



WOMEN AND ECONOMIC ANXIETY

From the Marketplace-Edison Research Poll
January 2019

WOMEN AND ECONOMIC ANXIETY

Women in the U.S. are losing sleep over their financial situations, feel more anxious than men about their personal financial circumstances, and are less likely than men to say the economy is strong. For women of color in the U.S., the differences are even more pronounced. The latest data from the [Marketplace-Edison Research Poll](#) shows major disparities in how women and men perceive the U.S. economy as well as their personal economies, and for nearly all women it is a stressful story.

Much of the national discussion around women and voting can focus on specific “women’s issues” while overlooking women’s views of the U.S. economy and their personal economies. The 2018 midterm elections drew an astonishing 18 million first-time midterm voters, and the data on the electorate will be dissected to understand as much as possible about the demographics and motivations of voters. We already know that an historic voting [gender gap](#) appeared in this election cycle according to our national exit poll data, with women leaning vastly more to voting for Democrats and data from The Marketplace-Edison Research Poll allows us some insight into the economic views of American women that may have motivated these choices.

The Marketplace-Edison Research Poll is a regular series of surveys examining how the U.S. population feels about their personal economy and financial situation in the landscape of the broader U.S. economy. It paints a compelling story about women and their current relationship with finances and the economy.

[The Economic Anxiety Index](#) is a tool designed by Edison Research and Marketplace to measure the amount of stress a person feels about their individual financial situation through a series of twelve questions regarding job security, saving and expenses, and general financial anxiety.

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Principal Findings:

- Women have a higher median Economic Anxiety Index score than men (26 v. 22).
- Non-white women have a higher median Economic Anxiety Index score than women in general (30 v. 26).
- Women are less likely than men to say the U.S. economy is strong (50% v. 70%) and only 37% of non-white women say the U.S. economy is strong.
- Healthcare is by far the top national economic issue of concern for women with 35% of women citing it as their number one concern among a list of seven items, including taxes, immigration, and rising prices.
- Women are less likely than men to say they are financially secure (31% v. 42%).
- Women are more likely than men to lose sleep over their personal financial situation (35% v. 26%). Non-white women (38%) are slightly more likely than all women to lose sleep over finances.
- The majority of women feel that Washington has forgotten them. Seventy-four percent of non-white women and 69% of all women say that the government in Washington has forgotten about people like them.

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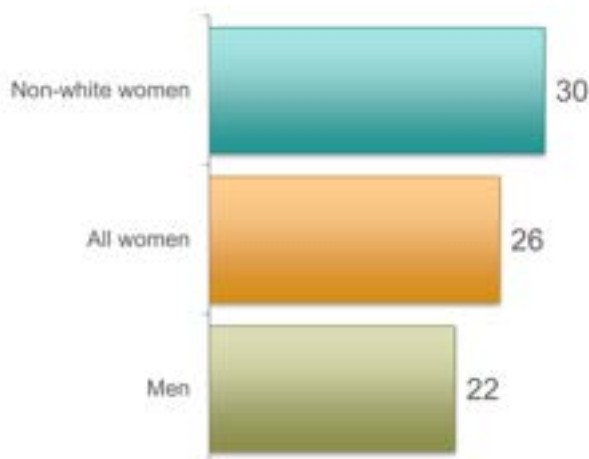
Overall, women have a higher median [Economic Anxiety Index](#) score than men (26 v. 22). Note this is not by political party or by any demographic categorization, this is just for women overall. Generally, women have a higher Economic Anxiety Index score than men.

Non-white women have even a higher median anxiety score than women in general, with a score of 30, 15% higher than all women.

The median anxiety score for women of color is 36% higher than that of all men. Women of color are less likely to be married than white women (43% v. 52%) and unmarried women are more likely to experience financial anxiety.



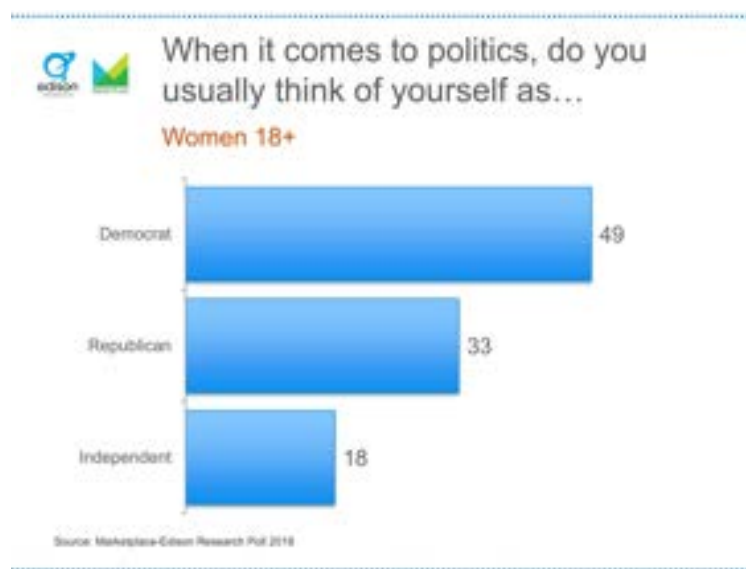
Marketplace-Edison Research Poll Median Anxiety Score



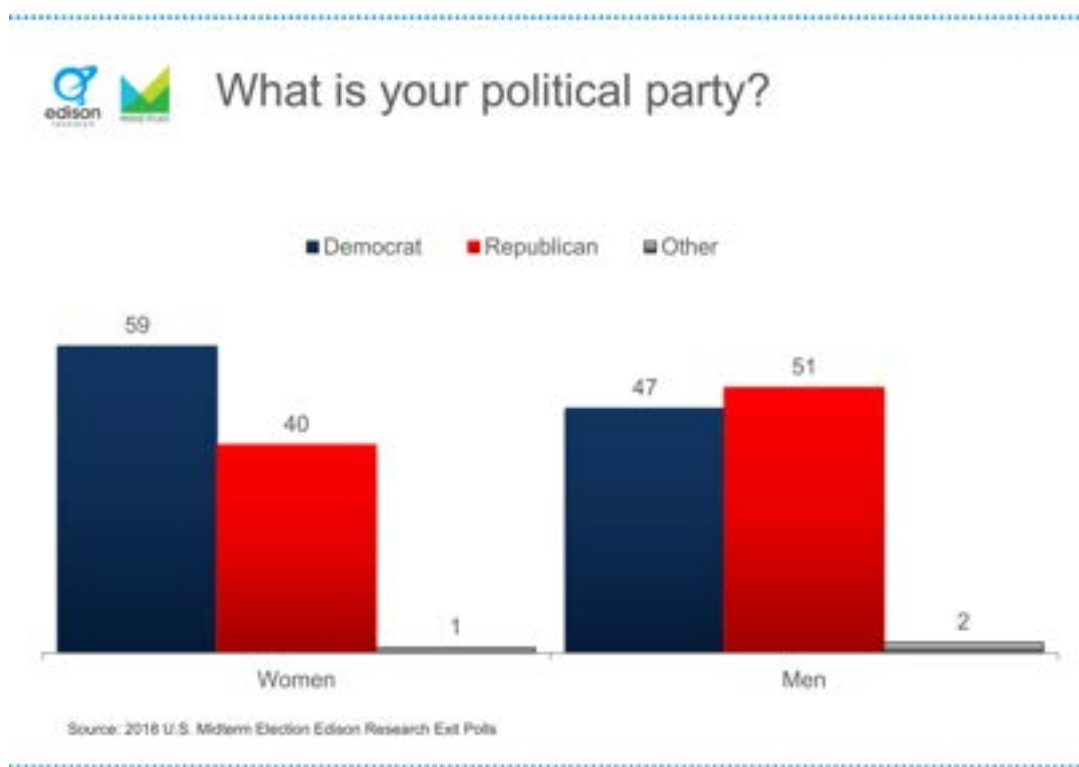
Source: Marketplace-Edison Research Poll 2018

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About half (49%) of women said that when it comes to politics, they usually think of themselves as a Democrat. This question does not measure actual political party affiliation or registration, but the respondent's self-perception of her political leanings. One-third (33%) said they usually think of themselves as a Republican and 18% said they think of themselves as an Independent.

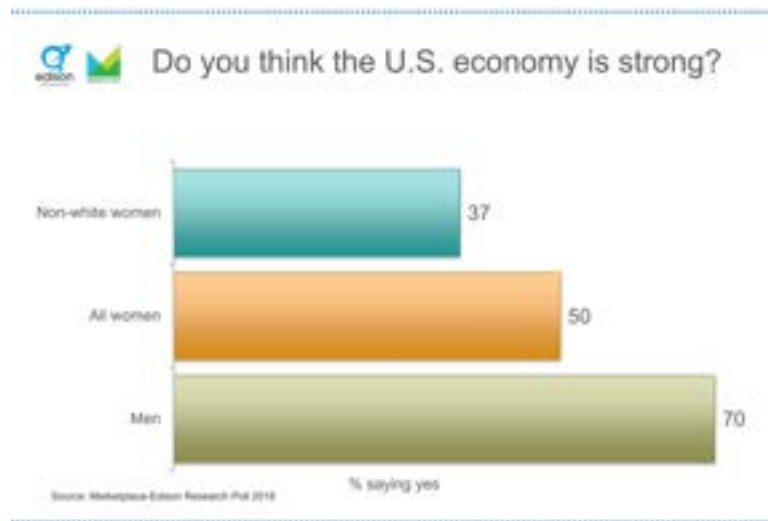


The same story bears out when looking at the political parties of women who actually voted in the 2018 midterm elections. This is the only chart in this report that contains Election Day exit poll data. Fifty-nine percent of women voters identified as Democrat, compared to 47% of men, so there are 25% more women than men saying they are Democrats. For men, they are split almost evenly between the two parties. This is important to consider as we find out from women how they feel about the U.S. economy and their personal financial situations.



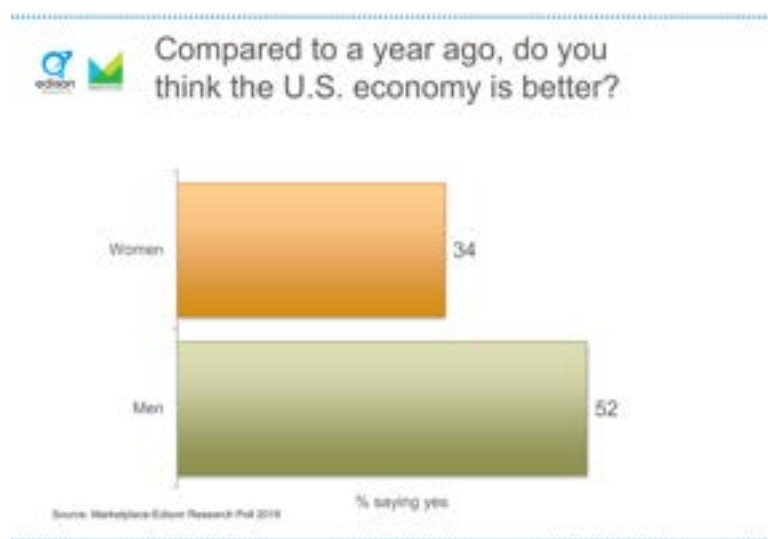
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Half of women say they think the current U.S. economy is strong whereas 70% of men say the same thing. One could argue that this data is a reflection of party loyalty, and since more women identify with the Democratic Party they are less likely to say that a Republican administration is strong. This idea is substantiated by [other data in the Marketplace-Edison Research Poll](#) which shows that partisanship plays a role in how willing respondents are to support the administration of a different party. Alternately, though, an explanation could be that more women are beginning to lean Democrat because of their feelings about the U.S. economy and their personal economies. The differences are striking when comparing non-white women to men regarding their feelings on the strength of the economy. Only 37% of non-white women said they believe the U.S. economy is strong, compared to 50% of all women and 70% of men.



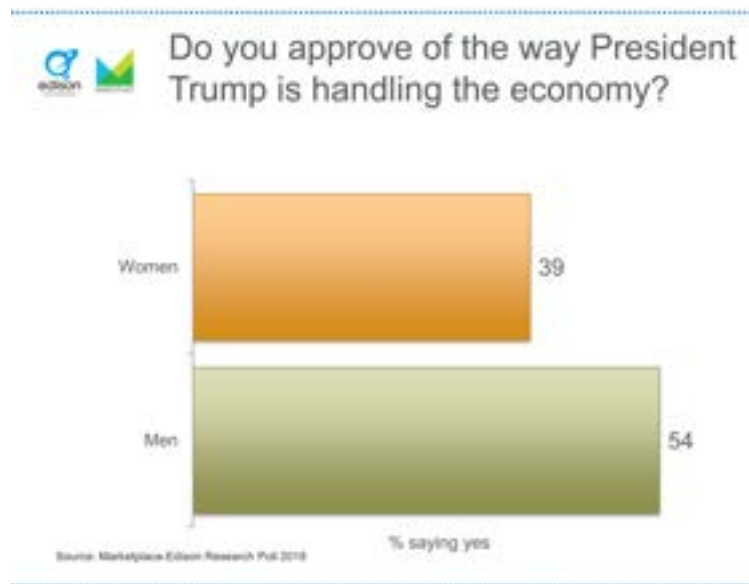
Women are less likely to think that the U.S. economy is better today than it was a year ago, with just about one-third, 34%, saying it is better today. A little over half of the men, 52%, think the U.S. economy is better today than a year ago.

Putting those views of the economy together: 50% of women say that the U.S. economy is strong and 34% say it is better than a year ago while 70% of men say it is strong and 52% say it is better than a year ago. So even though many women and men say they feel the economy is strong now, far fewer agree that it is better now than a year ago.

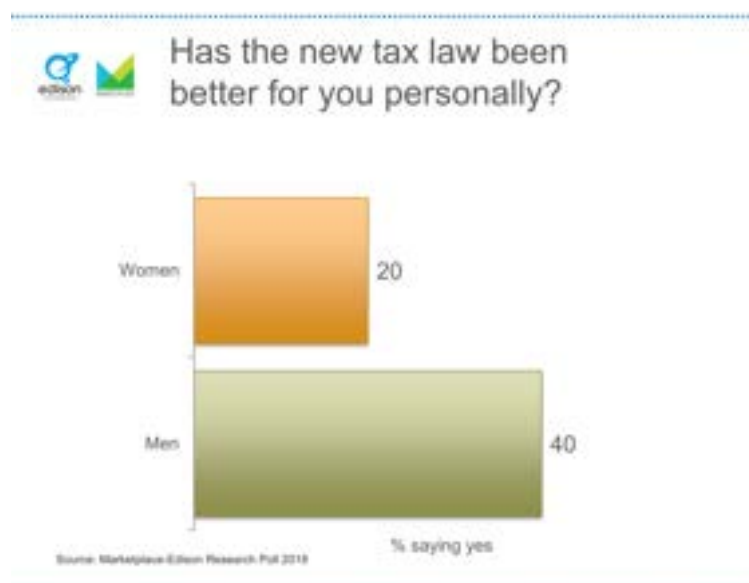


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Fewer than 40% of women approve of the way President Trump is handling the economy, compared to 54% of men. The approval follows party identification quite closely, but not identically. The point to know here is that as a group, regardless of party affiliation, women are less likely than men to approve of the way President Trump is handling the economy.



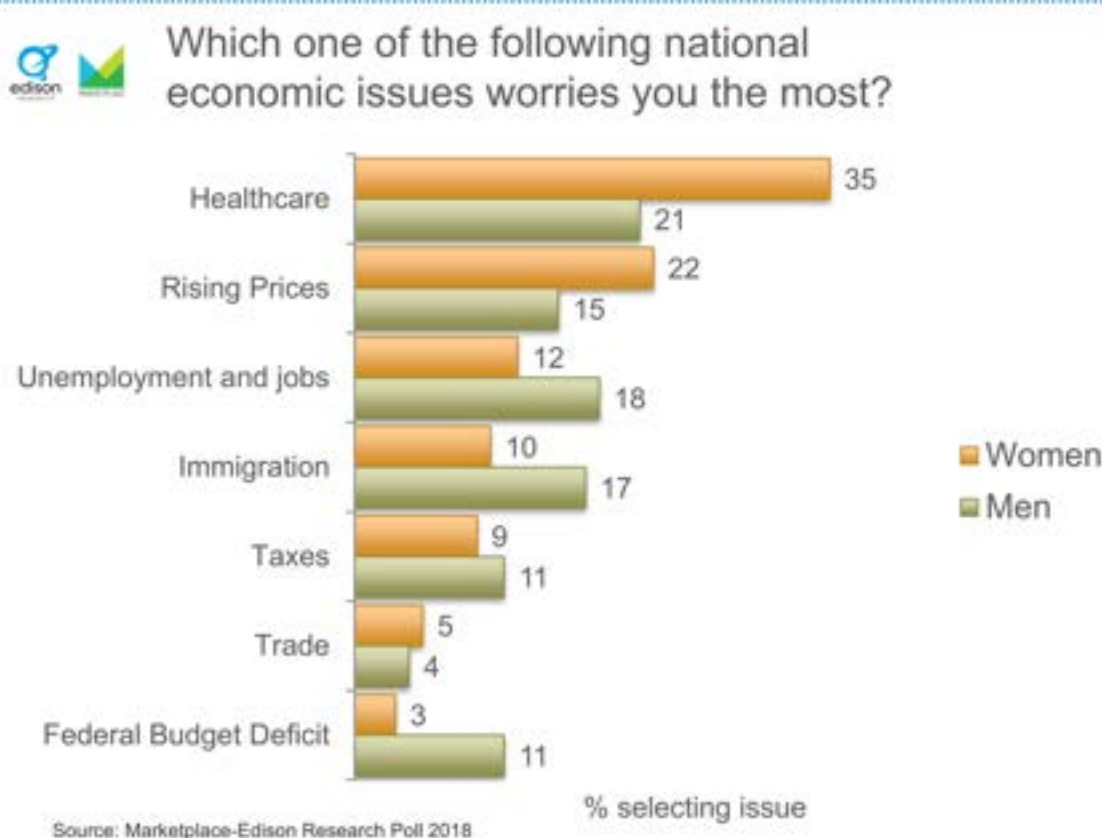
Women and men do not agree on the impact of the new tax law with twice as many men saying the new tax law has been better for them personally. Forty percent of men say the tax law has been better for the economy but only 20% of women say the same. With 33% of women in the Marketplace-Edison Research Poll identifying as Republican and only 20% of women saying that the tax law has had a positive impact, it is clear that women of both parties are not as bullish on the U.S. economic measures as men.



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Healthcare is the issue that women worry about most.

Thirty-five percent of women say that healthcare is the national economic issue that worries them the most, with rising prices far behind in second place at 22% and unemployment and jobs at 12% in a distant third. Although health care also tops the list of national economic issues for men, there are far fewer men who cite it as the top concern (21%). The top three national economic issues for men are healthcare at 21%, unemployment and jobs at 18% and immigration at 17%.



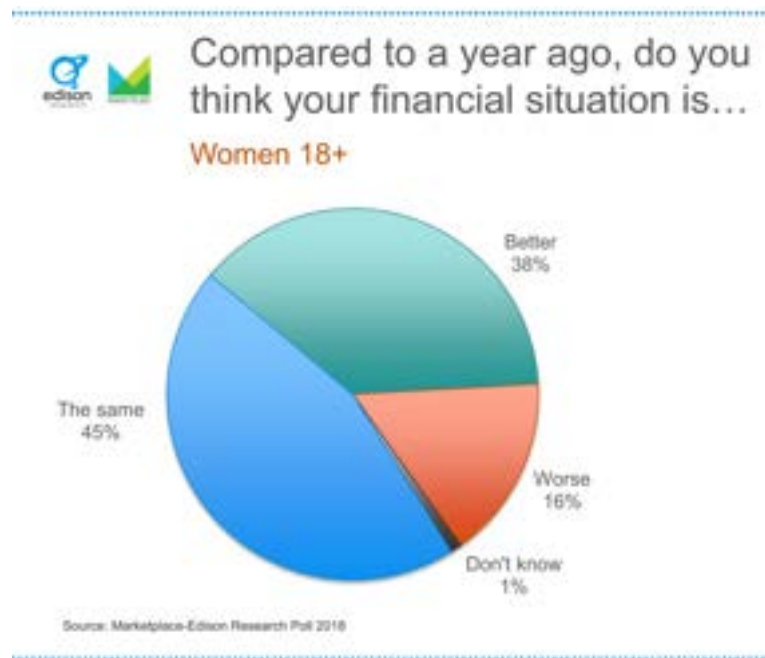
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Men are more likely than women to say that their current situation is “financially secure,” with 42% of men claiming financial security compared to 31% of women.

Less than one-third of adult women in the U.S. say they are financially secure.



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The good news for many women is that their financial situation is better than it was last year, with 38% saying it has improved. Only 16% of women say their financial situation has worsened and the largest number of women, 45%, cite no change.



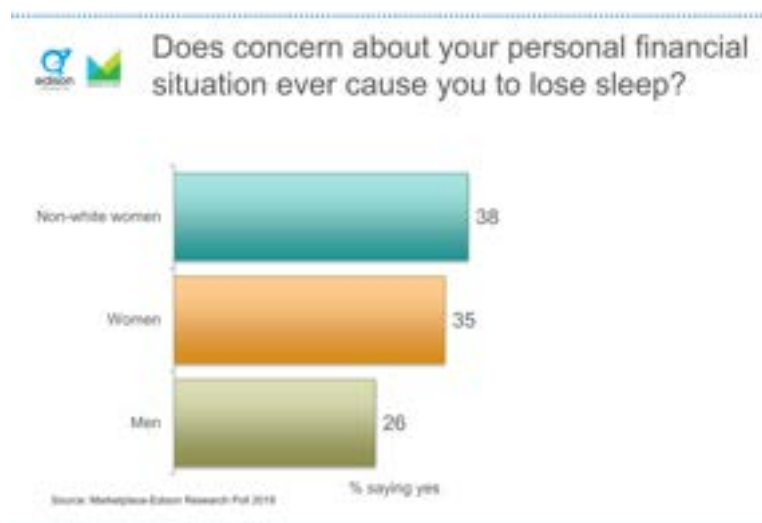
Even though half of women think the U.S. economy is strong and 38% think their personal financial situation is better than it was a year ago, one-quarter of them say they are frequently anxious about their financial situation. By comparison, 19% of men say they are frequently anxious about their financial situation.

Aligning with other data in the study, more non-white women say they are frequently anxious about their financial situations than all women or men. Almost one-third of non-white women (31%) say they are frequently anxious about their financial situation.

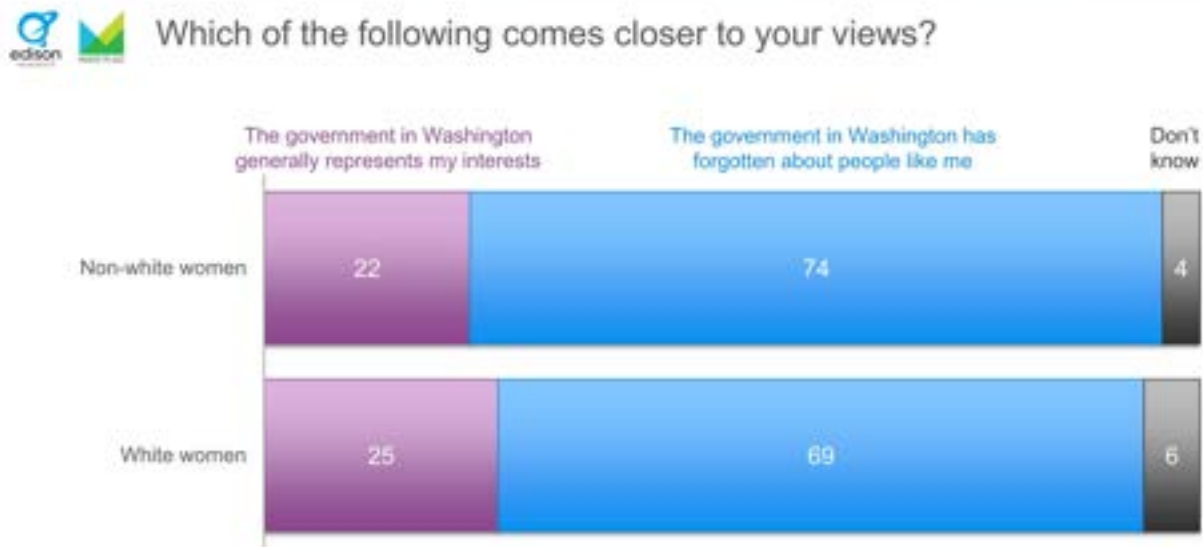
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Women, regardless of color, are losing sleep over their financial situation. Thirty-eight percent of non-white women and 35% of all women have enough concerns about their personal financial situation that they are losing sleep.

This is significant to note because personal concerns work their way into the voting booth and no doubt influence candidate choices. Men are less likely to say they lose sleep because of their personal financial situation.



Also worth noting is that all women, regardless of race, overwhelmingly think that the government in Washington has forgotten about people like them. Seventy-four percent of non-white women and 69% of white women say that Washington has forgotten about people like them.



Source: Marketplace-Edison Research Poll 2018

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Finally, do women feel like they have the opportunities to advance from their current financial situations? Half of them say yes, they do. This means that the other half either feel stuck (46%) or don't know (4%). More women than men say they feel stuck in their current financial situation and don't have the opportunities to move forward (46% v 38%).



Which better describes your current financial situation?



Source: Marketplace-Edison Research Poll 2018

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CONCLUSIONS

Although the U.S. economy might be strong, there are clearly differences when it comes to American men and women and their views on their personal economies. Women feel less financially secure, less sure about the strength of the U.S. economy, and they are more likely to have a high Economic Anxiety Index score. Women of color have an even more somber outlook. Women overall showed a break towards the Democratic party with the 2018 midterm elections, and their financial dissatisfaction and fear must be taken into account as they continue to speak out through their decisions at the polls. We will continue to track these important measures through the Marketplace-Edison Research Poll as we get closer to the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

METHODOLOGY

The Marketplace Edison Research Survey is a national survey of Americans ages 18 years and older. A total of 1,058 respondents were interviewed with 500 interviews conducted by telephone and 558 interviews conducted online. Among the telephone interviews, 244 were conducted via a landline phone and 256 interviews conducted via a cell phone. The average length of the survey was twenty minutes. The interviews were conducted from September 25th – October 1st 2018.

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For more information:

Laura Ivey, Edison Research
(908)707-4707
edisonresearch.com

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Since 2004, Edison Research has been the sole provider of Election Day data to the National Election Pool, conducting more than 100,000 interviews in a single day. For the 2018 U.S. election Edison provided exit polls and tabulated the national vote across every county in the United States for ABC News, CBS News, CNN and NBC News, and will do so again in 2020.

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