

## HER VIEW

# Is there a Republican 'War on Women'?



McMorris Rodgers

By Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers |

For weeks, President Obama, Democratic activists and their friends in the media have relentlessly pushed the idea Republicans have launched a "War on Women."

After weeks of this carefully orchestrated campaign, the consensus among administration officials and Beltway insiders is clear: Women are outraged by Republican policies, the GOP has done enormous damage to its brand among women and the Democrats are going to reap the benefits at election time.

If you're David Axelrod or Debbie Wasserman Schultz, it's a great story.

But is it true?

The Washington Post has no doubt. A few days ago, they ran a story titled "Recent debate over contraception comes as GOP loses gains among women." And the story is filled with quotes and anecdotes about how knuckle-dragging Republicans have badly damaged themselves by daring to stand up to the latest Obamacare mandate.

But what are the facts? What does the polling actually say?

The latest CBS NEWS/NY Times poll - in a story March 12 headlined "Obama's approval ratings drop" - showed that women's approval of Obama had dropped by 12 percent in the past month, entirely erasing Democrat's traditional lead among women.

The same poll showed 53 percent of women believe that "religiously affiliated employers such as a hospital or university" should be able to opt-out of mandatory contraception coverage.

Of course, that is exactly the opposite of the controversial position taken by the Obama administration.

Whether the inaccurate reporting is intentional misdirection or honest confusion is not for me to say. But talk about a gender gap is not new news.

Since 1992, Democrats have done better with women in presidential elections - in 2008, they supported Obama over McCain by 13 points.

What is new is that in the 2010 congressional elections, there was no gender gap. Women split their vote evenly between Republicans and Democrats - the only time Republicans have matched the Democrats among women voters in the history of exit polling.

The result was devastating for the Democrats. Republicans gained more seats than at any time since the Civil War. A record 87 Republicans were elected and a record nine of those freshmen were women - another story the media missed.

The end of the gender gap sent shock waves through the Democrat establishment. They need a gender gap to have any chance in 2012, but they are having a hard time manufacturing one.

After all, four of the six women governors today are Republicans. And we're the only party in the last 25 years to nominate a woman for vice president.

This time the plan backfired, as the Obama administration was widely perceived by both men and women to be attacking religious freedom.

But you can bet the Democrats and their media friends will keep trying to find some story that works.

The Democrats believe talking about health care will help them politically - even if they need to stretch the truth. I say: Let's talk about health care.

Let's talk about the fact American women make 85 percent of all health care decisions and they represent the vast majority of the people working in health care professions.

Let's talk about the 15 unelected members of IPAB, the Independent Payment Advisory Board, charged with deciding which of your medical treatments should receive federal funding.

Let's talk about the individual insurance mandate that tells a woman what type of insurance she needs to buy for her family.

This pseudo-controversy about "women's health" has only reminded American women of what Obamacare did - undermining her power to make health care decisions, and shifting that power to the government.

The real story of the last few years isn't the Republican "War on Women," it's that ~~women are turning to the Republicans more than ever before.~~ And it's a trend that shows no sign of stopping.

**U.S. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers** represents eastern Washington and is the highest-ranking Republican woman in Congress.