

CAWP News & Notes

CENTER for the
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WOMAN and
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Subscriber Information Service (SIS) enclosures

CAWP fact sheets: Women in Elective Office 1990, Women of Color in Elective Office 1990, Women in the US Congress 1990, Statewide Elective Executive Women 1990, Women in State Legislatures 1990, Women on County Governing Boards 1988, Women in Municipal Office 1990 • order form and executive summary of *Election 1989: The Abortion Issue in New Jersey and Virginia* • press clip: "Politicos Pay Tribute to Sigmund" • National Organizations of Women Public Officials: Report from a Meeting

About CAWP

The Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) is a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. CAWP is a leading authority in its field and a respected bridge between the academic and political worlds.

Before CAWP was founded in 1971, no organization or educational institution was compiling information about women in government and politics or studying and monitoring the status and prospects of those women. Today, CAWP has taken on the multiple roles of catalyst and resource, provider of data and analyses, interpreter and guide. CAWP raises and responds to emerging issues, working daily with women leaders as well as journalists, scholars, students, women's groups, governmental agencies, civic organizations, and political parties.

CAWP's major programs and activities include: a clearinghouse about women in politics and government; a data bank on women in public office; research about women in leadership; national surveys of elected and appointed women; an ongoing Program for Women State Legislators; a Subscriber Information Service and newsletter; conferences and seminars; programs for college and high school students; a specialized library collection about women in public life; books, monographs, reports, fact sheets, a documentary film; consulting services.

Eagleton Institute of Politics

Since its founding in 1956, the Eagleton Institute has built a national reputation for its graduate fellowship program and for its research and public service activities in the field of American politics. The Institute houses three major centers (CAWP; the Center for Public Interest Polling; and the Center for Policy Research in Education) and a number of special programs about American public policy and the political process.

Would you like to contribute to *CAWP News & Notes*?

If you or your organization has information which you think may be of interest to our readers, please contact Lucy Baruch at (908) 828-2210.

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As you may have noticed, we are behind schedule in getting CAWP News & Notes out. We apologize for the delay and assure you that all subscribers will receive three issues.

Abortion Issue Can Be Key Factor in Elections

The following press release was issued July 18, 1990. For more information contact Debra L. Dodson at (908) 828-2210. An executive summary of Election 1989: The Abortion Issue in New Jersey and Virginia and an order form for the 183 page report are enclosed.

The abortion issue could be hazardous to a candidate's health — or it could be a prescription for campaign success.

That depends on the actions of candidates, activists and the media, say researchers at the Eagleton Institute of Politics, a unit of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. The researchers base their conclusions on a study of the 1989 gubernatorial and state legislative elections in New Jersey and Virginia, released today at a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington.

The Eagleton report provides the first comprehensive and impartial analysis of the political impact of the abortion issue in the wake of the Supreme Court's *Webster* decision, shattering some common assumptions and confirming other aspects of the conventional wisdom.

The *Webster* decision, issued last July, gave the states greater power to regulate abortion, leaving the court's earlier *Roe vs. Wade* decision with a potentially precarious future. "The *Webster* decision had the potential to change electoral politics in the states for years to come. We looked at the first two states to hold post-*Webster* elections for clues about how the issue might play out around the country," commented Debra L. Dodson, assistant research professor at the Eagleton Institute and director of the study.

According to the study's investigators, candidates and activists had to educate voters on the abortion issue to influence their voting decisions. "Voters say abortion is an important issue, but that doesn't guarantee that they will base their votes on it," noted Ruth B. Mandel, professor at the Eagleton Institute and director of the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP). "Someone has to make them see how pulling the lever for a particular candidate can affect abortion policy.

The challenge for both sides is to influence voters to translate their attitudes into actions."

"In both New Jersey and Virginia — two very different states — voters who could draw a distinction between gubernatorial candidates' views on abortion were more inclined to choose the candidate who shared their views," said Dodson. "Because more voters identified themselves as pro-choice than pro-life, this worked to the advantage of perceived pro-choice candidates. In this case, the Democrats came out on top."

This voting pattern could present a serious challenge to the future of the Republican party, which is divided over the issue. In last year's elections, for example, many pro-choice Republicans — particularly women — were willing to cross party lines.

"Many pundits are predicting that the abortion issue will fade away," observed Dodson. "But we learned that in the post-*Webster* climate, women voters may not want to let it go. And a surprising number of men also seem ready to respond to well-crafted campaign messages about abortion."

One difference between the two states was the greater level of interest and awareness among Virginia voters regarding the abortion debate. The Eagleton study suggests that this difference was due to the heavier emphasis on the issue in the Virginia election. Democratic Lieutenant Governor L. Douglas Wilder stressed the abortion issue during his campaign, framing it as a question of individual rights. This strategy allowed voters with mixed feelings to see the issue as important and feel comfortable with Wilder's pro-choice stance.

The abortion issue could be very important in upcoming gubernatorial races where the candidates differ sharply on abortion policy, such as those in Pennsylvania, Texas, Iowa and Ohio. Whether it becomes important in these races will depend on whether the candidates, activists and media convince voters that the candidates differ and whether voters continue to care about these differences.

The issue also may be important in some races where both gubernatorial candidates consider themselves pro-choice. California is one example. "In California's gubernatorial race, former San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein is emphasizing the differences between herself and Senator Pete Wilson. It will be particularly interest-

ing to see whether voters agree there really is a difference and whether the candidates' gender affects how voters respond," Dodson said.

In addition, numerous legislative candidates thought the issue affected their campaign efforts. Pro-choice-endorsed candidates interviewed for the study were more likely than pro-life-endorsees to see their endorsements as helpful, and they were also more likely to see the *Webster* decision as bolstering their corps of volunteers.

Nevertheless, the study also found that voters were less apt to let abortion policy influence their voting in legislative elections than in gubernatorial elections. "Voters didn't say abortion was unimportant in legislative races," noted Mandel. "They simply knew less about the candidates and the issues in these lower-level races." As a result, the legislative elections were a less precise measure of people's views on abortion.

Funding for the study came from the John Merck Fund, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the

South Branch Foundation, the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, the Huber Foundation, and Rutgers.

The data discussed in the report are from pre-election telephone interviews with 4,400 registered voters in New Jersey and Virginia conducted between October 23 and November 6, 1989. In each state, 800 registered voters were interviewed (margin of error plus or minus 3.5 percent) as well as legislative district level samples of about 350 registered voters in eight legislative districts (margin of error plus or minus 6.5 percent).

The researchers also conducted unstructured interviews with 43 candidates for the General Assembly in New Jersey and 47 candidates for the House of Delegates in Virginia, as well as gubernatorial campaign activists, party activists, and pro-choice and pro-life activists in the two states. These interviews took place between December 1989 and April 1990. The interviewed legislative candidates were from districts where the abortion issue was thought to have the potential to play an important role. The interviews were usually conducted in person.

Women Candidates in 1990: A Preliminary Look

Lucy Baruch, Information Services Coordinator, CAWP

The following includes *preliminary* information about women candidates running for selected offices in 1990. As of August 1, 1990, half of the nation's fifty states have held their primaries and filing deadlines in some of the remaining states have not yet passed. A number of women running for Congress and statewide elective executive offices have good chances of winning, and for the first time there are women gubernatorial nominees in two of the nation's largest and most politically influential states (California and Texas). Although we may not see a record number of women candidates running, it is possible that once the winners take office in 1991, women will have made some gains.

U.S. Senate - 8 (1D, 7R)

Of the 2 women currently serving, Senator Kassebaum is seeking re-election and Senator Mikulski's term is not over until 1992.

St.	Candidate	Title (if known)	Seat*	Primary
CO	Josie Heath (D)	County Commissioner	O	8/14
DE	Jane Brady (R)	Former Chief Prosecutor of Sussex Cty., DE	C	9/8
HI	Patricia Saiki (R)	Congresswoman	C	9/22
HI	Maria Hustace (R)		C	9/22
IL	Lynn Martin (R)	Congresswoman	C	won
KS	Nancy Kassebaum (R)	US Senator	I	9/7
NJ	Christine Todd Whitman (R)	Former President NJ Board of Public Utilities	C	won
RI	Claudine Schneider (R)	Congresswoman	C	9/11

*We have listed whether a candidate is likely to be running as an incumbent (I) or challenger (C) or for an open seat (O) if she wins her primary.

U.S. House of Representatives - 60 (41D, 19R)

(Includes 3 Democrats running for the post of non-voting delegate from the District of Columbia.)

Of the 28 women currently serving, 23 are seeking re-election, 3 are running for the US Senate, and 2 are retiring — Representatives Lindy Boggs (D-LA) and Virginia Smith (R-NE).

Statewide Elective Executive Offices - 70 (44D, 25R, 1 nonpartisan)**Governor - 11 (5D, 6R)**

<u>St.</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Title (if known)</u>	<u>Seat*</u>	<u>Primary</u>
AK	Arliss Sturgulewski (R)	State Senator	O	8/21
CA	Dianne Feinstein (D)	Former Mayor San Francisco	O	won
FL	Marlene Woodson-Howard (R)	State Senator	O ⁺	9/4
KS	Joan Finney (D)	State Treasurer	C	8/7
MA	Evelyn Murphy (D)	Lieutenant Governor	O	9/18
NE	Kay Orr (R)	Governor	I	won
OR	Barbara Roberts (D)	Secretary of State	O	won
PA	Barbara Hafer (R)	State Auditor	C	won
TX	Ann Richards (D)	State Treasurer	O	won
WY	Mary Mead (R)		C	8/21
WY	Nyla Murphy (R)		C	8/21

Lieutenant Governor - 14 (8D, 6R)**Attorney General - 3 (3D)****Secretary of State - 12 (8D, 4R)****State Treasurer - 13 (9D, 4R)****State Auditor - 3 (2D, 1R)****Comptroller - 3 (2D, 1R)****Superintendent of Public Instruction - 6 (2D, 3R, 1 nonpartisan)****Education Commissioner - 1 (1D)****Labor Commissioner - 1 (1D)****Insurance Commissioner - 1 (1D)****Corporation Commissioner - 1 (1D)****Public Service Commissioner - 1 (1D)**

Because it is likely that later in the election season more women will be identified, some will drop out of their races, and others will lose their primaries, it is too soon to tell precisely how 1990 will compare with other years in terms of the number of women running in general elections. However, it appears that while we may surpass previous records for women candidates at a few levels of office, it is unlikely for others. The record number of women *general election* candidates for selected offices is:

U.S. Senate - 10 (1984)

U.S. House of Representatives - 65 (1984)

Governor - 8 (1986)

Lieutenant Governor - 11 (1986)

Secretary of State - 21 (1986)

State Treasurer - 11 (1986).

*We have listed whether a candidate is likely to be running as an incumbent (I) or challenger (C) or for an open seat (O) if she wins her primary.

⁺In Florida, the candidate is challenging an incumbent in her party's primary and will therefore be seeking an open seat if she wins.

CAWP Kicks Off 20th Birthday Endowment Campaign

The following includes excerpts from a letter Ruth B. Mandel, CAWP's director, recently wrote to a long-time friend of the Center.

Believe it or not the Center for the American Woman and Politics is heading toward a 20th birthday next July! A generation of good work. A generation of challenge, learning, and progress. There is much to celebrate, and we hope to do just that. We face CAWP's 20th year feeling both very good about measurable achievements and challenged by what we know still needs to be accomplished. CAWP is a singular research, education, and public service center; it should continue for many generations in its efforts to develop useful knowledge and serve as a unique national resource for women. To insure that CAWP will be able to keep building on the base we have toiled to establish, we have launched a major effort to build an endowment for the Center.

CAWP has spent almost two decades providing information, ideas, and networks necessary to understand women's political status and prospects and to help develop the skills and strategies for moving ahead. But resources for this important work have grown increasingly scarce in recent years. Twenty years into our work, we are still struggling every day to find resources to support our efforts. We still operate on a nickel-and-dime basis for core support of CAWP. In order to maintain and expand our capacity to respond to new issues and questions with timely and appropriate programs and materials, CAWP is seeking an endowment of \$5 million. Such a stable funding base would allow us to continue our ongoing work as well as add new programs. We could:

Education Programs: reach out to young women with programs and materials that will encourage them to join the next generation of public leaders; train teachers at the secondary and post-secondary levels to educate their students about women and public leadership; award fellowships to graduate students in women and politics; underwrite women leaders to

work on projects aimed at advancing women's participation in public life; sponsor lectureships, seminars and consultations to bring more attention to the subject of women and politics.

Research and Information Services: initiate and support studies about the conditions which inhibit or encourage the development of women's leadership; study the impact of a new generation of women with political power; examine women's leadership and political participation in nations around the globe; strengthen CAWP's capacity to reach a wider public with news, facts and background information about women in politics.

Library and Archival Resources: establish an archival project to collect the papers of prominent political women so that their experiences and reflections are not lost to future generations. They would be added to our unique library of published and unpublished materials about women's expanding political history and contemporary women in public life.

To kick off the endowment campaign, CAWP held a dinner in April 1990 saluting our most famous former staff member, Princeton Mayor Barbara Boggs Sigmund. More than 400 people turned out to honor Mayor Sigmund, including the Governor of New Jersey and friends and family from as far away as New Orleans. [See enclosed press clip.] Among the highlights of the evening was the presentation of CAWP's first Barbara Boggs Sigmund award "in honor of the example she sets as a public leader...to...a graduating senior at Douglass College, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey who is herself a promising public leader." The evening was the first in a series of events and other activities to build CAWP's endowment.

We would like to hear from friends and supporters who have creative ideas which might assist our endowment campaign and from those who are interested in contributing to the Center. For more information, please contact Ruth B. Mandel or Joan A. Crowley at (908) 828-2210 or write the Center for the American Woman and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901.

A New Decade of Leadership: Women State Legislators A Regional Forum

On November 15-18, 1990 the Institute for Policy Leadership (IPL) and the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) will bring together political women to begin a new decade of leadership. For the first time, women legislators in a region will join in discussion of common interests and visions for the future of their states, their region, and the nation. The Forum will be held in St. Louis, Missouri and all 183 women legislators from Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Tennessee have been invited to attend. The central focus of the meeting will be how this relatively small group of women can have maximum impact on the regional policy agenda, as well as individual legislative institutions.

The Forum will include: small working group sessions; a case study/strategy session with Olivia Golden (Harvard University); and presentations by Oklahoma Secretary of State Hannah Atkins, Joy Van Elderen (Megatrends, Ltd.), Kansas Senator Nancy Kassebaum (invited), Vermont Governor Madeleine Kunin, Ruth Mandel (CAWP), Colorado Congresswoman Pat Schroeder, Harriett Woods (IPL).

IPL was established in 1989 as part of the University of Missouri-St. Louis' James T. Bush, Sr. Center for Law, Social Change and Conflict Resolution. It is headed by former Missouri Lieutenant Governor Harriett Woods.

Women, Violence and Human Rights

Charlotte Bunch, Director, Center for Global Issues and Women's Leadership

In May 1990, the Center for Global Issues and Women's Leadership at Rutgers University [see *CAWP News & Notes*, Winter 1989] brought together twenty-two distinguished women leaders from around the world

to discuss the Global Center's inaugural theme, "Women, Violence and Human Rights." Among the participants were: Mariclaire Acosta, director of the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights; Adul de Leon, coordinator of the Commission Against Violence Against Women of Gabriela (a national coalition of Filipino women's groups); Anna Magezi, a Ugandan district judge; Marie Aimee Helie-Lucas, founder of the Women Living Under Muslim Laws International Solidarity Network; Susanne Roach, coordinator of the Women and Human Rights Task Force of Amnesty International USA; and Hannah Njoki Tiagha, from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa based in Ethiopia.

The International Planning Meeting considered the problem of violence and women on several levels. First, the group reported on the work being done by women's groups to address violence in their regions and what aspects of the problem seem most urgent. Second, they looked at violence against women as a family and social issue and how that needs to be addressed as an important political issue. Finally, four working groups discussed violence against women as related to and as essential elements of four other major social issues: peace and militarism; development and multi-national corporations; cultural and religious fundamentalism; and human rights. The Global Center will work in the coming years on further development of this analysis and sponsor programs to address women, violence and human rights in all of these contexts. Why women's rights have not been traditionally seen as human rights and how the world might change if women's lives and perspectives were taken seriously will also be explored. (For more information, contact Charlotte Bunch at 908-932-8782.)

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS: Garland Publishing is seeking contributors and suggestions for entries for a biographical reference work, *African American Women*, which will be part of a new series, *Directories of Minority Women*. Interested contributors should write to Dorothy Salem, Editor of *African American Women*, Professor of History, 5673 Rock Point Circle, North Ridgeville, Ohio 44039 or Kennie Lyman, Editor, Garland Publishing Inc., 136 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

National Federation of Republican Women (NFRW) Recruits Women Candidates

Karen A. Johnson, Director of Communications and
Political Affairs, NFRW

In an effort to elect more Republican women to office at the state and local level, NFRW has developed a candidate identification/recruitment program entitled *Project '90*. Unveiled and later praised by President Bush during the 25th biennial convention of NFRW in Baltimore, the program is aimed specifically at Federation members. "The time is right for Republican women candidates," stated NFRW President Judy Hughes. "Our membership has long been known as the Party's largest volunteer army, we'll soon be known as the Party's largest source of winning candidates!"

With 50 coordinators setting up *Project '90* networks in their states, women candidates are actively being recruited in every county, city, and precinct. "We have the organization to make this program a success," said NFRW President-elect Huda Jones. "Currently there are 515 Republican women serving in state legislatures. [Editor's note: now 517.] I'd like to see us recruit at least 500 additional women to run for state legislative seats, that's merely 10 new recruits per state." *For more information about Project '90, please contact Karen Johnson at 202-547-9341.*

Women in Politics: Goals and Gains

Ruth B. Mandel, Director, CAWP

A version of these remarks was delivered in October 1989 at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University at a seminar for elected women co-sponsored by the Kennedy School and the Women's Campaign Research Fund. The program was entitled "Women in Politics: Objective and Achievement."

Broadly speaking, the goal for women in politics since the early 1970s has been twofold — numbers and

impact. On the numbers side, women have sought to increase their participation in politics and leadership throughout the electoral system and at all levels of government. As for impact, women have hoped to make their growing presence count for something beyond numbers, beyond merely getting more women into the system or getting a piece of the action, so to speak. Many have dreamt that women's increasing presence will make a difference, that women will bring something new and positive to the public world. With this twofold, often interrelated, goal guiding women's political behavior for almost a generation now, what has been the achievement?

The numbers tally reveals an achievement which can be described as the proverbial cup either half full or half empty. In the full half we see remarkable firsts for women in politics in fewer than twenty years. These firsts epitomize a generation of tremendous change and great advances for women's political leadership. The first woman to govern a state in her own right was elected in Connecticut. The first woman was appointed to the United States Supreme Court. The first woman was elected attorney general of a state. A woman managed a presidential campaign for the first time. A woman was nominated for the vice presidency of the United States for the first time. The cup is half full because in the blink of an historical eye we have witnessed enormous increases of elected women. They have quadrupled their numbers in municipal offices and in state legislatures; they have achieved an all-time high in the Congress.

The half empty portion of the cup discloses the all-time high in Congress to be barely six percent of all elected senators and representatives. While women's fourfold increase in state legislatures has resulted in the highest level of representation by women in any elective office, that highest level still adds up to a mere seventeen percent of all state legislative seats. The conclusion we face on the numbers side is that political women's achievement represents clear progress; but it is incremental progress, progress in slow-paced, small gains which amount to significant change in the complexion of representative government when viewed from the long-term perspective of political history.

On the impact side, women's achievement is also both noteworthy and modest at once. Political women have

exerted and are exerting influence on the public agenda, primarily in raising, supporting and assigning priority to a set of issues traditionally of special concern to women, issues often undervalued by men or considered "soft" and less urgent than the "real issues," the "tough issues." Women show high concern for equity issues and for public policies primarily affecting women, children and families — child care, elder care, health care, domestic violence, education, social services, equal rights, pay equity, pension rights, credit equity, reproductive rights. In our research about public officials (particularly our studies of state legislators), we find elected women more feminist and progressive than their male counterparts in their attitudes toward social issues. We also have evidence that the presence of women in elective and appointive office both directly and indirectly results in recruiting and attracting more women to public life.

Thus, the overall impact of women in politics may be modest but does appear to have great potential for advancing progressive social issues and feminist perspectives; this potential is inextricably linked, of course, to the numbers question. Presumably, when the numbers of women leaders increase, their distinctive impact also will expand. It is important to note here that while political women's impact on the public agenda and its priorities has been noteworthy albeit modest to date, as yet no comparable impact has brought apparent change or reform to the institutions of government or to the parties and the political process itself.

What major obstacles stand in the way of furthering our twofold goal for women in politics? *The* continuing major obstacle is age-old: politics and public leadership are man-made arts, man-made products, cultural artifacts produced by men to their fit. That which is currently in place and has been for generations is a powerful, entrenched system of institutions and processes designed, as most human structures are, to house and accommodate its founding inhabitants and their direct descendants. These structures, usually designed to perpetuate themselves, are difficult to enter and integrate. In the case of legislative seats, over the past two decades for example, women are moving more rapidly in the states (about one percentage point gain each election cycle) than at the federal level (about three-tenths of one percentage point increase per election). The most formidable barrier they face at both levels is

the power of incumbency.

The decline in voluntary retirement and the power of incumbency mean reduced opportunity for newcomers. Because somewhat fewer incumbents sit tightly in their seats in state legislatures, turnover rates (approximately sixteen percent each election cycle for lower houses in recent years) make the legislative system more permeable in the states than in the Congress, where the current turnover rate for the House is about ten percent per election. Prestige is also built into the system. The higher the prestige, the more competition for nominations, the more money for waging campaigns, the more need for powerful networks of support. Many of these networks of established wealth and influence are found in the business and labor communities, in professional and trade associations, and in related interest groups and constituencies. They are overwhelmingly controlled by men, and they support incumbents. Insofar as the engine of history and tradition drives the political status quo, it serves to depress the numbers of outsiders who represent change.

While even at the state level, women do not arrive in legislatures by leaps and bounds, their rates of increase appear greater than at other levels of office, especially higher offices. Since our nation's domestic policy agenda is enacted in state houses and senates, political women's state legislative gains remain important. Furthermore, the legislatures often serve as bases from which women move up to higher offices. For example, in 1986 all four newly elected congresswomen previously served in state legislatures. In 1988, one of the two new congresswomen came to Washington from her state capitol; in 1989, the Florida special election sent a woman to Congress from Tallahassee. One-third of the women currently elected to the U.S. House of Representatives have served previously as state legislators.

Rates of entrance and mobility for women in Congress and in state legislatures illustrate that the power of incumbency — in gendered terms, the power of men — prevails as the greatest obstacle to diversifying our representative institutions. Nonetheless, the 1980s demonstrated that women can not only move in but also move up in electoral politics. Women achieved executive as well as legislative office. The governors of three states today are women; across the country, other women have set their sights on the highest executive

offices in their states. In the 1980s women competed against each other in major elections, including a gubernatorial race in Nebraska. The 1980s exhibited women handling severe pressures of public life with resiliency and stamina, Geraldine Ferraro standing out as the most dramatic example. Reaffirming the need for women to boost each other forward and up into the male political world, this past decade continued to witness the establishment and growth of several political action committees and campaign funds created by women to raise money for women candidates. In effect, women faced and recognized a double truth in the 1980s. More harshly than in the optimistic glow and eagerness of the previous decade's new thrust forward, women confronted a path to political leadership cut by men for men's traffic. With great effort, women could enter it a few at a time, moving slowly, and always encountering ahead of them crowds of men well equipped for the terrain.

Where can women expect to get on this journey? Switching the metaphor from road-work back to house-work — incrementally, women can expect to move into the men's houses of governance if women adapt to their architectural design. Women can work within them and even redecorate somewhat, perhaps even renovate. But essentially, these structures built over centuries by men in leadership will never be "a room of her own." Perhaps we can use an analogy here. With limitations, it is apt. It is that of a newly married couple establishing a home. Should they settle down to joint domestic life in his place, in her place, or in their place? In the case of a woman in politics, she is moving in *on* his place, largely uninvited, certainly unwooded. We must recognize this reality because little of real value can be accomplished without clear-sighted consciousness of who we are. Women face a double burden for a change — fitting in (to a man's political world), and also remaining true to themselves, retaining women's distinctive qualities. I think this double burden may be greater today than a generation ago in the first years of an idealistic and ideologically motivated momentum which carried women into new political roles.

Not underestimating the impediments, I still believe that this is a good moment for women in politics, a best-of-both-worlds moment. I also believe that tomorrow — the decade of the 1990s and beyond — will be even better. First, being female and politically ambitious today has

its advantages. Political women today can capitalize on still being relatively unique or at least unusual. They can continue to take advantage of representing alternatives to business as usual, to the tired and worn out practices, even to the image of corruption habitually associated with politicians. A woman today is still often perceived as an alternative to the old, stale and unimaginative. Yet she is also already somewhat familiar as a viable political figure, an acceptable image of a political leader. It is no longer astonishing to see a woman candidate seeking almost any elective or appointive position. Indeed, a benefit for today's political woman is a profile of experience. For a generation, women have proven they can perform as public leaders. Now there is a record, a history of women leaders, winners, women with strong political careers.

Second, this is a good moment for women in politics because women can begin to capitalize on the results of the difference their presence makes. As it turns out, women bring precisely the difference that appears desirable, the type of difference suited to the late twentieth century and seemingly appropriate for next century realities and needs. These include nurturing the environment, protecting and preserving its resources for everyone's use. There is also the issue of nurturing our families. Women's traditional strong interest in this area coincides with the business community's needs for profitable work environments in which employees can do a good job because the strains and stresses of their work and family lives have been alleviated by "nurturing benefits."

What I am saying is that women today are "qualified" in just the right ways for the real needs of the future. Whether or not the old credentials and tactics are still important for entree and survival in man's political world, women also must redefine and expand the notion of which credentials count. Women offer the outsider's perspective and credentials. They offer values and personal experiences compatible with the direction in which the human community must move, not in the next year alone or the next decade in isolation, but for the very long run.

CAWP's area code has been changed — our number is now 908 - 828-2210.

Looking Back at the 1980s and Forward to the 1990s

Susan J. Carroll, Senior Research Associate, CAWP

A version of these remarks was delivered in March 1990 at the annual meeting of Women Officials in NACo (National Association of Counties) held in Washington, DC.

I'd like to highlight five major findings or themes about women in elected office that have emerged from the research we've done at the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) during the 1980s. I'll also mention what I see as the implications of these findings for women in politics and government during the 1990s.

Numbers

The first finding I'd like to share with you is readily apparent from CAWP's fact sheets. The numbers of women serving in elective office at the county level, as well as at other levels of government, increased throughout the 80s, but the progress was gradual and incremental, with women still holding no more than 17% of elected offices at any level of government. Since 1975 the number of women on county governing boards has more than tripled — that's the good news. The bad news is that women still constitute only about 9% of all county governing board members according to the most recent figures we have, which are from 1988. At the national level the picture is even worse. Women currently hold only 5.6% of all the seats in Congress, which puts us about on a par with Iraq and Sri Lanka when it comes to the representation of women in our national legislature.

Why has the progress been so slow? There are really two major reasons. First, at most levels of office, the rate of turnover is low; most officeholders seek re-election. And the second reason is that most of the incumbents who seek re-election win. This is perhaps most extreme in the U.S. House of Representatives where in the past several elections more than 90% of those who sought re-election won. While the staying power of incumbents is good news for women who have managed to be elected, it is not good news for women who are on the outside waiting to get in. Either they

must challenge incumbents and face uphill battles, or they must wait until there are vacant seats, and that may be a long wait.

Of course, during the 1980s some women challenged incumbents and won, while others took advantage of opportunities to run for open seats when such opportunities arose, which is why the numbers of women in office have increased. But the low turnover rate and the high success rate of incumbents have combined to ensure that women's gains are gradual and incremental. Unless something is done to increase turnover or to make incumbents more vulnerable, and the probability that something will be done is very small indeed, the pattern for the 90s is likely to be similar to that of the 80s. We are likely to continue to see increases in the numbers of women at various levels of office, but they are likely to be gradual and incremental increases.

Political Experience

The second finding from our research that I'd like to share with you is that women who are elected to office are just as qualified for officeholding as their male colleagues, but their qualifications often look somewhat different. Let me provide two quick examples to illustrate this point. First, political experience: Women in office have just as much as or more political experience than men, but they have different kinds of experience. Not surprisingly, before running for any given office, men are more likely than women to have held a previous elective office. However, while women have less elective experience they are a lot more likely than the men to have held an appointive governmental position, often on a board or commission. Similarly, women officeholders are more likely than their male colleagues to have worked on campaigns for other candidates or on the staff of an elected official before running for office themselves.

The occupations of officeholders provide a second example of women and men in office being equally, but differently, qualified. Women and men among officeholders are about equally as likely to have professional or managerial occupations. Although they are similar in this respect, the men are more likely to be lawyers — that's the most common occupation among men — while the women are more likely to be school teachers — that's the most common occupation among

women. The men are also more likely than the women to be business people or farmers. In contrast, the women are more likely than the men to be nurses or other health care workers, clerical workers, and social workers.

Now, I have a hard time seeing how being a farmer, a businessperson, or even an attorney necessarily makes a person a better public official than a background in teaching, health care, social work, or even office management, which is why I would argue that the occupational backgrounds of women and men in office are roughly equal despite being different. This pattern of occupational differentiation between women and men in office is likely to change somewhat in the 90s as more and more women move into careers in business and law. However, I hope that we will also continue to see plenty of teachers, nurses, and social workers among our public officials, and if we do, they are for the foreseeable future more likely to be women.

Women Helping Women

The third finding that emerged loud and clear from all the research we conducted in the 1980s on women in elective office is the importance of women's organizations and women's networks in the careers of political women. Most women officeholders belong to women's organizations; for example, in our 1981 study we found that 58% of women county officials belonged to one or more of following major women's organizations: League of Women Voters; American Association of University Women; National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs; National Organization for Women; National Women's Political Caucus. Almost one-third belonged to an explicitly feminist group. But more important than mere membership, women's organizations are an important source of encouragement for women to run for office as well as a base of support for their campaigns. For example, about one-fourth of women county officials in 1981 reported that a women's organization actively encouraged them to run for office, and about one-fifth received formal or informal support for their campaigns from a women's group. The figures were higher at the state legislative level, where more than half the women reported that women's organizations provided support for their campaigns.

As you are probably aware, there is now a sizable

number of political action committees (PACs) at both the state and national level that raise money specifically for women candidates. The last time we counted, which was in 1989, we came up with a total of 35 PACs which either give money predominantly to women candidates or which have a predominantly female donor base; most were founded during the 1980s. Seventeen of these PACs provided the Center with information about direct financial contributions that they made to candidates in 1988. Those 17 PACs contributed over \$1,100,000 to 464 women candidates running in the 1988 elections. So it is clear that women's organizations are playing an important and growing role in women's campaigns and are likely to continue to do so in the 90s.

But it is not just women's organizations that are important to women's political careers. There are also a lot of signs of individual political women helping and mentoring other women. We have found that the women in office are notably more likely than the men to have had role models and mentors who were women and to have worked in other women's campaigns before running for office themselves. Just as many women in office have themselves been helped by other women, the women who are now serving in elective offices in turn try to encourage other women to follow in their footsteps. We have found that large proportions of women officeholders encourage individual women they know to become politically active, speak with groups of women to encourage their political involvement, and actively recruit women when hiring staff.

Private Lives

The fourth finding from our research on elective women undoubtedly will come as no surprise to you. We have found that women's private lives seem to affect their decisions about their political careers to a much greater extent than is true for men. For example, women more often than men wait until their children are grown before running for office, and they far more often than men report that the fact that their children were old enough to take care of themselves was a very important factor affecting their decision to run. Similarly, we have found that women officeholders are less likely than their male counterparts to be married, and when they are married, they almost all report that their spouses are very supportive of their political involvement. Majorities of the men also report that their spouses are very

supportive, but there is more variation among the men. Many of the men say that their spouses are only somewhat supportive, and some even report that their spouses are opposed to their officeholding activities. What these findings suggest is that it is very difficult for a married woman to run for and be elected to public office unless she has a super-supportive husband; for men having a fully supportive spouse seems to be less of a prerequisite.

Despite the fact that there have been a number of recent examples of political men who have cited wanting to spend more time with their families as a reason for either retiring from office or not running for some other office, I think that in the 90s women's private lives will continue to affect their decisions about their political careers to a greater extent than is true for men. Let me suggest, perhaps somewhat provocatively, that in the 1990s I think we will see men using their families and private lives as a convenient excuse for not running for office when the major reason is really something else, while for women considerations about families and private lives will often really be the major reason why they don't run.

Impact

The fifth and final finding of the research we've conducted during the 1980s is the one I consider to be the most important. That finding is that women's presence in office is making a real difference when it comes to public policy. This seems to be particularly true when it comes to issues pertaining to the welfare of women and children. In 1988 we conducted a study focusing on state legislatures where we attempted to interview by phone all women state senators across the country, one-half the women state representatives, and comparison samples of men, with very high response rates for all groups. We asked state legislators two open-ended questions focusing on their legislative work during the current session. First, we asked them to describe the one bill that had been their own personal top priority for the current session. Then we asked them if they had worked on any legislation during the current session, top priority or not top priority, where the bill itself or specific provisions of the bill were intended to help women in particular, and if they had, we asked them to describe what the bill had done for women. As you might expect, about three times as many women as men

— about one of every ten women — had a top priority bill that was aimed at women.

Women legislators were also more likely than the men to have bills that dealt with the welfare of children and with health care issues as their top priority. Differences between women and men were even bigger when it came to the question asking if they had worked on any legislation during the session that was intended specifically to help women. More than half the women, compared with about one-third of the men, had worked on such legislation. I want to note two additional points about these findings. First, most of the legislation that women were working on that was intended to help women could be considered feminist in intent; very few women were working on anti-feminist legislation. Second, it is not the case that the legislation women were working on to help women was getting nowhere. We asked legislators about their success in getting legislation through the legislature, and women seem to have been just as successful as the men.

But it is not just on women's issues or policies targeted specifically at women that women officeholders are making a difference. Women bring with them into office a set of life experiences different from those of men. And as a result, regardless of whether the issue is foreign aid, the budget, or the environment, women are more likely than men to consider the possible impact of the policy on the lives of women and children. Any woman officeholder probably has better stories about women's impact than I do, but let me tell just one little anecdote that I think will illustrate the point I'm trying to make. In New Jersey, we have a wonderful Republican woman, Hazel Gluck, who used to serve in the legislature, then was appointed to direct the state lottery, then became Commissioner of the Department of Insurance, and then headed the state Department of Transportation. She has done much to help women throughout the state in whatever position she has held. But the particular story about her that I want to tell illustrates that even in a policy area as seemingly remote as mass transit, it matters whether or not you have women in office.

In New Jersey we have a real traffic problem, and in order to ease traffic congestion, the Department of Transportation has tried to encourage more people to use public transportation by expanding the state's park-

and-ride system, so that people can leave their cars in lots for the day while they take the train or bus to work. As Hazel tells the story, when discussions were taking place over the state's park-and-ride system, the men working on the problem were largely concerned with things like finding new sites, expanding old lots, and figuring out how many cars could be accommodated. The women were concerned with these things too. But it was Hazel and the other women involved in the discussion who started raising a whole new set of questions. They started asking, "While we are redesigning these lots, wouldn't it be great to locate facilities such as convenience stores and dry cleaners in the park-and-ride lots so that you could get off the train, stop by the dry cleaners, or pick up the groceries you need for dinner before heading for home, not only saving time and making life easier but also getting people off the roads more quickly, thereby easing traffic congestion in the process?"

Now, this is a very small example, but I think it helps to show how a woman officeholder, because of differences in her life experiences and responsibilities, is likely to examine and evaluate public policy proposals in a variety of issue areas through a different lens than a man might use. And what I particularly like about this example is that it not only shows that women are more likely to think about how policies will affect women's lives, but also that the process of thinking about how policies may affect women's lives can lead to better and more effective solutions to whatever problem is at hand, in this case traffic congestion.

As we move into the 1990s I do think we will continue to see women making a difference in public policy in the ways I've tried to illustrate. But if I am to believe what I hear from political women across the country, we are also likely to see some important changes in men's public policy priorities in the 1990s as well. Political women, particularly women serving in state legislatures who have been there a number of years, have told me that it has definitely been the women who have taken the lead in their legislatures on issues such as child care, teen pregnancy, and spouse abuse. But what has happened as a result of women pushing to get these issues onto the agenda is that men in these legislatures have discovered that these are very popular issues with their constituents. As a result, male legislators are showing more interest and becoming more active on these issues.

So let me conclude with one final prediction for the 1990s. And that is: When it comes to policies that will most directly affect the lives of women and children, it will still be up to women to take the lead, but more and more men are likely to follow.

Why Move On?

Madeleine M. Kunin, Governor of Vermont

A version of these remarks was delivered in October 1989 at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University at The Strategic Leadership '90 Conference for elected women co-sponsored by the Women's Campaign Research Fund and the Kennedy School.

I'm delighted to join you here at this important conference. This, in a sense, is the graduate course on women in politics which we all have been waiting for. None of you are novices; you have all been through the rites of initiation into the American political system. And you have survived. That's why you're here. The question now is — what's next? Shall I aim even higher, seek a position of greater responsibility, power, and, with that, vulnerability? This trio is part of the bargain. Greater responsibility and power are always accompanied by that persistent tag along — vulnerability.

What I would like to explore with you today is why, on most days, moving on is worth taking the risk — in fact, necessary. Also, I would like to explore, in somewhat greater depth than usual, what it is that holds us back, even those of us who are politically savvy, reasonably tough, and know who we are and who we want to be.

We know why we are needed, to fill a glaring vacuum. The statistics on the numbers of women participating in our political system at all levels remain disconcertingly dismal. Given the progress women have made in other fields, it is hard to understand why, particularly when so much change has occurred for women in society. The most visible change is the unprecedented entry of large numbers of women into the workplace.

In 1970, women comprised 38 percent of the workforce; today that figure is 45 percent and quickly reaching 50

percent. And within the workforce, startling statistics are emerging. Thirty-one percent of new M.D.'s are women today, compared to 8.4 percent in 1970; 39 percent of the new lawyers are female today, compared to 5.4 percent in 1970, and 22.6 percent of the new dentists are female, up from less than one percent.

In the political professions, however, the statistics are far less encouraging. Progress has been made in state legislatures, but in the Congress there were 11 women in 1970 and there are 29 today. *[Editors note: 30 in 1990.]* As for women governors, there were none in 1970 and there are three of us today — two of whom have been elected.

Contrary to what happened to women in other traditionally male professions, politics, like law enforcement and the military, has remained a largely male domain. Take a snapshot of the power structure anywhere — on the Capitol steps during President Bush's inauguration, on the front pages of *The New York Times*, the Sunday talk shows, or on the steps of the University of Virginia during the education summit when the governors, the cabinet and the president smiled for the camera, only a few spots of colorful clothing stand out against the sea of blue gray suits. I was glad I wore red. When the picture is developed and framed, the question asks itself, "Where are the women?"

Perhaps if we had schools of politics where the graduates actually entered the system the same way that doctors, lawyers and dentists do, we would see more encouraging statistics. But even if we school women for the political life, there are barriers to their entry. Quite simply, incumbents refuse to leave their seats to make way for the new class. It's a large barrier but certainly not the only one.

Women who ran for congress in recent months did well, proving that when women do run, they can do exceedingly well, even with constituencies which have traditionally been conservative towards women, such as the Cuban-American voters in Miami.

Does that mean that gender as a question goes away once a high level of political office is either sought or attained? I used to think so — hoping there was some safe perch on which I could land, where no more gender questions would be asked. Armed with a title, like

governor, critics and questioners would snap to attention at the sound of authority.

But gender never goes away, but like a lot of facts of life, one learns how to put it in context. But there are flare ups, when there is a sudden visceral response to a remark, to an omission, or to a general characterization which is laden with sexism, provoking a rush of anger, and frustration because these moments are often impossible to explain, or to protest against. They must be swallowed, often with no show of emotion at all. For example, when a committee chairman at an National Governors' Association meeting looks straight at you and says, "gentlemen" twice in a row as he addresses the group; when it is so hard for the marine at the entrance to the East Room of the White House to get the announcement of your name and title straight, "Governor Madeleine Kunin and Dr. Arthur Kunin."

The expectation, the centuries of expectations, have been and continue to be that the man is the leader. You realize your very presence is a defiance of tradition and sometimes you internalize the feeling that this is not normal behavior. You begin to wonder how long it will take for women to be expected, to be welcome guests in the halls of power. And there are moments of total equanimity, and even times of triumph, when gender is not negative, but positive. We look around us, and smile, and conclude, because we are women, we are changing the world.

My very first speech in the legislature in 1973 on the Equal Rights Amendment gave me such a thrill. I knew why I was there. When we have a gathering of some of the past and present women in my administration and call ourselves the "old girls' network," when I look at what we have achieved for welfare mothers, for child care, for education, I feel we put those issues first because they are part of our personal "female" experience. And then, at the ballet, when a bevy of little girls in the audience come up to me to say hello and ask me to sign their programs, the female bond — generation to generation — moves me greatly. These are great times to be savored.

Overall, gender, as a political factor, is both a positive and negative force. It is, at times, a barrier — both practically and emotionally on levels which we cannot fully define, even to ourselves. But it is also what adds

excitement to the race. The very fact of breaking down the barriers, being one of the first, fighting the good fight for things in which we deeply believe provides the adrenaline of politics for many women. It may not be what makes Sally run, but it sure gives her energy for the race. That is why the spirit of sisterhood, which exists within the political structure in circles such as this, is sustaining and, in fact, necessary for survival.

Within my staff, where five out of eight top positions are held by women, we often reinforce one another by our mutual presence by being able to share the nuances, the subtleties of the pressures of political life for women that are usually not directly articulated. It makes us feel less like insurgents, more like we belong here.

Is it worth it to aim even higher? I think you already know what I will tell you — that it is much more exciting at the top, but it is also more dangerous. And you may also surmise my conclusion that it is worth exposing oneself to these dangers because the rewards are indeed great.

When I was lieutenant governor, frankly, I was in a very nice position — a good apprenticeship. I could take pot shots at the governor from time to time, side with the legislature on certain issues, and say "yes" to just about all constituencies. They accepted my sympathies and did not expect me to deliver. I could pick and choose my issues, and feel comfortable in an ancillary role — in one sense, a traditionally female role. The quantum jump from that position to that of governor was enormous. It was no longer "they," it was us. It was me.

And although I had mastered the art of getting elected to statewide office, and I had learned a lot about politics, issues, constituencies, and consensus building, as I had worked my way up through the system as a state legislator, appropriations committee chair, and lieutenant governor, this position was different from anything I had ever known before. The scope of the responsibility, in actual and in symbolic terms, is enormous. And the pace of events, moving in rapid fire from crisis to crisis, is almost impossible to describe. The status of the position creates a duality that is sometimes difficult to reconcile — great respect and great expectations, not all of which can be met.

Expectations run high for women in politics, in those areas traditionally associated with the mother figure and female compassion. Women inevitably disappoint their followers, to a degree, because it is almost impossible to govern responsibly and also meet the extraordinarily high demands placed on us. We are supposed to be different, and we are, but we cannot, operating within a larger political system, be as different as we are expected to be. For example, in my own state of Vermont, on the national scene, we rank third in welfare benefits, rank near the top in foster care and prenatal care coverage, and yet I am still sometimes charged with not doing enough.

New responsibility also means learning to operate in a whirlwind of conflict and debate, and being able to move, without a moment's notice from issue to issue with knowledge and confidence. Our ability to deal with conflict is often stymied by the public's tendency to characterize female leadership as indecisive. In the world of politics, feminine characteristics — witness the wimp — are disdained. Female attributes — compromise, consensus — are not as highly valued as male characteristics of toughness, bombast, and attack. Our fundamental instincts — our verbal language, our body language — sometimes dilute the image of leadership, which by tradition has been male defined. Dealing with criticism, conflict, the political attack, all can be highly uncomfortable.

Has it been worth it, thus far? Yes. Are there days when I question the system and my own role within it? Yes. What keeps people like me going? All the answers sound somewhat cliched, because we must go back to simple truths. The ability to express a vision of how things should be, to share that publicly, and then to help it take shape, is an extraordinary experience. There is a sense of purpose, a sense of connection, an explanation for the ultimate question of why we are here on this earth — which, fleeting though it may be, is exhilarating. Everything seems to make sense, including one's own existence. One feels a connection, a resonance with the audience. Applause and laughter are marvelous sounds of confirmation. Of course, it doesn't last. But it is great while it does. And there is the off chance that history will be kind.

And for the time being, there are achievements one can

point out — protecting my own state of Vermont from environmental decline and charting a course for future growth management and protection, providing a voice on the issue of legal and safe abortions, improving the quality of education in my state, and smaller things — like the elderly woman in the health club locker room who stops to tell me she's glad that I am there because when she was younger, she wished she could speak out, but dared not do so.

You have felt these hands reach out to you, you have been the special light in other women's eyes, as your presence on the political podium has elevated them to their rightful status. Watching the women along the parade route — that special applause, thumbs up, cheers — you know it when you see it, and it is extraordinarily powerful, our intuitive sisterhood. It is important to be there for these reasons. Are they enough to counter the mounting terror that accompanies reaching to greater political heights — the terror that comes from the press call in the night, the terror of having your privacy invaded? Only you can answer that question for yourself. I confess, it's a question I continue to ask myself every day.

I think if we are to be in politics in greater numbers, we must probe some of the ways in which we can better understand what holds us back. Although all of us are constantly looking to hone our political skills and strategies in such areas as fundraising, constituency building, and issues, we know we can acquire these skills. They are definable.

What is more difficult to define and to acquire is a comfort level with power itself. Let me try to describe what I mean. I heard the novelist Joyce Carol Oates speak the other night on the difference between the internal life of the writer and the career of the writer. The internal life is filled with dreams, the imagination, and is very private. The career, in many ways, is quite the opposite, demanding a very public persona.

It is somewhat analogous to politics. I think many of our motivations for entering politics are, in fact, personal — a reflection of our values, our desire to see change occur according to some ideal. But the public life — necessary to realize that ideal — is very different. We are still learning the culture of the public life — dealing with conflict, going into battle, and emerging

from battle with the strength to continue the fight.

I received some insight into this when discussing children's gender differences with a group of women. A mother described how her son prepared for the hockey game. He put on his shoulder pads, his knee pads, his thick layers of clothing, his helmet — he was armed for battle. He expected to fight. He was prepared to get hurt, but he had built up his protective layers. As the heroine in the play, "The Heidi Chronicles," says, "What is it that women tell their sons, that they don't tell their daughters?" We are the daughters, untaught in the ways of political battle. And each day, we go through not only outer skirmishes, but inner ones as well.

We would like to change the rules of the game, and sometimes hold ourselves back because we don't approve of the way it is played. But then we find if we don't play by their rules, we don't play at all. We would like to be the advocates of political perestroika — a less adversarial and more consensus built system — that is what we are more comfortable with. But the bottom line in politics is crude and demanding. It's win or lose. Nothing in between.

We can't expect the few women in political life to change the values and the rules of the game alone, although that is sometimes precisely the expectation. If you haven't changed the world, what's the point of your being there? Politics is, at best, a reflection of the values of society as a whole. And while political leaders can move the public forward, they can't wrench it around to where it does not want to be.

At the same time, we cannot expect that every political woman exercise power precisely like a man. She will develop a composite: Her internal self, which is the culmination of her own value system and her socialization as a woman, and then she must integrate that with the existing external political system. That is what is hard — reconciling one's internal self with the demands of the political system, which is based on male traditions and is still largely male defined — but it is not impossible.

Women increasingly have an effect on both the substance and the style of politics. Deciding what is important may be the most important choice of all — defining

the agenda. The more responsible the political position, the greater the opportunity to shape the agenda. Issues such as the environment, child care, family leave, choice, rise to the top of the agenda because they reflect my values, which are influenced to some extent by my view of the world as a woman. Not exclusively, of course, or else all women would think the same about these issues. Also, as we seek the public life, there are pleasures we gain from it.

What advice do I have for you? I'd like some company at the National Governors' Association meetings. I'd like to see women's pictures occupying more space on the U.S. Capitol steps at the next president's inauguration and certainly in his or her cabinet. How do we get there? I think we have to give more thought to what this means to us on both a personal and a cosmic level.

Personally, I think we have to acknowledge and further reconcile the conflicts we feel between our female culture and the predominantly male political system. Our mothers did tell us different things than they told our brothers. And for many, so did our fathers.

It is not lack of polling data or campaign contributions which keeps many women from ascending higher on the political ladder, it is fear and loathing of the political system itself. But while many men may be equally repelled by the political practices of our time, they are better equipped to deal with them. The public is also accustomed to seeing boys fight. In fact, they relish it. Girls are still not supposed to.

On the cosmic level, consider that women's voices must be heard as we debate, plan, and decide the future of our states, nation, and world. Women's individual and collective experiences are valid, even vitally necessary to our survival. Permit me to illustrate this point by reading excerpts from an essay called "The Space Crone" by Ursula K. Le Guin.

If a space ship came by from the friendly natives of the Fourth Planet of Altair, and the polite captain of the space ship said, "We have room for one passenger; will you spare us a single human being so that we may converse at leisure during the long trip back to Altair and learn from an exemplary person the nature of the race?" — I suppose what most people would

want to do is provide them with a fine, bright, brave young man, highly educated and in peak physical condition...there would surely be hundreds, thousands of volunteers, just such young men, all worthy, but I would not pick any of them. Nor would I pick any of the young women who would volunteer....

What I would do is go down to the local Woolworth's, or the local village market place, and pick an old woman, over sixty, from behind the costume jewelry counter or the betel-nut-booth. Her hair would not be red or blonde or lustrous dark, her skin would not be dewy fresh, should not have the secret of eternal youth. She might, however, show you a small snapshot of her grandson who is working in Nairobi. She is a bit vague about where Nairobi is, but extremely proud of her grandson. She has worked hard at small, unimportant jobs all her life, jobs like cooking, cleaning, bringing up kids, selling little objects of adornment and pleasure to other people...she has given birth several times and faced death several times — the same times. She is facing the final birth/death date a little more nearly and clearly every day now. Sometimes her feet hurt something terrible. She never was educated to anything like her capacity, and that is a shameful waste and a crime against humanity...and anyhow she's not dumb. She has a stock of sense, wit, patience, and experiential shrewdness, which the Altaireans might, or might not, perceive as wisdom.... In any case, since they are curious and kindly, let's give them the best we have to give.

The trouble is, she will be very reluctant to volunteer. "What would an old woman like me do on Altair?" she'll say. "You ought to send one of those scientist men,...maybe Dr. Kissinger should go...." It will be very hard to explain to her that we want her to go because only a person who has experienced, accepted and acted the entire human condition — the essential quality of which is change — can fairly represent humanity. "Me?" she'll say, just a trifle slyly, "But I never did anything."

But it won't wash. She knows, though she won't admit it, that Dr. Kissinger has not gone and will never go where she has gone, that the scientists...have not done what she has done. Into the space ship, Granny.

Into the space ship we go, representing the human condition. Deep down, like Granny, we know we can do it. We have a lot of collective wisdom, and there is so much we can teach to Dr. Kissinger, to George Bush, to the United States Congress, to the Supreme Court, and to the leaders of the world.

First Impressions: Women, Elections and the Abortion Issue

Lauren D. Burnbauer, Graduate Research Assistant, CAWP

In handing down the July 1989 *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* decision giving states more authority to determine abortion policy, the Supreme Court made it more likely that the abortion issue would soon be on campaign agendas in state races throughout the country. This article examines the role of the abortion issue in the 1989 campaign experiences of selected women legislative candidates and the attitudes of women voters in New Jersey and Virginia, the first two states holding state elections following *Webster*. Among candidates and voters, gender did make a difference.

As part of a larger study examining the abortion issue's impact in New Jersey and Virginia, we interviewed legislative candidates from districts where it seemed likely that the abortion issue would be important in the race.¹ As it happened, ten of the New Jersey candidates interviewed were women as were nine of the Virginia candidates. While the larger study included comparable numbers of Democrats and Republicans, of the 19 women interviewed in both states, there were four Republicans and 15 Democrats, four pro-lifers and 15

pro-choicers. Three of the four pro-life candidates were Republicans.² Half of the New Jerseyans and two-thirds of the Virginians interviewed won their races (most were incumbents). These 19 women candidates comprised about one-third and one-half of all women running in New Jersey and Virginia, respectively, and are not necessarily a representative sample of women running in these two states. The observations here suggest impressions more than generalizations. Comparisons will periodically be made with the male contenders (33 from New Jersey and 38 from Virginia) interviewed in the two states. "The candidates" referred to throughout are women, unless otherwise stated.

The Credibility Factor

All those who explicitly mentioned benefitting from the abortion issue among voters because they were women were pro-choice candidates. A number mentioned having greater credibility among voters than male candidates on the abortion issue.

The legislature is made up of men, but when men can carry babies they can tell women what to do.... [My running mate and I] were able to say, none of the men who are...going to vote on this...have ever [had] to face this decision. What right do they have to tell a woman?... Women can identify with that and so I think that we were able to have an advantage because we were not talking about it from an educational point of view. We were there.... I think that people respected our answer. I say people, the people who were [pro-] choice. The anti-choice people said you are crazy. You are women and you want to kill babies and you know what it's like to give birth.... They cut it the other way.... But I do think it gives a woman [candidate] more credibility. (New Jersey pro-choice Democratic challenger)

[After Webster] what happened was, women said, oh, my god, what are they crazy?... And I think for the first time women felt more comfortable voting for a woman who could identify

¹Forty-three candidates from 13 New Jersey districts and 47 candidates from 31 Virginia districts were interviewed. For a fuller discussion of the project's scope and findings, see enclosed "Executive Summary."

²For the sake of brevity both states will be grouped together in discussing candidates' comments and responses, except where distinct inter-state differences arise.

with that... Being a woman in this election...was a help.... I think, even if people didn't know what my position was on abortion, I think there is an assumption by the voters that a...female politician is pro-choice. Whether that's true or not, you know, that's what it was. The second thing is that...I got the impression from a lot of women that while everybody is saying that they're pro-choice now but, you know, I don't trust them. A lot of people are saying to me, I think we need more women in the legislature who understand what this right is about.... I think that helped [my campaign] a lot. (New Jersey pro-choice Democratic challenger)

Whether this credibility factor holds only among women voters or only for pro-choice candidates, and whether it can outweigh obstacles in women's paths to office (such as gender stereotypes that create different expectations of women and men candidates) is questionable. What is more certain is the feeling among a number of candidates that voters perceive women candidates as more sincere in their response to this issue.

[My running mate and I] had to always remember that we could be intelligent, competent, aware candidates, but we had to remember we were ladies, and I didn't say women. We had to remember we were ladies.... We had to be quietly aggressive, because women who are aggressive are not good. We had to be ladies. So we got credibility because we were women and we could talk about abortion. We also had to be very careful not to be too strident. (New Jersey pro-choice Democratic challenger)

I think people believe women on the abortion issue more quickly than they do men, whatever their position is. They believe that they're sincere. And so that when a woman says she's pro-choice, they say, well, she ought to know.... This isn't a theoretical exercise. This is something that women legislators have faced at some time in their lives or know of or have had some experience with and [voters] trust that judgment. (Virginia pro-choice Democratic incumbent)

Importance Among Candidates

About half the women and men candidates interviewed in each state felt the abortion issue was at least one of several important issues in their campaign. The gender

difference arises in whether a candidate *wanted* abortion policy to be an important campaign issue. While over half of the women candidates interviewed in New Jersey, and two-thirds of those in Virginia, *wanted* it to be significant, only about half of their New Jersey and one-third of their Virginia male counterparts wanted this. Almost two out of three women candidates interviewed in each state said they used the issue in their campaign material, compared with half of New Jersey and two out of five Virginia male contenders. Candidates gave numerous reasons for wanting to make the issue important in their races, including: that *Webster* made abortion policy a legitimate state election issue; that an opponent's sharply differing position or apparent waffling helped make it an issue; and that voters wanted it to be an issue.

This does not mean that all women candidates, or even all pro-choice women, wanted to focus on the issue in their campaigns. Those who preferred to play down the issue tended to be pro-life candidates and those candidates in districts where the issue "cut both ways" among constituents, possibly bringing electoral drawbacks that may have outweighed any payoffs. Candidates preferring the issue not be important in their race said either they or their constituents, or both, were uncomfortable with or tired of the issue.

Obviously the people were not interested or not the majority of people. I really truly do not think it was a valid issue in this campaign except for a few handfuls of people. (New Jersey pro-life Democratic challenger)

[My district] is predominantly certainly a rural county with traditional values.... As far as the legislative race, I think they got turned off by it [the abortion issue].... I really don't think that the position on that issue had any impact on the election in any way, shape, or form, with money, with volunteers, with anything.... I think [the public] are sick and tired of reading about it, hearing it, and having first one side then the other screaming at each other. (Virginia pro-life Republican challenger)

Voter Contacts

Almost two out of three New Jersey women candidates and over three out of four of the Virginia contenders said they were contacted often about the abortion issue

after Webster was decided; a small number said questions about the abortion issue composed a meager proportion of their overall contacts with voters.

From the [Webster] Court decision forward, I would say six out of ten voters who brought up any issue would bring up the abortion issue. (Virginia pro-choice Democratic incumbent)

As soon as Webster came down, it was as if all hell broke loose.... Once choice came in, automobile insurance went out the window.... The only issue about the time the election came around that had any meaning to anybody was ...choice. (New Jersey pro-choice Democratic challenger)

I probably throughout the whole district had four or five responses saying we're sorry we can't support you because of your stand on abortion.... Out of all the doors I knocked on, and I knocked on most of them, I probably had that question come up face-to-face only two or three times. (Virginia pro-life Republican challenger)

Campaign Resources

Issue group activity has been integral in raising and maintaining public interest in the abortion issue over the period it has been in the political arena. One-third of the women candidates found that pro-choice activity raised the issue's importance in their campaigns. These pro-choice candidates extolled the pro-choice groups as helpful in several ways; through their literature, financial contributions, volunteers, phone banks, voter targeting, and spreading the word.

I am grateful, extremely grateful, for the [pro-choice] women's groups that...always support me and give the money that they can.... A lot of women's groups don't have a lot of money and they make up for it in the amount of mailings they stuff, the stamps they lick, the poll workers that they are. They make up for it many times over. Sometimes I'd rather have that than the money, the actual foot work, the door-to-door, ringing the doorbells. We had a lot of people out there ringing doorbells. (Virginia pro-choice Democratic incumbent)

[Women's pro-choice PACs] gave us money. It helped a lot because this was a grassroots campaign. I think our total budget was \$25,000

or \$30,000 or something like that. That was all we spent. So if somebody gives a total of \$1,500 for that type of a campaign, that's a substantial chunk. (New Jersey pro-choice Democratic challenger)

In fact, regardless of their position, three out of five of those interviewed received some money from organized groups (all but one of these were pro-choice candidates).

Although some pro-choice candidates saw organized pro-choice activity as an asset for their campaigns, a majority either saw no pro-choice group activity in their districts or felt that activists' efforts did little to affect the issue's importance in the races. The few candidates (one in New Jersey and three in Virginia) who found the pro-choice groups actually unhelpful felt that the activists did not effectively connect the candidate with the issue in the voters' minds, or that the groups were just not as helpful as had been hoped.

Of the few candidates discussing how pro-life activism affected their campaigns, a couple of pro-life endorsees discussed the benefits (and possible drawbacks) from activists spreading the word via churches and other pro-life groups.

The last three times I ran, the pro-life people handed out a flyer at the churches at the Masses.... Just for me, because they didn't support [my running mate].... Through their churches they talked to their people.... Every little bit helps. Every group that goes out there and works. It gives you visibility. (New Jersey pro-life Republican incumbent)

I think [the pro-life activists] just probably worked in their own way. I think that they gave out literature at the churches.... It was good to know that they were there.... You know, sometimes it could hurt you too, because sometimes, some of them are like the pro-choicers. Not all. You have fringes on both sides. And if they come out too strong they can turn people off too. So you have to be careful. You just have to try to keep that balance, which is good. (New Jersey pro-life Republican incumbent)

Another candidate received no other assistance from pro-life groups besides the pro-life endorsement; a pro-choice candidate said local churches endorsed her pro-life opponents by name immediately before the election. Large majorities said that pro-life activity did not help

make the issue more significant in their campaigns, or that there was no pro-life activity in their races at all. (This was voiced especially among Virginia candidates.) Apparently, candidates felt that the issue's importance depended more on their own efforts, the voters' interest, and/or media activity.

This is not to say that candidates did not want or appreciate the efforts made by issue group activists. All the women candidates in both states, regardless of their own position, said they wanted the respective group endorsements. This contrasts with the one out of ten New Jersey men and almost half of the Virginia men who did not want any group endorsement from either side on the abortion issue. As for endorsements themselves, one-third of those women who actually received endorsements found them very helpful, while only one candidate in one of the states felt they did not affect her campaign.

In terms of other campaign resources, about two out of five candidates felt that *Webster* had at least a minor effect on their volunteer supply, including some who thought it had a major effect. Most candidates did not know *Webster's* impact on their contributions from individuals, but a number felt that the issue had no relationship to individual financial support.

I don't know of a single contribution I got that had anything to do with the abortion issue at all. (Virginia pro-life Republican challenger)

[With] the people who supported me financially, the issue did not come up. I'm certain...some business people, probably some of them were pro-choice, but that didn't come up because they liked the way I voted for business.... They may have liked the way I voted on school issues.... They didn't bring the abortion issue into it all. (New Jersey pro-life Republican incumbent)

Looking Back...and Toward the Future

In looking back on their campaigns, most women candidates say they would not have handled the abortion issue any differently. One quarter of the candidates, all of them pro-choice and all but one of whom lost, would have pushed the abortion issue more in their races. Only one candidate (a pro-choice New Jersey Republican) said the issue had become too party-defined, making it difficult for pro-choice Republicans.

Of the pro-choice candidates, over one-third favored framing the issue in terms of a woman's right to choose. Using the label "pro-choice" rather than "pro-abortion" and emphasizing libertarian themes were strategies also found to be successful among the electorate. New Jersey candidates were twice as likely to opt for the "women's rights" motif; Virginia aspirants were much more likely to emphasize libertarian themes as crucial in marketing the issue effectively. These state differences show the need to consider political culture when crafting a message amenable to the majority of voters — many of whom hold ambivalent attitudes about abortion. The pro-choice position on the issue may "sell" better when placed within a broader libertarian context in a southern state, whereas voters in a mid-Atlantic state may be more sympathetic toward feminist themes.

When asked what advice they would give abortion issue groups active in the 1990 races, most candidates recommended that activists on both sides be more realistic and tolerant, and avoid extremism. Other suggestions included focusing more on education and avoiding single issue politics. In offering advice for those running in 1990, three out of four candidates recommended that a candidate be clear about her stand and not waffle. Half of the Virginia candidates counseled against taking a popular stand just to get elected. Two Republican pro-life victors, a New Jersey incumbent and a Virginian winning an open seat, echo this advice.

I would tell them [1990 legislative candidates] they have to be true to themselves. They can't if they're going to sell their souls...just for power.... I would tell them that they can win [with a pro-life position] if they go to the grassroots and reach people. (New Jersey candidate)

On the abortion issue I didn't take advice given to me. Because everybody kept saying take one side. Just jump up and say, hey, I'm pro-choice or, hey, I'm pro-life. Jump on one side or the other and stick by it.... I would not wear a label. (Virginia candidate)

Legislation and Representation

Bolstering the notion that abortion policy is an issue of greater concern to women than to men, over half of the women candidates in both states would make the issue a top legislative priority if elected, compared with one-

third of the Virginia men and one-quarter of the New Jersey men. When asked how they would represent their constituents on this issue, women candidates' replies fell into three categories, with some giving multiple responses. Over half said representation would not be a problem because they held the same attitudes as their (prospective) constituents. About three-quarters answered that they would follow their personal beliefs and/or let the voters know their stand. Almost one-quarter would resolve the representation dilemma by not imposing their beliefs on their electorate, or doing what the district wants done, regardless of their own views.

I'm 55. I was brought up Roman Catholic and pro-life. I'm beyond childbearing years, alright, and whatever my personal beliefs are...I think that I have to represent the people that elected me.... I will not do anything to infringe on another woman's rights. (New Jersey pro-life Republican incumbent)

Importance Among Voters

In both New Jersey and Virginia, 800 voters, representative of the state's registered voters, were sampled (margin of error $\pm 3.5\%$) and asked various questions about the impending state elections and their attitudes on the abortion issue. The conventional wisdom has been that while women and men may share similar views about the abortion issue, women are more likely than men to see the abortion issue as important and to act on these concerns in elections. In fact, while women and men are equally likely to oppose new restrictions, women were more likely than men to cite the abortion issue as generally a very important issue, by a margin of about three to two in both states (New Jersey - women 57%, men 37%; Virginia - women 70%, men 49%). Furthermore, women rated the issue as more important than men regardless of whether they favored or opposed new restrictions.

The issue's higher saliency among women voters was manifested in a variety of ways, ranging from the questioning of candidates along the campaign trail to letter writing and phoning of legislative candidates to increased campaign and issue group activism as volunteers or contributors. Not all candidates reported experiences reflecting women's greater interest, but those

who did came from districts as diverse as the mountains of Virginia and the suburbs of New York City.

[My running mate] and I got letters from women who said that they were voting for us strictly on the pro-choice issue. (New Jersey pro-choice Democratic challenger)

I had spoken to people, particularly women, who said...they cared about nothing but this abortion issue. They made that their only issue. I could not understand that.... The ones that made it an issue were the pro-choice people, more so than the anti-abortion people. (New Jersey pro-life Republican incumbent)

I do think the abortion issue was very much on the minds of particularly the female voters. (Virginia pro-choice Democratic challenger)

Based on general interest patterns, women would seem to be potentially more receptive to campaign messages aimed at mobilizing voters around the abortion issue. Since more women oppose new restrictions than favor them in both states, pro-choice appeals had the potential to be particularly beneficial for candidates.³

Abortion is often assumed to be predominantly a "women's issue." Nevertheless, it also concerns many men. A sizeable group of male voters cited the issue as important to them and women legislative candidates seemed to think the issue had the potential to motivate male voters. As this candidate pointed out:

Men would bring it up because they said they would resent this being considered a woman's issue, although it is a family issue. It's an issue that belongs to everyone. They said if it was just a woman's issue, it's taking away from the man's interest and responsibility. (New Jersey pro-choice Democratic challenger)

While it is unlikely that any single-issue legislative campaign would succeed, voter opinion and the accounts of numerous women candidates attest to the abortion issue's relevance in the 1989 statehouse races in New Jersey and Virginia. Given the Louisiana state battle over abortion legislation and recent as well as upcoming Supreme Court decisions, it is likely that the abortion issue will continue to be relevant in statehouse races in 1990.

³Whether or not these appeals succeeded in luring more women voters to the pro-choice candidates is unclear.

Women's PACs: A Contact List

PAC contact list key:

* address may not be current

** PAC is currently inactive

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Eleanor Roosevelt Fund of New Mexico**

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Missouri Women's Action Fund

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National Organization for Women

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