

The Marriage Gap Among Young Women

To: Interested Parties

From: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research
Women's Voices. Women Vote¹

Young people have become a compelling narrative for this election. They show more energy and more commitment to the voting on election day than in any election in recent history. Their overwhelming support for Barack Obama leaves little doubt that they will play a significant role in the outcome in two weeks. But a closer inspection of their vote reveals important differences within these youngest voters, differences driven by race (of course), but also by marital status.

In the most recent installment of Democracy Corps and Greenberg Quinlan Rosner's, Youth For The Win (YFTW) series, young people—18-29 years of age—support Senator Obama over Senator McCain by 35 points (63-28) and young women support Obama over McCain by an even larger 38 point margin (65-27).²

Young married women support Obama over McCain by just 12 points (53-41) while white young married women divide evenly (46 – 47 percent). Conversely, Obama rolls up a 48-point margin among all young unmarried women and a 26-point margin among white unmarried women.

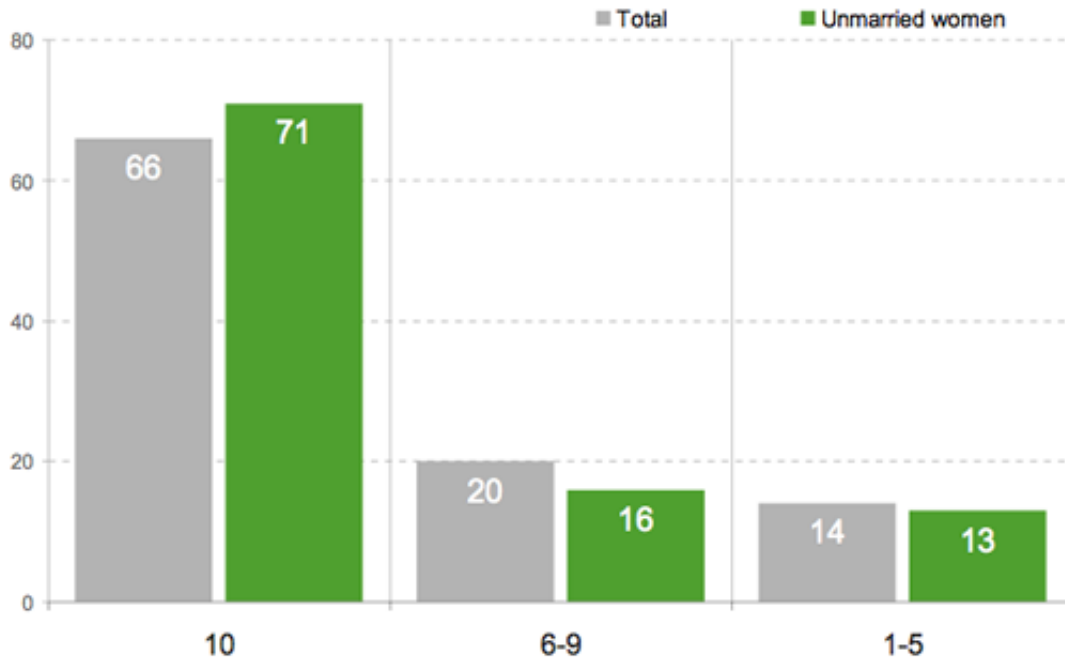
■ **Figure 1: The Marriage Gap – Presidential**

	Married		Unmarried		Marriage Gap
	Obama-McCain	Net Difference	Obama-McCain	Net Difference	
Young Women	53-41	+12	69-21	+48	36
Young White Women	46-47	-1	57-31	+26	27

The potential for Obama among young unmarried women is bolstered by their enthusiasm and energy. Historically, unmarried women do not vote in sufficient numbers; 20 million unmarried women sat out the 2004 election, a number which could have reversed the outcome of that election. However, in tracking the commitment of young people's intention to vote, we not only find raising enthusiasm among young people overall, but disproportionate enthusiasm among unmarried women.

■ Figure 2: Young Unmarried Women Show Greater Likelihood to Vote

On a scale of one to ten, with one meaning NOT AT ALL LIKELY and ten meaning VERY LIKELY, please tell me how likely you are to vote in the November Presidential election?



A number of national polls coming out this week show a tightening race. If this trend continues the election could evolve into a turnout war. That will mean progressives trying to pull-out every stop energizing not just “young people,” but those young people who deliver large margins, like unmarried women.

¹ WVWV is a nonpartisan organization that does not endorse candidates.

² A survey of 900 young people ages 18-29 conducted between September 29th and October 13th, 2008. To reach this population a multi-modal design was used, including 90 cell phone interviews, 360 web interviews, and 450 interviews using a random digit dial sample conducted over the telephone.