

In October 2024, Ipsos completed Phase 1 of a qualitative research project in partnership with Galvanize Action. This included two full days of online diaries, followed by six dynamic focus group discussions.

METHODOLOGY & TARGET SPECIFICATIONS

2-DAY Online Boards

We recruited 42 women from:

- Pennsylvania (11)
- Michigan (11)
- Wisconsin (11)
- Ohio (9)

Dynamic Group Discussions

- Choosing top respondents from the boards, we scheduled six, 90-minute dynamic group discussions with 5-7 per group (n=30)

Target Audience Specifications

- All participants were moderate white women (defined as somewhat conservative, moderate, or somewhat liberal using attitudinal statements to gauge core traits)
- We recruited equally across the following age groups:
 - 18-34
 - 35-54
 - 55-70
- Mix of rural, suburban, and small towns in each state
- Mix of marital and parental status
- Household incomes <\$100k
- Mix of educational attainment, but primarily less than graduate degree

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Deep Economic Anxieties:** The escalating cost of living, especially food and gas prices, is causing significant stress and impacting household budgets. These voters are seeking candidates who offer concrete solutions to alleviate these financial burdens.

"Ugh with the election right around the corner. I've been thinking a lot about inflation and the rising cost of goods. It's a significant issue affecting my family and community, making it harder for many to make ends meet." – 33yrs, OH, Moderate / Leaning Trump, Single, Parent

"My first issue is...The economy and how expensive everything is..." – 61yrs, WI, Somewhat Liberal / Leaning Harris, Married

2. **Abortion Rights Remain Key:** Access to abortion and reproductive rights is a major concern, even among those leaning conservative or moderate. They are worried about the potential rollback of these rights and the impact on women's health and autonomy.

"While I do have conservative views, I do not agree with banning Roe vs. Wade. That bothers me to the

highest degree..." – 33yrs, WI, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Trump, Single

"I have been thinking a lot about the election and especially about abortion as it is at stake and hope this right won't be taken away." – 32yrs, MI, Moderate / Leaning Harris, Married, Parent

"I'm definitely worried about women's rights and our access to abortion." – 34yrs, MI, Moderate / Leaning Harris, Single, Parent

3. **Negative Campaigning Fatigue and Fear of Political Instability:** Voters are tired of the negativity and personal attacks dominating the campaigns. They crave substantive policy discussions and want candidates to focus on real issues impacting their lives. The potential for post-election unrest and violence is a real fear for these voters, reflecting the tense political climate.

"I'm concerned about how people aren't talking in political statements about what affects real people directly day-to-day and rather busy bashing each other politically." – 52yrs, MI, Moderate / Leaning Trump, Divorced

"I am worried that there may be violence after the election." – 68yrs, MI, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Harris, Married

"When thinking about the upcoming election, a civil war is what keeps me up at night; Some sort of unrest or revolution within our community and our families." – 33yrs, PA, Somewhat Liberal / Leaning Trump, Living with Significant Other

4. **Mixed Views on Harris:** Voters are divided on Harris. Some see her as qualified and relatable, while others question her experience and trustworthiness. The top five things these women voters think about Kamala Harris:

- Some respondents believe Harris possesses the necessary qualifications, experience, and preparedness to be an effective president.

"I think she will make a great President. She has a lot of experience in different levels of the judicial system." – 58yrs, OH, Somewhat Liberal / Leaning Harris, Married, Parent

- Several women appreciate Harris's ability to connect with and understand the concerns of ordinary Americans.

"I like that she grew up middle class and seems to stand more for people who are in that and lower classes." – 42yrs, WI, Moderate / Leaning Harris, Single

- A significant number of respondents express distrust in Harris, questioning her honesty and accusing her of making false promises for political gain.

"I do not trust a word she says, I think she is incredibly unprofessional and uneducated..." – 38yrs, PA, Moderate / Leaning Trump, Divorced, Parent

- Many women believe Harris lacks the necessary qualifications, experience, or preparedness to effectively lead the country.

"I do not think that VP Harris is qualified for the job and I don't really think that she is liked by most Americans, even those in her party... Her communication skills are very lax and I do not think that she has either the strength or negotiating ability to deal with our foreign adversaries." – 70yrs, OH,

Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Trump, Widowed

- Several respondents commented on Harris's policy positions, expressing both support and opposition to various aspects of her platform.

"I believe she will be absolutely beneficial to this country and to women...Also, her stance on abortion is exactly why I like her as a candidate." – 34yrs, MI, Moderate / Leaning Harris, Single, Parent

5. **Consistent Views of Trump:** Perceptions of Trump are clearer and more consistent. He is seen as arrogant, egotistical, and divisive, yet effective on the economy. The top five things these women voters think about Donald Trump:

- Many respondents distrust Trump, citing his history of false statements and misleading rhetoric.

"He's a liar and a fraud and only cares for him and his family and rich donors." – 55yrs, PA, Moderate, Leaning Trump, Single, Parent

- Some women say Trump has strong leadership qualities and believe his policies, particularly on the economy, were effective.

"Things were better under Trump. Groceries were affordable and people could live!! Businesses were booming." –43yrs, WI, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Trump, Married, Parent

- Several respondents find Trump's personality off-putting, describing him as narcissistic, arrogant, and focused primarily on himself.

"I don't personally care for Donald Trump as an individual, mainly because I find him to be narcissistic and often divisive." – 63yrs, WI, Moderate, Undecided, Married

- Many women criticize Trump's behavior and communication style, finding him unprofessional, disrespectful, and lacking in tact.

"I really don't have much to say about President Trump. I don't like the way that he represents our democracy and even more important the role of a President." – 38yrs, OH, Somewhat Liberal / Leaning Harris, Married, Parent

- Several women express concern about Trump's rhetoric, finding it divisive, harmful, and offensive to various groups.

"I think he's wanting to gain as much power as possible and doesn't care about the average American, especially women!" – 34yrs, MI, Moderate / Leaning Harris, Single, Parent

6. **Susceptibility to Anti-Harris Narratives:** Some voters are exposed to, and influenced by, narratives questioning Harris's qualifications and ideological positions.

"Harris is still a new commodity. She has not been in the news as the Vice President much except for photo shoots..." – 67yrs, OH, Somewhat Conservative / Undecided, Married

"I am hearing a lot about how she is radical and led this country to socialism..." – 24yrs, PA, Moderate, Undecided, Single

7. **News / Media Impact:** Despite voters saying they rely on multiple perspectives and fact-checking to assess the credibility of news sources, responses suggest that media is one of the strongest influences on voter sentiment and candidate choice. If you watch conservative leaning media, you have one set of facts and ideas and if you watch liberal leaning media you have an entirely different (and opposed) set of facts and ideas.

QUALITIES A PRESIDENT NEEDS TO BE EFFECTIVE

1. **Honesty/Integrity/Trustworthiness:** Our respondents believe a president should be truthful, ethical, and act in a manner that inspires trust in the American people and the international community.

"Honesty -Important to not be dishonest and mislead the American people." – 43yrs, WI, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Trump, Married, Parent

"Integrity- they need to be honest, trustworthy and have high morals." – 42yrs, PA, Moderate / Leaning Harris, Married, Parent

2. **Empathy/Compassion:** A president needs to understand and connect with the experiences and needs of diverse populations, demonstrating care and concern for the well-being of all citizens.

"Empathy- the president needs to have empathy because if he or she cannot relate to the people of the world and what everyone is going through and everyone's needs and wants and thoughts then there's no need for that person to run for presidency." – 45yrs, OH, Moderate / Leaning Trump, Divorced

"Empathy and care for humanity - they need to be driven by a genuine desire to help others and make life better for all citizens." – WI, Somewhat Liberal / Leaning Harris, Married

3. **Strength & Leadership:** A president must be decisive, courageous, and able to lead the country through challenges, both domestic and international.

"Leadership- if we cannot feel that the president has a leadership quality then there's no sense in him running for presidency." – 45yrs, OH, Moderate / Leaning Trump, Divorced

"The first quality that comes to mind for a President is strength." – 31yrs, WI, Somewhat Liberal / Leaning Harris, Married

"Strength- in their decisions, their policies and their strategies." – 48yrs, MI, Moderate / Leaning Trump, Single

4. **Intelligence/Knowledge/Education:** A president needs to be well-informed, knowledgeable about a wide range of issues, and capable of making sound judgments based on facts and expertise.

"Knowledgeable - a President must be well informed on a wide range of issues - not only those facing the US but the other countries as well." – 63yrs, WI, Moderate, Undecided, Married

"Financial and constitutional knowledge is necessary to make sound decisions although he/she should also rely on opinions of their advisors who are hopefully experts in their areas." – 68yrs, MI, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Harris, Married

"Intelligence. The President has to be able to understand the law." – 58yrs, OH, Somewhat Liberal / Leaning Harris, Married, Parent

5. **Diplomacy/Communication Skills:** A president must be an effective communicator, able to build relationships with other countries, negotiate effectively, and address the American public in a clear and sincere manner.

"Diplomacy - A huge part of the presidential job is to work with other countries." – 67yrs, OH, Somewhat Conservative / Undecided, Married

"I think the president needs to have the ability to be diplomatic, fair and just and leave their egos at the doors of the White House." – 53yrs, PA, Somewhat Liberal / Leaning Trump, Living with Significant Other

6. **Open-mindedness/Adaptability/Flexibility:** A president must be willing to listen to different perspectives, adapt to changing circumstances, and adjust strategies as needed.

"Open-mindedness - The world is constantly changing, so it's important for a President to listen to different viewpoints and be willing to adapt." – 33yrs, OH, Moderate / Leaning Trump, Single, Parent

"Flexibility - it is important to listen to different opinions to decide what is right to do." – 68yrs, MI, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Harris, Married

7. **Focus on American Interests/Patriotism:** A president must prioritize the needs and interests of the American people and the country as a whole.

"Put America and Americans first - seems silly to even have to say this but if you are the American President your duty is to your country first." – 65yrs, MI, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Trump, Married

"Patriotism - our leader will need to have a love of our country." – 43yrs, WI, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Trump, Married, Parent

COMFORT DISCUSSING POLITICS

The women in these groups said they generally feel uncomfortable discussing politics with people they know. While some are open to conversations with like-minded individuals, many find it difficult to navigate political discussions due to differing viewpoints, potential for arguments, and the increasingly emotional and polarized nature of political discourse. Several mentioned avoiding political talk with certain family and friends to preserve relationships. Here are some of the reasons they feel this way:

1. **Potential for Arguments/Conflict:** Many expressed concerns about disagreements escalating into arguments or causing tension in relationships.

"There are some people in my life with whom I won't talk about politics. That is because, instead of actually debating the issues, they begin name calling and insults." – 70yrs, OH, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Trump, Widowed

"I honestly try to avoid talking about politics because of wrong information being spread and people speaking about it as though it is the truth. Other people get defensive about politics and if you don't agree with what they say they start personal attacks." – 38yrs, OH, Somewhat Liberal / Leaning Harris, Married, Parent

"I honestly don't feel super comfortable talking politics with people. The conversations can get very heated because people feel strongly one way or another." – 42yrs, WI, Moderate / Leaning Harris, Single

2. **Protecting Relationships/Avoiding Conflict:** Some prioritize maintaining relationships over engaging in potentially contentious political discussions.

"Definitely will not talk to my one daughter and son-in-law about politics. It clouds our relationship." – 67yrs, OH, Somewhat Conservative / Undecided, Married

"There are some friends we just don't talk about it because we differ on opinion. But that's OK. Doesn't make me love them any less." – 43yrs, WI, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Trump, Married, Parent

"I only talk about politics to my husband and daughter and a few close friends. However, many talk to me and I just listen. I think too many people nowadays take it personally if you don't agree with them." – 68yrs, MI, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Harris, Married

3. Feeling Uninformed/Lack of Confidence: A few women feel uncomfortable discussing politics due to a lack of confidence in their own knowledge or understanding of the issues.

"I feel pretty uninformed about politics so I'm kind of embarrassed to talk about it." – 32yrs, PA, Somewhat Liberal / Leaning Harris, Single

"I usually don't have a problem sharing my political views however, the minute the person I am speaking with starts trying to make me see their point of view if they are going with a different candidate and they don't wanna hear any of my views and they're one-sided about it. I start to get kind of upset because I don't try to make them believe what I believe I think that's what democracy is all about." – 53yrs, PA, Somewhat Liberal / Leaning Trump, Living with Significant Other

"I'm comfortable talking about politics with pretty much anyone but I don't know very much about it. I only know about it due to my brother who keeps up with it." – 29yrs, OH, Moderate / Leaning Trump, Living with Significant Other

4. Discomfort with Strong Opinions/Extremism: Some women are uncomfortable with people who hold very strong or extreme political views, particularly those who are unwilling to listen to other perspectives.

"I am very comfortable talking to open-minded people, meaning that even if we do not have the same views and beliefs, we can have a conversation about it and hear other view/perspective on things that we might not see. I do not like talking to liberal people who tend to only see one direction and support absurd ideas and extremities." – 38yrs, PA, Moderate / Leaning Trump, Divorced, Parent

"I'm only comfortable talking politics to those I know that have the same views as me...I don't think people can just have a calm conversation about politics nowadays so best to keep your thoughts to yourself sometimes." – 33yrs, WI, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Trump, Single

5. Increased Polarization: Some women noted that political discussions have become more difficult and uncomfortable in recent years due to increased polarization and the tendency for people to take disagreements personally.

"It isn't as comfortable as in the past because people seem much more emotional about it now." – 65yrs, MI, Somewhat Conservative / Leaning Trump, Married

"It's not comfortable at all, but it needs to be discussed and debated before we very possibly make one of the biggest mistake in US history." – 42yrs, PA, Moderate / Leaning Harris, Married, Parent

"Extremely uncomfortable. A lot of my friends are democratic and believe things that I'm unsure are true about Trump and his agenda. If I say anything that sounds like I like him I literally get a death stare." – 32yrs, WI, Moderate, Undecided, Married