

Women Who Voted for Donald Trump, in Their Own Words

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On Jan. 21, the day after the inauguration, women from all over the country will be rolling into Washington for what promises to be an enormous protest against Donald J. Trump. But millions of women went to the polls for Mr. Trump on Election Day, including, according to surveys, 53 percent of white women.

Why did they?

Conventional wisdom that his behavior and remarks would disqualify him in the eyes of many women proved wrong. Interviews with more than a dozen women around the country showed a range of reasons for their support: worries about the economy, anger about the Affordable Care Act and the price of health care, protection of Second Amendment rights, fears about immigration and terrorism, and opposition to abortion.

But many women also voted against Hillary Clinton, voicing deep suspicions about the American deaths in Benghazi, Libya; her use of a private email server; and the hacked emails of the Democratic National Committee as proof that she said one thing in public and another in private.

Here are excerpts, condensed and edited, from their thoughts.

More Respect for Police

Voter: Rebecca Gregory, 46. Nurse.

Home: Roseville, Mich.

In 2008 and 2012, I voted for Obama, I was pro-gay marriage, Planned Parenthood was very important to me. But after eight years, I saw there was much more racial divide than there had ever been, I didn't like the way the economy is going and I didn't like the stance he took on police. My husband is a court officer and volunteers in the police force. [President Obama] didn't support law enforcement the way he did the community that felt they were being unjustly treated. I think he could have done a better job instead of pointing blame. Instead of saying we need to educate people on how to behave when they're being pulled over by the police.

I'm seeing a barrage of patients coming in from different countries. An Iraqi immigrant came in last night, he needs dialysis. He will never be productive in the U.S., he will always be dependent on Medicaid. I feel for him, I want to help him, but we have to take care of our own people first. Driving to work yesterday, I saw three homeless people. They need our help.

If I turned down every candidate who objectified **women**, I'd vote for no one.

A 'Good Man, Deep Down'

Voter: Sandy Pearson, 48. Studying to be a mortgage broker.

Home: Chattanooga, Tenn.

Trump's not a perfect man, by any means. He kind of reminds me of my ex-husband.

I think he's a really good man, deep down. This guy has such potential, and I truly believe he cares about our country and wants to help everyone.

I do read things on occasion that he tweets and I think, oh my word. I wish I could have had 10 minutes with him. Listen, Donald, you need to straighten up and stop with this foolishness. What he said about **women** was disrespectful. But I don't get offended like some people do. You get through the bad and you focus on the good. Basically these were our choices, and I felt he was the better choice, and I had to overlook the negatives and focus on the positives.

At the very beginning of this election, I was leaning toward Bernie Sanders. I looked at all the candidates, what were their ideas to help our country out of debt and make our military strong and be there for our vets. I have so many friends whose health care costs have doubled and are having to get extra jobs just to pay their insurance. And I read all these things about people where their religious liberties are not being taken seriously.

'He Knows How to Build Things'

Voter: Deb Alighire, 44. Engineer and program manager at Mopar, a subsidiary of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles.

Home: Clarkston, Mich.

I'm very focused on bringing the plants back. In metro Detroit, waiters usually were younger people and during the time of hardship, the bankruptcies, it was very striking to me to go to a Papa Gino's and have a middle-aged man being a waiter. Usually these people would have some kind of job related to the automotive industry.

I'm super excited about **Trump**. I believe he knows how to build things. My dad worked at a coal power plant for 39 years and they're freaked out about energy changing too quickly.

I'm also concerned about immigration. I went to Minnesota and I had a Somali cabdriver who lectured me for 35 minutes to the airport about how **women** in America have too much freedom. My thought process on that is that I don't like seeing people going through the hardship they go through, but I don't want to go backwards in the feminist movement, either.

Daughter of Engineers

Voter: Taylor Davis, 27. Works in a small business.

Home: Enfield, Conn.

I helped campaign for Obama and I was a die-hard Bernie supporter. When he backed **Hillary Clinton**, I couldn't get behind it.

Both my parents are engineers. My mom was an engineer long before many **women** in the field. When the economy started faltering, she went from a very high position at **Pratt & Whitney** to being unemployed for a year, and that was heartbreaking. I think that **Trump** really cares about having high-skilled jobs back here, not necessarily the service industry.

Do I think **Trump's** trying to send **women** back to the kitchen? No, his daughter is a great example. She ran the **women-who-work** campaign long before he ran for president.

Didn't Like Him, Until a Rally

Voter: Robin Mueller, 42. Preschool teacher.

Home: Sterling Heights, Mich.

I made up my mind for **Trump** at the last minute. Since my husband is in the military, I was concerned about having someone who didn't have military experience, didn't have the knowledge of dealing with world leaders. And I kind of thought he had a big mouth.

But I had an 8-year-old who was totally on the **Trump** train. He talked me into taking him to a **Trump** rally. I expected him to be like what I'd seen on the news, saying hateful things. But his presence was very calming and I liked his talking points. We really are the middle class, and we kind of get swept aside.

The first time she ran against Obama, I was all on board for **Hillary Clinton**. I really wanted to have a female president. I think that's important. But I'm not sure that's her. In the past, her stance on abortion was more the way I feel, just for the first trimester, then she did a 360. She was here in the primary, having a debate with Bernie Sanders. He answered the question honestly. When they asked her the

same question, she kind of danced around it. Then she went on "The View" and said she was for late-term abortions. Just take a stance, be honest. Same thing as with gay marriage, she wasn't for it, then she was. I'm 100 percent for it. It's ridiculous the way we tell people who they can and cannot marry. Don't go back and forth. Don't pander.

I **voted** for Obama the last time. I don't agree with a lot of what he said, but I felt he was honest.

A Racist? 'You Don't Know Me'

Voter: Katie Holder, 39. Owns a weight-loss business.

Home: Gulf Shores, Ala.

I feel very, very badly for the people who are very scared for their way of life. From what I'm understanding, he's only really wanting illegal immigrants that have committed crimes to be deported, which I agree with. I feel bad for the lesbian and gay and transsexual community that fear for their way of life. From what I understand, he says he's not going to mess with that.

Somebody called me a racist because I did vote for **Trump**. Hold on, you don't know me. Doesn't that make you a racist by calling me a racist when you don't know me? I'm looking for a brighter future for me and my children, and honestly I felt I like our country was kind of at risk if we did elect Hillary.

No Time for Political Correctness

Voter: Victoria Czapski, 45. Works in education.

Home: Sterling Heights, Mich.

I felt he had what it would take to get the country back on track. Being P.C. was going to kill the country. He speaks his mind and because of that, he's not going to lie to you. I don't want immigrants, accepting them without doing the background checks. Are these people terrorists? I don't want to live in a country where we have to worry about going to the movie theater or the mall. Let's be on the offensive, versus the defensive.

We are a country based on immigrants. But I believe they should go through the process. My great-grandparents came here, they had to learn English. This is a Christian country. The whole bending over backwards. He says what everyone's thinking and is afraid to say. That doesn't make anyone bigoted.

I'm not saying there are people out there who shouldn't be helped. I worked in the inner cities. They're on welfare. They make a certain amount of money and everything gets taken away. That amount of money is so low that they have no incentive to work. Why don't you allow them to gradually earn more money? Find a way to help people get over the hump.

Can't Put Him in a Box

Voter: Pam Cornett, 46. Formerly self-employed, now working in customer service.

Home: Chattanooga, Tenn.

I **voted** for **Trump** because I wanted change. I feel like our economy has totally tanked. People do not have disposable income. I feel the last eight years have been a joke. Obama was out for himself. I don't think he really respected the office. I think it was more about him being a celebrity than a president. **Trump**'s a successful businessman, and I feel like that's what America needs to bring our economy back. I don't think **Donald Trump** is really Republican, to be quite honest with you. He's not in a box. One of the most attractive things to me is he can't be boxed. He wants to bring America back to what it was before. I don't think it's taking us back to **women** have no rights or slavery days.

He Was Egregious, but She Lied

Voter: Paula Filar, 71. Retired business owner.

Home: Shelby Township, Mich.

I thought if he would only have kept his mouth shut during the primary. About the way people looked, about their size. Really? About McCain. I mean, really? All of it was so egregious. I hated it, I cringed. All of that was bad, but it didn't stop me. And it's like Hillary has the right to talk about **Trump** when she stayed with a guy who was in the White House and took advantage of a young intern? Why would you stay with him?

Benghazi. The emails. The I.R.S. She's a liar. The Clintons got wealthy because of their position. I'd rather have someone there who doesn't need the money. He's got a message. He's going to make a change. Her message was all him. All negative ads.

I spent a long time in the staffing industry here, worked with the automotive industry. We weren't competitive. That's got to be turned around. We have to have incentives for companies to keep their work here.

Dark Suspicions

Voter: Tangie Wooden, 44. Learning facilitator for Blue Cross of Tennessee.

Home: Ringgold, Ga.

When **Trump** became my only choice, I felt he was the lesser of two evils. I had major issues with Hillary as far as ethics was concerned. It seems she feels that she is above the law and nothing ever seems to stick. I didn't particularly like everything he was saying as far as building a wall, and doing this to immigrants. I looked at that more as bravado, his audience needed that to get the applause. But there are allegations about killing people who get in her way -- Vince Foster, people like that. Someone who has a big bravado is not as concerning to me as someone who might kill people who get in her way.

Good Business Sense

Voter: Kasia Riddle, 43. Substitute teacher.

Home: Murfreesboro, Tenn.

I run my household like a business, my classroom like a business. I expect him to run the country in such a manner. You don't pay more money out than you have. You want to have your budget under control. You want to know the people you're working with are above average. You want to pick the people based on what they can do, not on what they did for you. He's not getting large amounts from donors based on what you'll do for me later.

A Voice for **Women**

Voter: Guzin Karides, 49. Homemaker, former attorney.

Home: Virginia Beach

I laughed **Trump** off like everyone else did. Once I stopped laughing at him and started listening, I started to support him. I felt like once you got past the bluster, he really was interested in helping everyone.

I do think having a secure border is very important. My father was a Muslim immigrant from Turkey, he went through the process. I don't agree with a ban on Muslims, but my father was very wary of Muslims who came over if they didn't have a reason to be here. He would support a full vetting, but not a total ban.

I have always considered myself a feminist. For me, I want to be treated the exact same way. That's not the feel I get from feminists today, they want extra privileges. I gave up my first marriage so I could be a law partner and then I had to give up on my partnership so I could be a better mom.

To say **women** are going backwards would be wrong. Look at how much **Trump** hires **women**, how much he does rely on **women**, how much he relies on his own daughter. I'm sort of amazed by her. She may pull him more into the middle. She'll be a good voice for **women**.