

U.S. Election: Canadians keen on Kamala, but say women generally walk a harder road to high political office

Men under 55 most likely to be critical of Harris: one-quarter call her 'dishonest', one-in-five 'corrupt'

August 14, 2024 – Presumptive Democratic nominee for president Kamala Harris is riding a wave of enthusiasm as preparations are made to confirm her candidacy at the Democratic National Convention next week.

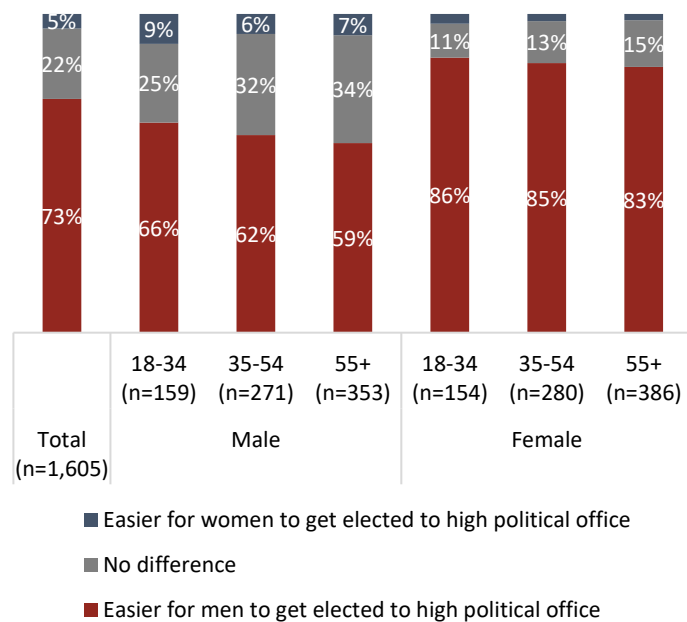
New data from non-profit Angus Reid Institutes finds excitement for Harris has spread beyond the border of the United States. Two-thirds of Canadians (64%) hold favourable views of the current vice president, while half (50%) say they are “hopeful” when they consider the prospect of her winning the election in November. The most commonly chosen words Canadians would use to describe Harris: “strong” (40%) and “inspiring” (35%).

“Relieved” (35%) is also a common emotion for Canadians as they consider Harris potentially stepping into the White House as president. That, of course, is as much a statement about Harris’ rival, former President Donald Trump, as Harris herself. Three-quarters (76%) of Canadians hold an unfavourable view of Trump, as [Canadians said in July his potential re-election](#) had them “worried” (46%), “dumbfounded” (36%) and “disappointed” (31%).

Positive views of Harris are not uniform among Canadians, however. She faces more criticism from men under 55 than other demographics. Two-in-five men that age hold unfavourable views, and younger men are the most likely to describe Harris as “dishonest”, “arrogant”, or “corrupt”.

As Harris looks to become the second woman to be nominated as a presidential candidate by a major party, and the second Black American and first South Asian American to hold the country’s highest office, there has been much discussion of what role gender and race will play during this election cycle. Canadians overwhelmingly believe it is easier for men to get elected to high political office (73%) than say gender plays no role in elections (22%). This despite at least half saying there is no difference between men and women when it comes to listening to voters (51%), seeking compromise across the political

Do you think it is easier, more difficult or no different for men vs women to get elected to high political offices, at the national level?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from July 31 to Aug. 2, 2024 among a representative randomized sample of 1,609 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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divide (50%), having a clear legislative vision (64%), making tough decisions (61%) and performing competently on the job overall (61%). For all five factors, where Canadians see an advantage, they are more likely to give it to women than men.

More Key Findings:

- Majorities of men say there is “no difference” between men and women when it comes to the factors listed above. Men who do believe there is a difference lean towards saying women are better than men, except when it comes to making difficult choices in office. On that front, men are slightly more likely to say women are worse than men (21% vs. 12%).
- Older Canadians, and especially women, are more enthusiastic about Harris. Four-in-five (79%) women older than 54 and seven-in-ten (71%) men that age say they have a favourable view of the presumptive Democratic nominee for president. Canadians older than 54 are more likely than others to describe her as “strong” (49%) or “inspiring” (46%).
- Canadians are divided as to whether Harris’ background as a Black and South Asian American is an advantage (26%) or disadvantage (21%) during the campaign. One-third (33%) say it will make no difference.

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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Part One: Canadians on Kamala

The Democratic president candidate swap from current President Joe Biden to current Vice President Kamala Harris has changed both the tone and emotion of the 2024 presidential election.

Related: [Game Change: Invigorated young Democrats give Harris slight lead over Trump](#)

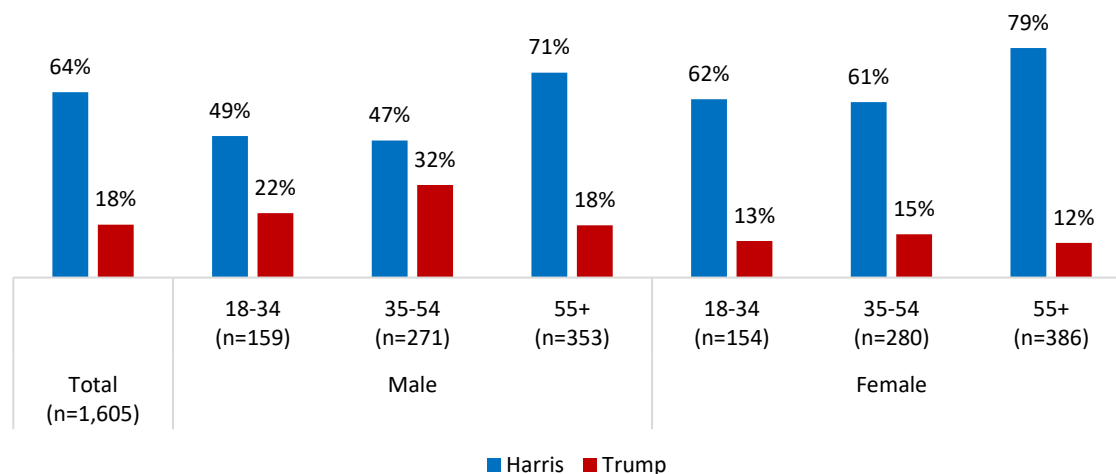
Instead of a third straight rematch between an octogenarian (Biden, age 81) and a near octogenarian (former President Donald Trump, 78), Harris' relative youthfulness (she turns 60 this year) has injected [enthusiasm](#) south of the border into the race. Rallies for Harris and recently minted running mate Tim Walz have brought out [tens of thousands of supporters](#) as the Democratic campaign looks to boost their odds in key swing states.

Two-thirds of Canadians hold favourable views; women more enthusiastic than men

North of the border, Canadians view the new Democratic candidate – whose time in Montreal in high school and college [has been well-documented in Canadian media](#) – with a much more positive lens than her Republican rival. Two-thirds (64%) of Canadians say they have a favourable view of Harris, one-quarter (25%) unfavourable and one-in-ten (11%) say they don't know enough to say. Comparatively, one-in-five Canadians (20%) say they view Trump positively, three-quarters (76%) negatively and one-in-20 (6%) offer no opinion.

While approaching half of all demographics say they view Harris favourably, she performs much better among women, and especially those older than 54, four-in-five (79%) of whom say they have a positive impression of the likely Democratic candidate for president. In fact, Harris garners much more positive views among older men as well. Men older than 54 are more likely to say they have favourable views of Harris than women under 55, though a larger proportion of women that age are unsure (women 18-34, 18%; women 35-54, 14%, [see detailed tables](#)).

Percentage who hold favourable views of Kamala Harris and Donald Trump



Canadians historically have had more positive assessments of Democrats than Republicans, however Harris is outpacing one notable comparison when it comes to likeability – 2016 Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton. [In September 2016](#), a majority (55%) of Canadians said they “disliked” (31%) or

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“disliked very much” (24%) Clinton. The rest (45%) said they liked her (38%) or liked her “very much” (7%). Though measured on a different scale, Harris clearly generates more positive views.

Men more likely to call Harris ‘dishonest’, ‘corrupt’, ‘arrogant’

Canadians were asked to choose five words from a list ([see the detailed tables for the full list](#)) to describe Harris. Following those generally favourable views above, Canadians are more likely to use positive terms – “strong” (40%), “inspiring” (35%), “strategic” (30%), “charismatic” (29%), and “honest” (29%) – than negative ones. However, men under 55 are more critical than others. One quarter of men aged 35- to 54-years-old describe Harris as either “corrupt” (23%) or “dishonest” (23%), while men under 35 are the most likely to call her “arrogant” (22%):

Thinking about Kamala Harris, please choose up to five words from the following list that you would use to describe her (Up to five chosen, top five shown)						
Total (n=1,605)	Male			Female		
	18-34 (n=159)	35-54 (n=271)	55+ (n=353)	18-34 (n=154)	35-54 (n=280)	55+ (n=386)
Strong 40%	Strategic 31%	Strong 26%	Strong 42%	Strong 37%	Strong 38%	Strong 56%
Inspiring 35%	Charismatic 26%	Charismatic 24%	Inspiring 42%	Strategic 31%	Strategic 31%	Inspiring 50%
Strategic 30%	Strong 26%	Corrupt 23%	Honest 41%	Inspiring 29%	Inspiring 30%	Honest 41%
Charismatic 29%	Dishonest 26%	Inspiring 23%	Down to earth 33%	Charismatic 28%	Charismatic 25%	Strategic 39%
Honest 29%	Arrogant 22%	Dishonest 23%	Charismatic 32%	Down to earth 19%	Honest 22%	Compassionate 36%

Canadians regard potential Harris presidency with hope, relief

It follows then, that men under 55 are also the most likely to be “disappointed” or “worried” about the prospect of Harris winning in November. However, “hopeful” is also a top choice among that demographic. Women, meanwhile, are more likely than men to say they are “inspired” as Harris attempts to break the glass ceiling of the Oval Office.

Overall, half (50%) of Canadians say they are “hopeful” about a potential President Harris, while one-third (35%) say they are relieved.

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When you think about the prospect of Kamala Harris becoming president of the United States, what are the main emotions or feelings that come to you? (Up to three chosen, top five shown)						
Total (n=1,605)	Male			Female		
	18-34 (n=159)	35-54 (n=271)	55+ (n=353)	18-34 (n=154)	35-54 (n=280)	55+ (n=386)
Hopeful 50%	Hopeful 39%	Hopeful 39%	Hopeful 48%	Hopeful 50%	Hopeful 56%	Hopeful 59%
Relieved 35%	Relieved 37%	Curious 30%	Relieved 35%	Relieved 37%	Relieved 33%	Relieved 46%
Curious 22%	Curious 29%	Relieved 21%	Confident 29%	Curious 28%	Inspired 29%	Excited 27%
Excited 22%	Disappointed 20%	Disappointed 21%	Happy 26%	Inspired 24%	Curious 27%	Inspired 26%
Inspired 21%	Worried 17%	Worried 20%	Excited 25%	Excited 19%	Excited 19%	Confident 26%

That sense of relief perhaps has much to do with the alternative of a return to the White House by Trump, a scenario that has been met with [plenty of consternation](#) and [even fear](#) by Canadians in previous data taken by the Angus Reid Institute.

Related:

- [State of the Nations: Canadians fear the impacts of another Trump term as U.S. Election 2024 looms](#)
- [Trumped Again?: 66% of Canadians say a second GOP presidential term would be ‘bad’ or ‘terrible’ for Canada](#)

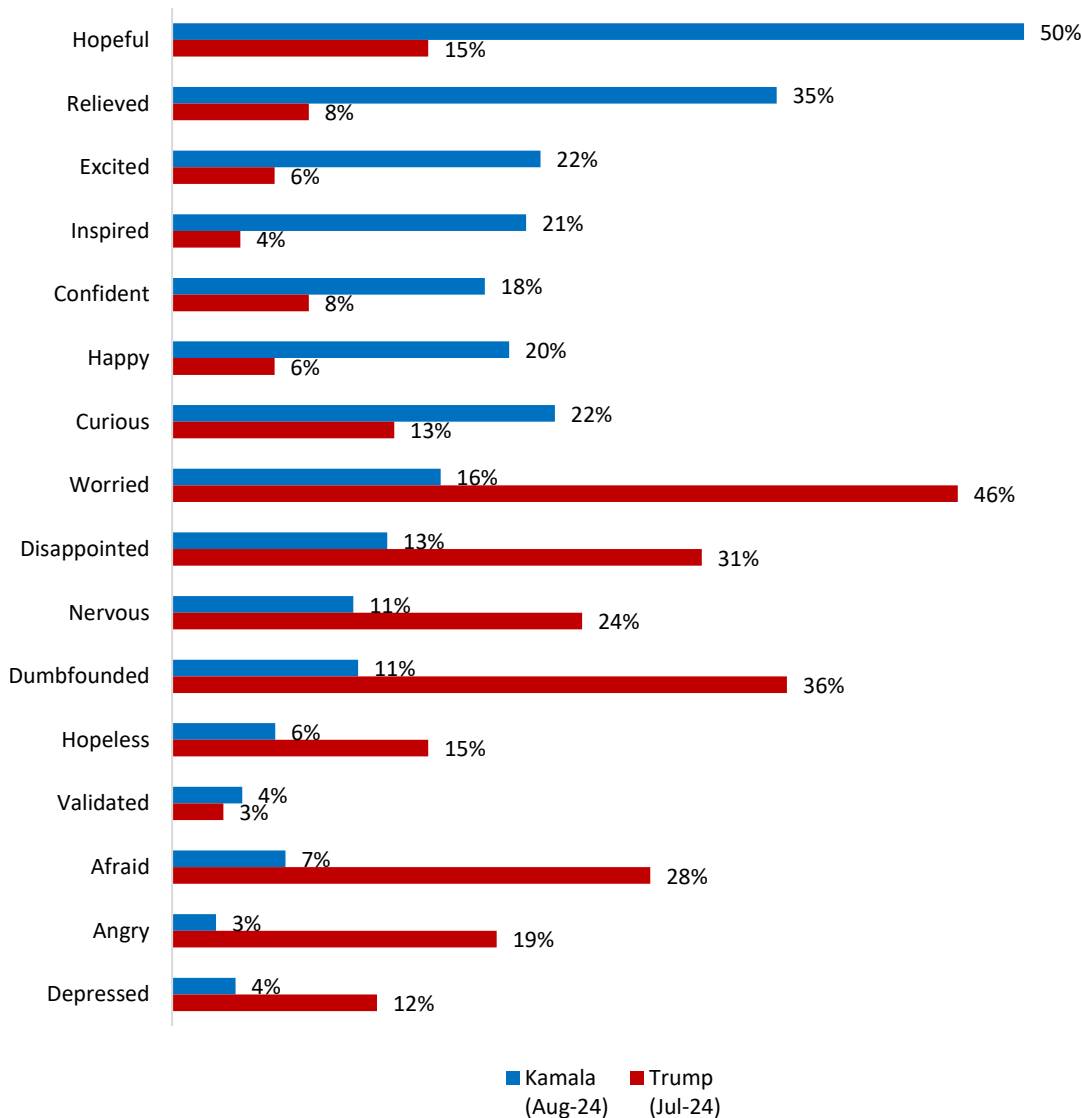
Indeed, when ARI offered Canadians the chance last month to select the main emotions and feelings that come to them when considering a second Trump term, “worried” (46%) was the top choice, followed by “dumbfounded” (36%). “Disappointed” (31%) and “afraid” (28%) also ranked highly.

The balance of emotions Canadians say are brought on by a potential Harris victory is much more positive than those brought on by a Trump return:

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When you think about the prospect of [Harris/Trump] becoming president of the United States, what are the main emotions or feelings that come to you?



Is being Black and South Asian an advantage or disadvantage for Harris?

Harris’ campaign is already historic. When the Democratic National Convention wraps up later this month, its expected Harris will become only the second Black American to be the presidential nominee for a major political party. She will also follow Hillary Clinton as only the second woman to be in that position as well.

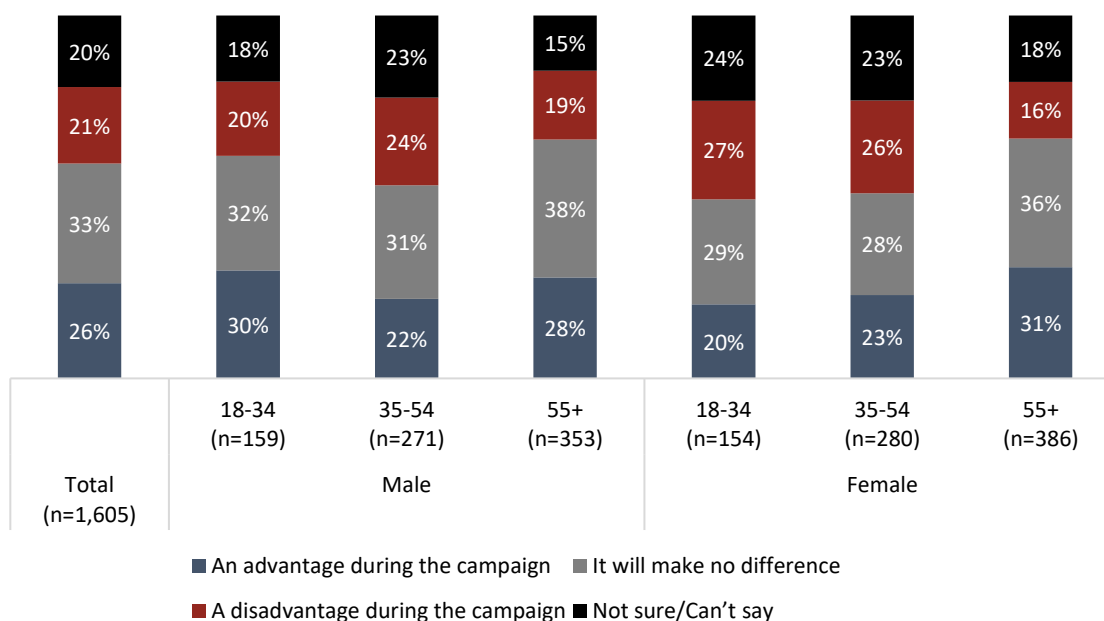
Unfortunately, the campaign has already seen ugly attacks on Harris’ identity.

“I didn’t know she was Black until a number of years ago when she happened to turn Black and now she wants to be known as Black,” [Trump said to National Association of Black Journalists in July](#). “So I don’t know, is she Indian or is she Black?”

A Republican congressman called Harris a [“DEI vice-president”](#), a reference to diversity, equity and inclusion programs that call for fair treatment and participation in the workplace for people of groups that had been historically discriminated against.

Canadians are split as to whether they believe Harris’ background as a South Asian and Black American will be an advantage or a disadvantage, with a plurality (33%) believing it will make no difference. Canadians older than 54, and men under 35, are more likely to say it will boost her efforts than not, if they believe it will make a difference. Women under 55 are more likely to believe it will be a hindrance, but are also as likely to say it won’t affect the campaign or they aren’t sure:

Regardless of your own feelings towards Kamala Harris, which is closest to your view? Is her background...

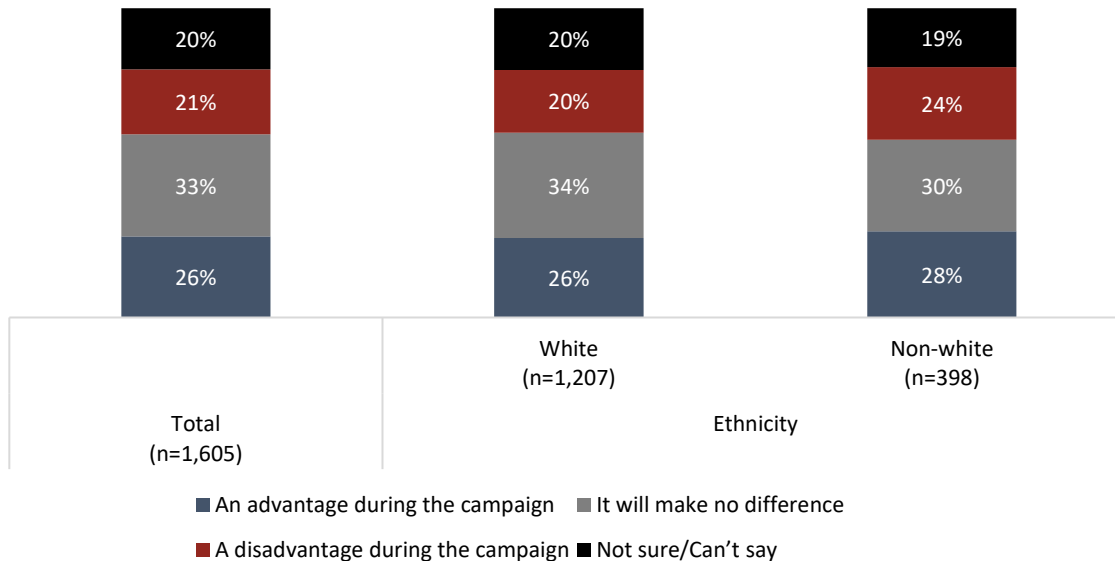


Non-white Canadians are also split as to whether Harris’ South Asian and Black background is a disadvantage, advantage, or will play no role in the campaign. However, compared to white Canadians, they are slightly less likely to say “it will make no difference” and slightly more likely to believe Harris’ background will play a role during the presidential election:

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Regardless of your own feelings towards Kamala Harris, which is closest to your view? Is her background...



Part Two: Women in politics

Harris follows in the steps of Clinton’s 2016 campaign, which broke ground for future female candidates for president. It also revealed potential hurdles future women would have to cross. In the post-mortem of her unsuccessful campaign, Clinton believed that sexism played a role in her defeat. “Sexism and misogyny played a role in the 2016 presidential election,” [wrote Clinton in her 2017 book What Happened](#). “Exhibit A is that the flagrantly sexist candidate won.”

As recently as May this year, Clinton also said that some women voters held her to an impossible standard, believing they didn’t vote for her because [she was not “perfect”](#) after a last-minute investigation into her private email server cast doubt on her judgement.

Canadians more likely to say women better at listening to voters, seeking compromise

As Harris begins this historic race to a potentially monumental finish line, Canadians were asked to reflect on women in politics more generally.

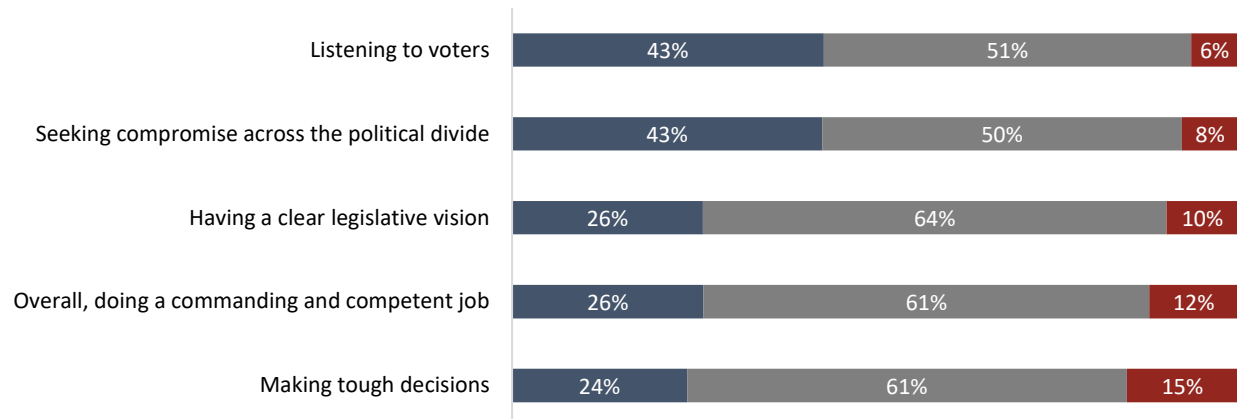
Overall, most Canadians say there is “no difference” between men and women when it comes to having a clear legislative vision, doing a commanding and competent job, and making tough decisions. Canadians are split as to whether one gender or neither have an advantage when it comes to listening to voters and seeking compromise across the political divide. For those latter two, where Canadians ascribe an advantage, they overwhelmingly give it to women.

They also tend to lean towards believing if either gender has an advantage, it is women who are better coming into office with a vision for policy, competence, and the ability to make difficult choices:

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**In general, would you say, at the national political level, women are better or worse than men at each of the following:
(All respondents, n=1,605)**

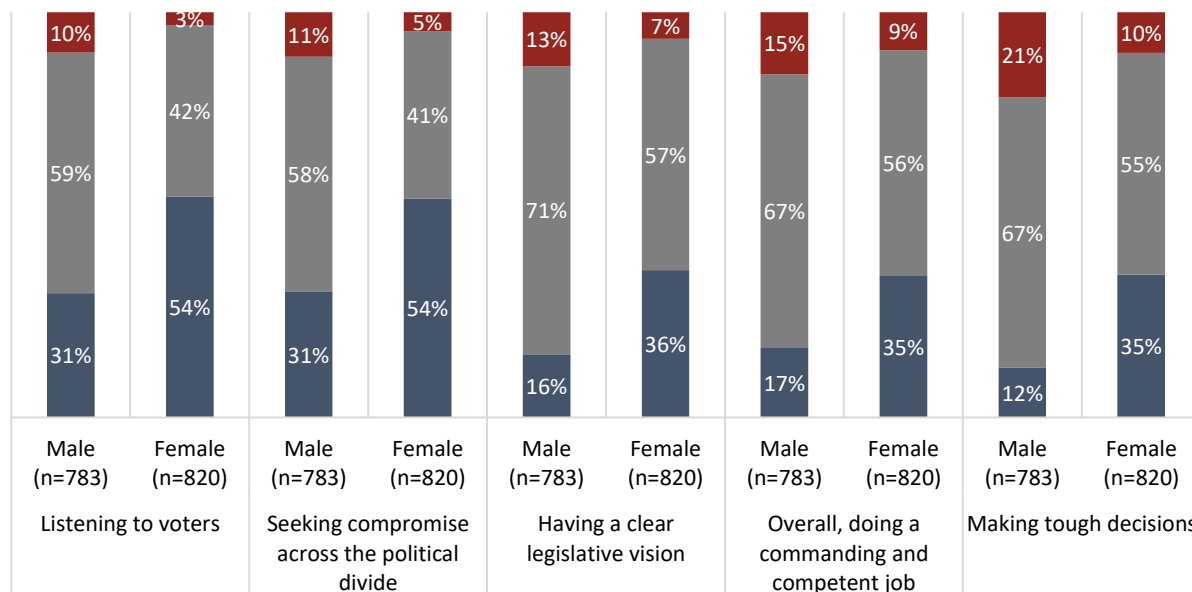


■ Women are generally better at this than men ■ No difference ■ Women are generally worse at this than men

Majorities of women believe their gender is better at seeking compromise and listening to the will of voters. When it comes to other factors, majorities of women believe neither gender has an advantage.

Across the board, majorities of men say there is no difference between men and women when it comes to the major elements of important political jobs. Where they see an edge, they lean towards saying women are better than men – except when it comes to making tough decisions. One-in-five (21%) men believe women are worse than men when it comes to making difficult choices in office, outnumbering the one-in-eight (12%) who say women are better at this than men:

In general, would you say, at the national political level, women are better or worse than men at each of the following:



■ Women are generally better at this than men ■ No difference ■ Women are generally worse at this than men

But most people believe it's easier for men to get elected

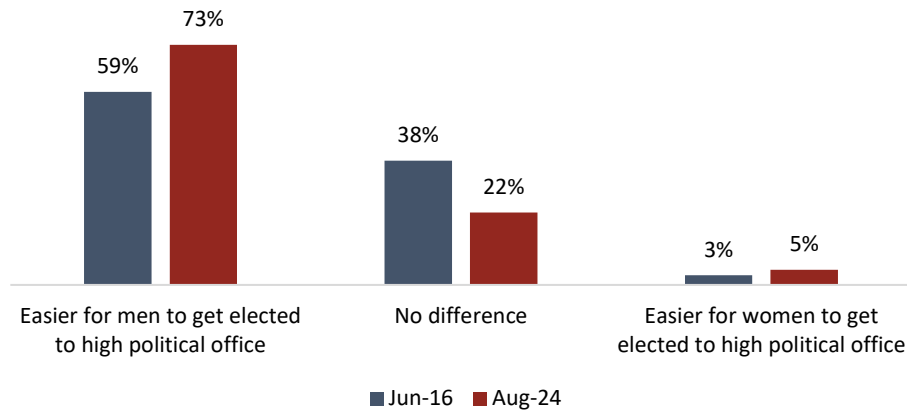
Despite Canadians' belief that gender does not make a difference when it comes to holding office or see women with an advantage when it comes to certain aspects of the jobs of important political leaders, three-quarters (73%) say it is easier for men to get elected. One-in-five (22%) believe there is no difference when it comes to the odds of men or women winning elections, while one-in-20 say (5%) women face less resistance to their electoral campaigns.

Since 2016, and after watching Clinton's bid for president end with her election loss to Trump that year, Canadians are more likely to say that it is easier for men to be elected than women. Correspondingly, the proportion of those who believe men and women are on equal footing when it comes to succeeding in politics has shrunk from two-in-five (38%) to fewer than one-quarter (22%):

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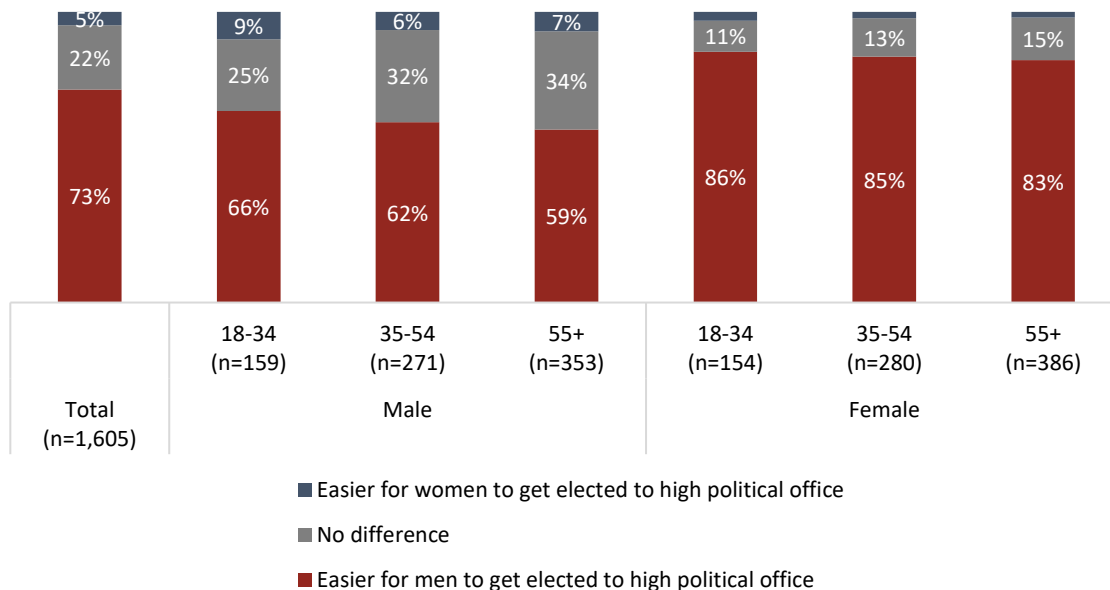
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Do you think it is easier, more difficult or no different for men vs women to get elected to high political offices, at the national level?



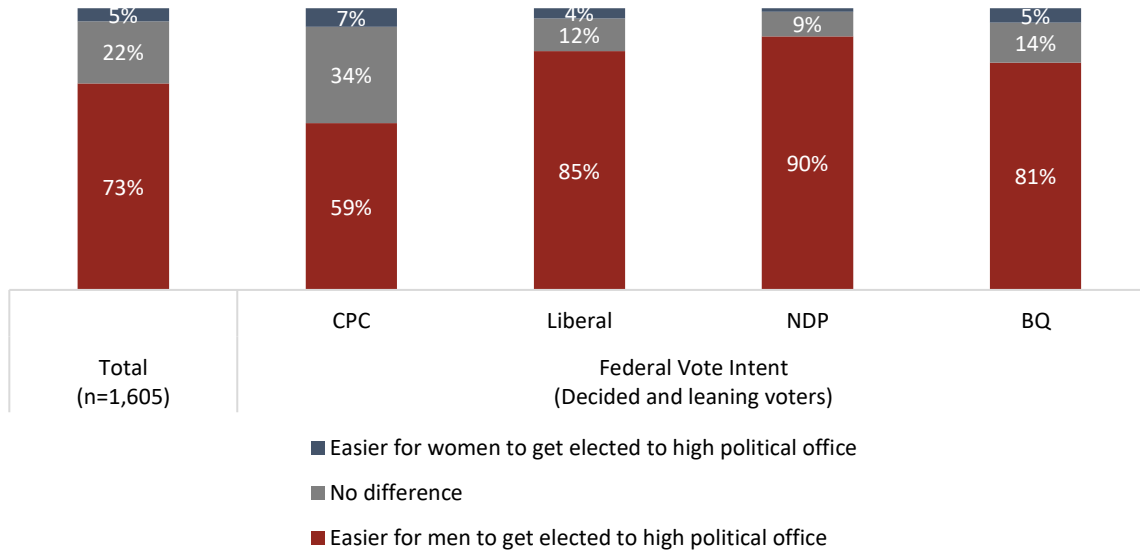
Overwhelming majorities of women say men encounter less barriers to political success. Majorities of men agree, though there are more sizable minorities among that gender who believe it makes no difference:

Do you think it is easier, more difficult or no different for men vs women to get elected to high political offices, at the national level?



A majority of supporters of all the four major Canadian political parties believe it is easier for men to get elected to high political office. However, those who would vote Conservative if an election were held today are much more likely (34%) than the supporters of other parties to say neither women nor men face additional barriers because of their gender to get elected:

Do you think it is easier, more difficult or no different for men vs. women to get elected to high political offices, at the national level?



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).