

**Does Women's Representation Lead to Woman-Friendly Policy?
A State-by-State Analysis**

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As a result of the 2000 elections, for the first time in recent history the proportions of women serving in state legislatures declined. Women's representation in state legislatures dropped from 1,672, or 22.5 percent of the total, in 2000 to 1,663, or 22.4 percent of the total, in 2001 (CAWP 2001a). While not a substantial decrease, if this trend continues 2000 could come to represent a crucial turning point for women's representation. During the 1990s, women achieved many gains in increasing their representation, but this trend could be tapering off. Furthermore, many women and men who serve in state legislatures later move on to higher office, and a slowdown in their gains in achieving representation at the state level could bode poorly for future advances at the national level.

As a result, this year's decline signals a renewed need to ask a crucial question: Does representation really matter for women? During the election of 1992, branded the "Year of the Woman" by the media, many voters seemed to feel that women would receive better representation from women elected officials than from men (Duerst-Lahti and Versteegen, 221). As Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Dayna Versteegen argue, increased numbers of women elected in 1992 seemed to reflect an undocumented observation that the public was beginning to develop a greater "awareness of the consequences of the absence of women in public leadership posts" (221).

Just what might those consequences be? Many researchers have argued that they may include a failure to consider women's unique experience and shared problems in the policymaking process (e.g., Sapiro 1981, 703). Women elected officials, in contrast, could shift debate to include or even focus on issues traditionally ignored by male public officials (Kathlene 1998, 201). If so, without women at the table in adequate numbers, a distinct voice is missing and important women's issues are likely to be ignored.

This paper follows and adds to a body of research designed to test this hypothesis by looking at how policymaking changes when women are in the picture. It specifically looks at the relationship between the political power women have achieved by winning elected office and the existence of woman-friendly policy. It does so by examining variations in women's levels of elected representation and whether they coincide with trends in woman-friendly policy across the fifty states: that is, it looks at whether, overall, states with higher levels of women's representation also have better policy for women.

The paper thus provides an aggregate view of the relationship between better representation and better policy for women. Unlike most existing research, it does not seek to isolate the dynamics that lead to these better policies or identify exactly where in the policymaking process women's influence is strongest. Instead, it provides an overall context for

understanding the importance of efforts to increase women's representation and for generalizing the results of the more detailed and intricate studies that currently exist.

Existing Research on Women's Impact as Elected Officials

Numerous studies have explored the kinds of influence women have once elected to public office. Early and foundational research by Susan Gluck Mezey, for example, found gender differences in "advocacy of the 'feminist' position" at the statewide level in Hawaii, with women in that state substantially more active in working to pass "feminist" policy than men (Mezey 1978). Similarly, Janet Flammang found that women involved in local government in the "feminist capital of the nation," Santa Clara County, led to more feminist policymaking there (Flammang 1982, 95).

Some research notes that sex is not the sole variable that can predict support for women's issues among policymakers. Rather, its influence is often filtered through specific political ideologies (Swers 2000), and it tends to work in tandem with party affiliation and political ideology (Mezey 1994). Nonetheless, most recent research asserts that gender-based dynamics usually trump other variables in explaining support for women's issues.¹ Vicky Wilkins suggests that women are more supportive of women's issues above and beyond party or ideological indicators because they see themselves as representing "women as a class" with unique social issues (Wilkins 2001).

The commitment of women elected officials to women's issues is evident at several stages in the policymaking process. Women in the U.S. Congress have been more likely to vote for and speechify about women's issues (Tamerius 1995). They have also been more likely to sponsor bills related to women's issues, an indicator of somewhat more substantial commitment to them (Swers 2000; Tamerius 1995). As a result, women in Congress have been responsible for "significantly altering the content of legislative decision-making" (Tamerius 1995, 108).

Some recent research on women in legislative bodies has identified a need for a "critical mass" in order for major change to occur in policy outcomes (Pilver 1996, Thomas 1994). Sue Thomas' study of twelve state legislatures, for example, estimates that women must make up 35 to 40 percent of state legislators to create a culture conducive to change and support for women's unique priorities (Thomas 1994). Until those levels are reached, more significant kinds of legislative change simply cannot take place, because women there are viewed as token voices and are limited in their ability to act as a unified force.

Researchers have also argued that women could come to change the legislative process itself, and not just policy outcomes, through their presence in public office. Thomas argues that women legislators have so far worked within existing norms, primarily because they have not

¹ We rely here on a distinction commonly used by feminist social scientists to differentiate between sex and gender. While "sex" denotes whether a person is physically male or female, "gender" denotes a set of behavioral expectations based on sex. Thus, for example, "sex" gives a woman ovaries and the ability to bear children, but "gender" asserts that she should be the primary caretaker and that she should be more caring and compassionate than a man. Sex gives men testicles, but gender requires they provide for their families and expects them to be more aggressive and militaristic.

amassed the numbers needed to force major changes in how business is done (Thomas 1994). As the numbers of women in public office increase, however, norms of good leadership may evolve from “male-oriented” decisiveness and aggressiveness to “female” values such as compassion and compromise (Conway, Steuernage1, and Ahern 1997).

Studies of the impact of women elected officials on public policy have focused on almost all levels of government. A few, like Flammang’s well-known study of Santa Clara County, have tracked changes at the local level. Many more have studied women in Congress. Some have studied the impact of women in high-level elected executive offices. The vast majority, however, has looked at the impact of women elected to state legislatures.

Largely missing from this body of knowledge is analysis of the importance of women’s overall level of representation *throughout* a state’s political system. Women elected officials in a state legislature are only part of a state’s political life, as are women in executive offices. To determine the overall impact women’s voices can have on policy outcomes in a state as a whole, research should look at the combined influence of women’s representation at all possible levels.

This paper is an attempt to do just that by evaluating women’s overall level of elected representation in the political lives of the U.S. states, in a range of offices from state legislators to Governors to U.S. Senators, and analyzing the relationship between women’s representation and the presence of woman-friendly policies across all 50 states. Using a cross-state model to analyze trends in these factors, the paper strives to build a broader picture of women’s influence in creating more woman-friendly policy.

Measuring Women’s Representation and Woman-Friendly Policy in the States

Research Design and Data

Within the United States, there are vast differences among the states in terms of women’s representation, levels of acceptance of women candidates, gender-role attitudes, and the actions of women who are elected (Arceneaux 2001; Caiazza 2000; Fox 2000). As a result, while many existing case studies and other current research have illuminated the specifics of women’s experiences and influence in one or more legislatures, aggregate cross-state analysis of representation and women’s policy can provide a more comprehensive and overarching look at the importance of women’s political influence. This research can provide the context and justification for pursuing more detailed analysis designed to isolate the mechanisms that seem to facilitate the influence of women elected officials.

To provide this overall look at the importance of women’s representation, we had to first measure two key concepts: 1) women’s overall levels of representation in a state, taking into consideration different kinds and levels of elected offices (governors and other statewide elected officials, state legislators, and state congressional delegations, for example) held by women, and 2) levels of woman-friendly policy in a state. To do so, we began with two resources developed by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) as part of its *Status of Women in the States* project: a composite index of women in elected office at the state level, and a women’s resources and rights checklist for each state.

Composite Index of Women in Elected Office

To rank the states based on women's relative levels of political representation, the authors used IWPR's composite index of women in elected office. Within this index, for each state, the proportion of officeholders who are women was computed for four levels: state representatives; state senators; statewide elected executive officials and U.S. Representatives; and U.S. Senators and governors. The percentages were then converted to scores that ranged from 0 to 1 by dividing the observed value for each state by the highest value for all states. The scores were then weighted according to the degree of political influence of the position: state representatives were given a weight of 1.0, state senators were given a weight of 1.25, statewide executive elected officials (except governors) and U.S. Representatives were each given a weight of 1.5, and U.S. Senators and state governors were each given a weight of 1.75. The resulting weighted scores for the four components were added to yield the total score on this composite for each state. Data were compiled from several sources, including the Center for American Women and Politics (1999a, 1999b, 1999c, and 1999d) and the Council of State Governments (1998).

Scores on the composite index were then used to rank the states for women in elected office. Table 1 shows states' rankings and scores on the composite index. Not surprisingly, the scores range widely, from a .49 for the state with the least representation for women, Mississippi, to a 3.29 for the state with the most, Washington (note that a state with 50-50 representation for women and men would have received a score of 4.31). Trends in states' scores indicate that many states of the West and Northeast had the highest levels of women's representation in 1998, while states of the southeast had the lowest.

Table 1 here

Women's Resources and Rights Checklist

Measuring levels of woman-friendly policy is more complicated than measuring levels of women's representation, since defining exactly what woman-friendly policy is can be controversial. Nonetheless, there are sources that provide guidelines for choosing a list of what those policies might entail at the state level. For example, the Fourth World Conference on Women, convened in September 1995 in Beijing, pointed to the importance of government action and public policy for the well-being of women. There, representatives of 189 countries (including the United States) unanimously adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Platform for Action outlines critical issues of concern to women and remaining obstacles to women's advancement.

Central ideas from the Platform for Action can be used to build a list of woman-friendly policies that might be adopted to advance women's status at the state level. These ideas include the need for policies that help prevent violence against women, promote women's economic equality, alleviate poverty among women, improve their physical, mental, and reproductive health and well-being, and enhance their political power.

Based on these ideas, IWPR created a women's resources and rights checklist of state policies that can be used to advance women's status in these areas. These rights and resources fall under several categories: protection from violence, access to income support (through welfare and child support collection), woman-friendly employment protections, legislation protecting sexual minorities, and reproductive rights. The checklist is designed to provide a measure of states' commitment to policies designed to help women achieve economic, political, and social well-being.²

Table 2 provides a list of the policies included in the women's resources and rights checklist, as well as the number of states with each policy or, where appropriate, the average value for each state on a policy indicator. Appendix I provides more detailed explanations of the indicators, sources for them, and how states were scored for their relevant policies. For each of the indicators in the women's resources and rights checklist, data are the most recent available. In most cases the original sources date to 1999 and were updated by IWPR in and for 2000.

Table 2 here

To measure states' relative commitment to woman-friendly policy, the authors of this paper added up each state's scores on each of the policy indicators in the checklist. In most cases, states were given a "1" for having the appropriate policy and a "0" for lacking it. Where indicators measure a proportion or dollar amount, scores were first standardized by dividing the score into the mean of the scores for all fifty states. In a few cases, states were given partial credit for adopting some parts of a policy but missing others (see Appendix 1 for details).

The results of these calculations are presented in Table 3, which provides rankings and total scores for each of the states on the women's resources and rights checklist. Like the scores for women in elected office, the scores on the checklist vary widely. Out of a total possible score of 39.19, the top-scoring state, Hawaii, earned 26.99 points, while the bottom-ranking state, Tennessee, earned just 6.35. States in the Northeast and the West once again score among the top states, while many southeastern states do poorly.

Table 3 here

Results

Using the data described above, we compared levels of women's representation (through the women in elected office composite index) with levels of woman-friendly policy in each state (through the women's resources and rights checklist). This comparison was done using simple correlations and OLS regression analysis. To allow for a potential lag between women's representation and woman-friendly policymaking, data for women's political representation are from 1998, while data on woman-friendly policy are, in most cases, from 2000.

² Neither the authors of this paper nor IWPR claim that the women's resources and rights checklist encompasses all important or relevant policies for women. Its scope is limited by many factors, perhaps most importantly the availability of state-by-state data on potentially relevant policies. However, the checklist is designed to get at the nature of a state's policies in a relatively wide range of areas of women's lives, given the data limitations that exist.

Results of the correlation and regression analysis are presented in table 4. As this table shows, the correlation coefficient between women in elected office and the women's resources and rights checklist is .43, with a significance level of $p < .01$. Similarly, the β coefficient for women in elected office, 3.39, is significant at the level of $p < .005$. This simple regression has an r^2 of .18.

Table 4 here

Overall, we find a strong relationship between the two variables. Indeed, the results of the regression analysis indicate that an increase of one point in a state's score for women in elected office will increase a state's score on the women's resources and rights checklist by about 3.4 points. Thus, in a hypothetical perfect state, with 50-50 representation for men and women, the regression equation would project an overall score of just over 24 on the rights and resources checklist.

Figure 1 more graphically illustrates the relationships described in table 4. This figure maps each state on a grid with scores for women in elected office on the x-axis and scores for the women's resources and rights checklist on the y-axis, with the regression line superimposed. Figure 1 reiterates the strength of the relationship between women in elected office and levels of woman-friendly policy.

Figure 1 here

Alternative Explanations: Other Forms of Political Participation among Women

State-by-State Data on Voter Turnout and Institutional Resources

While the relationships described above are compelling, the simple model presented in table 4 and figure 1 do not account for alternative explanations of the presence of woman-friendly policy. In particular, other forms of political participation among women could account for increased attention to women's and feminist issues. A strong body of research suggests that policymakers and in particular elected officials respond to the preferences of voters, for example (see Mezey 1993). Indeed, women's higher turnout and the gender gap in vote choices between men and women in recent years have prompted increased attention in national political debates to issues deemed important to women (Frankovic 1999). Thus, by forcing male and female elected officials to respond to their political opinions, high levels of women's voter turnout may also lead to better policy for women.

In addition, women may benefit from institutional resources designed to increase their visibility in the political process. These institutions often advocate for woman-friendly policy. Thomas, for example, has found that the presence of a formal women's legislative caucus is a strong predictor of the "overall success levels of women's, children's, and family legislation" (Thomas 1994, 101). Similarly, research on commissions for women indicates that they can play an active role in pursuing legislation related to women's issues (Langford 1998; Stetson and

Mazur 1995). Finally, non-governmental organizations can serve as another kind of resource. In particular, formal women's organizations provide a voice for women to make their concerns visible and to organize their interests (see, for example, Freeman 1975; Gelb and Palley 1982).

To account for these possible alternative explanations, we added two additional variables to the model presented in table 4: levels of women's voter turnout and an indicator of the levels of institutional resources available to women in each state. Tables 5 and 6 present the data and rankings for each state for these indicators.

In table 5, states are ranked for levels of women's voter turnout in 1996, the last presidential election before 2000, the year of the data in the women's resources and rights checklist. These turnout levels range from a low of 43.6 percent, in Hawaii, to a high of 71.0 percent, in Minnesota. They are based on data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1998), based on the Current Population Survey.

Table 5 here

In table 6, states are ranked for the levels of institutional resources available to women. This indicator measures the number of institutional resources for women available in a state from a maximum of three, including a commission for women (established by legislation or executive order), a legislative caucus for women (organized by women legislators in either or both houses of the state legislature), and a women's state agenda project (a voluntary, nongovernmental, state-based coalition group addressing a broad range of issues concerning women). States received 1.0 point for each institutional resource present in their state, although they received partial credit if a bipartisan legislative caucus does not exist in both houses. States receive a score of 0.25 if informal or partisan meetings are held by women legislators in either house, 0.5 if a formal legislative caucus exists in one house but not the other, and 1.0 if a formal legislative caucus is present in both houses or the legislature is unicameral. These data come from three sources: the National Association of Commissions on Women (1997), the Center for American Women and Politics (1998), and the Center for Policy Alternatives (1995). Where necessary, these sources were updated by IWPR in 1998 to reflect data for that year.

Table 6 here

As table 6 shows, a total of ten states had commissions for women, a formal caucus in both legislative houses, and a women's agenda project. Only two states, Kansas and Tennessee, had none of these institutional resources as of 1998.

A More Complicated Model: Results

Adding the new variables to our model, we performed both correlation and regression analysis testing the relationships between the three explanatory variables—women in elected office, women's voter turnout, and women's institutional resources—and the presence of women-friendly policy. Table 7 presents the results from this analysis.

Table 7 here

As table 7 shows, the only of the three explanatory variables to correlate at a significant level with states' scores on the resources and rights checklist was women in elected office. In contrast, neither women's voter turnout nor women's institutional resources has any significant correlation with woman-friendly policy. Similarly, in the multiple regression model, only the β coefficient for women in elected office was statistically significant.

Thus neither women's voter turnout nor women's institutional resources can provide explanations that compete with levels of women's representation in elected office in their power to account for levels of woman-friendly policy. Women's role as active and visible individual players in elected bodies and positions seems to be crucial to advancing policy to improve their status.

Potential Caveats and Implications for Future Research

The results described above are compelling, but some caution is needed in evaluating them. First, another possible explanation not tested in these models is the political or even social culture of a state; its overall levels of acceptance of women's equality in political, economic, or social life; and attitudes toward gender roles. Research indicates that these kinds of factors can influence levels of women's representation and that they may vary by state (e.g. Arceneaux 2001; Norrander and Wilcox 1998). All these factors could also work to influence the adoption or rejection of many policies in the women's resources and rights checklist. In conservative states, for example, predominating attitudes may not only discourage women as political candidates but also make the policy options included in the women's resources and rights checklist less politically viable, whether or not women are in office. Thus political culture and gender-role attitudes could explain levels of both women in elected office and woman-friendly policy. Accounting for these possible dynamics would improve the model.

A second (and related) problem with the model is the possibility of endogeneity. It is conceivable that states with better policy for women actually enable or encourage women to run for political office. Those policies may allow women the autonomy, financial resources, education, or other factors that would make running for office more likely and more possible. That is, levels of woman-friendly policy could be influencing levels of women in elected office, and not vice versa.

To test this proposition, the model used above could be expanded to track changes across time. This paper captures one moment in time, but it does not account for how long given policies have been in place or whether they were implemented before increases in women's representation. By extending the analysis across time, further analysis could answer the classic chicken-and-egg question of which came first: Women's representation or woman-friendly policy?

At the same time, given the paper's context within existing research, the explanations we originally provided for our findings seem highly probable. Work on women in elected positions has found repeatedly that they do, in fact, change policy outcomes and the policymaking process

within individual legislatures and other government bodies. Taken in tandem with this literature, our results suggest that it is highly likely that women's increased presence as elected officials does, in fact, lead to better policy for women. This may happen in conjunction with—or even despite—a state's political culture, and it can also happen independently of the potentially positive effects of woman-friendly policy on encouraging women candidates to run for office.

Finally, the model would be improved by expanding our assessment of levels of women in elected office even further, to include several other types of positions: women in judicial positions and women in appointed office, for example. We were unable to find or collect sufficient data on women in either elected or appointed judicial office, and we chose to focus on elected officials in the interest of time and parsimony, since appointed officials have a slightly different kind of political role to play. Still, adding these factors to the model could improve the model's comprehensiveness as an assessment of women's overall representation.

Conclusion

The findings presented in this paper suggest that women's presence in elected office is crucial to pursuing policies that are relevant to women's lives and that will advance women's status. At the aggregate level, states with more women in office have better policies for women. This finding complements existing research, which has generally focused more on the experiences of women in individual or a limited number of legislatures or other governing bodies.

As a result, the findings in this paper both bolster the importance of existing research and point to the real need for efforts to increase women's representation. Having women in elected office cannot guarantee better policy for women, but it clearly helps.

**Appendix I:
Descriptions, Sources, and Scoring for Table 2
(Women’s Resources and Rights Checklist)**

*Note: This source information and all data come from IWPR’s reports on
The Status of Women in the States.*

Violence Against Women

Separate Offense: States are given a “yes” and scored a 1.0 if they classify domestic violence as a separate offense from normal assault and battery. A separate offense allows enhanced penalties for repeat offenders and helps ensure equal treatment for victims of domestic violence. Source: Miller, 1999a.

Domestic Violence Training: Whether the state has adopted a legislative statute requiring new police recruits to undergo training about domestic violence. States with this statute are scored a 1.0. Source: Miller, 1999a.

State Funding for Domestic Violence and Stalking Programs: Amount of federal and state money allocated to a state’s domestic violence and stalking programs per person in the state. Funding estimates come from a poll by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of state and federal agencies administering and distributing the funds. The CDC notes that these numbers may not include all funding because of difficulties with the survey process; specifically, because violence against women and stalking funds are distributed to and by many different state agencies, the survey may not cover them all, and as such it may leave out some funding. Moreover, because data on incidence of domestic violence and stalking are unreliable, it is difficult to gauge how much funding states need to address the problem. The information is provided to indicate which states are above or below the national average. To standardize these scores, funding levels per capita for each state were divided into the median level for all states. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 1997.

Stalking Offense Status: Whether a state classifies a first offense for stalking as a felony. States that do are given a score of 1.0; states that allow first-offense stalking to be a felony only sometimes were given a 0.5. Source: Miller, 1999b.

Sexual Assault Training: Whether a state has adopted a legislative requirement mandating sexual assault training for police and prosecutors. Those that do were given a score of 1.0. Source: Miller, 1999b.

Child Support

Single-Mother Households Receiving Child Support or Alimony: A single-mother household is defined as a family headed by a nonmarried woman with one or more of her own children (by birth, marriage or adoption). Such a family is counted as receiving child support or alimony if it received full or partial payment of child support or alimony during the past year (Annie E. Casey

Foundation, 1999). Figures are based on an average of data from the Current Population Survey for 1994-98. To standardize these scores, figures for each state were divided into the median level for all states. Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1999.

Cases with Collection: A case is counted as having a collection if as little as one cent is collected during the year. These figures include data on child support for all family types. To standardize these scores, proportions for each state were divided into the median level for all states. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, 1998.

Welfare

Child Exclusion/Family Caps: Whether a state extends TANF benefits to children born or conceived while a mother receives welfare. Many states have adopted a prohibition on these benefits, sometimes called a “family cap.” Those states without family caps were given a score of 1.0. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, 1999b.

Time Limits: States may not use federal funds to assist families with an adult who has received federally funded assistance for 60 months or more. They can set lower time limits, however. States that allow welfare recipients to receive benefits for the maximum allowable time or more are indicated by “yes” and were given a score of 1.0. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, 1999b.

Work Requirements: What constitutes work activities is a contentious issue at both the state and federal level. State policies around these issues continue to evolve and are subject to caseworker discretion. This report uses each state’s self-reported policy to identify which states require immediate work activities and which allow recipients time before they lose benefits. Those states that allow at least 24 months are indicated as “yes” and given a score of 1.0. Two states have different requirements for single parents and married parents, with single parents given less stringent requirements; they were scored 0.5. To receive the full amount of their block grants, states must demonstrate that a specific portion of their TANF caseload is participating in activities that meet the federal definition of work. In fiscal year 2000, states must show that 40 percent of their TANF caseload is working. The required proportion grows each year until 2002, when states must demonstrate that 50 percent of their TANF caseload is engaged in work. PRWORA also restricts the amount of a caseload that may be engaged in basic education or vocational training to be counted in the state’s work participation figures and allows job training to count as work only for a limited period of time for any individual. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, 1999b.

Transitional Child Care: Whether a state extends child care to families moving off welfare beyond a minimum of twelve months. States that do were given a score of 1.0. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, 1999b.

Family Violence Provisions in TANF Plans: States can provide exemptions to time limits and other policies to victims of domestic violence under the Family Violence Option. This measure

indicates whether a state has opted for the optional certification or adopted other language providing for victims of domestic violence. States that have were scored a 1.0. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, 1999b.

Earnings Disregards: States are given leeway in determining how much of a low-income worker's earnings to disregard in determining eligibility for welfare reciprocity. Six states have not changed their earnings disregards policy from the test that existed under the former welfare program, AFDC, which disregarded \$90 for work expenses and \$30 plus one-third of remaining earnings for four months; \$120 for the next 8 months; and \$90 after a full year. Forty-four states and the District of Columbia have changed their policies. Those that disregard at least 50 percent of earnings are indicated by a "yes" and given a score of 1.0. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, 1999b.

Size of TANF Benefit: Average monthly amount received by TANF recipient families in the state. This number is not adjusted for family size differences among the states. To standardize these scores, benefits for each state were divided into the median level for all states. The average number of individuals in a TANF family in the United States as a whole was 2.8, with two of the family members children. While two in five families had only one child, one in ten had more than three children. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, 1999a.

Employment/Unemployment Benefits

Minimum Wage: States receive a "yes" and scored a 1.0 if their state minimum wage rate as of March, 2000 exceeded the federal rate. According to the Fair Labor Standards Act, the state minimum wage is controlling if it is higher than the federal minimum wage. A federal minimum wage increase was signed into law on August 20, 1996 and raised the federal standard to \$5.15 per hour on September 1, 1997. Source: U.S Department of Labor, 1999.

Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI): In the five states with mandated Temporary Disability Insurance programs (California, Hawaii, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island), employees and/or their employers pay a small percentage of the employee's salary into an insurance fund and, in return, employees are provided with partial wage replacement if they become ill or disabled. Women can also use this benefit upon giving birth. These states were each scored a 1.0. Source: Hartmann, Yoon, Spalter-Roth and Shaw, 1995.

Access to Unemployment Insurance (UI) for Low-Wage Workers: In order to receive UI, potential recipients must meet several eligibility requirements. Two of these are high quarter earnings and base period earnings requirements. The "base period" is a 12-month period preceding the start of a spell of unemployment. This, however, excludes the current calendar quarter and often the previous full calendar quarter (this has serious consequences for low-wage and contingent workers who need to count more recent earnings to qualify). The base period criterion states that the individual must have earned a minimum amount during the base period. The high quarter earnings criterion requires that individuals earn a total reaching a specified threshold amount in one of the quarters within the base period. IWPR research has shown that women are less likely to meet the two earnings requirements than men are and thus are more

likely to be disqualified from receipt of UI benefits. IWPR found that nearly 14 percent of unemployed women workers were disqualified from receiving UI by the two earnings criteria. This rate is more than twice that for unemployed men (Yoon, Spalter-Roth and Baldwin, 1995). States typically set eligibility standards for UI and can enact policies that are more or less inclusive and more or less generous to claimants. For example, some states have implemented a “movable” base period, allowing flexibility to the advantage of the claimant. Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Unemployment Insurance Service, 1999.

Since states have the power to decide who receives unemployment insurance benefits, some states set high requirements, thereby excluding many low earners. A state was scored “yes” and given a score of 1.0 if it was relatively generous to low earners, such that base period wages required were less than or equal to \$1,300 and high quarter wages required were less than or equal to \$800. If the base period wages required were more than \$2,000 or if high quarter wages required were more than \$1,000, the state was scored “no” and given a 0; “sometimes” was defined as base period and high quarter wages which fell between the “yes” and “no” ranges. These last states were given a score of 0.5.

Access to UI for Part-Time Workers: Only eight states and the District of Columbia allow unemployed workers seeking a part-time position to qualify for UI. These states were scored a 1.0. Source: American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, 1999.

Access to UI for “Good Cause Quits”: Eleven states offer UI coverage for voluntary quits caused by a variety of circumstances, such as moving with a spouse, harassment on the job, or other situations. These states were scored a 1.0. The specifics of which circumstances are considered “good cause” differ by state. Source: American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, 1999.

Use of UI for Paid Family Leave: Recent initiatives in several states have advanced the idea of using UI to provide benefits during periods of family leave. At the federal level, the Department of Labor now allows states to provide partial wage replacement under the unemployment compensation program on a voluntary, experimental basis to parents who take leave or otherwise leave employment following the birth or adoption of a child. The new regulations were issued in June of 2000 and took effect on August 14, 2000. To implement them, state legislatures must approve of plans to use UI in this fashion. States that did so in 2000 were given a score of 1.0. Source: National Partnership for Women and Families, 2000.

Pay Equity: Pay equity, or comparable worth, remedies are designed to raise the wages of jobs that are undervalued at least partly because of the gender or race of the workers who hold those jobs. States that have these policies within their civil service system are marked as “yes” and scored a 1.0. Source: National Committee on Pay Equity, 1997.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Civil Rights Legislation: Whether a state has passed a statute extending anti-discrimination laws to apply to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. States that have were scored a 1.0. Source: Hawes, 1999.

Same-Sex Marriage: Whether a state has avoided adopting a policy—statute, executive order, or other regulation—prohibiting same-sex marriage. States that have not adopted these policies were scored a 1.0. Source: Hawes, 1999.

Hate Crimes Legislation: Whether a state has established enhanced penalties for crimes perpetrated against victims due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. States that do were scored a 1.0. Source: Hawes, 1999.

Reproductive Rights

Mandatory Consent: States received a score of 1.0 if they allow minors access to abortion without parental consent or notification. Mandatory consent laws require that minors gain the consent of one or both parents before a physician can perform the procedure, while notification laws require they notify one or both parents of the decision to have an abortion. Source: NARAL and NARAL Foundation, 2000.

Waiting Period: States received a score of 1.0 if they allow a woman to have an abortion without a waiting period. Such legislation mandates that a physician cannot perform an abortion until a certain number of hours after notifying the woman of her options in dealing with a pregnancy. Source: NARAL and NARAL Foundation, 2000.

Restrictions on Public Funding: If a state provides public funding for abortions under most circumstances for women who meet income eligibility standards, it received a score of 1.0. Source: NARAL and NARAL Foundation, 2000.

Contraceptive Coverage Laws: Whether a state has a law or policy requiring that health insurers who provide coverage for prescription drugs extend coverage for FDA-approved contraceptives (e.g., drugs and devices) and related medical services, including exams and insertion/removal treatments. States received a score of 1.0 if they mandate full contraceptive coverage. They received a score of 0.5 if they mandate partial coverage, which may include mandating that insurance companies offer at least one insurance package covering some or all birth control prescription methods or requiring insurers with coverage for prescription drugs to cover oral contraceptives. Source: NARAL and NARAL Foundation, 2000.

Coverage of Infertility Treatments: States mandating that insurance companies provide coverage of infertility treatments received a score of 1.0, while states mandating that insurance companies offer policyholders at least one package with coverage of infertility treatments received a score of 0.5. Source: Stauffer and Plaza, 1999.

Same-Sex Couples and Adoption: Whether a state allows gays and lesbians the option of second-parent adoption, which occurs when a nonbiological parent in a couple adopts the child of his or her partner. At the state level, courts and/or legislatures have upheld or limited the right to second-parent adoption among gay and lesbian couples. States were given 1.0 point if the state supreme court has prohibited discrimination against these couples in adoption, 0.75 if an appellate or high court has, 0.5 if a lower court has approved a petition for second parent

adoption, 0.25 if a state has no official position on the subject, and no points if the state has banned second parent adoption. Source: Hawes, 1999.

Mandatory Sex Education: States received a score of 1.0 if they require middle, junior or high schools to provide sex education classes. Source: NARAL and NARAL Foundation, 2000.

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Table 1.
States Ranked for Women in Elected Office, 1998

RANK	STATE	SCORE
1	Washington	3.29
2	Delaware	2.78
3	California	2.72
4	Arizona	2.68
5	Maine	2.56
6	Colorado	2.45
7	Hawaii	2.33
8	Connecticut	2.29
9	Kansas	2.21
10	Maryland	2.17
11	Wyoming	2.12
12	New Hampshire	2.06
13	Minnesota	1.97
14	Oregon	1.91
15	Illinois	1.88
16	Idaho	1.87
17	Montana	1.77
18	Alaska	1.76
19	Nevada	1.75
20	Vermont	1.67
21	South Dakota	1.66
22	Nebraska	1.57
23	Missouri	1.56
24	Indiana	1.54
25	Rhode Island	1.53
26	Texas	1.50
27	New Jersey	1.44
28	Ohio	1.43
28	Michigan	1.43
30	Florida	1.41
31	New Mexico	1.40
32	North Dakota	1.35
33	New York	1.24
34	Iowa	1.22
34	Utah	1.22
36	Louisiana	1.17
37	Wisconsin	1.15
38	Oklahoma	1.06
39	North Carolina	1.04
40	Arkansas	1.02
41	Massachusetts	0.97
42	Georgia	0.89
43	Tennessee	0.75
44	Virginia	0.73
45	South Carolina	0.68
46	Pennsylvania	0.65
47	Alabama	0.64
47	West Virginia	0.64
49	Kentucky	0.53
50	Mississippi	0.49

Source: Center for American Women and Politics, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 1999d; Council of State Governments, 1998

Table 2.
Measuring Woman-Friendly Policy:
IWPR's Women's Resources and Rights Checklist

	Total Number of States with Policy or US Average
Violence Against Women	
Number of states in which domestic violence is a separate criminal offense:	30
Number of states whose laws require domestic violence training of new police recruits:	32
Domestic violence and sexual assault spending per person:	\$1.34
Number of states in which a first stalking offense is considered a felony:	10
Number of states whose laws require sexual assault training for police and prosecutors:	10
Child Support	
Percent of single-mother households receiving child support or alimony:	34%
Percent of child support cases with orders for collection in which support was collected:	39%
Welfare Policies	
Number of states which extend TANF benefits to children born or conceived while a mother is on welfare:	27
Number of states which allow receipt of TANF benefits up to or beyond the 60-month federal time limit:	30
Number of states which allow welfare recipients at least 24 months before requiring participation in work activities:	23
Number of states which provide transitional child care under TANF for more than 12 months:	33
Number of state TANF plans which been certified or submitted for certification under the Family Violence Option or made other provisions for victims of domestic violence:	40
In determining welfare eligibility, number of states which disregard the equivalent of at least 50 percent of earnings from a full-time, minimum wage job:	25
Average TANF benefit, 1997-98:	\$358
Employment/Unemployment Benefits	
Number of states with minimum wage this is higher than the federal level as of January 2000:	10
Number of states that have mandatory temporary disability insurance:	5
Number of states which provide Unemployment Insurance benefits to:	
Low-wage workers	12
Workers seeking part-time jobs	9
Workers who leave their jobs for certain circumstances ("good cause quits")	23
As of July 2000, number of states with proposed policies allowing workers to use Unemployment Insurance for paid family leave:	0 Enacted; 12 Proposed
Number of states that implemented adjustments to achieve pay equity in state civil services:	20
Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	
Number of states that have civil rights legislation prohibiting discrimination	19

on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity:	
Number of states that have a Hate Crimes law covering sexual orientation:	24
Number of states that have avoided adopting a ban on same-sex marriage:	20
Reproductive Rights	
Number of states that allow access to abortion services:	
Without mandatory parental consent or notification	9
Without a waiting period	33
Number of states that provide public funding for abortions under any or most circumstances if a woman is eligible:	15
Number of states that require health insurers to provide comprehensive coverage for contraceptives	11
Number of states that require health insurers to provide coverage of infertility treatments	10
Number of states that allow the non-biological parent in a gay/lesbian couple to adopt his/her partner's child:	21
Number of states that require schools to provide sex education:	18

Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research. See Appendix A for sources.

**Table 3.
States Ranked According to Rights and
Resources Checklist, 2000**

RANK	STATE	SCORE
1	Hawaii	26.99
2	Vermont	23.63
3	Washington	23.48
4	California	23.47
5	Alaska	22.73
6	New Jersey	21.43
7	Connecticut	21.27
8	Massachusetts	20.99
9	New York	20.42
10	Illinois	19.88
11	Rhode Island	19.67
12	New Mexico	19.66
13	Maryland	19.22
14	Iowa	18.74
15	New Hampshire	18.33
16	Minnesota	18.01
17	Oregon	17.75
18	Nevada	17.69
19	Wisconsin	16.21
20	Pennsylvania	15.64
21	West Virginia	15.42
22	Maine	15.23
23	Texas	14.87
24	Wyoming	13.73
25	Missouri	13.64
26	Kentucky	13.63
27	Montana	13.52
28	Ohio	13.18
29	Utah	12.59
30	Colorado	12.57
31	Delaware	11.89
32	Nebraska	11.54
33	Oklahoma	11.36
34	Arkansas	11.25
35	Florida	10.91
36	Georgia	10.61
37	Kansas	10.41
38	Michigan	10.41
39	South Carolina	10.22
40	Louisiana	10.21
41	Arizona	9.95
42	South Dakota	9.90
43	North Carolina	9.44
44	Alabama	8.84
45	Virginia	8.44
46	North Dakota	8.42
47	Indiana	8.05
48	Idaho	7.48
49	Mississippi	6.58
50	Tennessee	6.35

See Appendix A for sources.

Table 4.

Statistical Relationships Between Women in Elected Office and Woman-Friendly Policy

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Correlation Results (with Woman-Friendly Policy)		
Women in Elected Office	.43*	
Regression Analysis (Woman-Friendly Policy as Dependant Variable)		
Intercept	9.42**	1.77
Women in Elected Office	3.39**	1.04
<i>r squared</i>	0.18	

*p < .01 **p < .005

Table 5.
States Ranked According to Women's Voter
Turnout, 1996

RANK	STATE	PERCENT
1	Minnesota	71.0%
2	Montana	70.7%
3	Maine	68.5%
4	Wyoming	67.3%
5	North Dakota	66.1%
6	South Dakota	66.0%
7	Wisconsin	64.6%
8	Oregon	64.2%
9	Louisiana	63.1%
10	Vermont	63.1%
11	Missouri	63.0%
12	Alaska	62.6%
13	Washington	62.2%
14	Kansas	62.1%
15	Nebraska	61.6%
16	Rhode Island	61.3%
17	Idaho	61.2%
17	Iowa	61.2%
19	Michigan	60.7%
20	Colorado	60.4%
21	Oklahoma	60.1%
22	Connecticut	59.7%
23	Ohio	59.6%
24	Massachusetts	59.2%
25	New Hampshire	58.8%
26	Virginia	58.7%
27	Alabama	58.5%
28	Delaware	57.1%
29	South Carolina	56.6%
30	Illinois	56.4%
31	Indiana	56.1%
32	Mississippi	55.4%
32	Utah	55.4%
34	Maryland	55.3%
35	New Jersey	55.1%
36	North Carolina	54.9%
37	New Mexico	54.7%
38	Kentucky	54.1%
39	Pennsylvania	53.5%
40	Nevada	53.4%
41	Tennessee	53.3%
42	New York	52.3%
43	Arkansas	51.7%
44	Florida	51.6%
45	West Virginia	51.4%
46	Arizona	51.1%
47	California	50.1%
48	Georgia	49.2%
49	Texas	47.6%
50	Hawaii	43.6%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1998

Table 6.
States Ranked According to Institutional Resources Available to Women,
1998

RANK	STATE	SCORE
1	California	3
1	Florida	3
1	Georgia	3
1	Maryland	3
1	Massachusetts	3
1	Missouri	3
1	New York	3
1	North Carolina	3
1	South Carolina	3
1	Virginia	3
11	Alabama	2.5
11	New Mexico	2.5
13	Connecticut	2.25
13	Idaho	2.25
13	Michigan	2.25
13	Minnesota	2.25
13	North Dakota	2.25
13	Oklahoma	2.25
13	Oregon	2.25
13	Wisconsin	2.25
21	Delaware	2
21	Hawaii	2
21	Illinois	2
21	Indiana	2
21	Kentucky	2
21	Montana	2
21	Nevada	2
21	New Hampshire	2
21	New Jersey	2
21	Ohio	2
21	Rhode Island	2
21	Texas	2
21	Utah	2
21	West Virginia	2
35	Nebraska	1.5
35	Pennsylvania	1.5
35	Vermont	1.5
38	Colorado	1.25
38	Iowa	1.25
38	Washington	1.25
41	Alaska	1
41	Arizona	1
41	Louisiana*	1
41	Maine	1
41	South Dakota	1
41	Wyoming	1
47	Arkansas	0.5
48	Mississippi	0.25
49	Kansas	0
49	Tennessee	0

Sources: National Association of Commissions for Women, 1997, updated in 1999 by IWPR, and Center for American Women in Politics, 1998.

Table 7.

Statistical Relationships Between Woman-Friendly Policy and Measures of Women's Political Participation

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Correlation Results (with Woman-Friendly Policy)		
Women in Elected Office	.43**	
Women's Voter Turnout	[-.06]	
Women's Institutional Resources	[.12]	
Regression Analysis (Woman-Friendly Policy as Dependant Variable)		
Intercept	13.39*	7.36
Women in Elected Office	3.73***	1.06
Women's Voter Turnout	[-11.06]	11.91
Women's Institutional Resources	[1.02]	0.87
<i>r squared</i>	0.23	

*p < .1 **p < .01

***p < .005

[] denotes p > .1

Figure 1. Impact of Women in Elected Office

