Female Descriptive and Substantive Representation:

A Complicated Correlation

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I. INTRODUCTION

As the exit poll data began to materialize following the 2014 November midterm elections, one distinct media narrative developed instantly: female candidates had made history. The United States Congress that convened in January 2015 reflects historically high levels of female representation. For the first time in American history, the U.S. Congress contains over 100 women, with 20 senators and 84 representatives (“Women in U.S. Congress,” CAWP). New Hampshire is the first state to send an all-female delegation to Congress. Republican Joni Ernst became the first women ever elected to Congress from Iowa (“Women in U.S. Congress,” CAWP). The United States state legislatures are now comprised of 24% female representatives.

However, despite these duly noted milestones, as New York Times journalist Sheryl Gay Stolberg poignantly states, “2014 was hardly the Year of the Woman” (Stolberg). Overshadowed statistics highlight that in the 2014 midterms, of the fifteen women running for the Senate ultimately only four were elected (“Women in U.S. Congress,” CAWP). Within the House of Representatives, the numerical representation of female legislators increased from only two to five women, raising the number of female representatives from 79 to 82. Although these gains are worth mention and garnered significant media attention, one might argue that this increase in female representation is hardly remarkable or groundbreaking. Certainly if the goal is gender parity, or for levels of political representation to be reflective of the American female population at hand (approximately 51%), then women remain significantly underrepresented in the political realm. When examining female political equity through an international lens as well, the 2014 Gender Gap Report highlights that female political representation continues to lag far behind other historically gender gapped areas of interest, namely education, economic opportunity, and health (The Gender Gap Report: 2014). The current American case in particular proves
extremely intriguing; as a developed country that ranks relatively high in other areas of gender equality, the United States reflects these disproportional levels of male/female political representation ("Women in U.S. Congress," CAWP).

Despite these gender disparities in U.S. political representation, the previously noted trend of increasing female representation has been consistent in preceding decades (CAWP). Female legislators are steadily gaining numbers in Congress, a development that is by most accounts unlikely to reverse. As women continue to enter the political arena in higher numbers, scholars find themselves faced with question regarding the influence of these female legislators. Specifically, what is the true impact of this increased female descriptive representation? Are women in representative roles able to impact policymaking in a substantial way? Furthermore, does this policymaking promote the interests of women, often elusively grouped into the broad category of “women’s issues?” Consequentially, research on gender and representation, namely whether increased descriptive representation has empirical and measurable impact on introduction, remains one of the most crucial subjects for gender and political research.

II. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis aims to research two concepts simultaneously, ultimately examining the correlation between descriptive female political representation and gender focused policy introduction, or the substantive representation of women. Specifically, this study looks to address whether increasing the level of female representation in the United States Congress leads to increased “women’s issue” policy introduction.

I hypothesize that greater female representation in Congress is not as strongly correlated with higher percentages of women’s issue bill introduction as scholarship might suggest. Although research will show that female legislators are more likely than their male counterparts to
introduce women’s issue legislation, my study examines the overall impact of female legislators on the percentage of women’s bill introduction, compared with total policy introduction. Diverging from the research design used in other existing literature, this study primarily examines the first step in the legislative process, the introduction of bills, when considering the impact of female legislators. Rather than examining later stages in the legislative process (voting on the floor, passage of the bill, etc.) I believe that examining the first stage of bill introduction will provide the most accurate portrayal of the types of policies female legislators are choosing and attempting to put forth. I will also examine the impact of the historic “Year of the Woman” election, again hypothesizing that the impact of this increased female representation on the introduction of “women’s issue” bills may be less than scholarship might anticipate.

To provide this analysis, first I examine the historical landscape of political and gendered representation. My research assesses a wide range of data regarding female political office holders and women’s issue legislation (1947-2011) with hopes of providing an expansive view of female legislative contributions over time. Certain scholarship has chosen to examine individual Congressional years or smaller data sets; however, by using almost seven decades worth of information, I believe the reader will be better able to grasp changing trends of female legislative activity. Next, I provide an overview of the existing literature on this topic, following with my explanation of the independent and dependent variables used in this study. I will conclude with what findings I surmise from this research, and what I believe the implications of these findings are for future researchers as well.

III. FEMALE REPRESENTATION: WHY IT MATTERS

Academics have long explored the complexity of “who” we choose to represent us, why we choose certain individuals, and how well they communicate and act upon our interests.
Particularly when one considers gender, this story of representation becomes significantly more complicated. A historic lack of gender parity has marked American politics, leading scholars and academics to explore the underrepresentation of women in elected legislative roles. Supply and demand side factors, institutional obstacles, gender trait differences, informal barriers, and women’s self evaluation of their own qualifications have all been identified as possible influences on female descriptive underrepresentation in the political realm (Fox and Lawless, Norris and Lovenduski, Crowder-Meyer). Historically, feminist based research has led the way on this descriptive representation based research, with goals of discovering the causation of women’s political underrepresentation; certainly within the American context, the disparity between female and male legislators remains a compelling story.

That said, the media wisely ran with the previously referenced “100 Woman Congress” headline following the 2014-midterm elections. The notably low level of female political representation is typically viewed and discussed as a negative of the American political system, a feature of our representational democracy that leaves room for improvement. Despite being 51% of the American population, women find themselves a political minority group, as minority group status is certainly more closely linked to power rather than numerical value or group size.

The reasons that society generally views the increased descriptive representation of women favorably are numerous. Women, as a perpetually underrepresented group, have weathered a difficult battle for political representation, beginning as an entirely disenfranchised population. History and mainstream opinion (to a point) tend to favorably view the success of minority groups gaining political power and increased opportunity; within the American context this has also proven true in the most recent years as well. As women, perhaps the ultimate
“majority minority,” gain political power, society celebrates these gains, or at least does not criticize them.

In addition, there is a certain “fairness” and equality sentiment attached to increasing female representation. Particularly in mainstream feminist thought, a just political institution requires that women are present and represented (Phillips, 1995). Multiple organizations, Political Action Committees (PACs), and volunteer groups are dedicated to supporting the election of female legislators in the United States for this identified reason, spending large sums of money and mobilizing voters in attempts to elect women to political office. For example, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, EMILY’s List, a PAC dedicated to supporting and electing pro-choice, Democratic female legislators, spent approximately $44,878,362 in the 2014 election cycle supporting the election of female candidates (Center for Responsive Politics). The National Organization of Women (NOW) PAC states that their purpose is “to elect a majority of elected officials who are committed to the advancement of women’s rights in all levels of political office.” Moreover, when looking toward the 2016 elections, NOW’s political work webpage states that their focus surrounds the election of “a feminist woman to be president of the United States” (The National Organization of Women). Female donors and volunteers, albeit often disproportionally comprised of progressive or left-leaning women, are often the largest supports of these organizations.

However, perhaps the most important undercurrent supporting these activities is the assumption that increasing levels of female representation will lead to “better” representation for women. There is the subtle expectation that women in political office will pay far greater attention to the interests of women, a group that these legislators descriptively represent. This (perhaps often unstated) assumption suggests that when present in politics, female legislators are
more likely to act for women than men, and therefore more likely to legislate on behalf of
women as well. Traditionally, feminist scholars and feminists have supported this positive
relationship between the descriptive and the substantive elements of representation; at minimum,
scholarship seemingly suggests that being female is conceived as an “enabling condition” for the
substantive representation of women (Phillips 1995).

A. Women’s Direct Interests

To suggest that this “link” in regard to representation exists, one must accept certain facts as
ture in regard to female representation. Firstly, one must consider “women” to be a unique,
identifiable group. Although this concept may seem straightforward, for women to be
collectively represented in some way, one must believe that ultimately women are a subset of
individuals who share a unique set of experiences, experiences that yield a specific set of policy
preferences and political preferences. Research from the 1970’s originally contradicted this
concept; rather, survey results found the preferences of women to be structured along social-
class, political-party, or religious beliefs, rather than stemming from specific “gendered”
preferences. These authors originally suggested that there is no “bloc” of women’s voting, even
when women have direct self-interest in the outcome (Susan B. Hansen, Linda M. Franz and
Margaret Netemeyer-Mays 1976).

However, scholars Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler highlight that although women are a large
and diverse population, research widely perceives this group as sharing certain common and
identifiable “women’s interests” (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2002). Throughout the literature,
these “shared preferences” are often deemed the result of a shared female perspective. While
women can certainly not be deemed an entirely homogenous group, women are generally
considered to share “the outward signs of having lived through the same experiences” (Childs
and Celis). Iris Marion Young also references women's shared social perspective, suggesting women have shared “experience and assumptions with which reasoning begins.” He expands this idea, stating that this social perspective derives from group members being “similarly positioned and attuned to particular kinds of social meanings” (I.M. Young 2002). Recent work from Jason Ganious explores the “women’s perspective” in contemporary terms. His working paper examines men and women who classify themselves as both conservative and Republican. This research demonstrates distinct differences between men and women in this conservative Republican grouping; evidence of a “woman’s perspective” is more convincing because the expectation is that individuals of this subset would have similar preferences (Ganious 2002).

Existing literature continues to support somewhat mixed opinions on this notion; however, the majority of current research agrees that there is generally a shared set of political and policy preferences among women (Wirls 1986; Goertzel 1983; Kaufman and Petrocik 1999; Conover 1988; Burris 1984). These preferences are often presented within the context of “gender gap,” or the differences between men and women in party ideology, vote choice, and policy preferences. For example, research has shown that women are more likely than men to identify with the Democratic Party and to support liberal, Democratic candidates. This identifiable gender gap in party identification, a trend that has been observed since the early 1980s, has consistently held true. A recent 2014 Washington Post poll found that women are nine percentage points more likely than men to identify as Democrats (ABC/Washington Post Poll April 2014).

More specifically, recent polls also suggest that, when compared with men, women are more likely to favor a more activist role for government, be more supportive of programs to guarantee health care and basic social services, be more sympathetic to restrictions on firearms, more in favor of same-sex marriage, and more likely to favor legal abortion without restrictions (CAWP).
Women are less supportive of the use of military force in areas of foreign policy and are more liberal in their desire for the government to provide services, jobs and healthcare to citizens (Gilens 1988; Eichenberg 2002; Fite, Genest, and Wilcox 1990; Smith 1984; Wilcox, Ferrara, and Allsop 1993). Additional research also shows that in general, women tend to demonstrate more care and compassion for “vulnerable groups” (Huddy, Cassese and Lizotte 2008; Hutchings 2004; Kathlene 1995; Norrander 2008).

Crowder-Meyer’s 2007 publication also highlights significant differences in “political” attitudes when comparing men and women. After controlling for party identification, women are more likely than men to believe that “it is problematic that not everyone in the United States has an equal chance in life.” Women are more supportive of government's role in addressing economic distress and needs such as health care, and are more concerned about economic inequality. Women are shown to be more supportive of government spending on the poor, elderly, and children (Crowder-Meyer 2007). Other settings and behaviors also support the previously mentioned conclusions. College majors that serve populations “in need” are overwhelmingly female, namely health (85%), education (77%), and psychology and social work (74%) (Carnevale, Strohl, and Melton 2011).

Perhaps surprisingly, conventional women’s issue policy areas (explored in later sections of this work) do not always correspond with the previously outlined “female preferences.” The distinction and debatable influence between women’s preferences and women’s issue policies is a subject area not extensively explored within this work. Additional research can and should explore the parallels, or lack thereof, between female preferences, female perspectives, and women’s issue policy. However, the demonstrated shared policy preferences of women validate the rationale that women are an identifiable “group,” and as such, women can be substantively
represented. Legislators certainly cannot advocate or “stand for” women if women do not identify, at least minimally, as a distinguishable social group. As my ensuing Review of the Literature (pg. 18) demonstrates, female substantive representation has historically been linked with women’s issue policy, rather than women’s policy preferences. This thesis chooses to follow previous scholarship and focuses on women’s issue policy, rather than women’s preferences, when examining the legislative activity of female representatives and the substantive representation of women.

B. The Link: Descriptive and Substantive Representation

Secondly, and as this thesis will specifically explore, one must believe that female legislators propose, enact, and support policies that support gender equality, women’s rights, or simply issues female voters care about. In existing literature, these topics are all often combined underneath the umbrella term “women’s issue” legislation. (Again, the topic of “women’s issues” and the contention surrounding this definition is individually explored within later sections of this research). As with any research area, particularly research concerning gender and representation, there is academic and ideologically fueled debate on the construction of the variables at hand. Firstly, critics argue that defining “women” as an all-encompassing group with shared interests neglects the multiple intersections and identities relevant to the human experience. Sexuality, race, socioeconomic status, religion, education, and other variables certainly influence the opinions, political preferences, and policy preferences of women.

C. “Woman’s Issue” Contention

Although Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler correctly suggest that there are similarities in ways academics, politicians, and policymakers have identified “women’s issues,” an in depth analysis of this categorization finds that the “women’s issue” grouping is often varied and can encompass
different policy preferences. Moreover, what constitutes a “woman’s issue” is also certain to have changed over time, depending on the politics of that era and whether women could be said to have a disproportionate interest in that issue. Due to this outlined reasoning, certain scholars have begun to question the soundness of the “women’s issue” grouping, arguing that a historic academic and political focus on descriptive female representation ignores important differences between women (Reignold, Beth, and Kerry Haynie). Can women, a population that crosses varied political affiliations, religions, socioeconomic backgrounds, races, education levels, and all other identities, identify with a collective set of “women’s issues?” Are these the “issues” the interests that are salient to women, or simply the issues that affect women? And are “women’s issues” always feminist issues, or can this term be synonymous with more conservative views as well? In short, the difference between these identifications might best be characterized as the difference in “who” is conceptualizing women’s issues. Are women themselves identifying what they believe to be most salient or important, or do social scientists and scholars identify women’s issues?

An analysis of the existing literature related to gender and politics addresses these questions and others, often proving contentious and varied in its own right when considering what constitutes a woman’s issue. Scholars Craig Volden, Alan Wiseman, and Dana Wittmer from Vanderbilt University highlight the complexity of this issue, stating, “…it should be unsurprising that a multitude of issues, such as abortion, women’s health, childcare, education, social services, discrimination, welfare, family leave, and general healthcare have all, at times, been categorized as women’s issues” (Volden, Craig and Alan Wiseman, and Dana Wittmer). This somewhat differentiated reasoning has identified diverse women’s issue areas, namely policy that explicitly addresses and affects women, like sexual workplace discrimination or
domestic violence, legislation that has historically been associated with women, children, families, and the private sphere, or lastly, gender equality based initiatives. These women’s issue areas and others are often identified as particularly salient to women, either because they primarily or disproportionately concern or affect women or because they reflect the more conventional or presumed concerns of women (Volden, Craig and Alan Wiseman, and Dana Wittmer).

These differences in “women’s issue” categorization can be identified across the literature in other major studies of gender and politics. Sue Thomas’ work, a notable scholar of female substantive representation, identifies “women’s issues” as policy dealing with matters related to women, children, and families (Thomas, 2002). Moreover, Michelle Swers’ research, “The Difference Women Make: The Policy Impact of Women in Congress,” identifies policy areas related to children and family, civil rights and affirmative action, women’s health, crime, education, economic equity, health, and welfare as the areas of women’s issue legislation (Swers 2002). Seemingly here, one finds that in both cases these authors identify women’s issues as those issues that affect women more than they affect men.

In a slightly different avenue, Leslie Bahler’s and William Misler’s paper, “The Nexus of Representation: An Integrated Model of Women’s Representation,” measures gender equality in political rights, gender equality in social rights, national maternity leave policy, and gender equality in marriage and divorce laws in their pursuit studying international women’s political representation. However, these two authors also importantly note that, “these measures in no way exhaust the range of issues that might be considered women’s issues;” rather, they chose to identify women’s issues based on the idea that these subject areas reflect, “key issues of particular importance to many women” (Bahler and Misler 2002).
In addition, recent work by the previously referenced scholars Volden, Wiseman, and Wittman addresses this question of “women’s issue” policy categorization in a different manner. This study is seemingly the first of its kind to identify “women’s issues” on the strict basis of analyzing what policies female legislators promote in the US Congress. Specifically, these scholars define women’s issues in terms of bill issues that are sponsored and introduced at a greater rate by women in Congress over a thirty-year period. Legislation relating to civil rights and liberties, education, health, labor, employment and immigration law, crime, and family were identified as the women’s issue areas for this particular study.

However, these authors note that a complication of their research design is the broadness of these categorizations, noting for example that in their analysis, a bill expanding access to abortion and one restricting access to abortion would both fall under the “health” policy categorization. This dilemma speaks to yet another complication of “women’s issue” definitions: the variance in female political preferences and partisanship.

IV. WOMEN’S ISSUES AND PARTISAN PREFERENCES: A CASE STUDY

Irrespective of a “gendered” influence on policy leanings and preferences, one certainly finds that the political behavior of female legislators is also shaped by party membership and individual ideology. For example, if one considers abortion legislation, perhaps one of the more commonly referenced “women’s issues,” one finds significantly different opinions (and consequentially voting behaviors) within the broader group of female legislators. This divide between the camps often termed “pro-life” or “pro-choice” is typically divided on Republican and Democratic Party lines. For instance, this previously referenced political influence on the views of “women’s issues” is found by examining two significant women’s groups within the United States. An analysis of the Feminist Majority Foundation’s (FMF) website, one of the
larger feminist and female groups in the United States, demonstrates FMF’s commitment to actively promoting issues like abortion access, ending violence against women, global women’s rights, and birth control access. To carry out these aims, FMF promotes research and public policy development, public education programs, and grassroots organizing projects with these directives in mind. This organization aligns with mainstream feminist ideology, a concept that is certainly linked to “women’s issue” policy for feminists (*Feminist Majority Foundation*).

Ronnee Schreiber discusses the opposing, female conservative groups’ viewpoint in her paper, “Playing ‘Femball’: Conservative Women’s Organizations and Political Representation in the United States.” Schreiber references Concerned Women for America (CWA), an organization with nearly 500,000 members to date, as one of the best-organized and prominent conservative (and perhaps anti-feminist) groups in the United States (Schreiber). A prime example of the difference in these groups’ viewpoints of what constitutes a “woman’s issues” is found underneath the “issues” section listed on their website. The CWA identifies defense of family, education, religious sanctity, sexual exploitation, defense of Israel, and sanctity of life as their top issues areas. Specifically, the CWA’s description of their work pertaining to sanctity of life states:

“CWA supports the protection of all innocent human life from conception until natural death. We also support alternatives to abortion and healing for mothers suffering from the results of abortion” (*Concerned Women for America*).

This viewpoint and emotionally charged language is certainly counter to that of the FMF, an organization that supports female access to abortion and reproductive choice. Underneath the “Our Work” tab, the “Abortion” section, FMF states:

“Abortion is a necessity for millions of women worldwide, for their health, for their well
being, for their dreams of a better tomorrow. The reality is that a woman will seek an abortion—legal or otherwise—almost instinctively and in self-defense. A woman will do this when an unwanted pregnancy presents an excessive strain on her or her family’s physical, emotional or economic resources…. In a civilized society we owe women the legal right to make their decision safely. It is a matter of survival” (Feminist Majority Foundation).

As Schreiber also highlights, despite the opposing viewpoints of these organizations these two groups share important and relevant similarities. When discussing conservative, political groups like the CWA, Schreiber highlights that “…these groups claim to represent women’s interests. These organizations…publicly contest definitions of women’s interests and influence political debates and policy outcomes” (Schreiber).

Schreiber’s research and these examples demonstrate that both groups not only identify diverse issues as “women’s issues” via their public platforms, but also often take opposing views on the same policies. For many, this begs that question: can both groups be said to focus on “women’s issues?” As one might expect, there is obvious cause for both sets of groups to claim that their definition of "women's issues" is the correct one. Organized interests and groups certainly gain additional credibility if the group can claim to represent an entire demographic group, rather than just the specific numbers of people that pay dues to that organization.

This case study demonstrates the complexity of identifying common ground on women’s issues. Women are a large and diverse population, one that connects with a variety of political preferences, policy preferences, and salient issues. Additional research in subsequent years and studies will continue to refine the categorization of “women’s issue” policy, as women, like any population subset, remain a dynamic and changing group. Moreover, we recognize that gender is not the only important determinant of women's attitudes toward issues; certainly this is a limit on
the process of substantive representation. Although this literature demonstrates the multiple ways in which one can define what a woman’s issue is, for the purpose of this study my research will continue forward using three distinct women’s issues groupings, Broad, Narrow, and Very Narrow. These categories are comprised of policy groupings from the Policy Agendas Project. An expansive explanation of these category groupings follows in the “Data and Research” section, as well as the Appendix.

V. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Political theorist Hanna Pitkin's work, *The Concept of Representation*, is often cited as the beginning framework for theories of representation. Through her research, Pitkin famously identifies four main categories of representation: formalistic representation, symbolic representation, descriptive representation, and substantive representation, the latter two being most relevant to this thesis work. Pitkin characterizes descriptive representation as the extent to which a representative resembles those they are representing. Moreover, Pitkin outlines substantive representation as “acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them” (Pitkin, 1967). According to Pitkin, one division between descriptive and substantive representation is the variance between a representative “standing for” or “acting for” the represented population (Pitkin 1967). However, the following review is concerned not only with identifying types of representation and discussing descriptive representation, but will also examine research on the conditions in which substantive representation is most likely to occur.

In the subsequent 50 years following Pitkin’s work, scholars have continued to explore descriptive and substantive representation. Although Pitkin’s work subtly suggests that substantive and descriptive representation are not always complementary and can be in conflict with one another, other research often suggests a connection, tie, or correlation between female

More specifically, Sue Thomas’ work, a notable scholar of female substantive representation, suggests that women in states with the highest percentages of female representatives introduce and pass more women’s issue bills than men in their respective states (Thomas 1991). Beth Reignold, among many others, extensively explores this idea in her work, “Women as Office Holders: Linking Descriptive and Substantive Representation.” Most directly, her research suggests that throughout the policymaking process, female officeholders are more likely than their male colleagues to act for women or women’s interests.

Most recently, Swers thoroughly explores female representation in her work, “The Impact of Descriptive Representation on Women’s Political Engagement: Does Party Matter?” as she researches the impact of female representatives on policy-making by examining the 103rd and 104th U.S. Congress. Swers explores multiple stages of the legislative process, including bill sponsorship, co-sponsorship, and the amendment process in committees, floor amendments, and roll call voting. She uses this information in combination with interviews from staffers and representatives from both political parties. Ultimately, Swers concludes that female legislators do engage in more frequent legislative action that highlights women’s issues and women’s concerns than male legislators of the same party. For the Washington Post, Swers provided contemporary examples via email: Democratic Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (N.Y.) and Claire McCaskill (Mo.), two legislators that have focused on sexual harassment in the military. Moreover, Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) is a female legislator who advocated for the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.
Specifically, her work finds that women are more likely than men to advocate for issues often associated with women’s interests — items she defines as child care, women’s health, abortion, and pay equity (Swers 2002). Research also demonstrates that female legislators are also more likely to partake in floor speeches and legislative debates, framing the discussed political issues in terms of women’s interests (Swers 2013).

Within these broader conceptions of representation one finds a multitude of nuanced views and theories throughout the existing literature, attempts to further explain the “why” between these links connecting descriptive and substantive representation. In a multitude of empirical studies, the framework often used to explore the relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation has historically been “critical mass theory” (Dahlerup, 1988, D.T. Studlar and I. McAllister). The debate on “critical mass” in gender and politics research can be traced back to scholars Kanter and Dahlerup, whose research explores the experiences of women (as minorities) in the corporate and political spheres. The idea of critical mass is understood to suggest that only once women comprise a certain proportion of the political system in question, the affect of these female legislators will be felt (D.T. Studlar and I McAllister, Childs and Krook 2008, Dahlerup 1988).

Therefore, this theory suggests that the relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation is entirely dependent upon a particular proportion of women being present in a political institution. This argument finds that female legislators are unlikely to have a major impact on legislative outcomes until their numbers reach a considerable minority of all legislators. More specifically, “only as their numbers increase will women are able to work more effectively together to promote women-friendly policy change and to influence their male
colleagues to accept and approve legislation promoting women’s concerns” (Childs and Krook, 2008).

However, recent work and empirical research has discovered potential flaws in the soundness of this theory, or at minimum additional questions to be considered. (S. Childs and M.L. Krook, 2008). Swers concludes that although in general, gender is significant and does matter when constructing policy, women are more likely to promote women’s issue policy when in placed in positions of power, such as committee heads or chairpersons, or when their political party controls the majority vote (Swers, 2002). In addition, Dahlerup, who famously promoted the term “critical mass” in gender and politics, also references the importance of “critical acts,” a political reference to major initiatives that “change the position of the minority and lead to further changes” (Dahlerup, 1988). Gender and politics research also supports the idea of “critical actors,” or those representatives who individually perpetuate female focused policy change and inspire other to promote policies for women (Childs and Krook, 2008).

Although certainly the majority of the existing literature suggests that women do promote women’s issue legislation in higher levels than men, there are certain notable exceptions to this widely accepted, normative theory. Perhaps most importantly, research highlights that this “loyalty” of female legislators to their descriptive population is not guaranteed or absolute. Research suggests that in particular, political party affiliation can mitigate the likeliness for female legislators to promote “women’s issue” policy, issues that are often associated with left-leaning ideals and legislation. Swers highlights this finding in her work Women in the Club: Gender and Policy Making in the Senate; although her research suggests that women in the Senate are more likely than men to promote women’s issue proposals, she finds a divide between Democratic and Republican female legislators and the likelihood of their introduction of
women’s issue legislation. Swers suggests that this difference is due to the political gain associated with working on women’s issue legislation. The Democratic Party tends to focus more closely on women’s issues, while these same issues do not hold a pivotal place on the Republican Party agenda. Therefore, Democratic legislators have more to gain with their political base by working on women’s issue legislation, while Republican legislators do not reap the same benefits with their base for this type of behavior (Swers, 2002). In a progressively polarized Congress, one might expect this trend to continue and increase.

VI. DATA AND RESEARCH

In short, my research design demonstrates the empirical and measurable impact of descriptive female representation on policy introduction, specifically women’s issue legislation. After reviewing the existing academic debates, I identify “women’s issue” legislation via the Policy Agendas Project, a dataset that ultimately serves as the dependent variable for this study. This database, compiled by E. Scott Adler and John Wilkerson, provides information on over 400,000 bills introduced in the U.S. Congress, 1947-2011. Moreover, this dataset includes information regarding each bill’s sponsor, the gender of the person who sponsors the bill, their political party, and other relevant information. Each bill is coded according to the topic coding system of the Policy Agendas Project and divided into one of 19 major categories and 220 subcategories. I utilize the category names provided by the Policy Agendas Project in my Appendix. Although “women’s issues” is not one of the subcategories, I was able to sift through these categories and determine bills are related to women’s issues via their selection criteria.

Specifically, I have identified three categorizations of “women’s issue” policy: 1. Broad Categorization, 2. Narrow Categorization, and 3. Very Narrow Categorization. As the names suggest, these categories encompass varied levels of “directness” in regard to what might be
considered women’s issue policy. The Broad Categorization encompasses all areas of legislation where women (as a group) are affected or could be affected based on their gender. As the name suggest, this category is wide-ranging and all-inclusive. When determining this category, I decided to include all categories that affect women in any manner, noting that this may also bring in other areas of policy that potentially do not specifically affect only women as well. These measures include all welfare initiatives, as women are most often low wage earners and the recipients of social welfare programs, certain healthcare reforms, military legislation specifically affecting female soldiers or women as military spouses, and female business initiatives underneath this categorical umbrella. In addition to these subjects, conventional and normative “women’s issue” areas of legislation, namely reproductive rights, sexual harassment and discrimination, violence against women, and family/childcare issue legislation are also included in this most broad categorization. The “Narrow Categorization” and the “Very Narrow Categorization,” as expected, respectively “narrow in” on the most normative ideas of women’s issue legislation. In particular, the Very Narrow Categorization includes strictly gender-based initiatives, namely workplace discrimination, abortion access, women’s healthcare, and other conventional “women’s issue” areas, namely family and children’s issues. (Please see attached appendix for a full list of policy issues attached to each subject area). In addition, all Very Narrow policies are included within the Narrow category, as are all Narrow and Very Narrow policies are included within the Broad category. It is the opinion of this author that the Narrow category grouping most closely follows the existing literature’s consideration of what constitutes women’s issue policy. The Broad categorization and Very Narrow categorization offer space for additional analysis, adding both a wider and more restrictive definition for comparison when examining the influence of female legislators on women’s issue policy introduction.
The purpose of this three-tiered design is to allow for a comparative approach to women’s issue legislation introduction. By comparing the Broad category (all legislation that *might* qualify as women’s issue policy) the Narrow category (legislation that is most likely considered women’s issue policy), and Very Narrow (legislation that I believe most research certainly supports as women’s issue policy), this study uniquely compares these three legislation groupings and provides an interesting analysis for the reader. This multi-layered design also helps address disparities in the literature concerning “women’s issue” definitions. By providing three distinct women’s issue variables, each encompassing varied types of policies and a varied “broadness,” one is able to examine female legislators and women’s issue bill introduction in a multitude of ways.

In addition, the level of female representation in the United States Congress over the time period of 1947-2013 serves as my independent variable. This data was collected from the CQ Press Library, Congress Collection. Data from the Brookings Institution was also used when comparing the Policy Agendas Project’s “Women’s Issue” bill sets to the overall snapshot of congressional action, namely total numbers of bills introduced and passed from 1947-2013.

This study chooses to examine percentages of women’s issue bill introduction and female representation, rather than the raw numerical values. In the case of bill introduction, examining the percentage of bills rather than the raw number alleviates a variety of concerns related to the legislative process. In the legislative process, a majority of bills fail in the committee stage, and far fewer are signed into law. For bills that do travel further along the legislative process, one finds that additional measures are often implemented within the bill that were not there before, measures that may not be related to the purpose of the original legislation. Moreover, one finds that the “politics” of the political process tend to take over as well in these later stages of
legislative development. In the final stages of bill passage, whether a representative votes or does not vote for a bill can depend on their party affiliation, the composition of Congress, the political party in power, an upcoming election season, etc. Studying bill introduction is perhaps the best way to negate these mitigating factors in the legislative process, and measure what policies representatives are at the very least attempting to put forth. Perhaps in other words, bill introduction perhaps best gages what constituents these representatives are substantively trying to represent.

In addition, I examine the percentage of women’s bill introductions compared to all bill introductions (again, rather than using the raw number of women’s issue bills introduced) in this variable construction. My research finds significant variability in the raw number of bills introduced from year to year depending on the “activeness” of the specific Congress at hand. This study believes that by examining the percentage of women’s issue bill introduction, or the share of all legislation that qualifies as women’s issue legislation, readers are best able to observe the “amount of time” legislators spend introducing women’s issue bills compared to other legislation. If the raw numerical values of bill introduction were to be used, one might find significant but “false” spikes in women’s issue bill introduction; these jumps could simply coincide with a time period representative of large increases in overall bill introduction in general. In these cases, legislators are not truly spending more time, energy, of focus on women’s bill introduction, or prioritizing it over other legislative measures, despite a higher raw number of bills. Comparing the percentage of women’s issue bill introductions to the percentage of female legislators (again, rather than the raw number of female legislators) also allows us to examine whether women are “pulling their weight” in women’s issue bill introduction compared to their share of Congress.
VII. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

A. Levels of Female Representation

As previously discussed, this research study aims to examine the impact of increased proportions of female representation on the introduction of women’s issue legislation. To begin, Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 highlight both the numerical representation and percentage of female legislators in Congress over time (1945-2013), exhibiting the historical landscape of female representation. In Figure 1.3, note two different lines accounting for the percentage of female representation, the blue line representing percentages of female legislators in the House of Representatives and the red line representing the percentage of female legislators in the Senate. This study has largely chosen to examine all data in this context, separating the House of Representatives and Senate, simply to provide room for additional analysis and another platform for discussion regarding the impact of female legislators within Congress.

In particular, we examine the spike in representation levels corresponding with 1993, an upward shift in representation following the 1992 election year that was ultimately termed the “Year of the Woman.” In this election year, four new female senators and 24 new congresswomen were elected to the U.S. Congress (CAWP). Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 also demonstrate significantly higher levels of female representatives within the last two decades when compared to preceding years. Of the 278 women who have served in the House of Representatives, over 50% have been elected since 1992. Moreover, 23 of the 46 women who have served in the Senate were elected to office in 1996 or later (CAWP).

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 also demonstrate that within this overall increasing numerical trend of female legislators, one finds a greater increase in the number of female Democratic representatives when compared to female Republican representatives. Figures 1.1 and 1.2
admittedly exclude female legislators who may identify as Independents or members of other political parties; however, this number of representatives is minuscule, and does not affect the overall trends displayed in these charts. Of the 164 women elected to the House since 1990, 112 (69%) have been Democrats; 18 of the 27 women (67%) elected to the Senate over the same period have been Democrats (DeSilver, 2015). This trend seemingly begins in the early 1990s as well, a period where an overall spike in female Congressional representation in both the House of Representatives and Senate is observed.

Left-leaning policies and the Democratic Party are most closely associated with women’s issue measures; these findings beg the question whether perhaps partisan affiliation may be more imperative to the introduction of women’s issue legislation rather than the overall numerical representation of female legislators. In other words, is it essential to have Democratic women in Congress, rather than just “more” women overall, if one is concerned with women’s issue bill introduction? Again, these questions surrounding party affiliation are widely beyond the scope and purpose of this research, but are explored in other research and will certainly be explored in later works as well.
To begin my analysis of the impact of female legislators on the introduction of women’s issue legislation, first I choose to explore the landscape of all bill introduction within the House of Representatives and Senate over time, separating the results by gender. Generally, we find that men introduce significantly higher percentages of bills than do female legislators. These findings
are largely unsurprising; men represent significantly higher percentages of the House of Representatives and Senate. The results in Figures 1.4 and 1.5 correspond with what one might expect taking into account the gender composition of these legislative bodies. Beginning in the early 1990s, one notes a steady increase in the percentage of all bills introduced by women in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Again, these findings correspond with higher levels of female representatives within the last two decades when compared to preceding years.

Figures 1.4 and 1.5 also reflect other findings regarding overall bill introduction by male and female legislators. First, we find that male bill introduction significantly increases during certain periods of time (1959, 1970s, and late 1980-early 1990s). Conversely, again female bill introduction reflects a consistent, upward trend beginning in the 1990s, but does not replicate the same “spikes” in the introduction of all bills by male legislators. Figures 1.4 and 1.5 also reflect interesting findings regarding the 2003-2009 time period within the House of Representatives and Senate. Here, we find opposing trends regarding male/female legislators. Beginning in 2003 within the House of Representatives, female bill introduction is increasing while male bill introduction is decreasing. This trend continues until 2009, where male bill introduction begins to increase and female bill introduction begins to decrease. Within the Senate, female bill introduction decreases from 2003-2005, while male bill introduction is simultaneously increasing. However, in 2005, male bill introduction begins to decrease while female bill introduction begins to increase. Although these charts do not directly address women’s issue legislation, these trends examining overall bill introduction may have implications for women’s issue policy introduction overall as well.

However, these findings are likely a product of the changing percentages and gendered composition of the House of Representatives and Senate. Men are introducing fewer bills, while
women are simultaneously introducing higher percentages of bills, as the proportion of men in Congress decreases and the proportion of women increases. Figures 1.6 and 1.7 support these findings as well. Figure 1.6 compares the proportion of all bill introduction by women, the percentage of women’s issue bill introduction (using the Broad category), and the proportion of female legislators in the House of Representatives. Again, we see that these three trends track closely.

Perhaps these findings are unsurprising; we expect female legislators to introduce bills in equal proportions to their level of representation, particularly women’s issue bills. However, Figure 1.6 demonstrates slightly higher percentages of women’s issue bills introduced by women when compared to the ratio of women present in the House of Representatives beginning in 1984 and ending in 2011. These findings, again using the Broad category of women’s issue policy categorization, reinforce the notion that women are more likely to introduce women’s issue legislation, as much of the existing literature supports. We see an even larger disparity between the percentage of women in the Senate compared to the percentage of all bills and all women’s issue bills that female legislators introduce in the Senate. Female senators introduce greater shares of all legislation (and specifically women’s legislations) when compared to their proportional representation in the Senate might suggest. Particularly in the years 2003 and 2007, we find significant spikes in bill introduction by female Senators. In 2003, women represented 13.3% of the Senate; however, that year women introduced 19.02% of all women’s issue legislation and 15.92% of all legislation put forth in the Senate. Moreover, in 2009 women represented 15.69% of the Senate, yet introduced 21.58% of all women’s issue legislation (in the Broad categorization) and 20.51% of all legislation.
Bill Introduction by Gender in the House of Representatives
(Figure 1.4)

Bill Introduction by Gender in the Senate
(Figure 1.5)
Bill Introduction in the House of Representatives
(Figure 1.6)

Bill Introduction in the Senate
(Figure 1.7)
C. Women’s Issue Bill Introduction: The Big Picture

Lastly, this study examines the proportion of women’s issue bill introduction in three categories, Broad, Narrow, and Very Narrow, compared to the proportion of female representatives in the House of Representatives and Senate. Here, the data reflects what may be considered surprising findings regarding female legislators and women’s issue bill introduction.

Figures 1.9 and 2.0 examine the ratio of female legislators compared to the percentages of Broad, Narrow, and Very Narrow women’s issue bill introduction. First, we draw attention to the Broad definition of women’s issue policy. As Figures 1.9 and 2.0 demonstrate, the Broad categorization does not follow the trajectories of Narrow and Very Narrow women’s issue legislation. When comparing the percentage of women in Congress overall to the percentage of Broad women’s issue bill introductions, the correlation is 0.428. Conversely, when comparing the percentage of Narrow and Very Narrow bill introductions to the proportion of women in Congress, the correlations are 0.751 and 0.843 respectively.

The potential reasons for this disparity between the Broad categorization and the Narrow/Very Narrow definitions are numerous; however, there are certain conclusions that can likely be drawn from these findings. First, Figures 1.9 and 2.0 highlight that the Broad definition utilized in this research may have been too far-reaching in scope. In hindsight, this categorization may have included legislation that may not truly reflect “women’s issue” legislation. This data suggests that female legislators are not the only representatives introducing Broad women’s issue policies; by the nature of this data, we can surmise that men are also introducing women’s issue bills, at least in the Broad sense, in high proportions as well. Only in the years 1999 and 2005 (House and Senate respectively) do we find that the ratio of female legislators is equal or greater than the ratio of women’s issue bills introduced. Therefore, we can confidently infer that male
Legislators as well are introducing policies within this Broad definition of women’s issue bills, relying on the earlier data presented in Figure 1.6 and 1.7. An examination of the Narrow and Very Narrow categorizations, and their corresponding trends, is observed in Figure 1.8. The correlation between the Narrow and Very Narrow women’s issue bill introduction categorizations is 0.932.

Although the goal of this broad categorization is to provide a comprehensive look at all possible definitions of women’s issue policy, these findings suggest that the more selective categories of women’s issue policy may provide a more thought-provoking study of female descriptive and substantive representation. Figure 1.8 excludes the Broad categorization, as to provide a closer look at the corresponding trends between the Narrow and Very Narrow groupings.
D. Narrow and Very Narrow: Women’s Issue Policy Introduction

When considering the ratio of Narrow and Very Narrow women’s issue policy introduction compared to all bill introduction, and comparing these proportions to the percentage of female legislators in the House of Representatives and Senate, the data reflects thought-provoking findings. In particular, I find that although the overall percentage of women in the House of Representatives and Senate increases over time, the overall percentage of both Narrow and Very Narrow women’s issues bill introduction does not increase at an equal rate or follow a similar trend when considering the percentage of female legislators in both the House of Representatives and Senate. In the subsequent sections, the data examining women’s issue bill introduction in the House of Representatives and Senate will be independently explored.

i). The House of Representatives

When examining the House of Representatives (Figures 1.9 and 2.1) one first notes the previously referenced similarities in the Narrow and Very Narrow categories; the trends displayed track extremely closely over time. There is a notable exception from 1963-1965 where we observe an upward trend in Narrow women’s issue bill introduction that is not found in the Very Narrow categorization. Beginning in 1981, the ratio of female legislators in the House of Representatives is greater the ratio of bill introduction in the Narrow and Very Narrow categorizations. From 1991-1993, we observe an upward trend in the proportion of female legislators and the proportion of Narrow and Very Narrow bill introduction. This finding is noteworthy, as this time frame encompasses the 1992 “Year of the Woman” election and following years. During this time period, the percentage of female legislators jumped from 6.31%-10.61%, whereas the proportion of Narrow and Very Narrow women’s issue bill introduction increased 4.72%-6.31% and 1.79%-2.27% respectively.
However, following 1993, after the wave of female representatives ushered in during the “Year of the Woman” would have taken office, we note a steady and slightly downward trend in the percentage of Narrow and Very Narrow women’s issue bill introduction. Ultimately, Narrow and Very Narrow bill introduction does not return to or match the 1993 level of bill introduction in the Narrow or Very Narrow categorizations in subsequent years. During the 18-year time period following 1993, we note a steady and significant increase in the overall ratio of women’s representation in the House of Representatives, 10.61%-17.08%. Conversely, the Narrow and Very Narrow proportions of bill introduction drop from 6.31%-4.69% and 2.27%-1.64% respectively. During this overall steady but slightly downward trend of Narrow/Very Narrow bill introduction, we do note three slight, peaks in the years 2003, 2007 (Very Narrow only), and 2009; however, these percentage increases are minor.

ii). The Senate

In general, we find that a multitude of the trends observed within the House of Representatives are also found in the Senate data as well (Figures 2.0 and 2.2). When considering the impact of the Year of the Woman (1992), we observe significant increases in female representation within the Senate. Female representation in the years 1993-1997 increases 2.91%-8.74%. In 2007, we note a significant spike in the introduction of women’s issue bills in the Senate (Narrow and Very Narrow), where a spike in female representation in the Senate is not observed.

Moreover, we do not observe the same overall slight downward trend in Narrow and Very Narrow bill introduction in the Senate following 1993 that was observed in the House of Representatives. Rather, in the years 2003-2005 and 2007-2009, we note significant drops in the Narrow (71.8%-4.50%, 8.13%-4.61%) and Very Narrow (2.31%-1.75%, 2.94%-1.66%)
women’s issue bill introductions, with peak years of Narrow and Very Narrow bill introduction in 2003 and 2007. During this same 2007-2009 time frame, there is an increase in the percentage of female Senators, again while simultaneously the share of Narrow and Very Narrow bill introduction is decreasing.
% of Women's Issue Bills Compared to % of Female Legislators in the House of Representatives (Excluding Broad)  
(Figure 2.1)

% of Women's Issue Bills Compared to % of Female Legislators in the Senate (Excluding Broad)  
(Figure 2.2)
VIII. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This research chose to examine women’s issue areas both broadly and narrowly, analyzing bill introduction over a 54 year period. Although my examination of the introduction of women’s issue policy by female legislators followed previous literature and was extensive in scope, later research may choose to construct the dependent variable differently, as additional scholarship continues to explore female political preferences and the saliency of diverse policy issues for men and women. In particular, as women continue to enter the political real in higher numbers, the categorization method utilized by Craig Volden, Alan Wiseman, and Dana Wittmer (see Review of the Literature) to define women’s issue legislation will become increasingly thought provoking as well.

The results highlighted in this research reflect conclusions that offer support for existing literature, and other findings that perhaps leave room for additional analysis. First, this data (and existing literature) demonstrate that women do introduce women's issue bills in slightly higher proportions that the female percentage of Congress might suggest. When compared to all bill introductions by female legislators, we find that women are slightly more likely to put forth women’s issue bills. These findings again offer support for existing scholarship (See Review of the Literature), adding backing to the theory that female legislators are more likely to act on behalf of women and legislate with women in mind.

However, the impact on the overall percentage of Narrow and Very Narrow women’s issue bills introduced, when compared to all bill introduction, is less related to legislative years with higher percentages of female representation that one might expect. The data reflects small increases of women’s issue bill introduction during certain time periods; however, these increases are within a steady, slightly descending trend (House of Representatives) and
significant downward spikes within the Senate data as well. Ultimately, the share of female representation does not track closely with the share of Narrow and Very Narrow women’s issue bill introduction.

Nonetheless, these findings require additional explanation and reflect certain limitations. First, in the American political climate, we almost certainly could not expect the percentage of women’s issue bill introduction to historically increase in the same proportion as female representation. In the 2015 Congress, this mirror reflection would require that 20% of bills introduced qualify as women's issue bills. Irrespective of the potential positive or negative impacts this might be for society (or women) on the whole, we know that female legislators are tasked with a variety of political priorities, most often focus on a wide set of issues, and certainly do not limit their legislative behavior to women’s issues entirely. Representatives are tasked with a multitude of legislative responsibilities and priorities; to please a diverse constituency, a female legislator will certainly have to concentrate on a variety of measures. Although women’s issues are increasingly present on political agendas, one finds that political priorities are wide-ranging and dynamic. Moreover, alongside women’s issue bills, both men and women are certainly introducing other bills. This may mask the overall landscape of women’s issue bill introduction by female legislators as well.

A. Future Work: Questions Unanswered

However, the lack of a strong correlation between the percentage of female legislators and the percentage of women’s issue bill introduction remains relevant for a variety of reasons. First, these findings offer support for the idea of critical mass theory and critical actors. Perhaps increasing levels of female representation and increasing levels of women’s issue bill introduction do not follow similar trajectories simply because there are not “enough” female
representatives in either the Senate or the House of Representatives to initiate this growth, or that the percentage of female representation in Congress has not reached a critical mass.

Conversely, perhaps these findings suggest that a significant increase overall in women’s issue legislation introduction requires more than “just” an increase in the proportion of female representatives. Future work should explore the implications of political party affiliation in regard to female legislators and their likeliness of introducing a women’s issue bill. The importance of the majority party (whether Republican/Democrat generally, or whether the woman/women in question belongs to the majority party) will also prove relevant to later research as well. In addition, although common trends in women’s issue bill introduction are observed in both the Senate and House of Representatives, there are certain inconsistencies and differences between the data representing these two political bodies. Future work will be able to study these two entities independently as well as together.

Lastly, although this study chose to examine the impact of female legislators, future work could also explore the legislative activity of male legislators in this context, namely their likelihood of introducing a women’s issue bill. One might expect that male legislators represent women in different ways than female legislators. When are men most incentivized to act on behalf of women, or introduce women’s issue bills? Is this action related to party affiliation, political pressures, or personal life conditions? There is certainly room for expansion within this particular research. Specifically, this exploration of male legislators and their likeliness of women’s issue bill introduction might be a compelling compare and contrast to the previously presented findings on female legislators.

However, as the introductory paragraphs of this study highlight, media and society are often quick to analyze the impact of moderate increases in female representation. Although it is
important to recognize all gains in female representation as a step toward a more gender-equal political body, a goal worth pursuing in its own right, one should also be cautious not to assume that women’s substantive representation increases extensively with the addition of each new female legislator. As this research shows, the overall gains observed in Narrow and Very Narrow women’s issue bill introduction, when compared to all bills introduced, are modest at best. Ultimately, women still remain a small percentage of the overall Congressional composition; simply put, female legislators are not miracle workers, legislate on a variety of initiatives, and operate in a continually gender-disproportionate Congress. Research demonstrates that female legislators are introducing women’s issue bills and even pulling more of their weight in this arena; however, if one considers policy-making a mark of true substantive representation for women, women are not only underrepresented proportionally, but arguably may also be underrepresented from a policymaking standpoint as well. It is important to recall that this data reflects only the introduction of women’s issue bills; the number of women’s issue bills passed into law will be significantly smaller.

These findings highlight the continued importance of gender and politics research, particularly study surrounding female policymaking and the impact of female legislators. As this section alone highlights, there will continually be room for additional research and analysis surrounding female representation, in all its forms. Above all else, this research has the potential to have tangible impacts for the female electorate, a population that by most all measures remains a significant distance from true substantive representation. Almost without question, this study and others agree: descriptive and substantive representation are linked. However, the magnitude, power, and extent of this relationship will certainly require additional analysis.
Works Cited


Huddy, Leonie and Nayda Terkinstin. “Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and


Appendix A

Broad Categorization:

- **100: General Domestic Macroeconomic Issues (includes combinations of multiple subtopics)**
  - Examples: the administration’s economic plans, economic conditions and issues, economic growth and outlook, state of the economy, long-term economic needs, recessions, general economic policy, promote economic recovery and full employment, demographic changes, population trends, recession effects on state and local economies, distribution of income, assuring an opportunity for employment to every American seeking work.

- **200: General (includes combinations of multiple subtopics)**
  - Examples: Civil Rights Commission appropriations, civil rights violations, Civil Rights Act, Equal Rights amendments, equal employment opportunity laws, discrimination against women and minorities, appropriations for civil rights programs, civil rights enforcement, coverage of the civil rights act, employment discrimination involving several communities (age, gender, race, etc. in combination), taking private property, impact on private property rights, employment discrimination due to race, color, and religion, and fair housing initiatives and discrimination in housing.

- **202: Gender and Sexual Orientation Discrimination**
  - Examples: gender and sexual orientation discrimination in the military, social security inequities affecting women, employment barriers to women, female salary inequities, sex discrimination regulations, equal pay for women.

- **208: Right to Privacy and Access to Government Information**
  - Examples: privacy of consumer and worker records, employee drug and polygraph testing, computer access and security, police wiretapping, privacy of medical records, access to government records and information, disclosure and confidentiality standards for government information, electronic funds transfer and financial privacy, security and privacy of criminal arrest records, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), dissemination of USIA films, programs or information within the U.S. or at museums, protection of women’s abortion rights.

- **301: Comprehensive health care reform**
  - Examples: proposals to reform broader health system (rather than specific aspects of a program), including establishment of a national health care system, comprehensive Medicare reform, delegation of responsibilities to the states, changing responsibilities of states, regulation of state health care reform, initiatives in women’s health, initiatives in rural health, federal assistance percentages, state share of Medicare or Medicaid payments.

- **321: Regulation of drug industry, medical devices, and clinical labs**
  - Examples: Generally about safety of products and procedures, approval processes, drug labeling and marketing, organ transplant allocations, safety of the blood supply, faulty cholesterol screening, prescription drug counterfeiting, pacemaker regulation, prescription drug labeling, over-the-counter drug safety, fatal allergic reactions to drugs, drug abuse in nursing homes, vitamin, mineral and diet supplements, regulation of drug marketing procedures, approval of drugs to combat specific diseases, FDA drug approval process, FDA regulation of medical devices, FDA approval of contraceptive devices, regulation of clinical trials, inspection of x-ray equipment by PHS.

- **331: Prevention, communicable diseases and health promotion**
  - Examples: Cancer screening, health promotion programs, consumer guides, medical information, health education in schools, immunization, prevention programs for osteoporosis, sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, federal response to AIDS, breast cancer treatment, skin cancer, renal disease, treatment of high blood pressure,
    - Legionnaire’s disease, communicable disease control, sickle cell anemia prevention, polio, Center for Disease Control funding, designation of national health promotion holidays.

- **332: Infants and children**
  - Examples: Preventive services for children, prenatal care, child and juvenile health care, school health programs, child immunization, Comprehensive Child Immunization Act, reduction of infant mortality, promotion of breast feeding, prenatal care programs, child health care, sudden infant
death syndrome, childhood malnutrition, fetal alcohol syndrome, child dental care.
  o See also: 331 health education programs; 208 abortion related issues.

- **398: Research and development**
  o Examples: Alzheimer’s research, research on women’s health, government tax incentives for research and development, research grants to organizations and educational institutions, conferences on health-related issues, genetic engineering issues, medical research and regulatory issues, sleep disorders research, NASA-NIH biomedical research, fetal tissue transplant research, health policy research programs, medical applications of biotechnology research, research on increased life expectancy, human genetic engineering research, biomedical and behavioral research.

- **505: Fair Labor Standards**
  o Examples: minimum wage regulation for federal contracts, increase the minimum wage rate, enforcement of wage and hour standards, require contractors to pay wages at the rate in locality where the construction occurred, fair labor standards act, application of the fair labor standards act in Puerto Rico, penalties on employers for overtime work requirements, Davis-Bacon Act (or Davis Bacon).

- **508: Parental Leave and Child Care**
  o Examples: Family and Medical Leave Act, child care assistance programs, child care for low and moderate income families, meeting the child care needs of working parents, affordability of insurance for day care centers, parental and medical leave, child care placement assistance for working parents, dependent care, dependent and Child care.

- **1208: Family Issues**
  o Examples: court-ordered child support, battered women and child custody legislation, state of child welfare services, adoption and foster care programs, domestic violence, federal family planning programs, impact of drugs on children and families, aid for abandoned infants and children, teenage pregnancy issues, teenage suicide prevention, family services support for adoption, family economic problems, consequences of divorce, elderly abuse, domestic violence, child tax credits.

- **1210: Criminal and Civil Code**
  o Examples: revisions of the federal criminal code, federal crime sentencing disparities, hate crimes sentencing enhancement act, federal rape law reform, judicial sentencing in narcotics cases, sentencing in capital cases, criminal penalties for assaults on firemen and policemen, proposals to abolish the death penalty, apply federal law to crimes committed on aircraft, civil penalty guidelines and limitations, criminal justice statistics, habeas corpus reform.

- **1211: Riots, Crime Prevention, and Crime Control**
  o Examples: programs to prevent crimes against women, crimes against the elderly, deterring auto theft, violent crime control, national crime survey, federal criminal diversion programs, compensation programs for victims of violent crime, causes of urban riots and civil disturbances.

- **1300: General**
  o Examples: Health and Human Services (HHS) and Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) appropriations and budget requests, administration’s welfare reform proposals, effectiveness of federal and state public welfare programs, social services proposals, public assistance programs, effects of economic and social deprivation on the psychology of underprivileged persons, social security and welfare benefits reforms, related state and local issues.
    o See also: 300 HHS appropriations specific to health; 300 HEW appropriations specific to health; 600 HEW appropriations specific to education.

- **1301: Food Stamps, Food Assistance, and Nutrition Monitoring Programs**
  o Examples: USDA grants to states for women, infant and children (WIC) supplemental food program, childhood hunger relief, child nutrition programs, consumer nutrition awareness, food stamp abuse and fraud, approach to the U.S. hunger problem, USDA school breakfast/lunch program, malnutrition problems among the elderly, food assistance for low income families, coordinate USDA and HHS programs for nutrition monitoring, USDA food programs for the homeless, administration task force on food assistance, food stamp reductions, special milk program eligibility for public schools, national nutrition policy study, food assistance for the elderly, national school lunch act.
• **1302: Poverty and Assistance for Low-Income Families and Individuals**
  o Examples: Economic Opportunity Act antipoverty programs, programs to alleviate long-term welfare dependency, examine proposals to reform Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, needs of disadvantaged children from low-income families, efforts of Southern states to reduce poverty, mandatory work and training programs for welfare recipients, promotion of economic self-sufficiency for single mothers receiving AFDC benefits, HHS low-income energy assistance programs, budget cut impact on AFDC programs, general or cross-cutting issues related to Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

• **1303: Elderly Issues and Elderly Assistance Programs (Including Social Security Administration)**
  o Examples: contributions into the social security fund, Older Americans Act, revise social security retirement earnings test, social security system filing problems, SSA procedures for handling claims for denied benefits, improve social security benefits for older women, social services for the elderly, management of the social security trust funds surplus, reduction of social security benefits, elderly assistance programs under the older Americans act, problems and needs of elderly women, cost of living adjustments for social security benefits, impact of budget cuts on the elderly, social security financing issues, energy cost assistance for the elderly, cost assistance for the elderly, needs of rural elderly.

• **1406: Low and Middle Income Housing Programs and Needs**
  o Examples: housing affordability problems of low and moderate income families, federal housing assistance programs, low-income housing shortages, condominium conversion trends and housing affordability, rent control, deficiencies in public housing projects, budget renewal for HUD’s Section 8 program, alleged mismanagement of HUD programs, tenant-management initiatives in public housing projects, HUD management of multi-family housing programs, security in public housing, neighborhood preservation, slum clearance and related problems, multifamily housing projects, housing affordability and availability.

• **1521: Small Business Issues and the Small Business Administration**
  o Examples: Small Business Administration (SBA) budget requests and appropriations promoting small business exports, small business credit availability problems, health insurance cost burden on small businesses, government assistance to small business, federal set aside contracts for small business, small business competitiveness under current liability laws, problems of small businesses complying with EPA regulations, SBA loans to small businesses, impact of deregulation on small trucking businesses, SBA implementation of small business programs for veterans, promotion of women in small business, impact of product liability costs on small business, increases in small business failures, impact of federal regulations on small business, access to capital for small business, government competition with small business.
  o See also: 1523 small business disaster loan programs; 201 SBA minority business programs; 1609 VA small business loans.

• **1608: Manpower, Military Personnel and Dependents (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines), Military Courts**
  o Examples: DOD authorization requests for armed forces personnel strength levels, military personnel issues, child care programs at military installations, armed forces staffing requirements, imminent danger pay for those serving in the Persian gulf, DOD morale, welfare, and recreation programs, DOD officer promotion procedures, shortage of affordable housing for military families, benefits for military retiree spouses, special pay to encourage personnel retention, survivor benefit plans, defense officer personnel management act, status of army manpower, selective service system funding, unionization of military personnel, enlistment bonuses for service in a critical skill, increase flight pay for military aviators, recruiting and retention of military personnel, life insurance for military personnel, various personnel issues during W.W.II, Americans missing or prisoner in Asia, POW’s in Vietnam, live sightings of U.S. prisoners of war, retired military personnel issues, military court martial, transportation of armed forces, air travel of armed forces, mail for armed forces, mail for servicemen, defense department overseas teachers pay and issues.
  o See also: 601 GI Bill and military academies.

• **1609: Veteran Affairs and Other Issues**
  o Examples: veterans programs budget requests, veteran’s benefit claims, VA national cemetery system, illness of Persian Gulf veterans, disabled veterans compensation, VA board of appeals
adjudication procedures, VA benefits eligibility, compensation for veterans, cost of living adjustments for veterans, delays in processing veterans claims, problems faced by Vietnam era veterans, federal services for women veterans, VA life insurance programs, reorganization of veteran’s food service operations, small business loans to veterans, consolidation of the veterans administration, veterans readjustment assistance act, veterans pay, veterans transportation issues.

See also: 300 series for veterans health care (.3 denotes military or veterans health); 601 veterans education benefits; 1407 veterans housing; 1409 homeless veterans; 2008

Narrow Categorization:

• 200: General (includes combinations of multiple subtopics)
  o Examples: Civil Rights Commission appropriations, civil rights violations, Civil Rights Act, Equal Rights amendments, equal employment opportunity laws, discrimination against women and minorities, appropriations for civil rights programs, civil rights enforcement, coverage of the civil rights act, employment discrimination involving several communities (age, gender, race, etc. in combination), taking private property, impact on private property rights, employment discrimination due to race, color, and religion, and fair housing initiatives and discrimination in housing.

• 202: Gender and Sexual Orientation Discrimination
  o Examples: gender and sexual orientation discrimination in the military, social security inequities affecting women, employment barriers to women, female salary inequities, sex discrimination regulations, equal pay for women.

• 208: Right to Privacy and Access to Government Information
  o Examples: privacy of consumer and worker records, employee drug and polygraph testing, computer access and security, police wiretapping, privacy of medical records, access to government records and information, disclosure and confidentiality standards for government information, electronic funds transfer and financial privacy, security and privacy of criminal arrest records, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), dissemination of USIA films, programs or information within the U.S. or at museums, protection of women’s abortion rights.

• 301: Comprehensive health care reform
  o Examples: proposals to reform broader health system (rather than specific aspects of a program), including establishment of a national health care system, comprehensive Medicare reform, delegation of responsibilities to the states, changing responsibilities of states, regulation of state health care reform, initiatives in women’s health, initiatives in rural health, federal assistance percentages, state share of Medicare or Medicaid payments.

• 1208: Family Issues
  o Examples: court-ordered child support, battered women and child custody legislation, state of child welfare services, adoption and foster care programs, domestic violence, federal family planning programs, impact of drugs on children and families, aid for abandoned infants and children, teenage pregnancy issues, teenage suicide prevention, family services support for adoption, family economic problems, consequences of divorce, elderly abuse, domestic violence, child tax credits.

• 1210: Criminal and Civil Code
  o Examples: revisions of the federal criminal code, federal crime sentencing disparities, hate crimes sentencing enhancement act, federal rape law reform, judicial sentencing in narcotics cases, sentencing in capital cases, criminal penalties for assaults on firemen and policemen, proposals to abolish the death penalty, apply federal law to crimes committed on aircraft, civil penalty guidelines and limitations, criminal justice statistics, habeas corpus reform.

• 1211: Riots, Crime Prevention, and Crime Control
  o Examples: programs to prevent crimes against women, crimes against the elderly, deterring auto theft, violent crime control, national crime survey, federal criminal diversion programs, compensation programs for victims of violent crime, causes of urban riots and civil disturbances.

• 1301: Food Stamps, Food Assistance, and Nutrition Monitoring Programs
  o Examples: USDA grants to states for women, infant and children (WIC) supplemental food program, childhood hunger relief, child nutrition programs, consumer nutrition awareness, food stamp abuse and fraud, approach to the U.S. hunger problem, USDA school breakfast/lunch
program, malnutrition problems among the elderly, food assistance for low income families, coordinate USDA and HHS programs for nutrition monitoring, USDA food programs for the homeless, administration task force on food assistance, food stamp reductions, special milk program eligibility for public schools, national nutrition policy study, food assistance for the elderly, national school lunch act.

- **1302: Poverty and Assistance for Low-Income Families and Individuals**
  - Examples: Economic Opportunity Act antipoverty programs, programs to alleviate long-term welfare dependency, examine proposals to reform Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, needs of disadvantaged children from low-income families, efforts of Southern states to reduce poverty, mandatory work and training programs for welfare recipients, promotion of economic self-sufficiency for single mothers receiving AFDC benefits, HHS low-income energy assistance programs, budget cut impact on AFDC programs, general or cross-cutting issues related to Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

**Very Narrow Categorization:**

- **202: Gender and Sexual Orientation Discrimination**
  - Examples: gender and sexual orientation discrimination in the military, social security inequities affecting women, employment barriers to women, female salary inequities, sex discrimination regulations, equal pay for women.

- **332: Infants and children**
  - Examples: Preventive services for children, prenatal care, child and juvenile health care, school health programs, child immunization, Comprehensive Child Immunization Act, reduction of infant mortality, promotion of breast feeding, prenatal care programs, child health care, sudden infant death syndrome, childhood malnutrition, fetal alcohol syndrome, child dental care.
  - See also: 331 health education programs; 208 abortion related issues.

- **508: Parental Leave and Child Care**
  - Examples: Family and Medical Leave Act, child care assistance programs, child care for low and moderate income families, meeting the child care needs of working parents, affordability of insurance for day care centers, parental and medical leave, child care placement assistance for working parents, dependent care, dependent and Child care.

- **1208: Family Issues**
  - Examples: court-ordered child support, battered women and child custody legislation, state of child welfare services, adoption and foster care programs, domestic violence, federal family planning programs, impact of drugs on children and families, aid for abandoned infants and children, teenage pregnancy issues, teenage suicide prevention, family services support for adoption, family economic problems, consequences of divorce, elderly abuse, domestic violence, child tax credits.