

Class of 1971 50th Reunion Survey

Political and Civic Engagement

Questions 38 through 40

Q38. Have you held or do you now hold elective office? If so, at what political level?

Q39. Are you politically active? If so, in what way? How has your political involvement changed over the years?

Q40. What do you see as the most pressing political/social/women's issues, and how have such public policy issues affected your personal life and outlook?

Q38. Have you held or do you now hold elective office? If so, at what political level?

Yes — 12 (10%)

No — 107 (90%)

Comments — 14

- At one point, I thought of running for the CA State Assembly, but that was momentary.
- Chair of our School Committee/ Member of the Maine State Senate and the Maine House of Representatives
- Town selectperson, library trustee
- municipal
- only if you count that I was president of our neighborhood association in the early 80s
- Local voter-registration checklist supervisor
- In the 1980's, I was a trustee of a village--basically kept the streets free of snow and the garbage collected.
- only municipal appointed
- Nine years as a Selectman in Williamstown MA. Member of the Massachusetts State Democratic Committee for a decade.
- Yes, precinctwoman (I actually had one election that was competitive—first competitive election I ever won!)
- Municipal Council
- in today's climate seeking elective office holds absolutely NO attraction whatsoever
- No interest whatsoever.
- Condo board

Q39. Are you politically active? If so, in what way? How has your political involvement changed over the years?

Yes — 62 (56%)

No — 49 (44%)

Comments — 69

- I follow the news daily
- I would not say that I am politically active, although I am quite concerned about the current state of politics. I did give a bunch of more in donations last year, before the 2020 elections, and am giving more now than usual as I am very concerned about Republican efforts to suppress the right to vote, and other Republican initiatives.
- In part, this question depends on one's definition of "active." As a federal employee, I was limited in what I could do by the Hatch Act, which I always interpreted conservatively. So I never got in the habit of campaigning or volunteering for specific candidates. But I have participated in marches and demonstrations, and I have voted in every single election--local, state, or national--since I've been eligible to vote.
- Still very much of a liberal and democrat. However, very much to the center.
- Living in small towns, I attended town meetings and vote in local elections. Service on a town board currently.
- I work actively for political campaigns.
- It depends on the context.
- I have been an elected official for 23 years. I continue to be active, helping with campaigns and advocacy. I also voluntarily advise local non profits on strategy around legislation, etc.
- Strengthened and broadened.
- I have become more progressive and try to support progressive causes.
- Mostly as a contributor.
- Not officially
- I support various candidates and attend small events
- I wrote 1500 non partisan postcards urging people to register and vote in the 2020 elections.
- My local mountain-and-river environment has been threatened three times in the past five years with environmentally destructive developments. I have been working with local groups to stop such development.
- following and donating to many candidates/causes
- I've been active in three presidential campaigns in the months leading up to the election.
- Democratic Party-local
- Donations, letter writing, election assistance. I no longer meet with representatives.
- I was active during my college years (campaigned for Eugene McCarthy) then not involved in partisan politics until Elizabeth Warren campaign for Senate, not quite involved with local political activist network, getting out the vote
- I'm more informed than I used to be
- Like many people I wrote postcards and made phone calls before the 2020 election!
- More active in past dozen years.
- I made phone calls for my Congressman for two campaigns. For his third campaign I leafleted 3,000 houses. I've canvassed for my state rep. I wrote hundreds of postcards to voters in 2019. In 2016 I began going to weekly protests at Senator Toomey's Philadelphia office (TuesdaysWithToomey). He's never held a town hall in Philadelphia or Pittsburgh. Since the pandemic, we've joined the Harrisburg protestors on Zoom.

Q39. Are you politically active? If so, in what way? How has your political involvement changed over the years?
(continued)

- I financially support elected officials I admire. I also financially support political organizations doing good work.
- Not politically active but more politically informed than ever before
- in my local area and my professional associations
- I now work on the campaign of my local state senator. May do more in the future.
- I have not been involved in a campaign for a long time. I have spoken at City Council meetings and submit legislative comments from time to time.
- I am deeply concerned about the many crisis-level issues facing our country, and keep myself informed via print and TV analysis of the issues; however, my political activity is limited to making my voice heard through voting.
- as with volunteer work, I'm in transition
- Active in the sense of supporting candidates and causes with my vote and financially.
- Contribute money to candidates or causes.
- I care a lot about politics and I contribute to the candidates of my choice. At this stage of life, I'm able to contribute more than in the past. Also, see my response to Q34.
- Not very active now, more in my youth, reduced and recently increasing.
- I still have the same political views on essential issues.
- Financial and phone banks
- Anything to fight Trump
- I was married to a journalist for 39 years so I avoided any political activity (except when my mom ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 1980 when I spent the summer helping her with speech writing and going to public events). Since I got divorced, I joined a Party, got myself elected to the state convention twice and worked hard on several campaigns.
- Voting. I live outside the US but have voted via absentee ballot for many years. I vote in-person in the country where I live, since becoming a citizen.
- In the past 4 years it has escalated from the women's march to leading a precinct.
- I follow politics more than I ever used to!
- Was never politically active but now am looking for a way to be effective; protests don't cut it for me
- started with VISTA and now spending time on voting work.
- Used to ring doorbells. Now I donate money.
- Now I write letters and participate in town halls. Increased
- Vote in primaries, stay informed, always vote. I am more informed now.
- I no longer participate in individual campaigns. The misogyny of the MA Democratic Party drove me away, in addition to the feeling that my support for any campaign was the kiss of death. (I love E Warren but didn't work on her campaign.) Still a political junkie to the point where my mental health is literally dependent on the state of the nation. It makes for a very tenuous existence.
- fundraising, getting out the vote
- Only in that I contribute \$\$ and also personally reach out to Congress and our state legislators for specific requests relating to affordable housing and also funding for 911 systems.
- Yes, I'm very active, doing much more now that I'm retired. I always was a letter writer and quiet contributor. Now, I have a group of about 60 people who I inform about the issues and have encouraged them to take action from time to time. I correspond regularly with my elected officials since many of them are on the opposite side from me on many issues. Putting on a different hat, I'm very involved as a precinctwoman, making calls, canvassing, writing postcards, and going to meetings to learn about issues. The elected officials in my party know who I am.
- Somewhat is the correct answer. I have always preferred to work from the inside, not to work as an outside activist.
- Volunteer
- I financially support the causes that interest me.

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(continued)

- I started out in political activism, took a break after my work at the 1972 Democratic Convention and then began canvassing for candidates again in 2004. Have continued phone calling and door to door canvassing until COVID.
- Long time involvement in nonpartisan advocacy
- I served as co-chair of a municipal committee several years ago. Now I mainly get involved in supporting candidates through volunteer time and contributions, plus writing letters to elected officials on issues that are important to me.
- I do what I can to volunteer and go to demonstrations and donate money
- I vote in every election and still maintain liberal views about government and our place in the world.
- much more plugged in and informed
- more very politically aware than politically active
- It's waxed and waned but became active in Obama and Biden's election efforts.
- I read a lot and do too little
- But I vote!
- In Maryland, I worked for some Democratic candidates.
- Has Declined
- I used to help out with national election campaigns. Now I believe you can't change people's deeply held political beliefs. I never fail to vote!
- More active thanks to the travesty of the Trump era
- I'm more interested in knowing what's going on politically & understanding the Constitution & limits of federal power, even though those limits often are not generally recognized.

Q40. What do you see as the most pressing political/social/women's issues, and how have such public policy issues affected your personal life and outlook?

- Me Too and Black Lives Matter. My awareness is sharper
- I just read part of an article recently that said that it will take 145 years for women to gain equality with men, in income, health and education, political power, and one other area. That was extremely distressing. The gap increased exponentially this past year as the industries most impacted by COVID and job losses, etc. were areas mostly employing women. I am still disheartened that for so long women were make \$0.59 to the dollar that men were making. It seems to have gotten worse, though I think that the actual monetary loss is a bit less now.
- The most crucial social/political issues to me are not specifically women's issues: climate change and hunger. But I also care deeply about equal opportunity and pay equity for women.
- Women should have equal opportunity, pay, and rights! We are not there yet!!
- Even though opportunities for women are much greater than when I was young, it still not an even playing field. I'm a lot more cynical as the result of seeing how hard it still is for women to succeed.
- Racial equity and equality. I had thought we'd come a good ways, but now I see that is not true. When Obama was elected, it felt like people got worried and the fear led to hate coming out of the closet. White supremacy has reared its ugly and longstanding head.
- That is way too sweeping a question for this space!
- Politics have changed and are seeking new identities and hopefully will resettle but differently in the near future.
- The hugely growing difference between haves and have-nots.
- Climate change, income equality, racial justice
- Climate change, the inequality of incomes in the US, racism. I went into public service to attempt to address these issues. I continue to work to address them now as a private citizen.
- Most pressing and disheartening to me is the fact that I feel as though we are living in a civil rights scenario that hasn't changed much since we were in college.
- racism, white nationalism, gun control, and all ultra conservative movements--I have become discouraged about the future of our democracy given the events of the past year and the failure of bipartisanship in politics.
- Respect for others (ie wearing of masks to lessen the spread of Covid, not taking the lives of innocent people, etc), gun control, appreciation of our freedoms.
- Fundamentalism in religion - whether evangelical, catholic, jewish, muslim or fringe sects - is the root cause of much of the problems facing the country and women in particular.
- voter rights
- Voting rights. Children's health and food security. k-12 education. Gun control.
- The decline of free speech, respect for law and order and liberty
- racial, gender, and economic inequity, the environment
- Without a doubt, social and racial equality as well as climate change are the most pressing issues of our time.
- Social, gender, race equality; immigration reform; voting rights; alleviation of poverty; the environment
- climate change, CO-VID19, getting rid of the "big lie", preventing disenfranchising the black vote.
- Voter suppression Disparity between the haves and the have nots. After 2016 election results, I vowed to do what I could to get people registered, so that no matter what happened in 2020, I could say I did what I could.
- Child care / family/ elder care seems to be falling mostly on women especially during this pandemic. It appears to be limiting their career paths as compared to those of men. This will negatively impact their lives even through their retirement years. I am single so this has not affected me personally.

Q40. What do you see as the most pressing political/social/women's issues, and how have such public policy issues affected your personal life and outlook? (continued)

- Immigration, Death penalty, Abortion, election of women to key political positions, election of minorities to political positions, voting rights, racism
- climate change--I speak to local garden clubs about best gardening practices in the face of change.
- Voting rights/reproductive rights/gender equality/race/climate...the list goes on
- Racial disparities and discrimination impacting all aspects of life including safe, affordable housing; employment and living wages; health, medical care; transportation; affordable healthy food; personal safety, etc. continue to plague America. And now, add to that internet security and safety, and climate change. A system of National Governance is a challenge. On a human to human level: finding and using our voices to advocate for change seems to be a huge barrier for many/most people.
- Right to vote, abortion, cleaning up our election laws
- Leadership needed more than ever from women
- Continued racism in this country, Turn to the far right among many white people
- Trump is an evil menace to the world and his years in office the most destructive force in history - 4 plus years of personal depression, discouragement
- nuclear disarmament, racism, climate crisis- very involved in education and advocacy
- Intolerance
- racism
- Listening and understanding various views and how individuals came to their views.
- For women, childcare, wages, caregiving. I got no credits toward Social Security staying home raising my kids. People who raise children and/or take care of the sick or elderly need to be better compensated.
- I think our problems — including but not limited to racism, divisive government, sexism, gun violence, and domestic terrorism — stem from our failure as a society to educate our citizens to embrace (not just tolerate) individual worth and differences. I am distressed and dismayed that we seem to have backtracked whenever apparent progress has been made.
- Balancing career and personal and family life continues to be challenging, particularly for women.
- All of the areas cited
- Expand and protect voting rights; work to end racism and social discrimination of all forms
- the rigid divisions between ideologies the lack of civil discourse the unwillingness to discuss and compromise and work cooperatively
- Nowadays -- the ethics of public health policy
- Elected positions equal pay
- In my state of Texas, the governor has gone back to no mask mandate and no restriction on businesses as far as occupancy. Those in charge have also wanted more restricted voting. I think that we need a scientific basis for pandemic rules and a more fair voting system.
- We need to find a way to repair the damage incurred under the former administration and find ways to address pressing issues like immigration, climate change, education, and jobs for the 21st century. So grateful that we seem to be making good progress with COVID vaccines--and with getting them in to people's arms. I expect to be active in some form or other in politics going forward--not as a candidate, but as a worker behind the scenes. I was a great door-knocker, until COVID!
- too hard to answer
- Racism; gender bias.
- Access to quality and affordable (or free) childcare and preschool is a fundamental issue that affects women, particularly those who are single parents. Access to birth control and abortion also affect women, particularly those who don't have access. These issues did not really affect me personally.
- I have been deeply concerned and horrified by violence in our society: for example, the attack on the Capitol in January, the police brutality/murder of African-Americans, the sexual violence against women in the military. I am also horrified by how many Americans believe Trump's lie about the election being stolen, and how many are in denial about the pandemic and refuse to wear masks. But--I am also greatly encouraged that we have a new President who chose a woman of color as his VP and is aggressively addressing so many of the current crisis issues, especially the need to get people

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vaccinated and provide relief for those unemployed due to the pandemic, and also climate change, immigration, police reform, etc. I'm starting to feel that I don't have to be ashamed any more to be an American with Biden/Harris at the helm.

- climate change and social justice are almost enough to defeat my innate optimism
- Extreme right wing politics, deniers of our political process and legitimacy, gun control, climate change, lack of respect for scientists and experts in all fields. Women still have a difficult time balancing work lives with family lives. I have two daughters and it is overwhelming at times for them.
- Economic disparity and gender inequity.
- The rise of white supremacy is very disturbing to me. It has the potential to destroy our democracy which I find frightening.
- Omg, there is so very much that is pressing. I've chosen to fight hardest for fair and accessible voting and for environmental protections.
- Keeping awareness of the "Me Too" issues around women's rights.
- Economic and racial equality and after pandemic getting women back into workforce and restoring the gains we had made.
- Climate change - I'm a demon on recycling. Civil justice
- Inequality- racial, gender, economic
- I am an extremely personal and local social animal. My favorite forums are
- I see the interrelated issues of climate catastrophe, inequity/income inequality and militarism as the most important places where significant, immediate change needs to happen.
- Racial justice and reconciliation. Period.
- I'm more willing to speak out. Freedoms of choice, to vote, to live in a more just world. I'm learning more now that I know how much I don't know about others and how they live.
- Affordable health care for everyone, affordable child care, higher minimum wage, and social and racial justice.
- Finding a way to bring the two sides together (left and right). I've always gone either way and remain an Independent Voter. We seem to be in a very precarious time in this country now esp after the Jan 6th assault on Congress. I am afraid for the first time even more so than I was after Kent State and when a NY State cop pulled a switchblade on me because I was hitchhiking...
- Systemic racism, climate change, equity in salary for women, equity in advancement opportunities. The past four years were catastrophic and depressing. Now we have an opportunity to return to true democratic values. I still very much fear for my granddaughters' futures.
- To get the races to recognize all are capable and that women can do anything and everything
- Social justice and equality.
- Gap between rich and poor Climate Change The disappearance of a strong middle class and a sustainable public education system, all of which are necessary for democracy.
- virus control, healthcare in general, voting access, the environment
- equal pay, paid family leave
- Equal Pay, Racial Justice, Support for Families, Paid Leave, Women's Rights, Choice, Birth Control - so many important issues for us to solve.
- I think in some circles there is a war on women with some people trying to send us back to another era. Threats to reproductive rights and non-support for family friendly policies are part of this. The pandemic has brought some of these issues to the forefront.
- The potential backslide on gained womens rights, before with Trump, and now with a conservative Supreme Court
- Racial equity, women's equality, fair and honest government
- Trump supporters and followers are killing our democracy and civil discourse.
- Now, pandemic related issues which have highlighted racial and economic disparities. We need more willingness for compromise/less of the attitude of we vs they in Congress.
- Inclusiveness, racial & social justice, environmental justice, protection of fundamentals of democracy. Choice of career, how to raise a family, engagement with community.

Q40. What do you see as the most pressing political/social/women's issues, and how have such public policy issues affected your personal life and outlook? (continued)

- The terrible political divide in our country, which already existed but was exploited by Trump. Racial and economic inequality. Women's rights, especially abortion.
- Economic and racial inequality—ie concentration of wealth; climate change, health care inequity
- Women continue to be discriminated against in work, education, and in their personal lives. I have learned to be more assertive, yet still respectful, in expressing my opinions.
- climate change, income inequality, systemic racism, lack of cohesive and compassionate immigration policy
- Economy and pandemic
- countering cancel culture and restoring toleration (hopefully respect) for other views; restoring respect for our country's accomplishments instead of merely focusing on things which can be improved
- I consider Black Lives Matter to be a very important movement. I think that only now is the country becoming aware of the effects of systemic racism.
- Racism
- There's no end to the answer to this question. Again, it's another book. Suffice to say in recent years the Obama years held promise and the Trump years have been devastating.
- Polarization and paralysis in government is a huge problem because it prevents dealing with the other critical problems.
- Inequality of all kinds – racial, economic, healthcare, housing, etc.
- I worry about the glass ceiling, , the right to abortion, and the effects of the pandemic
- Pay equity is perhaps still the most salient. Now retired and using Social Security as a portion of my income drives home the point that lower earnings over a woman's lifespan has meant less retirement assets.
- Racism; equity; unity Become more aware of racism and inequality
- Climate change is the most important issue of our time. I have worked to be an example of sustainable living for my family and my neighbors, for example, by growing most of my own food in a front yard garden, and sharing my produce with all who walk by and stop to chat.
- systemic racism, profound financial and educational inequality between have and have nots, climate change
- Most pressing is the constantly growing involvement of the federal government in matters it should stay out of.
- In light of the 2020 presidential election, I am very concerned about misinformation and a loss of civility. I think the really pressing women's issues are in developing nations.
- As always; female equity in education and workplace; but under attack, women's bodies and our rights