

VOTING & ELECTIONS

FACT SHEET

Why Women Should Vote: To Ensure Everyone Gets A Good Education

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Education is key to women's job opportunities and economic security. By voting, women can make sure that elected officials make education a priority and help all students succeed.

The federal government's role in ensuring that all students have equal educational opportunities is under threat.

- Ever since *Brown v. Board of Education*, the federal government has led the fight for educational equity, from desegregation, to non-discrimination laws, to measures to close achievement gaps. Efforts in Congress to cut back or eliminate the federal role in education threaten to turn the clock back decades, harming the kids who historically have been left behind.

Federal law does not clearly protect students from discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Students are being driven to desperation and even suicide because of harassment based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Feeling unsafe in school is correlated with declining academic performance, skipping school, and dropping out. Title IX provides protection against harassment based on students' failure to conform to gender stereotypes, but LGBT students need more comprehensive civil rights protection.

Students still don't get the same protection from harassment in school – including bullying – that their teachers receive.

- Schools don't have the same legal obligation to protect students from harassment that they have to protect employees. Efforts to make sure students get as much protection as the adults who are charged with educating them have not yet passed in Congress.

Girls are dropping out of high school at alarming rates, with stark economic consequences.

- Over 25% of girls fail to graduate with a high school diploma in four years – if at all – and the rates are far worse for Black, Latina, and Native American girls. Girls who drop out are more likely than male dropouts to be unemployed and earn lower wages than male dropouts if they do have job.

Pregnant and parenting students are being pushed out of high school and college instead of supported in their efforts to succeed.

- Nearly 3 in 10 girls in the U.S. get pregnant before age 20. Pregnant and parenting students

are particularly likely to drop out, and far too many schools erect barriers that push these students out of school, placing them and their children on a path to poverty.

- Programs to help pregnant and parenting girls stay in school equip girls for college or careers, but the resources schools need to create these programs are scarcer than ever in today's economic climate.

Public education remains inadequately funded.

- Programs aimed at closing achievement gaps – particularly in high schools – have always been woefully underfunded.
- Even worse, because of the economic downturn, many states have made particularly severe cuts in education budgets.

A college education is more critical than ever for women to achieve economic security and close the wage gap with men, but is financially out of reach for many.

- The typical woman who has received an associate's degree still isn't paid as much as the typical man who only graduated from high school. A college education is especially important for women trying to move into high-skill, high-wage fields traditionally dominated by men.
- In the face of high unemployment rates, more people are returning to school to retrain, and more students need financial aid. But the cost of college has increased significantly. Pell grants have not kept pace and are threatened by further budget cuts.

When women vote, leaders listen.

REGISTER. VOTE.

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