

THE LOUISIANA SURVEY 2018

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Manship School of
Mass Communication
Reilly Center For
Media & Public Affairs



Growing share of state residents say women face discrimination

Nearly three-fourths say elected officials accused of sexual harassment or assault should resign

The fourth in a series of six reports from the 2018 Louisiana Survey



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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
ON THIS REPORT:**

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Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs

The Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs, an integral part of Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication, uses the intellectual muscle of the school's faculty to help solve practical problems and advance good government initiatives. The Reilly Center's mission is to generate thoughtful programs, dialogue, and research about social, economic, and political affairs, as well as the developing role of the media in American society. The Center is committed to advancing the Manship School's national leadership in media and politics.

The Center's agenda is diverse and fluid – from the annual John Breaux Symposium, which brings in national experts to discuss a topic that has received little or no attention, to conducting the annual *Louisiana Survey*, a vital resource for policymakers, which tracks advancements and regressions of citizen attitudes about state services. The Center's role, within the state's flagship university, is to respond quickly to the needs of state governance in addressing challenges facing Louisiana, particularly in times of crisis such as during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Its action-oriented and partnership-driven philosophy underscores the Reilly Center's dedication to tackling ideas and issues that explore the relationship of media and the public in democratic society.

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About the Louisiana Survey

The *2018 Louisiana Survey* is the seventeenth in an annual series sponsored by the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs at Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication.

The mission of the *Louisiana Survey* is to establish benchmarks as well as to capture change in residents' assessments of state government services. The survey is further dedicated to tracking public opinion on the contemporary policy issues that face the state. Each iteration of the *Louisiana Survey* contains core items designed to serve as barometers of public sentiment, including assessments of whether the state is heading in the right direction or wrong direction, perceptions about the most important problems facing the state, as well as evaluations of public revenue sources and spending priorities.

In the *2018 Louisiana Survey*, this core is supplemented by measures of perceptions of political polarization in the state and support for compromise; trust in government and media; opinion on proposals to address the state's "fiscal cliff;" beliefs about the role of government in business and the economy; approval of major recent policy developments such as criminal justice reform and Medicaid expansion; and beliefs about gender discrimination and sexual harassment.

As part of an effort to ensure that the *Louisiana Survey* fulfills its public service mission, the research team solicited input about topics for the survey from members of the government and policy community across the political spectrum. Additionally, the research team drew upon expertise in public policy and polling from Louisiana State University faculty. These advisors provided invaluable insight into the design of the questionnaire and in identifying the contemporary policy questions that could most benefit from an understanding of the public's views. While we are indebted to them for their time and contributions, they bear no responsibility for any mistakes in the questionnaire, analysis, or interpretation presented in this report.

We especially thank the Reilly Family Foundation for their generous support and vision in helping to create the Louisiana Survey.

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Overview

Overall, Louisiana residents see significant discrimination against women in society today and a number of challenges to gender equality. The *2018 Louisiana Survey*, a project of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs, reveals that:

- Seventy percent of state residents say women face “a lot” or “some” discrimination in our society today, up from 63 percent a year ago. These views hardly budged for Democrats, nearly all of whom already believed women face discrimination, but the share rose by ten points from 42 percent to 52 percent for Republicans. The shift was even larger among Republican women (+16) than Republican men (+11).
- Three fourths of Louisiana residents believe the country needs to make further changes, comparable to 71 percent who said so a year ago. There was significant growth in the shares of Democratic men (+7) and Republican men (+11) who believe further change is necessary. Opinion did not shift among Democratic women, 95 percent of whom say further change is necessary, but they had already reached near unanimity a year ago. Among Republican women, the share who say further changes are necessary *declined* by seven points since 2017.
- Overall, 61 percent of Louisiana residents say women still face significant obstacles that make it harder for them to get ahead than men. A year ago, the share was 58 percent. Any increase in the belief that women face these obstacles was largely concentrated among Democratic women, among whom the share rose from 80 percent to 88 percent.
- Two-thirds of state residents say that recent allegations of sexual harassment and assault against prominent men in entertainment, politics, and the media mainly reflect widespread problems in society rather than isolated incidents of individual misconduct. There is a larger difference between Democrats and Republicans than between men and women on this question.
- Nearly three-fourths of Louisiana residents (72 percent) say elected officials who are accused of sexual harassment or assault by multiple people should resign rather than stay in office. The share is moderately higher among women (76 percent) than men (68 percent) and much higher among Democrats (90 percent) than Republicans (62 percent).

The *2018 Louisiana Survey* was administered over the telephone from January 26 to March 3, 2018, to both landline and cell phone respondents. The project includes a representative sample of 852 adult Louisiana residents. The total sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points.

This is the fourth in a series of six releases on results from the *2018 Louisiana Survey*.

More Louisiana residents say women face discrimination than a year ago

Seventy percent of state residents say women face “a lot” or “some” discrimination, up from 63 percent a year ago (Figure 1). Men and women show similar trends in their perceptions of discrimination since 2017, and the gap between Democrats and Republicans narrowed. These views hardly budged for Democrats, nearly all of whom already believed women face “some” or “a lot” of discrimination. Among Republicans, the share saying women face discrimination rose by ten points from 42 percent to 52 percent. The shift was even larger among Republican women (+16) than Republican men (+11).

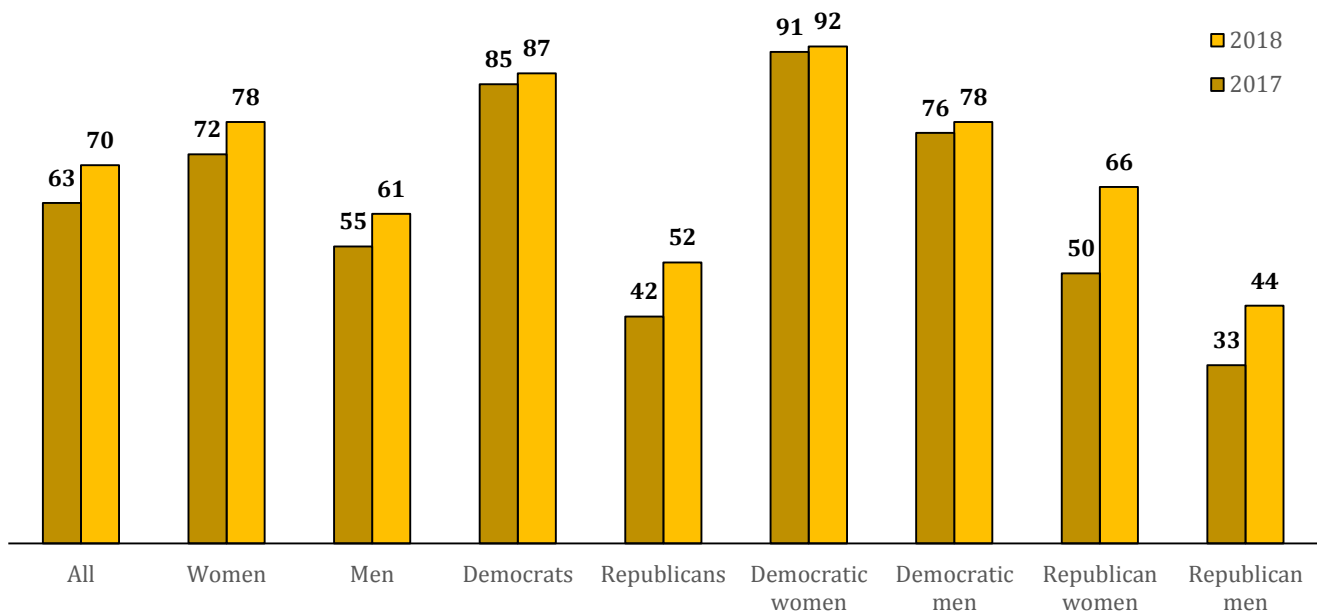
There was less change in the share of Louisiana residents who say, “The country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace.” Three fourths of Louisiana residents believe the country needs to make further changes, comparable to 71 percent

who said so a year ago (Figure 2). This modest trend for the total sample masks uneven shifts across gender and political party. There was significant growth in the shares of Democratic men (+7) and Republican men (+11) who believe further change is necessary. Opinion did not shift among Democratic women, 95 percent of whom say further change is necessary, but they had already reached near unanimity a year ago. Among Republican women, the share who say further changes are necessary *declined* by seven points since 2017.

Overall, 61 percent of Louisiana residents say women still face significant obstacles that make it harder for them to get ahead than men (Figure 3). A year ago, the share was 58 percent. Any increase in the belief that women face these obstacles was largely concentrated among Democratic women, among whom the share rose from 80 percent to 88 percent. Among Democratic men, the share slipped by six points. Republican men showed no change, and Republican women showed modest, if any, change on this question.

Figure 1: More say women face discrimination than a year ago

Percent who say there is “a lot” or “some” discrimination against women in our society today

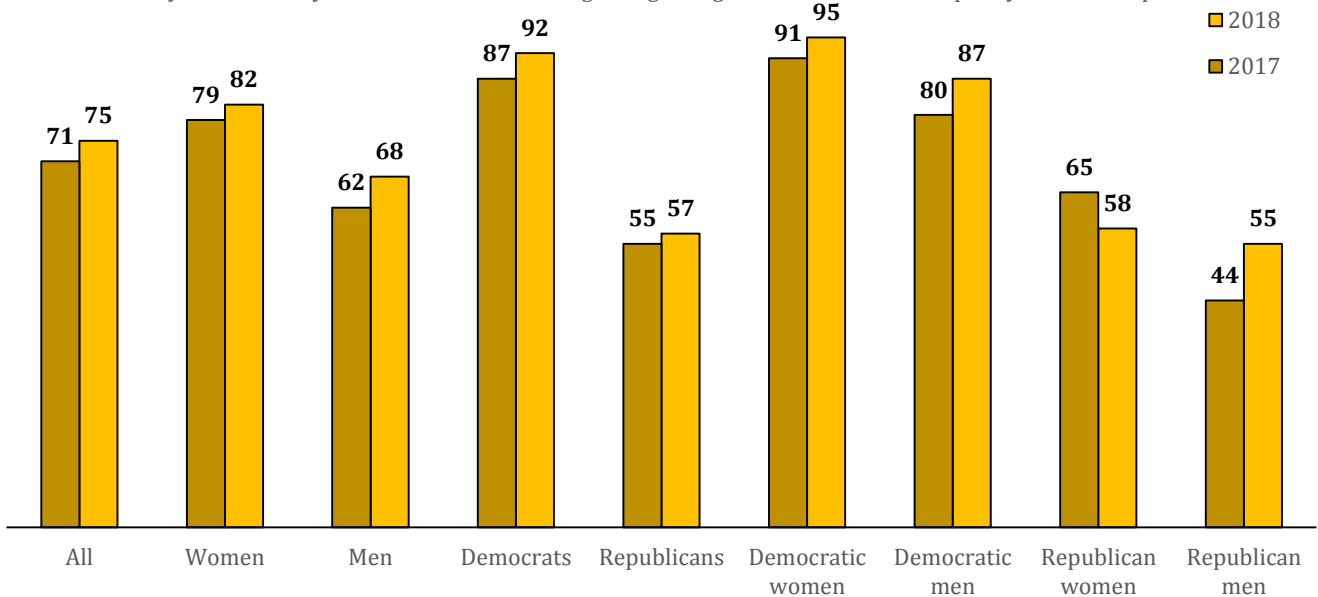


NOTE: Response options not shown include “only a little” and “none at all.” Additionally, respondents who volunteered that they did not know or who refused to answer the question are not shown.

SOURCE: 2017 & 2018 Louisiana Surveys

Figure 2: More say country needs to continue making changes for workplace equality than in 2017, except among Republican women

Percent who say "This country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace."

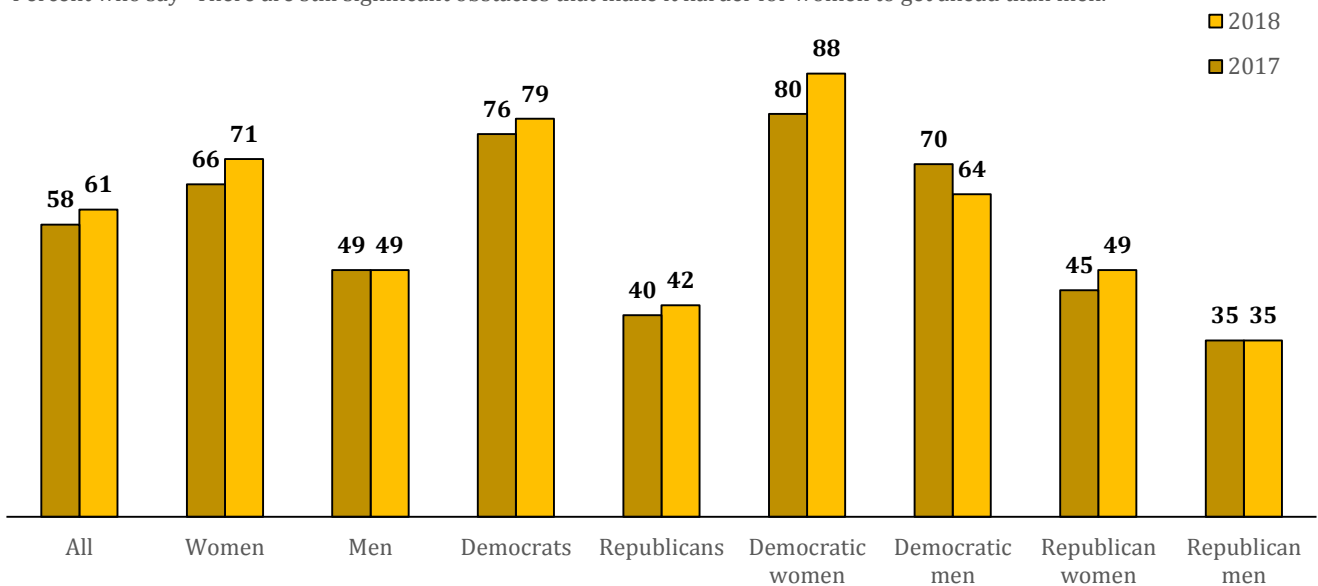


NOTE: Respondents were asked to choose the statement that comes closer to their own view even if neither is exactly right, selecting either, "This country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace," or "This country has made the changes needed to give men and women equality in the workplace."

SOURCE: 2017 & 2018 Louisiana Surveys

Figure 3: View that significant obstacles to gender equality remain in place on the rise among women, but not men

Percent who say "There are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men."



NOTE: Respondents were asked to choose the statement that comes closer to their own view even if neither is exactly right, selecting either, "The obstacles that once made it harder for women than men to get ahead are now largely gone," or "There are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men."

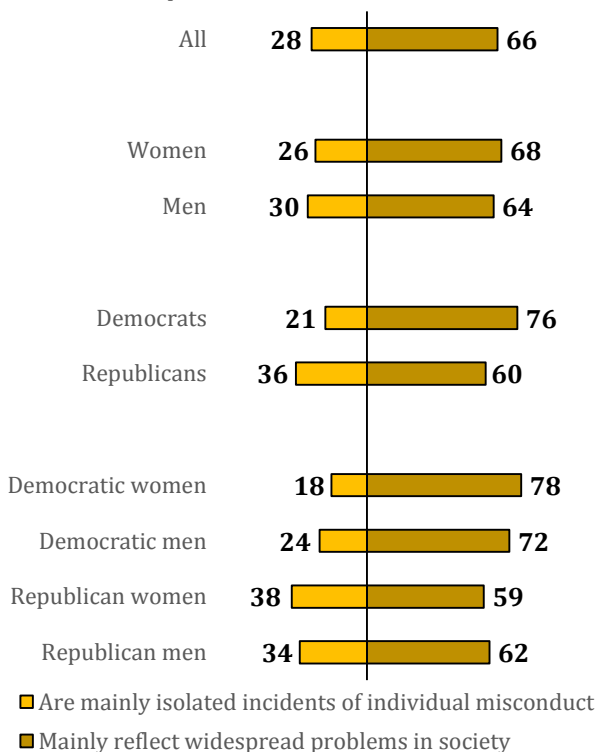
SOURCE: 2017 & 2018 Louisiana Surveys

Most say sexual harassment is a systemic problem

Two-thirds of state residents say that recent allegations of sexual harassment and assault made against prominent men in entertainment, politics, and the media mainly reflect widespread problems in society rather than isolated incidents of individual misconduct (Figure 4). There is a larger difference between Democrats and Republicans than between men and women on this question. Sixty percent of Republicans and 76 percent of Democrats say these allegations mainly reflect societal problems. Even when looking within political parties, men and women largely agree.

Figure 4: Most see sexual harassment and assault as systemic problems

Percent who say recent allegations of sexual harassment and assault made against prominent men in entertainment, politics and the media _____



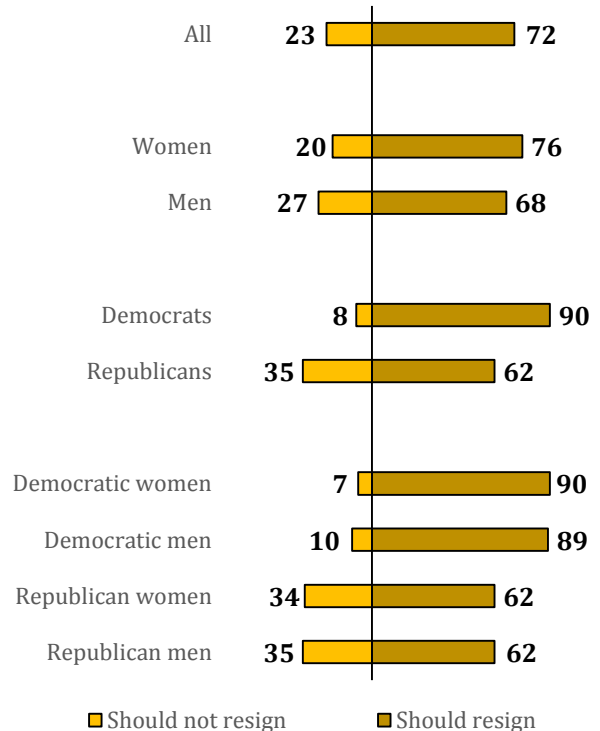
SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Most say elected officials should resign when facing multiple allegations

Nearly three-fourths of Louisiana residents (72 percent) say elected officials who are accused of sexual harassment or assault by multiple people should resign rather than stay in office. The share is moderately higher among women (76 percent) than men (68 percent) and much higher among Democrats (90 percent) than Republicans (62 percent). Within the parties, however, men and women show little differences. For example, Republican women are no more likely to say these elected officials should resign than Republican men.

Figure 5: Most think elected officials accused of sexual harassment or sexual assault should resign

Percent saying _____



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Survey Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted among a statewide sample of 852 adults (18 years of age or older) living in Louisiana. The survey was conducted by interviewers at Louisiana State University's Public Policy Research Lab. The sample includes 326 respondents interviewed via landline telephone and 526 respondents interviewed on a cellphone, including 344 who do not have a landline telephone. The design of the landline sample ensures representation of both listed and unlisted numbers by use of random digit dialing. The cell phone sample is randomly drawn from known, available phone number banks dedicated to wireless service. Both samples, landline and cellphone, were provided by Marketing Systems Group.

The combined landline and cell phone sample is weighted using an iterative procedure that matches race, education, household income, gender and age to known profiles for the adult population of Louisiana found in the Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2016 one-year estimates. The sample is also weighted for population density by parish. Weighting cannot eliminate every source of nonresponse bias. However, proper administration of random sampling combined with accepted weighting techniques has a strong record of yielding unbiased results.

The sample has an overall margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, as accounted for through the margin of error, readers should recognize that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls. As often as possible, the *Louisiana Survey* follows the wording of relevant questions repeatedly used by reputable public opinion research institutions and projects, such as the Pew Research Center, Gallup Inc., and the American National Election Studies.

Interviews for this survey were conducted from January 26 to March 3, 2018. Because data collection overlaps with a special session of the Louisiana Legislature from February 19 to March 3, 2018, responses to questions included in this report were analyzed for any differences between the pre-session interviews and interviews conducted during the session, controlling for mode of interview. For most questions, there is no evidence for differences by date of interview. The exceptions are: The belief that recent allegations of sexual harassment and assault made against prominent men in entertainment, politics, and the media mainly reflect widespread problems in society rather than isolated incidents of individual misconduct fell by 13 points among men and 17 points among Democrats during this period.

The *2018 Louisiana Survey* has a response rate of 11 percent. This response rate is the percentage of eligible residential households or personal cell phones in the sample for which an interview is completed. The rate is calculated using the American Association for Public Opinion Research's method for Response Rate 3 as published in their Standard Definitions. Response rates for telephones have been on decline for several decades and frequently fall in the single digits even among the very best survey research organizations. The response rate for this survey is within the typical range for reputable live-interviewer telephone survey firms.

Louisiana State University's Public Policy Research Lab, a division of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs, designed the survey questionnaire and sampling strategy, computed the survey weights, and conducted all statistical analysis.

Question Wording & Toplines

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, results are for the total sample. Not all respondents were asked each question, and questions asked to a subset of respondents are labelled accordingly. For these questions, percentages are only for those respondents who were asked the particular question. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Q1.

How much discrimination would you say there is in our society today against women?

A lot	30
Some	40
Only a little	22
None at all	7
Don't know/Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	1

Q2.

Which of these two statements comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?

This country has made the changes needed to give men and women equality in the workplace	22
This country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace	75
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q3.

Which of these two statements comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?

The obstacles that once made it harder for women than men to get ahead are now largely gone	37
There are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men	61
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q4.

Which comes closer to your view about recent allegations of sexual harassment and assault against prominent men in entertainment, politics and the media?

They are mainly isolated incidents of individual misconduct	28
They mainly reflect widespread problems in society	66
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q5.

If an elected official has been accused of sexual harassment or sexual assault by multiple people, do you think that elected official should resign, or not?

Yes, should resign	72
No, should not resign	23
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5