

## **One in Four U.S. Women Reports Workplace Harassment**

More than a political issue, sexual harassment in the workplace is a common experience among women – and source of worry among men – in American society.

One in four women has experienced workplace sexual harassment, this ABC News/Washington Post poll finds. One in 10 men say they've experienced it as well – and a quarter of men say they worry about being falsely accused of sexual harassment.

With harassment allegations against Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain dominating the headlines, this survey, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), shows the extent to which the subject resonates in the personal experiences and concerns of many Americans.

Overall, 64 percent see sexual harassment as a problem in this country, soaring to 88 percent of women who've been harassed. Still, the overall number is far below its peak, 85 percent, in late 1992. That was a year after the confirmation hearings of Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas, accused of harassment by former co-worker Anita Hill; and during the sexual misconduct scandal that forced then Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Oregon, from office.

**PROGRESS and PROBLEMS** – Experience of harassment also is down from its peak, from 32 percent of women in surveys in late 1992 and mid-1994 to 24 percent now, perhaps a sign of progress. Additionally, among women who've been sexually harassed, somewhat more now say they reported it to their employer – 41 percent, compared with 33 percent in 1994.

Further, the number of men who worry about being falsely accused has eased a bit from 31 percent in 1994 to 25 percent now. And fewer men think they've said or done things that might be construed as workplace sexual harassment – 10 percent now, vs. 25 percent in 1994.

Challenges remain. Among those who've experienced harassment but did not report it, four in 10 were either concerned about the consequences of making a report, or didn't think it would do any good. (Fewer, three in 10 didn't consider it important enough.) And only a modest majority of women, 56 percent, think that if they did report harassment it would be handled fairly.

**DIVISIONS** – Sixty-nine percent of women call workplace sexual harassment a problem, compared with 59 percent of men; that widens in particular to a gap between Republican women (63 percent call it a problem) vs. Republican men (just 43 percent agree.) There's no gender difference among Democrats, and a smaller one among independents.

Strictly along political lines, 75 percent of Democrats call the issue a problem, as do seven in 10 liberals and moderates alike; that declines to 53 percent of Republicans (men and women combined) and 55 percent of conservatives.

CAIN – Finally, experience of sexual harassment informs views of the [Cain controversy](#). Among women who've experienced harassment, 61 percent are inclined to believe Cain's accusers rather than his denials; that declines to 47 percent of women, and 37 percent of men, who haven't been sexually harassed at work. And people who think harassment is a problem likewise are more apt to believe Cain's accusers and to see the issue as a serious matter.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post survey was conducted by landline and cell phone among a random national sample of 1,018 adults from Nov. 9-13, 2011. The results have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 points. This survey was produced for ABC News by Langer Research Associates of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

Media Contacts: [David Ford](#), (212) 456-7243, and [Julie Townsend](#), (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

\* = less than 0.5 percent.

1 previously released.

2. Do you think sexual harassment of women in the workplace is a problem in this country or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
11/13/11	64	30	6
6/8/94	71	27	2
12/14/92	85	13	2
10/13/91	74	21	5
10/12/91	76	16	7

2a. (IF YES) Is it a serious problem, or not serious?

	Serious	Not serious	No opinion
11/13/11	74	21	5

2/2a NET:

	NET	Problem Serious	Not serious	Not a problem	No opinion
11/13/11	64	47	13	30	6

3. Have you ever been sexually harassed at work, or not?

	Yes	No	Never worked (vol.)	No opinion
11/13/11	17	83	*	*
6/8/94	21	78	1	*
12/14/92	20	79	1	*
10/29/91	16	83	*	*
10/21/91	17	82	*	*
10/14/91	22	76	0	2
10/13/91	20	79	1	*
10/12/91	17	82	1	*
10/9/91	14	86	*	*
10/8/91	10	90	*	*

4. (IF HARASSED) Did you report the sexual harassment to your employer or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
11/13/11	36	64	0
6/8/94	28	72	0

3/4 NET:

	NET	Harassed Reported	Did not report	Never harassed	Never worked (vol.)	No opinion
11/13/11	17	6	11	83	*	*
6/8/94	21	6	15	78	1	*

5. (IF DID NOT REPORT) Is that because (you didn't think it was important enough to report), (you didn't think it would do any good), (you were concerned about the consequences of reporting it), or something else?

	Not important enough	Wouldn't do any good	Concerned about consequences	Something else	No opinion
11/13/11	31	22	18	27	2

4/5 NET:

	NET	Not important enough	Wouldn't do any good	Concerned about consequences	Something else	Reported	No opin.
11/13/11	64	20	14	11	17	36	0

6. (IF FEMALE AND REPORTED HARASSMENT) Do you think the case was handled fairly or not?

(Insufficient sample size)

7. (IF FEMALE AND NEVER HARASSED OR DID NOT REPORT IT) If you did report you were sexually harassed at work to your employer, do you think the case would be handled fairly or not?

	Yes	No	Don't work (vol.)	No opinion
11/13/11	56	32	1	10
6/8/94	52	38	3	7

8. (IF MALE) Do you ever worry that you will be falsely accused of sexually harassing someone? (IF YES) Do you worry about that a great deal or just somewhat?

	----- Worry -----				
	NET	Great deal	Somewhat	Don't worry	No opinion
11/13/11	25	4	22	74	*
6/8/94	31	5	26	68	*

9. (IF MALE) Have you ever said or done anything, even inadvertently, that a woman you worked with might have considered to be an unwanted sexual advance?

	Yes	No	No opinion
11/13/11	10	89	1
6/8/94	25	73	2
12/14/92	23	76	2

10-12 previously released.

\*\*\*END\*\*\*