



NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER
ACTION FUND



2022 Midterm Gender Justice Voter Guide



Women—especially Black, Latina, Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander, and Indigenous women—have shouldered the dual crises of the COVID-19 public health crisis and the economic recession it triggered. For nearly three years, we have shown up for our country as essential frontline workers across industries, particularly in the health care, food service, education and child care sectors. We also showed up as a critical voting bloc in 2020, both as the workers and consumers powering our economy, as well as the community leaders powering our institutions. And we continue to show up in the streets and on the steps of courthouses to defend our basic rights to freedom and equality.

We are at a crucial point in our democracy.

The approaching 2022 midterm elections are shaping up to be some of the most consequential in history for gender justice.

Since our last midterm election, we have seen our democracy pushed to the brink: a devastating Supreme Court term featuring an extremist majority handpicked to steal our guaranteed freedoms; insurrectionists, and their sympathizers, who continue to hold office while failing to deliver economic relief to everyday households and families;

and radical politicians across states who have suppressed voting rights, silenced communities by unfairly redrawing district lines, banned books, endangered LGBTQ+ students, restricted access to critical care, including abortion and contraception, and dismissed the pressing concerns of parents afraid for their children's safety in the face of rising gun violence.

It is time that our country and our elected officials show up for us. Our fundamental rights are at stake, but with our collective power, we can change things.

Women and gender justice activists have a track record of organizing and action, and we need to show up with and for one another. This guide is one way to keep voters educated and engaged on some of the key issues that will ensure women and girls achieve our fullest potential at work, at school, and in our communities. Read it. Share it. Activate your family, friends, and community members, and **make certain that everyone votes.**



ADVANCING ABORTION ACCESS

Reproductive rights are essential to living a life of freedom, autonomy, and dignity. Despite strong public will in support of access to abortion care, the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June, marking the end of a guaranteed right to abortion for people across the country. This means that a small, extremist group defied settled law and stole a basic right from us. Access to abortion care is now up to whichever politicians are in power in a state at any given moment—and the attacks have come swiftly. Twenty-six states are poised to ban or severely restrict abortion. Many have already done so, forcing pregnant people to travel hundreds or thousands of miles for care while others are forced to remain pregnant against their will. And radical

politicians want a national ban that would make abortions illegal in every state.

Making abortion illegal harms people who already face unequal access to health care, especially people of color. It also threatens women's economic security and pushes families into poverty.

We need elected officials to prioritize policies that protect the ability of every person to have the freedom they need to make personal decisions without interference from extremist politicians who want to control us. It is the job of our lawmakers to make sure our laws safeguard our ability to choose if, when, and how to start a family, including protecting access to affordable and available abortion care.

Policies candidates & lawmakers should support:

- **Create a new federal right that guarantees that the right and access to abortion does not depend on where a person lives or how much money they make.**
- **Ensure that people's access to abortion care is free from stigma, barriers, and restrictions.**
- **Make sure our federal budgets fully fund reproductive health care, including birth control and abortion care.**

Questions to ask federal candidates:

- ☐ Given the Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and as states continue to ban abortion, how have you—or how will you—work to create a new federal right to abortion?
- ☐ How have you advocated for policies that help people get abortion care?
- ☐ Will you commit to protecting people seeking reproductive care and those who help them, including abortion providers, abortion funds, pharmacists, and others?
- ☐ What will you do to guarantee our policies and budgets ensure affordable and available reproductive health care, including birth control and abortion care?
- ☐ What are you doing to learn about what is happening in your state for people who are seeking abortion care and those who are trying to support them? How are you making sure their needs are being reflected in the policies you support?

PROMOTING ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR WOMEN & FAMILIES

Strengthening women's economic security and labor force participation is essential to our fight for gender justice. The economic crisis sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated the longstanding inequities and economic vulnerability faced by workers and families. Caregiving and service sector jobs performed largely by women—disproportionately Black, Latina, and other women of color—have long left millions living paycheck to paycheck or working multiple jobs to survive, even as corporations continue to rake in record profits.

We need an economy and a tax system that work for everyday women and families—where working people are paid sustainable wages, where everyone can make ends meet in safety and with dignity, and where

communities have the resources key to ensuring that everyone has equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination and harassment. By ensuring that corporations and the very wealthy pay their fair share of taxes, our communities reclaim revenue that can support the programs we need. If politicians unrig our economy and fix our unfair tax system, we will have more to invest in critical supports like child care, paid leave for all, better infrastructure, enforcement of anti-harassment and anti-discrimination protections, and other policies to help women and families recover and thrive.

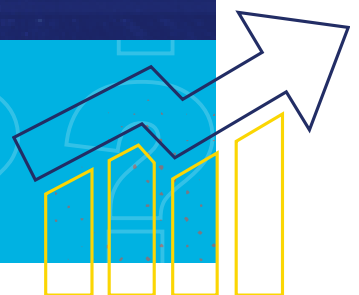
Politicians and lawmakers need to prioritize policies that provide women and families with the supports they need to enter, thrive, and stay in the workforce.

Policies candidates & lawmakers should support:

- **Make millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share of taxes.**
- **Help families with the rising cost of child care by investing in high-quality, affordable child care.**
- **Establish universal paid family and medical leave.**
- **Protect women, especially women of color, and all workers from discrimination and harassment in the workplace.**
- **Pay workers fairly, including ensuring equal pay for all and raising the minimum wage to at least \$15/hour for all working people.**

Questions to ask federal candidates:

- ☐ The tax code concentrates wealth in the hands of the privileged few, perpetuates racial and gender wealth gaps, and deprives our communities of revenues that could be put toward public investments that benefit us all. How will you ensure that corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes?
- ☐ Have you developed policy, advocated for programs, or passed laws that help families meet their needs, including households struggling to find and afford the high cost of quality child care? How will you support households struggling to find and afford quality child care?
- ☐ Have you advocated for and/or passed legislation that strengthens anti-discrimination protections and ends discriminatory pay practices in the workplace? How will you specifically address the pay gap for Black, Indigenous, and other women of color, many of whom suffer the largest pay gaps?
- ☐ How have you advocated for the passage of comprehensive paid family and medical leave for all? Will you commit to ensuring that all working people have access to paid time off to care for themselves and loved ones?
- ☐ People working to support their families should be able to make ends meet, including paying for housing, health care, child care, transportation, and other basic needs. How have you advocated for raising the minimum wage to one fair wage of at least \$15 per hour for all workers before tips, including youth, workers with disabilities, and others? How will you ensure that anyone who works gets paid at least \$15 an hour, before tips?



BUILDING SAFE & EQUITABLE SCHOOLS FOR ALL

Schools should be places where all students—regardless of race, gender, disability, or any other identity—can learn with safety, dignity, and equality. In every school, educators should collaborate with students and families to build healthy environments rich with opportunity, imagination, and belonging. Instead, extremist politicians across the country are working to ban books, prevent schools from teaching the complicated history of race and gender, push out educators, exclude and police students of color, and shame and endanger LGBTQI+ students. Instead of safe and educational spaces for our children, extremist politicians have weaponized

schools to exert control. These extremists are pushing unpopular policies that exploit divisions and restrict our freedoms so they can take and hold on to power and money. And at the same time, these politicians are refusing to take critical action to keep students safe in schools.

We must demand that elected leaders commit to keeping our children and schools safe and healthy. Politicians and lawmakers should prioritize protecting every student against discrimination and harassment and ensure that schools have the supports they need to help students grow, thrive, and live full, dignified lives.

Policies candidates & lawmakers should support:

- **Support students' ability to learn and be themselves by keeping them safe from discrimination and harassment in school.**
- **Oppose efforts to fuel divisions in our communities by vilifying and excluding transgender students.**
- **Oppose censorship of schools' ability to teach truth, including about race and gender and how they have been used to divide us.**
- **Safeguard students' ability to live full, dignified lives free from gun violence without compromising students' classroom time, especially students of color and disabled students.**

Questions to ask federal candidates:

- ☐ How will you ensure that all students and their families, especially students of color, disabled students, and LGBTQI+ students, feel safe and able to thrive within their school communities? What policies or programs have you advanced or supported to protect and meet the needs of LGBTQI+ students, disabled students, and students of color?
- ☐ How will you work to ensure that transgender students are cared for and validated as they learn and play in their school communities?
- ☐ How will you work to ensure that Black, Indigenous, and students of color, including girls of color, are protected from harmful and racist disciplinary practices that rob them of quality classroom time and opportunities?
- ☐ How will you champion educators' and students' freedom to teach, learn, and think critically about our nation's history and current events?
- ☐ How will you ensure that all students—particularly girls of color, disabled students, and LGBTQI+ students—can learn in spaces free from sexual harassment? And how will you hold perpetrators accountable for their actions?



PROTECTING VOTING RIGHTS & BUILDING FAIR COURTS

Our democracy should be of the people, by the people, and for the people. But, thanks to years of gerrymandering, partisan gridlock, and the sharp increase in extremist conservative activism within the courts, that democracy is now of, by, and for the wealthy and the powerful few. A sound democracy is key to building progressive change and policies that support gender justice.

We must demand that our democratic systems are legitimate, elected leaders are held accountable, and voters are heard on how our communities are governed. We can do this by electing leaders who are committed to passing laws that will ensure everyone across the country has equal access to register to vote, cast a ballot, and then have that ballot counted fairly. We need lawmakers who will promote the integrity of our elections instead of cheating the system by limiting access to the ballot

and picking and choosing whose votes matter and when.

And it isn't just lawmakers we need to keep accountable—it's judges too. We elect the president and senators who appoint and confirm judges and justices for lifetime appointments on the courts, which are meant to ensure equal justice and protect fundamental civil and constitutional rights for all. We must use the power of our votes to reshape our courts so that our judges and justices support equal rights under the law for all, especially for women, families, and people of color.

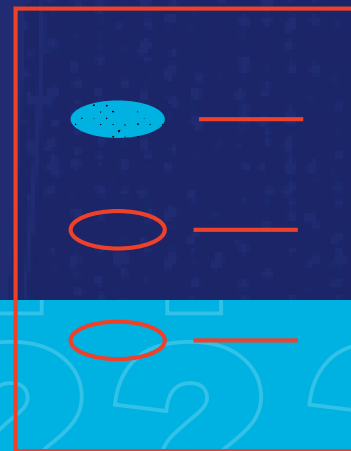
Politicians and lawmakers need to prioritize strengthening our democratic infrastructure and our courts to create a level playing field, restore fundamental protections and civil rights, and prevent future threats to our democratic systems.

Policies candidates & lawmakers should support:

- **Protect and expand access to the ballot and restore the Voting Rights Act, including by passing the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.**
- **Unrig our democracy by abolishing the filibuster, an old U.S. Senate rule that has been used for decades to block critical civil rights, including voting rights, and gun safety legislation.**
- **Reshape the makeup of our federal judiciary by nominating and confirming judges with a strong record of supporting gender and racial justice issues and who affirmatively declare they will uphold equality, opportunity for all, individual liberty, and the freedom to make personal decisions about our bodies and relationships.**

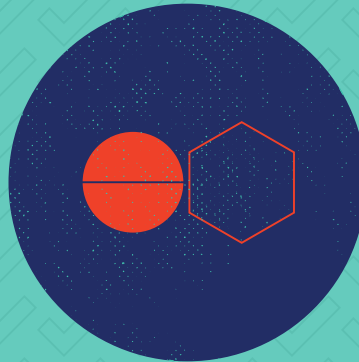
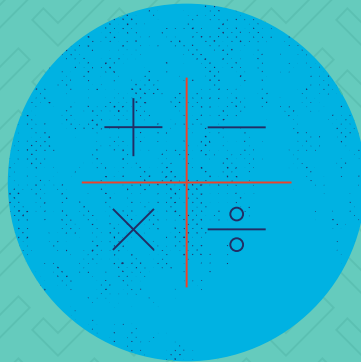
Questions to ask federal candidates:

- ☐ What policies will you support to ensure that all eligible voters have equal access to register to vote, cast a ballot, and have that ballot counted fairly?
- ☐ For congressional candidates: Have you endorsed the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act? If not (because you are not an incumbent), will you commit to endorsing and passing the John Lewis Voting Rights Act during its next introduction and other efforts to fully restore the Voting Rights Act?
- ☐ How will you ensure that you recommend candidates for federal judgeships who are committed to equality, freedom, opportunity for all, and individual liberty and rights that uphold individuals' abilities to make personal decisions about their bodies and relationships?
- ☐ Have you recommended candidates to the White House and/or supported judicial nominees with a strong record on civil rights and gender justice? If not (because you are not an incumbent), will you commit to recommending and supporting judicial nominees with a strong record on civil rights and gender justice?
- ☐ How will you hold federal judges accountable who do not adhere to constitutional norms and the rule of law?





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