

WOMEN VOTERS REPORT

The past several years have demonstrated the importance of women voters in both presidential and midterm elections. Women not only make up more than half the population, but they also tend to register and vote at higher rates than men.¹ Though it can be difficult to categorize such a large and diverse group as a single voting bloc, there are a few trends that persist for women as a demographic. These give insights into voting patterns and show the integral role women play in every election.

In this report, we'll look at:

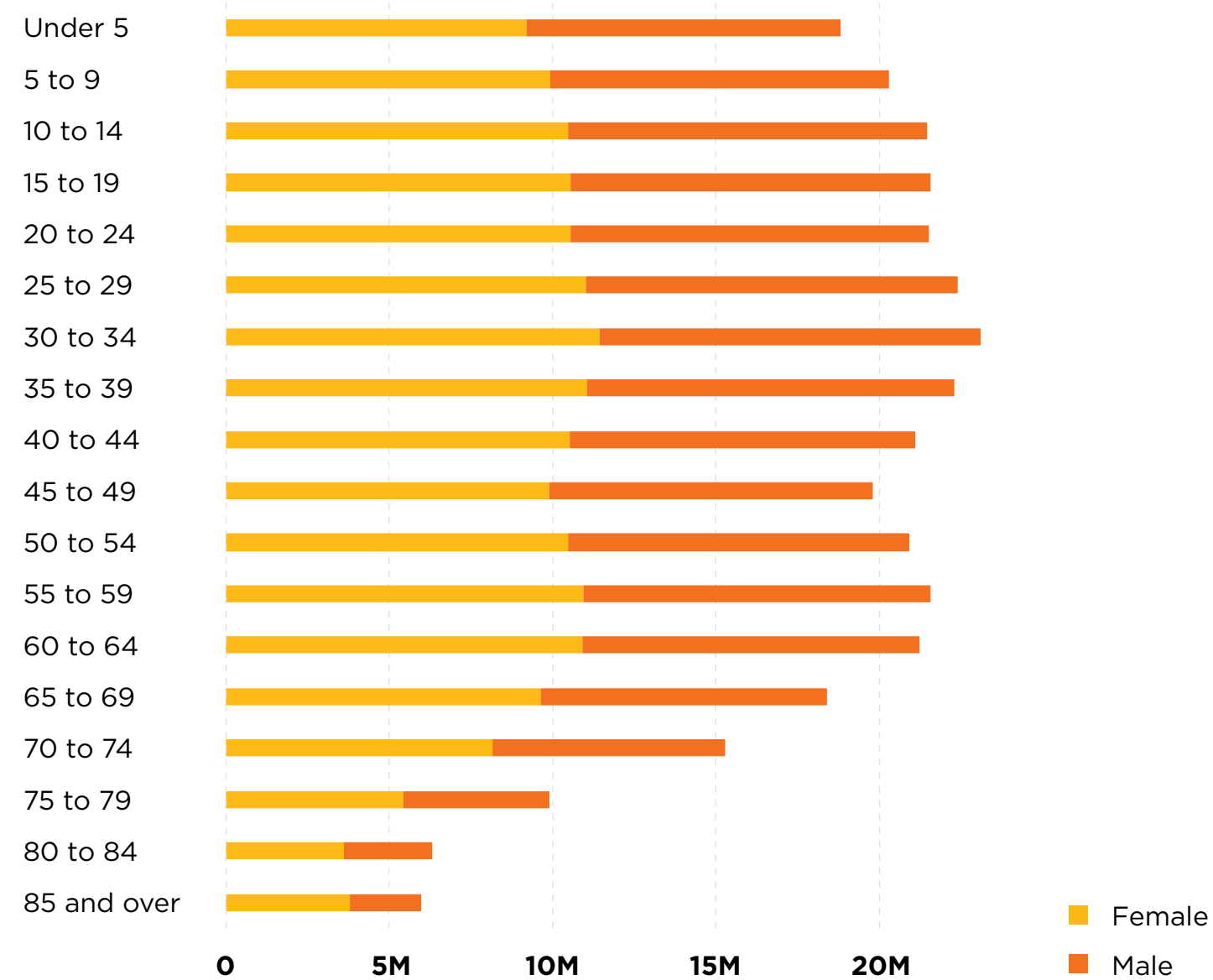
- Women as a population
- Women's voting trends
- The partisan gender gap
- Issues most important to women
- How best to reach women voters



Population

Women and girls make up more than half the U.S. population, at about 50.4%.² While sex ratio at birth in the United States is generally even (slightly favoring male births), women tend to live longer than men.³ In fact, women over 85 outnumber men over 85 nearly two to one.⁴

Population of the United States by Sex and Age⁵



Of the more than 108 million women of voting age in the United States⁶, around 89 million are registered to vote,¹ making women the largest and most influential voting bloc in the U.S.

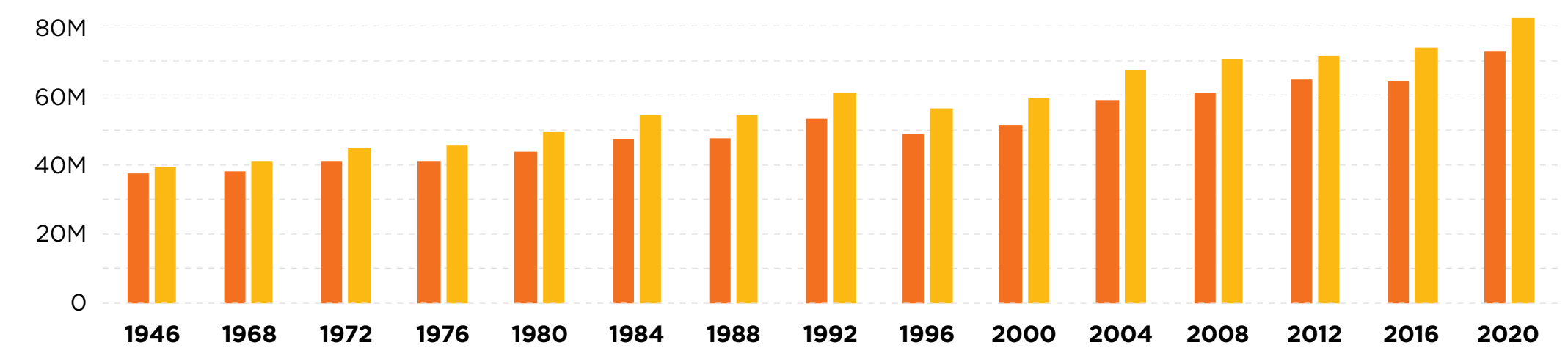




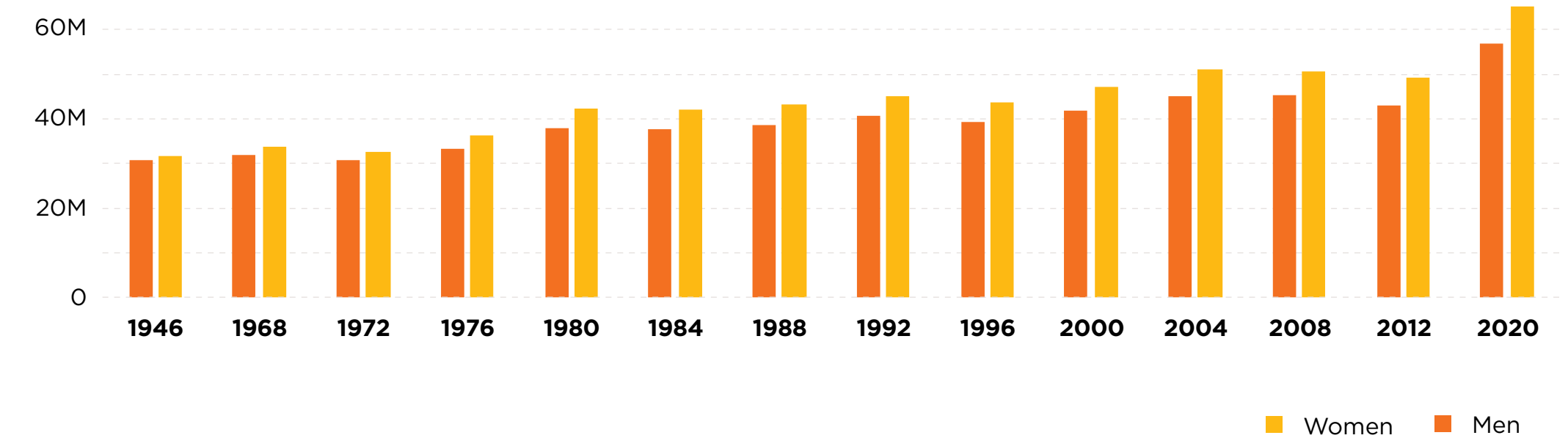
The Voting Gap

Women have voted in higher numbers than men in every presidential election since 1964, and they have voted at a higher rate in every election since 1980.¹ The gap in turnout tends to narrow slightly in non-presidential years but the advantage remains.

Number of Voters (Presidential Years)¹

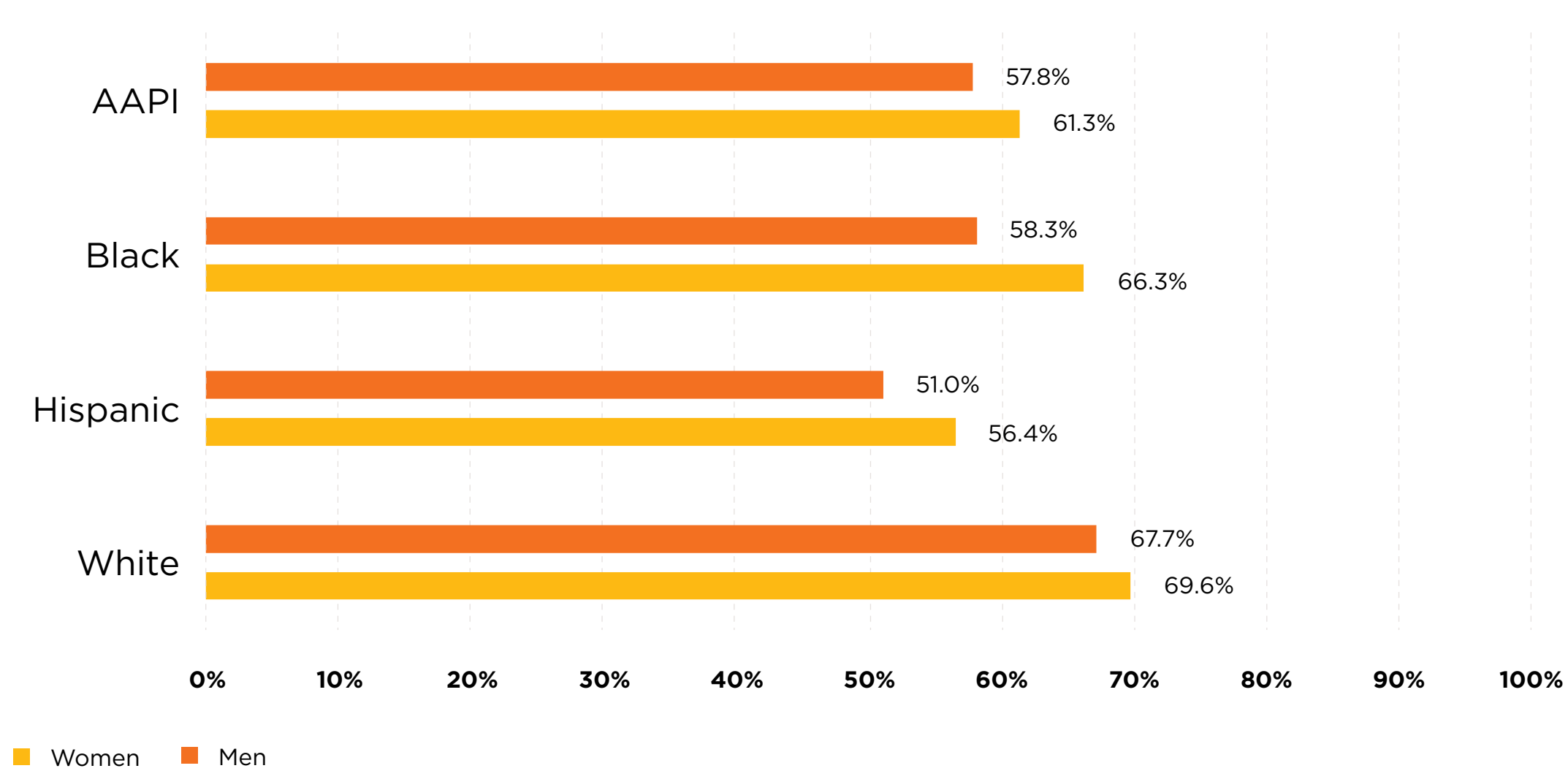


Number of Voters (Non-Presidential Years)¹



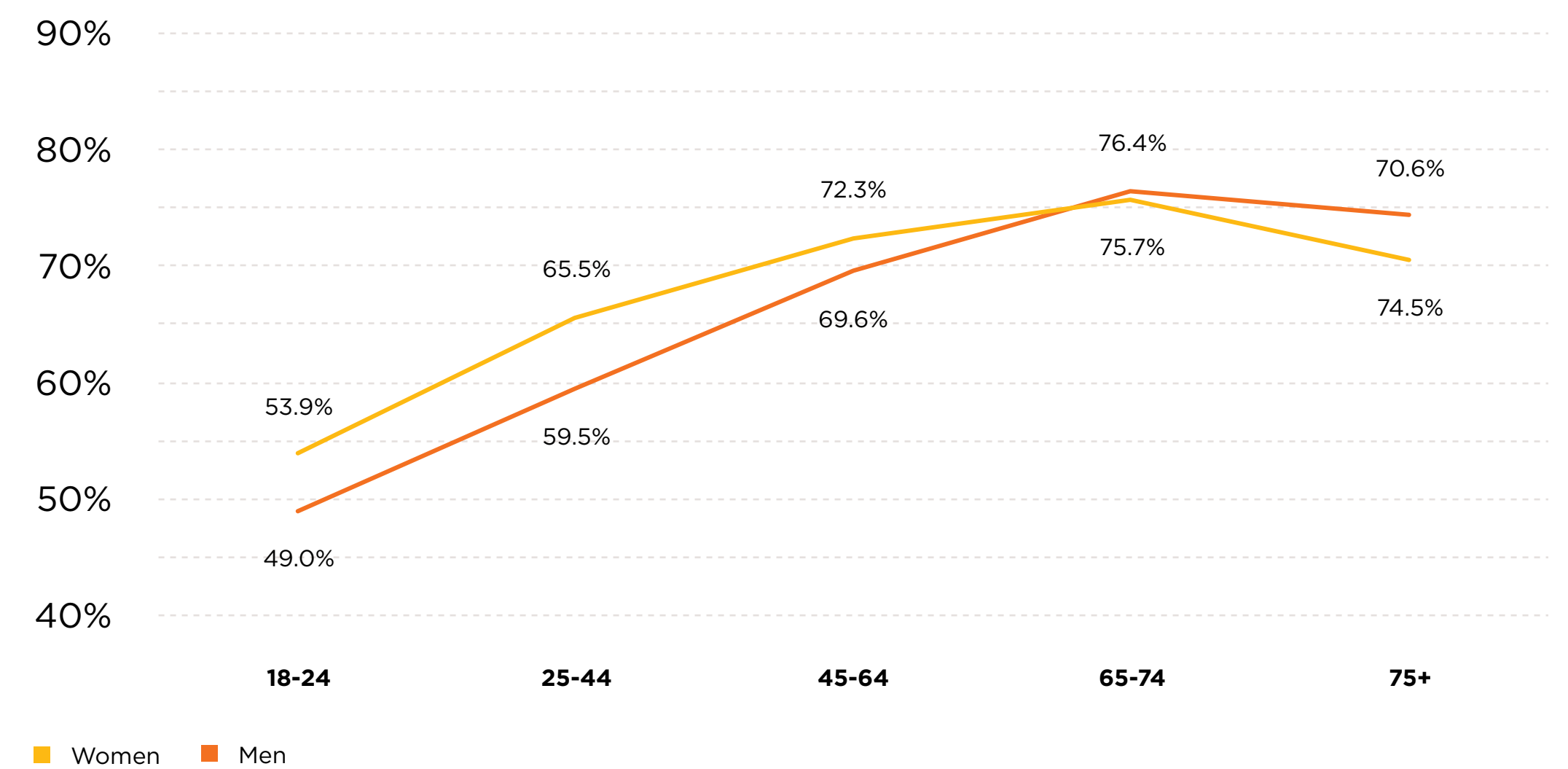
This turnout gap has grown slightly larger with each successive presidential election and in 2020, 68.8% of eligible women voters reported that they voted, compared to 65% of men.¹ This disparity is consistent across race and ethnicity, though the degree of difference varies.

2020 Proportion of Eligible Adult Population Who Reported Voting, by Race/Ethnicity¹



However, the gap narrows and then reverses as the population ages, with men over 65 voting at higher rates than women of the same age.

2020 Proportion of Eligible Adult Population Who Reported Voting, by Age¹

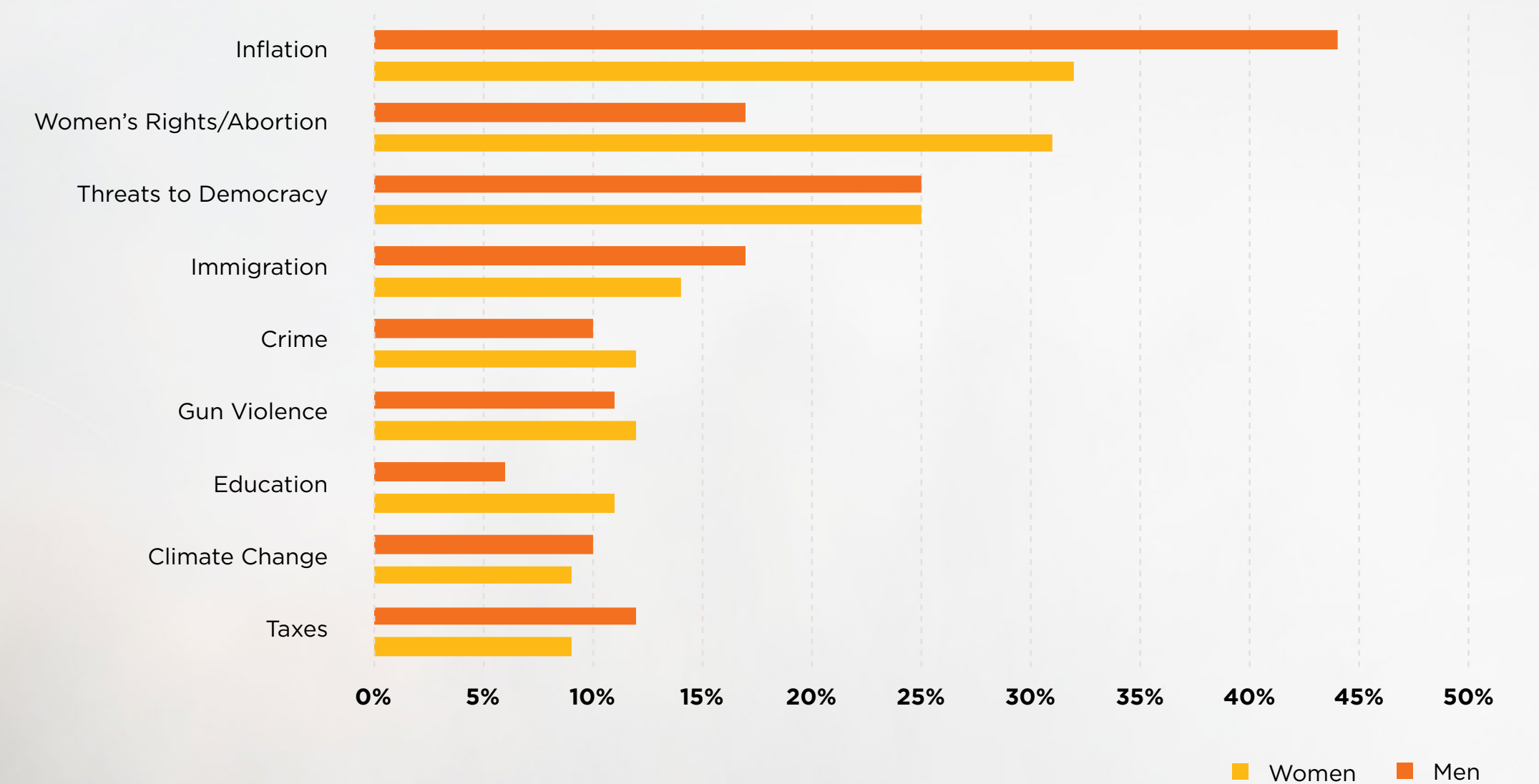




Issues Important to Women

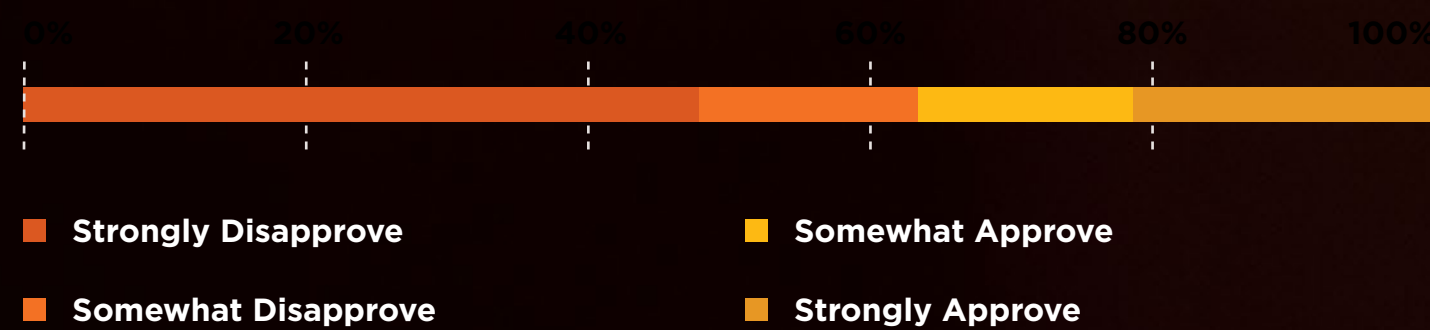
A poll taken before the 2022 midterm elections analyzed the political topics that were most important to women voters in the battleground states of Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Georgia, Florida, and Wisconsin. It found that the top issues were inflation, women's rights/abortion, and threats to democracy:⁷

Issue Priorities in Battleground States



For women, inflation and women’s rights/abortion were nearly equal in importance. Though abortion is always a high-profile topic, it was made even more prominent due to the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* earlier in 2022. 62% of American women said they disapproved of the decision to overturn *Roe*, the vast majority of that group saying they “strongly disapprove” while 36% approved (21% strongly).⁸

Women’s Opinion of Overturn of *Roe v. Wade*



This decision proved to be a major factor in several elections with many Democratic candidates making protecting abortion rights an integral part of their campaigns. Three gubernatorial candidates in particular – Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, Tony Evers of Wisconsin, and Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania – made this issue central to their election bids. All three won close races in battleground states.⁹



In Georgia, however, where support for abortion access is nearly evenly split¹⁰ (compared to a significant pro-choice lean for the country overall¹¹), the Democratic pro-choice candidate, Stacey Abrams, lost to incumbent Republican governor Brian Kemp by 7.5 percentage points.¹²

For Many Voters In Competitive Races, The SCOTUS Decision On Roe Had A Major Impact On Their Vote Choice And Turnout

Percent of voters in each state who said the the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade* had a major impact on...

	...their decision about whether to vote in this election	...deciding which candidates they support on this election
Georgia	42%	50%
Pennsylvania	38%	48%
Arizona	37%	48%
Nevada	36%	42%
Wisconsin	35%	46%

Among voters who cited abortion as their top issue in 2022, **70%** voted for the Democratic candidate.

Of Pennsylvania and Arizona Republicans who said the overturning of Roe was the single most important factor of the 2022 election, **20%** broke party lines and voted for the Democratic Senate candidate.¹³



Party Preference

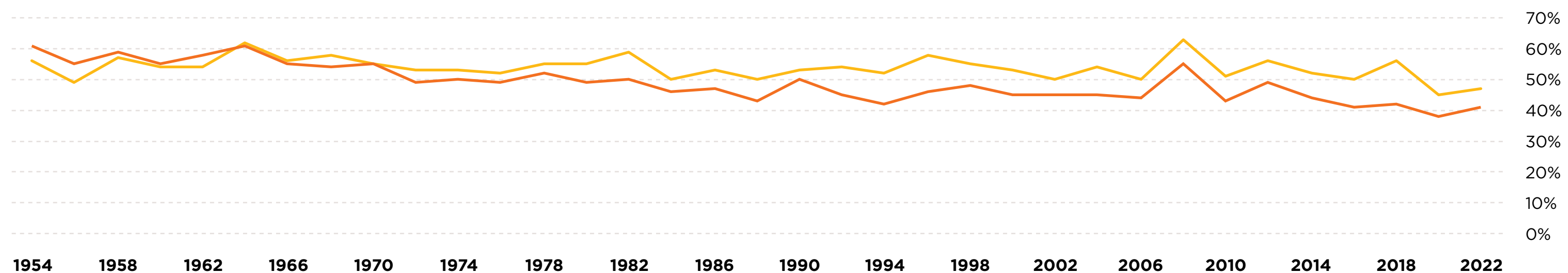
Women generally favor Democratic candidates more than men, a trend that goes back to the 1980 presidential election. Prior to that, both parties appealed to women on equality issues and enjoyed roughly the same share of the women vote.¹⁴ However, leading up to the 1980 election, Ronald Reagan pushed the Republican Party to stand against several key issues:¹⁵

- **The social safety net:** the idea that the government has a responsibility to ensure people have the necessities for life.¹⁶
- **Abortion.**
- **The Equal Rights Amendment:** a proposed constitutional amendment designed to guarantee protection against sexual discrimination¹⁷

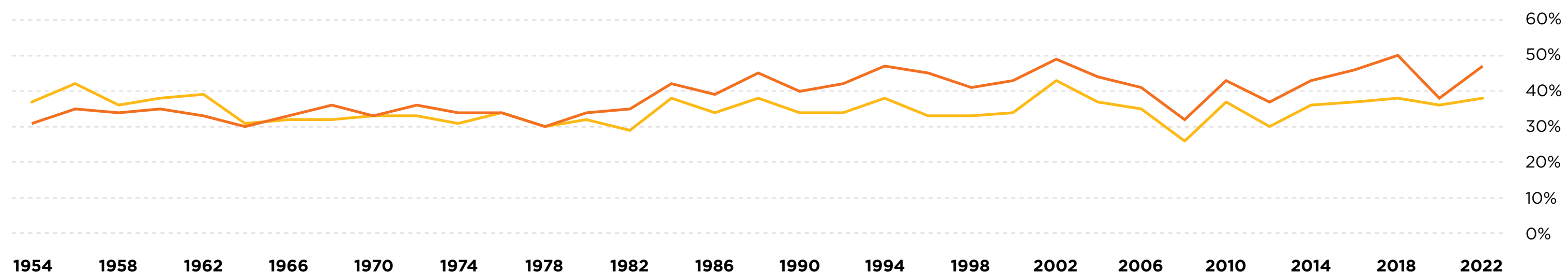
Democrats then adopted the opposite stances, which were generally favored by women, garnering them more votes.



Gender Difference In Democratic Party Identification¹⁸



Gender Difference in Republican Party Identification¹⁸



■ Women ■ Men

The gender gap has generally widened over the years, though it often fluctuates. During the 2022 midterm elections, 47% of women said they would vote for or lean toward the Democratic Party compared to 41% of men.¹⁹





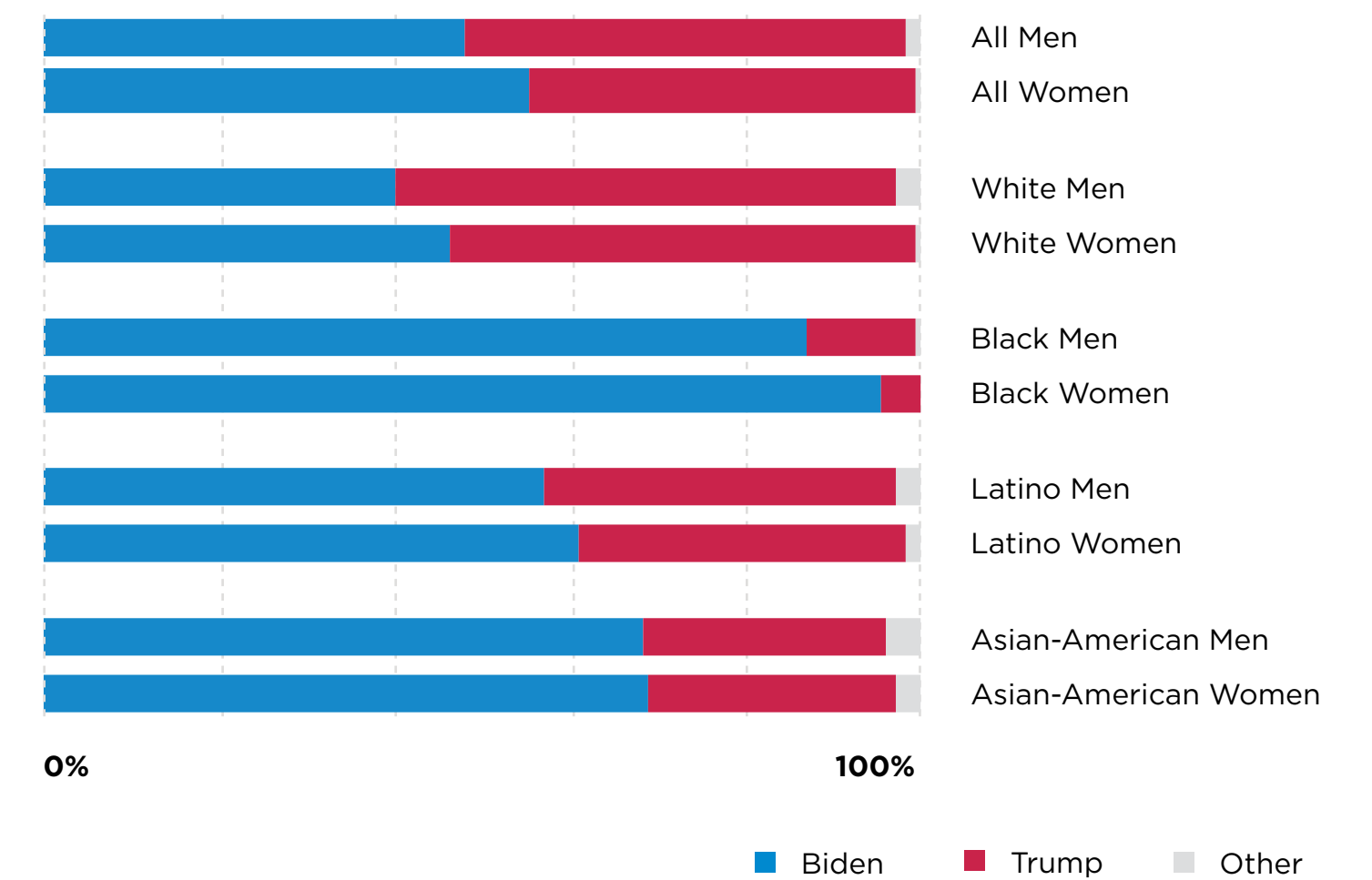
2020 Turnout

82.2 million women voted in the 2020 presidential election.¹

55% of women voters cast their ballots for Joe Biden, compared to 48% of men.²⁰

Women voters are not homogeneous. As a group, women are more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate than men. However, upon closer inspection, the story isn't quite as simple.

2020 Gender Gap by Race/Ethnicity

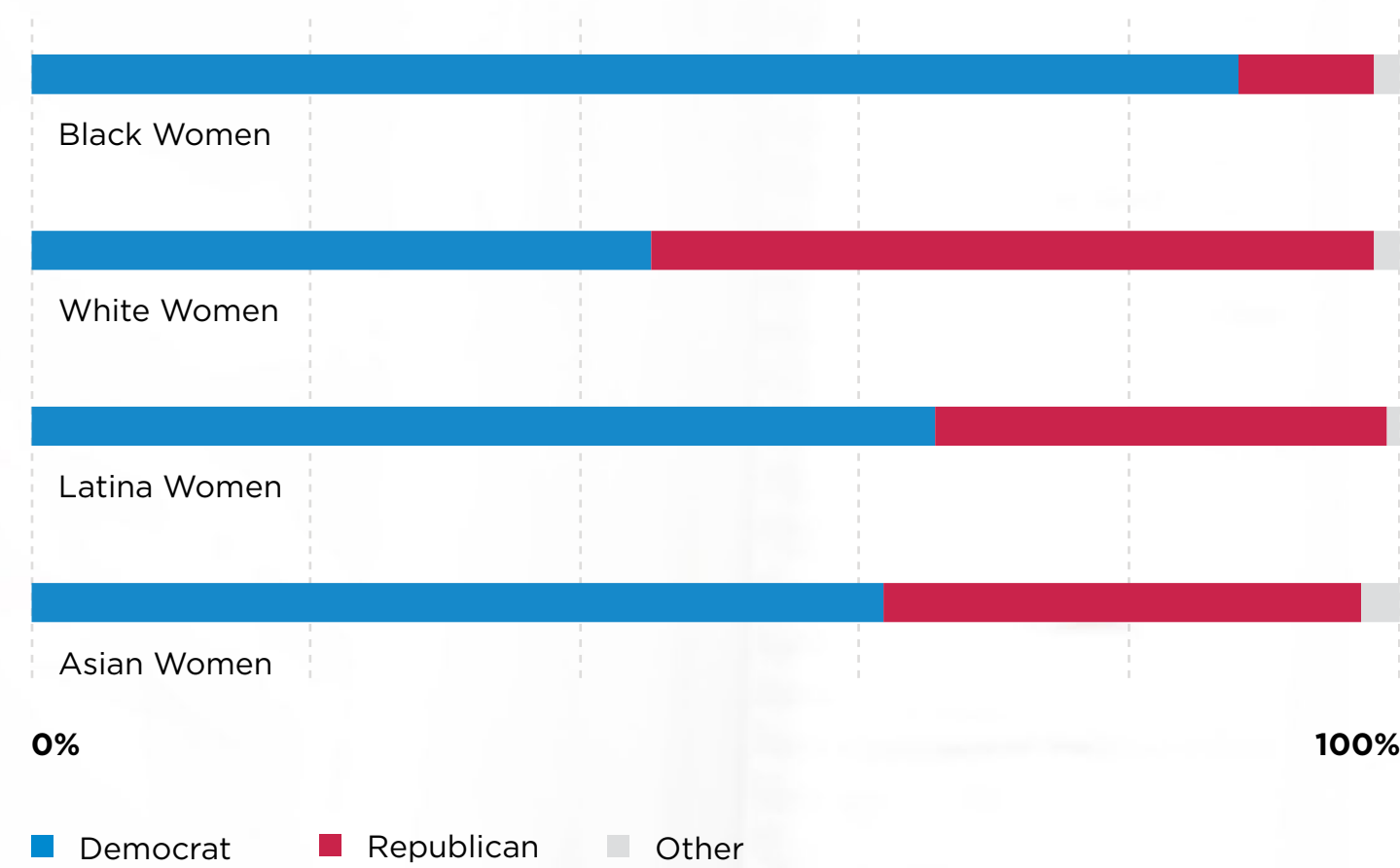


A majority of white women have voted for the Republican candidate in every presidential election since 2000.²¹ However, in 2020, nonwhite voters accounted for about one-third of the electorate, the largest share ever.²² This, coupled with the overwhelming gender gaps in voter turnout and party preference, meant that women of color had more political sway than ever before and proved integral in electing Joe Biden.

2022 Turnout

Midterm elections often show a partisan gap narrow and 2022 was no exception. In 2022, 49% of women voted Democrat while 48% voted Republican.²³ Once again, the numbers change drastically when it comes to race and ethnicity.

2022 Women Congressional Voting Results by Race/Ethnicity²⁴



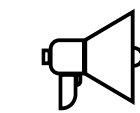


Messaging



Tailored Messaging

Women voters are an enormously diverse group made up of tens of millions of individuals, so there is no one-size-fits-all approach to messaging. While there are some issues, such as abortion and women's rights, that are hugely important, it may be just as important to understand which topics matter to your local constituency. Emphasizing a candidate's relationship to women as a group (even if the candidate is a man) has also shown to be an effective way to garner support from women voters.²⁵ One strategy may be to take advantage of targeted advertising opportunities by delivering different messages to different sub-segments of women as an audience.



Multi-Channel Marketing

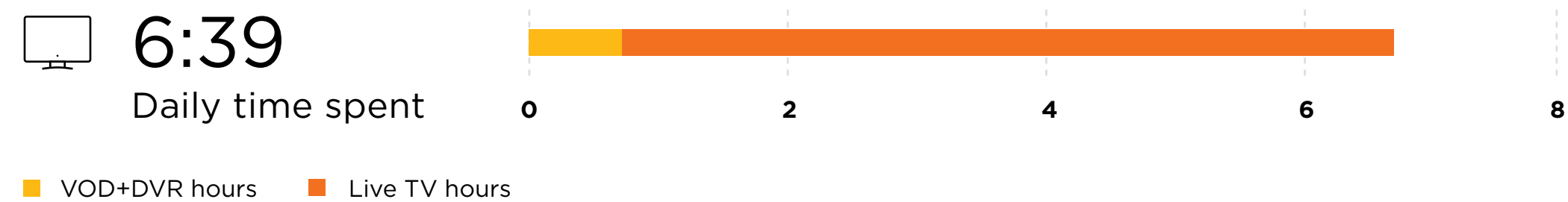
Using a combination of mediums – such as TV, streaming, direct mail, and social media – can help ensure your message is not only received but remembered as well.²⁶ Of these options, TV has been found to affect election outcomes by having a greater ability to change minds, especially in down-ballot elections where less information is available.²⁷ Additionally, early and consistent TV advertising increases reach. In an analysis of more than 8,000 political TV campaigns that ran leading up to the 2022 election, Comcast Advertising found that the campaigns with the greatest reach ran for an average of 16 days longer than those with the lowest reach. This 16-day difference accounted for 2.5 times greater reach and 86% higher frequency.²⁸

Viewing Habits

Live TV Viewing

Live TV still accounts for the majority of TV viewing. Cable and broadcast make up over two-thirds of women voters' viewing share, making advertising on live TV an essential part of reaching them.

- Households with women voters 18+ spend over 6.5 hours per day watching television with 89% of that live.²⁹



- These households spend almost twice as much time with cable than with broadcast.²⁹
- These households spend 66% of their viewing outside of primetime.²⁹

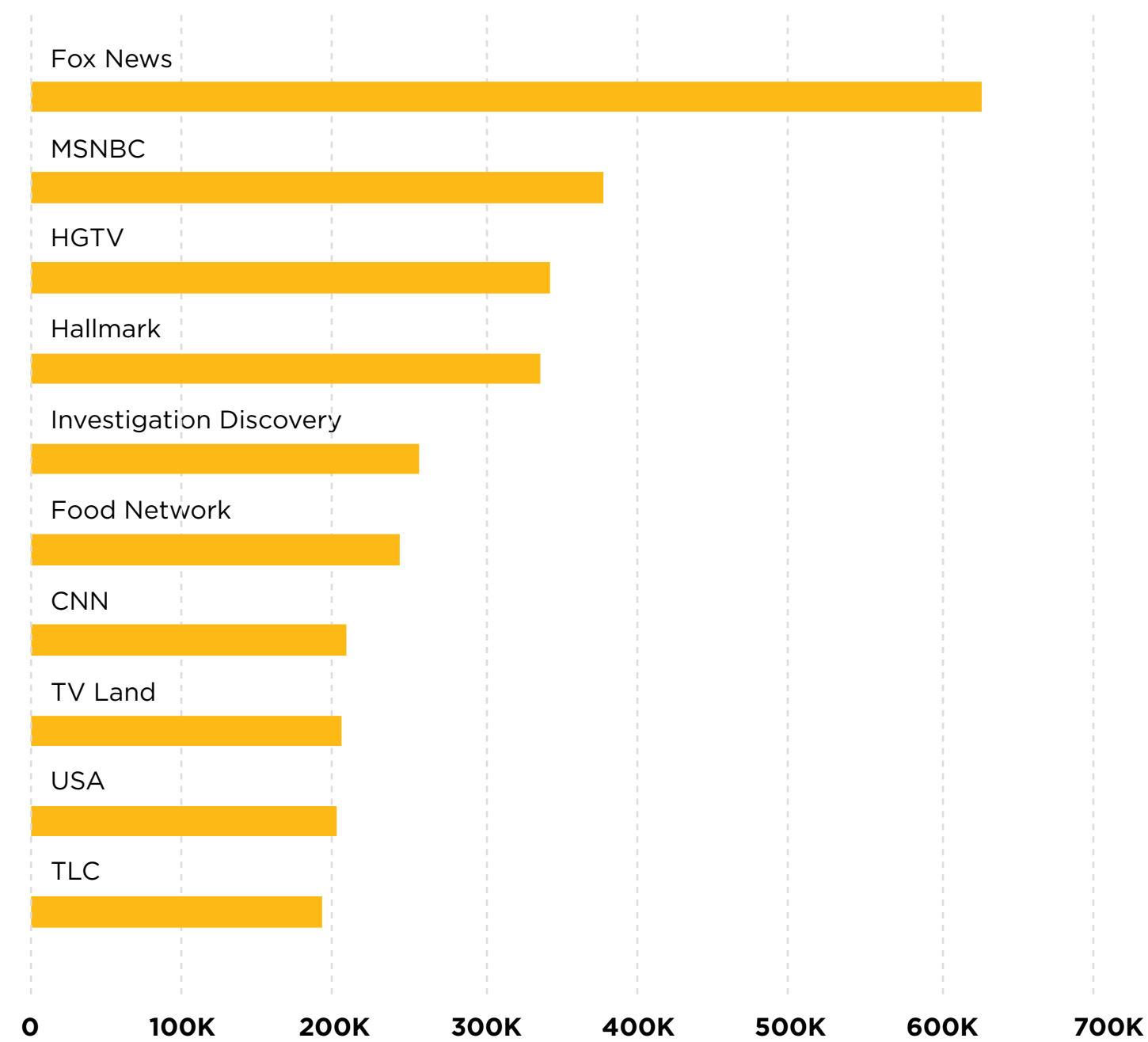
Viewing by Time of Day



Top Networks³⁰

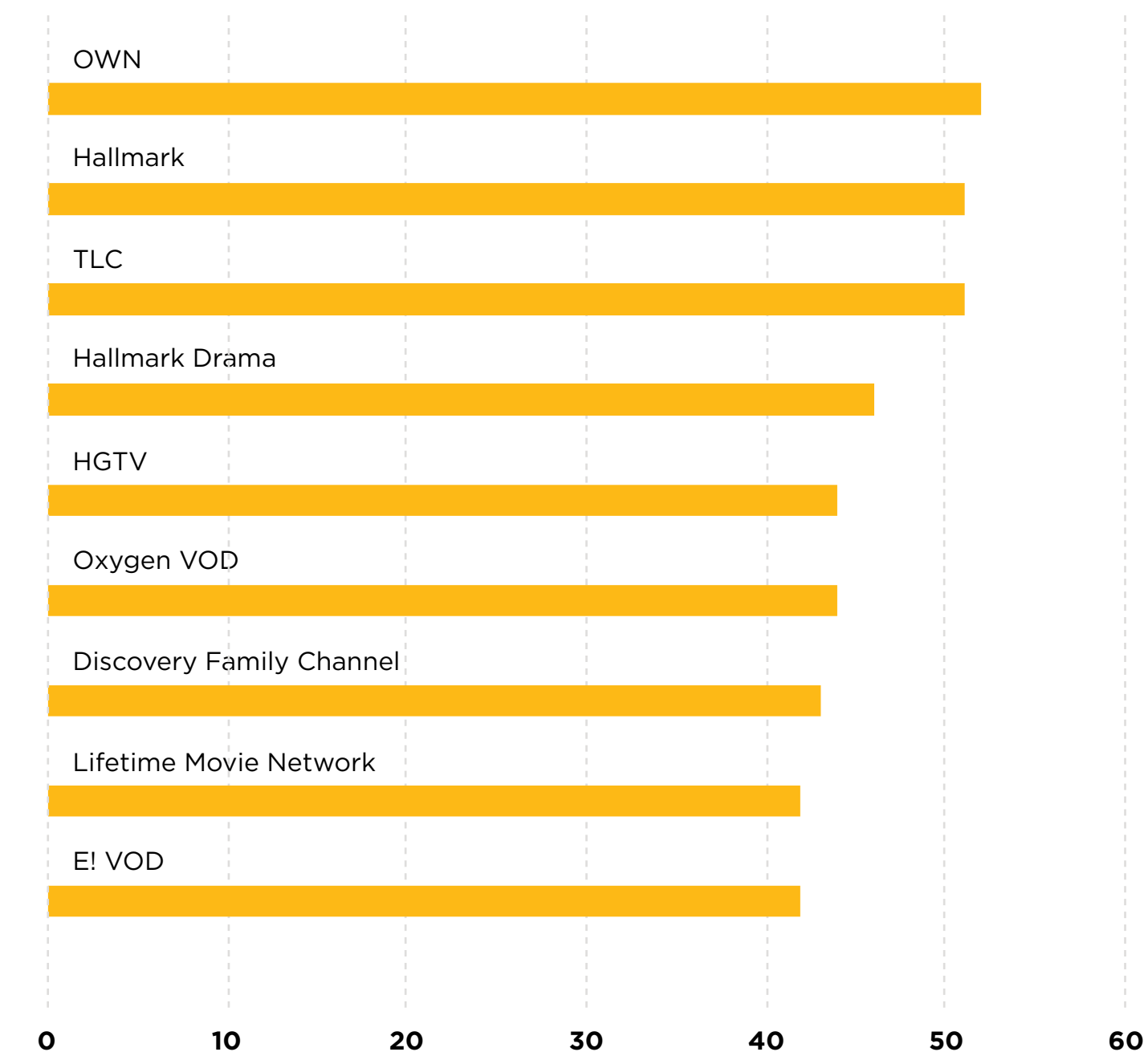
Network Reach - Women 18+

(Impressions)



Network Index

(Percent More Likely to Watch Than Average)



Fox News, MSNBC, and CNN are three of the top ten networks by reach for women over 18. The remainder are specialty channels such as HGTV, Hallmark, and Food Network. Additionally, women over 18 are much more likely to watch networks that prioritize women and family-focused programming, like OWN, TLC, and Discovery Family. However, college-educated women are more likely to watch entertainment-forward networks like USA, TBS, WE tv, and TNT.³¹

Since the average person watches about 30 different networks per month, advertising on high-value programming like cable news, single-genre networks, and entertainment-focused programming, while simultaneously running an audience-targeted campaign can maximize your ability to reach this group.

Streaming

Though live TV still commands an enormous audience, streaming is becoming increasingly popular. Currently, households with women voters spend about 29% of their viewing time with streaming.³² Moreover, of households with women voters who use streaming, 46% would not have been reached by linear TV alone.³³

Streaming continues its growth:

- For households with women voters over the age of 35, the share of streaming increased 7 percentage points from 2021 to 2022. This includes both ad-supported and non-ad-supported streaming.³²
- Ad-supported video on demand (AVOD) increased 37% year over year for households with women voters aged 18-34, which is higher than the increase of subscription VOD (24%).³⁴
- College-educated women dedicate 12% more of their viewing to streaming than women with no college education.³⁵

As AVOD and free ad-supported streaming television (FAST) become increasingly popular, it is important for political advertisers to broaden their outreach. A mix of live and streaming television is essential for any modern campaign.






Conclusion

Women are the largest and most active group of voters, with women of color having more voting power than ever before. So, tailoring strategies and messages to appeal to women voters is an absolute must for political campaigns. Candidates and campaigns can reach this group by advertising during cable news and specialty programming, expanding beyond primetime, running audience-targeted campaigns, and casting a wide net across live TV and streaming services. Advertisements should focus on both garnering a sense of group identity and specifically addressing issues that affect women.

However you choose to reach women voters, Comcast Advertising is here to help guide your campaign to victory. Contact us today to start strategizing your outreach efforts.

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