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HARNESSING THE POWER OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL GIVING

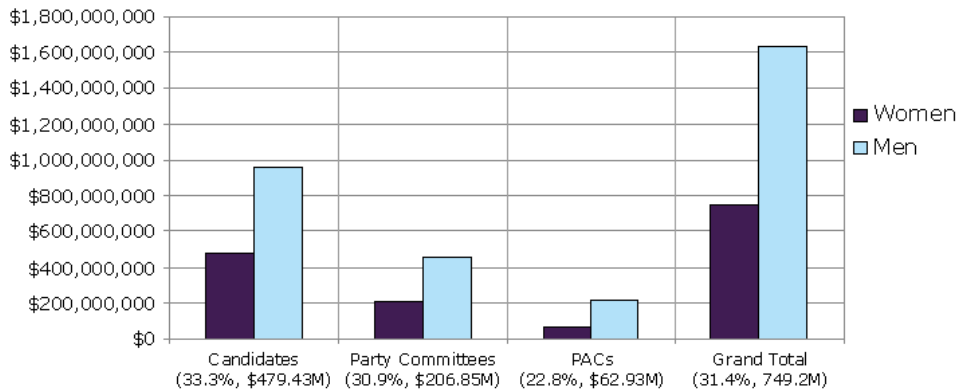
# Crisis of the Checkbook: Women, Money & Politics Today

Since 1984, women's votes have been critical in deciding federal elections. In 2004 alone, women voters outnumbered male voters by nearly nine million. The 2008 presidential election was no different, as almost eight million more women cast ballots than men. Women also view different forms of political participation more positively including

volunteering, fundraising, canvassing and media coverage. In addition, women are at least as likely as men to engage in their local communities and join other civic groups. There are three legs of the proverbial political power stool: voting, action, and money. Women are excelling at voting and action, but it is within the realm of political giving that women fall far behind their male counterparts.

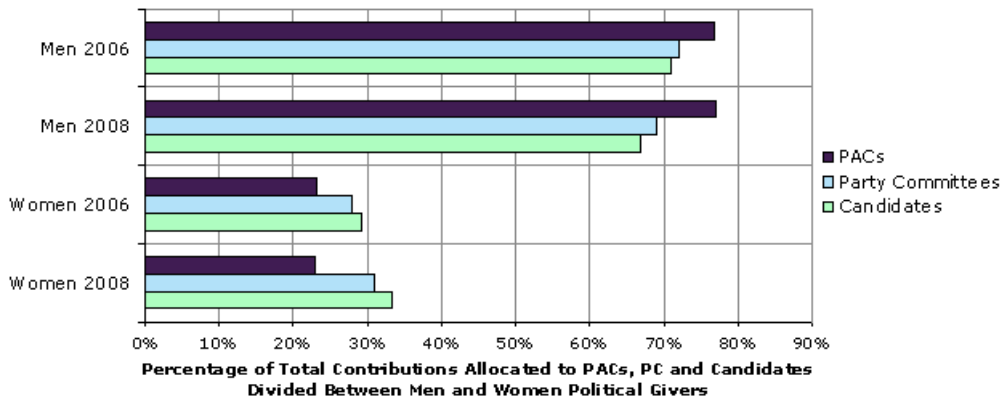
**More effort is needed to encourage women to increase their political giving.** In 2008, women contributed just 31% of total contributions to candidates, political action committees (PACs), and party committees. This represented a mere four percent increase over women's contributions in the 2006 cycle.

2008 Women's Political Giving Compared to Men's



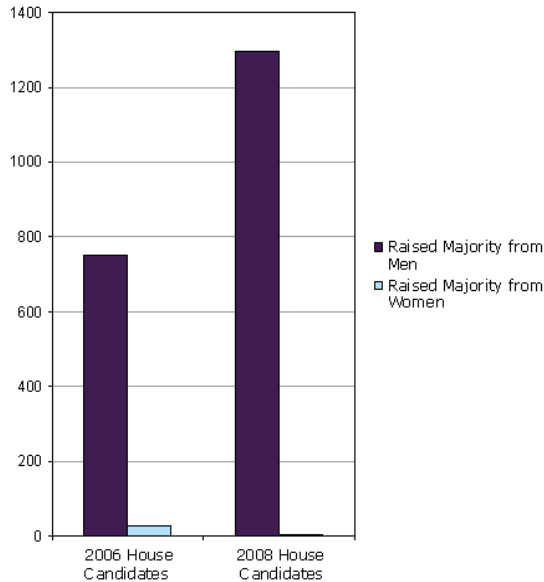
\*Data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics.

2006 Vs. 2008 Women's Political Giving Compared to Men's



\*Data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics.

House Candidates Raising Majority  
of Funds from Women



Direct contributions to candidates remained women's strongest suit in 2008 - 33.3% of total contributions to candidates were made by women, an increase of 4.3% from 2006. Unfortunately, over the last two decades women's high dollar contributions to candidates have remained unchanged, with women consistently comprising only 28% of contributions of \$1,000 or more (single or combined).

As the number of all U.S. major party House candidates has increased from 778 in 2006 to 1303 in 2008, women's financial engagement has not followed suit. In 2006, 27 of the 778 candidates raised the majority of their individual funds from women, whereas in 2008 only five of the 1303 candidates relied on women for more than half of their campaign contributions.

The trend amongst senate candidates is no different. In 2006, 64 candidates ran for the U.S. Senate. This number more than doubled in the 2008 cycle when 142 candidates participated. There was one constant from 2006 to 2008, however. Of the Senate candidates who raised more than \$125,000 not a single one relied on women for the majority of their contributions.

PACs still receive the least support from women. Of the PACs we examined, only 11 received more than 80% of their 2008 contributions from women compared to 571 which relied predominantly on male funding. Unfortunately, this striking difference is consistent with the percentage breakdowns from 2006, when only eight PACs received more than 80% of their contributions from women, compared to 319 for men. There was a small percentage increase in women's contributions to the top-raising business and labor related PACs. In 2006, female contributions accounted for 15% of these committee's totals, compared to 16.7% in 2008. Unlike business and labor PACs, issue and leadership oriented PACs received 45% of their contributions from women. It is worth noting that business and labor related PACs gave to women candidates at rates consistent with women's contributions to these PACs. The issue and leadership PACs, however, have been investing proportionally less in female candidates - 25% of their contributions in 2006 and only 18.5% in 2008.

*Even though women increased their giving, in 2008 they are still being outspent by men in this area and are not making the connection that politically their money matters. If women want to elect more women they need to invest in women.*

## Case Study: Women Giving, Women Running

Women candidates are strong fundraisers. For the past five years it has become clear that women have the ability to raise the necessary funds for political campaigns. In 2004, Rep. Allyson Schwartz was the third highest raiser, trailing only former Speaker Dennis Hastert and Rep. Martin Frost. Two years later, challenger Kirsten Gillibrand had the second highest fundraising total for the first quarter of 2007. Dr. Deborah Travis Honeycutt was the fifth highest raiser of all House candidates in 2008. Among 2008 Senate candidates, Senator Elizabeth Dole was the fourth most successful.

Like 2006, 2008 was a very successful year for women candidates. Eleven new women were elected to the House and two to the Senate. While these gains are encouraging, the playing field was by no means even, with men generally enjoying significant financial advantages over their female counterparts.

## 2008 Elections: House of Representatives

- Of the major party House incumbents, men raised on average \$196,281 more than women. While unfortunate, these numbers are not surprising considering the 2006 difference between the top twenty male and female incumbents was on average \$500,000.
- Of the major party House challengers who raised at least \$125,000, women have raised on average \$138,762 more than men. However, women compose just 21% of all House challengers so a more just comparison is the average of the top 50 women to that of the top 180 men. In 2006, the top 20 women challengers were outraised by the top 20 men challengers by four million dollars.
- Men have widened the gap in average contributions to House candidates. The average contribution received by women candidates was \$967 versus \$1,051 for men. This is an increase from the 2006 margin, when women received on average \$670 compared to the \$735 for men.

## 2008 Elections: Senate

- Six women ran as incumbents in 2006, with only three women enjoying an incumbency advantage in 2008. The total raised by these women was approximately \$33 million - \$16 million less than the total for the top three male incumbents. This difference is consistent with 2006.
- In highly competitive races, the gap between the top-raising female and male Senate challengers was almost \$14 million (Senator Kay Hagan raised \$8.5 million and Al Franken \$22.5 million), which is \$8 million more than the difference in 2006.
- The average contribution received by women candidates was \$1,121 versus \$1,141 for men. The small difference between the two numbers is consistent with 2006, when the averages were \$797 for women and \$827 for men.

*In 2008, if women had increased their giving by just 22%, this would have represented an additional \$40 million for congressional candidates of both genders or \$13.8 million for women candidates specifically.*



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