

Does Women's Representation in Elected Office Lead to Women-Friendly Policy? Analysis of State-Level Data

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ABSTRACT. This project assesses the relationship between women's representation and women-friendly policies across the states while controlling for several factors, including voter turnout, institutional resources for women, attitudes toward women's roles, labor force participation, and the strength of the two major political parties. It identifies a two-staged process in which party dominance and attitudes about women in politics influence levels of women's representation; women's representation and party dominance then influence levels of women-friendly policy. The findings are stronger for women's legislative and Democratic representation than for women's executive and Republican representation, although women Republicans are nonetheless important to advancing women-friendly policy. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <http://www.HaworthPress.com> © 2004 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]*

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the 2000 elections, for the first time in recent history the proportion 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 (Center for American Women and Politics [CAWP], 2001). This trend continued with the 2002 elections, which resulted in 1,642 women holding 22.2 percent of legislative seats (CAWP, 2003).

If women's representation in state legislatures continues to decline, 2000 will be a crucial turning point for women's representation. During the 1990s, women made many gains in increasing their representation. This trend, however, could come to an end. Although so far the declines are small, and only in state office, they bode poorly for women's representation nationally: because many women and men who serve in state legislatures later move into higher office, a slowdown in women's gains at the state level could bode poorly for future advances at the national level.

The decline signals a renewed need to ask a crucial question: Does representation in elected office 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, 2000: 221). Increased numbers of women elected in 1992 suggested that the public was beginning to develop a greater "awareness of the consequences of the absence of women in public leadership posts" (Duerst-Lahti and Versteegen, 2000: 221). For many political researchers, those consequences may include a failure by elected bodies to consider women's unique experiences and shared problems adequately in the policymaking process (e.g., Sapiro, 1981). In contrast, women elected officials could shift debate to include issues traditionally ignored by male public officials (Kathlene, 1998).

The analysis in this paper follows and adds to a body of research exploring how policymaking changes when women are in the picture. It specifically looks at the relationships between the political power women have achieved by winning elected office and the existence of women-friendly policy. It does so by examining variations in women's levels of elected representation and whether they coincide with trends in women-friendly policy across the 50 states: that is, it examines whether, overall, states with higher levels of women's representation also have better policies for women.

In addition, the analysis in this paper examines the relative importance of women's representation compared with other factors potentially related to women-friendly policy. For example, women's political participation as voters, the institutional resources (such as a commission for women) available to women, attitudes toward women's roles, women's

labor force participation, and differences in party dominance of a state's political system could all affect the kinds of policies considered and adopted by various state governments. The analysis in this paper compares the relationships between each of these factors and levels of women-friendly policy, in order to assess their relative strength.

EXISTING RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S IMPACT AS ELECTED OFFICIALS

Numerous studies have explored the influence women have once elected to public office. Early 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 so-called "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, 1985: 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 2002a), and it tends to work in tandem with party affiliation and political ideology (Mezey, 1994). Nonetheless, most recent research finds that gender-based dynamics usually trump other variables in explaining support for women's issues. For example, 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 concerns (Wilkins, 2001).

The commitment of women elected officials to women's issues is evident at several stages in the policymaking process (Swers, 2002a and b). 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 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).¹

Studies of the impact of women elected officials on public policy have focused on almost all levels of government (Swers 2002b). A few, like Flammang's 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 at more than one level of 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 could look at the combined influence of women's electoral representation at all possible levels. The analysis in this paper evaluates how women's overall level of elected representation in the U.S. states, in a range of offices from state legislators to governors, relates to women-friendly policies. This research can provide the context and justification for pursuing more detailed analysis designed to isolate the mechanisms that facilitate the influence of women elected officials.

In addition, little research has looked at the relative importance of women's representation compared with other factors related to women-friendly policy. Indicators of women's levels of political participation, the institutional resources available to them, gender role attitudes, and party strength have all been shown to affect the kinds of policies considered and adopted by various state governments (e.g., Frankovic, 1999; Langford, 1998; Mezey, 1993; Stetson and Mazur, 1995; Thomas, 1994). The analysis in this paper evaluates the relationships between each of these factors and levels of women-friendly policy. It also compares their importance to that of women's levels of representation.

WOMEN'S ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION AND WOMEN-FRIENDLY POLICY IN THE STATES

To provide an overall picture of the importance of women's representation, measures for two key concepts were developed: one for women's overall levels of elected representation in a state, taking into consideration different elected offices (governors, other statewide elected officials, and state legislators), and one for levels of women-friendly policy in a state. Measuring these two concepts began with two resources: an index of women in elected office at the state level, and a women's resources and rights checklist. Both are based on analytical tools developed by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) as part of its *Status of Women in the States* project (see Caiazza, 2000).

To measure women's political representation, the proportion of officeholders who are women was computed for each state at three levels—state legislators, statewide elected executive officials besides governors, and governors—all of which have direct influence over state policy. Within each category, the proportion of seats held by women was calculated, resulting in three numbers for each state, one legislative and two executive (governors and non-gubernatorial statewide elected officials).² The two executive indicators were combined by weighting governors at 1.5, non-governors at 1.0, adding the two numbers, and standardizing the resulting number by dividing by the top score for all states. These steps resulted in one measure of women's legislative power and one of their executive power. The two measures were then added to create a score for women's overall level of elected representation in each state. These scores and rankings for all the states are presented in Table 1. Not surprisingly, the scores range widely, from 0.13 for the state with the least representation for women, Mississippi, to 1.17 for the state with the most, New Jersey. Many states of the West and Northeast had the highest levels of women's representation in 1996, while in general states of the Southeast had the lowest. The mean score for this indicator was 0.45 with a standard deviation of .22.³

Measuring levels of women-friendly policy is more complicated: the very idea of what constitutes women-friendly policy is controversial. Nonetheless, there are sources that provide guidelines for choosing a list of what those policies might entail at the state level. For this analysis, an important source was the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which were unanimously adopted by representatives of 189 countries (including the United States) at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The Platform for Action outlines critical issues of concern to women and remaining obstacles to women's advancement. These issues 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 the Platform for Action, IWPR created a women's resources and rights checklist of state policies that can be used to advance women's status in these areas. The rights and resources fall under several categories: protection from violence, access to income support (through welfare and child support collection), women-friendly employment protections, legislation protecting sexual minorities, and reproductive rights. The checklist is designed to provide a measure of state's commit-

TABLE 1. State Ranks and Composite Scores for Women in Elected Office, 1996

RANK	STATE	SCORE
1	New Jersey	1.17
2	Colorado	0.85
3	Hawaii	0.84
4	Kansas	0.83
5	Alaska	0.80
6	Delaware	0.79
7	Washington	0.73
8	Minnesota	0.71
9	Michigan	0.67
10	Indiana	0.63
10	Arizona	0.63
12	Connecticut	0.56
13	Illinois	0.53
14	Maryland	0.52
15	Wyoming	0.51
16	Utah	0.50
17	Ohio	0.49
18	Missouri	0.48
19	Nevada	0.47
19	Vermont	0.47
21	Idaho	0.46
21	Pennsylvania	0.46
23	Rhode Island	0.43
24	North Dakota	0.42
24	New Mexico	0.42
24	California	0.42
27	New York	0.41
28	South Dakota	0.39
28	Arkansas	0.39
28	Oregon	0.39
31	Montana	0.37
32	Tennessee	0.36
33	Florida	0.33
33	Nebraska	0.33
33	Texas	0.33
36	Iowa	0.32
37	New Hampshire	0.31
38	Oklahoma	0.30
39	Alabama	0.27
40	Maine	0.26
41	North Carolina	0.24
42	Wisconsin	0.23
42	Massachusetts	0.23
44	South Carolina	0.22
44	Georgia	0.22
46	Louisiana	0.17
46	Kentucky	0.17
48	Virginia	0.15
48	West Virginia	0.15
50	Mississippi	0.13

Sources: Center for American Women and Politics, 1996a and 1996b; Council of State Governments, 1998.

ment to policies intended to help women achieve economic, political, and social well-being.⁴

Table 2 provides a list of the policies included in the women's resources and rights checklist and the number of states with each policy or, where appropriate, the average value for all states on an indicator (Appendix 1 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 used were the most recent available for assessing state policies in 2000. In most cases the original sources date to 1999 and were updated by IWPR for 2000.

To measure state's relative commitment to women-friendly policy, each state's scores on the policy indicators in the checklist were summed. 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).

Table 3 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. The mean score for this indicator was 14.72 with a standard deviation of 5.25.

The analytical tools described above were first used to analyze the relationship between levels of women's representation and levels of women-friendly policy in each state through simple OLS regression analysis. To allow for a potential lag between women's representation and women-friendly policymaking, data for women's political representation are from 1996, while data on women-friendly policy are in most cases for 2000.

The results of this initial analysis suggest a strong relationship between women's representation and women-friendly policy (see Table 4 and Figure 1). Not only do the two variables have a statistically significant relationship, but this simple equation has an r-squared value of 0.13. Overall, if a state had equal representation for women in its legislature and non-gubernatorial executive elected offices, as well as a woman governor, the formula presented in model 1 in Table 4 would

TABLE 2. Indicators of Women-Friendly Policy: Women's Resources and Rights Checklist, 2000	
	Total Number of States with Policy (of 50) or U.S. 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 that extend TANF benefits to children born or conceived while a mother is on welfare:	27
Number of states that allow receipt of TANF benefits up to or beyond the 60-month federal time limit:	30
Number of states that allow welfare recipients at least 24 months before requiring participation in work activities:	23
Number of states that provide transitional child care under TANF for more than 12 months:	33
Number of state TANF plans that have 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 that is higher than the federal level as of January 2000:	10
Number of states with mandatory temporary disability insurance:	5
Number of states that 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 have 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 on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity:	19
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
For sources for the indicators used here, see Appendix 1. Compiled by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research. Copyright IWPR 2002.	

TABLE 3. State Ranks and Composite Scores for Women's 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
37	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

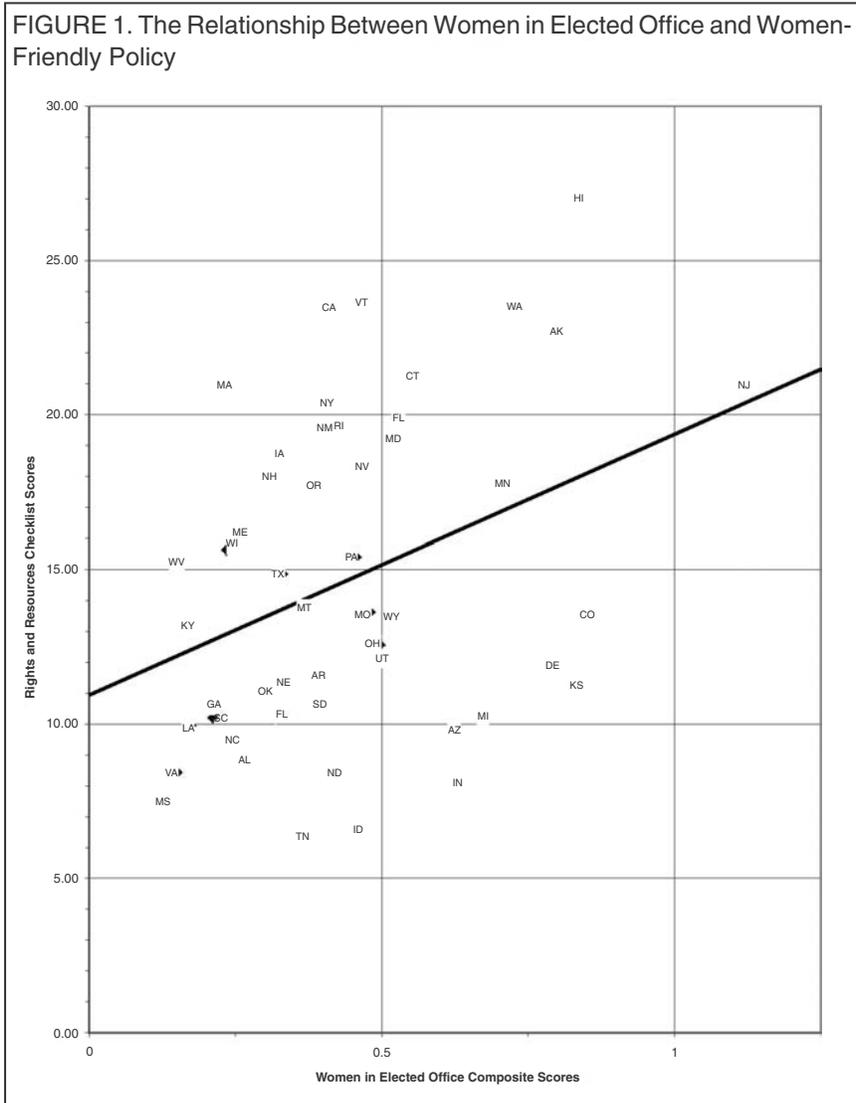
Source: IWPR, 2000; Copyright IWPR 2002; see Appendix 1 for sources for data.

predict a score of 24 on the women's resources and rights checklist about 60 percent of the total possible score.

***RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WOMEN-FRIENDLY POLICY,
WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, AND WOMEN'S
INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES***

While its results are compelling, the simple model presented in Figure 1 does not account for several alternative explanations for the presence of women-friendly policy besides the proportion of women in elected office. Other forms of political participation and representation among women, for example, could account for increased attention to women's issues. A strong body of research suggests that policymakers (and in particular elected officials) respond to the preferences of voters (see Mezey, 1993). 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, for example (Frankovic, 1999). 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—especially when women vote at higher rates than men.

TABLE 4. Predicting Women-Friendly Policy: Results of OLS Regression Analysis			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Women in Elected Office	8.43*** (3.22)	8.96*** (3.34)	4.73 (3.45)
Women's Institutional Resources		1.05 (1.13)	
Ratio of Women's to Men's Voter Turnout		11.17 (12.68)	
Labor Force Participation Ratio			-11.31 (23.41)
Attitudes Toward Women in Politics			19.09*** (5.03)
Democratic Dominance in State Legislature			13.99** (5.17)
R-squared	0.13	0.16	0.42
F-value	6.87	2.86	5.90
N	50	50	38
***p < .01 **p < .05			



Women may also benefit from institutional resources designed specifically to increase their visibility in the political process. These institutions often advocate for women-friendly policy. Sue 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, chil-

dren'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 coalitions 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, two additional variables were added to the model in Figure 1, in order to analyze their relative relationships with women-friendly policy: (1) the ratio of women's to men's levels of voter turnout, and (2) levels of institutional resources available to women in each state. The ratio of women's to men's voter turnout rates in 1996 is based on figures from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1998), based on the Current Population Survey. For all but five states, this ratio exceeds 1.00: women voted at higher rates than men in most states in 1996. The highest score, 1.27, is Nevada's; the lowest, .94, is Pennsylvania's. Overall, states in the West and the Northeast have the highest ratios of women's to men's voter turnout; several Southeastern and Midwestern states are among the bottom states. The mean for this indicator is 1.06 with a standard deviation of .06.

States were also scored by the number of institutional resources available to women in 1996, from a maximum of three: (1) a commission for women (established by legislation or executive order), (2) a legislative caucus for women (organized by women legislators in either or both houses of the state legislature), and (3) a women's state agenda project (a voluntary, nongovernmental, state-based coalition group addressing a broad range of issues concerning women). States received one point for each institutional resource present in their state, although they received partial credit if they had some kind of women's caucus in the legislature but a formal, bipartisan legislative caucus did not exist in both houses (all data from the Center for Policy Alternatives, 1995).⁵ As of 1996, four states (Georgia, Maryland, New Hampshire, and North Carolina) had all three of the institutional resources included in this measure. Only two states, Kansas and Mississippi, had none. The mean score on this variable was 1.86 out of 3.00, with a standard deviation of 0.65.

The measures of voter turnout and institutional resources were included in an analysis testing the relationships between the three possible explanatory variables—women in elected office, women's voter turnout,

and women's institutional resources—and the presence of women-friendly policy. Table 4 presents the results of this analysis. In the new model, the women in elected office variable was still highly statistically significant. In contrast, women's institutional resources and voter turnout were not significantly associated with levels of women friendly policy.

What explains the lack of significance of the two new independent variables? First, women's institutional resources may emerge when women officials feel they most need them—and also when they are least likely to be effective. A women's legislative caucus, for example, may develop when women feel most ignored by party caucuses. In contrast, if women legislators feel included in and well represented by their parties, they may not band together in a women's caucus.⁶ Women's commissions and state agenda projects may also be created when women feel the most pressing need for this kind of governmental or nongovernmental advocacy—that is, when conditions are least favorable for them to be effective. In addition, these resources vary tremendously from state to state in their ability to advocate for women's policy. For example, while a few women's commissions are extremely effective, many are hamstrung by difficult circumstances such as legislative or executive bans on working on certain issues (such as reproductive rights), small budgets, and weak appointments. These explanations may account for the insignificant relationship between institutional resources and women-friendly policy.

Finally, the ratio of women's to men's voter turnout is probably at best an indirect measure of the political factors that sway public officials. It may be less important than the actual political attitudes of the men and women who are voting. That is, preferences for or against the policies in the women's resources and rights checklist, or even about women's equality more generally, may be more likely than simple turnout to sway political agendas. A more direct measure of these political attitudes might provide a better sense of the political culture that elected officials respond to in a given state.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WOMEN-FRIENDLY POLICY AND INDICATORS OF POLITICAL CULTURE

Political culture is the all-important environment in which political processes occur, and as a result it could be an important factor in understanding why states adopt women-friendly policy and how women elected officials can affect those policies. Political culture can encompass

many factors, including social and political attitudes or party preferences in a state. For the purposes of this study, two main aspects of political culture are studied: attitudes about women's roles, and the predominance of Democrats or Republicans in a given state.

Attitudes toward women's roles could influence the adoption or rejection of many policies in the women's resources and rights checklist by shaping their political viability. In conservative states, for example, predominating attitudes could make much of what are defined in this analysis as "women-friendly policy" politically problematic. In contrast, in states with overall gender-role attitudes that more strongly favor equality for women, these policies may be more politically viable. They may also be more likely to be on the table for discussion in the first place.

To assess state-level attitudes toward women's roles and equality, this project relies on a measure of support for women's political equality developed by Brace et al. (1999) for their analysis of public opinion in the states. This measure is also used by Arceneaux (2001) to analyze the effects of gender-role attitudes on women's representation. It was developed to evaluate acceptance of women as political leaders: using pooled data from the General Social Survey from 1974-96, Brace et al. (1999) analyzed state differences in levels of support for two statements: (1) "Women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country to men" and (2) "Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are women." They then calculated scores for the 38 states with sufficient sample sizes to reliably estimate levels of support for women's equality in politics (the remaining twelve did not have sufficient sample sizes despite the pooling of over twenty years of data).

Because the measure developed by Brace et al. focuses on attitudes toward women in politics rather than in a wide array of possible roles, it is limited as a measure of overall attitudes toward gender roles. For example, respondents could conceivably support equality for women as workers, in education, or in other areas but also support their exclusion from politics. Conversely, they could support political equality but not economic or educational equity. Nonetheless, the measure provides a snapshot of attitudes towards gender equality. On a more practical level, this measure of attitudes toward gender equality is one of the only attempts to measure gender ideologies, political or otherwise, at the state level. As Arceneaux (2001) points out, previous attempts to assess such differences have been forced to rely on even more indirect measures of gender-role attitudes, including overall political ideology toward state involvement in various political and social issues.⁷

Brace et al. award the highest score for favorable attitudes toward women in politics to Washington (at 1.59); the lowest scores were given to Arkansas and Alabama (both at 1.01). As with levels of women's representation, states of the West and the Northeast generally have higher scores than states of the Southeast and parts of the Midwest. The mean score on this variable is 1.38 with a standard deviation of 0.16.

Because of the limited scope of this measure, in this project it was supplemented with the ratio of women's to men's labor force participation rates in each state, as a complementary indicator of attitudes toward women's non traditional gender roles. While many factors may affect women's labor force participation, certainly one that has been crucial over the past twenty years is changing attitudes about gender roles. Women's desire for economic independence, along with increased acceptance of their public roles, has contributed to the sharp increase in their workforce participation over the past few decades. Of course, men's labor force participation rates vary significantly across the states for a variety of reasons, including the overall strength of the labor market and demographic differences related to factors like age and education levels, which also vary across the states (Caiazza, 2000). To control for these factors, women's labor force participation rates were divided into men's, using data from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (1999), based on the Current Population Survey (for noninstitutionalized women and men aged 16 and older). In the highest-ranking states, Hawaii and South Dakota, women work at rates that are about 88 percent of men's. In the lowest, Texas and West Virginia, women work at rates that are just 76 percent of men's. Overall, women in the Midwest and Northeast work at rates that are among the closest to men's, while women in the Southeast and a few Western states work at rates that are among the lowest compared with men's. The mean score for this indicator was .82 with a standard deviation of 0.03.

Because the two major U.S. parties have very different approaches to many of the issues outlined in the women's resources and rights checklist, the dominance of a certain party among elected officials in a state could also be a variable that is strongly related to levels of women-friendly policy. Democrats are more likely to support stronger social programs concerning women's issues, for example, and to advance legislation protecting abortion and other than Republicans are. States also vary quite a bit in the representation of reproductive Democrats and Republicans in political office and particularly within state legislatures. Like attitudes toward women in elected office, party dominance can make a significant difference in the political viability and importance of poli-

cies related to women's equality and status. To measure the importance of party, an indicator of the proportion of Democrats in state legislatures was developed using data from the United States Statistical Abstract (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1997). In 1996, this proportion ranged from 0.86 (in Arkansas) to 0.15 (in Idaho), with a mean of 0.52 and a standard deviation of 0.16.

Each of these three new measures were added to the model testing the relationship between women's elected representation and women-friendly policies (the two insignificant variables from the previous model tested were dropped so that the small sample size would affect the outcomes less drastically). Table 4 presents the results of the new model.

In this model, women-friendly policy is significantly related to attitudes toward women in politics and party dominance, but not to the ratio of women's to men's labor force participation. For both significant variables, the relationship is positive: thus, favorable attitudes toward women in politics and the dominance of the Democratic party in the state legislature are associated with the existence of more women-friendly policies.

Interestingly, when the new variables are added to the model, the relationship between women's representation in elected office and women-friendly policy loses its significance. This finding suggests that attitudes toward women in politics and party dominance are the more important explanatory factors. Increased levels of women in elected office may be only coincidentally related to women-friendly policy—perhaps even a by-product of favorable attitudes toward women in politics or even of party. These findings seem to contradict existing research that finds a direct link between women's roles as elected officials and policy results.

At the same time, because states' scores on the indicators of women-friendly policy and attitudes toward women in elected office are highly correlated (there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables, which have a correlation coefficient of 0.62 significant at $p < .01$), it seems possible that the relationships between women-friendly policy, attitudes toward women in elected office, and levels of women in elected office are more complex than the model might suggest. In fact, it is possible to imagine that both favorable attitudes toward women in politics and Democratic dominance could lead to increased women's representation, which could in turn lead to higher levels of women-friendly policy. Clearly, a state with more accepting and encouraging attitudes toward women and politics could be expected to have higher levels of women's representation, and research has found evidence of this relationship (Arceneaux, 2001). Women's representation could then play an intermediary role in encouraging women-friendly policy by providing a link between attitudes and women-

friendly policy. Similarly, since a higher proportion of women legislators are Democrats than Republicans (CAWP, 1996b), the dominance of the Democratic party could play a role in increasing women's representation, which could then lead to more women-friendly policy.

To test these hypotheses, a new model was developed to test a two-staged set of relationships leading to women-friendly policy. The new model analyzed the possibility that attitudes toward women in politics and Democratic dominance are both directly related to levels of women in elected office, and this relationship explains their more indirect relationship with levels of women-friendly policy. The new model also retained party as a variable with a direct relationship with women-friendly policy, since it could simultaneously have both.⁸

Table 5 presents the results of this analysis. As this table shows, when attitudes toward women in politics and Democratic dominance are treated as indirectly related to women-friendly policies by way of women's representation, women's representation in elected office once again enjoys a relatively strong relationship with levels of women-friendly policy. Both it and Democratic dominance are significantly related to women-friendly policy. In addition, attitudes toward women and party dominance are both significantly related to women in elected office. Interestingly, Democratic dominance is negatively related to women in elected office: that is, Democratic control of the legislature is actually associated with decreased levels of women's representation when attitudes toward women in politics are taken into account.

These findings suggest a two-staged relationship from party and gender-role attitudes, through women's representation, to women-friendly policy. In a given state, attitudes toward women's political roles and the dominance of a certain party influence the level of women in elected office, with more favorable attitudes toward women's political roles and more Republicans in office associated with higher levels of women's representation. In turn, the proportion of women in elected office and political party affect levels of women-friendly policy. This time, more women in office and the dominance of the Democrats are associated with better policy for women.

Many aspects of this model make intuitive sense. The second stage of the model, namely that more women in office and Democratic legislative power are associated with the policies in the women's resources and rights checklist, is certainly not unexpected. The importance of women elected officials follows most of the analysis presented in this paper thus far, and the Democratic party is a more proven advocate of many of the policies in the checklist. In addition, the association of women's representation with attitudes about women in politics is extremely logi-

TABLE 5. Predicting Women-Friendly Policy: Results of 2SLS Regression Analysis		
	Effects on Women-Friendly Policy	Effects on Women in Elected Office
Women in Elected Office	42.12** (19.04)	
Democratic Dominance in State Legislature	23.15** (16.15)	-.49** (0.24)
Attitudes Toward Women in Politics		.49** (0.03)
R-squared	0.13	0.30
F-value	2.49	7.40
N	38	38
**p < .05		

cal: where citizens support women's political roles, more women will run and win party and public support for their candidacies.

In contrast, the positive relationship between Republican legislative power and women's representation is counterintuitive, since most women elected officials are Democrats. Perhaps this association stems from Republican attempts to neutralize a long-standing reputation as a whiter and more "male" political party by actively recruiting and supporting women's candidacies (this may be more likely, in fact, in states more supportive of women's political involvement). In contrast, Democrats may feel less pressed to actively encourage gender diversity among their candidates, in part because of their platform support for many women-friendly policies, and in part because they suffer at least slightly less from an image as white and male.

THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS AND EXECUTIVES

Although this paper seeks to analyze the overall influence of women elected officials, the results presented above raise an interesting question: are women more likely to influence policy as legislators or executives? To answer this, the analysis outlined above was repeated using two separate variables of women's representation: the proportion of women in the state legislature, and the proportion of women in executive office, weighted to account for gubernatorial and non-gubernatorial positions (see above). The results of the new analysis are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Dividing women's representation into indicators of legislative and executive power does not change the results of the models tested, at least overall: women's representation still matters. However, women's legislative representation seems to predict women-friendly policy more strongly than women's executive representation. Not only is the indicator of women's legislative representation more significant in most of the models, but when the two-staged analysis used to model the relationships among representation, party, and attitudes is done separately for women's legislative and executive power, executive representation completely loses its significant relationship with women-friendly policy.

Explanations for these findings may lie in the nature of state executive power and women's access to it. On the one hand, because executives have power over particular issue areas, we might expect them to hold more independent sway over policy. Governors in particular should have significant power over policy overall. On the other hand, the scope of most executive offices may be confined to a particular department or policy area, so that despite weighty influence over some areas of public policy, officeholders have little power in others, limiting their overall influence.⁹ In addition, there are fewer executive positions across the states, limiting the ability of women to achieve executive power. In seven states in 1996, there were no women in statewide elected office, and that year there was only one woman serving as governor: New Jersey's

TABLE 6. The Importance of Women's Executive and Legislative Representation to Women-Friendly Policy: OLS Regression Analysis

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Women's Legislative Representation	25.02*** (8.92)	23.96** (9.49)	16.02 (11.32)
Women's Executive Representation	5.77* (3.40)	6.58* (3.56)	3.29 (3.71)
Women's Institutional Resources		0.90 (1.12)	
Ratio of Women's to Men's Voter Turnout		4.79 (13.00)	
Labor Force Participation Ratio			-17.50 (24.11)
Attitudes Toward Women in Politics			15.88*** (5.88)
Democratic Dominance in State Legislature			13.58** (2.62)
R-squared	0.19	0.21	0.44
F-value	5.61	2.94	4.95
N	50	50	38

***p < .01 **p < .05 *p < .10

TABLE 7. The Importance of Legislative and Executive Representation to Women-Friendly Policy: 2SLS Regression Analysis				
	Model 1: Legislative		Model 2: Executive	
	Effects on Women-Friendly Policy	Effects on Women in Legislature	Effects on Women-Friendly Policy	Effects on Women in Executive Office
Women's Legislative Representation	61.41*** (16.22)		134.04 (176.36)	
Women's Executive Representation				
Democratic Dominance in State Legislature	12.48** (6.02)	-.02 (.07)	74.68 (98.32)	-.47** (.22)
Attitudes Toward Women in Politics		.34*** (.07)		.15 (.21)
R-squared	0.09	0.45	0.00	0.17
F-value	7.31	14.39	0.29	3.66
N	38	38	38	38

***p < .01 **p < .05

Christine Todd Whitman. With such a limited sample, the statistical analysis presented here may underestimate the influence that women governors and other executives wield (or potentially wield) over policy. Alternatively, it may simply be too early to tell what women's influence will be once executive women gain a certain threshold of power.

HOW DOES PARTY FIT IN?

In most of the analysis presented thus far, party plays a significant role in predicting levels of both women-friendly policy and women's representation. In some ways, the findings about party are surprising: although more women are Democrats, this paper found that Republican dominance was associated with women's increased representation, at least when attitudes about women's roles were taken into account. In others, they are predictable: Democratic legislative power is associated with the adoption of more policies on the women's resources and rights checklist.

Thus far, however, the analysis here has not considered whether the party affiliation of women elected officials themselves matters. Although women's representation remains significant in most of the analysis above, despite controlling for party, it is possible that it matters whether women representatives are Democrats or Republicans.

To examine this question, indicators of women's Democratic and Republican representation were added to a last set of models. These indicators measure the proportion of each state legislature that were Democratic and Republican women in 1996, using data available through the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP, 1996b).¹⁰ The results of the new analysis are presented in Tables 8 and 9.

Women's Democratic representation is clearly more important to predicting women-friendly policy than women's Republican representation: Democratic women seem more likely to successfully advance those policies. Again, given the affiliation of many of policies in the women's resources and rights checklist with a more Democratic agenda, this finding is not unexpected.

At the same time, the results in Tables 8 and 9 present some surprising findings. First, in model 1 of Table 9, not only does women's Democratic representation predict levels of women-friendly policy independently of whether Democrats or Republicans dominate the legislature, but party itself is not significant. That is, Democratic women overshadow their own political party in advancing a women-friendly policy agenda. The Democratic party itself cannot be relied upon to push policies for women; Democratic women are the stronger advocates for women's rights.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Women's Democratic Representation	60.92*** (12.53)	60.65*** (13.19)	23.40 (21.32)
Women's Republican Representation	-2.89 (12.02)	-3.14 (12.70)	8.20 (21.35)
Women's Institutional Resources		-.01 (1.00)	
Ratio of Women's to Men's Voter Turnout		1.12 (11.93)	
Labor Force Participation Ratio			-16.04 (24.81)
Attitudes Toward Women in Politics			14.68** (6.67)
Democratic Dominance in State Legislature			8.58 (8.15)
R-squared	0.34	0.34	0.42
F-value	11.98	5.74	4.71
N	50	50	38

***p < .01 **p < .05

In contrast, in model 2 of Table 9, party has an independent relationship with women-friendly policy despite controlling for the affects of women's representation as Republicans (and vice versa). Here, Democratic dominance is still positively and significantly associated with women-friendly policy. This suggests that for Republican women, the political context of the legislature itself is more of a factor than it is for Democratic women in successfully advocating for women. Perhaps, for example, Republican women can more easily advance women-friendly policy in an atmosphere that allows them that latitude; in Democratic legislatures, there may simply be more policy support for such an agenda. Women's representation still makes a difference, even among Republicans, but it relies on support from Democratic allies. Notably, if the party variable were coded in reverse, model 2 would show that Republican dominance is negatively associated with women-friendly policy when controlling for Republican women's influence. In other words, these women are often working against the political positions of their party. When it dominates, they may be able to join with minority Democrats to advance policies for women; when it does not, they may still take the lead as advocates for women but enjoy more support among the majority party.

In other words, there may be more underlying support for a women-friendly agenda among Republican women than is obvious at first glance.

	Model 1: Democratic		Model 2: Republican	
	Effects on Women-Friendly Policy	Effects on Women's Democratic Representation	Effects on Women-Friendly Policy	Effects on Women's Republican Representation
Women's Democratic Representation	87.92*** (20.98)		212.68** (94.35)	
Women's Republican Representation				
Democratic Dominance in State Legislature	-4.22 (5.22)	.18*** (.04)	51.63** (23.49)	-.19*** (.04)
Attitudes Toward Women in Politics		.24*** (.04)		.10** (.04)
R-squared	0.26	0.55	0.10	0.53
F-value	8.95	21.09	2.59	19.37
N	38	38	38	38

***p < .01 **p < .05

The right political circumstances may allow them more freedom to pursue policies designed to improve women's status and issues.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings in this paper suggest that having women in elected office makes an important difference in encouraging women-friendly policy in a state. Of course, research on women in elected office has found repeatedly that women influence policy outcomes and the policymaking process within city councils, state and national legislatures, and other government bodies. The results presented here supplement those findings to suggest that they are not idiosyncratic to individual times or places. Women have an impact at a more aggregate level, across the U.S. states, and their presence in elected office encourages states to pursue policies that are relevant and beneficial to women's lives.

This is especially true of women's legislative representation, which is more closely associated with women-friendly policy than women's executive representation. Women's executive representation is also significantly related to women-friendly policy in some of the statistical models presented here, but this significance disappears in the two-staged analysis analyzing the relationships among policy, representation, party, and attitudes about women in politics. As noted, this may in part be due to the small number of women serving in executive office. Analysis of the experiences and influence of these women individually, and in the aggregate as their numbers increase, is a fertile field for new research.

Analysis here (and elsewhere) suggests strongly that the importance of women's representation to policymaking depends at least in part on context. The right political culture—including both party and attitudes toward women in office—plays an important role both in advancing policy when women are in office and in women winning office in the first place. At least for women legislators, public support for women's political participation (which itself suggests a certain level of support for women's equality overall) helps put more women in office, and Democratic dominance of the state legislature increases women's ability to advance a women-friendly agenda. While Democratic women legislators overshadow the importance of overall Democratic control in advancing women-friendly policies, Democratic political power and women's Republican representation are independently associated with them. All of these findings underscore the work of scholars such as Michele Swers (2000 and 2002a) and Susan Gluck Mezey (1994), who argue that political ideologies and party affiliations are important filters for women policymakers' support for women's issues.

The research presented here does not find a significant relationship between women-friendly policies and several other potentially important variables, including women's voter turnout relative to men's; the institutional resources available to women in a state; and women's labor force participation relative to men's. These variables seem to play at most a secondary role shaping the political context for policymaking around women's issues. They are overshadowed by two measures of political cultures studied here, attitudes toward women in politics and party dominance.

There is room to continue the research presented here in at least three ways. First, long-term analysis measuring levels of women's representation and women-friendly policy over time would allow a more detailed look at the relationships between the two variables. It would allow an assessment of how long it takes before women in office have a long-term impact on policy outcomes. It would add to the growing debate on questions of critical mass and whether a certain threshold of women's representation accelerates women's influence.

Similarly, as women gain more representation in elected executive office, this analysis could be revisited, to see whether their gains translate into a more significant relationship with policy outcomes. Perhaps once women reach a critical mass within these offices—at the state level and in the aggregate across the states—we will see larger policy impacts.

The relationship between women's representation and women-friendly policy could also be studied to examine whether policies themselves influence women's levels of representation. Conceivably, states with better policy for women could enable or encourage women to run for political office. Those policies may increase women's access to income, education, and other resources that would make running for office a more realistic option for them.

The findings presented here join existing research to point to one important conclusion: in order to improve women's status at the local, state, and national levels, there is a continued need to increase women's representation. Having women in elected office cannot guarantee better policy for women, but it clearly helps.

AUTHOR NOTE

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NOTES

1. This analysis relies 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” creates the expectation 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.

2. Data were compiled from several sources, including the Center for American Women and Politics (1996a and b) and the Council of State Governments (1998). The number of statewide executive offices elected in each state varies, so this indicator was calculated as the number of women officeholders divided by the total number of statewide elected executive offices as reported by the Council of State Governments. Because comparable state-by-state data on women’s representation among elected officials in the judiciary for 1996 were unavailable, they were not included in this analysis. Collecting and including this kind of data would, of course, improve future research.

3. Scores for women in state legislatures ranged from 0.39 in Washington state to 0.04 in Alabama, with a mean of .22 and a standard deviation of 0.08. Scores for women in statewide elected executive office ranged from 1.0 in New Jersey to 0.00 in seven states: Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. This indicator had a mean of .23 and a standard deviation of 0.20.

4. It can be argued that the Platform for Action reflects a liberal definition of women’s policies, since both the tenets of the Platform and many of the policies outlined in the checklist used here are politically identified more closely with progressives than conservatives in the United States. Importantly, the Platform was adopted unanimously by 189 countries, including the United States, and has been embraced as a basis for improving women’s status globally. There is also a social scientific basis for its recommendations and for including many of the policies outlined here. A large body of research designed to identify barriers to and strategies for improving women’s status has pointed to these policies, and other similar ones, as important to women in the United States and worldwide. See, for example, Miller, 1999a and b, and U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Violence Against Women Grants Office, 1998, on violence policies; Gershenson, 1993, on child support; Cohen, 2001, and IWPR, 1998, on welfare; Bernstein, Hartmann, and Schmitt, 1999, Hartmann and Aaronson, 1994, and Yoon, Spalter-Roth, and Baldwin, 1995, on employment policies; U.S. Department of Labor, 2001, on family leave; and Malhotra and Mehra, 1999, on reproductive rights. Of course, neither the authors of this paper nor IWPR claim that the women’s resources and rights checklist encompasses all important or relevant policies for U.S. women. Our choices were severely limited by the availability of state-by-state data on potentially relevant policies. For example, we could not find reliable state-by-state data on policies designed to advance women-owned businesses, such as those encouraging government entities to pursue contracts with women- or minority-owned firms. 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.

Notably, the policies comprising the women’s resources and rights checklist are not evenly distributed across issue areas: for example, there are six welfare indicators but just two child support indicators. This distribution is intentional and has been con-

structured partially to reflect the importance of certain types of issues, especially welfare and employment policies, to women's lives, in comparison with others that are important but less central, such as child support. Again, these decisions are made based on our assessment of the importance of the indicators within existing research on the policies affecting women's lives.

Cronbach's alpha for the checklist is .825. Within each issue area, Cronbach's alpha ranges from .672 (for employment policies) to .746 (for welfare policies).

5. 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.

6. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this point.

7. Brace et al. also find that changes across time in each state were not sufficient enough to compromise the reliability of their measure.

8. In an alternative model, attitudes toward women in political positions were also tested as simultaneously having direct and indirect relationships with women-friendly policy, but the findings did not support this hypothesis.

9. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this point.

10. Democratic women ranged from 23 percent of the state legislature in Washington state to 3 percent in Delaware in 1996 (Nebraska, with its nonpartisan legislature, is not included in this analysis; it was dropped because of small sample size in the attitudes indicator developed by Brace et al.), with a mean of 0.11 and a standard deviation of 0.05. Republican women ranged from 20 percent of Idaho's legislature to 0 percent of Alabama's, with a mean of 0.09 and a standard deviation of 0.05.

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APPENDIX 1
 Descriptions of Indicators, Sources, and Scoring for Women's
 Resources and Rights Checklist (Table 2)

*Note: This source information and all data come from IWPR's reports on
 The Status of Women in the States (Caiazza, 2000).*

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.

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

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 earning 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.

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.

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

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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