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ABC News/Refinery29 Poll: Millennial Women

Millennial women are scared of Donald Trump, widely uninspired by their choices for president and, in the case of four out of 10, already booked for dinner.

A remarkable 63 percent of women age 18 to 35 in an ABC News/Refinery29 poll say Trump scares them. Nearly half, 47 percent, don't find any of the presidential candidates inspiring – including the one seeking to become the first female president. And when asked if there are any with whom they'd like to have dinner, another plurality, 39 percent, turns down the offer.

One reason: Half of these women say the candidates are not really discussing issues important to them, a major turn-off in terms of interest, voting intention and dinner arrangements alike. Young black women, in particular, say the campaign has failed to address the issues they care about most.

The national survey was conducted March 2-22 by landline and cell phone among a random national sample of 566 women younger than 36. It covers a range of political and social concerns, from election issues to views on bias against women to student loan debt.

In another notable result, a vast share of young women, 79 percent, think society is biased against women holding positions of power. Yet at the same time, many fewer, 45 percent, describe themselves as feminists. One reason: Among those who don't identify themselves as feminists, half say they agree with the goals of feminism, but simply dislike the term.

Group profile

In addition to assessing their views on issues, the results paint a political and demographic profile of millennial women, who account for roughly one in six adults, the equivalent of about 40 million Americans. Some results may be unexpected: Nearly half, 47 percent, have full time jobs; as many are married or living with a partner and 37 percent are parents. Twenty-nine percent have at least a four-year college degree; that jumps to 41 percent of those age 31-35 – seven points higher than it is among women age 36 and older in comparable data.

Household income rises with education, with median income in the \$30,000-\$40,000 range among those without a college degree, vs. \$50,000-\$75,000 among those with one. Yet, as covered below, student debt is a considerable burden. The nearly four in 10 young women with student loan debt owe a median of \$17,000, rising to \$30,000 among those with a four-year degree or more.

Millennial women are notably diverse in terms of race and ethnicity: Fifty-six percent are white, compared with 74 percent of women 36 and older in comparable data. Instead 20 percent of younger women are Hispanic, 14 percent black, 10 percent other or a mix. Indeed, the youngest millennial women, 18-21, are a majority-minority group: Just 44 percent are white.

Sixty-five percent overall report being registered to vote, with sharp differences by age – 52 percent in the 18-21 group vs. 72 percent among those 26 and older. That’s still lower than it is among older women (peaking at 90 percent registration among those 50+), but nonetheless it demonstrates sharply rising political engagement as millennials age.

Politically they lean left. Thirty-eight percent identify themselves as liberals and as many are Democrats; across the spectrum, 26 percent are conservatives and just 16 percent are Republicans. In comparable data, women older than 35 are much less likely to be liberals and political independents, and more likely to be conservatives and Republicans.

| | Women | | |
|---------------|-----------|---------|----------|
| | Age 18-35 | Age 36+ | Diff. |
| Liberals | 38% | 21% | +17 pts. |
| Moderates | 30 | 38 | -8 |
| Conservatives | 26 | 39 | -13 |
| Democrats | 38 | 36 | +2 |
| Independents | 40 | 28 | +12 |
| Republicans | 16 | 28 | -12 |

Ideology and partisanship, unsurprisingly, are linked: Thirty-four percent of conservative millennial women identify themselves as Republicans, compared with just 10 percent of liberals and moderates. That said, young conservative women are 12 points less likely than older conservative women to be Republicans. By contrast, six in 10 liberal women are Democrats, regardless of whether they’re millennials or older.

There’s also a relationship between ideology and education: Looking at women age 23-35, 47 percent of liberals have a four-year college degree, vs. 37 percent of moderates and 27 percent of conservatives.

Presidential preference

Reflecting their ideological preferences more than gender solidarity, women age 18-35 prefer Bernie Sanders for the White House. In an open-ended question, 35 percent say they’d like to see him win the presidency, vs. 25 percent for Hillary Clinton and 21 percent for any Republican candidate (each individually in the single digits). Eighteen percent – particularly those less engaged in the contest – have no current preference.

Preference for Sanders skews young – a potential challenge for him because, as noted, young millennials are less apt to be registered to vote. Among women age 18-21, 49 percent favor Sanders; that falls sharply, to 27 percent, among those who are 31-35. That said, Sanders does well with those who express a commitment to turn out: Forty-two percent of young women who say they’re certain to vote pick him, vs. 24 percent of those less likely to participate.

Further, Sanders tops Clinton among millennial women who are Democrats, 51-38 percent, as well as by 48-27 percent among liberals. Preference for Sanders reaches 55 percent among those in both camps, liberal Democrats.

Sanders also distinguishes himself among those who are more interested in this contest than they were in the 2012 election – 47 percent in this group name him as their choice. And he does better among those who say it makes a difference who wins (39 percent for Sanders) than among those who say it doesn't (among whom 20 percent pick him for president).

Clinton, for her part, does much less well with whites than others – 18 percent name her as their choice, vs. 37 percent of Hispanics and blacks. And, perhaps surprisingly, there's essentially no difference in support for Clinton on the basis of feminism. There is, instead, for Sanders: he does best with feminists, especially strong ones.

Similarly, seeing societal bias against women in power strongly relates to support for Sanders, and not to support for Clinton. And both of these differences are not simply a reflection of the greater liberalism of Sanders' supporters: Even among liberals, those who are feminists and see societal bias against women are more likely to support the Vermont senator.

| | Prefer for president | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------|---------------|
| | Sanders | Clinton | GOP candidate |
| Strong feminist | 56% | 25 | 9 |
| Feminist NET | 47 | 27 | 13 |
| Not a feminist | 24 | 24 | 27 |
| See bias against women | 39 | 26 | 16 |
| No bias | 18 | 21 | 40 |
| Liberals | 48 | 27 | 12 |
| Moderates | 33 | 26 | 21 |
| Conservatives | 19 | 24 | 35 |
| 18-21 | 49 | 23 | 13 |
| 31-35 | 27 | 32 | 25 |

While millennial women overall have little love for individual GOP candidates, these candidates do somewhat better as a group among young women who see no bias against women in power, non-feminists, conservatives and 31-35 year olds. That said, in each of these groups at least as many (and usually more) millennial women prefer the two Democratic candidates as the five Republicans named, underscoring the decided Democratic tilt of young women. (For example, just 12 percent of conservatives back Trump, as do 6 percent of liberals and moderates.)

Another question asked millennial women which candidate seems most likely to appoint a Supreme Court justice who shares their values. Sanders prevails by an even wider margin – 34 percent pick him (about the same as his support for the presidency) while 19 percent name Clinton (6 points fewer than would like to see her win) and 20 percent choose one of the GOP candidates. Divisions among groups are similar to those in presidential preference overall.

Personal responses

Beyond preferences for the winner, the survey measured three personal responses to the candidates, asking – in an open-ended question – whether there were any that young women were scared of, any they found inspiring and any with whom they'd like to have dinner. (Multiple responses were accepted.)

Trump, as reported, takes the fright prize; 63 percent of millennial women say he scares them, far above the next most prominent mention, Clinton at 13 percent. Seventy-seven percent of blacks and 72 percent of Hispanics say they're scared by Trump, declining to a still-high 57 percent of whites.

It's 54 percent even among conservatives, as well as 65 percent among moderates and 71 percent among liberals. And while the sample size of Republicans is too small for precision, four in 10 in this group say they're scared by Trump, rising to 60 percent of independents and 79 percent of Democrats.

Trump also scares 71 percent of those who say it makes a difference who wins the election, vs. 38 percent of those who don't. And the fright factor hits 69 percent among millennial women who are more interested in this presidential election than they were in the last one.

Sanders and Clinton lead as the most inspirational and the top dinner dates, mentioned in both cases by 25 and 15 percent, respectively. But, as noted, millennial women are most likely to see none of the candidates as inspirational or a good choice for table talk. (Being inspired peaks among liberals and Democrats, reflecting its association with Sanders.)

Election interest, importance and issues

The poll finds substantial interest in the election; 45 percent of millennial women say they're more interested in this presidential contest than they were in 2012, with 32 percent much more interested. Still, that leaves a majority with the same or less interest than last time, 33 and 21 percent, respectively.

Relevance is a key factor in interest. As noted, young women divide evenly, 49-49 percent, on whether or not the candidates are discussing issues that are important to them personally. Of those who say yes, 58 percent also say they're more interested this year; among those who feel their important issues aren't being addressed, greater interest falls to 33 percent.

Notably, just a third of young black women say the candidates are discussing issues that are important to them, and only a quarter are more interested in this election than the last one. That compares with about half of whites and Hispanics alike on both questions.

One apparent reason is the importance black women place on the issue of student loans, which has not figured prominently in the campaign to date. Given a list excluding perennial key issues such as the economy, terrorism, health care and immigration, a third of black women say student loans are most important to them, nearly double the share of whites who say so, with Hispanics

in between. The top issue for whites, instead, is economic inequality, a centerpiece of the campaign on the Democratic side. (Hispanics divide nearly equally between these two issues.)

Overall, economic inequality and student loans top this issues list with 21 percent each, followed by protecting gun rights, equal pay for women and preserving access to abortion, at 11 percent apiece. Remaining issues tested – lowering taxes and strengthening the military – are in the single digits.

There are differences by ideology as well as race. For example, 19 percent of conservative millennial women say protecting gun rights is most important among the items listed, compared with nine percent of moderates and five percent of liberals. That said, nearly as many liberals and conservatives alike see economic inequality as the top issue on the list.

| | ----- Important issues ----- | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------|
| | Economic inequality | Student loans | Abortion access | Equal pay | Gun rights | Stronger military | Lower taxes |
| All | 21% | 21 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 4 | 8 |
| Whites | 19 | 16 | 15 | 8 | 13 | 6 | 8 |
| Blacks | 22 | 32 | 2 | 16 | 7 | * | 8 |
| Hispanics | 24 | 25 | 7 | 14 | 8 | 3 | 5 |
| Liberals | 24 | 23 | 16 | 13 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| Moderates | 17 | 25 | 9 | 11 | 9 | 3 | 8 |
| Conservatives | 21 | 12 | 5 | 9 | 19 | 7 | 12 |

Whatever their issue preferences, a large majority agrees on another question: Seventy-eight percent say the outcome of the election will make a difference in their own lives, including 59 percent who feel that way strongly. Seven in 10 Democrats feel this way strongly, vs. fewer than six in 10 independents and Republicans. (It's also lower among conservatives, 70 percent, vs. more than eight in 10 among liberals and moderates alike.)

Student loan debt

As noted, nearly four in 10 millennial women currently owe money on a student loan, a key reason it ranks high on the issues list. Among those with student loans, a third call such debt their top issue on the list, vs. 12 percent of those without loans.

The priority that young black women give to student loans in part reflects their higher debt levels. Forty-five percent of black women say they owe money on a student loan, vs. a quarter of Hispanic women. And while similar shares of white and black women have these loans, more than four in 10 blacks owe more than \$25,000, vs. three in 10 whites and a quarter of Hispanics.

Among those with student loans, debt peaks among millennial women with a college degree, more than half of whom owe more than \$25,000. Among non-graduates, 16 percent carry that level of student debt. (Among all millennial women, not just those with loans, the figures are 28 percent and 5 percent, respectively.)

Feminism and bias against women

As noted, millennial women overwhelmingly see bias against women holding positions of power in this country; nearly eight in 10 think it's so, including 45 percent who feel strongly about it. A strong sense of bias peaks among strong feminists, liberal Democrats and blacks, reaching 61 to 67 percent in these groups. By contrast, just more than a quarter of conservatives or Republicans feel strongly that there's bias against women in power. In the middle are whites, Hispanics, independents and those who don't identify as feminists.

Even while so many young women perceive this bias, fewer than half identify themselves as feminists, including just 19 percent who say they're strong feminists. Feminism peaks among liberals, at 61 percent, vs. 46 percent among moderates and just 27 percent of conservatives.

Beyond partisanship, branding seems to be at play: Among those who aren't feminists, half say they agree with the goals of feminism – they just don't like the term. This is particularly the case for liberals and moderates who say they aren't feminists: Fifty-eight percent support feminism's goals but dislike the word, vs. only 33 percent of conservatives – they're more apt, instead, to disagree with the goals of feminism.

Beyond these partisan and ideological differences, education is a key element. Fifty-seven percent of millennial women with a college degree consider themselves feminists, vs. 39 percent of those who lack a degree. And whites and Hispanics are slightly more likely than blacks to identify themselves as feminists.

| | -- See bias -- | | | Feminist | |
|---------------|----------------|----------|---------|----------|----|
| | NET | Strongly | No bias | Yes | No |
| All | 79 | 45 | 19 | 45 | 53 |
| Whites | 79 | 41 | 18 | 46 | 52 |
| Blacks | 90 | 61 | 9 | 35 | 62 |
| Hispanics | 71 | 41 | 29 | 42 | 54 |
| Democrats NET | 88 | 59 | 11 | 54 | 43 |
| Liberal Dems | 92 | 65 | 8 | 66 | 31 |
| Independents | 80 | 42 | 17 | 40 | 57 |
| Republicans* | | | | | |
| Liberals | 87 | 59 | 13 | 61 | 37 |
| Moderates | 84 | 46 | 16 | 46 | 51 |
| Conservatives | 64 | 28 | 30 | 27 | 70 |
| Col. degree | 87 | 55 | 11 | 57 | 41 |
| No degree | 76 | 41 | 22 | 39 | 58 |

*Insufficient sample size

Vote intention

Finally in this election season is the question of millennial women making themselves heard in the presidential election. Fifty-eight percent say they're certain to vote, which is strongly related

to registration: Seventy-five percent of those who are registered to vote say they're certain to do so, compared with just 27 percent of unregistered.

There are other differences. Seventy-four percent of college graduates say they're certain to vote, vs. 51 percent of non-graduates. Voting intention is highest among Democrats, lowest by far among independents, and higher among liberals than moderates or conservatives.

But there are other key factors as well; millennial women are much more likely to say they'll vote if they're more interested in this election than the last one, say the candidates are discussing issues they care about and think it matters who wins. If candidates want millennial women to join the game, the route seems simple: They just need to make it relevant.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Refinery29 poll was conducted by landline and cell phone March 2-22, 2016, among a random national sample of 566 women age 18 to 35. Results have a margin of sampling error of 4.5 points, including the design effect. The survey was produced by Langer Research Associates of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

Full results follow. * = less than 0.5 percent

1. How do you feel about the presidential election this year compared with the election in 2012 – are you more interested this year, less interested, or about the same? (IF MORE/LESS) Are you somewhat (more/less) interested or much (more/less) interested?

| | ----- More ----- | | | | ----- Less ----- | | | |
|---------|------------------|------|----------|------|------------------|----------|------|------------|
| | NET | Much | Somewhat | Same | NET | Somewhat | Much | No opinion |
| 3/22/16 | 45 | 32 | 13 | 33 | 21 | 7 | 14 | 1 |

2. Do you think it'll make a difference in your own life who wins the election, or not? (IF YES) Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

| | ----- Difference ----- | | | | |
|---------|------------------------|----------|----------|---------------|------------|
| | NET | Strongly | Somewhat | No difference | No opinion |
| 3/22/16 | 78 | 59 | 19 | 20 | 2 |

3. To what extent do you think the presidential candidates are talking about issues that are important to you personally? Is this happening a great deal, a good amount, just some, or hardly at all?

| | -- Happening more -- | | | ----- Happening less ----- | | | | |
|---------|----------------------|------------|-------------|----------------------------|-----------|---------------|-------------------|------------|
| | NET | Great deal | Good amount | NET | Just some | Hardly at all | Not at all (vol.) | No opinion |
| 3/22/16 | 49 | 21 | 28 | 49 | 30 | 19 | * | 2 |

4. Thinking again about the current candidates for president – are there any of them (ITEM)? (IF YES) Who would that be?

Summary Table – 3/22/16

| | Carson | Sanders | Trump | Clinton | Kasich | Rubio | Cruz | None | No op. |
|------------------|--------|---------|-------|---------|--------|-------|------|------|--------|
| a. Who scare you | * | 4 | 63 | 13 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 19 | 1 |
| b. Who you find | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|
| inspirational | 3 | 25 | 4 | 15 | * | 2 | 1 | 47 | 2 |
| c. Who you would like to have dinner with | 3 | 25 | 11 | 15 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 39 | 2 |

5. I'd like you to rate the chances that you will vote in the presidential election in November: Are you absolutely certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or less than that?

| | | | | | |
|---------|---------|----------|-------|------|------------|
| | Certain | Probably | 50-50 | Less | No opinion |
| 3/22/16 | 58 | 12 | 13 | 16 | 1 |

6. Of the candidates who are now running, who would you most like to see elected president in November?

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|--------|---------|-------|---------|--------|-------|------|------------|
| | Carson | Sanders | Trump | Clinton | Kasich | Rubio | Cruz | No opinion |
| 3/22/16 | 2 | 35 | 8 | 25 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 18 |

7. Of the candidates who are now running, which candidate do you believe would be most likely to nominate a Supreme Court justice who reflects your values?

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|--------|---------|-------|---------|--------|-------|------|------------|
| | Carson | Sanders | Trump | Clinton | Kasich | Rubio | Cruz | No opinion |
| 3/22/16 | 2 | 34 | 6 | 19 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 26 |

8. Apart from big issues like terrorism, the economy, health care and immigration, there are other issues that may come up in the presidential campaign. Of the ones I list, please tell me which one is the most important issue to you: protecting gun rights, economic inequality, equal pay for women, preserving access to abortion, student loan debt, strengthening the military, lowering taxes, or something else?

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| | 3/22/16 |
| Protecting gun rights | 11 |
| Economic inequality | 21 |
| Equal pay for women | 11 |
| Preserving access to abortion | 11 |
| Student loan debt | 21 |
| Strengthening the military | 4 |
| Lowering taxes | 8 |
| Other (vol.) | 11 |
| No opinion | 2 |

9. On another subject, do you think there is bias against women being in positions of power in this country, or do you think there's no such bias? Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|------------------|----------|----------|---------------------|----------|----------|------------|
| | ----- Bias ----- | | | ----- No bias ----- | | | |
| | NET | Strongly | Somewhat | NET | Somewhat | Strongly | No opinion |
| 3/22/16 | 79 | 45 | 34 | 19 | 12 | 7 | 2 |

10. Do you consider yourself to be a feminist, or not?

| | | | |
|---------|-----|----|------------|
| | Yes | No | No opinion |
| 3/22/16 | 45 | 53 | 3 |

10a. (IF FEMINIST, Q10) Would you say you're a strong feminist, or somewhat?

| | | | |
|---------|--------|----------|------------|
| | Strong | Somewhat | No opinion |
| 3/22/16 | 42 | 56 | 1 |

10b. (IF NOT A FEMINIST, Q10) Is that because you disagree with the goals of feminism, or because you dislike the word "feminist" but agree with the goals?

| | | | |
|---------|---------------------|--------------|------------|
| | Disagree with goals | Dislike word | No opinion |
| 3/22/16 | 34 | 49 | 17 |

11. Do you personally owe any money on a student loan, or not?

| | | | |
|---------|-----|----|------------|
| | Yes | No | No opinion |
| 3/22/16 | 38 | 62 | 0 |

12. (IF OWES MONEY ON STUDENT LOAN, Q11) Confidentially and for statistical purposes only, approximately how much money do you owe at this time, just in student loans?

| | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| | | \$10,000- | | | |
| | <\$10,000 | \$25,000 | >\$25,000 | Median | No opinion |
| 3/22/16 | 31 | 37 | 31 | \$17,000 | 2 |

*** END ***