I read each one, please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with it. For example, here is the statement:

It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.

A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work. A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.

Source: 2018 GSS conducted April 12-November 10, 2018.

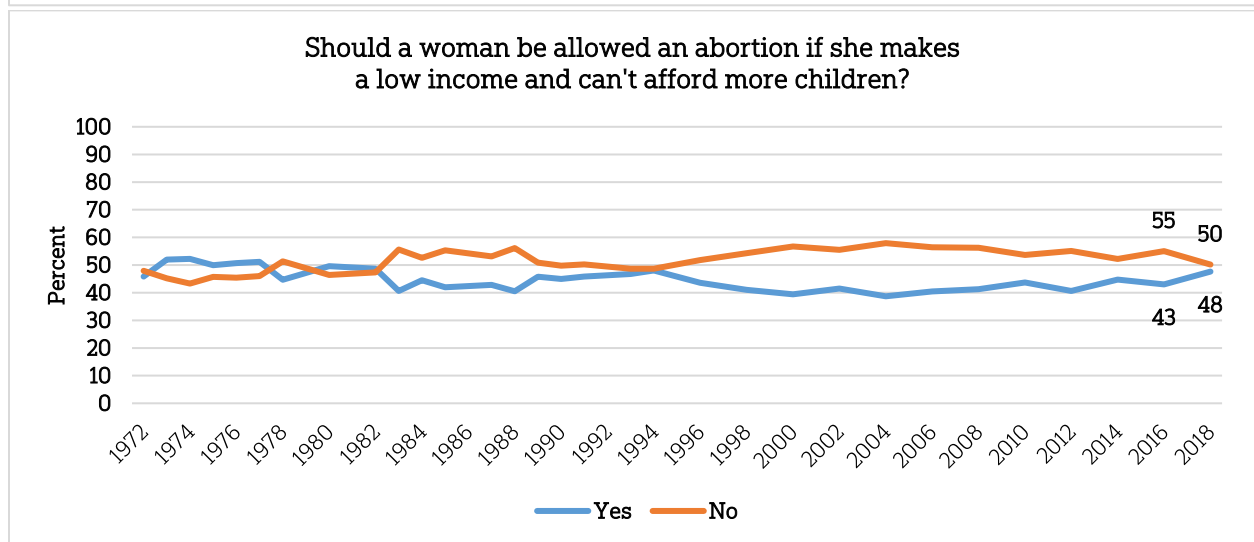
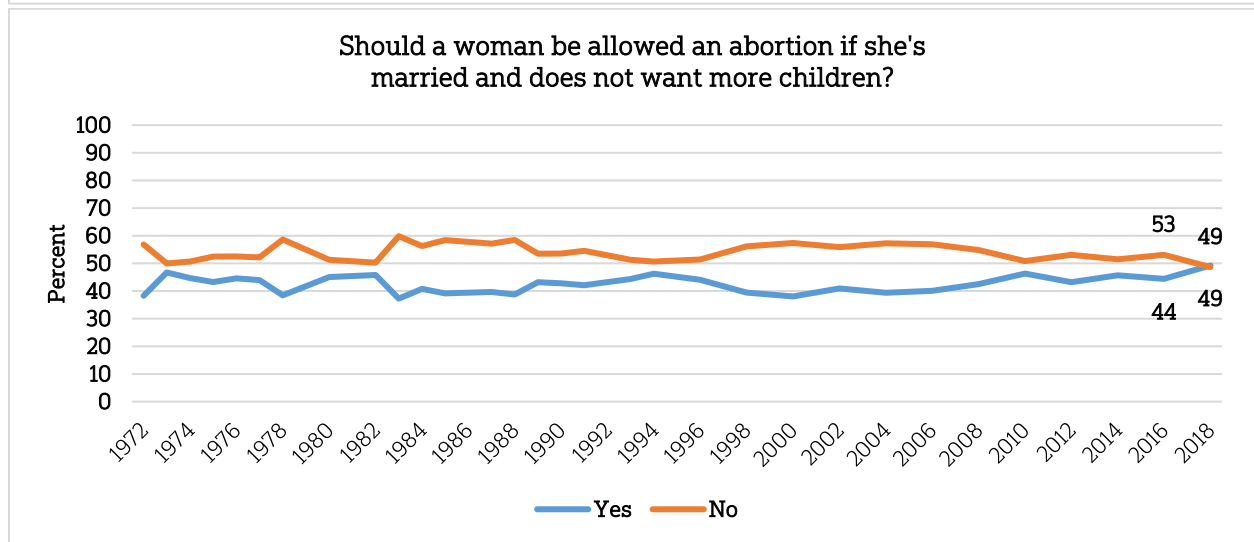
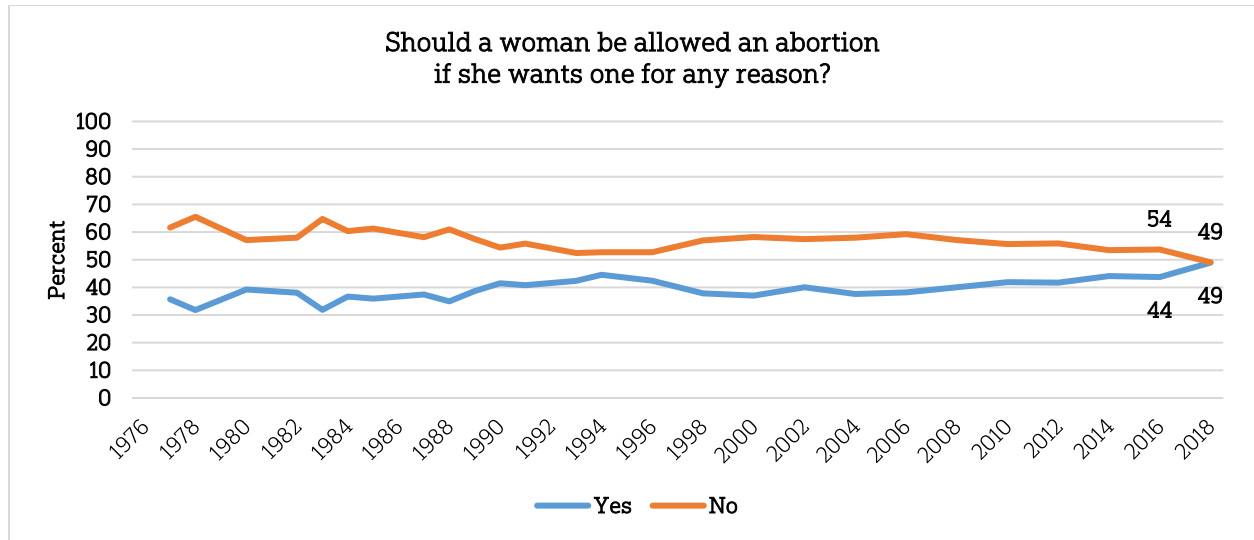
Men are more skeptical of women working. Twenty-eight percent of men agree that it is better for men to work and women to stay home compared to just 22 percent of women. However, this gender difference disappears when comparing Democratic men and women, but it widens when comparing Republican men (37 percent) to Republican women (22 percent).

Men are also more likely than women to say preschool kids suffer if the mother works (34 percent vs. 22 percent). Again, there is no gender difference among Democrats but there is among Republicans. Thirty-nine percent of Republican men but just 18 percent of Republican women say preschool kids suffer if the mother works.

MORE AMERICANS SUPPORT ABORTION IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS, BUT A SHARP DIVIDE REMAINS IN THE COUNTRY.

While Americans remain sharply divided on the issue of abortion, since 2016, more Americans say abortion should be legal under several circumstances. When posed with three scenarios, nearly the same amount of Americans say a woman should be able to get an abortion as those that say she should not. Those scenarios were: if a woman doesn't want more children (49 percent say yes vs. 49 percent say no), if a woman can't afford more children (48 percent vs. 50 percent), or for any other reason a woman might have (49 percent vs. 49 percent).

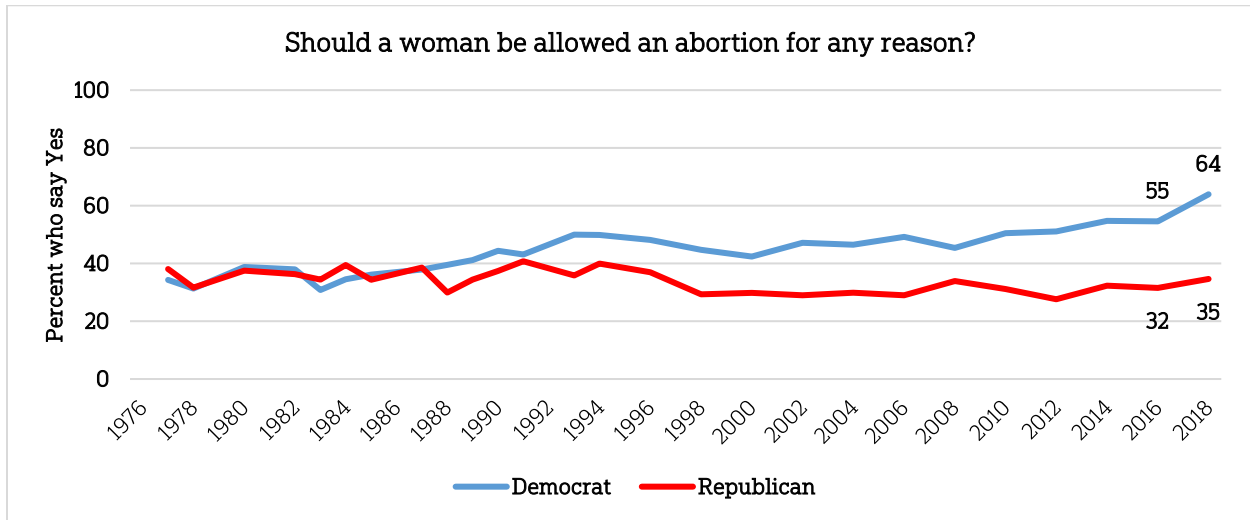
Compared to 2016, more Americans are supportive of abortion rights under different circumstances.



Questions: Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if... [The woman wants it for any reason/she is married and does not want any more children/the family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children?]
 Source: GSS, the latest survey conducted April 12-November 10, 2018.

In the 1990s, partisan attitudes on abortion began to diverge, and in 2018, the difference in opinion between Democrats and Republicans is wider than ever. Democrats are becoming more supportive of legal abortion than ever—registering all-time highs in support—while Republican support has remained the same and comparatively low. In 2018, 64 percent of Democrats agree that women should have access a legal for any reason compared to 35 percent in 2016.

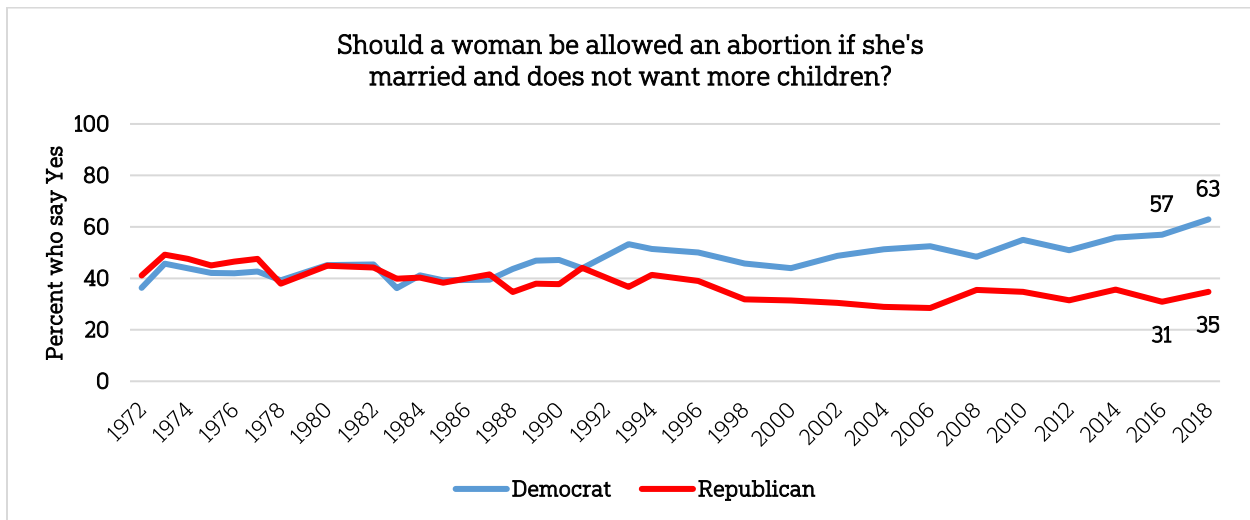
Support for a woman’s legal access to abortion for any reason has reached an all-time high among Democrats.



Questions: Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if... the woman wants it for any reason?
 Percentages for Democrats and Republicans include independents who say they lean toward either party.
 Source: GSS, the latest survey conducted April 12–November 10, 2018.

The trend in partisan differences emerges in support for abortion access when a woman does not want any more children. Democrats’ support increased from 57 percent in 2016 to 63 percent in 2018, while Republicans did not register a meaningful change.

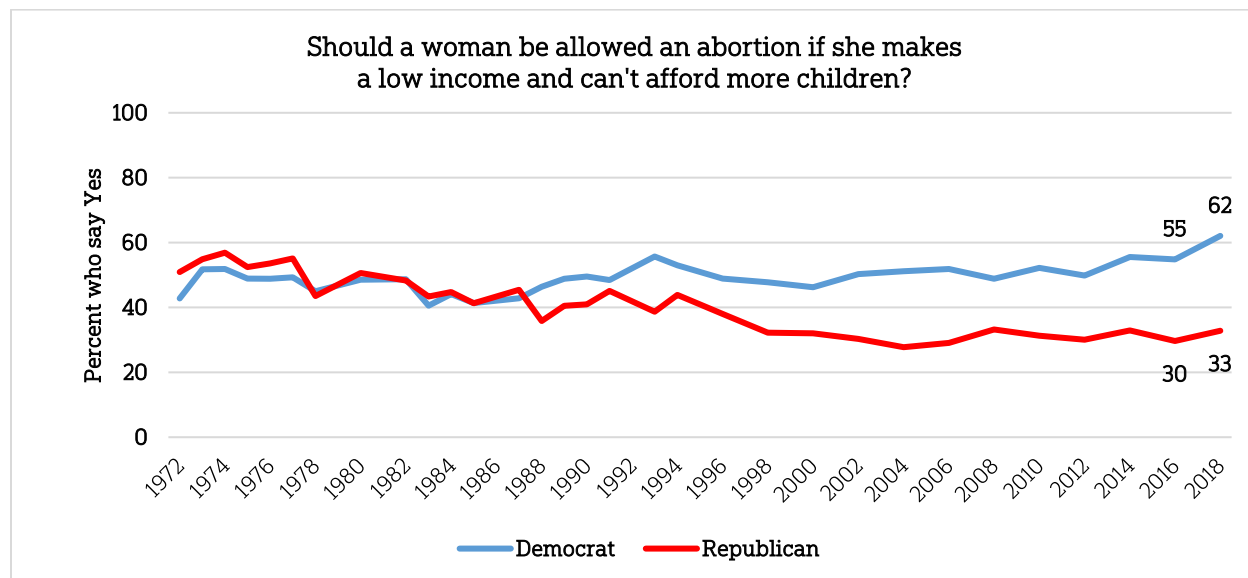
Two-thirds of Democrats but just one-third of Republicans say a married women who doesn’t want more children should be able to obtain a legal abortion.



Questions: Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if... She is married and does not want any more children?
 Percentages for Democrats and Republicans include independents who say they lean toward either party.
 Source: GSS, the latest survey conducted April 12–November 10, 2018.

Republicans and Democrats opinions also widened when asked if they would support legal abortions for women who cannot afford more children. Democrats' support reached 62 percent in 2018, while only a third of Republicans agreed.

Democrats are also more likely than Republicans to support abortion rights for a woman who can't afford more children.



Questions: Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if... The family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children?

Percentages for Democrats and Republicans include independents who say they lean toward either party.

Source: GSS, the latest survey conducted April 12-November 10, 2018.

While there is no difference in 2018 between men and women in support for legal abortion for any reason (both 49 percent in favor), men are more supportive of legal abortion if the woman doesn't want more children (54 percent vs. 45 percent) or is poor and can't afford more children (51 percent vs. 45 percent). These gender differences are concentrated within the Republican Party. While there are no differences between Democratic men and Democratic women, Republican men are more supportive than Republican women of making abortions available if the woman doesn't want more children (43 percent vs. 27 percent) or can't afford more children (38 percent vs. 28 percent).

METHODOLOGY

GSS DESCRIPTION:

The GSS is administered by NORC at the University of Chicago, primarily using in-person interviewing. The GSS started in 1972 and completed its 32nd round in 2018. For the last 40 years, the GSS has been monitoring societal change and the growing complexity of American society. The GSS is the largest project funded by the Sociology Program of the National Science Foundation. The typical sample size was 1,500 prior to 1994, but increased to 2,700-3,000 until 2008 and decreased to 2,000-2,500 for the most recent surveys. Resulting margins of error are between +/- 3.1 for the smaller sample sizes and +/- 2.2 percentage points for the larger sample sizes at the 95 percent confidence level. The GSS 1972-2018 Cumulative File was utilized to produce the statistics presented.

LINK:

<http://gss.norc.org/>