



**SHE**  
**SHOULD**  
**RUN**

# Vote With Your Purse

LESSON LEARNED: WOMEN, MONEY, AND POLITICS IN THE 2010 ELECTION CYCLE

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## Vote With Your Purse

### Lesson Learned: Women, Money, and Politics in the 2010 Election Cycle

While women's votes have been critical in deciding federal elections since the 1980's,<sup>i</sup> women still face significant barriers towards realizing equality in politics and public life. In 2010, our nation experienced the first backslide in electing more women to office in over 30 years. In the same year, it also experienced a decrease in women's political giving, after securing very marginal increases in past elections.

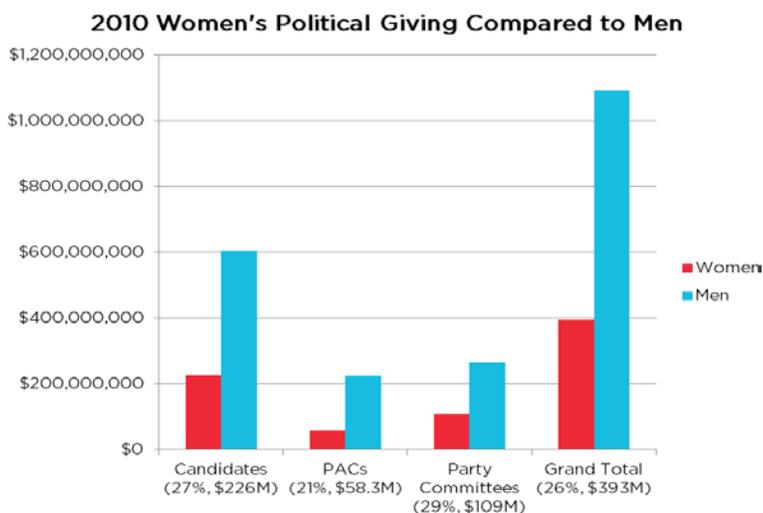
She Should Run, working with the Center for Responsive Politics (CRP), found that women still lag drastically behind men in political giving. In 2010, women made up just 26% of recorded federal political contributions to candidates, political action committees (PACs), and party committees. **More importantly, this is down from 31% in the 2008 cycle and down from 30% in the 2006 cycle.**

This report reveals a probable correlation between women's political giving and their representation in Congress. It is telling that women's political giving went down during the same cycle that women's representation in Congress decreased. Our nation cannot afford these declines, given that women make up approximately 17% of Congress, yet represent over 50% of the population.

**The time is ripe for women to increase their political giving to match their economic and voting power.** Women have demonstrated strength in different forms of political participation, such as volunteering and voting. Moreover, their economic power continues to grow. However, more effort is needed to encourage women to increase their political giving. When women start to invest their money politically at equal rates to men, they will drastically change the political landscape.

In *Vote With Your Purse*, She Should Run also has identified a prime opportunity to fundamentally alter women's approach to political giving, as well as campaigns' outreach to female donors. For women donors, this report offers key recommendations to empower women to make the critical connection between their political dollars, the issues they care about, and the political leaders they help elect. For candidates, this report also offers tips for cultivating a largely untapped resource: women donors.

*Clearly money matters in politics, but women simply do not give enough. When women do not give, they do not have a voice. And without a voice, they cannot affect change. If*



Source: Center for Responsive Politics

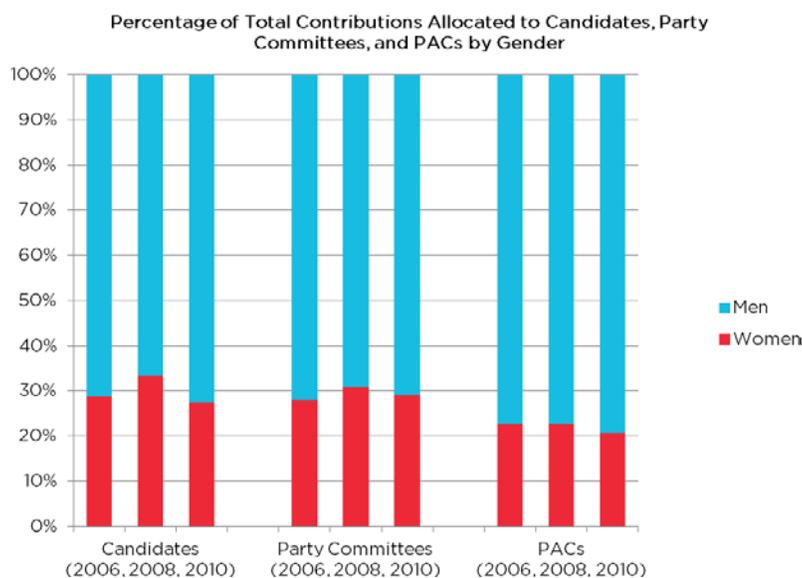


*all women - from different age groups, ethnicities, or economic backgrounds - vote with their purse in 2012, they will significantly increase women's political success.*

## Key Findings

This report examines trends in women's political giving during the 2010 election cycle. It is an update to the *Vote With Your Purse* reports on the 2008 and 2006 cycles, with data from CRP. **As in past years, women gave to individual candidates, party committees, and PACs at dramatically lower rates than men.**

The 2010 cycle experienced notable decreases and other changes in women's political giving. Women's total contributions<sup>ii</sup> to party committees represented their strongest suit, as they made 29% of total contributions to party committees. This percentage stands in contrast to past years, resulting in a decrease of 1.9 percentage points from 2008. It also indicates a change from the 2006 and 2008 cycles, since women's strongest support was for individual contributions to candidates during those years.



Source: Center for Responsive Politics



Individual contributions to candidates decreased in 2010 and are no longer women's strongest area of giving, as in past cycles. Only 27% of total contributions to candidates were made by women, representing a decrease of 6.3 percentage points from 2008.

**Notably, women tend to donate more to Democratic candidates.** In 2010, women made 30% of the total individual contributions to Democrats and just 25% of the total contributions to Republican candidates.

Finally, women made just 21% of the total contributions to PACs in

2010, a decrease of 1.8 percentage points from 2008. PACs also still receive the least support from women. An overwhelming majority of PACs receive 80% of their contributions from men, as was the case in 2008 and 2006. Women show the most support for ideological PACs, over business or labor PACs. In 2010, women made 33.3% of total contributions to ideological PACs, and only made 17.6% and 15.1% of the contributions to labor and business PACs, respectively.

Compared to 2008 and 2006, women's giving to ideological PACs decreased in 2010, while their giving to labor and business PACs stayed relatively the same. For example, in 2008, women made 45.1% of the contributions of ideological PACs, 17.8% to labor PACs, and 15.6% to business PACs.

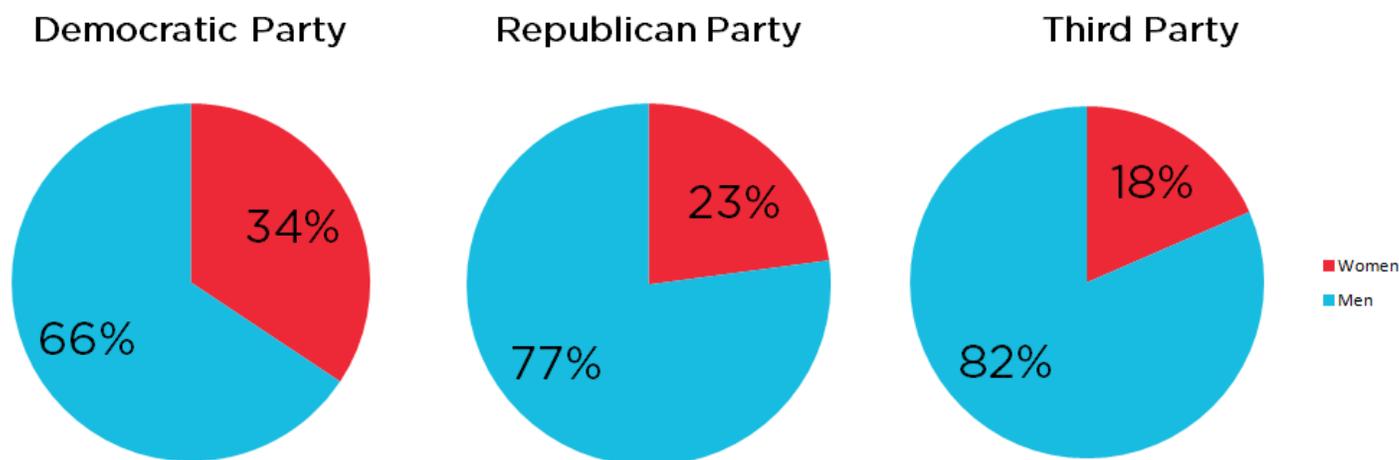
Overall party committees, candidates, and PACs received fewer donations from women in 2010 compared to 2008. It would benefit all three groups to increase their female donor base and consequently increase their funding levels.

## Party Committees

In terms of party committees, women tend to give more to Democratic committees. Party committees are the official arms of the political parties and the Republican and Democratic campaign arms of the House or Senate. In general, women made 34% of the contributions to all Democratic committees and only made 23% of the contributions to Republican committees.

Specifically, women made 38% of the 2010 individual contributions to the Democratic National Committee, while women made 24% of contributions to the Republican National Committee. For the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), women made 35% of the contributions. The National Republican Congressional Committee received only 21% of its donations from women. Finally, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee received 29% of its contributions from women, while the National Republican Senatorial Committee received just 22% from women.

While both parties would benefit from increasing their donor base, the Republican committees fell short of Democratic committees in cultivating a strong female donor base in 2010. Women donors remain an untapped resource. Both parties, especially Republican committees, should strongly invest in securing a higher percentage of contributions from women donors.



Source: Center for Responsive Politics 

## Women Outraise Men

Though the number of Congressional candidates increased from 1,303 in 2008 to 2,215 in 2010, women's financial engagement did not follow suit. Very few candidates rely on women donors for the majority of their contributions. In 2008, *only five* out of 1,303 candidates raised the majority of their funds from women, and in 2010, *only four* out of 2,215 candidates relied on women for more than half of the individual contributions to their campaigns. This change highlights the decreases in women's political giving from 2010. One constant remains: not a single candidate who raised more than \$125,000 total relied on women for the majority of their contributions.

In 2010, only

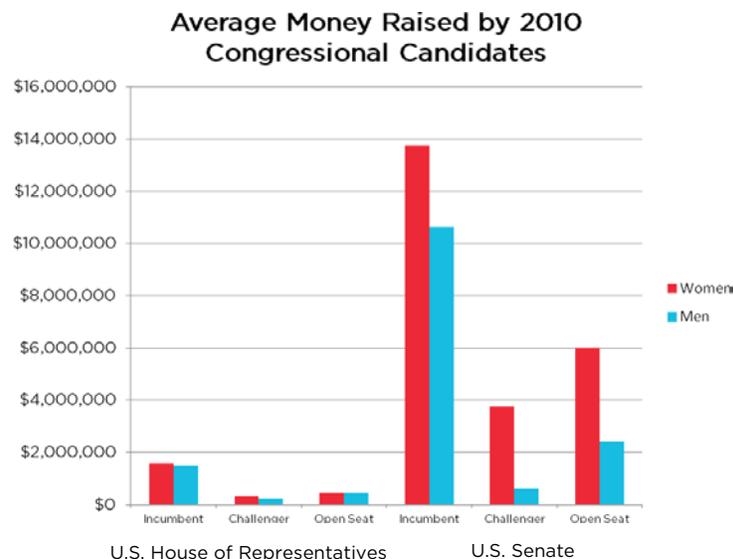
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out of 2,215 Congressional candidates raised a majority of their money from women donors.

**Women candidates are strong fundraisers.** In the 2010 primaries and general elections combined, despite the gender gap in political giving, female House incumbents raised approximately \$100,000 more than their male peers by raising \$1,593,805 on average, while male House incumbents raised on average \$1,496,655. Female House challengers raised on average \$329,747, when their male counterparts raised on average \$255,640.

- Broken down by party, Republican female House incumbents raised on average \$2,100,520, while their male counterparts raised on average \$1,319,193. Republican female House challengers raised on average \$317,111, while their male peers outraised them by a slim margin, securing on average \$319,845.
- Democratic female House incumbents raised on average \$1,449,029, and their male counterparts outraised them with \$1,634,278 on average. However, Democratic female House challengers significantly outraised their male peers. They raised \$396,944, while Democratic male House challengers raised \$184,111 on average.

With increased financial support from women donors, female candidates would be better equipped to wage even stronger campaigns and increase their numbers in office.



Source: Center for Responsive Politics

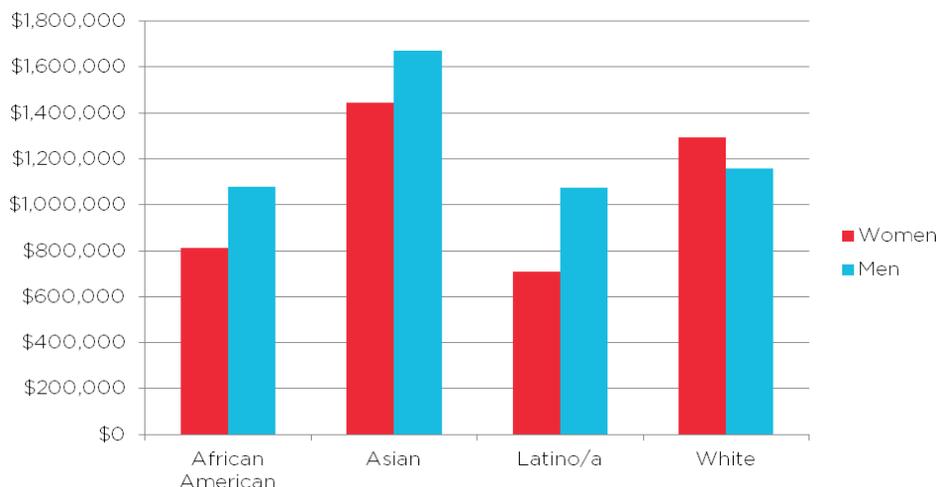
## Case Studies: Women Giving, Women Running

In 2010, we experienced a decrease in women's political giving and the number of women elected to Congress. The following case studies provide insight into where and to whom women were and were not donating.

### Women Candidates of Color

- Currently, women of color are drastically underrepresented in Congress and on the campaign trail. Of the 93 women serving in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, only 26 are women of color - 4 are Asian American, 7 are Latinas, 13 are African American, and none are Native American.<sup>iii</sup> In addition, one African American woman and one Caribbean woman serve in Congress as non-voting delegates representing the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands respectively. No women of color currently serve in the Senate.
- In 2010, there were 4 Asian American women, 9 Latina, and 17 African American women candidates (including incumbents and challengers) for the House. This means that out of the 1,861 House candidates in the 2010 election, only 138 were women, and *only 30* of those were women of color.
- Notably, women candidates of color for the U.S. House of Representatives on average receive less financial support than men of color receive:
  - African American *women* House candidates raised on average \$812,068, while African American *male* House candidates raised on average \$1,077,031.
  - Latina House candidates raised on average \$710,858 while Latino House candidates raised on average \$1,074,138.
  - Asian American female House candidates raised on average \$1,691,804 while Asian American male House candidate raised on average \$1,670,248.

Average Money Raised by 2010 Candidates for U.S. House of Representatives By Race



Source: Center for Responsive Politics

- Women donors financially supported African American and white female candidates more than Latina and Asian American candidates. Women donors made 34% of contributions to African American and 35% to white women House candidates, but only 30% of contributions to Latina House candidates and only 28% of contributions to Asian American women House candidates.
- While women donors gave less than men did, women donors gave at higher rates to *female* candidates than *male* candidates. Women made just 27% of the contributions to African American male House candidates, 25% to white male House candidates, 24% to Latino male candidates, and 29% to Asian American male House candidates.

Imagine how different Congress would look if women of color could rely on a stronger donor base. If women want to increase the number of women of color represented in Congress, **they need to open up their checkbooks and support more women of color running for office.**

### *Presidential Women*

- Hillary Clinton and Michelle Bachmann stand as the leading female presidential candidates (however few there are) of all time from the Democratic and Republican parties respectively, albeit from different election cycles. While they experienced different levels of success in their primaries, their donations from women reveal important insights. This data provides another example that when women give, they financially support more Democratic than Republican candidates.
- **In the 2008 cycle, Clinton received any eye-opening 50.9% of her individual contributions from women.** More specifically, women donors led contributions made at the \$200 - \$2,300 levels. Clinton's Presidential race was an historic endeavor for multiple reasons. **For the first time, a viable Presidential candidate received the majority of their individual contributions from women.** In 2008, women reversed the typical trend and bolstered their support for a candidate through political giving that not only matched but surpassed men's giving.
- It is important to note that even though Clinton received a tremendous boost in political giving from women, only a marginal improvement in women's overall giving occurred during 2008. In the 2008 cycle, women made only 31% of the total contributions to candidates, PACs, and party committees and just 33% to candidates alone. While women contributed 50.9% of donations to Clinton, they did not contribute enough to other campaigns to drastically increase their percentage of total contributions during the 2008 cycle.
- Bachmann received 25.2% of her individual contributions from women in 2011 for the 2012 cycle. **During Bachmann's campaign, male donors outraised female donors in every recorded contribution level from \$200 - \$4,600 plus.** Women donors showed most of their support for Bachmann at the \$200 - \$499 individual contribution level.

Women from both parties can learn a valuable lesson from these two different races: women can no longer sit on the sidelines when it comes to campaign contributions. Clearly, Republican women are not showing enough financial support for female candidates. Currently, of the 93 women who serve in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, only 29 are

Republican.<sup>iv</sup> For all female candidates, Hillary Clinton's 2008 Presidential campaign shows that women donors are a valuable untapped financial resource and they offer new opportunities for women candidates to raise more money.

## Why Aren't Women Giving?

Women have both the economic power and the passion for social change to significantly increase their political giving. Today, women direct more than \$7 trillion in consumer and business spending.<sup>v</sup> Women's income has risen more than 60% in the last 30 years.<sup>vi</sup> They are also the majority of philanthropic givers, making contributions to almost two times as many charitable organizations as men.<sup>vii</sup> So why do they represent only 26% of the individual contributions to candidates, PACs, and political committees?

The 2007 *Vote With Your Purse* report revealed two key factors that helps explain why women invest in campaigns at lower rates than men. The research showed that women do not necessarily think their money matters in showing support for a candidate's campaign and the issues she champions. They do not tend to connect political leadership with positive, productive social change. Women also do not view political giving as a civic responsibility, like voting or volunteering for a campaign.

While there is no silver bullet for motivating women to give politically, more can be done to engage women donors. It is clear that candidates and other stakeholders can facilitate the connection women want to see between supporting a candidate and supporting the causes most important to them. Below are five ways to make that connection.

**Impact** Women must be convinced that a political gift will impact the issues about which they care most. Currently, 78% of charitable women donors polled believe that contributing to charities has a bigger impact than contributing to candidates. They have limited appreciation for the budgetary, legislative, and media power of their elected representatives to promote change.

**Inspiration** Charitable women would be more inclined to contribute politically if giving were reframed as a civic or social responsibility (much like voting or volunteering). This sentiment is at the core of political donors' motivation.

**Information** Women have a higher standard for research and data in making spending decisions (including political ones), looking for information they deem "independent."

**Inclusion** In an age where charitable donors are urged to follow the money closely, political campaigns can appear to be a black hole. By making the spending needs of political operations more transparent, campaigns can have greater success with charitable donors.

**Interaction** Women are motivated by other people – knowing the candidate, knowing people who support the candidate and being part of a larger movement. Peer-to-peer referrals are the most meaningful to women.

## Lesson Learned

*In 2010, if women had increased their giving to candidates by just 23%, this would have represented an additional \$52 million for congressional candidates, including an additional \$13 million that would have been generated for women running for Congress.*

2010 was a year of setbacks in women's representation and political giving. With a considerable number of women running in 2012, this is the year to reverse those losses. Women are largely an untapped source for fundraising, and can make a dramatic difference in election cycles. Increasing women's political contributions would have a major impact on election outcomes. It is time for women to invest in female candidates. It is time for women to invest in gender equity within our political system. **It is time for women to vote with their purse.**

## The Path Ahead

She Should Run is committed to working not just to increase women's political giving, but to increase their investment in gender parity in public office. Women must match their political giving levels with their strong voting and volunteer records if they wish to achieve equality. Their political success depends upon it.

Every day, women are losing the opportunity to support public officials they respect and want in office because they do not give politically. We encourage women to make the connection between their dollars, the candidates they support, and their political success. For female candidates, more work is needed to motivate women donors to invest in women's campaigns. Every woman - of every age, ethnicity or economic background - needs to contribute to women's campaigns and increase their ability to impact the direction of this nation. The challenge will be to inspire women donors to use their growing economic power to support women candidates.

**Join She Should Run in drastically altering women's power in the political area.** On the following page are tips for women donors and candidates to help break down barriers to increasing women's political giving. Women must be asked to engage in this vital civic responsibility and to put their money where their politics are.



## Tips for Candidates

**Brand Yourself.** Make sure women understand the impact you have on their key issues. Mention legislative, funding, and volunteer efforts to support key issue groups.

**Detail Your Dedication.** Your personal ties to organizations and issues matter. Share stories about the causes and the charities in which you are involved.

**Educate Donors.** Women often cite lack of information about specific candidates and the political process in general as a reason not to give. Make sure they know about your work and the dynamics of your race. Don't forget that women donors can often be more successfully motivated to fight *against* a candidate than *for* a candidate – make sure they know what is at stake!

**Every Little Bit Helps.** Candidates must communicate their viability, the closeness of the race, and need for contributions, even small contributions. Make it clear that every donation counts.

**Strength in Numbers.** Demonstrate that when women give, they are key participants of a group that is making a bigger difference together. Their donations pooled together with those of others will make a difference – and a movement.

**It's Never "In the Bag."** Women are less enthusiastic about giving to candidates who have raised so much money that they do not need smaller individual contributions. Show the value of each contribution even when you are doing well.

**Gender Appeals are Less Helpful.** Gender-based fundraising appeals have limited resonance with today's women, especially those under 50. Women respond to reminders that women candidates have a harder time raising money, but most say they contribute because of the candidate's stand on the issues, not their gender.

**Make – and Keep – it Personal.** Women are more inclined to contribute to candidates with whom they have a personal connection. Giving is a response to an emotional appeal for many women. They do not want to commit to giving regularly, but want to be inspired throughout the campaign. Stay in touch with small but valuable interactions such as e-mail updates, holiday cards, conference calls, online chats, or annual donor appreciation days.

## Tips for Women Donors

**Set Your Philosophy.** What are your goals? Do you want to back a winner, help someone new get started, or promote someone who will talk about your key issues?

**Set Your Priorities.** What is most important to you? Local, state, or national candidates? Party control or specific issues? Know what you want to accomplish in advance to make the best decisions.

**Make a Budget.** Plan ahead for the kind of impact you'd like to have. Build it into your budget just the way you would with your charitable gifts or any other kind of spending.

**Make it Bigger.** Ask yourself if there is any way to grow your reach – skipping a soda or latte once a week? Cutting back on some other item? Even \$25 can buy a candidate a lot of flyers.

**Do the Research.** There are many resources to help you, and most are just a click away on the Internet. Campaign websites are the quickest and easiest ways to get the information you need, but also check out political party pages, newspapers, blogs, or political tracking sites like [opensecrets.org](http://opensecrets.org). Don't be shy – if you have questions you want answered by the candidate or the campaign team, ASK!

**Give Early, Give Often.** Your early investment will help a candidate prove viability to other investors – these gifts multiply! The needs of the campaign will expand over time, so be ready to help your candidate over the finish line with additional gifts to publicize key endorsements respond to attacks and create a strong “Get Out The Vote” team.

**Ask Others.** At some point, you may run out of resources, but you still have friends, neighbors, colleagues and family. Tap into your network to introduce a candidate you are rooting for – they can help you make an even bigger financial impact.

**Consider PACs.** Giving to political action committees (PACs) is a clear way to show you are giving based on your passion for a particular issue. There is a PAC for everyone. If you care about charter schools, senior health coverage, pharmaceutical-testing on animals, automatic weapons bans, recycling, trade policy...there is a PAC for you.

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- <sup>i</sup> Reported Registration Rates in Presidential Election Years, by Selected Characteristics: November 1968 to 2004, May 26, 2005, United States Census Bureau, 13 April 2007 <<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/tabA-10.xls>>; Reported Registration Rates in Congressional Years by Selected Characteristics: November 1966 to 2002, May 26, 2005, United States Census Bureau, May 30, 2007; Reported Voting Rates in Congressional Election Years by Selected Characteristics: November 1964 to 2002, May 26, 2005, United States Census Bureau, 13 April 2007 <<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/tabA-7.xls>>; Reported Voting Rates in Presidential Election Years, by Selected Characteristics: November 1964 to 2004, May 26, 2005, United States Census Bureau, 13 April 2007 <<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/tabA-9.xls>>; based on research conducted in partnership with the Center for Responsive Politics.
- <sup>ii</sup> For the purposes of this report, we are restricting analysis to individual contributions of \$200 or more.
- <sup>iii</sup> Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University: [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/levels\\_of\\_office/documents/cong.pdf](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/levels_of_office/documents/cong.pdf)
- <sup>iv</sup> Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University: [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/levels\\_of\\_office/Congress-Current.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/levels_of_office/Congress-Current.php)
- <sup>v</sup> Fara Warner, *The Power of the Purse* (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc. 2006) 3.
- <sup>vi</sup> Pallavi Gogoi, "I Am Woman, Hear Me Shop," 14 February 2005, Business Week Online, 13 April 2007 <[http://www.businessweek.com/bwdaily/dnfl ash/feb2005/nf20050214\\_9413\\_db\\_082.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/bwdaily/dnfl ash/feb2005/nf20050214_9413_db_082.htm)>.
- <sup>vii</sup> Women and Philanthropy: Understanding and Engaging a High Potential Audience (n.d.) Council of Michigan Foundations 13 April 2007 <<http://www.cmif.org/Documents/5168womenpaper.pdf>> (citing B.W. Johnson and J.P. Rosenfeld, "Examining the Factors that Affect Charitable Giving," *Trusts and Estates*, 1991, 30).

**METHODOLOGY:** Fundraising totals from women versus men are based on itemized individual contributions downloaded electronically from the Federal Election Commission (FEC). Coding is largely automated and relies on names as well as other identifiers (Ms. vs Mr., occupations indicating gender such as "Housewife", etc.). Gender for candidates is based on name plus research on the specific candidates.



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To learn more about Vote With Your Purse and She Should Run's other exciting programs, please visit our website at [\*\*sheshouldrun.org/purse\*\*](http://sheshouldrun.org/purse)

Special Thanks to the Center for Responsive Politics

