WOMEN'S ROUTES TO ELECTIVE OFFICE

A Comparison with Men's

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

RUTGERS

Women's
Routes to
Elective
Office
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Center for the American Woman & Politics

Women's Routes to Elective Office

A COMPARISON WITH MEN'S

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CONTENTS

In 1975 and again in 1977, the Center for the American Woman and Politics
(CAWP) conducted mail surveys of all women serving in federal, state, and
local offices. The 1975 study was the first national survey of elected
women ever conducted. The 1977 research was among the first studies pro-
viding a comparison between women and men holding elective office.[1]

Both earlier studies laid the groundwork for this 1981 study entitled
"Women's Routes to Elective Office: A Comparison with Men's." The studies
conducted in the mid-1970s provided baseline descriptions of women holding
elective office: their personal and political backgrounds, their attitudes
toward current issues, their ambitions.

This study builds on CAWP's earlier studies by again surveying women
and men elected to office. However, it differs from the earlier studies in
two major ways. First, it specifically focuses on the routes by which
women enter public office and discusses the ways these routes are similar
to or different from those of men. Second, it is the first study which in-
cludes a nationwide comparison between women and men in elective public
office; it is based on national samples of women and men who were holding
office in 1980 and 1981.[2]

SAMPLES, SURVEYS, AND RESPONSE RATES

Elected officials serving as state senators, state representatives,
members of county governing boards (referred to in this report as county
commissioners), mayors, and members of local governing boards (referred to
in this report as local council members) are examined in our report. In
addition, data from a sample of black elected women are analyzed. Surveys
of all the officeholders in our study, except for state legislators, were
conducted by telephone. State legislators were contacted by mail.[3] Our
sampling procedures varied based on the availability of lists of office-
holders. However, all the samples are based on systematic and random
sampling procedures and are reflective of the population of officeholders.
State Legislators

In May 1981, questionnaires were mailed to all 906 women serving in
state legislatures at that time.[4] Of the 137 female state senators con-
tacted, 73 returned our survey for a response rate of 53.3%. Of the 769
female state representatives contacted, 447 returned our survey for a
response rate of 58.1%.

Lists of male state senators and male state representatives were
constructed from State Elective Officials and the Legislatures 1981-82.[5]

Within each state, male senators were systematically sampled until the number of male senators selected equalled the number of female senators who were serving in that state. Out of 136 male senators selected, 68 returned our survey for a response rate of 50.0%.

A sample of male state representatives also was drawn through systematic sampling procedures. Within each state, the number of male representatives selected equalled one-half of the number of female representatives who were serving in that state. Out of 382 male representatives selected, 201 returned our survey for a response rate of 52.6%.

Members of County Governing Boards

In 1980, a total of 1,008 members of county governing boards were women.[6] In order to have a final sample size of about 100 women and 100 men, CAWP first drew a systematic sample of 100 cases with 75 replacement cases from a list of all women county commissioners.

Because no comprehensive list of all male county commissioners exists, a systematic sample of men could not be drawn. Instead, we randomly selected one man from each governing board on which a woman in our sample was serving.[7]

We completed interviews with 101 pairs out of the 128 pairs of county commissioners whom we contacted. Thus, the response rate was 78.9%.[8]

Members of Local Governing Boards

In 1980, a total of 12,136 members of municipal and township governing bodies were women.[9] In order to have a final sample size of about 150 women and 150 men, CAWP first drew a systematic sample of 150 cases with 150 replacement cases from a list of all women serving as members of township and municipal governing boards organized alphabetically by name of municipality within each state. The states' lists were ordered randomly.

Because no comprehensive list of all male municipal council members exists, a systematic sample of men could not be drawn. Instead, we randomly selected one man from each council on which a woman in our sample was serving.[10]

We completed interviews with 151 pairs out of the 202 pairs of municipal council members whom we contacted. Thus, the response rate for this survey was 74.8%.[11]

Mayors

In 1980, a total of 1,184 mayors were women.[12] In order to have a final sample size of 100 women and 100 men, CAWP first drew a systematic sample of 100 cases with 100 replacement cases from a list of all female mayors.

After the number of female mayors selected for the sample was determined, we selected an equal number of male mayors. In selecting male mayors, we limited the sample to states in which women in our sample of

female mayors were serving. Then, within each of these states, we randomly selected a number of male mayors which equalled, for each state, the number of female mayors included in our women's sample.[13]

We completed interviews with 100 female mayors out of the 161 women whom we contacted. Thus, the response rate was 62.1%. We completed interviews with 100 male mayors out of the 129 men whom we contacted. Thus, the response rate was 77.5%.[14]

Elected Black Women

In 1981, according to a list obtained from the Joint Center for Political Studies, 327 black women were serving as elected members of county governing boards, mayors, and local council members. From the list provided by the Joint Center for Political Studies, 100 cases (excluding those who were selected for the samples of elected women described previously) were systematically selected for our study. Seventy-five replacement cases also were selected.[15]

In order to reach our goal of 100 complete interviews, we contacted 142 women. Interviews were completed with 101 black elected women. Thus, the response rate was 71.1%.[16] These 101 women plus 2 state senators, 19 state representatives, 2 county commissioners, and 2 local council members who were the black women who had been selected for our other samples were included in our study. The report does not present findings for black women serving as state senators or as mayors because there were too few cases for analysis.

CONTACTING THE OFFICEHOLDERS

The mailed survey of state legislators was conducted between May and July 1981. Those who did not respond to the first mailing of the questionnaire were sent a second copy of the questionnaire after two weeks. Postage-paid return envelopes were included.

The cover letter included with the mailed questionnaire outlined two goals for our research: first, to identify routes of entry into elective office; second, to develop a profile highlighting similarities and differences between the ways women and men enter elective office. The letters were sent from CAWP's parent organization, the Eagleton Institute of Politics, on stationary which included a list of all four research centers housed therein. Respondents were promised confidentiality.

Telephone surveys of members of county governing boards, mayors, and municipal council members were conducted between June 2, 1981 and July 2, 1981. The interviewer identified herself or himself as calling from the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers-The State University of New Jersey. She or he explained that the purpose of the survey was to identify some of the reasons why people run for public office. Respondents were

promised confidentiality. The interviews averaged twenty minutes in length.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is composed of two parts. Part One analyzes women's routes to elective office, comparing their routes with those of men. Part One begins with an overview which provides a framework for the study of women's routes to elective office, summarizes our major findings on women office-holders, and presents recommendations for bringing more women into elected office. The analysis itself is presented in six chapters.

Chapter 1 examines the personal background and family characteristics of state, county, and local elected officials--their age, race, education, marital status, and family characteristics.

Chapter 2 continues the exploration of elected officials' backgrounds by focusing on their prior political experiences. Prior elective and ap-pointive officeholding, work on an elective officeholder's staff, campaign experience, and participation in candidate workshops are examined. The importance of role models and mentors in influencing officeholders' poli-tical careers also is discussed. Finally, officeholders' evaluations of the importance of various types of political experience are assessed.

Chapter 3 analyzes the roles political parties play in recruiting and supporting female and male candidates. Officeholders' evaluations of poli-tical party support also are reviewed.

Chapter 4 examines women officeholders' organizational involvement and the extent to which women's groups, occupational organizations to which officeholders belonged, and other organizations encouraged and supported women candidates. Finally, officeholders' evaluations of the importance of organizational support in their decisions to run for office are analyzed.

Chapter 5 discusses other factors which influenced officeholders' decisions to run for office. These include money, friends and supporters, flexibility of occupation, concern with issues, political ambition, per-ceived capabilities for holding office, and ability to counter discrimina-tion. Also included in this chapter is a review of officeholders' assess-ments of the most important reasons why they ran for public office.

Chapter 6 highlights the implications of the findings of our research. Drawing upon findings from earlier chapters of the report and women office-holders' recommendations, this chapter points to problem areas and targets of opportunity that need to be considered by those who are developing pro-grams and strategies for increasing women's numbers in elective office.

Part Two presents and analyzes data on black women's routes to elec-tive office, comparing these routes with the routes for women generally. Part Two is divided into six chapters, each of which largely corresponds with Chapters 1 through 6 of Part One of the report.

Notes for all chapters appear at the end of the report and are followed by a list of selected readings.

A Reader's Guide to the Report

The report is organized to enable the reader to sift through the analysis and review the findings in as much depth as she or he prefers.

The first section of Part One provides an interpretive overview of our findings on women's routes to elective office and our recommendations for increasing the number of women in elective office. Key findings from Chapters 1 through 5 of Part One are highlighted at the beginning of each of the chapters. The concluding sections of each of these chapters elaborate on the key findings.

The concluding chapters of Parts One and Two also highlight the major findings of our study. The conclusion of Part One discusses the implications of our research for bringing more women into public office, and the conclusion of Part Two summarizes and interprets our findings on black women's routes to elective office.

Finally, throughout the report, we have labeled tables with descriptive titles. The table titles also provide an overview of key findings of the report.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Part One

Women's Routes to Elective Office

OVERVIEW:
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bringing more women into public office--along with others who have been underrepresented--is a basic issue of equity. Despite often-voiced ideals, American government has never been truly reflective of the population it serves. Ours has been, for the most part, a government of wealthy white men. While government need not be a mirror image of the people who are governed, the overwhelming predominance of one group suggests a system which favors that group, probably at the expense of others. Although the overt legal barriers have fallen away, allowing some to claim that we have equality of opportunity in this country, women, minorities and the poor have faced almost insurmountable informal and systemic barriers--in attitudes, in institutions, in financial resources. As a consequence, their voices remain largely unheard in the shaping of policies affecting their lives.

Furthermore, at a time when government at all levels must regularly confront complex and sensitive issues, the need is greater than ever for all of the brainpower and human energy we can muster. Bringing more women into public office means making fuller use of America's talent, creativity, and intellect. We can ill afford a government that does not reflect the best our country has to offer, and we need to select our officials from the broadest possible spectrum of individuals.

Finally, an increase in the number of women in elective office will bring new perspectives to bear on public policy. Because of their own experiences as women in our society, female officeholders have perspectives which are different from those of men. Bringing more women into elective office should lead to public policy which is more responsive to women's special needs and interests on issues ranging from domestic violence and child care to unemployment and education. An increase in the number of women officeholders almost assuredly will lead to more legislation aimed specifically at the distinctive problems women face in this society. Moreover, an increase in women elected officials is likely to help insure that proposed legislation on everything from foreign aid to transportation policy will be scrutinized and analyzed with respect to its likely impact on women as well as on men.

In addition to carving out new areas of public policy, women may bring new perspectives to bear on current policy issues.[1] The writings of feminist theorists as well as findings from public opinion polls suggest that women officeholders will have perspectives on public policy distinctive from those of their male counterparts. Feminists have suggested that women's historical subordination to men has enabled women to have a greater

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capacity to identify and empathize with oppressed groups such as racial minorities and the economically disadvantaged. Moreover, women's traditional roles within the family as caretakers of children and nurturers of family members have been seen as causing women to be more compassionate, more concerned with moral standards, and more opposed to war and other acts of violence than are men.

Findings from public opinion polls also suggest that women may have perspectives on many public issues that differ from those of men. Polls consistently have shown that women more often are opposed to war and the use of force in domestic or foreign contexts. More women than men oppose nuclear power and the death penalty and favor gun control. Women often have been found to be more supportive of civil rights and social welfare policies, although differences between the sexes are not always apparent on such questions. Historically, women also have been more willing to limit and control social vices such as drinking, drugs, and gambling. Finally, the "gender gap" in evaluations of Ronald Reagan and his policies which appeared before and after the 1980 election suggests differences in perspectives between women and men.

Until we have a critical mass of women serving in elective office, we cannot be certain which of these differences will prove significant. Nor can we predict precisely how much of an effect they will have on public policy. Nevertheless, the weight of existing evidence clearly indicates that bringing more women into public office will have policy consequences. One does not have to believe that women's values and perspectives are superior to men's in order to appreciate the need for the representation and expression of these perspectives. Women's values can complement and enrich those values already represented in our political system by men.

THE INCREMENTAL INCREASES OF THE PAST DECADE

Despite compelling arguments for equitable representation of women in elective offices, progress toward this goal has been slow. At the congressional level, women in mid-1983 held twenty-four seats--two in the U.S. Senate and twenty-two in the U.S. House of Representatives. Ten years earlier, in 1973, women occupied sixteen seats in Congress. Thus, over a ten-year period, the number of women in Congress increased only by eight, and the proportion of seats held by women increased only from 3% to 4.5%.

Over the past decade, women have fared somewhat better at the state legislative level. The number of women state legislators has increased from 424 in 1973 to 991 in 1983. Over the past ten years, the proportion of state legislative seats held by women has grown from 6% to 13%.

Although available figures on other offices do not span an entire decade, the pattern of small increases is apparent for these offices as well.

In 1975, women held 10% of all statewide elective offices; in 1983, they held 13% of these positions. The proportions of women on county governing boards increased from 3% in 1975 to 6% in 1981. Similarly, the proportion of women mayors and local council members grew from 4% in 1975 to 10% in 1981.

If nothing is done to speed up the movement of women into elective office, few if any of us can hope to see equitable representation of women and men in public office, especially at the highest levels, during our lifetimes. Projecting into the future the rate of increase over the past decade in the number of women serving in Congress, three centuries would have to pass before half of all congressional seats were held by women.

CHANGING THE RULES OF THE GAME

Clearly, the present rate of progress toward equitable representation of women and men is very slow. The numbers of women who hold elective offices remain small. Two strategies for changing this situation present themselves. The first alternative is to work to change "the rules of the game" so that they no longer put women at a disadvantage. The second alternative is to make more women effective players within the current political framework. The research in this report was conducted with the latter strategy in mind. However, before we turn to the results of our research and our recommendations for bringing more women into elective office, a brief discussion of the strategy of changing the rules of the game is warranted.

The political system is biased in ways which promote the continued tenure of groups and individuals who are in positions of power. For example, incumbents are very difficult to defeat; open seats for high-level offices are rare. The high costs of campaigning and the absence of public financing of campaigns for most offices insure that the "have-nots" in society will not be able to seek public office. The monetary barriers that keep those without personal wealth from running for office also work disproportionately against women, who on the average earn only fifty-nine cents for every dollar earned by men.

These structural barriers are reinforced by beliefs that often work to keep women from running and winning election to public office. The characteristics that are most valued in political leaders--aggressiveness, forcefulness, dominance, competitiveness, and composure--are those that traditionally are associated with the male sex. Traditionally female characteristics--warmth, compassion, submissiveness, nurturance, and emotionality--have been viewed as inconsequential to, if not inconsistent with, political leadership. Similarly, standards by which we evaluate qualifications for public officeholding are defined by men's experiences.

A background in law or business, more common for men, is seen as more appropriate than a background in teaching or social work, more common for women. Similarly, involvement in the Chamber of Commerce or Rotary Club often carries more weight than participation in the PTA or the League of Women Voters. Unpaid volunteer experience, of which women often have a great deal, is not accorded the same importance as paid, vocational experience, of which women often have less than men.

Fundamental changes in the rules of the game--the ways in which we evaluate candidates and select our officeholders--could help to bring more women into elective office. Any reform that weakens the staying power of incumbents or reduces the costs of campaigning is likely to work to the collective advantage of women. Although it might have some undesirable consequences, a reasonable proposal that would place an upper limit on the number of terms an individual could serve in offices now characterized by low turnover would, by creating more open seats, work to the benefit of women and other underrepresented groups. Public financing of campaigns, carefully designed so as not to offer unfair advantages to incumbents, would enable women who are not independently wealthy or well-connected to special interest money to run for office. A broadening of the range of characteristics we look for in political leaders, to include warmth, compassion, and nurturance as well as aggressiveness and forcefulness, would help to bring more women into public office. The movement of women into elective offices also would be facilitated if we learned to attach value to a broader set of backgrounds and experiences in judging candidates for public office.

MAKING MORE WOMEN EFFECTIVE PLAYERS

The difficulty of changing the rules of the game makes it important to concentrate as well on improving women's playing skills. Our research examined women who have succeeded in electoral politics--those who have played the game effectively--in order to develop a better understanding of those factors that stood in their way and those that led to their success.

Many of the factors that make seeking and winning election to office difficult for women are the same as those which pose obstacles for men. However, women also face many barriers which are different from, or more severe than, those for men. The same is true of factors that facilitate entry into elective office--some are the same for both sexes and some are different. In developing recommendations about how to bring more women into public office, we relied primarily on findings regarding the weaknesses and strengths distinctive to women's pursuit of elective office.

Obstacles to Bringing More Women Into Elective Office

Family responsibilities and considerations more often seem to be an impediment to women running for office. Women officeholders less often

than their male counterparts have young children and more often claim that
the ages of their children affected their decisions to run for office.
Fewer women than men serving in office are younger than forty, suggesting
that women often wait until they are through the early years of child-
rearing before seeking office. Female officeholders less often than male
officeholders are currently married; women more often are divorced, sepa-
rated or widowed. Married women more often than married men have spouses
who are very supportive of their officeholding. These differences between
women and men who hold public office suggest that considerations about
children's needs and spouse's attitude affect a woman's decision about
seeking elective office more often than they affect a man's. A woman with
young children or a woman whose husband does not approve of her political
activity rarely runs and is elected to office. A man with young children
or a man whose wife is not completely enthusiastic about his political in-
volvement is not as often deterred from running for office.

Job segregation and women's concentration in occupations with little
flexibility in leaves of absence and work hours pose an obstacle to bring-
ing more women into elective office. Even among those who hold elective
offices, women more often than men have occupations in the fields of
nursing, teaching, and clerical work. Female officeholders less often
than male officeholders have occupations as lawyers or managers and adminis-
trators in which leaves of absence and flexible work hours are more common.
Because candidates and officeholders need to be able to rearrange their
work schedules to accommodate their campaign and officeholding activities,
the paucity of women in jobs with flexibility undoubtedly means fewer women
are in a position to seek office.

Our research also ..ggests that lack of self-confidence and fear of
sex discrimination are obstacles to bringing more women into public office.
Large majorities of women officeholders, and more women than men, claim
that the realization that they were just as capable of holding office as
most public officials was very important in their decisions to run for of-
fice. Similarly, most women officeholders, and far more women than men,
report that the knowledge that they were strong enough to combat any dis-
crimination they might face was a very important factor affecting their
decisions. Apparently, then, factors related to self-concept play a more
critical role in women's decisions to run for office than in men's. To
the extent that women lack confidence in their own political capabilities
or fear that they may not have the inner strength to deal effectively with
any discrimination they might face, they will be reluctant to seek public
office.

Although female officeholders more often than their male counterparts
have served in appointive governmental positions and worked in political

campaigns before running for their current offices, they are not more likely to have served in prior elective offices. It is not surprising that women who hold office do not have greater elective officeholding experience, given the paucity of women in elective office during the 1970s. Nevertheless, experience in one elective office constitutes the strongest "qualification" one can have for holding another elective office, and women's lack of greater elective officeholding experience works to their disadvantage.

The present candidate recruitment practices of political parties pose another obstacle to bringing more women into elective office. Although the role of parties in electoral politics has weakened in recent years, our research shows that in many areas of the country parties remain a vital force and are active in recruiting candidates. Women who seek and win election to office are just as likely as men to have had the support of political party leaders. They also are as likely, or almost as likely, as men to evaluate that support as important in their decisions to run for office. While party support is clearly important to many of those women who eventually win, the fact that only 4.5% of members of Congress and 13% of state legislators are women suggests that both major parties could be doing much more than they are to recruit and support women candidates. Among women officeholders in our study, those who ran in the most adverse electoral circumstances, in which winning was a long-shot, were the ones who most often had been recruited by party leaders. Recruitment of women candidates in situations in which they are likely to lose will not contribute substantially to an increase in the number of women holding office.

Finally, a lack of resources, particularly money, for women's campaigns stands in the way of bringing more women into elective office. Most women state legislators claim that the assurance of having sufficient financial resources to conduct a viable campaign was a factor that figured importantly in their decisions. Moreover, more female legislators than male legislators view financial considerations as having been important in their decisions to run, suggesting that the difficulty of raising money looms larger for women. When asked to give their recommendations about how to stimulate more women to run for office, women state legislators often pointed to the need for financial support for women candidates. Although the need for money is not as critical at local and county levels where the costs of campaigns often are not as great, the high costs of campaigns may well deter many women from running for offices at state and federal levels.

Building on Women's Strengths

Many of the obstacles which women face in trying to move into elective offices can best be overcome by using women's strengths to make more women

effective political players. Just as many of the obstacles women confront
are problems specific to women, or problems that occur more often for women
than for men, so too are women's special advantages in seeking office sex-
related.

What are the unique strengths that women bring to electoral politics?
Women's greatest strengths lie with themselves, their organizations, and
their institutions. The alternative to waiting for men and male institu-
tions to do more to recruit, support, and encourage women candidates is
for women themselves to mobilize to bring more women into elective office.

Our research indicated that many women officeholders and women's or-
ganizations perceive a special responsibility for supporting other women.
A majority of women legislators claim that they actively recruit women
when hiring staff, that they actively encourage individual women to become
involved in politics, and that they speak to various groups of women in
order to urge them to participate in politics. Moreover, many of the women
officeholders in our study were helped by other women. Some have had women
mentors, and many have gained valuable experience by working in the cam-
paigns of other women candidates. Many women officeholders in our study
are members of the League of Women Voters and other women's organizations,
and they often have learned leadership skills and acquired political knowl-
edge through involvement with these organizations. Some officeholders were
encouraged to run and supported in their bids for office by women's groups.

Clearly, political women and women's groups have been supporting other
political women for some time. The idea of women supporting women is not
a new one. Nevertheless, past efforts of women on behalf of women have
been limited in scale, constrained by lack of resources, and lacking any
central coordination.

Women's efforts to bring more women into elective office should be
targeted at two different groups--politically uninvolved women and poli-
tically active women. Programs aimed at politically uninvolved women would
attempt to stimulate their interest and participation in politics; even-
tually some of these women would be likely to seek elective office. Pro-
grams targeted at politically active women would attempt to motivate them
to run for office or for higher office in the immediate future. Women's
organizations and women who hold elective office can play central roles in
efforts aimed at both groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOCUSED ON WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Women's organizations and women's institutions such as women's col-
leges can help to motivate larger numbers of women to become active in
politics by sponsoring educational programs with a practical political
focus. When asked for recommendations about how to bring more women into

elective office, women officeholders in our study frequently suggested education and educational programs as tools. Practical educational programs could be targeted at occupational associations (e.g., nurses, lawyers, teachers, or office workers), women's organizations that lack an explicitly political focus (e.g., women's church groups and social clubs), adult or college-aged students, or community women. These programs could take a variety of forms and serve a variety of goals. They could be inspirational, attempting to expose women to political role models. They could be designed to develop women's assertiveness, public speaking skills, and/or political self-confidence. They could be aimed at demystifying the political process and informing women how to get involved in their political parties or how to seek political appointments to local boards and commissions.

Women's organizations and institutions also could get more women involved in politics through grass-roots efforts to organize women around public policy issues that affect their lives. The issues of most pressing concern at the grass-roots level vary from community to community. In one community education may be a mobilizing issue; in another community rent control or environmental quality or development may be the catalyst for action. Many women holding office today first became interested and involved in politics because of a concern with an issue that directly affected their lives or the lives of their family members. Women officeholders in our study often report that their concern with one or two public policy issues was one of the critical factors leading them to run for office.

Women's organizations also can play a critical role in encouraging women already active in political organizations, political parties, or their communities to take the next step and run for office. Because the political parties as the traditional mechanisms for candidate recruitment have not sought out and encouraged large numbers of women to run for winnable seats, an alternative recruitment mechanism is needed. Few women run for office unless they are urged to do so by others. However, women presently receive encouragement on a very haphazard basis. No systematic, large-scale, coordinated effort exists anywhere in the country to identify winnable races and to find and recruit qualified women to run in those races. Such an effort to recruit and run women where they can win, if adequately staffed and financed, could have an immediate and noticeable impact on the numbers of women serving in elective office in the targeted area-- whether it be a state, a region, or the entire country. Such an effort might be spearheaded by a single women's organization or by a coalition of women's organizations.

While a systematic identification and recruitment effort would have some impact on the numbers of women serving in elected office, the impact would be greatly enhanced if the recruitment effort were backed by a full-scale candidate support operation. Many women do not run for office because

they fear that they will not have available the resources--money, people, and time--necessary to run a viable campaign. Other women do run, but they lose because they lack sufficient resources. A fully developed candidate support operation could help to supply women candidates with staff and workers and could assist candidates with a major problem--money--by helping them raise funds from political action committees and from individuals. It could refer candidates to reputable professionals and consultants who could provide technical assistance for designing campaign materials, conducting polls, and making media buys. Also, a candidate support operation could help maximize the time a woman has available for campaigning by providing assistance with family and personal responsibilities. Freeing a woman candidate from mundane chores such as grocery shopping, laundry, picking up children after school, and cooking meals would allow her to devote much more time to her campaign. Such support also might lead to more candidacies among women who have young children or who have husbands with traditional sex-role expectations.

Clearly, a candidate recruitment and support operation of any magnitude would be both an ambitious and expensive undertaking, even if limited to a small geographic area. However, such an operation represents the best hope for bringing about the largest increase in the number of women elected officials in the shortest period of time. While less dramatic in impact, any serious effort by women's organizations or other groups to provide women running in winnable races with needed campaign resources also is likely to have an effect on the numbers of women elected to office.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOCUSED ON ELECTED WOMEN

Women elected officials also can be mobilized to help bring more women into elective office. They can be useful both in reaching out to politically inactive women and in helping active women to seek elective office.

Because of their visibility and experience, elected women can be important role models and mentors. They can provide inspiration to politically inactive women by talking with them individually or in groups about their experiences as candidates and officeholders. Elected women can help other women gain valuable experience by hiring them as staff members, appointing them to boards and commissions, and giving them positions of responsibility in their campaigns. Women elected officials can encourage politically active women to run for office. They can provide not only moral support but also contacts with influential political figures and advice based on experience.

Although many women officials care about helping other women and do so when they have an opportunity, elected women as a group could be utilized more effectively for this purpose. Some elected women need to be

reminded of how valuable they can be as role models and mentors for other women. Others are looking for suggestions about the ways they can be of greatest assistance. The efforts of individual elected women as well as associations of elected women to help other women need to be encouraged, supported, organized, and coordinated so that they have maximum impact.

CONCLUSION

Several efforts consistent with the general recommendations outlined above are underway throughout the country. Several women's colleges--members of the Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN)--have developed programs to educate women about participation in public life. The National Organization for Women (NOW) and the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) have recently announced new efforts to identify and recruit women candidates. Political action committees have been established at the national level and in some states to provide funds to women candidates.[2] Women officeholders in several states have organized associations of women public officials with goals of bringing more women into government and supporting and promoting the political aspirations of their members. These and other similar efforts are steps in the right direction, although their collective impact has not yet been sufficient to lead to equal representation in office for women and men. These efforts should be built upon and expanded, and major new efforts should be initiated to supplement the old.

Only when women and other underrepresented groups become equal players in the game of politics will our democratic system approach the ideal of a government that is truly representative and reflective of the population it serves. Only when female elected officials are as numerous as male elected officials will our government be making full use of America's talent, creativity, and intellect. And only when women are as likely as men to hold elective office will we have public policy that reflects women's as well as men's values and experiences.

*Women who run for and win election to public office tend to share a
set of demographic characteristics. Entry into elective office ap-
pears to be easier for:*

- *women between the ages of 40 and 59*
- *women who have attended college*
- *women who have professional or managerial occupations*
- *women who are not currently married or are married to
  spouses who are supportive of their officeholding
  activities*
- *women who do not have young children*

We begin our examination of women's routes to public office with a brief
review of the demographic and family characteristics of women and men in
elected public office. Although elected officials differ from most mem-
bers of the American population in important respects, they are demographi-
cally diverse.[1] In this chapter, we highlight the diversity and the simi-
larity in the backgrounds of women who hold public office and compare their
backgrounds with those of men who hold public office. In order to detect
any developing trends, we compare our current findings with findings from
our 1977 study of women officeholders whenever possible.

NEWCOMERS

Throughout this and subsequent chapters, we examine patterns for "new-
comers" to elective office as well as for all officeholders. Newcomers are
those officials holding an elected office for the first time and serving in
their first term in that office. An examination of newcomers allows us to
assess whether routes to elective office have changed for the women who
have entered elective positions most recently.

Except for mayors and local council members, larger proportions of
women than men in our study are newcomers (Table 1.1). About one-fifth of
women state senators, one-fourth of state representatives, and one-third
of county commissioners, compared with much smaller proportions of their
male counterparts, are recent entrants to elective office.

TABLE 1.1: AT STATE AND COUNTY LEVELS, WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO BE "NEWCOMERS" TO ELECTIVE OFFICE[a]

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Serving first term in first elective office	20.5	7.4	24.0	14.6	32.7	20.8	17.0	22.0	35.1	34.4
Total[b]	(73)	(68)	(445)	(199)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

[a]Newcomers are defined as those officeholders who are serving in their first terms in their first elective offices.

[b]In this and all subsequent tables, the numbers in parentheses refer to the number of respondents on which proportions are based.

AGE

Previous research has generally found women officeholders to be older than male officeholders.[2] In contrast, Table 1.2 indicates that the median ages of women and men in elective offices in 1981 are very similar, with neither sex having an older median age across all offices.[3] The median ages of women and men do not differ by more than three years at any level of office. The difference in findings between this study and earlier research may reflect a change that has taken place over time. Alternatively, differences in conclusions may be the result of differences in the levels of office and numbers of officeholders sampled.

Although the median ages of women and men do not differ greatly at any level of office, women are more concentrated between the ages of forty and fifty-nine than are men. Except for county commissioners, fewer women than men are younger than forty years old. This finding suggests that women more often wait until after the early years of childrearing to run for office. Similarly, with the exception of state senators and local council members, fewer women than men are sixty years old or older. This difference is primarily due to men's longer tenure in office; large majorities of female and male officeholders who are sixty years old or older are beyond their first term.[4]

Women serving in public office are somewhat older than were those surveyed in 1977. Between the years 1977 and 1981, the median age of women officeholders increased by three years among state senators and county commissioners and by two years among state representatives and local council members.[5] Women mayors are an exception to this pattern; their median age actually declined by one year between 1977 and 1981.

TABLE 1.2: WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN MEN ARE CONCENTRATED BETWEEN THE AGES OF 40 AND 59

Age[a]	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Under 30 years old	4.3	0.0	6.0	8.1	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	3.3
30-39 years old	10.1	20.9	15.8	22.3	16.2	14.9	15.2	17.0	19.6	22.5
40-49 years old	29.0	26.9	31.9	19.8	29.3	23.8	28.3	23.0	28.4	28.5
50-59 years old	34.8	35.8	32.1	26.9	31.3	25.7	39.4	25.0	30.4	29.1
60 years old or older	21.7	16.4	14.2	22.8	21.2	34.7	15.2	34.0	19.6	16.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(69)	(67)	(430)	(197)	(99)	(101)	(99)	(100)	(148)	(151)
Median age	51	50	49	49	51	54	51	53	49	47

NOTE: In this and all subsequent tables, percentages may not add precisely to 100 because of rounding.
[a]Reflects the age of officeholders at the beginning of 1981.

TABLE 1.3: MOST WOMEN WHO ARE NEWCOMERS TO ELECTIVE OFFICE ARE MIDDLE-AGED

Age[a]	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Under 30 years old	10.7	21.4	3.1	0.0	5.9	0.0	3.8	5.8
30-39 years old	19.4	42.9	31.3	23.8	17.6	31.8	30.8	30.8
40-49 years old	32.0	14.3	15.6	23.8	17.6	13.6	28.8	23.1
50-59 years old	29.1	10.7	37.5	23.8	47.1	18.2	23.1	26.9
60 years old or older	8.7	10.7	12.5	28.6	11.8	36.4	13.5	13.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(103)	(28)	(32)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(52)	(52)
Median age	46	32	48	52	51	51	43	45

NOTE: In this and all subsequent tables that examine newcomers, state senators are excluded because the number of newcomers (15 women and 5 men) is too small to permit meaningful analysis.
[a]Reflects the age of officeholders at the beginning of 1981.

The older median age of women officeholders in 1981 compared to 1977 may seem surprising in light of the common perception that increasing numbers of younger women are running for office. However, the older median age of women officeholders probably stems in large part from their increasing seniority as public officeholders, not from an increase in their age at entry into office. In fact, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, notably fewer women in 1981 than in 1977 were serving in their first terms in office. Many of the same women who were serving in 1977 were still serving in 1981; these women contributed to the increase in the median age over this four-year period.

Except for mayors, newcomer women are younger than women officeholders overall at every level of office (Table 1.3). About one-third of female newcomers to state houses, county commissions, and local councils and almost one-fourth of newly elected women mayors are under the age of forty. Moreover, except for state representatives, the median age of female newcomers is the same as or lower than that of male newcomers. Nevertheless, most newcomers among women are middle-aged. Majorities of newcomer women at every level of office are between the ages of forty and fifty-nine.

RACE

As was true in our 1977 survey, officeholders in this survey are overwhelmingly Caucasian.[6] Only about one-twentieth or fewer officials across all offices are members of minority groups (Table 1.4). Except for mayors, more female than male officials are minority group members, but the differences in minority representation among female and male officeholders are slight. Overall, minorities have made slightly greater inroads in state legislatures than in local offices.

TABLE 1.4: FEW WOMEN OR MEN ARE MEMBERS OF MINORITY GROUPS

Race	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Caucasian	94.4	95.5	93.4	95.0	94.1	99.0	98.0	95.0	96.0	96.7
Black	2.8	4.5	4.3	2.5	2.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.3	2.0
Hispanic	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.5	2.0	0.0	2.0	1.0	0.7	0.7
Asian	1.4	0.0	0.9	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Native American	1.4	0.0	0.5	0.5	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	0.7
Other	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(71)	(67)	(441)	(200)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(150)	(151)

TABLE 1.5: FEW NEWCOMER WOMEN OR MEN ARE MEMBERS OF MINORITY GROUPS

Race	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Caucasian	94.3	93.1	97.0	95.2	100.0	86.4	94.3	100.0
Black	1.9	0.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hispanic	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	1.9	0.0
Asian	2.8	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Native American	0.9	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	3.8	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(106)	(29)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

Newcomers to elective office also are predominantly Caucasian (Table 1.5). Only among local council members are newcomer women more likely than newcomer men to be members of minority groups.

EDUCATION

Elected officials in this survey, like those in our 1977 study, are well educated (Table 1.6).[7] Large majorities of women and men holding office at all levels have some schooling beyond high school, although only among state legislators are a majority college graduates.

TABLE 1.6: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE ATTENDED COLLEGE

Education	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Some or no high school	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.5	1.0	5.9	2.0	8.0	3.3	9.3
High school graduate	5.6	17.9	8.2	15.0	25.7	35.6	33.0	25.0	36.4	35.8
Some college	25.0	11.9	28.9	23.0	37.6	19.8	37.0	29.0	23.2	19.9
College graduate	38.9	26.9	37.1	29.0	21.8	25.7	16.0	22.0	24.5	23.2
Advanced degree[a]	30.6	43.3	25.1	31.5	13.9	12.9	12.0	16.0	12.6	11.9
M.A.	20.8	16.4	15.5	11.5						
J.D.	6.9	20.9	6.8	17.0						
Ph.D.	2.8	6.0	2.1	2.5						
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(72)	(67)	(439)	(200)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

[a]County and local officeholders were not asked to specify the nature of their advanced degrees.

TABLE 1.7: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES, NEWCOMER WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN NEWCOMER MEN TO HAVE
ADVANCED DEGREES

Education	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Some or no high school	1.9	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	9.1	0.0	1.9
High school graduate	3.8	6.9	21.2	23.8	23.5	22.7	39.6	30.8
Some college	36.2	24.1	39.4	19.0	35.3	31.8	28.3	19.2
College graduate	38.1	31.0	24.2	33.3	11.8	13.6	24.5	32.7
Advanced degree[a]	20.0	37.9	15.2	9.5	29.4	22.7	7.5	15.4
M.A.	11.4	20.7						
J.D.	7.6	10.3						
Ph.D.	1.0	6.9						
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(105)	(29)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

[a]County and local officeholders were not asked to specify the nature of their advanced degrees.

Overall, the educational attainment of women does not differ greatly
from that of men. Nevertheless, women are somewhat more likely than men
to have attended college for at least a short time. At county and local
levels, women are less likely than men to have dropped out of high school.
At county and state levels, women less often than men ended their education
upon graduation from high school.

While female officeholders at county and local levels are similar to
their male counterparts in the proportions who have advanced degrees, fe-
male state legislators lag behind male legislators in this respect. Al-
though female legislators are slightly more likely than their male col-
leagues to have M.A.s, they are far less likely to have law degrees. Only
about one of every twenty female legislators, compared with almost one of
every five male legislators, have been trained as lawyers.

Except for mayors, newcomer women are not notably better educated
than women officeholders generally (Table 1.7). Similar to the pattern
for all state legislators, women representatives newly elected to office
are less likely than their male counterparts to have advanced degrees,
although the gap in the proportions of newcomer women and men with law
degrees is not as great.

OCCUPATION

In order to determine the nature of women's occupations and to compare

women's work history with men's, we asked officeholders about their primary occupation. Similar to CAWP's 1977 findings, the majority of officeholders report current or past employment in professional/technical or managerial/ administrative occupations (Table 1.8).[8] One-half to three-fourths of both female and male officeholders list these occupations. This finding sug- gests both that officeholders are concentrated in the upper half of the socioeconomic scale, and that women and men in public office are similar in their socioeconomic status.

Despite the fact that most officeholders of both sexes have white collar jobs, the occupations of women and men differ. Perhaps in large part because of unequal job opportunities and sex-typing of occupations, women in public office are more likely than their male colleagues to have professional/technical occupations but less likely to have managerial/ad- ministrative occupations. Another apparent example of job segregation by sex is the large number of female officeholders who are in clerical/secre- tarial occupations. About one-fourth of female county and local elected public officials, compared with almost no men, report clerical or secre- tarial work as their primary occupation. Also indicative of sex-related patterns of work is the fact that, except for service as elected officials, women are less likely than men to have been in the paid labor force.[9]

TABLE 1.8: WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN MEN HAVE PROFESSIONAL/TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS AND LESS OFTEN HAVE MANAGERIAL/ADMINISTRATIVE OCCUPATIONS

Occupation[a]	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Professional/technical	50.0	49.3	45.8	35.2	33.7	16.8	31.6	19.2	34.3	21.9
Manager/administrator	13.9	29.9	17.7	25.5	27.6	41.1	19.4	44.4	20.3	33.6
Sales worker	5.6	3.0	5.2	12.2	5.1	8.4	8.2	17.2	7.7	8.2
Clerical worker/secretary	5.6	0.0	10.4	1.5	23.5	1.1	27.6	1.0	23.1	4.1
Craftsperson	0.0	1.5	0.5	1.5	1.0	3.2	5.1	4.0	4.9	10.3
Operative	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	3.2	2.0	3.0	2.8	12.3
Laborer	0.0	3.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4
Farmer	1.4	7.5	1.6	10.7	3.1	20.0	1.0	8.1	1.4	7.5
Service worker	0.0	1.5	1.1	1.5	2.0	3.2	2.0	3.0	2.1	0.7
No occupation outside the home	23.6	3.0	17.7	5.1	4.1	1.1	3.1	0.0	3.5	0.0
Retired, occupation not listed	0.0	1.5	0.0	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(72)	(67)	(441)	(196)	(98)	(95)	(98)	(99)	(143)	(146)

[a]Officeholders who have ever worked outside the home aside from holding office were asked to list current or past primary occupation. Occupations are classified using census categories.

TABLE 1.9: WOMEN AND MEN TEND TO CLUSTER IN DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS ACCORDING TO SEX

Selected Occupations	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Nurse or other health worker[a]	4.2	0.0	4.1	0.0	6.1	0.0	2.0	0.0	4.2	0.0
Social worker	1.4	0.0	1.6	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Elementary or secondary school teacher[b]	20.8	9.0	20.0	6.1	19.4	4.2	13.3	4.0	16.8	1.4
College professor	2.8	3.0	2.5	3.1	2.0	2.1	1.0	2.0	0.7	1.4
Lawyer	5.6	19.4	6.3	14.8	1.0	4.2	1.0	6.1	1.4	3.4
Physician or dentist	1.4	7.5	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.7	0.7
Public administrator	0.0	0.0	1.6	1.0	3.1	1.1	2.0	4.0	3.5	2.1
Editor or reporter	4.2	1.5	1.1	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.8	0.0
Real estate or insurance sales worker	4.2	3.0	3.6	10.2	4.1	4.2	0.0	7.1	5.6	3.4
Total	(72)	(67)	(441)	(196)	(98)	(95)	(98)	(99)	(143)	(146)

[a]Excludes physicians.

[b]Includes all teachers who are not teaching in colleges or universities.

An examination of selected occupations further indicates that office-holders tend to cluster in different occupations according to sex (Table 1.9). The image of politician as lawyer is a more accurate portrayal of male officeholders than female officeholders. Women, especially among state legislators, are far less likely than men to be attorneys; only about one of every twenty female state legislators, compared with about one of at least every seven male state legislators, identify themselves as lawyers. Consistent with sex-typing of occupations in society at large, women are much more likely than men to be school teachers, with up to one-fifth of women state legislators and county commissioners reporting that elementary, secondary, or other non-college teaching is or was their primary occupation. These proportions are similar to the proportions of elected women in 1977 who said they were school teachers.[10] In another example of job segregation by sex, some women, but almost no men, are nurses, other health workers (excluding physicians), or social workers by occupation.

Newcomers appear to have occupational backgrounds similar to those of all officeholders, with newcomers concentrated in professional/technical and managerial/administrative occupations (Table 1.10). Like officeholders generally, newcomer women more often than newcomer men have professional/technical occupations but less often have managerial/administrative occupations; the only exception to this pattern is among newcomer state representatives.

TABLE 1.10: MORE NEWCOMER WOMEN THAN NEWCOMER MEN HAVE PROFESSIONAL/TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS

Occupation[a]	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Professional/technical	48.6	44.8	39.4	21.1	50.0	23.8	31.4	27.5
Manager/administrator	24.8	17.2	21.2	31.6	18.8	38.1	27.5	41.2
Sales worker	3.8	20.7	6.1	0.0	0.0	4.8	9.8	7.8
Clerical worker/secretary	7.6	0.0	30.3	5.3	25.0	4.8	19.6	5.9
Craftsperson	1.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	5.9	2.0
Operative	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	7.8
Laborer	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Farmer	1.0	6.9	3.0	21.1	6.3	14.3	0.0	3.9
Service worker	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.8	0.0	9.5	0.0	2.0
No occupation outside the home	13.3	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.9	0.0
Retired, occupation not listed	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(105)	(29)	(33)	(19)	(16)	(21)	(51)	(51)

[a]Officeholders who have ever worked outside the home aside from holding office were asked to list current or past primary occupation. Occupations are classified using census categories.

TABLE 1.11: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES, SIMILAR PROPORTIONS OF NEWCOMER WOMEN AND MEN ARE LAWYERS

Selected Occupations	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Nurse or other health worker[a]	5.7	0.0	3.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	3.9	0.0
Social worker	1.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Elementary or secondary school teacher[b]	23.8	3.4	18.2	0.0	37.5	9.5	15.7	2.0
College professor	1.0	3.4	6.1	0.0	0.0	4.8	2.0	2.0
Lawyer	8.6	10.3	3.0	10.5	0.0	4.8	2.0	2.0
Physician or dentist	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Public administrator	3.8	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.9	0.0
Editor or reporter	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Real estate or insurance sales worker	2.9	20.7	3.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	7.8	5.9
Total	(105)	(29)	(33)	(19)	(16)	(21)	(51)	(51)

[a]Excludes physicians.

[b]Includes all teachers who are not teaching in colleges or universities.

~ ~   Like women officeholders overall, a substantial proportion of new-
comer women are school teachers by occupation (Table 1.11). However, per-
haps indicating a lessening of occupational segregation by sex among of-
ficeholders, the proportions of newly elected female and male state repre-
sentatives who are lawyers are almost equal, with more newcomer women and
fewer newcomer men working as lawyers than among officeholders overall.
Nonetheless, almost no newcomer men are in traditionally female occupa-
tions; with the exception of some men who are school teachers, only women
among newcomers report occupations in the areas of nursing and health care,
social work, and elementary and secondary education.[11]

Women and men in public office differ in the proportions who are
holding jobs outside the home in addition to serving in public office
(Table 1.12).[12] Fewer women than men are working outside the home while
holding office, although the gap between women and men in the proportion
working is larger among state legislators than among county and local of-
ficeholders. The proportion of women who are employed outside the home
while serving in office has remained fairly constant since 1977.[13]

Many factors may explain why women are less likely than men to be em-
ployed outside the home at the same time as they are holding an elected
office. The traditionally female occupations in which many female office-
holders have been employed--such as school teaching, nursing, and clerical
work--may preclude the option of working while holding office, whereas
traditionally male occupations such as law and business may allow men the
flexibility and autonomy to rearrange work schedules to accommodate their
duties as elected officials. As the traditional primary wage-earners,
men in office may feel greater need to continue to work, while married

TABLE 1.12: FEWER WOMEN THAN MEN ARE EMPLOYED OUTSIDE THE HOME IN ADDITION TO HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women X	Men X	Women X	Men X	Women X	Men X	Women X	Men X	Women X	Men X
Employed in addition to holding office[a]	33.8	79.4	27.5	73.1	35.6	66.3	57.0	73.0	55.6	84.8
Total	(71)	(68)	(440)	(197)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

[a]Legislators were asked the question slightly differently than were county and local officeholders.
Legislators were asked to name their primary occupation and were then asked whether, aside from holding
office, they were presently employed in this occupation. Local and county officeholders were asked
whether, aside from holding office, they were presently employed.

TABLE 1.13: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, NEWCOMER WOMEN LESS OFTEN THAN NEWCOMER MEN ARE EMPLOYED OUTSIDE THE
HOME IN ADDITION TO HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE

	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Employed in addition to holding office[a]	40.4	86.2	42.4	47.6	76.5	63.6	64.2	82.7
Total	(104)	(29)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

[a]See note for Table 1.12.

women in particular may feel less need to continue employment in addition
to officeholding. Since many women continue to bear the primary responsi-
bility for labor done inside the home, their work inside the home when
combined with officeholding responsibilities may not leave time for out-
side employment. Finally, although almost all female officeholders report
having worked outside the home, many may have stopped working outside the
home several years prior to running for office. Despite all these factors,
however, substantial proportions of female officeholders, especially at
the local level, appear to maintain jobs while serving in public office.

Table 1.13 shows that at every level of office, newcomer women are
more likely than all women in public office to report that they are em-
ployed outside the home in addition to serving in office. This fact is
not simply a consequence of being new to office, since in most cases female
and male newcomers differ less in the proportions employed than do female
and male officeholders generally. Rather, this finding probably reflects
the societal trend toward increased participation of women in the work
force.

FAMILY SITUATIONS

Political officeholding is more likely to come into conflict with
family responsibilities for women than for men. Despite recent changes
in relationships between the sexes, the responsibilities for raising chil-
dren and maintaining households still fall disproportionately on women.

Because of the conflict between the demands of elective officeholding
and the disproportionate burden for family responsibilities that most
married women bear, one might expect fewer female elected officials than
male officials to be currently married. Similarly, one might expect those
women who serve in public office to be more likely than their male coun-
terparts to have spouses who are supportive of their political activities.

TABLE 1.14: WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN MEN ARE WIDOWED OR DIVORCED/SEPARATED

Marital Status	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Currently married	68.1	89.4	72.1	84.0	69.3	88.1	76.0	93.0	76.8	95.4
Widowed	15.3	0.0	8.2	3.0	21.8	5.0	11.0	2.0	14.6	0.7
Divorced/separated	13.9	7.6	11.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	7.0	2.0	4.6	2.6
Single, never married	2.8	3.0	8.7	9.0	5.0	4.0	6.0	3.0	4.0	1.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(72)	(66)	(437)	(200)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

TABLE 1.15: AT COUNTY AND LOCAL LEVELS, NEWCOMER WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN NEWCOMER MEN TO BE
CURRENTLY MARRIED AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE WIDOWED

Marital Status	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Currently married	76.7	75.9	60.6	85.7	70.6	86.4	84.9	96.2
Widowed	3.9	0.0	24.2	0.0	23.5	4.5	7.5	0.0
Divorced/separated	7.8	6.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	3.8	3.8
Single, never married	11.7	17.2	15.2	14.3	5.9	0.0	3.8	0.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(103)	(29)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

Because running for office has been an activity outside the realm of "appropriate" behavior for women, family approval may be far more important to women's decisions to run for office than it is to men's. Finally, one might expect female elected officials to have proportionately fewer and older children than male officials. Political activity may be more manageable for women who are free from the constraints of rearing young children.

Marital Status

Consistent with our findings for 1977 officeholders, a large majority of women serving in elective offices are currently married (Table 1.14).[14] However, women officeholders at every level of office are notably less likely to be currently married than are their male counterparts. Women are especially more likely than men to be widowed; they also are more likely to be divorced or separated.

Compared with our 1977 figures, the proportions of women at state and county levels of office who are married have declined over the past few years.[15] Consistent with our finding that the median age of women officeholders increased between 1977 and 1981, the proportion of women officeholders who are widowed has increased.

Except for state representatives, newcomer women are less likely than all women officeholders to be currently married (Table 1.15). Similarly, with the exception of state representatives, fewer newcomer women than newcomer men are married. However, differences in the proportions of female and male newcomers who are currently married are due almost entirely to the substantially greater proportions of newcomer women who are widows.

Support From Spouse

Currently married officeholders were asked whether their spouses are very supportive, somewhat supportive, indifferent, or somewhat resistant to

TABLE 1.16: MORE WOMEN THAN MEN HAVE SPOUSES WHO ARE VERY SUPPORTIVE OF THEIR OFFICEHOLDING

| Spouse's Attitude | State Senate | | State House | | County Commission | | Mayoralty | | Local Council | |
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very supportive	87.8	62.7	82.7	58.2	79.7	65.9	71.1	69.9	73.3	57.6
Somewhat supportive	8.2	23.7	14.3	27.9	14.5	25.0	25.0	18.3	19.0	31.3
Indifferent	2.0	5.1	1.0	5.5	1.4	3.4	2.6	7.5	5.2	5.6
Somewhat resistant	2.0	8.5	2.0	8.5	4.3	5.7	1.3	4.3	2.6	5.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(49)	(59)	(307)	(165)	(69)	(88)	(76)	(93)	(116)	(144)

TABLE 1.17: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, MORE NEWCOMER WOMEN THAN NEWCOMER MEN HAVE SPOUSES WHO ARE VERY SUPPORTIVE OF THEIR OFFICEHOLDING

| Spouse's Attitude | State House | | County Commission | | Mayoralty | | Local Council | |
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very supportive	77.3	68.2	89.5	66.7	66.7	84.2	71.1	52.0
Somewhat supportive	16.0	22.7	5.3	33.3	33.3	5.3	15.6	30.0
Indifferent	1.3	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.5	8.9	10.0
Somewhat resistant	5.3	4.5	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	8.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(75)	(22)	(19)	(18)	(12)	(19)	(45)	(50)

their holding public office. A majority of both women and men report that
their spouses are very supportive. However, except for mayors, the majori-
ties are much larger among women than among men (Table 1.16). Few office-
holders of either sex, but fewer women than men, say that their spouses are
indifferent or somewhat resistant.

Among newcomers, the patterns are similar. Majorities of newcomers
report very supportive spouses (Table 1.17). However, except for mayors,
larger proportions of newcomer women than newcomer men at every level of
office have spouses who are very supportive.

Evaluation of Importance of Spousal Support

Officeholders were asked to evaluate the importance of the support of
their spouses in their decisions to run for office. Large majorities of
state legislators and near or slight majorities of county and local offi-
cials report that spousal support was very important (Table 1.18). Only
among county commissioners do larger proportions of women than men say
that the approval of their spouses was very important. At every level of
office, more women than men say that spousal support either was not im-
portant or not applicable in their cases. The fact that larger proportions
of women evaluate spousal support as unimportant is due primarily to the
fact that fewer women than men are currently married.

Except for mayors, newcomer women are about equally as likely as all
women officeholders to evaluate spousal support as very important (Table
1.19).

TABLE 1.18: LARGE MAJORITIES OF WOMEN AND MEN EVALUATE SPOUSAL SUPPORT AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS
TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Support of Spouse[a]	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	69.4	69.1	65.9	69.4	57.4	49.5	53.0	52.0	44.6	48.7
Somewhat important[b]	9.7	17.6	11.1	14.5	6.9	24.8	12.0	25.5	20.3	31.3
Not important/not applicable[c]	20.8	13.2	23.1	16.1	35.6	25.7	35.0	22.4	35.1	20.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(72)	(68)	(425)	(193)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(98)	(148)	(150)

[a]Legislators were asked to evaluate the importance of the approval of their spouses, while county and
local officeholders were asked to evaluate the importance of the support of their spouses.

[b]Includes "slightly important" responses for local and county officeholders.

[c]The category "not applicable" includes officeholders who are not currently married.

TABLE 1.19: LARGE MAJORITIES OF NEWCOMER WOMEN AND NEWCOMER MEN EVALUATE SPOUSAL SUPPORT AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Support of Spouse[a]	State House Women %	State House Men %	County Commission Women %	County Commission Men %	Mayoralty Women %	Mayoralty Men %	Local Council Women %	Local Council Men %
Very important	65.0	60.7	51.5	66.7	41.2	54.5	44.2	38.5
Somewhat important[b]	9.7	10.7	9.1	14.3	17.6	22.7	25.0	34.6
Not important/not applicable[c]	25.2	28.6	39.4	19.0	41.2	22.7	30.8	26.9
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(103)	(28)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(52)	(52)

[a] Legislators were asked to evaluate the importance of the approval of their spouses, while county and local officeholders were asked to evaluate the importance of the support of their spouses.

[b] Includes "slightly important" responses for local and county officeholders.

[c] The category "not applicable" includes officeholders who are not currently married.

Children

Most women officeholders are mothers, and women officeholders are about as likely as their male counterparts to have children (Table 1.20). However, except for county commissioners, women officeholders are notably less likely than male officeholders to have young children. Only one-sixth or fewer women at every level of office have a child under twelve years old. Majorities of women at every level of office either have no children or have grown children who are eighteen years old or older.[16] Newcomer women are fairly similar to all women officeholders in the proportions who have

TABLE 1.20: EXCEPT FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, WOMEN LESS OFTEN THAN MEN HAVE CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 12

Age of Youngest Child	State Senate Women %	State Senate Men %	State House Women %	State House Men %	County Commission Women %	County Commission Men %	Mayoralty Women %	Mayoralty Men %	Local Council Women %	Local Council Men %
Under 6 years old	2.9	9.1	3.7	11.9	2.0	3.0	1.0	9.0	5.3	16.6
6-11 years old	11.4	19.7	7.5	10.9	12.9	7.9	16.0	12.0	11.3	15.9
12-17 years old	7.1	25.8	22.1	17.1	18.8	22.8	20.0	20.0	25.8	21.2
18 years old or older	68.6	36.4	50.3	44.6	58.4	53.5	52.0	50.0	51.0	37.7
No children	10.0	9.1	16.3	15.5	7.9	12.9	11.0	9.0	6.6	8.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(70)	(66)	(429)	(193)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

TABLE 1.21: EXCEPT FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, NEWCOMER WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN NEWCOMER MEN TO HAVE YOUNG CHILDREN

Age of Youngest Child	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Under 6 years old	3.9	14.3	6.1	4.8	0.0	18.2	11.3	26.9
6-11 years old	4.9	10.7	12.1	9.5	23.5	9.1	11.3	11.5
12-17 years old	31.4	21.4	15.2	14.3	11.8	18.2	30.2	19.2
18 years old or older	41.2	21.4	51.5	57.1	52.9	40.9	41.5	36.5
No children	18.6	32.1	15.2	14.3	11.8	13.6	5.7	5.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(102)	(28)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

children and in the proportions who have young children, although newcomer women in county and local offices are slightly more likely than all women in those offices to have children under age twelve (Table 1.21).

Evaluation of Importance of Grown Children

Officeholders were asked to evaluate the importance of the following factor in their decisions to run for their current offices: "My children being old enough for me to feel comfortable not being at home as much." Women are much more likely than men to view this factor as having been very important in their decisions to run for office (Table 1.22). One-half

TABLE 1.22: WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN MEN REPORT THAT THE AGE OF THEIR CHILDREN WAS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Children Being Old Enough[a]	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	69.4	35.8	57.3	37.7	66.3	28.0	61.0	23.2	49.3	16.0
Somewhat important	12.5	26.9	15.7	23.6	11.9	21.0	12.0	30.3	19.3	22.7
Not important/not applicable[b]	18.1	37.3	27.0	38.7	21.8	51.0	27.0	46.5	31.3	61.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(72)	(67)	(426)	(191)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(99)	(150)	(150)

[a]The precise wording of the factor which officeholders were asked to evaluate is as follows: "My children being old enough for me to feel comfortable not being at home as much."

[b]The category "not applicable" includes officeholders who do not have children.

TABLE 1.23: NEWCOMER WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN NEWCOMER MEN REPORT THAT THE AGE OF THEIR CHILDREN WAS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Children Being Old Enough[a]	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	60.2	31.0	72.7	33.3	64.7	27.3	50.0	15.4
Somewhat important	7.8	6.9	9.1	28.6	23.5	50.0	28.8	53.8
Not important/not applicable[b]	32.0	62.1	18.2	38.1	11.8	22.7	21.2	30.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(103)	(29)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(52)	(52)

[a]The precise wording of the factor which officeholders were asked to evaluate is as follows: "My children being old enough for me to feel comfortable not being at home as much."

[b]The category "not applicable" includes officeholders who do not have children.

to two-thirds of female officeholders, compared with two-fifths or fewer male officeholders, report that having grown children had a very important effect on their decisions. Newcomer women are very similar to all women in claiming that the age of their children was a very important factor in their decisions to seek office (Table 1.23). Newcomer women, like their female counterparts among all officeholders, are far more likely than newcomer men to evaluate this factor as very important.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

While women who serve in elective offices are somewhat diverse, they often share a set of demographic characteristics. More often than not, they are middle-aged, Caucasian, and well educated, with professional or managerial/administrative occupations. Most women officeholders are currently married; if not married, they most often, with the exception of state representatives, are widowed. They have spouses who are very supportive of their officeholding. They usually have children, but generally do not have young children. Apparently, few women with husbands who are not fully supportive of their wives' political activity run for office. Similarly, the presence of young children seems to deter many women from seeking office.

In many respects, women officeholders resemble their male counterparts. However, women more often than men are concentrated between the ages of forty and fifty-nine. Women are more likely to have attended college. However, women are generally less likely than men to have

advanced degrees, especially law degrees. Women are less likely to be lawyers and more likely to be concentrated in the traditionally "female" professions such as nursing, social work, and elementary or secondary education. Women more often than men are widowed, divorced, or separated. Fewer women than men have young children. More women than men have spouses who are very supportive of their officeholding activities.

The demographic profile of newcomers to elective office differs very little from that of all women officeholders. The only notable difference is that newcomer women are younger than women officeholders generally. However, even most newcomers are middle-aged.

These findings suggest that the doors of entry into public office may open more readily for women with certain demographic characteristics and family situations. White women may find seeking and winning elective office easier than do women of color who must confront the additional problem of racial discrimination. Women who are well educated may have an advantage over less educated women. Women who are professionals, managers, or administrators may be more likely than women who are clerical or sales workers to have skills and financial contacts that make a bid for public office feasible. Winning and holding elective office may be easier for middle-aged women whose children are grown. Women with grown children do not have to confront questions about whether they are neglecting their children, and they may have fewer constraints upon their time. Similarly, women whose husbands are fully supportive of their political involvement may find it easier to seek and hold public office than do women whose husbands are not as supportive.

While the doors of entry to public office may open more readily for those who have these characteristics, some women without these characteristics are serving in elective office. Women of color, women who lack a college education, women who have never worked in professional or administrative positions, young women, women with young children, women whose husbands are lukewarm about their officeholding activities can, and sometimes do, hold elective office. Women officeholders show some diversity, but their profile suggests that seeking and winning election to public office is less difficult for some than for others.

*Certain types of political experience may be critical in helping many
women run for and win election to public office. The political ex-
periences which may facilitate women's entry into elective office in-
clude:*

- *previous appointive officeholding experience at any level of
  government*
- *work in political campaigns or on the staffs of elected public
  officials*
- *the guidance and assistance of mentors, who are often women*

Considerable research has documented that those who seek and hold elective
office in this country have often been active in politics.[1] Yet, previous
research has not investigated which types of political experience are most
helpful in motivating and assisting women to move into elective office and
whether these experiences are the same or different from those that are
most helpful to men. One might anticipate that women, because they are
disadvantaged in many other respects in seeking public office, might ac-
quire more and different political experiences than men before running for
office. One also might expect that women would place more emphasis on the
importance of prior experience and evaluate it more highly.

This chapter will examine the previous political experience of female
and male officeholders in light of these concerns. Prior elective and ap-
pointive officeholding, work on an officeholder's staff, campaign ex-
perience, and participation in candidate workshops will be investigated.
We also will discuss the influence of role models and mentors on office-
holders' political careers. Finally, officeholders' evaluations of the
importance of their previous political experience will be assessed.

TERM OF OFFICE

To the extent that women are new to elected public office, "freshman"
status as elected officials is one liability more women than men face. At
state, county, and municipal levels of government, women officeholders are
more likely than their male counterparts to be serving in their first
terms in their current offices (Table 2.1). The only exception to this
pattern is that female and male mayors are equally as likely to be serving
in their first terms.

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TABLE 2.1: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO BE IN THEIR FIRST TERMS IN ELECTIVE
OFFICE   - .

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Serving in first term[a]	34.7	22.1	32.1	25.8	37.6	24.8	38.0	38.4	39.3	36.2
Total	(73)	(68)	(443)	(198)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(99)	(150)	(149)

[a]Includes county commissioners, mayors, and local council members who recently left office but who
served only one term.

However, women are beginning to "catch up" with men in acquiring
seniority in elected positions. The majority of women in elected office
in 1981 have served in their positions for more than one term. About one-
third of women state legislators and almost two-fifths of women serving at
county and local levels of government are in their first terms (Table 2.1).
In contrast, our 1977 study of women officeholders found about two-fifths
of women in state legislatures and more than one-half of women in local and
county offices serving in their first terms in those offices.[2] These
changes between 1977 and 1981 reflect the fact that many of the female
officeholders who broke ground for women in politics in the 1970s have now
gained seniority.

ELECTIVE AND APPOINTIVE EXPERIENCE

Although women officeholders are more likely than their male colleagues
to be in their first terms in their current offices, they generally have as
much or more officeholding experience than men. When appointive as well as
elective positions are taken into account, the prior officeholding ex-
perience of female elected officials at most levels of government matches
or exceeds the prior officeholding experience of their male counterparts
(Table 2.2). A slightly larger proportion of female than male state legis-
lators have served in previous offices. Female and male county commis-
sioners and local council members have similar levels of past officeholding
experience. Only at the mayoral level do proportionately fewer women than
men have prior experience in public office. Compared with women office-
holders in 1977, larger proportions of women holding office in 1981 have
previous appointive or elective officeholding experience.[3]

Women and men serving in public office appear to have arrived at their
current positions through somewhat different routes. Women officeholders

are less likely than men to have climbed a ladder of successive elective positions, but as was the case in 1977, women are more likely than men to have held appointive positions before being elected to their current offices.[4]

Elective Experience

Table 2.3 shows that women elected officials generally have less elective experience than do their male counterparts. Even though almost equal proportions of women and men, with the exception of mayors, have held one previous elective office, women at most levels of office are less likely than men to have served in two or more previous elective offices. Nevertheless, at the highest level of officeholding examined in this study--the state senate--women do have as much previous elective experience as their male colleagues. Similarly, among local council members, among whom the level of past elective experience is very low, similar proportions of women and men have previous elective experience.

TABLE 2.2: AT MOST LEVELS OF OFFICE, WOMEN ARE EQUALLY OR MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE HELD PREVIOUS ELECTIVE OR APPOINTIVE OFFICES

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Held at least one other elective or appointive office	75.3	72.1	54.4	49.3	50.5	52.5	53.5	65.0	41.1	39.1
Total	(73)	(68)	(447)	(201)	(101)	(101)	(99)	(100)	(151)	(151)

TABLE 2.3: AT STATE AND COUNTY LEVELS, WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE HELD PREVIOUS ELECTIVE OFFICES

Number of Previous Elective Offices	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
None	53.4	51.5	74.7	65.7	81.2	75.2	54.0	54.0	88.7	88.1
One	38.4	39.7	18.8	19.9	15.8	17.8	43.0	36.0	10.6	11.3
Two or more	8.2	8.8	6.5	14.4	3.0	6.9	3.0	10.0	0.7	0.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(73)	(68)	(447)	(201)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

TABLE 2.4: THE MAJORITY OF WOMEN AND MEN WITH PREVIOUS ELECTIVE EXPERIENCE SERVED IN MUNICIPAL OFFICES

Level of Previous Elective Office[a]	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
State	24.7	19.1	2.2	3.5	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.7
County	9.6	10.3	5.8	6.0	2.0	4.0	1.0	4.0	3.3	0.7
Municipal	19.2	26.5	20.4	30.8	17.8	21.8	45.0	44.0	7.9	10.6
Total	(73)	(68)	(447)	(201)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

[a]For each level of office, the figures shown include those who held one or more offices at that level of government.

Among state senators, women and men differ not only in the amount but also in the kind of elective experience they have had (Table 2.4). Although about one-half of both female and male state senators have previously held at least one other elective office, a slightly larger proportion of women than men have held elective offices at the state level, usually in the state house. At the other end of the scale, female senators are somewhat less likely than their male counterparts to have held an elective municipal office. These findings suggest that women may feel more confident about running for, or may more easily be elected to, seats in the senate after having first acquired experience in the state house. In contrast, men may more readily put themselves forward as candidates and gain election to the senate without previous elective officeholding experience at the state level.

Appointive Experience

Although women are less likely than men to have held elective office, women have a great deal of experience in appointive positions. Except for mayors, women elected to state, county, and municipal offices have held more government appointments than their male colleagues (Table 2.5). Women state senators have the most appointive experience. More than one-half of female state senators, compared with about two-fifths of male state senators, have held an appointive government office. One-third of female state senators, more than twice the proportion of their male counterparts, have held two or more appointive positions. Female state representatives and county commissioners also are markedly more likely than their male counterparts to have held two or more appointive positions.

Many newcomers, who by definition have not held a previous elective office, have held appointive government offices (Table 2.6). In fact, newcomers closely resemble all officeholders not only in their amount of

TABLE 2.5: AT MOST LEVELS OF OFFICE, WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN MEN HAVE HELD APPOINTIVE POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT - .

Number of Previous Appointive Government Positions	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
None	45.2	57.4	58.4	74.1	59.4	65.3	77.8	64.0	63.6	68.9
One	20.5	27.9	20.4	13.4	18.8	18.8	16.2	21.0	23.8	21.9
Two or more	34.2	14.7	21.3	12.4	21.8	15.8	6.1	15.0	12.6	9.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(73)	(68)	(447)	(201)	(101)	(101)	(99)	(100)	(151)	(151)

TABLE 2.6: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, MORE NEWCOMER WOMEN THAN NEWCOMER MEN HAVE HELD APPOINTIVE POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT[a]

Number of Previous Appointive Government Positions	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
None	59.8	75.9	51.5	61.9	88.2	81.8	66.0	69.2
One	19.6	17.2	27.3	23.8	5.9	9.1	26.4	23.1
Two or more	20.6	6.9	21.2	14.3	5.9	9.1	7.5	7.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(107)	(29)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

[a]Newcomers are defined as those officeholders who are serving in their first terms in their first elective offices.

appointive experience but also in the differences which exist between women and men. With the exception of mayors, proportionately more female than male newcomers have held at least one appointive government office. Also, substantially more female newcomers than male newcomers in state houses and county commissions have held two or more appointive positions. These findings suggest that the pattern of appointive experience as a route of entry for women into elective office has persisted as more women have entered electoral politics.

Among state legislators, women's appointive experience also differs from men's in that the positions which women have held are at higher levels of government (Table 2.7). Women state legislators are much more likely than their male colleagues to have held state and federal appointive

TABLE 2.7: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE HELD APPOINTIVE POSITIONS IN
STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Level of Previous Appointive Government Position[a]	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Federal	11.0	1.5	2.9	1.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	4.0	1.3	0.7
State	38.4	19.1	21.3	9.5	15.8	11.9	7.1	8.0	5.3	2.6
County	6.8	7.4	10.1	8.0	21.8	18.8	5.1	11.0	6.6	6.6
Municipal	17.8	22.1	20.6	13.9	13.9	9.9	13.1	23.0	28.5	25.8
Total	(73)	(68)	(447)	(201)	(101)	(101)	(99)	(100)	(151)	(151)

[a]For each level of office, the figures shown include those who held one or more offices at that level of government.

offices. One of every ten female state senators has served in a federal appointive position compared with about one of every fifty male state senators. Among both state senators and state representatives, the proportion of women who have held appointive positions at the state level is twice that of men.

STAFF AND CAMPAIGN EXPERIENCE

Working on the staff of an elected public official or working on a candidate's campaign can provide opportunities to develop political skills, make contacts, and learn first-hand how the political world operates. These experiences may be especially valuable for women, who are more likely than men to be newcomers to politics. In some cases, staff or campaign work also may help a woman develop her own sense of competency and may motivate a subsequent decision to run for office. In order to determine how likely officeholders are to have such experiences before running for office, we asked women and men in office whether, before running for office for the first time, they had worked on the staff of an elected public official or in a political campaign. Because we were interested in whether women officeholders had been particularly helped by the experience of working for other women, we also asked about the sex of the people for whom officeholders had worked or campaigned.

Working For A Public Official

Women officeholders are more likely than their male counterparts to have worked for an elected official before running for office, although only a minority of both women and men have had such experience (Table 2.8). Nearly one-fourth of female state senators, twice the proportion of male

TABLE 2.8: EXCEPT FOR LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE WORKED ON THE STAFF OF AN ELECTED PUBLIC OFFICIAL

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Worked on the staff of an elected public official	24.6	12.1	23.5	16.0	14.9	8.9	13.0	7.0	6.0	7.3
Total	(61)	(58)	(370)	(175)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)
Worked on the staff of a woman public official	3.2	3.5	5.0	2.3	4.0	1.0	4.0	3.0	2.0	0.7
Total	(62)	(57)	(362)	(172)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

senators, have worked on the staff of an elected public official. Similarly, about one-fourth of female state representatives, compared with about one-sixth of male state representatives, have previously worked on an officeholder's staff. Fewer county and municipal officeholders than state legislators have worked as staff aides; however, women county commissioners and mayors are more likely than men in those offices to have worked for an elected public official. Only among local council members, among whom staff experience is minimal, are women less likely than men to have served previously on the staff of an elected official.

A greater proportion of women than men, though only a small proportion of officeholders in general, have worked for female public officials (Table 2.8). As an exception to this pattern, equal proportions of female and male state senators have worked for women officeholders.

Women's and men's staff experience also differs among newcomers in office (Table 2.9). A greater proportion of women than men among newcomers in state houses have had staff experience, but newcomer women and men are more similar to each other in experience than are female and male state representatives generally. Also, both female and male newcomers in state houses have had more staff experience than female and male legislators overall. These data suggest that work on a public official's staff has for some time been an experience acquired by proportionately more women than men who successfully seek seats in state legislatures. However, in recent years as state legislatures have become more professional, more women and men have had staff experience before becoming legislators. If this trend continues, one can expect even more of those who successfully

newcomer women among state representatives are slightly more likely than
female state representatives generally to have worked on a campaign, while
newcomer men among state representatives are markedly less likely than male
state representatives generally to have worked on a campaign. This finding
suggests that campaign experience continues to be characteristic of women
seeking entry into state legislative offices but may have declined in im-
portance for men seeking seats in the state legislature.

At the state legislative and county levels, much larger sex differences
exist for newcomers than for officeholders generally in the proportions who
have worked for female candidates (Table 2.11). Almost one-half of the
women newly elected to state houses and county commissions, more than twice
the proportion of their male counterparts, have worked for female candidates.

PARTICIPATION IN CANDIDATE WORKSHOPS

One might expect that female officeholders would be more likely than
male officeholders to have attended candidate workshops. As discussed
earlier, female officeholders have less previous elective officeholding
experience than male officeholders and thus have less experience as candi-
dates. Moreover, women candidates must confront not only all the problems
that men confront but also the prejudices of those who believe that women
do not belong in politics.[5] To compensate for these disadvantages and to
maximize the effectiveness of their campaigns, women may turn to workshops
for guidance and skills training. To ascertain whether women officeholders
are, in fact, more likely than men to have acquired special training in
campaign techniques, we asked officeholders whether they had ever attended
a candidate training program or workshop. We also asked officeholders to
identify the sponsors of the workshops they attended.

Table 2.12 shows that larger proportions of women than men at most
levels of office have attended candidate workshops. The higher the level
of office, the greater the probability that an officeholder has partici-
pated in a workshop, and at the highest levels of office, larger propor-
tions of women than men have attended candidate training sessions. More
than one-half of female state legislators, compared with slightly more
than two-fifths of male state legislators, have participated in workshops.
Although fewer county commissioners than legislators have attended work-
shops, twice as many women as men in county government have participated
in candidate training programs. Among local council members and mayors,
among whom participation in candidate training is fairly low, women are no
more likely than men to have enrolled in a workshop.

Newcomer women--those with the least experience in elective politics--
are not consistently more likely than women officeholders generally to have
attended candidate workshops (Table 2.13). Only among state representa-
tives and mayors have more newcomer women than women officeholders overall

TABLE 2.12: AMONG STATE AND COUNTY OFFICEHOLDERS, WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE ATTENDED CANDIDATE TRAINING WORKSHOPS

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women $\overline{\text{%}}$	Men $\overline{\text{%}}$	Women $\overline{\text{%}}$	Men $\overline{\text{%}}$	Women $\overline{\text{%}}$	Men $\overline{\text{%}}$	Women $\overline{\text{%}}$	Men $\overline{\text{%}}$	Women $\overline{\text{%}}$	Men $\overline{\text{%}}$
Attended a candidate training program or workshop	54.8	43.9	57.3	43.4	31.7	15.8	15.0	16.0	8.6	10.6
Total	(73)	(66)	(436)	(196)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

TABLE 2.13: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES, NEWCOMER WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN NEWCOMER MEN TO HAVE ATTENDED CANDIDATE TRAINING WORKSHOPS

	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women $\overline{\text{%}}$	Men $\overline{\text{%}}$	Women $\overline{\text{%}}$	Men $\overline{\text{%}}$	Women $\overline{\text{%}}$	Men $\overline{\text{%}}$	Women $\overline{\text{%}}$	Men $\overline{\text{%}}$
Attended a candidate training program or workshop	62.5	48.3	30.3	28.6	23.5	27.3	5.7	3.8
Total	(104)	(29)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

participated in candidate workshops. Moreover, only among state representatives have notably more newcomer women than newcomer men participated in training programs for candidates.

Sponsors of Workshops

Most of the officeholders who received candidate training attended workshops sponsored by the Democratic and Republican parties (Table 2.14). More than one-third of female state legislators and about one-third of male state legislators participated in training sessions sponsored by the parties, not including sessions sponsored by women's divisions of the parties. Proportions attending party workshops are smaller at county and local levels; this is probably due to the fact that races for these offices often are nonpartisan, and consequently, the parties are not as directly involved with the candidates. Greater proportions of female than male officeholders at state and county levels attended party-sponsored workshops.

Although proportionately more women than men at state and county levels went to party-sponsored workshops, very few women officeholders

TABLE 2.14: MOST WOMEN AND MEN WHO ATTENDED CANDIDATE WORKSHOPS PARTICIPATED IN WORKSHOPS SPONSORED BY POLITICAL PARTIES

Sponsor of Candidate Workshop[a]	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Political party[b]	37.0	33.3	39.2	31.6	18.8	6.9	5.0	12.0	2.0	3.3
Women's division of political party or partisan women's club	0.0	1.5	3.4	1.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Women's Political Caucus (WPC)	4.1	0.0	7.1	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.7	0.0
Nonpartisan women's organization other than WPC	5.5	0.0	5.3	0.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	1.3	0.0
Government department or agency	0.0	0.0	1.6	1.0	3.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Association of public officials	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	3.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	2.0	4.0
Labor union or professional association	0.0	0.0	1.4	2.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Educational institution	0.0	0.0	1.8	1.5	3.0	4.0	2.0	0.0	1.3	0.0
Other sponsor	4.1	1.5	2.5	5.6	3.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0
Attended workshop, sponsor not specified	6.8	6.1	3.9	3.6	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.3	2.0
Did not attend workshop	45.2	56.1	42.2	56.6	68.3	84.2	85.0	84.0	91.4	89.4
Total	(73)	(66)	(436)	(196)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 because officeholders could name one or two sponsors of workshops.

[b]The category "political party" does not include women's division of political party.

attended candidate training sessions sponsored by women's partisan clubs or women's divisions of the major parties. Women officeholders appear to have turned more often to nonpartisan women's organizations than to their political parties for training specifically geared toward women candidates. Women officeholders made use of workshops sponsored by women's organizations such as the Women's Political Caucus and the National Women's Education Fund. Some women at every level of office, but no men, report having attended a candidate workshop sponsored by the Women's Political Caucus or other nonpartisan women's organizations. A notable proportion of women state legislators in particular--about one-tenth--took advantage of workshops sponsored by nonpartisan women's organizations.

Workshop Sponsor As Related To Party Affiliation

Republican officeholders are more likely than Democratic officeholders to have attended candidate workshops, but in both parties, generally more women than men attended workshops (Table 2.15). Republican and Democratic

TABLE 2.15: AMONG BOTH DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS AT MOST LEVELS OF OFFICE, WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN MEN ATTENDED CANDIDATE TRAINING WORKSHOPS

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Democrats										
Attended a candidate training program or workshop	47.4	38.5	46.2	32.7	25.4	13.6	12.2	19.6	6.3	9.0
Sponsor of candidate workshop										
Democratic party[a]	28.9	25.6	20.4	19.6	11.1	6.8	4.1	9.8	1.6	1.5
Women's division of Democratic party or Democratic women's club	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nonpartisan women's organization	10.5	0.0	16.4	0.0	4.8	0.0	2.0	0.0	1.6	0.0
Total	(38)	(39)	(225)	(107)	(63)	(59)	(49)	(51)	(63)	(67)
Republicans										
Attended a candidate training program or workshop	62.9	53.8	70.1	56.2	50.0	21.9	18.9	11.6	9.4	13.1
Sponsor of candidate workshop										
Republican party[a]	45.7	42.3	57.8	46.1	37.5	9.4	8.1	11.6	3.1	4.9
Women's division of Republican party or Republican women's club	0.0	3.8	3.3	2.2	6.3	3.1	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nonpartisan women's organization	8.6	0.0	7.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4	0.0	3.1	0.0
Total	(35)	(26)	(211)	(89)	(32)	(32)	(37)	(43)	(64)	(61)

[a]The political party category does not include women's division of political party.

women also differ somewhat in their workshop choices.

Among Republican women serving as state legislators and county commissioners, more than one-half went to candidate workshops. Most of the workshops which these women attended were sponsored by the Republican party. Very few Republican women officeholders at any level of office sought workshops specifically geared toward female candidates. Among those Republican women who did go to workshops for women, a slightly larger proportion in

general went to workshops sponsored by nonpartisan women's organizations than to workshops sponsored by an organization of Republican women. However, women officeholders from the Republican party have participated in workshops sponsored by partisan women's organizations more often than have Democratic women officeholders.

Democratic women officeholders are less likely than Republican women officeholders to have attended candidate workshops. Democratic women also are less likely than Republican women to have gone to a workshop sponsored by their party. Also, few Democratic women report having attended workshops sponsored by organizations of Democratic women. However, except among local council members, larger proportions of Democratic than Republican women officeholders did attend workshops sponsored by nonpartisan women's organizations.

ROLE MODELS AND MENTORS

Previous research on officeholders and candidates has devoted little attention to the role of "significant others" in affecting political aspirations and careers. In our study, we wanted to examine whether the inspiration of role models and the assistance of mentors were among the critical experiences leading women (and men) to seek public office.

Role Models

To determine whether officeholders have had role models, we asked officeholders whether they could single out one political leader whom they particularly admired and whose example inspired them to become politically active. The higher the level of office, the more likely a woman is to have had a role model; proportions ranging from nearly one-fourth of women local council members to about one-half of women state legislators have had role models (Table 2.16). Nevertheless, at most levels of office, proportionately fewer women than men have had role models.

More newcomer women than women officeholders generally have had role models (Table 2.17). Moreover, among mayors and local council members, larger proportions of female than male newcomers have had role models. However, among state representatives and county commissioners, female newcomers are less likely than male newcomers to have had role models.

Perhaps the most feasible explanation for the smaller proportions of women than men at most levels of office who have had role models is that traditionally most political figures have been men. In fact, the majority of the role models named by both women and men were men (Table 2.18). Nevertheless, a substantial proportion of those women at every level of office who have had role models report that their role models were women (Table 2.18). Sizable proportions of women newcomers with role models also have had female role models (Table 2.19). However, women newcomers do not

TABLE 2.16: AT MOST LEVELS OF OFFICE, WOMEN LESS OFTEN THAN MEN HAVE HAD ROLE MODELS[a]

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Has had a role model[b]	52.2	48.5	49.5	55.1	33.0	42.9	29.3	30.0	22.8	28.0
Total	(69)	(68)	(434)	(196)	(100)	(98)	(99)	(100)	(149)	(150)

[a]The precise wording of the question which officeholders were asked is the following: "Can you single out one political leader whom you particularly admired and whose example inspired you to become politically active?"

[b]Officeholders who said that they could not name just one role model are not included in the proportions who have had a role model.

TABLE 2.17: AMONG MAYORS AND LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, NEWCOMER WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN NEWCOMER MEN TO HAVE HAD ROLE MODELS

	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Has had a role model[a]	58.1	69.0	45.5	55.0	52.9	22.7	26.9	21.2
Total	(105)	(29)	(33)	(20)	(17)	(22)	(52)	(52)

[a]See notes for Table 2.16.

TABLE 2.18: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, ONE-FOURTH OR MORE OF WOMEN WITH ROLE MODELS HAVE HAD WOMEN AS THEIR ROLE MODELS

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Has had a woman as a role model	25.7	0.0	34.7	6.5	27.3	2.4	13.8	0.0	26.5	0.0
Total	(35)	(33)	(213)	(108)	(33)	(42)	(29)	(30)	(34)	(42)

TABLE 2.19: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF NEWCOMER WOMEN WITH ROLE MODELS HAVE HAD WOMEN AS
THEIR ROLE MODELS

	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Has had a woman as a role model	35.0	0.0	33.3	9.1	11.1	0.0	28.6	0.0
Total	(60)	(20)	(15)	(11)	(9)	(5)	(14)	(11)

differ much from female officeholders overall in the proportions reporting
that their role models were women.

Women and men in public office differ in the types of people to whom
they have looked as role models. Men's role models usually have served in
high-level offices, whereas women's role models were more diverse (Table
2.20). Among male officeholders, about two-fifths of state legislators
and more than one-half of local and county officeholders report that their
role models were federal officials. In contrast, smaller proportions of
women, about one-third to two-fifths across the various offices, have had
role models who were federal officials. This difference between women and
men is widest among mayors; federal officials were role models for more
than three-fourths of male mayors and slightly more than one-third of
female mayors.

For mayors as well as for other elected officials, the difference be-
tween women and men is due partly to the fact that far fewer women than men
name a U.S. president as a role model (Table 2.20). This finding is not
surprising since the barriers to a woman becoming president have tradi-
tionally been so great that women's aspirations could not realistically in-
clude the presidency. A small proportion of women, but no men, do name
first ladies as their role models; however, among newcomers, no one reports
that a first lady was her role model.[6] Thus, while the first lady has
significance as a nationally prominent woman, her importance as a role
model appears to have declined as more women have entered politics in their
own right and can serve as role models.

While women are less likely than men to have had federal officials as
role models, women officeholders at most levels of office are more likely
than their male counterparts to have had role models who are state offi-
cials (Table 2.20). Also, at most levels of office, female officeholders
are more likely than male officeholders to have had county and municipal

TABLE 2.20: WOMEN'S ROLE MODELS ARE LESS CONCENTRATED IN FEDERAL AND STATE POSITIONS THAN ARE MEN'S ROLE MODELS

Role Model's Position When She/He Served as a Role Model	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Federal official[a]	34.3	42.4	29.9	38.9	42.4	61.0	37.9	83.3	35.3	59.5
U.S. president	5.7	9.1	6.9	16.7	21.2	41.5	24.1	63.3	20.6	40.5
State official[b]	54.3	33.3	34.8	39.8	21.2	14.6	6.9	16.7	23.5	2.4
County or municipal official[c]	5.7	15.2	12.3	4.6	21.2	17.1	20.7	0.0	17.6	16.7
Senator, level of government not specified	5.7	3.0	2.5	4.6	3.0	0.0	10.3	0.0	2.9	14.3
Judge or district attorney[d]	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	6.9	0.0	2.9	0.0
Political party leader	0.0	0.0	6.9	1.9	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	5.9	0.0
Political or campaign activist	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	2.9	2.4
Foreign political leader	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	6.1	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
First lady	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	3.0	9.3	9.3	0.0	4.9	10.3	0.0	8.8	4.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(35)	(33)	(204)	(108)	(33)	(41)	(29)	(30)	(34)	(42)

[a]Includes president, vice-president, U.S. senator, U.S. representative, Supreme Court Justice, and other federal officials. Does not include judge other than Supreme Court Justice.

[b]Includes governor, lieutenant governor, state legislator, statewide elected official, director of state department or agency, gubernatorial staff member, and other state officials. Does not include judge.

[c]Includes county executive/supervisor/commissioner, mayor, local council member, county/municipal board of education member, and other local officeholders. Does not include judge.

[d]Excludes Supreme Court Justice.

officials as role models. Women officeholders also chose more diverse role models than did men. In general, judges, district attorneys, political party officials, campaign activists, and foreign political leaders served as role models for larger proportions of women than men.

Mentors

To ascertain whether officeholders had mentors, we asked officeholders whether any one political leader or activist had helped their political careers along in some significant way. Table 2.21 indicates that larger proportions of women than men at all levels of office have had mentors. The proportion of women with mentors ranges from about one-sixth of mayors to one-half of state legislators.

Mentors also played instrumental roles in the careers of many newcomer women (Table 2.22). At every level of office, newly elected women are more likely than newly elected men to have had mentors. Furthermore,

TABLE 2.21:   WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE HAD MENTORS[a]

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Has had a mentor[b]	49.3	37.3	51.4	46.1	24.8	22.0	16.2	13.0	19.9	14.9
Total	(67)	(67)	(424)	(193)	(101)	(100)	(99)	(100)	(151)	(148)

[a]The precise wording of the question which officeholders were asked is the following: "Has there been one political leader or activist who has helped your political career along in some significant way?"
[b]Officeholders who said that they had several mentors are not included in the proportions who have had a mentor.

TABLE 2.22:   NEWCOMER WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN NEWCOMER MEN HAVE HAD MENTORS

	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Has had a mentor[a]	59.6	44.8	27.3	19.0	25.0	0.0	22.6	12.0
Total	(99)	(29)	(33)	(21)	(16)	(22)	(53)	(50)

[a]See notes for Table 2.21.

TABLE 2.23:   ONE-TENTH TO ONE-FOURTH OF WOMEN WITH MENTORS HAVE HAD WOMEN AS THEIR MENTORS

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Has had a woman as a mentor	9.1	8.0	24.5	8.0	16.0	0.0	18.8	0.0	13.3	4.5
Total	(33)	(25)	(216)	(87)	(25)	(22)	(16)	(13)	(30)	(22)

at every level of office, newcomer women are slightly more likely than women officeholders overall to have had mentors. Mentors are most common for women newcomers to state houses, with three-fifths of these women reporting that they have had mentors.

Table 2.23 shows that in several instances, women acted as mentors for other women. Among female state representatives, about one-fourth of those with mentors have had female mentors. Among female officeholders at other levels of office who have had mentors, one-tenth to one-fifth were assisted in their political careers by other women. Among officeholders at all levels of government, more women than men have had female mentors.

Female newcomers among state representatives are more likely than all women state representatives to have had women mentors. Also, among state representatives, proportionately more female newcomers with mentors—22.0%—than male newcomers with mentors—15.4%—report that their mentors were women.[7]

Table 2.24 indicates the highest positions which officeholders' mentors

TABLE 2.24: EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, WOMEN'S MENTORS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN'S MENTORS TO HAVE SERVED AT THE SAME LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT AS THE OFFICEHOLDERS THEMSELVES

Highest Position Mentor Has Held	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Federal official[a]	18.8	16.0	12.2	20.5	12.0	14.3	6.3	7.7	10.0	27.3
State official[b]	62.5	36.0	50.7	48.9	36.0	23.8	18.8	46.2	10.0	4.5
County or municipal official[c]	6.3	12.0	13.6	12.5	28.0	52.4	56.3	30.8	50.0	45.5
Senator, level of government not specified	3.1	4.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	4.8	6.3	0.0	3.3	0.0
Judge or district attorney[d]	3.1	4.0	1.9	0.0	12.0	0.0	6.3	7.7	0.0	4.5
Political party leader	3.1	8.0	7.0	5.7	12.0	0.0	6.3	7.7	23.3	9.1
Political or campaign activist	0.0	4.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0
Other	3.1	16.0	7.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(32)	(25)	(213)	(88)	(25)	(21)	(16)	(13)	(30)	(22)

[a] Includes president, vice-president, U.S. senator, U.S. representative, Supreme Court Justice, and other federal officials. Does not include judge other than Supreme Court Justice.

[b] Includes governor, lieutenant governor, state legislator, statewide elected official, director of state department or agency, gubernatorial staff member, and other state officials. Does not include judge.

[c] Includes county executive/supervisor/commissioner, mayor, local council member, county/municipal board of education member, and other local officeholders. Does not include judge.

[d] Excludes Supreme Court Justice.

have held. In general, officeholders' mentors have held positions at the same level of government as that in which the officeholders now serve. This pattern is especially true for women officeholders. Of those women who have had mentors, nearly two-thirds of state senators and one-half of state representatives have had mentors who were state officials. Similarly, among female mayors and female city council members with mentors, about one-half have been assisted in their political careers by county and municipal officeholders. The exception to this pattern is among women county commissioners whose mentors were more likely to be state than county officials.

Except in the case of county commissioners, women's mentors are more likely than men's mentors to have served at the same level of government as the officeholders themselves. Also, at most levels of office, larger proportions of male officeholders than female officeholders have had mentors who were federal officials.

Political party leaders acted as mentors for some officeholders at every level of office. However, female local council members were especially likely to have had mentors who were party leaders. Nearly one-fourth of the mentors of female local council members, compared with about one-tenth of the mentors of male local council members, were party officials.

EVALUATION OF POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

Throughout this section of the report, we have examined various types of political experience which officeholders acquired before running for office for the first time. We now turn to officeholders' own evaluations of the importance of these experiences in their decisions to run for office.

Sufficient Prior Political Experience

We asked officeholders to evaluate the overall importance of prior political experience in influencing their decisions to run for their current offices. Officeholders were asked whether "making sure I had sufficient prior political experience" was very important, somewhat important, not important, or not applicable to their decisions to run.

A majority of women state legislators and county commissioners evaluate their prior political experience as having been very or somewhat important in their decisions to run for office (Table 2.25). By contrast, a majority of mayors and local council members report that prior political experience did not influence their decisions to run for office. This finding is not surprising since few mayors and local council members have held previous elective or appointive positions or worked in campaigns.

At most levels of office, more women than men view their prior political experience as having been important in their decisions to run for their current offices. About one-fourth of women state legislators and

TABLE 2.25: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN MEN CONSIDER THEIR PRIOR POLITICAL EXPERIENCE TO HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Prior Political Experience[a]	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	24.7	11.8	23.8	17.1	29.0	19.0	20.0	23.0	13.4	9.9
Somewhat important	37.0	41.2	31.5	31.2	26.0	23.0	19.0	21.0	24.2	17.2
Not important/not applicable	38.4	47.1	44.8	51.8	45.0	58.0	61.0	56.0	62.4	72.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(73)	(68)	(429)	(199)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(149)	(151)

[a]The precise wording of the factor which officeholders were asked to evaluate is the following: "Making sure I had sufficient prior political experience."

TABLE 2.26: NEWCOMER WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN NEWCOMER MEN CONSIDER THEIR PRIOR POLITICAL EXPERIENCE TO HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Prior Political Experience[a]	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	21.2	27.6	43.8	10.0	11.8	4.5	11.3	5.8
Somewhat important	34.6	10.3	18.8	15.0	29.4	22.7	24.5	11.5
Not important/not applicable	44.2	62.1	37.5	75.0	58.8	72.7	64.2	82.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(104)	(29)	(32)	(20)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

[a]See note for Table 2.25.

more than one-fourth of women county commissioners view prior political experience as very important. Women mayors are the only group of women who are less likely, and then only slightly less likely, than men to regard past political experience as very important.

The fact that more women than men claim that sufficient political experience influenced their decisions to run for their current offices is not due simply to the fact that larger proportions of women than men have had political experience. With the exception of mayors, female officeholders who have held a previous appointive or elective office evaluate their prior

political experience as more important than do male officeholders who have held a prior office.[8]

These patterns are accentuated among newcomers, who by definition have no prior elective experience. Women newcomers are strikingly more likely than their male counterparts to rate prior political experience as very or somewhat important (Table 2.26). Among newcomers on county commissions, where the sex differences are greatest, twice as many women as men claim that having prior political experience influenced their decisions to run for office. Women newcomers are equally or more likely than women office-holders overall to view prior political experience as very or somewhat important.

Legislators' Evaluations

We also asked officeholders to evaluate the influence of specific political experiences on their decisions to run for their current positions. The questions were phrased differently for state legislators than for other officeholders. State legislators were given a list of nine factors and asked to select the three factors which were most important in their decisions to run for legislative office.[9] Included in the list were former public officeholding experience, experience working in campaigns, experience on the staff of an elected public official, and participation in a candidate training program or workshop.

Table 2.27 shows that former officeholding experience and campaign experience influenced the decisions of large proportions of women state legislators. Women state senators and women state representatives differ in that more senators cite former officeholding experience while slightly more state representatives cite campaign work as one of the three most important factors that affected their decisions to run for the legislature. Much smaller proportions of women legislators evaluate the experiences of working on the staff of an elected public official or participating in a candidate workshop as among the top three factors that influenced their decisions to run for office.

Women legislators are slightly more likely than their male counter-parts to name campaign work and staff work among the three most important factors influencing their decisions to run for the legislature (Table 2.27). However, this difference between women and men is due largely to the fact that more women than men have had such experiences. Although the data are not presented, when only officeholders who have had the specific experience are examined, similar proportions of women and men evaluate each type of experience as important.

More newcomer women in the state house than women state representa-tives overall place importance on various types of political experience (Table 2.27). About one-half rank campaign work as one of the three most

TABLE 2.27: AMONG STATE LEGISLATORS, WOMEN ARE SLIGHTLY MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO RANK THEIR EXPERIENCES WORKING IN CAMPAIGNS OR ON THE STAFFS OF ELECTED OFFICIALS AS ONE OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Ranked as One of the Three Most Important Factors Influencing Decision to Run for Current Office[a]	State Senate		State House		Newcomers State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Former public officeholding experience	43.1	46.9	27.1	27.1	n.a.	n.a.[b]
Experience working in campaigns	38.9	34.4	43.7	39.1	50.0	46.4
Experience working on the staff of an elected official	13.9	9.4	12.6	8.9	13.7	14.3
Participation in a candidate training program or workshop	1.4	0.0	5.8	3.1	11.8	10.7
Total	(72)	(64)	(428)	(192)	(102)	(28)

[a]Legislators were given a list of nine factors and asked to select the three factors that were most important in influencing their decisions to run for their current offices. The list included the following factors: former public officeholding experience, experience working in campaigns, experience working on the staff of an elected official, participation in a candidate training program or workshop, the support of groups or organizations related to officeholder's occupation, the support of women's organizations, the support of other types of organizations, the support of officeholder's political party, and the support of officeholder's husband and/or family. Male legislators were presented with a list of only eight factors, as men were not asked to evaluate the factor "support of women's organizations."

[b]The factor "former public officeholding experience" is not applicable for newcomers because, by definition, newcomers have not held previous elective public offices.

important influences on their decisions to run for office, and slightly more than one in ten rank work on the staff of an elected official and participation in a candidate workshop as one of the top three factors. Female and male newcomers among state representatives are similar in their evaluation of these experiences.

County and Local Officeholders' Evaluations

County and local officeholders also were asked to evaluate the importance of holding a previous office, working on a candidate's campaign, and working on the staff of a public official. However, in contrast to the legislators, county and local officeholders were asked to indicate whether each of these experiences was very important, somewhat important, slightly important, or not important in their decisions to run for their current offices.

Previous officeholding did not play a role in the decisions of majorities of women local and county officials (Table 2.28). Nonetheless, substantial proportions--ranging from as few as one-seventh among local council members who were least likely of all local and county women

TABLE 2.28: AMONG COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN MEN EVALUATE
FORMER OFFICEHOLDING AS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO
RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Former Officeholding Experience	County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	32.0	19.8	34.0	39.0	14.7	15.5
Somewhat important[a]	11.0	18.8	14.0	14.0	10.0	11.5
Not important/not applicable	57.0	61.4	52.0	47.0	75.3	73.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(100)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(150)	(148)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

officeholders to have previous officeholding experience to one-third of
mayors who were the most likely to have previous officeholding experience--
report that holding a previous office was a very important influence on
their decisions to run for their current offices. The only notable dif-
ference between women and men is among county commissioners, among whom
far more women than men evaluate former officeholding experience as very
important. This difference in women's and men's evaluations is not simply
a reflection of actual officeholding experience. When only those county
commissioners with previous elective or appointive experience are examined,
62.1% of women and 37.7% of men say that having held a previous office had
a very important influence on their decisions to run for their current
offices.[10]

Campaign experience had more of an impact on the decisions of female
county commissioners than did former officeholding experience (Table 2.29).
Women on county commissions are more likely than women in local offices to
view campaign experience as having had a somewhat or very important in-
fluence on their decisions to run for office. Similarly, more female than
male county commissioners evaluate campaign experience as having been im-
portant. These findings are due almost entirely to the fact that, of local
and county officeholders, female county commissioners had the most campaign
experience (see Table 2.10). Majorities of female mayors and local council
members report that working on a campaign was not at all important in their
decisions to run for their current offices. This finding is due largely to
the lack of campaign experience among local officeholders.

Of those women officeholders who had worked on a candidate's campaign,
the vast majority claim that campaign experience was a very or somewhat

TABLE 2.29: AMONG COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO
RATE CAMPAIGN EXPERIENCE AS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS
TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Campaign Experience	County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	39.0	21.8	9.1	15.0	10.0	8.6
Somewhat important[a]	19.0	23.8	13.1	11.0	21.3	11.9
Not important/not applicable	42.0	54.5	77.8	74.0	68.7	79.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(100)	(101)	(99)	(100)	(150)	(151)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

TABLE 2.30: AMONG COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, NEWCOMER
WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN NEWCOMER MEN REPORT THAT CAMPAIGN
EXPERIENCE WAS VERY OR SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS
TO RUN THE FIRST TIME 'OR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Campaign Experience	County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	48.5	23.8	0.0	9.1	9.4	9.6
Somewhat important[a]	21.2	38.1	17.6	18.2	17.0	9.6
Not important/not applicable	30.3	38.1	82.4	72.7	73.6	80.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

important influence on their decisions to run for their current offices.
Moreover, among those with campaign experience, similar proportions of
women and men--82.9% of female county commissioners, 62.9% of female mayors,
and 66.2% of female local council members compared with 83.6% of male
county commissioners, 65.0% of male mayors, and 63.3% of male local coun-
cil members--evaluate their previous campaign work as very, somewhat, or
slightly important.[11]

The patterns for newcomers are very similar (Table 2.30). Among new-
comers in county and local offices, female county commissioners are most

TABLE 2.31: AT COUNTY AND LOCAL LEVELS, FEW WOMEN OR MEN EVALUATE WORKING
ON THE STAFF OF AN ELECTED OFFICIAL AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR
DECISIONS TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Working on the Staff of an Elected Official	County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	6.9	3.0	3.0	1.0	3.3	2.0
Somewhat important[a]	5.9	4.0	5.0	3.0	0.7	2.6
Not important/not applicable	87.1	93.1	92.0	96.0	96.0	95.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

likely to evaluate campaign experience as important in their decisions to
run largely because women on county commissions are most likely to have
worked in campaigns. Few women mayors or local council members among new-
comers view campaign experience as important. This finding stems primarily
from the fact that only a minority of newcomer women in local offices have
worked in campaigns (see Table 2.11).

The experience of working on the staff of an elected public official
had even less of an influence than campaign experience on county and local
women officeholders' decisions to run for their current offices (Table 2.31).
The overwhelming majority of women and men at county and local levels of
government did not evaluate working on the staff of an elected public offi-
cial as at all important in their decisions to run. The lack of influence
of staff experience is mostly due to the fact that few county and local
officeholders have worked on the staff of an elected public official (see
Table 2.8).

Women newcomers are markedly more likely than either male newcomers
or officeholders in general to evaluate staff experience as a very or
somewhat important influence on their decisions to run for office (Table
2.32). Among county commissioners and mayors, the difference between women
and men is exactly parallel to women's and men's different levels of staff
experience. Whereas no newly elected male mayors or county commissioners
had worked on the staff of a public official, all the newcomer women who
had staff experience--six county commissioners and two mayors--claim that
their staff experience played a very, somewhat, or slightly important role
in their decisions to run for office. Among newly elected local council

TABLE 2.32: AT COUNTY AND LOCAL LEVELS, NEWCOMER WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN
NEWCOMER MEN EVALUATE THE EXPERIENCE OF WORKING ON THE STAFF
OF AN ELECTED OFFICIAL AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN
THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Working on the Staff of an Elected Official	County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	12.1	0.0	5.9	0.0	5.7	1.9
Somewhat important[a]	6.1	0.0	5.9	0.0	1.9	1.9
Not important/not applicable	81.8	100.0	88.2	100.0	92.5	96.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

members with staff experience, four of the five women and two of the three
men say staff experience was important.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

More women than men acquire political experience before seeking public
office. With the exception of prior elective officeholding, elected women
are more experienced than their male counterparts in every type of activity
we examined. Also, largely because women have more experience than men,
proportionately more women than men evaluate prior experience as important
in their decisions to run.

Women in elective office have held appointive positions in greater
numbers and at higher levels of government than have men in elective of-
fice. Among female officeholders, two-fifths or more at county and state
levels have served in at least one appointive position. Although women
have less elective experience than men, the fact that more elected women
than men have appointive experience means that women officeholders generally
have as much or more overall officeholding experience than their male col-
leagues.

Women also are more likely than men to have worked on the staff of an
elected official or in a political campaign before seeking public office
themselves. While only about one-fourth of women state legislators and
fewer women officeholders at county and local levels have worked on the
staff of an elected official, the vast majority of women officeholders at
county and state levels, and close to a majority of local council members,
have had experience working in a political campaign. Women in state and

county offices also are more likely than their male counterparts to have attended candidate workshops or training sessions. More than one-half of women state legislators and about one-third of female county commissioners have participated in candidate workshops.

The greater political experience of women relative to men suggests that women often prepare themselves for elective officeholding through their involvement in other activities in the public sector. Experiences such as serving in appointive positions, working for elected officials, working in campaigns, and attending candidate training workshops allow women to acquire useful skills, gain self-confidence, and make political contacts that can be very valuable in seeking and serving in elective positions. Such experiences also may play a motivational role; women who have never considered running for public office may have their aspirations kindled by their involvement in political activities. Most female officeholders who have had such political experiences evaluate those experiences as instrumental in their decisions to run for office.

Women elected officials are generally less likely than their male counterparts to have had role models but are more likely to have had mentors. Women may have more difficulty than men finding political figures who can serve as inspirational models for public careers and with whom they easily can identify. But with or without another's inspiration, many of those women who have succeeded in politics apparently have relied heavily on the guidance and assistance of another politically active individual. Sizable proportions of women officeholders, ranging up to one-half of state legislators, point to individuals who served as mentors and helped their political careers in significant ways. Perhaps mentors help women to overcome some of the disadvantages associated with being women in a male-dominated field. Mentors may provide entry into influential networks to which women often lack access. Mentors may also provide valuable information about how the "boys" operate, which otherwise may be difficult for those women who are not closely tied to the "old boys' network" to obtain. Regardless of the specific functions they perform, mentors clearly are important to the public careers of many elected women officeholders.

Our analysis also suggests that individual women and women's groups often assist the political careers of other women. While few elective officeholders of either sex have worked as staff members for female elected officials, more women than men have done so. Additionally, more women than men have worked in the campaigns of women candidates. Among state legislators, more than two-fifths of all women worked in a women's campaign before running for office themselves. Up to one-third of women officeholders with role models have had female role models; similarly, one-tenth to one-fourth of women officeholders with mentors report that their mentors

were women. These proportions are far larger than those for male office-
holders. Finally, small but significant proportions of women officeholders
have attended candidate workshops sponsored by women's organizations.
These findings suggest that the careers of many of those women now serving
in elective office were helped by their exposure to the careers and ex-
periences of women who preceded them in politics.

New female entrants to elective office, much as the women who entered
elective politics in years previously, have a more extensive political
background than do male newcomers. However, women who are newcomers to
elective office do not differ greatly in political experience from women
officeholders generally. They are about as likely, or only slightly more
likely, than women officeholders overall to have held an appointive office,
to have worked on an elected official's staff, to have worked in a cam-
paign, and to have attended a candidate workshop.

Newcomers to elective office do differ from all women officeholders in
one important respect. More newcomer women than women officeholders over-
all report that they have had role models and mentors; nevertheless, simi-
lar proportions of newcomer women and all women officeholders have had
female role models and mentors.

This pattern of findings reflects both the growing political conscious-
ness of women and the continued scarcity of women politicians. The women's
movement has enabled many more women to imagine themselves in political
positions. Whereas twenty years ago a woman could not look to a U.S.
senator or statewide elected official as a realistic role model, some wom-
en today can do so. This fact perhaps explains why increasing numbers of
women say that admiration for political figures has inspired them to be-
come politically active. However, when a woman looks to politics for
inspirational models, she is still far more likely to find men than women
serving in visible, high-level positions. Similarly, as the political
consciousness of women has grown, more of the women who eventually achieve
elective office have sought out mentors to help their careers along.
Perhaps more women entering politics in recent years have realized that as
"outsiders," they can benefit from the assistance mentors provide in help-
ing them to operate successfully in the political world. However, as with
role models, the individuals with the knowledge, experience, and contacts
to serve as mentors continue disproportionately to be men. Only as more
women move into visible positions of influence in politics will large
numbers of women with political aspirations be able to look to other women
for both inspirational and actual support.

Party support appears to facilitate entry into elective office.
Although most women officeholders who ran in partisan races were
supported by party leaders in their bids for office, party leaders:

- *were most active in recruiting women who ran in the most*
  adverse electoral circumstances
- *were more active in recruiting women who ran for "women's*
  seats"--seats previously held by other women--than
  they were in recruiting women for seats generally

As one way of identifying the factors that are critical to bringing more
women into public office, the Center for the American Woman and Politics
held meetings in 1981 and 1982 in New Jersey, Minnesota, and California
with politically active women, many of whom were current or former candi-
dates and officeholders. A common theme that emerged from these meetings
was the important role of political parties in facilitating or inhibiting
the movement of women into positions in government. While some former
Democratic and Republican candidates for public office reported that their
parties had been fully supportive of their candidacies, many of the women
attending these sessions believed that the major parties fall far short
of their potential in recruiting women to run for office and supporting
those women who choose to run.[1] Scholars and journalists who have observed
women's campaigns often have come to similar conclusions.[2]

In order to develop a clearer understanding of the amount of support
successful women candidates receive from parties and the importance of
that support, we asked women officeholders about party leaders' reactions
to their candidacies and compared their responses with those of male
officeholders. Because we suspected that the support candidates receive
from party leaders might depend, in part, on the electoral situations
candidates confront, we also asked officeholders questions about the party
identification of the immediately prior occupant of their office and the
opposition they faced in the primary. This chapter presents our findings
regarding the support which women elected to office receive from their
parties.

PARTY AFFILIATION OF OFFICEHOLDERS IN PARTISAN RACES

All state representatives and all state senators, except for those in

Nebraska, ran in partisan races for their seats (Table 3.1).[3] Unlike state legislative races, county and local races often are nonpartisan contests. Only three-fifths of county commissioners, one-fifth of mayors, and one-third of local council members won election in partisan races. The proportions of female and male officeholders who ran in partisan contests are very similar across all offices.

Table 3.2 presents the party affiliation of those officeholders who ran in partisan races. Among state legislators, all the women and men who ran in partisan contests are Democrats and Republicans.[4] Very small proportions of male county commissioners, male mayors, and local council members of both sexes who ran in partisan races are Independents or third party candidates.

Among legislators who responded to our survey, women are slightly more

TABLE 3.1: SIMILAR PROPORTIONS OF WOMEN AND MEN RAN IN PARTISAN RACES

Nature of Race	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Partisan	95.9	97.1	100.0	100.0	61.6	62.6	20.4	20.0	34.7	33.1
Nonpartisan	4.1[a]	2.9[a]	0.0	0.0	38.4	37.4	79.6	80.0	65.3	66.9
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(73)	(68)	(447)	(201)	(99)	(99)	(98)	(100)	(147)	(148)

[a]Races for seats in the unicameral legislature in Nebraska are nonpartisan.

TABLE 3.2: AMONG THOSE WHO RAN IN PARTISAN RACES, SLIGHTLY MORE WOMEN THAN MEN IN STATE LEGISLATIVE OFFICES ARE REPUBLICANS WHILE MORE WOMEN THAN MEN IN LOCAL OFFICES ARE DEMOCRATS[a]

Political Party Affiliation	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Democrat	52.9	59.1	51.5	54.7	68.3	66.1	65.0	60.0	52.1	38.8
Republican	47.1	40.9	48.5	45.3	31.7	30.6	35.0	35.0	41.7	57.1
Independent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	0.0	5.0	6.3	4.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(70)	(66)	(447)	(201)	(60)	(62)	(20)	(20)	(48)	(49)

[a]In this table and Tables 3.3 to 3.9 and Tables 3.11 to 3.14, officeholders who ran in nonpartisan races are excluded from the analysis.

likely than men to be Republicans, while female mayors and local council members who ran in partisan races are more likely than their male counterparts to be Democrats. Female and male county commissioners who ran in partisan contests are very similar in their party affiliation (Table 3.2).

Because party leaders generally are not involved in recruiting and supporting candidates in nonpartisan elections, only the responses of officeholders who ran in partisan races are examined in the sections of this chapter which pertain to the activities of party leaders.

VARIATION IN PARTY INVOLVEMENT IN CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT

Parties no longer play as dominant a role as they once did in American politics. As the Democratic and Republican parties have weakened as political institutions, they have become less involved overall in candidate selection.[5] Moreover, the degree to which party leaders participate in the recruitment of candidates is known to vary greatly from state to state and from locality to locality within states.[6]

Nevertheless, those holding seats in state legislatures in 1981 report fairly high levels of party involvement in recruitment of candidates in their districts (Table 3.3).[7] Only about one-fifth say that their party's leaders are completely inactive in recruiting candidates in the areas they represent. A majority claim that their party's leaders are very or somewhat active in candidate recruitment in their districts.

Although officeholders come from areas where parties are involved to different degrees in recruiting candidates, Table 3.3 suggests that women and men are about equally likely to represent districts where party leaders are not active in candidate recruitment. Similarly, almost equal proportions

TABLE 3.3: WOMEN AND MEN IN STATE LEGISLATURES ARE ABOUT EQUALLY AS
LIKELY TO REPORT THAT PARTY LEADERS IN THEIR DISTRICTS ARE
VERY OR SOMEWHAT ACTIVE IN CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT

Level of Involvement of Party Leaders in Candidate Recruitment in Area Officeholder Represents	State Senate		State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very active	20.9	16.9	23.4	23.4
Somewhat active	32.8	35.4	32.0	26.0
Slightly active	26.9	26.2	22.9	27.1
Inactive	19.4	21.5	21.7	23.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(67)	(65)	(419)	(192)

of women and men say that their party's leaders are very or somewhat active in recruiting candidates in their areas, although female state representatives report slightly higher levels of party involvement than do their male counterparts. Because of the overall similarity between women and men in reports of party leaders' involvement in the recruitment process, any differences between female and male legislators in proportions recruited or encouraged by party leaders--the topic to be examined next--do not occur simply because women came from areas where party leaders are more or less active than in the areas men represent.

SUPPORT FROM PARTY LEADERS

Officeholders who ran in partisan races at all levels of government were told to "think back to the first time you ran for the office you now hold." They then were asked whether party leaders actively sought them out and encouraged them to run for office. Officeholders who were not sought out by party leaders were also asked whether party leaders generally supported, opposed, neither supported nor opposed, or were divided in their reactions to their candidacies.

Except among state representatives, female officeholders are equally or more likely than their male counterparts to have been recruited by party leaders (that is, sought out and encouraged to run) and/or supported in their candidacies (Table 3.4). Female state representatives slightly less often than male representatives report that they were recruited and/or

TABLE 3.4: MAJORITIES OF WOMEN AND MEN WERE RECRUITED AND/OR SUPPORTED BY PARTY LEADERS WHEN THEY FIRST RAN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Party Leaders' Reactions to Candidacy of Office-holder	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Recruited and/or supported[a]	70.6	62.3	67.5	74.5	78.0	72.9	85.0	68.4	83.7	84.4
Opposed	8.8	14.8	6.2	5.6	3.4	1.7	5.0	5.3	0.0	2.2
Divided, some supported and some opposed	13.2	14.8	12.6	8.7	13.6	11.9	5.0	15.8	0.0	0.0
Neutral, neither supported nor opposed	7.4	8.2	13.6	11.2	5.1	13.6	5.0	10.5	16.3	13.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(68)	(61)	(419)	(196)	(59)	(59)	(20)	(19)	(43)	(45)

[a]This response includes those who said that party leaders actively sought them out and encouraged them to run for office and/or those who said that party leaders supported their candidacies after they had decided to run.

TABLE 3.5: WOMEN AND MEN SERVING IN THEIR FIRST TERMS AS STATE
REPRESENTATIVES-ARE ABOUT EQUALLY AS LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN
RECRUITED AND/OR SUPPORTED BY PARTY LEADERS

Party Leaders' Reactions to Candidacy of Officeholder	State House	
	Women %	Men %
Recruited and/or supported[a]	73.2	76.5
Opposed	5.1	2.0
Divided, some supported and some opposed	10.1	7.8
Neutral, neither supported nor opposed	11.6	13.7
	100.0	100.0
Total	(138)	(51)

[a]See note for Table 3.4.

supported by party leaders. At every level of office, two-thirds or more
of the women say that party leaders sought them out and/or supported them
in their first bids for their present positions. Except for state senators,
few officeholders of either sex report that party leaders generally opposed
their candidacies, although significant proportions claim that party leaders
remained neutral or were divided in their reactions (Table 3.4).

To assess whether patterns have changed or remained the same for re-
cent entrants into office, Table 3.5 presents the reported reactions of
party leaders to the candidacies of those state representatives serving in
their first terms.[8] Analysis is confined to state representatives because
only among this group are there a sufficient number of officeholders
elected in partisan races. Among state representatives, women in their
first terms are about equally as likely as their male counterparts to say
that they were recruited or supported by party leaders. Also, women in
their first terms are fairly similar to female representatives generally in
their reports of party leaders' reactions to their candidacies. Thus, the
support which elected women receive from party leaders does not appear to
have changed recently, at least among state representatives.

The reactions of party leaders to officeholders' candidacies varied
by party (Table 3.6).[9] Republican officeholders of both sexes are more
likely than their Democratic counterparts to report that they were recruited
and/or supported by their party's leaders in their first bids for their
current offices. In both parties, female state senators more often than
male senators say that party leaders supported them, while female state
representatives less often than male representatives claim that they had

TABLE 3.6: AMONG LEGISLATORS OF BOTH PARTIES, PROPORTIONATELY MORE WOMEN THAN MEN IN STATE SENATES AND FEWER WOMEN THAN MEN IN STATE HOUSES WERE RECRUITED AND/OR SUPPORTED BY PARTY LEADERS

Party Leaders' Reactions to Candidacy of Officeholder	State Senate				State House			
	Democrats		Republicans		Democrats		Republicans	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Recruited and/or supported[a]	65.7	60.0	75.8	65.4	57.5	63.6	78.0	87.6
Opposed	17.1	17.1	0.0	11.5	8.9	10.3	3.4	0.0
Divided, some supported and some opposed	8.6	14.3	18.2	15.4	17.3	11.2	7.8	5.6
Neutral, neither supported nor opposed	8.6	8.6	6.1	7.7	16.4	15.0	10.7	6.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(35)	(35)	(33)	(26)	(214)	(107)	(205)	(89)

[a]See note for Table 3.4.

the support of party leaders. Nevertheless, the differences between Republican women and men are greater than those between Democratic women and men. Republican women are notably _more_ likely than Republican men to have had party support in senate races and notably _less_ likely than Republican men to have had party support in races for the state house.

RECRUITMENT BY PARTY LEADERS

While thus far we have examined general levels of party support for the candidacies of women and men, a similar picture emerges from an examination of the proportions of candidates actually recruited to run for office by party leaders (Table 3.7). Among state senators, county commissioners, and mayors, women more often than men report that they were approached by party leaders and encouraged to run in their first bids for

TABLE 3.7: EXCEPT FOR LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, WOMEN ARE AT LEAST AS LIKELY AS MEN TO HAVE BEEN RECRUITED BY PARTY LEADERS WHEN THEY FIRST RAN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Sought out and encouraged to run by party leaders	54.4	33.9	46.5	47.7	49.2	45.2	65.0	35.0	51.0	60.4
Total	(68)	(62)	(428)	(197)	(61)	(62)	(20)	(20)	(51)	(48)

TABLE 3.8: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES SERVING IN THEIR FIRST TERMS, WOMEN ARE AS LIKELY AS MEN TO HAVE BEEN RECRUITED BY PARTY LEADERS

	State House	
	Women %	Men %
Sought out and encouraged to run by party leaders	54.7	52.9
Total	(139)	(51)

their current offices. Among state representatives, women were as likely as their male counterparts to be recruited. Only among local council members have proportionately fewer women than men been recruited by party leaders. Across all offices, about one-half or more of women who ran in partisan races claim that party leaders sought them out and encouraged them to run.

Female state representatives in their first term are about equally as likely as male representatives in their first term to have been recruited by party leaders; however, women in their first term are slightly more likely than female representatives generally to report that party leaders sought them out and encouraged them to run (Table 3.8).

Table 3.9 presents the proportions of Democrats and Republicans

TABLE 3.9: AMONG DEMOCRATS AT EVERY LEVEL OF OFFICE, WOMEN ARE AS LIKELY OR MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE BEEN RECRUITED BY PARTY LEADERS

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Democrats										
Sought out and encouraged to run by party leaders	51.4	36.1	39.5	40.2	48.8	43.9	61.5	41.7	64.0	61.1
Total	(35)	(36)	(220)	(107)	(41)	(41)	(13)	(12)	(25)	(18)
Republicans										
Sought out and encouraged to run by party leaders	57.6	30.8	53.8	56.7	52.6	52.6	71.4	28.6	50.0	64.3
Total	(33)	(26)	(208)	(90)	(19)	(19)	(7)	(7)	(20)	(28)

recruited by their party's leaders. Among Democrats at every level of office, an equal or larger proportion of women than men were recruited by party leaders. Among Republicans, the pattern is less clear cut. Republican women state senators and mayors more often, Republican women county commissioners equally as often, and Republican state representatives and local council members less often than their male counterparts were recruited by party leaders.

PARTY SUPPORT AND RECRUITMENT OF CANDIDATES WHO WON ON FIRST ATTEMPT

Because officeholders were told to "think back to the first time you ran for the office you now hold" when answering questions about party leaders' reactions to their candidacies, the analysis thus far has included some individuals who lost as well as those who won their initial bids for office. Table 3.10 shows that, except for women state senators, about one-fifth of female and male state legislators lost the first time they ran for the seats they now hold. The fact that only about one-half as many women as men serving in state senates have been defeated in a prior bid for the office may have a variety of explanations.[10] Perhaps women who lose initial bids for state senate seats are less likely to run again than are men who lose their initial bids, or perhaps women who are not confident of winning rarely run for state senate seats. However, the fact that many women senators first ran in virtually hopeless situations but still won, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter, undoubtedly contributed to the low rate of defeat for women senators.

Table 3.11 indicates that the general findings on party support and recruitment for all state legislators, including legislators who ran unsuccessfully before winning their seats, hold true as well for legislators who won their first bids for office. Women state senators who won their first bids for office are more likely, and women state representatives almost as likely, as their male counterparts to report that they were

TABLE 3.10: AMONG STATE LEGISLATORS, WOMEN LESS OFTEN THAN MEN WERE DEFEATED IN PRIOR BIDS FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

	State Senate		State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Defeated in a prior bid for current office	9.9	20.6	19.1	23.1
Total	(71)	(68)	(446)	(199)

TABLE 3.11: AMONG LEGISLATORS WHO WON THEIR FIRST BIDS FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES, WOMEN STATE SENATORS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS TO HAVE BEEN RECRUITED AND/OR SUPPORTED BY PARTY LEADERS

	State Senate		State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Party leaders' reactions to candidacy of officeholder				
Recruited and/or supported[a]	71.2	62.5	69.0	74.7
Opposed	8.5	18.8	5.9	5.3
Divided, some supported and some opposed	11.9	14.6	11.8	8.7
Neutral, neither supported nor opposed	8.5	4.2	13.3	11.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(59)	(48)	(339)	(150)
Sought out and encouraged to run by party leaders	55.9	28.6	46.7	50.0
Total	(59)	(49)	(345)	(150)

[a]This response includes those who said that party leaders actively sought them out and encouraged them to run for office and/or those who said that party leaders supported their candidacies after they had decided to run.

supported in their candidacies or sought out and encouraged by party leaders to run for office.

Patterns of party support for first-term state representatives who won their first bids for office are almost identical to those for all state representatives in their first term (Table 3.12). Among first-term representatives who have never been defeated in a bid for a seat for the state legislature, women are equally as likely as men to have been recruited or supported by party leaders.

ELECTORAL SITUATIONS AND PARTY RECRUITMENT

Officeholders first ran for their current offices in a variety of different electoral situations. In order to examine the types of situations in which women successfully ran for office and the level of party involvement in recruiting the women who ran in various electoral situations, we asked officeholders a series of questions about the nature of the opposition they faced in their bids for office and the party affiliation of the prior occupant of the office.[11]

TABLE 3.12: AMONG FIRST-TERM STATE REPRESENTATIVES WHO WON THEIR FIRST
BIDS FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES, WOMEN ARE AS LIKELY AS MEN TO
HAVE BEEN RECRUITED AND/OR SUPPORTED BY PARTY LEADERS

	State House	
	Women %	Men %
Party leaders' reactions to candidacy of officeholder		
Recruited and/or supported[a]	75.7	75.0
Opposed	3.7	2.5
Divided, some supported and some opposed	8.4	7.5
Neutral, neither supported nor opposed	12.1	15.0
	100.0	100.0
Total	(107)	(40)
Sought out and encouraged to run by party leaders	57.9	57.5
Total	(107)	(40)

[a]See note for Table 3.11.

Four different electoral situations are characterized in Table 3.13.
All legislators in our study first ran in one of these situations.[12] The
electoral situations are ordered from the type of situation in which one
generally would expect a candidate to have the greatest chance of success
to the type of situation in which a candidate could be expected to have the
least chance of success, that is, from most favorable to least favorable.

The most favorable of the four situations is one in which the previous
occupant of the seat is from the candidate's own party but this incumbent
does not seek re-election. In such a situation, a strong candidate could
be expected to have a reasonably good chance of winning election. As Table
3.13 shows, the largest proportions of officeholders successful in their
initial bids for state legislative seats ran in races characterized by
these favorable electoral circumstances. More than one-half of female
representatives, male representatives, and male senators gained election
on their first attempts by running in contests in which their party had
controlled the seat in the immediate past and the incumbent had not sought
re-election. The proportion of female senators who ran in such situations
and won is somewhat smaller but still greater than two-fifths. Of those
who ran in favorable situations, about two-fifths to three-fifths report

TABLE 3.12:   AMONG FIRST-TERM STATE REPRESENTATIVES WHO WON THEIR FIRST
              BIDS FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES, WOMEN ARE AS LIKELY AS MEN TO
              HAVE BEEN RECRUITED AND/OR SUPPORTED BY PARTY LEADERS

	State House	
	Women %	Men %
Party leaders' reactions to candidacy of officeholder		
Recruited and/or supported[a]	75.7	75.0
Opposed	3.7	2.5
Divided, some supported and some opposed	8.4	7.5
Neutral, neither supported nor opposed	12.1	15.0
	100.0	100.0
Total	(107)	(40)
Sought out and encouraged to run by party leaders	57.9	57.5
Total	(107)	(40)

[a]See note for Table 3.11.

Four different electoral situations are characterized in Table 3.13. All legislators in our study first ran in one of these situations.[12] The electoral situations are ordered from the type of situation in which one generally would expect a candidate to have the greatest chance of success to the type of situation in which a candidate could be expected to have the least chance of success, that is, from most favorable to least favorable.

The most favorable of the four situations is one in which the previous occupant of the seat is from the candidate's own party but this incumbent does not seek re-election. In such a situation, a strong candidate could be expected to have a reasonably good chance of winning election. As Table 3.13 shows, the largest proportions of officeholders successful in their initial bids for state legislative seats ran in races characterized by these favorable electoral circumstances. More than one-half of female representatives, male representatives, and male senators gained election on their first attempts by running in contests in which their party had controlled the seat in the immediate past and the incumbent had not sought re-election. The proportion of female senators who ran in such situations and won is somewhat smaller but still greater than two-fifths. Of those who ran in favorable situations, about two-fifths to three-fifths report

TABLE 3.13: AMONG STATE LEGISLATORS WHO WON THEIR FIRST BIDS FOR OFFICE, THE LARGEST PROPORTIONS OF
WOMEN AND MEN WERE ELECTED TO OPEN SEATS PREVIOUSLY OCCUPIED BY INCUMBENTS OF THEIR PARTY[a]

Electoral Situation	State Senate		State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
#1 Prior incumbent of seat was from same party but respondent did not face incumbent in primary	44.6	53.2	56.0	50.7
Percent of these recruited by party leaders	[60.9]	[37.5]	[48.2]	[50.7]
#2 Prior incumbent of seat was from opposing party and respondent faced serious opposition in primary	8.9	17.0	15.5	14.0
Percent of these recruited by party leaders	[60.0]	[25.0]	[42.2]	[36.8]
#3 Prior incumbent of seat was from same party and respondent faced this incumbent in primary	12.5	23.4	14.2	18.4
Percent of these recruited by party leaders	[14.3]	[18.2]	[34.1]	[52.0]
#4 Prior incumbent of seat was from opposing party and respondent faced no serious opposition in primary	33.9	6.4	14.2	16.9
Percent of these recruited by party leaders	[73.7]	[33.3]	[58.1]	[56.5]
Total	(56)	(47)	(309)	(136)

[a]This situation is represented by electoral situation #1.

that they were recruited to run by party leaders. Female and male repre-
sentatives running in favorable electoral circumstances are about equally
as likely to say that they were recruited, while female senators are more
likely than their male counterparts to report recruitment by party leaders.

The next two electoral situations are neither particularly favorable
nor particularly unfavorable. In the first of these, the previous occu-
pant of the seat is a member of the opposing party and the candidate con-
fronts serious opposition in her/his own party's primary. The presence of
serious opposition in the candidate's primary is often an indication that
the winner of the primary has a reasonable chance of winning the general
election, despite the fact that the opposing party has controlled the seat
during the previous term. As Table 3.13 indicates, fewer than one of every

five legislators won an election in an electoral situation of this type. Proportionately fewer female senators than male senators ran and won in such situations, although female representatives ran and won in such circumstances as often as did their male counterparts. Party leaders more often recruited the women than the men who ran in these situations.

The other electoral situation which is neither a particularly favorable one, nor the most unfavorable one, appears third in Table 3.13. In this situation the previous occupant is from the candidate's party, indicating a possible party advantage in the district, but the occupant of the seat is seeking re-election, indicating that the candidate must run against an incumbent in the primary. Especially among state senators, proportionately fewer women than men first ran and were elected to office in such circumstances. Perhaps women are less likely to challenge incumbents of their own party, or perhaps they are just less likely to win when they do. As one might expect, party leaders were less involved in recruiting candidates who ran against incumbents of their own party than in other electoral situations, although a surprisingly large proportion of the male representatives who ran in such circumstances--about one-half--claim that they were recruited to run by party leaders.

The fourth and final electoral situation is the one in which the odds usually are strongest against the candidate emerging as the victor. In this situation, the previous occupant of the office is from the opposing party and the candidate faces no serious opposition in her/his party primary. While the lack of primary opposition might on the surface appear to be an advantage for the candidate, the degree of competition in a primary often serves as an indicator of the party's chances of victory in the general election.[13] When the opposing party controls the seat and no one challenges the lone candidate in a primary, the candidate generally is a long shot to win the election.[14] This is the classic "sacrificial lamb" situation. Among state representatives, women are about as likely as men to have made and won their first bids for state legislative office in this type of electoral situation. Fewer than one-fifth of female and male representatives initially ran and won in situations in which the other party had control of the seat and the candidate was unopposed in her/his primary.

Among state senators, however, very large sex differences are evident. Fully one-third of female senators, compared with a small handful of their male colleagues, made and won their first bids for senate seats in races that appear to have been sacrificial lamb situations. The fact that such a sizable proportion of women in state senates defied the odds and won election in the most adverse of electoral situations is particularly significant. Because relatively few women serve in state senates, our finding suggests that the proportion would be even smaller if a number of women had

not run and won in what probably appeared as hopeless situations. Not
surprisingly, a majority of officeholders who ran initially in sacrificial
lamb situations report that they were recruited to run by party leaders,
and the proportions recruited are much higher for women than for men among
state senators.

Electoral Situations Faced by Democrats and Republicans

Table 3.14 presents the proportions of state legislators from each party
who first ran and were elected in various types of electoral situations.

TABLE 3.14: AMONG STATE SENATORS OF BOTH PARTIES WHO WON THEIR FIRST BIDS FOR STATE SENATE SEATS, WOMEN
ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE WON RACES IN WHICH THEY APPEAR TO HAVE RUN AS
"SACRIFICIAL LAMBS"[a]

		State Senate				State House			
		Democrats		Republicans		Democrats		Republicans	
Electoral Situation		Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
#1	Prior incumbent of seat was from same party but respondent did not face incumbent in primary	53.3	48.3	34.6	61.1	54.9	55.9	57.1	45.6
	Percent of these recruited by party leaders[b]					[40.7]	[39.5]	[56.0]	[64.5]
#2	Prior incumbent of seat was from opposing party and respondent faced serious opposition in primary	10.0	17.2	7.7	16.7	14.2	13.2	17.0	14.7
	Percent of these recruited by party leaders[b]					[47.6]	[22.2]	[37.5]	[50.0]
#3	Prior incumbent of seat was from same party and respondent faced this incumbent in primary	16.7	27.6	7.7	16.7	17.9	17.6	10.2	19.1
	Percent of these recruited by party leaders[b]					[34.5]	[50.0]	[33.3]	[53.8]
#4	Prior incumbent of seat was from opposing party and respondent faced no serious opposition in primary	20.0	6.9	50.0	5.6	13.0	13.2	15.6	20.6
	Percent of these recruited by party leaders[b]					[45.0]	[55.6]	[69.6]	[57.1]
	Total	(30)	(29)	(26)	(18)	(162)	(68)	(147)	(68)

[a]Electoral situation #4 represents an apparent "sacrificial lamb" race.

[b]The small number of cases at the state senate level prevents an analysis of the proportion who were
recruited by party leaders in each type of electoral situation.

Across both parties, the proportions of women and men who first sought and won election to the state house in the four types of situations are quite similar. The exception is that Republican female representatives are somewhat more likely than their male counterparts to have run and won in the most favorable situation in which the prior occupant of the seat had been a member of their own party who was not seeking re-election, and they are somewhat less likely than their male counterparts to have run and won in the third situation in which they challenged an incumbent of their own party in the primary.

More striking differences appear among state senators of each party who won their first bids for senate seats. Among Democratic women, Democratic men, and Republican men, a plurality of senators ran and won in the most favorable of electoral circumstances in which the senator's party controlled the seat and the incumbent was not seeking re-election. However, among Republican women, a plurality--one-half--made their first bids for senate seats and won under the most adverse electoral circumstances in which the opposing party controlled the seat and there was no opposition in the woman's primary. Almost none of their Republican male colleagues first ran and won under the same circumstances. This pattern of more women than men running and winning in the least favorable electoral situation is also true for Democrats, although to a lesser degree. Almost three times the proportion of Democratic female senators as their male counterparts made their first bids for senate seats and won election in the most unfavorable electoral situations.

While there are too few cases at the state senate level to examine proportions of Democratic and Republican women and men in each type of electoral situation who were recruited by party leaders, such an examination is possible for state representatives (Table 3.14). Regardless of the sex of the candidate, Republicans generally are more likely than Democrats to claim that they were recruited by party leaders. However, female and male state representatives of the same party do differ to some degree.

Among Republican representatives who ran and won in the least favorable or sacrificial lamb situations, women are more likely than men to have been recruited by party leaders, while among Republican representatives who ran and won in more favorable electoral situations, women are less likely than men to have been recruited by party leaders. Among Democratic state representatives who ran and won in sacrificial lamb situations, women are less likely than men to have been recruited by party leaders, and among the Democratic state representatives who won in the most favorable electoral situations, women are about equally as likely as their male counterparts to have been recruited.

Electoral Situations Faced by First-Term Officeholders

Although the data are not presented, women legislators in their first term who won their first bids for office closely mirror women state legislators generally in the proportions who ran in each of the four types of electoral situations. The only notable difference is that women senators serving their first terms are slightly less likely than women senators overall to have run and won in the most favorable of electoral situations (38.9% of the eighteen women state senators in their first term ran and won in the most favorable electoral situation).

WOMEN RUNNING FOR "WOMEN'S SEATS"

One additional type of electoral situation merits attention. As more and more women are elected to political office, it is possible that some seats are becoming defined as "women's seats." Once a woman has broken through the traditional barriers and held an office for the first time, other women may be more likely to try to follow in her footsteps. Women in the same or the opposing party may challenge a female incumbent for the seat or may try to take her place when she retires. Party leaders also might show a greater propensity to recruit women in districts where another woman has paved the way by demonstrating that a woman candidate can win.

In order to test for the existence of "women's seats," we asked each state legislator whether the person who occupied her/his seat immediately prior to when she/he first ran for office was a woman or a man. Not surprisingly, since proportionately so few women have held state legislative seats until recently, very few legislators of either sex ran for seats previously held by women (Table 3.15). Nevertheless, more women than men, especially among state senators, first ran for a seat held by another woman.

Among state senators, the one man and three of the four women who sought seats previously held by women were recruited by party leaders to

TABLE 3.15: MORE WOMEN THAN MEN RAN FOR SEATS WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN HELD BY WOMEN

	State Senate		State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Ran for a seat previously held by a woman	7.6	1.8	12.8	10.2
Total	(66)	(57)	(390)	(167)

TABLE 3.16:   AMONG FIRST-TERM STATE LEGISLATORS WHO WON THEIR FIRST BIDS
FOR THE LEGISLATURE, WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE
RUN FOR SEATS PREVIOUSLY HELD BY WOMEN

	State Senate		State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Ran for a seat previously held by a woman	15.0	0.0	20.4	9.1
Total	(20)	(12)	(98)	(33)

run for office. Of the forty-eight female and seventeen male state repre-
sentatives who ran for seats previously held by women, proportionately
more of the women, 64.6%, than of the men, 52.9%, report that they were
recruited to run by party leaders. Party leaders apparently were more
active in recruiting the women who ran for "women's seats" than they were
in recruiting female representatives overall, of whom only 46.5% were re-
cruited (see Table 3.7). Both the Democratic and Republican parties con-
formed to this pattern.[15]

Data for state legislators who ran for their seats for the first time
in the most recent election suggest that the slight tendency for women to
run for "women's seats" may be increasing (Table 3.16). Much larger pro-
portions of these women sought seats formerly held by women than did women
legislators generally. Also, the gap between women and men in the pro-
portions who ran for "women's seats" is much larger for legislators who
ran for their seats for the first time in the most recent election than
for legislators generally.

EVALUATION OF PARTY SUPPORT

We asked officeholders to assess the importance of party support in
their decisions to run for the offices they now hold. Local and county
officials were asked whether the support of their political party was very
important, somewhat important, slightly important, or not at all important
in influencing their decisions to run for the first time. The format of
the question was different for state legislators. They were presented
with a list of nine factors and asked to select the three factors which
were most important in influencing their decisions to seek legislative
office.[16] Included in the list was political party support.

Officeholders at state and county levels attach greater importance to
party support than do mayors or local council members. Two-fifths of state

TABLE 3.17:   AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES, WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN MEN
TO RATE PARTY SUPPORT AS ONE OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT
FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT
OFFICES

Ranked as One of the Three Most Important Factors Influencing Decision to Run for Current Office[a]	State Senate		State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Support of political party	40.3	40.6	49.8	60.4
Total	(72)	(64)	(428)	(192)

[a]Legislators were given a list of nine factors and asked to select the
three factors that were most important in influencing their decisions to
run for their current offices. For a complete list of the factors, see
note "a" for Table 2.27.

senators select party support as one of the three most important factors
in their decisions to run, with no difference between women and men (Table
3.17). Even larger proportions of state representatives rank party support
among the top three factors, with somewhat fewer women than men perceiving
party support as critical. As Table 3.17 indicates, one-half of the women
and three-fifths of the men among state representatives have party support
in their top three choices. Among county commissioners, more than half
evaluate party support as important with fairly slight differences between

TABLE 3.18:   WOMEN AND MEN AT THE COUNTY LEVEL ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN AND MEN AT LOCAL LEVELS TO
RATE PARTY SUPPORT AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT
OFFICES

Importance of Political Party Support	County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	30.3	30.7	9.0	7.1	7.3	9.4
Somewhat important[a]	30.3	23.8	10.0	19.2	10.7	14.1
Not important/not applicable	39.4	45.5	81.0	73.7	82.0	76.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(99)	(101)	(100)	(99)	(150)	(149)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

TABLE 3.19: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES IN THEIR FIRST TERMS, FEWER WOMEN THAN MEN RATE PARTY SUPPORT AS ONE OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Ranked as One of the Three Most Important Factors Influencing Decision to Run for Current Office[a]	State Senate		State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Support of political party	37.5	40.0	54.0	61.2
Total	(24)	(15)	(137)	(49)

[a]Legislators were given a list of nine factors and asked to select the three factors that were most important in influencing their decisions to run for their current offices. For a complete list of the factors, see note "a" for Table 2.27.

the sexes (Table 3.18). In contrast, among local council members and mayors, about three-fourths of the women and four-fifths of the men say party support was not at all important (Table 3.18). These evaluations reflect, to some degree, the fact that mayors and local council members are least likely among officeholders to run in partisan races (see Table 3.1). Nonetheless, even when only those local and county officeholders who ran in partisan races are compared, mayors and local council members are less likely than county commissioners to claim that party support was important.

Like legislators generally, large proportions of state senators and representatives in their first terms attach considerable importance to party support, with about two-fifths of state senators and more than half of state representatives listing party support as one of the top three factors in their decisions to run (Table 3.19). As is true for state representatives generally, fewer female than male representatives in their first terms view party support as having been important.

Party differences in evaluations of the importance of party support are presented in Tables 3.20 and 3.21. Among Democratic state senators and state representatives, women are less likely than men to see party support as critical. The reverse is true for Democratic county commissioners, with proportionately more women than men attaching importance to party support. Among Republicans, female officeholders less often than their male counterparts evaluate party support as critical, with the exception of state senators. Among Republican state senators, women are more likely than men to list party support as one of the three most important factors that affected their decisions to seek senate seats.

TABLE 3.20: AMONG DEMOCRATIC STATE LEGISLATORS, WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN MEN TO RANK PARTY SUPPORT AS ONE OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Ranked as One of the Three Most Important Factors Influencing Decision to Run for Current Office[a]	State Senate				State House			
	Democrats		Republicans		Democrats		Republicans	
	Women $\bar{x}$	Men $\bar{x}$	Women $\bar{x}$	Men $\bar{x}$	Women $\bar{x}$	Men $\bar{x}$	Women $\bar{x}$	Men $\bar{x}$
Support of political party	34.2	44.7	47.1	36.0	42.5	49.0	57.5	73.9
Total	(38)	(38)	(34)	(25)	(59)	(104)	(207)	(88)

[a]Legislators were given a list of nine factors and asked to select the three factors that were most important in influencing their decisions to run for their current offices. For a complete list of the factors, see note "a" for Table 2.27.

TABLE 3.21: AMONG COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, DEMOCRATIC WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY AND REPUBLICAN WOMEN LESS LIKELY THAN THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS TO EVALUATE PARTY SUPPORT AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

	County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women $\bar{x}$	Men $\bar{x}$	Women $\bar{x}$	Men $\bar{x}$	Women $\bar{x}$	Men $\bar{x}$
Democrats						
Importance of political party support						
Very important	35.5	28.8	12.2	12.0	11.1	16.7
Somewhat important[a]	35.5	27.1	10.2	18.0	17.5	12.1
Not important/not applicable	29.0	44.1	77.6	70.0	71.4	71.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(62)	(59)	(49)	(50)	(63)	(66)
Republicans						
Importance of political party support						
Very important	25.8	43.8	8.1	2.3	6.3	5.0
Somewhat important[a]	25.8	25.0	13.5	23.3	7.9	21.7
Not important/not applicable	48.4	31.3	78.4	74.4	85.7	73.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(31)	(32)	(37)	(43)	(63)	(60)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

TABLE 3.20: AMONG DEMOCRATIC STATE LEGISLATORS, WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN MEN TO RANK PARTY SUPPORT AS ONE OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Ranked as One of the Three Most Important Factors Influencing Decision to Run for Current Office[a]	State Senate				State House			
	Democrats		Republicans		Democrats		Republicans	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Support of political party	34.2	44.7	47.1	36.0	42.5	49.0	57.5	73.9
Total	(38)	(38)	(34)	(25)	(59)	(104)	(207)	(88)

[a]Legislators were given a list of nine factors and asked to select the three factors that were most important in influencing their decisions to run for their current offices. For a complete list of the factors, see note "a" for Table 2.27.

TABLE 3.21: AMONG COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, DEMOCRATIC WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY AND REPUBLICAN WOMEN LESS LIKELY THAN THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS TO EVALUATE PARTY SUPPORT AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

	County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Democrats						
Importance of political party support						
Very important	35.5	28.8	12.2	12.0	11.1	16.7
Somewhat important[a]	35.5	27.1	10.2	18.0	17.5	12.1
Not important/not applicable	29.0	44.1	77.6	70.0	71.4	71.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(62)	(59)	(49)	(50)	(63)	(66)
Republicans						
Importance of political party support						
Very important	25.8	43.8	8.1	2.3	6.3	5.0
Somewhat important[a]	25.8	25.0	13.5	23.3	7.9	21.7
Not important/not applicable	48.4	31.3	78.4	74.4	85.7	73.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(31)	(32)	(37)	(43)	(63)	(60)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

TABLE 3.22: WOMEN AND MEN REPORT GREATER SUPPORT FROM PARTY LEADERS IN THEIR RE-ELECTION BIDS THAN IN THEIR INITIAL BIDS FOR OFFICE

Supportiveness of Party Leaders in Officeholder's Re-election Race Compared With Initial Race	State Senate		State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
More supportive	70.8	64.2	70.6	75.8
Equally supportive	27.1	28.3	26.8	22.3
Less supportive	2.1	7.5	2.6	1.9
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(48)	(53)	(313)	(157)

PARTY SUPPORT FOR INCUMBENTS

Observers of women in politics have suggested that party support for women candidates increases once they have demonstrated their viability by winning election.[17] Table 3.22 suggests that this observation holds for women as well as for men. Large majorities of state legislators who have sought re-election report that party leaders were more supportive of their re-election bids than of their initial bids for office. Women state senators are somewhat more likely, and women state representatives somewhat less likely, than their male colleagues to report that they received greater party support upon seeking re-election.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Party support clearly is viewed as an important factor by women who have successfully sought public office. Despite the fact that parties have weakened in recent years, a majority of women legislators report that party leaders are somewhat or very active in recruiting candidates in their districts. Large majorities of women who ran in partisan races for offices at all levels say that party leaders supported their initial bids for their present positions. About one-half or more of women officeholders across all levels of office report that they were specifically sought out by party leaders and encouraged to run. Except for state representatives and local council members, women officeholders in partisan races more often than their male counterparts were supported by party leaders in their bids for office. Similarly, except for state representatives and local council members, women more often than men were recruited to run for office by party leaders.

At first glance these findings seem to contradict much of what we heard at our meetings with women activists in New Jersey, California, and Minnesota about how parties often fail to assist women candidates.[18]

However, upon further reflection, these findings and the comments of women attending our consultations are quite consistent. The findings in this report are based on surveys of winners, those women who eventually were successful in their bids for public office even if they did not win the first time they ran. Eight of every ten women representatives and nine of every ten women senators in our study won their first bids for office. Our survey does not reflect the experiences of unsuccessful women candidates. Their experiences may be quite different, and many of the comments that we heard at our consultations suggest that the major parties may not be nearly as supportive of other women candidates as they are of those who eventually emerge victorious.

This observation in and of itself has great significance, for it suggests that party support often may be an important factor distinguishing between those women candidates who win and those who lose. Clearly, the support of the major parties is as critical to the women who win election as to the men who win election. In fact, party support may be more critical for women than for men. The finding that female officeholders more often than their male counterparts were recruited and supported by parties suggests that women may find it more difficult than men to run and win without the backing of their parties. The importance of party support for women who win partisan races suggests that the parties must be convinced to recruit, encourage, and support greater numbers of women to seek public office if the number of women elected officials is to increase significantly. In areas or situations where the major parties cannot be persuaded to place greater emphasis on recruiting and encouraging women, alternative mechanisms must be established to identify women to run for office and to support their candidacies.

One of the most striking findings to emerge from the analysis in this chapter is the finding that one-third of women state senators, but few men, first ran for office and won in the most adverse of electoral situations in which the other party controlled the seat and the odds of winning probably were very low. These women won the hard way. While they were successful in unfavorable electoral situations, by far the largest proportions of successful candidates for legislative seats among both women and men ran in situations in which their party controlled the seat and the incumbent was not seeking re-election.

The situations in which women run, then, are clearly critical to their likelihood of victory. It is important not only that women be recruited to run, but also that they be recruited to run in favorable electoral circumstances. Party leaders were most active in recruiting those women who ran in the most adverse circumstances. While party leaders also recruited many of the women who ran in favorable situations, the number of

women serving in elective office is likely to increase substantially only if much larger numbers of women run in electoral situations in which their probability of winning the general election is high. Party leaders must be convinced to recruit more women to run in such favorable electoral situations, or alternatively, recruitment mechanisms outside the party structures must be established.

Entry into elective office seems to be facilitated by encouragement and support from organizations. Particularly significant for women are:

- *the League of Women Voters. About one-half of women state legislators and many women officeholders at county and local levels have belonged to the League. The League often seems to have played an important role in inspiring and preparing women to seek and hold office.*
- *feminist organizations, such as the Women's Political Caucus (WPC) and the National Organization for Women (NOW). About one-half of women state legislators have belonged to a feminist organization. Feminist groups have provided informal or formal support for the candidacies of significant numbers of women state legislators.*

Organizations other than political parties can play an important role in recruiting and supporting women candidates for office. The contemporary women's movement has given birth to groups such as the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), the National Organization for Women (NOW), and the Women's Campaign Fund (WCF), whose goals include electing women to public office. Women also have a long history of participation in community, school, and religious organizations. Involvement in these organizations can provide women with opportunities to develop leadership skills. Additionally, such organizations can assist women politically by encouraging them to run for office and providing them with valuable campaign support. As increasing numbers of women enter the paid labor force, occupation-related groups also may play a role in encouraging and supporting women candidates.

This chapter examines the extent to which organizations generally, and women's groups and occupational associations specifically, encourage and support women's candidacies.[1] The chapter also discusses the importance of organizational support in women's decisions to seek their current offices.

OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONS

We asked female and male officeholders whether an organization other than a political party played a particularly important role in getting

TABLE 4.1: WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN MEN REPORT THAT AN ORGANIZATION PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN GETTING THEM TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
An organization played a particularly important role	31.5	23.9	33.9	16.3	19.8	6.9	16.0	6.0	22.5	16.6
Total	(73)	(67)	(434)	(196)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

TABLE 4.2: NEWCOMER WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN NEWCOMER MEN TO REPORT THAT AN ORGANIZATION PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN GETTING THEM TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES[a]

	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
An organization played a particularly important role	35.2	13.8	24.2	9.5	11.8	0.0	28.3	17.3
Total	(105)	(29)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

[a]Newcomers are defined as those officeholders who are serving in their first terms in their first elective offices.

them to run the first time for their current offices. As Table 4.1 indicates, the encouragement of organizations figured significantly in the decisions of many female officeholders. Proportionately more women than men attribute their decisions to run at least partly to the influence of organizations. One-sixth to one-third of female officeholders, more than twice the proportion of their male colleagues in some cases, report that an organization played an important role in getting them to run for their current offices.

Newcomer women are more likely than newcomer men to report that organizations played an important role in getting them to run for their current offices, with the gap between women and men larger than for officeholders generally (Table 4.2). Also, with the exception of newly elected mayors, female newcomers are somewhat more likely than female officeholders

TABLE 4.3: EXCEPT FOR LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, WOMEN CITE WOMEN'S GROUPS MORE OFTEN THAN ANY OTHER TYPE OF ORGANIZATION AS HAVING PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN GETTING THEM TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Type of Organization Which Played an Important Role in Getting Officeholder to Run the First Time For Current Office[a]	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Women's	17.8	0.0	23.5	0.0	7.9	1.0	5.0	1.0	6.6	0.0
American Association of University Women (AAUW)	2.7	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW)	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.7	0.0
League of Women Voters (LWV)	9.6	0.0	11.8	0.0	5.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	3.3	0.0
National Organization for Women (NOW)	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Women's Political Caucus (WPC)	5.5	0.0	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Political or partisan	0.0	4.5	2.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Business or professional	1.4	4.5	0.5	4.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	4.0	1.3	1.3
Teachers'	5.5	1.5	3.2	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Labor	2.7	3.0	0.5	1.5	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Governmental boards or commissions	2.7	1.5	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	2.0	2.6
School, church, or service	0.0	3.0	2.5	3.1	3.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.3	2.6
Race-related or ethnic	0.0	1.5	0.2	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Community	1.4	0.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	8.6	6.6
Environmental	2.7	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	4.5	2.5	3.1	2.0	2.0	4.0	1.0	2.0	1.3
Organization played a role, but organization not specified	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.7	2.0
Organization did not play a role	68.5	76.1	66.1	83.7	80.2	93.1	84.0	94.0	77.5	83.4
Total	(73)	(67)	(434)	(196)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

[a] Percentages do not add to 100 for legislators because legislators could name one or two organizations.

generally to claim that organizations were important. These findings for newcomers suggest that the importance of organizations in recruiting women to run for office is not diminishing and may, in fact, be increasing.

To the extent that organizations played an important role in the decisions of a larger proportion of elected women than men, the difference is due largely to women's organizations (Table 4.3). We asked officeholders to name the one or two organizations which played an important role

in getting them to run for their current offices. The proportions of fe-
male state legislators listing women's organizations--more than one-sixth
of female state senators and nearly one-fourth of female state representa-
tives--is striking compared with the small proportions of officeholders
naming other organizations. Only among women on local councils are women's
organizations less important than another type of organization. Although
the League of Women Voters cannot formally recruit or endorse candidates,
the League is the women's organization most frequently named by female
officeholders at all levels of office. At the state legislative level, a
notable number of women also single out the Women's Political Caucus as
having played an important role in getting them to run for office.

Aside from women's organizations, the types of organizations which
played a role in getting women officeholders to run are diverse. A small
proportion of officeholders, but fewer women than men, single out occupa-
tion-related groups as having been important. The role played by occupa-
tion-related groups divides along sex lines; among state legislators, women
are more likely than men to list teachers' associations as important,
whereas men are more likely than women to list business and professional
organizations as important. Community groups played a more important role
than other groups in getting both female and male local council members to
run for office, but women on local councils are slightly more likely than
men on local councils to report such support.

While the data are not presented, newcomers closely resemble all
officeholders in the organizations which they cite as important. Women's
organizations stand out in importance for newly elected female officeholders
at almost every level of office, and the League of Women Voters is the
organization most often listed. Community groups are strikingly important
for newcomer women on local councils; 13.2% of women compared to 3.8% of
the newly elected men report that community groups played an important
role in getting them to run for office.[2]

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The importance of women's organizations for female officeholders can
take different forms. Women can acquire leadership experience through
involvement in women's organizations. Women's organizations may iden-
tify female leaders in a community and encourage them to run for office.
These organizations also may provide a base of campaign workers and
make financial contributions to women candidates. In order to determine
the extent to which women's organizations have assisted women seeking pub-
lic office, we asked female officeholders whether they currently belong or
have belonged to women's organizations and whether, in their bids for of-
fice, they benefited from the support of women's groups.

TABLE 4.4: LARGE PROPORTIONS OF WOMEN OFFICEHOLDERS, PARTICULARLY AT STATE
AND COUNTY LEVELS OF OFFICE, BELONG TO WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

	State Senate Women %	State House Women %	County Commission Women %	Mayoralty Women %	Local Council Women %
Member of at least one major women's organization (AAUW, BPW, LWV, NOW, WPC)[a]	79.5	77.1	58.4	35.0	37.1
Member of at least one feminist organization (NOW, WPC, or other feminist group)[b]	57.5	45.8	28.7	9.0	6.6
Total[c]	(73)	(441)	(101)	(100)	(151)

[a] The category "major women's organizations" includes the American Associa-
tion of University Women (AAUW), the National Federation of Business and
Professional Women's Clubs (BPW), the League of Women Voters (LWV), the
National Organization for Women (NOW), and the Women's Political Caucus
(WPC).

[b] The category "feminist organizations" includes the National Organization
for Women (NOW), the Women's Political Caucus (WPC), and other feminist
groups. To some degree, the categories "feminist organizations" and
"major women's organizations" overlap.

[c] Officeholders were provided with a list of women's organizations and asked
to indicate whether or not they had ever belonged to any of the specific
organizations listed. Officeholders who did not answer the question are
excluded from the total.

Membership in Women's Organizations

The higher the level of office, the more likely female officeholders
are to belong to at least one major women's organization (Table 4.4).[3]
Proportions ranging from more than one-third of female officeholders at the
local level to nearly four-fifths of female state legislators belong to at
least one of the following major women's organizations: the American
Association of University Women (AAUW), the National Federation of Business
and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW), the League of Women Voters (LWV), the
National Organization for Women (NOW), the Women's Political Caucus (WPC).

Memberships in explicitly feminist organizations are more common at
the state than at the county or local level (Table 4.4).[4] Over one-half
of female state senators and nearly one-half of female state representa-
tives belong to the Women's Political Caucus, the National Organization for
Women, or other explicitly feminist groups. Much larger proportions of
women officeholders belong to feminist organizations than was true in 1977.[5]

TABLE 4.5: THE HIGHER THE LEVEL OF OFFICE, THE MORE LIKELY NEWCOMER WOMEN
ARE TO BELONG TO WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

	State House Women %	County Commission Women %	Mayoralty Women %	Local Council Women %
Member of at least one major women's organization (AAUW, BPW, LWV, NOW, WPC)[a]	75.5	69.7	41.2	45.3
Member of at least one feminist organization (NOW, WPC, or other feminist group)[b]	44.3	24.2	17.6	13.2
Total[c]	(106)	(33)	(17)	(53)

[a]See note "a" for Table 4.4.

[b]See note "b" for Table 4.4.

[c]Officeholders were provided with a list of women's organizations and asked to indicate whether or not they had ever belonged to any of the specific organizations listed. Officeholders who did not answer the question are excluded from the total.

This change suggests that over time, increasing numbers of women office-holders are identifying with the goals of the women's movement.

Newcomer women in county and local offices are more likely than all women in those offices to belong to at least one of the major women's or-ganizations (Table 4.5). Newcomer women among mayors and local council members also are more likely to be members of feminist groups than are fe-male mayors and local council members generally. Similar proportions of newly elected female state representatives and female state representatives overall are members of major women's organizations and feminist groups.

Table 4.6 provides a more detailed breakdown of the proportion of women officeholders who are members of specific women's organizations. Except for mayors, the League of Women Voters has the largest membership among women officeholders at every level of office. The National Federa-tion of Business and Professional Women's Clubs is the only organization other than the League to which substantial proportions of women county commissioners, mayors, and local council members belong. Nearly one-half of women state senators and more than one-third of state representatives are members of the Women's Political Caucus, and about one-third of women state senators and one-fifth of state representatives are members of the

TABLE 4.6: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, MORE WOMEN OFFICEHOLDERS BELONG TO THE
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS THAN TO ANY OTHER WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

Member of	State Senate Women %	State House Women %	County Commission Women %	Mayoralty Women %	Local Council Women %
American Association of University Women (AAUW)	32.9	25.4	12.9	6.0	7.9
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW)	30.1	28.6	28.7	18.0	15.9
Junior League	4.1	6.1	6.9	2.0	2.6
League of Women Voters (LWV)	57.5	49.7	34.7	17.0	17.9
National Organization for Women (NOW)	30.1	22.2	6.9	4.0	2.6
Women's Political Caucus (WPC)	47.9	37.4	13.9	5.0	3.3
An association of women public officials	42.5	44.2	21.8	9.0	11.3
Total[a]	(73)	(441)	(101)	(100)	(151)

[a]Officeholders were provided with a list of women's organizations and asked
to indicate whether or not they had ever belonged to any of the specific
organizations listed. Officeholders who did not answer the question are
excluded from the total.

National Organization for Women. However, relatively few elected women at
county and local levels are members of WPC or NOW. More than two-fifths
of women state legislators, one-fifth of women county commissioners, and
one-tenth of women mayors and local council members belong to an associa-
tion of women public officials.

Membership in women's organizations varies by party as well as by
level of office (Table 4.7). Generally speaking, the higher the level of
office, the more pronounced are the party differences, with Democratic
women more likely than Republican women to belong to women's organizations.
Except for county commissioners, Democratic women, especially Democratic
state legislators, are more likely than their Republican counterparts to
belong to one or more of the major women's organizations. Similarly,
Democratic women are more likely than Republican women to belong to femi-
nist groups, with particularly large party differences in membership oc-
curring among state legislators.

Encouragement from Women's Organizations

To determine the role which women's organizations played in motivating
officeholders' bids for office, we asked female officeholders whether any

TABLE 4.7:   AMONG STATE LEGISLATORS, DEMOCRATIC WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN REPUBLICAN WOMEN TO BELONG
             TO WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

	State Senate Women $\overline{\%}$	State House Women $\overline{\%}$	County Commission Women $\overline{\%}$	Mayoralty Women $\overline{\%}$	Local Council Women $\overline{\%}$
Democrats					
Member of at least one major women's organization (AAUW, BPW, LWV, NOW, WPC)[a]	89.5	83.5	58.7	36.7	38.1
Member of at least one feminist organization (NOW, WPC, or other feminist group)[b]	73.7	59.6	30.2	14.3	7.9
Total[c]	(38)	(230)	(63)	(49)	(63)
Republicans					
Member of at least one major women's organization (AAUW, BPW, LWV, NOW, WPC)[a]	68.6	70.1	62.5	32.4	37.5
Member of at least one feminist organization (NOW, WPC, or other feminist group)[b]	40.0	30.8	25.0	5.4	6.3
Total[c]	(35)	(211)	(32)	(37)	(64)

[a] See note "a" for Table 4.4.

[b] See note "b" for Table 4.4.

[c] Officeholders were provided with a list of women's organizations and asked to indicate whether or not they had ever belonged to any of the specific organizations listed. Officeholders who did not answer the question are excluded from the total.

women's organizations actively encouraged them to run for the first time for their current offices. The higher the level of office, the more likely that an officeholder received encouragement from a women's group (Table 4.8). About one-fourth of female state legislators and county commissioners and one-seventh of female mayors and local council members were actively encouraged by women's organizations.

Female newcomers are about equally or slightly more likely than all female officeholders to have been urged by women's organizations to run for office (Table 4.9). Only among mayors have notably fewer women newcomers than women officeholders overall received encouragement from women's groups.

TABLE 4.8: THE HIGHER THE LEVEL OF OFFICE, THE MORE LIKELY WOMEN ARE TO
HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT
OFFICES BY WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

	State Senate Women %	State House Women %	County Commission Women %	Mayoralty Women %	Local Council Women %
Actively encouraged by a women's organization	26.0	27.3	23.8	15.2	14.6
Total	(73)	(432)	(101)	(99)	(151)

TABLE 4.9: SIZABLE PROPORTIONS OF NEWCOMER WOMEN WERE ENCOURAGED TO RUN
THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES BY WOMEN'S
ORGANIZATIONS

	State House Women %	County Commission Women %	Mayoralty Women %	Local Council Women %
Actively encouraged by a women's organization	25.7	33.3	6.3	18.9
Total	(105)	(33)	(16)	(53)

Table 4.10 shows that a wide range of women's organizations helped
motivate female officeholders to run for their current offices. Feminist
groups, particularly the Women's Political Caucus, played the largest role
in encouraging female state legislators to run. About one-tenth of women
state legislators report that a feminist organization, generally the WPC,
actively encouraged them to run the first time for their current offices.
Women's general social service organizations, and in particular the League
of Women Voters, also were important for female officeholders; local and
county officeholders mention the League of Women Voters more often than
they mention other organizations as the women's group which helped motivate
them to run for office.[6]

Although the data are not presented, newcomers closely resemble all
officeholders in the types of women's groups which gave them encouragement,
except for two notable differences. The League of Women Voters played less
of a role among newly elected female state representatives than among all

TABLE 4.10: A WIDE RANGE OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED
WOMEN TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Type of Women's Organization Which Encouraged Officeholder[a]	State Senate Women %	State House Women %	County Commission Women %	Mayoralty Women %	Local Council Women %
Feminist[b]	11.0	9.0	3.0	1.0	0.7
National Organization for Women (NOW)	1.4	1.6	1.0	0.0	0.0
Women's Political Caucus (WPC)	11.0	8.1	2.0	1.0	0.7
General social service[c]	9.6	7.9	8.9	4.0	6.0
American Association of University Women (AAUW)	4.1	1.4	1.0	0.0	1.3
League of Women Voters (LWV)	8.2	6.5	7.9	4.0	4.6
Business or professional[d]	4.1	2.3	5.0	2.0	0.7
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW)	4.1	1.6	5.0	2.0	0.7
Partisan	1.4	6.5	5.9	3.0	0.7
Church-related	1.4	1.6	0.0	1.0	0.7
Race-related or ethnic	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.3
Other[e]	1.4	3.9	4.0	6.1	6.0
Encouraged by women's organization, but organization not specified	0.0	1.2	1.0	0.0	0.7
Women's groups did not play a role	74.0	72.7	76.2	84.8	85.4
Total	(73)	(432)	(101)	(99)	(151)

[a] Percentages do not add to 100 because officeholders could name one or two women's organizations which encouraged them to run the first time for their current offices.

[b] The category "feminist" includes the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Women's Political Caucus (WPC), and other explicitly feminist groups.

[c] The category "general social service" includes the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the Junior League, and the League of Women Voters (LWV).

[d] The category "business or professional" includes the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW) and occupation-related women's groups such as nurses' groups.

[e] The category "other" includes women's clubs, sororities, community-based women's groups, and other groups.

TABLE 4.11: AT STATE AND COUNTY LEVELS, DEMOCRATIC WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN REPUBLICAN WOMEN WERE ENCOURAGED TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES BY WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

	State Senate Women %	State House Women %	County Commission Women %	Mayoralty Women %	Local Council Women %
Democrats					
Actively encouraged by a women's organization	28.9	30.8	28.6	14.6	14.3
Total	(38)	(224)	(63)	(48)	(63)
Republicans					
Actively encouraged by a women's organization	22.9	23.6	18.8	16.2	15.6
Total	(35)	(208)	(32)	(37)	(64)

female state representatives. Also, partisan women's organizations generally played more of a role among newly elected female officeholders than among female officeholders generally.[7]

Both Democratic and Republican women received encouragement from women's organizations, but among state legislators and county commissioners, more Democratic women than Republican women received such encouragement (Table 4.11). The differences between Democratic and Republican women are due largely to party differences in support from feminist organizations (Table 4.12). Among state legislators, a substantial proportion of Democratic women but only a handful of Republican elected women were actively encouraged by feminist organizations to run for office. Nevertheless, Republican women are equally or more likely than Democratic women to have received encouragement from partisan women's organizations.

Support from Women's Organizations

In addition to encouraging women to run for office, women's organizations can provide a base of electoral support for women once they have declared their candidacies. We asked female officeholders whether any women's organizations formally or informally supported their candidacies after they had decided to run the first time for their current offices.

The higher the level of office, the more likely that an elected woman had received the support of a women's organization (Table 4.13). More than one-half of female state legislators received formal or informal support from women's groups when they ran for the state legislature. The significance of this support is particularly apparent when contrasted with the

TABLE 4.12: AMONG STATE LEGISLATORS, DEMOCRATIC WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN REPUBLICAN WOMEN WERE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES BY FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS

	State Senate Women %	State House Women %	County Commission Women %	Mayoralty Women %	Local Council Women %
Democrats					
Type of women's organization which encouraged officeholder					
Feminist[a]	21.1	13.8	3.2	2.1	0.0
National Organization for Women (NOW)	2.6	2.7	1.6	0.0	0.0
Women's Political Caucus (WPC)	21.1	12.5	1.6	2.1	0.0
Partisan	0.0	3.6	6.3	2.1	0.0
Total	(38)	(224)	(63)	(48)	(63)
Republicans					
Type of women's organization which encouraged officeholder					
Feminist[a]	0.0	3.8	3.1	0.0	1.6
National Organization for Women (NOW)	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Women's Political Caucus (WPC)	0.0	3.4	3.1	0.0	1.6
Partisan	2.9	9.6	6.3	5.4	0.0
Total	(35)	(208)	(32)	(37)	(64)

[a]The category "feminist" includes the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Women's Political Caucus (WPC), and other explicitly feminist groups.

overall support men received from organizations; the proportions of male state legislators receiving support from all types of organizations--51.6% of male senators and 44.5% of male representatives--are smaller than the proportions of female state legislators receiving support from women's organizations alone.[8]

The role of women's organizations in women's candidacies has not diminished and may have increased over time. Table 4.14 shows that with the exception of mayors, women newcomers are equally or more likely than all women officeholders to have been formally or informally supported by women's organizations.

Table 4.15 shows the types of women's organizations which formally or informally supported women who ran successfully for state legislative offices. The largest proportion of female state legislators, more than one-third of state senators and nearly one-third of state representatives,

TABLE 4.13: A MAJORITY OF WOMEN STATE LEGISLATORS RECEIVED FORMAL OR
INFORMAL SUPPORT FROM WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS WHEN THEY RAN
FOR THE STATE LEGISLATURE

	State Senate Women $\overline{x}$	State House Women $\overline{x}$	County Commission Women $\overline{x}$	Mayoralty Women $\overline{x}$	Local Council Women $\overline{x}$
Formally or informally supported by a women's organization[a]	54.4	53.9	18.0	9.0	6.6
Total	(68)	(425)	(100)	(100)	(151)

[a]Officeholders were asked whether any women's organizations formally or
informally supported their candidacies after they had decided to run the
first time for their current offices.

TABLE 4.14: A MAJORITY OF NEWCOMER WOMEN STATE REPRESENTATIVES RECEIVED
SUPPORT FROM WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS WHEN THEY RAN FOR THE
STATE LEGISLATURE

	State House Women $\overline{x}$	County Commission Women $\overline{x}$	Mayoralty Women $\overline{x}$	Local Council Women $\overline{x}$
Formally or informally supported by a women's organization[a]	53.9	25.0	5.9	11.3
Total	(102)	(32)	(17)	(53)

[a]See note for Table 4.13.

received support from feminist groups. Of the feminist groups, the Women's
Political Caucus is at the forefront. More than one-fourth of women serv-
ing in state senates and more than one-fifth of women serving in state
houses report that they were informally or formally supported by the Wom-
en's Political Caucus. Also, more than one-eighth of state senators and
almost one-tenth of state representatives received support from the National
Organization for Women. The National Federation of Business and Profes-
sional Women's Clubs supported one of every seven women who successfully
ran for state senate seats. Smaller proportions of female state legislators

TABLE 4.15: WOMEN MOST OFTEN NAMED FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS AS THE WOMEN'S GROUPS WHICH FORMALLY OR INFORMALLY SUPPORTED THEIR CANDIDACIES

Type of Women's Organization Which Supported Officeholder's First Candidacy for Current Office[a]	State Senate Women %	State House Women %
Feminist[b]	35.3	28.5
National Organization for Women (NOW)	13.2	8.2
Women's Political Caucus (WPC)	27.9	21.9
General social service[c]	11.8	9.6
American Association of University Women (AAUW)	5.9	4.0
League of Women Voters (LWV)	5.9	5.9
Business or professional[d]	14.7	6.1
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW)	11.8	5.2
Partisan	2.9	12.7
Church-related	1.5	1.2
Race-related or ethnic	0.0	0.9
Other[e]	0.0	9.9
Supported by women's organization, but organization not specified	0.0	1.9
Did not receive support from a women's organization	45.6	46.1
Total	(68)	(425)

[a] Percentages do not add to 100 because officeholders could name one or two women's organizations which supported their candidacies. County and local officeholders were not asked to specify which women's organizations gave them support.

[b] The category "feminist" includes the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Women's Political Caucus (WPC), and other explicitly feminist groups.

[c] The category "general social service" includes the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the Junior League, and the League of Women Voters (LWV).

[d] The category "business or professional" includes the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW) and occupation-related women's groups such as nurses' groups.

[e] The category "other" includes women's clubs, sororities, community-based women's groups, and other groups.

report that they received support from the American Association of University Women and the League of Women Voters, although League support would had to have come from individual members rather than from the organization. Although the data are not presented, newcomer women in state houses are about equally as likely as all women in state houses to have received support from feminist organizations and slightly less likely to have received

TABLE 4.16: AMONG STATE LEGISLATORS, DEMOCRATIC WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN
REPUBLICAN WOMEN RECEIVED FORMAL OR INFORMAL SUPPORT FROM
WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS WHEN THEY RAN FOR THE STATE LEGISLATURE

	State Senate Women %	State House Women %	County Commission Women %	Mayoralty Women %	Local Council Women %
Democrats					
Formally or informally supported by a women's organization[a]	73.5	60.7	21.0	8.2	6.3
Total	(34)	(219)	(62)	(49)	(63)
Republicans					
Formally or informally supported by a women's organization[a]	35.3	46.6	15.6	10.8	6.3
Total	(34)	(206)	(32)	(37)	(64)

[a]See note for Table 4.13.

support from general social service and business or professional women's
organizations.[9]

Organizational support for the candidacies of both women and men varies
by party. Nearly twice as many Democratic male legislators as Republican
male legislators report support from organizations of any kind.[10] The
partisan difference is also evident in the numbers of women legislators who
received support from women's organizations. As Table 4.16 indicates,
twice as many Democratic women as Republican women in state senates re-
ceived support from women's groups when running for office. This difference
between Democratic and Republican women successively decreases with level
of office, to the point where roughly equal proportions of Democratic and
Republican mayors and local council members received support from women's
groups.

Feminist organizations in particular gave different levels of support
to Democratic and Republican women (Table 4.17). More than three times as
many Democratic as Republican women in state senates, and more than twice
as many Democratic as Republican women in state houses, were supported by
feminist organizations such as the Women's Political Caucus or the National
Organization for Women. In contrast, similar proportions of Democratic

TABLE 4.17: AMONG STATE LEGISLATORS, DEMOCRATIC WOMEN ARE MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY AS REPUBLICAN WOMEN TO HAVE RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS WHEN THEY RAN FOR THE STATE LEGISLATURE

Type of Women's Organization Which Supported Officeholder's First Candidacy for Current Office	State Senate		State House	
	Democrats Women %	Republicans Women %	Democrats Women %	Republicans Women %
Feminist[a]	55.9	14.7	39.7	16.5
National Organization for Women (NOW)	23.5	2.9	12.3	3.9
Women's Political Caucus (WPC)	47.1	8.8	31.5	11.7
General social service[b]	11.8	11.8	10.0	9.2
American Association of University Women (AAUW)	5.9	5.9	3.2	4.9
League of Women Voters (LWV)	5.9	5.9	6.4	5.3
Business or professional[c]	17.6	11.8	6.4	5.8
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW)	11.8	11.8	5.0	5.3
Total	(34)	(34)	(219)	(206)

[a]The category "feminist" includes the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Women's Political Caucus (WPC), and other explicitly feminist groups.

[b]The category "general social service" includes the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the Junior League, and the League of Women Voters (LWV).

[c]The category "business or professional" includes the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW) and occupation-related women's groups such as nurses' groups.

and Republican state legislators report that they received formal or informal support from groups such as the AAUW, the BPW, or the League of Women Voters. The reasons for the differential levels of support for Democratic and Republican candidates are multifaceted. One reason may be that feminist organizations base their support for women candidates in part on candidates' stands on specific issues; these findings suggest that Democratic candidates more often than Republican candidates adopt issue positions which feminist organizations find acceptable.

In sum, although the League of Women Voters is the women's organization with the largest membership among women officeholders, feminist organizations have been more active than women's general social service organizations in recruiting and supporting women candidates, especially women candidates for the state legislature. Among feminist organizations, the Women's Political Caucus has played the biggest role. The fact that the League and the WPC have played somewhat different roles in helping women who seek public office may be related to the different legal status and objectives of each organization. The Women's Political Caucus has an

explicit goal of increasing the number of women in public office. It can
endorse and financially support the candidacies of women of all parties.
The League of Women Voters, because of its nonprofit status, is prohibited
by law from direct involvement in partisan races. Nevertheless, large
proportions of women officeholders have belonged to the League and have
acquired important leadership skills through League activities. When asked
which organizations, including organizations other than women's groups,
played a role in getting them to run for office, more women officeholders
name the League than the WPC, probably because they are interpreting this
question very broadly. However, when asked more specifically which women's
organizations endorsed or supported their candidacies, women legislators
far more often name the WPC than the League. These findings suggest that
both the League of Women Voters and the Women's Political Caucus have been
instrumental, but in different ways, in bringing women into public office.

OCCUPATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Occupational organizations can provide an important base of support

TABLE 4.18: WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF ORGANIZATIONS RELATED TO THEIR
OCCUPATIONS

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Member of organization related to occupation	44.9	72.7	48.8	68.8	43.6	56.4	34.0	59.0	46.4	50.3
Total	(69)	(66)	(432)	(192)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

TABLE 4.19: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, NEWCOMER WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN NEWCOMER MEN TO HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF
ORGANIZATIONS RELATED TO THEIR OCCUPATIONS

	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Member of organization related to occupation	56.2	71.4	42.4	52.4	58.8	54.5	41.4	57.7
Total	(105)	(28)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

- for those who seek public office. Potentially, occupational organizations can both encourage their members to run for office and deliver support for their candidacies in the form of workers, money, and votes. In order to determine whether the occupational organizations to which officeholders belonged played a role in their bids for office, we began by asking officeholders about their affiliations with organizations related to their occupations.

Membership in Occupational Organizations

Smaller proportions of women than men in public office have belonged to groups or organizations related to their occupations (Table 4.18). About one-third of female mayors and more than two-fifths of women in other elected offices have been members of occupational organizations. In contrast, at least one-half of male local and county officeholders and over two-thirds of male legislators have ties to organizations related to their occupations. Among newcomers as well, with the exception of mayors, women are less likely than men to have been affiliated with occupational groups (Table 4.19).

TABLE 4.20: AMONG STATE LEGISLATORS, PROPORTIONATELY MORE WOMEN THAN MEN HAVE BELONGED TO THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AND PROPORTIONATELY FEWER WOMEN THAN MEN HAVE BELONGED TO THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Member of[a]	State Senate		State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
National Education Association (NEA)	13.0	4.5	10.6	5.7
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)	0.0	4.5	1.2	0.0
American Bar Association	4.3	18.2	6.3	12.0
A predominantly female professional organization[b]	4.3	0.0	4.6	0.0
Labor union	0.0	3.0	0.9	5.2
Other occupational organization	24.6	39.4	24.3	41.7
Belonged to occupational organization, but organization not specified	0.0	3.0	2.3	4.2
Did not belong to an occupational organization	55.1	27.3	51.2	31.3
Total	(69)	(66)	(432)	(192)

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 because officeholders could name one or two occupational organizations to which they belonged. County and local officeholders were not asked to specify the occupational organizations to which they belonged.

[b]This category includes women's professional organizations and organizations associated with predominantly female professions such as nurses' associations, the Association of Legal Secretaries, the Home Economists' Association, and Women in Communications.

Women and men in public office generally have belonged to different occupational organizations (Table 4.20). These different organizational affiliations correspond closely to the sex-segregated nature of occupations. More than one-tenth of female legislators--twice the proportion of their male colleagues--have been members of the National Education Association (NEA). In contrast, only about one of every twenty female state legislators, compared with more than one-tenth of male state representatives and almost one-fifth of male state senators, belong to the American Bar Association (ABA). A similar pattern is found among local and county officeholders. Among local and county officeholders who belong to occupational organizations, more women than men are teachers while more men than women are lawyers or farmers.[11]

The differences between women and men in organizational affiliation are less pronounced among newly elected state representatives.[12] Just as similar proportions of female and male newcomers in state houses are lawyers, similar proportions--8.6% of the women and 10.7% of the men--are members of the American Bar Association. Like all female officeholders, female newcomers at state, county, and local levels of government are more likely than men to belong to teachers' organizations and organizations associated with predominantly female professions.

Encouragement from Occupational Organizations

Except in a relatively small number of cases, the occupational groups to which officeholders belonged did not play a role in encouraging officeholders to run the first time for their current offices (Table 4.21). More state legislators than other officeholders report that they were encouraged to run by groups related to their occupations; yet, fewer than one-tenth of state legislators report such encouragement. With few exceptions, newcomers are slightly more likely than officeholders overall to have been actively encouraged to run by an occupational group to which they

TABLE 4.21: FEW WOMEN OR MEN WERE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES BY THE OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS TO WHICH THEY BELONGED

| | State Senate | | State House | | County Commission | | Mayoralty | | Local Council | |
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Actively encouraged by occupational organization	9.1	7.4	8.0	10.0	4.0	5.0	3.0	2.0	3.3	3.3
Total	(56)	(68)	(412)	(190)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

TABLE 4.22: FEW NEWCOMER WOMEN OR NEWCOMER MEN WERE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES BY THE OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS TO WHICH THEY BELONGED

	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Actively encouraged by occupational organization	9.8	10.7	0.0	4.8	11.8	0.0	5.7	7.7
Total	(102)	(28)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

TABLE 4.23: WOMEN ARE EQUALLY OR LESS LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE RECEIVED FORMAL OR INFORMAL SUPPORT FOR THEIR CANDIDACIES FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH THEY BELONGED

	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Formally or informally supported by occupational organization[a]	21.5	27.9	21.7	24.5	8.9	19.8	6.0	5.0	7.3	4.6
Total	(65)	(68)	(406)	(188)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(151)

[a]Officeholders were asked whether groups related to their occupations and to which they belonged had formally or informally supported their candidacies after they had decided to run the first time for their current offices.

TABLE 4.24: NEWCOMER WOMEN ARE ABOUT AS LIKELY OR MORE LIKELY THAN NEWCOMER MEN TO HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED IN THEIR CANDIDACIES BY THE OCCUPATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH THEY BELONGED

	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Formally or informally supported by occupational organization[a]	20.4	21.4	12.1	14.3	23.5	0.0	7.5	7.7
Total	(98)	(28)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

[a]See note for Table 4.23.

belonged (Table 4.22). The largest difference between female and male new-comers is that more than one-tenth of newly elected female mayors, but no newly elected male mayors, received encouragement from organizations related to their occupations. In general, however, whether among newcomers or all officeholders, few women or men were actively encouraged to run for their current offices by the occupational groups to which they belonged.

Support from Occupational Organizations

Although only a few officeholders were actively encouraged to run for their current offices by the occupational groups to which they belonged, a much larger proportion of officeholders received support from such organizations once they had decided to run (Table 4.23). The higher the level of office, the larger is the proportion of women officeholders who report that their candidacies were formally or informally supported by the occupational organizations to which they belonged. However, at state and county levels,

TABLE 4.25: WOMEN STATE LEGISLATORS NAME THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION MORE FREQUENTLY THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE OCCUPATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN MEMBERS AS AN ORGANIZATION WHICH SUPPORTED THEIR CANDIDACIES

Type of Occupational Organization Which Supported Officeholder's First Candidacy for Current Office[a]	State Senate		State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
National Education Association (NEA)	9.2	4.4	5.2	2.1
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)	0.0	1.5	0.7	0.0
American Bar Association	0.0	1.5	0.7	0.5
A predominantly female professional organization[b]	3.1	0.0	2.0	0.0
Labor union	0.0	1.5	1.0	3.2
Other	9.2	17.6	8.9	11.2
Supported by occupational organization, but organization not specified	0.0	2.9	4.4	8.0
Did not receive support from an occupational organization	78.5	72.1	78.3	75.5
Total	(65)	(68)	(406)	(188)

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 because officeholders could name one or two occupational groups to which they belonged which supported their candidacies. County and local officeholders were not asked to specify which of the occupational organizations to which they belonged gave them support.

[b]This category includes women's professional organizations and organizations associated with predominantly female professions such as nurses' associations, the Association of Legal Secretaries, the Home Economists' Association, and Women in Communications.

somewhat fewer women than men received this support. Occupational groups supported the candidacies of one-fifth of female state legislators compared with one-fourth of male state legislators. Only one-half as many women as men on county commissions report that they received support from the occupational groups to which they belonged.

These differences between women and men cannot be fully explained by the fact that fewer women than men belong to groups related to their occupations. Fewer female than male mayors and local council members belong to such groups, yet slightly more women than men in these offices received the support of occupational groups during their candidacies. Furthermore, despite the fact that, except for mayors, proportionately fewer newcomer women than newcomer men belonged to organizations related to their occupations, roughly equal proportions of newcomer women and men, with the exception of newly elected mayors, received the support of these occupational groups during their candidacies (Table 4.24). Among newcomer mayors, nearly one-fourth of the women and none of the men received the support of the occupational organizations to which they belonged, even though the women and men were about equally likely to have belonged to such groups.

The only specific group named by notable proportions of female officeholders as an occupational organization to which they belonged and from which they also received support is the National Education Association (Table 4.25). Female newcomers in state houses also mentioned the NEA more frequently than any other single organization as an occupational group which gave them support.[13]

EVALUATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Organizations--whether occupation-related organizations, women's organizations, or other organizations--encouraged and supported a substantial proportion of officeholders during their candidacies. We asked officeholders to evaluate the importance of this organizational support in their decisions to run for their current offices.

Legislators' Evaluations

We presented legislators with a list of nine factors and asked legislators to select the three factors which were most important in influencing their decisions to seek legislative office.[14] Included in the list of factors were the support of occupation-related organizations and the support of other organizations. The support of women's organizations also was included as a factor in the list of factors presented to female officeholders.

Table 4.26 shows that fewer women than men--about one-fifth of female state legislators and about one-third of male state legislators--rank the support of organizations other than occupational and women's organizations

TABLE 4.26: EXCEPT FOR THE SUPPORT OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS, WOMEN LESS OFTEN THAN MEN RATE THE
SUPPORT OF ORGANIZATIONS AS ONE OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR
DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Ranked as One of the Three Most Important Factors Influencing Decision to Run for Current Office[a]	State Senate		State House		Newcomers State House	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Support of women's organizations[b]	8.3	n.a.	13.6	n.a.	15.7	n.a.
Support of occupation-related organizations	11.1	17.2	12.1	18.8	15.7	10.7
Support of other organizations[c]	23.6	34.4	20.8	30.2	18.6	35.7
Total	(72)	(64)	(428)	(192)	(102)	(28)

[a] Legislators were given a list of nine factors and asked to select the three factors that were most important in influencing their decisions to run for their current offices. For a complete list of the factors, see note "a" for Table 2.27.

[b] This category is not applicable for male legislators because they were not asked to evaluate the factor "support of women's organizations."

[c] Excludes women's organizations and occupation-related organizations.

among the top three factors that most influenced their decisions to run.
Similarly, fewer female than male state legislators claim that the support
of occupational organizations to which they belonged was one of the three
major factors in their decisions to run for office. However, almost one-
tenth of women senators and more than one-eighth of women representatives
evaluate the support of women's organizations as one of the most important
factors influencing their decisions to seek office.

Women newcomers among state representatives are about equally as likely
as women representatives generally to rate the support of occupational,
women's, and other organizations as among the most important factors in
their decisions to run (Table 4.26). However, unlike the pattern for all
representatives, a larger proportion of newcomer women than newcomer men
rank the support of occupational organizations as important.

County and Local Officeholders' Evaluations

County and local officeholders were asked in a somewhat different man-
ner whether the support of organizations was important in influencing their
decisions to run the first time for their current offices. They were asked
to rate organizational support as very important, somewhat important,
slightly important, or not at all important. Women officials also were
asked to evaluate the importance of the support of women's organizations.

TABLE 4.27: AT COUNTY AND LOCAL LEVELS, WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN
TO EVALUATE THE SUPPORT OF ORGANIZATIONS AS IMPORTANT IN
THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT
OFFICES

Importance of Support of Organizations	County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	11.0	2.0	10.1	3.0	8.7	10.1
Somewhat important[a]	6.0	5.0	4.0	2.0	11.4	4.0
Not important/not applicable	83.0	93.1	85.9	95.0	79.9	85.9
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(100)	(101)	(99)	(100)	(149)	(149)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

TABLE 4.28: MORE NEWCOMER WOMEN THAN NEWCOMER MEN AT COUNTY AND LOCAL
LEVELS RATE THE SUPPORT OF ORGANIZATIONS AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR
DECISIONS TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Support of Organizations	County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	18.2	0.0	11.8	0.0	13.5	5.9
Somewhat important[a]	3.0	9.5	0.0	0.0	13.5	5.9
Not important/not applicable	78.8	90.5	88.2	100.0	73.1	88.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(21)	(33)	(17)	(22)	(52)	(51)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

Few officeholders of either sex at county and local levels report that
the support of organizations was of any importance in their decisions to
seek office (Table 4.27). However, among mayors and county commissioners,
larger proportions of women than men claim that the support of organiza-
tions was very important. Similarly, among newcomers at all levels of of-
fice, more women than men evaluate the support of organizations as very
important (Table 4.28). However, women newcomers among county commissioners

TABLE 4.29:   FEW WOMEN IN COUNTY AND LOCAL OFFICES EVALUATE THE SUPPORT OF
              WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN
              THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Support of Women's Organizations	County Commission Women %	Mayoralty Women %	Local Council Women %
Very important	5.0	5.0	2.0
Somewhat important[a]	8.9	3.0	3.3
Not important/not applicable	86.1	92.0	94.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(101)	(100)	(151)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

TABLE 4.30:   FEW NEWCOMER WOMEN IN COUNTY AND LOCAL OFFICES EVALUATE THE
              SUPPORT OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR
              DECISIONS TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Support of Women's Organizations	County Commission Women %	Mayoralty Women %	Local Council Women %
Very important	9.1	5.9	1.9
Somewhat important[a]	9.1	0.0	7.5
Not important/not applicable	81.8	94.1	90.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(33)	(17)	(53)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

and local council members are only slightly more likely, and women new-
comers among mayors no more likely, than women officeholders generally to
view organizational support as important. Small proportions of women re-
port that the support of women's organizations was very important or some-
what important in their decisions to run for their current offices (Table
4.29). Because few women in local and county offices report that they
were supported by women's organizations, this finding suggests that the
women who did receive the support of women's organizations valued that
support.

Newcomer women on county commissions and local councils are slightly more likely than all women in those offices to report that the support of women's organizations had an impact on their decisions to run for office (Table 4.30). This finding corresponds to the fact that more women newcomers than all women in those offices received encouragement or support from women's groups.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Organizations have been a source of encouragement and support for many women interested in serving in elected public office. Women's organizations in particular have taken the lead in recruiting and promoting women for public office. Women's organizations actively encouraged more than one-fourth of women state legislators to run for office, and women's organizations formally or informally supported the candidacies of over half of the women who ran successfully for state legislative seats.

This key role which women's organizations played in recruiting and supporting many of the women who currently are holding office reflects the potential effectiveness of women organizing to support women in politics. Women state legislators most often named the Women's Political Caucus (WPC), and to a lesser extent the National Organization for Women (NOW), as the groups which formally or informally supported their candidacies. The Women's Political Caucus also is the women's organization which actively encouraged the largest proportion of women state legislators to run for their offices. An increasing number of women officeholders are members of the Women's Political Caucus, the National Organization for Women, and other feminist organizations. About one-half of women legislators and more than one-fourth of county commissioners, a sizable increase since 1977, belong to feminist groups.

More long-standing women's organizations, particularly the League of Women Voters, also have been instrumental in stimulating women to run for state as well as local and county elected offices. The largest proportions of women report that the League of Women Voters was the one organization or one of two organizations which played a particularly important role in getting them to run for office. This finding suggests that participation in a group such as the League can provide women with the political know-how and leadership experiences which can ultimately motivate or qualify them to run for office. Half of the women in state legislatures are or have been members of the League of Women Voters. The League also has one of the largest, if not the largest, membership of any women's organization among women in county and local elected positions.

The role which women's organizations play in motivating and supporting women to run for elected public office helps distinguish the routes which

women and men take into public office. Across all levels of office, larger proportions of women than men claim that an organization other than a political party played a particularly important role in getting them to run the first time for their current offices. Women's groups are primarily responsible for this difference between women and men.

Women's organizations are all the more important for bringing women into public office because so few women receive support from traditional organizational structures such as political parties and the occupational organizations to which they belong. Occupational organizations played a minor role in officeholders' bids for office and played less of a role for women than for men. Fewer female officeholders than male officeholders belong to occupational organizations, and generally fewer female officeholders than male officeholders, received formal or informal support from these occupational groups when running for office.

Organizations played a greater role in newcomer women's bids for office than in the bids of women officeholders generally, suggesting that organizations are increasingly playing a stronger role in women's campaigns. In general, an about equal or larger proportion of women newcomers than of women officeholders overall are members of at least one major women's organization and members of at least one feminist organization. Newcomer women generally are equally or more likely than all women in elected office to have been motivated to run in part by organizations, supported by the occupational organizations to which they belonged, and encouraged to run and supported by women's organizations. Corresponding to this greater organizational support for newcomers, newcomer women are generally more likely than all women to evaluate the support of organizations as important.

The need for organizations--women's groups as well as other organizations--to continue to increase their efforts to identify women leaders and support them to run for office is evidenced by the fact that legislators more often choose factors other than the support of organizations as among the top three factors that influenced their decisions to run for office. When officeholders are asked about the support of organizations independent of other factors, as was the case with county and local officeholders, those who have had organizational support rate that support highly.

Clearly, the efforts of organizations in general and women's organizations in particular have been effective in helping many of the women currently serving in office to move into their current positions. The new organizations created by women to support women have great potential--as yet only partially realized--to cultivate and promote women as political leaders.

> Factors other than those considered in previous chapters are critical
> in facilitating women's entry into elective office. These factors
> include:
>
>   ▸sufficient financial resources, especially for those
>   running at the state legislative level
>   ▸a loyal group of friends and supporters
>   ▸concern with public policy issues
>   ▸confidence in one's abilities to hold office
>   ▸the inner strength to combat discrimination

Other factors besides those considered in previous sections may influence
decisions to run for office. Several of these are examined in this chap-
ter. We also review the reasons which officeholders themselves give for
their decisions to run for public office.

MONEY

During the past decade, the costs of campaigning for many offices
have skyrocketed. While campaign expenses vary from state to state and
from office to office, most political observers agree that money is a key
ingredient for a successful campaign. U.S. House Speaker Tip O'Neill was
once quoted as saying, "There are four parts to any campaign. The candi-
date, the issues of the candidate, the campaign organization, and the money
to run the campaign with. Without money, you can forget the other three."[1]

Observers of women's campaigns have suggested that women candidates
often have greater difficulty raising money than men do, both because women
are not well integrated into male-dominated financial networks and because
they find it more difficult than men to ask for money for themselves.[2] As
a result, one might expect that money would be a more important considera-
tion for women in making a decision to run for office than it would be for
men.

Because so much recent attention has been devoted to the increasing
costs of campaigns, the findings in Table 5.1 are somewhat surprising.
About one-third to two-fifths of state legislators and large majorities of
officeholders at county and local levels claim that having sufficient finan-
cial resources to conduct a viable campaign was not an important considera-
tion in their decisions to run for their current offices. Only about one-
fifth to one-third of legislators and much smaller proportions of county

TABLE 5.1: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN MEN RATE MONEY AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "Assurance that I would have sufficient financial resources to conduct a viable campaign"[a]	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	33.8	20.6	26.5	21.0	13.9	8.9	10.0	3.0	6.0	2.0
Somewhat important	33.8	33.8	37.9	34.0	25.7	17.8	5.0	14.1	11.9	9.3
Not important/not applicable	32.4	45.6	35.6	45.0	60.4	73.3	85.0	82.8	82.1	88.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(71)	(68)	(430)	(200)	(101)	(101)	(100)	(99)	(151)	(150)

[a] In this and subsequent tables in this chapter, the precise wording of the factors which officeholders were asked to evaluate is placed in quotation marks.

TABLE 5.2: EXCEPT FOR MAYORS, NEWCOMER WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN NEWCOMER MEN RATE MONEY AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES[a]

Importance of "Assurance that I would have sufficient financial resources to conduct a viable campaign"	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	31.7	34.5	15.2	28.6	17.6	0.0	7.5	5.8
Somewhat important	41.3	34.5	33.3	4.8	0.0	31.8	15.1	3.8
Not important/not applicable	26.9	31.0	51.5	66.7	82.4	68.2	77.4	90.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(104)	(29)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

[a] Newcomers are defined as those officeholders who are serving in their first terms in their first elective offices.

and local officials report that money was a very important consideration. In part, these proportions probably reflect the fact that campaign expenses for most offices at county and local levels and for many state legislative seats are still low enough that they are not a paramount concern for most individuals who consider bids for these offices. However, the small proportions who report that money was an important consideration may also reflect the fact that many candidates do not consider the costs of seeking office until after they have decided to run.

Table 5.2 suggests that financial considerations are becoming in-
creasingly important for candidates. Except for men serving on local coun-
cils, newcomers are more likely than all officeholders to claim that having
sufficient financial resources was a very or somewhat important factor in
their decisions to run for office.

The evidence indicates that women perceive money to be a greater po-
tential problem than do men. Except for mayors, women serving in all offices
are more likely than their male counterparts to say that having financial
resources sufficient to conduct a viable campaign was a somewhat or very
important consideration in their decisions to run (Table 5.1). Differences
in responses for women and men are greatest at the state senate level where
campaign expenses also are greatest. One-third of female state senators,
compared with only one-fifth of male senators, claim that money was a very
important consideration in their decisions to run for office. Except for
mayors, newcomer women also are more likely than newcomer men to report
that having financial resources was a factor of some importance (Table 5.2).

SUPPORTERS

If money is the first critical resource for a successful campaign,
then people are the second. A candidate needs a large group of friends and
supporters who will do much of the work of the campaign and provide con-
tinual encouragement for the candidate.

Table 5.3 indicates that both women and men are far more likely to
view a loyal group of friends and supporters as important in their decisions
to run for office than they are to view money as important. Three-fourths
or more of state legislators and one-half to two-thirds of county and local
officials report that having a loyal group of supporters was a very important

TABLE 5.3: WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO RATE HAVING A LOYAL GROUP OF FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS AS
VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "Having a loyal group of friends and supporters behind me"	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	87.7	80.6	82.9	76.0	70.3	68.0	70.0	64.0	62.7	51.7
Somewhat important	11.0	16.4	13.9	20.0	18.8	21.0	21.0	26.0	23.3	31.8
Not important/not applicable	1.4	3.0	3.2	4.0	10.9	11.0	9.0	10.0	14.0	16.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(73)	(67)	(438)	(200)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(150)	(151)

TABLE 5.4: EXCEPT FOR STATE REPRESENTATIVES, NEWCOMER WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN NEWCOMER MEN RATE HAVING A
LOYAL GROUP OF FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS AS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR
CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "Having a loyal group of friends and supporters behind me"	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Woman %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	81.9	89.7	66.7	55.0	76.5	59.1	64.2	53.8
Somewhat important	12.4	6.9	21.2	25.0	23.5	18.2	+ 15.1	36.5
Not important/not applicable	5.7	3.4	12.1	20.0	0.0	22.7	20.8	9.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(105)	(29)	(33)	(20)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

consideration in their decisions to seek office. Women are more likely
than men to say that supporters were very important.

Newcomer women do not differ significantly from women officeholders
in general in their perceptions of the importance of a loyal group of sup-
porters (Table 5.4). Except among state representatives, newcomer women
are more likely than newcomer men to report that having a loyal group of
supporters was a very important factor in their decisions to run for
office.

FLEXIBLE OCCUPATION

Like money and people, time is a resource that is critical to a suc-
cessful campaign. A candidate must have sufficient time during the cam-
paign to get the campaign's message across to the people. Occupation is
one of the factors that affects the amount of time a candidate has avail-
able for campaigning. An attorney or businessperson who can take a leave
of absence from a firm or adjust work hours to the campaign schedule has
a great advantage over an individual who has a job with an inflexible leave
policy and work schedule. Moreover, those with flexible jobs also have an
advantage once elected. They do not experience conflicts of the same mag-
nitude between the responsibilities of their elected positions and their
occupations as do those with inflexible jobs.

We asked officeholders how important having an occupation that would
allow them sufficient time and flexibility to hold office was in their
decisions to run for office. About two-fifths to two-thirds of women and
men across the various offices claim that a flexible occupation was very
important (Table 5.5). These proportions are larger than the proportions
who report that having sufficient financial resources was very important

TABLE 5.5: WOMEN LESS OFTEN THAN MEN RATE HAVING A FLEXIBLE OCCUPATION AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "Having an occupation that would allow me sufficient time and flexibility to hold office"	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	48.6	63.2	43.5	59.6	57.0	67.3	58.6	62.6	45.3	38.7
Somewhat important	13.9	29.4	19.2	27.8	17.0	17.8	24.2	24.2	21.3	38.0
Not important/not applicable	37.5	7.4	37.3	12.6	26.0	14.9	17.2	13.1	33.3	23.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(72)	(68)	(432)	(198)	(100)	(101)	(99)	(99)	(150)	(150)

TABLE 5.6: NEWCOMER WOMEN LESS OFTEN THAN NEWCOMER MEN RATE HAVING A FLEXIBLE OCCUPATION AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "Having an occupation that would allow me sufficient time and flexibility to hold office"	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	44.2	62.1	57.6	57.1	56.3	63.6	50.9	46.2
Somewhat important	19.2	27.6	21.2	23.8	25.0	22.7	17.0	34.6
Not important/not applicable	36.5	10.3	21.2	19.0	18.8	13.6	32.1	19.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(104)	(29)	(33)	(21)	(16)	(22)	(53)	(52)

but somewhat smaller than the proportions who report that having a loyal group of supporters was very important. Unlike the pattern for the other two resources, women are less likely than men to view a flexible occupation as important in their decisions to run. Two-thirds of women legislators and local council members and three-fourths of women county commissioners, compared with much larger proportions of their male counterparts, report that having a flexible occupation was a very or somewhat important consideration in their decisions to seek office. Only among mayors are women and men about equally likely to say that having a flexible occupation was of some importance.

In part, these differences stem from the fact that smaller numbers of women than men were employed outside the home at the time they ran for

office. However, the differences between women and men also are due to differences in the occupations of the two sexes. As discussed in Chapter 1, women are more likely than men to be nurses, teachers, and clerical workers--jobs with little flexibility in leaves of absence and work hours. Men are more likely than women to be lawyers and managers/administrators--jobs in which flexibility of work hours and leaves of absence are more common.

Newcomers among women public officials differ little from women officeholders overall in their evaluations of the importance of a flexible occupation (Table 5.6). Except for county commissioners, newcomer women are less likely than newcomer men to report that having a flexible occupation was a somewhat or very important consideration in their decisions to run.

ISSUES

One might expect that public policy issues often play a role in motivating people, and perhaps particularly women, to run for office. Prior research on women's involvement in politics has suggested that women's participation is more often motivated by public-serving considerations, while men's participation is more often motivated by self-serving considerations.[3] This research would suggest that concern over issues would be more important to women's decisions to run for office than to men's.

As Table 5.7 indicates, a majority of officeholders at all levels of office report that a concern with one or two particular public policy issues was somewhat or very important in their decisions to run for office. Moreover, issues appear to have played a major role in motivating the candidacies of proportionately more women than men. Women more often than men report that a concern with issues had a very important influence on

TABLE 5.7: WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO REPORT THAT A CONCERN WITH PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES WAS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "My concern about one or two particular public policy issues"	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	44.4	19.1	32.4	28.5	43.0	33.0	42.4	36.0	41.3	33.3
Somewhat important	29.2	39.7	35.7	39.0	26.0	32.0	24.2	22.0	24.0	28.7
Not important/not applicable	26.4	41.2	31.9	32.5	31.0	35.0	33.3	42.0	34.7	38.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(72)	(68)	(426)	(200)	(100)	(100)	(99)	(100)	(150)	(150)

TABLE 5.8: NEWCOMER WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN NEWCOMER MEN TO REPORT THAT A CONCERN WITH PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES WAS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "My concern about one or two particular public policy issues"	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	35.6	31.0	56.3	28.6	35.3	40.9	43.4	30.8
Somewhat important	36.6	31.0	21.9	28.6	47.1	22.7	35.8	25.0
Not important/not applicable	27.7	37.9	21.9	42.9	17.6	36.4	20.8	44.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(101)	(29)	(32)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

their decisions to seek office, with the greatest differences occurring between female and male state senators, county commissioners, and local council members.

A concern with particular public policy issues appears to have been a more important motivating factor for the candidacies of newcomer women than for the candidacies of women officeholders generally (Table 5.8). At every level of office, more women among newcomers than among officeholders in general say that a concern with issues was somewhat or very important in their decisions to run. Moreover, at every level of office, more newcomer women than newcomer men report that a concern with issues was very or somewhat important.

AMBITION FOR HIGHER OFFICE

One might anticipate that some individuals run for an office because they view it as a stepping stone to another office that they eventually hope to hold. If women more often are motivated by public-serving considerations while men more often are motivated by self-serving considerations, one also might expect women's decisions to run for office to be less often affected by ambition for higher office.

We asked officeholders to evaluate the importance in their decisions to run of the factor "My perception that this office was an important stepping stone toward higher office." As Table 5.9 indicates, three-fourths or more of officeholders at all levels report that their decisions to run for their current offices were not influenced by a perception that the office would help them in their pursuit of higher office. Moreover, while fewer female than male state legislators claim that ambitions for higher office had a very or somewhat important effect on their decisions to run, female county and local officials are equally or more likely than their

TABLE 5.9: FEW WOMEN OR MEN RATE POLITICAL AMBITION AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "My perception that this office was an important stepping stone toward higher office"	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	0.0	10.4	4.0	5.1	7.0	5.9	14.0	7.0	7.9	7.3
Somewhat important	16.9	11.9	10.1	16.7	13.0	9.9	11.0	11.0	8.6	9.3
Not important/not applicable	83.1	77.6	85.9	78.3	80.0	84.2	75.0	82.0	83.4	83.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(71)	(67)	(426)	(198)	(100)	(101)	(100)	(100)	(151)	(150)

TABLE 5.10: FEW NEWCOMER WOMEN OR MEN RATE POLITICAL AMBITION AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "My perception that this office was an important stepping stone toward higher office"	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	3.8	13.8	9.4	0.0	5.9	4.5	9.4	7.7
Somewhat important	9.6	17.2	12.5	9.5	23.5	18.2	9.4	7.7
Not important/not applicable	86.5	69.0	78.1	90.5	70.6	77.3	81.1	84.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(104)	(29)	(32)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

male counterparts to say that ambitions played a role. Women newcomers do not differ significantly from women officials overall in their assessment of the role ambitions for higher office played in their decisions to seek office (Table 5.10).

REALIZATION OF CAPABILITY

We frequently have heard women explain that they first decided to run for office when they realized that they were just as competent as many people presently holding public office. In order to test whether this realization serves as a motivating factor and whether women more often than men attach importance to this factor, we asked officeholders to evaluate

TABLE 5.11: WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO RATE AWARENESS OF THEIR CAPABILITIES AS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "The reali-zation that I was just as capable of holding office as most officeholders"	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	81.9	64.7	80.3	66.2	89.0	77.2	84.0	63.9	74.0	65.3
Somewhat important	12.5	26.5	14.4	26.8	10.0	19.8	13.0	28.9	22.0	25.3
Not important/not applicable	5.6	8.8	5.3	7.1	1.0	3.0	3.0	7.2	4.0	9.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(72)	(68)	(436)	(198)	(100)	(101)	(100)	(97)	(150)	(150)

TABLE 5.12: NEWCOMER WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN NEWCOMER MEN TO RATE AWARENESS OF THEIR CAPABILITIES AS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "The realization that I was just as capable of holding office as most officeholders"	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	74.0	69.0	90.9	76.2	94.1	72.7	77.4	67.3
Somewhat important	20.2	20.7	9.1	23.8	5.9	22.7	15.1	25.0
Not important/not applicable	5.8	10.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	7.5	7.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(104)	(29)	(33)	(21)	(17)	(22)	(53)	(52)

the importance in their decisions to run of "The realization that I was just as capable of holding office as most officeholders."

Large majorities--more than three-fifths--of officeholders at every level report that an appreciation of their own capabilities was very important in their decisions to run (Table 5.11). Moreover, at every level of office, notably larger proportions of women than men evaluate this factor as very important.

Except for mayors, newcomer women are not more likely than women overall to claim that a realization of their capabilities was very important (Table 5.12). Similar to the pattern among all officeholders, newcomer women more often than newcomer men point to an appreciation of their capabilities as a very important factor in their decisions to run.

TABLE 5.13: WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO RATE THE ABILITY TO COMBAT DISCRIMINATION AS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "Belief that I was strong enough to combat any discrimination that I might encounter"	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	63.9	39.7	54.9	36.7	73.0	61.0	74.0	64.6	68.2	48.3
Somewhat important	19.4	35.3	22.7	33.7	15.0	27.0	12.0	19.2	16.2	27.2
Not important/not applicable	16.7	25.0	22.5	29.6	12.0	12.0	14.0	16.2	15.5	24.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(72)	(68)	(432)	(196)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(99)	(148)	(151)

TABLE 5.14: NEWCOMER WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN NEWCOMER MEN TO RATE THE ABILITY TO COMBAT DISCRIMINATION AS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "Belief that I was strong enough to combat any discrimination that I might encounter"	State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Very important	55.3	37.9	78.8	50.0	82.4	77.3	69.2	53.8
Somewhat important	24.3	31.0	15.2	35.0	11.8	13.6	13.5	25.0
Not important/not applicable	20.4	31.0	6.1	15.0	5.9	9.1	17.3	21.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(103)	(29)	(33)	(20)	(17)	(22)	(52)	(52)

STRENGTH TO COUNTER DISCRIMINATION

We asked officeholders to evaluate the importance in their decisions to run of the following factor: "Belief that I was strong enough to combat any discrimination that I might encounter." Because of sex discrimination, we expected to find that much larger numbers of women than men attribute their decisions to run for office in part to the belief that they were strong enough to counter discrimination. However, we were uncertain about how many women would perceive this factor as important.

Table 5.13 shows that more women than men do view strength to combat discrimination as having been very important in their decisions to run for

office. Moreover, large majorities of women see the strength to combat discrimination as having been very important. Table 5.14 shows that these generalizations are true as well for newcomers. Most surprising are the sizable proportions, ranging from more than one-third among legislators to almost two-thirds among mayors, of men who say that having the strength to combat discrimination was a very important factor in their decisions to run for office (Table 5.13). These proportions suggest that many officeholders perceive that they may encounter discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, or other factors. Fears of these forms of discrimination, as well as sex discrimination, may affect the decision to run.

MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR SEEKING OFFICE

In order to identify the most important among all the factors office-holders perceived as critical to their decisions to run, we asked office-holders an open-ended question about their major reasons for seeking office. Because such questions almost always yield a large majority of general references to public service, we asked the question in such a way as to encourage other types of responses. The question was worded: "In addition to a desire to serve the public, what would you say were the one or two most important factors, influences, or events that led you to run for the office you now hold?"

Officeholders gave a variety of responses with few consistent sex differences apparent across various levels of office (Table 5.15). While no consensus emerges among women officeholders on the single most important factor, some responses are more common than others. One of the most fre-quent reasons women at all levels of office give for running for office is a desire to learn about or participate in the political process. Propor-tions ranging from one-tenth of female mayors to one-fifth of female local council members claim that this is one of the major reasons they ran for office.

Expressions of a desire to bring about social or political change also are common among women at every level of office. In particular, sizable proportions of women report that they ran primarily because of a concern with a specific policy area or issue, a dissatisfaction with poli-tics or incumbent politicians, or a desire to bring about social change. About one-fourth of women mayors and local council members, and somewhat smaller proportions of women legislators and county commissioners, attri-bute their decisions to run for office to a concern with a specific issue or area of public policy such as housing, education, or the environment. About one-tenth to one-sixth of women mention dissatisfaction with in-cumbents or politics in general, and except for women county commissioners, proportions of similar magnitude point to a general concern with social change as their primary reason for running for office. Among women county

TABLE 5.15: WOMEN AND MEN GIVE SIMILAR RESPONSES WHEN ASKED TO LIST THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS, INFLUENCES, OR EVENTS THAT LED THEM TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Most Important Factor, Influence, or Event That Led Officeholder to Run the First Time for Current Office[a]	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women $\bar{x}$	Men $\bar{x}$	Women $\bar{x}$	Men $\bar{x}$	Women $\bar{x}$	Men $\bar{x}$	Women $\bar{x}$	Men $\bar{x}$	Women $\bar{x}$	Men $\bar{x}$
General interest in politics and government										
To learn about or participate in the political process	18.5	11.9	12.6	19.8	17.8	16.0	10.1	5.2	20.1	13.8
Social or political change										
Concern with specific policy area or issue[b]	16.9	11.9	13.1	14.0	17.8	26.0	25.3	20.6	23.6	25.5
Concern with inter-governmental relations	1.5	3.4	3.0	0.6	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dissatisfaction with politics or incumbent politicians	15.4	16.9	9.4	9.9	14.9	12.0	8.1	10.3	11.1	9.7
General concern with social change	12.3	5.1	7.2	17.4	23.8	17.0	13.1	14.4	11.1	13.1
Representation of specific interests										
To represent women or women's issues	7.7	0.0	9.1	0.0	12.9	0.0	8.1	0.0	8.3	0.0
To represent minorities or civil rights issues	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.6	3.0	0.0	2.0	1.0	0.0	1.4
Civic pride										
Civic pride or responsibility	1.5	3.4	3.7	4.1	10.9	22.0	18.2	32.0	22.2	29.7
Experience and qualifications										
Prior experience in campaigns, party, government	4.6	11.9	17.0	11.0	8.9	10.0	18.2	11.3	7.6	9.0
Experience in community, neighborhood, organization	3.1	1.7	6.4	2.3	9.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.7
Perception that she/he was qualified or capable	4.6	15.3	9.6	7.6	10.9	11.0	16.2	17.5	6.9	6.2
Recruitment										
Recruited by party or political leaders	13.8	6.8	10.1	5.8	1.0	2.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	4.8
Recruited or encouraged by organizations, associates, friends	9.2	10.2	11.6	7.6	5.0	14.0	16.2	10.3	15.3	10.3
Opportunity										
Challenge of the office or career opportunity	7.7	3.4	4.0	5.2	9.9	6.0	6.1	1.0	2.1	0.7
Opportune political circumstances	13.8	8.5	15.1	7.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.1	0.0	1.4

TABLE 5.15 (Continued)

Most Important Factor, Influence, or Event That Led Officeholder to Run the First Time for Current Office[a]	State Senate		State House		County Commission		Mayoralty		Local Council	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Other reasons										
Other political reasons (e.g., lack of candidates, wanted a turn in office)	7.7	3.4	3.2	5.2	4.0	1.0	12.1	7.2	7.6	11.0
Concern for the party	7.7	5.1	3.0	1.7	5.9	2.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Inspiration of a specific leader or event	1.5	3.4	1.2	1.7	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Influence of a professor or course of study	1.5	0.0	0.7	2.3	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.4	0.0
Inspiration or support of family member	10.8	11.9	12.1	4.1	10.9	2.0	1.0	4.1	9.7	0.0
Personal	6.2	5.1	7.9	8.1	4.0	7.0	6.1	5.2	10.4	6.9
Other	6.2	5.1	3.0	8.1	3.0	3.0	1.0	6.2	4.2	2.8
Total	(65)	(59)	(405)	(172)	(101)	(100)	(99)	(97)	(144)	(145)

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 because officeholders could name one or two factors, influences, or events.
[b]Does not include civil rights or women's issues.

commissioners, almost one-fourth cite their concern with social change as the major reason they ran for office.

At the local level, civic pride or responsibility is a major factor that led many women to seek public office. About one-fifth of female mayors and local council members say they ran for office primarily because of their concern with their communities.

Many women state legislators say they ran largely because of opportune political circumstances. About one of every seven point to factors such as the presence of an open seat or the retirement of an incumbent as the most important reason why they ran. Similarly, a significant number of women state legislators--about one-tenth--report that they ran for the legislature primarily because they were recruited by partisan or other political leaders. Few women at the local or county levels mention party recruitment as a major reason for seeking office. However, almost one-sixth of women mayors and local council members point to encouragement from or recruitment by organizations, associates, and friends as the most important factor in their decisions to run.

Several other factors were critical motivating influences for sizable numbers of women. Women state representatives and mayors, in particular,

often point to their prior political experience as the most important reason why they ran. Almost one-fifth of women state representatives and mayors report that their previous experience in campaigns, their party, or government was the primary reason for seeking public office. One-sixth of women mayors also claim that they ran in large part because they perceived that they were qualified for the position or had the ability to do the job. This reason also was mentioned by one-tenth of female state representatives and county commissioners. Except for mayors, a notable proportion--about one-tenth--of women officeholders at every level cite the inspiration or support of a family member as a major reason why they ran for public office.

Finally, a significant number of women also mention a desire to represent women or women's issues as a primary motivating factor in their decisions to run for office. Almost one of every ten women, but no men, report this as a major reason for seeking office. This difference in proportions of women and men who were motivated to run by a desire to represent women or women's issues is the only sex difference apparent across all levels of office.

Although the data are not presented, except for mayors, newcomer women do not differ appreciably from women officeholders generally in their reports of the one or two most important reasons why they ran for office. Newcomer women differ most consistently from newcomer men in that some women, but no men, say that they ran for office primarily to represent women or women's issues.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has highlighted a number of factors that affect women's decisions to seek elective office. Considerations of the availability of basic campaign resources--money, people, and time--enter into the decisions of many women. Few women at the local and county levels report that assurance of sufficient financial resources was a factor that affected their decisions to run. However, at the state legislative level where the costs of campaigning often are higher, large majorities say that money was a very or somewhat important consideration. Across all levels of office, large majorities of women claim that having a loyal group of friends and supporters was important in their decisions to run. Majorities or near-majorities report that having an occupation that would allow sufficient time and flexibility to hold office was critical. Majorities of women also claim that a concern about one or two particular policy issues, a realization that they were just as capable of holding office as most officeholders, and the strength to combat any discrimination they might encounter were important factors that entered into their decisions to seek office.

More women than men evaluate many of these factors as having been important in motivating them to run for office. Women officeholders more

often than their male counterparts report that assurance of sufficient
financial resources to conduct viable campaigns, a base of loyal friends
and supporters, a concern with one or two particular public policy issues,
confidence in their own ability to hold office, and the strength to combat
discrimination figured importantly in their decisions to run. The only
factor which more men than women evaluate as critical to their decisions
to seek office is having an occupation that allowed them sufficient flexi-
bility to hold office. Although fewer women than men work outside the home,
this finding is due in part to the greater concentration of men in jobs
with flexible hours and leaves of absence.

Newcomers among female officeholders differ from all female office-
holders in more often reporting that assurance of sufficient financial re-
sources and concern with one or two particular public policy issues played
an important part in their decisions to run. The former of these findings
probably reflects the accelerating costs of political campaigns. The lat-
ter may be a product of the ideological and issue-oriented tenor of poli-
tics during the 1980 campaign season.

When asked an open-ended question about the one or two most important
reasons why they ran for office, women officeholders across all offices
most often say that they ran because of a desire to learn about or par-
ticipate in the political process or because of a desire to bring about
social or political change. Many women ran for office largely because of
a concern with a specific issue or policy or because of a dissatisfaction
with politics or incumbent politicians. At the local level, sizable num-
bers of women sought office primarily because of a sense of civic pride or
responsibility. At the state legislative level, women often point to
opportune political circumstances or recruitment by party leaders as their
major reasons for running. While many women at the local level also say
they ran primarily because they were recruited or encouraged, their re-
cruitment or encouragement came from sources other than the parties. Some
women at all levels of office also ran largely because of a concern with
women's issues or a desire to represent women.

These findings suggest that a variety of factors, in addition to those
examined in previous sections of the report, are critical to bringing more
women into public office. Women must be helped in obtaining sufficient
quantities of the three basic campaign resources--money, people, and time.
Because a concern with public policy issues has been critical in motivating
many women to run for office, women need more exposure to and education
about various issues, ranging from infrastructure to fiscal policy to
environmental protection to comparable worth. Women's political self-
confidence and perceived strength to combat discrimination must be enhanced
if more women are to seek public office. Finally, the fact that so many

women ran for office primarily because they were asked to do so by party leaders, friends, or organizations suggests that many more women might run for office if only they were sought out and encouraged to do so.

A number of problem areas and targets of opportunity need to be considered in developing programs and strategies for bringing more women into elective office. This final chapter identifies and discusses some of the most important of these problems and potentialities, drawing upon findings from earlier chapters of the report. Frequent references are made to Summary Chart 6.1, where various factors examined throughout the report are grouped roughly according to the proportions of women officeholders who evaluate each factor as having been important in their decisions to run for office.[1] The discussion in this chapter also relies heavily on elected women's suggestions for how to bring more women into public office, presented in Table 6.2. These suggestions were given in response to the final question on our survey:

> One purpose of this survey is to develop a set of recommendations about how to stimulate more women to run for public office. We'd like your advice. What do you think can be done to get more women to run for public office? Could you please make two or three recommendations?

PRIVATE LIVES AND FAMILY SITUATIONS

Family situations are critically important for women who serve in public office. Large proportions of women officeholders at all levels report that the approval of their spouses and the age of their children were important in their decisions to run for office (Chart 6.1). Among married women officeholders, few women have a spouse who is not fully supportive of their political activities. Similarly, few mothers of young children are found in elective office.

These findings suggest that the size of the potential pool of women candidates for elective office is affected significantly by the sexual division of labor in our society. Greater numbers of women must be freed from the disproportionate burden they bear for family and domestic responsibilities if much larger numbers of women are to seek elective office. On an individual basis, a woman can lighten this burden by remaining single, choosing not to have children, or marrying a husband who supports her career and assumes co-equal responsibility for child care. However, societal changes in attitudes and public policy are needed to lighten women's domestic burdens on a wider scale. Institutions and individuals must become more supportive of women's participation in activities, such as politics, which traditionally have been viewed as "inappropriate" for women. Women then will not be so often deterred from running for office by the

SUMMARY CHART 6.1: RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE WOMEN'S DECISIONS TO RUN FOR OFFICE

	Women State Legislators	Women County and Local Officials
Factors of Great Importance to Many Women Officeholders	Having a loyal group of friends and supporters behind me Realization that I was just as capable of holding office as most officeholders Belief that I was strong enough to combat any discrimination I might encounter Knowing that my children were old enough that I would not be needed at home as much Approval of my spouse	Having a loyal group of friends and supporters behind me Realization that I was just as capable of holding office as most officeholders Belief that I was strong enough to combat any discrimination I might encounter Knowing that my children were old enough that I would not be needed at home as much Support of my husband
	My concern about one or two particular public policy issues Having an occupation that would allow me sufficient time and flexibility to hold office The support of my political party Assurance that I would have sufficient financial resources to conduct a viable campaign Making sure I had sufficient prior political experience My former public officeholding experience My experience working in campaigns	My concern about one or two particular public policy issues Having an occupation that would allow me sufficient time and flexibility to hold office
	The support of women's organizations The support of groups or organizations related to my occupation[a] The support of other types of organizations My experience working on the staff of an elected public official	The support of my political party Making sure I had sufficient prior political experience My former public officeholding experience My experience working in campaigns Assurance that I would have sufficient financial resources to conduct a viable campaign The support of organizations The support of women's organizations
Factors of Great Importance to Few Women Officeholders	My participation in a candidate training program or workshop[a] My perception that this office was an important stepping stone toward higher office	My experience working on the staff of an elected public official My perception that this office was an important stepping stone toward higher office

NOTE: Factors listed within blocs are roughly similar in their overall impact on women's decisions to run. This chart is based on women officeholders' evaluations of factors presented throughout the report.

[a]Not evaluated by women officeholders at county and local levels.

disapproval of spouses. Government provision or subsidy of child care is needed to free women of the disproportionate burden they bear for child-care. Flexible work schedules and generous leave policies which enable fathers to assume greater responsibility for child rearing are needed in both public and private sectors. Increased availability of child care services and more flexible work schedules, along with greater societal support for women's involvement in politics, would greatly lessen the family pressures and responsibilities that presently stand in the way of women's greater political involvement.

FLEXIBILITY OF OCCUPATION

Just as the easing of women's child care responsibilities and a change in societal attitudes toward women's involvement in politics are necessary to increase greatly the pool of women candidates, so too is the elimination of job segregation between the sexes. Having an occupation that allows sufficient time and flexibility to hold office is rated by many women officeholders as important in their decisions to run (Chart 6.1). Yet, this factor is rated as important by fewer women than men, in part because women are concentrated in different occupations than are men. Women officeholders are more likely to have occupations such as nursing, teaching, and clerical work that have little flexibility in leaves of absence and work hours. Men who hold public office are more likely to have occupations as lawyers or managers/administrators in which leaves of absence and flexible work hours are more common. As job segregation by sex declines and more women move into professions with more flexible work schedules, fewer women will be discouraged by job-related constraints from seeking office.

SELF-CONFIDENCE AND EDUCATION

Confidence in one's own abilities is a prerequisite for women who wish to seek public office. For large majorities of women officeholders at all levels, the realization that they were just as capable of holding office as most public officials was critical in their decisions to run. Similarly, for large majorities of women, another important factor was the knowledge that they were strong enough to combat any discrimination they might encounter (Chart 6.1). Larger proportions of women than men rate both of these factors as important in their decisions to run for office.

Education traditionally has been one means of strengthening self-confidence, and almost one-third of women legislators and about two-fifths of county and local officials mention education or educational programs as one of their recommendations for stimulating more women to run for office (Table 6.2). Educational programs that bring women into contact with officeholders and other practitioners can help many women to realize that they too have the potential and capabilities to hold political positions.

TABLE 6.2: WOMEN OFFICEHOLDERS OFFER A WIDE RANGE OF RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT HOW TO STIMULATE MORE WOMEN TO RUN FOR ELECTIVE OFFICE

Recommendation[a]	State Senate Women %̄	State House Women %̄	County Commission Women %̄	Mayoralty Women %̄	Local Council Women %̄
Education	31.4	31.2	41.0	44.0	38.1
Educate women about the contributions they can make to the political arena	13.7	17.0	26.5	32.0	22.9
Educate women about politics/government	9.8	8.0	8.4	6.7	9.5
Educate college-aged women about politics/government	2.0	3.9	3.6	2.7	2.9
Educate girls in secondary and elementary school about politics/government	3.9	3.2	3.6	4.0	1.9
Other educational recommendation	3.9	2.6	4.8	2.7	2.9
Involvement and experience	21.6	27.3	37.3	32.0	30.5
Women should acquire local government experience or seek local elective offices	7.8	5.8	9.6	6.7	4.8
Women should get involved in their communities	2.0	12.5	18.1	21.3	18.1
Women should seek appointive positions in government	3.9	4.2	1.2	2.7	8.6
Women should work in campaigns	7.8	8.0	3.6	0.0	0.0
Women should become involved in their political parties	5.9	8.4	8.4	1.3	3.8
Women should join women's organizations	2.0	1.6	6.0	4.0	3.8
Recruitment and encouragement	60.8	54.3	44.6	30.7	38.1
Elected women should recruit or encourage women to run	17.6	19.6	25.3	16.0	17.1
Political parties should recruit or support women candidates	11.8	4.2	4.8	0.0	1.9
Women's organizations should recruit women candidates	5.9	3.2	3.6	1.3	3.8
Women or women's organizations should support women candidates	5.9	4.5	4.8	2.7	6.7
Families of women candidates should support them	2.0	3.9	1.2	1.3	3.8
Women candidates should be supported financially	17.6	18.6	7.2	2.7	4.8
Women should be encouraged to become candidates or women candidates should be supported, neither money nor source of support mentioned	13.7	17.4	8.4	6.7	4.8
Special skills training					
Women should obtain or be provided with special training in campaign techniques, public speaking, etc.	9.8	14.8	6.0	6.7	9.5

TABLE 6.2 (Continued)

Recommendation[a]	State Senate Women %	State House Women %	County Commission Women %	Mayoralty Women %	Local Council Women %
Interest in issues					
Women should learn about or become involved with issues	23.5	11.9	15.7	12.0	9.5
Other recommendations					
More publicity and media coverage about women in politics	7.8	2.9	1.2	1.3	3.8
An increase in the salary for public officeholders	0.0	1.0	0.0	5.3	2.9
"Anti-woman" response (e.g. women don't belong in politics, too many women are in politics now)	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	1.0
Other	2.0	10.6	4.8	4.0	1.9
Total	(51)	(311)	(83)	(75)	(105)

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 because officeholders could name up to three recommendations.

Education about politics also can help to demystify the political process, provide valuable knowledge about issues, and enhance skills such as public speaking that may build women's confidence in their abilities to function in the political world.

Women officeholders who recommend education or educational programs as a means of motivating more women to run for office most frequently focus on educating women about the contribution that they can make to the political arena, either as individuals or as women (Table 6.2). However, women also commonly refer to the general need to better educate women about government and the political process, and a few women specifically recommend educational programs targeted at girls in elementary and secondary schools or women in college.

The array of recommendations focusing on education suggests that women officeholders see education, both inside and outside of formal institutions, as an important tool for motivating increasing numbers of women to run for office. While educational programs alone, in the absence of other types of efforts, are not likely to translate directly into increased numbers of women officeholders, educational programs--especially those with a strong practical focus--can help to provide the political self-confidence and knowledge that are necessary prerequisites for seeking public office.

SKILLS TRAINING

Significant proportions of women officeholders at all levels suggest that one of the ways to increase the number of women holding elective office is to provide them with special skills training (Table 6.2). In particular, training in campaign techniques and public speaking are mentioned by several women officials.

Only a few women state legislators actually rate participation in candidate workshops as among the three most critical factors affecting their decisions to run for office (Chart 6.1). Nevertheless, training in campaign techniques and specific leadership skills, including public speaking, is potentially of considerable importance. While one cannot expect a one-day or two-day workshop or training session to have an impact of the same magnitude as more sustained efforts to increase the number of women who seek public office, the effect of workshops should not be underestimated. Workshops and training sessions can be critical components of a comprehensive effort to stimulate women to run for office.

ISSUES

An interest in issues can motivate women to become involved in politics. Once involved, women then may decide to run for office in order to have even greater impact on issues that concern them. Large numbers of women at all levels of office claim that they ran for office at least in part because of a concern with one or two particular public policy issues (Chart 6.1). Similarly, notable proportions of women officeholders, ranging from about one-tenth of local council members to almost one-fourth of state senators, recommend exposing women to issues or developing women's knowledge about issues as a means of stimulating them to seek elective office (Table 6.2).

These findings suggest that any comprehensive effort to motivate more women to run for office should include programs to inform and educate large numbers of women about the issues that affect their lives and communities. Nonpolitical organizations that have large female memberships such as women's social clubs, church groups, and parent/teacher associations would seem a natural target for such programs. Issue-oriented programs offered through educational institutions could reach women who are not involved in organizations.

POLITICAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

About one-third of women officeholders give recommendations of how to stimulate more women to run for public office that can be summarized as, "Get women involved" (Table 6.2). Some suggest that women should gain experience in local government; others say that women should try to obtain an appointment to a board, commission, or position in government. Still other

officeholders recommend that women get involved in campaigns or political
parties or women's organizations. At the local level, the most frequent
recommendation is that women should become actively involved in their com-
munities.

As another indication of the perceived importance of involvement and
experience in politics, sizable proportions of women state legislators re-
port that their prior political experience, their former officeholding ex-
perience, and their work in campaigns were among the three most important
factors affecting their decisions to run for seats in the state legislature
(Chart 6.1). Some also rank the experience of working on the staff of an
elected official as among the most critical factors affecting their deci-
sions. Fewer women at county and local levels report that these factors
were important in their decisions to seek office. Nevertheless, among the
local and county officeholders who had each type of experience, large ma-
jorities rate the experience as important.

These findings suggest that political activity motivates further in-
volvement in politics. Involvement in government, community activities,
organizations, campaigns, or the parties can provide important skills and
contacts that make running for office feasible. Experience in these activi-
ties also can build self-confidence and help women to see that they have an
important contribution to make. Any type of program that facilitates and
encourages the involvement of women in political or community activity is
likely in the long term to increase the number of women who seek elective
office.

ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT OF WOMEN'S CANDIDACIES

Women state legislators' recommendations for stimulating more women
to run for office most often focus on the need for recruitment of and sup-
port for women candidates; more than one-half of women state legislators
make such recommendations (Table 6.2). Women officeholders at county and
local levels also frequently make recommendations that focus on support
and encouragement for women who seek office.

Specific recommendations point to the need for support from political
parties, women's organizations, families, and elected women. The rankings
of the factors important in women officeholders' own decisions to run also
show the importance of support and encouragement (Chart 6.1).

People to staff a campaign and money to finance its operation are two
critical means of support. Very large majorities of women officeholders
at every level report that having a loyal group of friends and supporters
was important in their decisions to run for office (Chart 6.1). Similarly,
a majority of state legislators and significant minorities of county and
local officeholders claim that having sufficient financial resources to

conduct a viable campaign was important in their decisions to run. Among state legislators and county commissioners, more women than men cite money as critical to their decisions. A clear implication of these findings is that any effort to insure large and committed groups of supporters and adequate financial resources for women's campaigns is likely to lead to larger numbers of women candidates. A large base of supporters and workers is important to women candidates seeking offices at all levels, although the higher the level of office, the more critical this resource is. Money also is important to some women candidates at all levels; however, it is especially critical for large numbers of women at the state legislative level.

Traditionally, perhaps the most important mechanisms for channeling campaign workers and money to candidates have been the political parties. Although their role in electoral politics has weakened in recent years, parties still remain a vital force in many areas of the country. The importance of party support to the candidacies of women elected to office is illustrated by the fact that two-fifths of state senators and one-half of state representatives rate party support as one of the three most important factors affecting their decisions to run for office. Party support is less important to women officeholders at county and local levels, primarily because so many races at these levels are nonpartisan.

The fact that women comprise only 13% of all state legislators suggests that both major parties could be doing much more than they are at present to recruit and support women candidates. It is important not only that parties seek out qualified women and support their candidacies for office but also that they recruit women candidates in favorable electoral circumstances where the candidates' chances of winning are strong. Evidence from this study suggests that party leaders are most active in recruiting those women who run in the most adverse electoral circumstances in which winning is a long shot at best. Greater recruitment of women in these situations is not likely to contribute substantially to an increase in the number of women holding office.

If the major parties cannot be persuaded to place far greater emphasis on recruiting and supporting women candidates in districts where they are likely to win election, alternative mechanisms to identify women to run for office and to support their candidacies must be established and/or encouraged. Potentially, organizations could fill this role, but there are few signs that they are currently doing so. About one-fifth of women state legislators, a notably smaller proportion than that for men, rate the support of organizations which are neither women's organizations nor organizations related to their occupations as one of the three most important factors influencing their decisions to seek office (Chart 6.1). Slightly more than one-tenth of women legislators report that the support of an

organization related to their occupations was one of the three major factors. At county and local levels, the support of organizations had an important effect on the decisions to run of only a handful of officeholders. Thus, while nonwomen's organizations potentially could be an important source of encouragement and support for women candidates, such support is still largely unrealized. However, a comprehensive effort to stimulate more women to run for office might focus, in part, on persuading selected organizations to channel more of their resources into the recruitment and support of women candidates. Because more women legislators belong to teachers' organizations than to any other occupational association, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) are obvious targets for such efforts. Since more women are becoming attorneys and business executives, bar associations and organizations of businesswomen are other organizational targets. Labor unions also should be included in any such effort as should occupational organizations in fields such as nursing and clerical work in which women traditionally have been concentrated.

WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN

Perhaps the most feasible short-term strategy for stimulating more women to seek and win election to public office lies with elected women and with women's organizations and networks. Male-dominated institutions such as political parties and occupation-related organizations have failed to help bring women into office in sufficient numbers to alter the pattern of substantial underrepresentation of women. However, an alternative exists to waiting for men and male institutions to do more to support women. That alternative is for women themselves to mobilize to bring women into public office.

Our research shows several signs that many women officeholders and women's organizations perceive a special responsibility for supporting other women. Many of the women in our study gained valuable experience at the side of political women. As many as one-third of those women who had role models and as many as one-fourth of those who had mentors across the various levels of office had female role models and mentors. A few women officeholders had worked on the staffs of women public officials. More than two-fifths of state legislators and smaller, but significant, proportions of women officeholders had campaigned for women candidates. In short, the political careers of many of the women in our study have been motivated, assisted, and supported by other women. In return, the women in our study feel a responsibility to inspire and help future generations of women who will follow in their footsteps. Among women state legislators, majorities report that they actively recruit women when hiring staff, encourage individual women to become active in politics, and speak

to various groups of women urging them to become active in politics.[2]

These patterns of women learning from other women, and political women facilitating the careers of women who can follow in their footsteps, should be encouraged and expanded. Those women now serving in elective offices are a critically important resource for bringing more women into office. They can hire women as staff members, appoint them to boards and commissions, give them positions of responsibility in their campaigns, and introduce them to people with political influence. In these ways, women officeholders can use their positions to groom and prepare a future generation of candidates for office. Also, because of their positions, women officeholders can play an inspirational role; through speaking to individual women and groups of women, they can motivate others to become involved in politics.

When asked for recommendations of ways to stimulate more women to run for office, fully one-fourth of county commissioners and almost one-fifth of women officeholders at other levels suggest that elected women should be directly involved in recruiting and encouraging other women to run (Table 6.2). Clearly, a comprehensive effort to bring more women into public office should include incentives and support for elected women to reach out to and assist other women. Moreover, state associations of women elected officials, which have as goals the recruitment of women candidates and the advancement of their members to higher levels of office, should be supported.

Women's organizations are a second means through which women can help to bring more women into public office. The support of women's organizations is rated by some women at all levels of office as important in decisions to run (Chart 6.1). More than one-half of women state legislators were supported in their candidacies by women's organizations. Moreover, women's organizations, particularly the League of Women Voters, appear to be important in helping women to develop leadership skills and political knowledge that may motivate candidacies and prove useful to women once elected to office. About one-half of state legislators, one-third of county commissioners, and almost one-fifth of local officials belong to the League of Women Voters. Comparable proportions of state legislators and county commissioners, and about one-tenth of local officials, are members of at least one feminist organization. While it is not clear whether officeholders joined these groups before or after their election to office, most women officeholders at state and county levels and a sizable minority at the local level appear to have ties to one or more major women's organization.

Although women's organizations have in the past helped many women both by providing opportunities for them to develop leadership skills and by supporting their candidacies, the close ties between politically active

women and women's organizations suggest that these organizations could play a far larger role in the future. In the early 1980s, the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) and the National Organization for Women (NOW) announced new drives to recruit and support women candidates for office. Such efforts on the part of these and other women's organizations should be encouraged and supported. Women's organizations represent a viable alternative to male-controlled recruitment mechanisms.

NEWCOMERS

In most respects, women newcomers to elective office--those who are serving their first terms in their first elective positions--share the characteristics and experiences of their more senior counterparts. However, newcomers do differ from women officeholders overall in some important ways. These differences serve to underscore several of the recommendations we have made in this chapter.

Although newcomers tend to be middle-aged, they are younger, on the average, than women officeholders generally. Perhaps in part because they are a slightly younger generation of women, they more often have had role models and mentors. Organizations played a greater role in their bids for office than in the bids of women generally. With few exceptions, newcomers are at least as likely, and often more likely, to have received support from women's organizations, to be members of women's organizations and feminist groups, and to evaluate the support of organizations as important in their decisions to run for office. Finally, newcomer women more often than women officeholders overall rate having sufficient financial resources and a concern with one or two public policy issues as having been important in their decisions to seek office.

These findings for the most recent entrants into elective office suggest that organizational ties, especially to women's groups, have assumed increasing importance for politically active women. Perhaps as women's organizations have become more involved in politics in order to improve women's status in society, more women have turned to these groups to develop political skills. Perhaps members of these groups themselves have become more politicized and have started to run for office in increasing numbers. In either case, these groups represent an important potential source of women candidates and training ground for them.

Like the findings on newcomers' closer ties to women's organizations, the fact that women newcomers more often than all women have had role models and mentors underscores the increasing importance of women supporting women. Political women can help to inspire other women to become active in politics and can provide critical advice and assistance to help their political careers.

Finally, the heightened importance of public policy issues and financial considerations in affecting newcomers' decisions to run has significant implications. The fact that more recent entrants into elective office have been motivated to seek office at least in part by their concern with issues reinforces our suggestion that efforts to educate women about public policy issues and to involve them in work on these issues may lead ultimately to increased numbers of women candidates. However, we are not likely to see huge increases in the numbers of women seeking office without campaign finance reform or without assurance that women, especially those who run for higher level offices and/or in states where campaign costs are high, can raise enough money to conduct viable campaigns.

A CAVEAT ON MAYORS

Throughout this report, mayors have stood out as exceptions in many respects. While not all the differences between women mayors and other women officeholders can be explained easily, we suspect that many of the differences stem from differential recruitment into executive and legislative positions. Except for mayors, all offices considered in this report are legislative positions, and our findings and general discussion should be viewed as most relevant for women in elective legislative positions at state, county, and local levels. Further research on women mayors, heads of county government, and statewide officials is necessary before drawing firm conclusions on how to bring more women into elective executive positions in government.

CONCLUSION

The numbers of women holding elective office increased only incrementally during the past decade. The 1980s pose the challenge of turning the incremental increases of the 1970s into significant gains.

A number of notable developments during the past few years are likely to lead to long-term increases in the number of women candidates and elected officials. These include recently announced efforts by the National Women's Political Caucus and the National Organization for Women to focus increased attention and resources on the recruitment and support of women candidates, the development at the state level of political action committees which provide support primarily to women seeking office, and recent attempts by the National Women's Education Fund to work in partnership with organizations in targeted areas to set up training programs related to women in public leadership.[3] These efforts should be sustained and supported. Nevertheless, much more can be done. While the programs already in place are important building blocks, new and creative thinking about additional programs to stimulate women to seek elective office is needed. We hope that the findings of this report will contribute to such thinking.

Part Two

Black Women's Routes to Elective Office: an Exploratory Essay

The history of black women's participation in American politics has been marked by a dual discrimination resulting from both racism and sexism. Black women historically have been excluded both as blacks and as women from the political process.[1]

The history of black women's suffrage provides one example of the effects of dual discrimination. Even after black men gained the right to vote with the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1871, black women as women remained disenfranchised. Moreover, after women gained the vote in 1920, black women as blacks often were kept from voting, especially in the South, by intimidation, legal barriers, and the use of force. Only since the development of the civil rights movement and subsequent passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 have the voting rates of black women begun to approach those for white women.[2]

Similarly, only in the two decades since the advent of the civil rights movement have the numbers of black women holding elective office increased notably. Nevertheless, black women still constitute a dismally small proportion of all officeholders. In 1981, a total of 421 black women were serving in elective offices as mayors, members of local councils, members of county governing boards, state legislators, and members of the U.S. Congress; this number represents less than 1% of all elected officeholders in those offices. Moreover, the fact that black women constitute only 2.5% of all women elected officials and only about 20% of all black elected officials reflects the lingering effects of dual discrimination.[3] No black woman has ever served in the U.S. Senate. In 1981, 2 of the 18 women in the U.S. House of Representatives were black. Of 908 women in state legislatures in 1981, 63 or 7% were black. Black women in 1981 constituted 40 or 3.5% of 1,128 women on county governing boards, 22 or 1% of 1,707 women mayors, and 294 or 2% of 12,755 women municipal council members. Black women officeholders are concentrated geographically. They are most frequently from the South and least often from the West.[4] Among local council members, black women more often than women overall serve in large municipalities with populations of over 30,000.[5]

Part Two of our report examines how these pioneering black women made their way into the elective offices they hold today. We discuss the routes which black women take into elected office and compare those routes with the routes into office of women overall.

To gather information, the Center for the American Woman and Politics surveyed a sample of black women who were serving as state legislators and

members of county and municipal governing boards in 1981. We analyze the responses of nineteen state representatives, nineteen members of county governing boards (referred to as county commissioners), and eighty-three members of municipal governing boards (referred to as local council members).[6] State senators and mayors are excluded from our study of black women because the number of black women in these positions is too small for reliable analysis. The data for "all women" presented in this part of the report are based on our samples of the entire population of women officeholders whom we discussed in Part One of this report. While these samples of "all women" consist primarily of white women, they include women of color in proportion to their presence in the population of women officeholders. Because we used the same survey for the sample of black women as for the sample of women officeholders overall, the data are comparable across samples.

In making comparisons between black women and women overall, we take into account the fact that the large majority of black women officeholders are Democrats.[7] However, we present only those comparisons between black Democratic women and all Democratic women which provide insight into the differences observed between black women officeholders and women officeholders overall.

Our ability to compare the findings for black women with those for women overall represents both the strength and the weakness of our data. The strength is the comparability, which allows an identification of the factors which characterize black women's routes to office compared with those which characterize the routes to office of women generally. Previous research on black women officeholders has articulated the need to compare findings for black women officeholders with findings for women officeholders generally.[8] Our research makes a first step in that direction; by comparing black women with women overall, we are able to uncover the ways in which black women converge with and diverge from women overall in the paths they take into office. The weakness of the data is that certain questions were not asked which we might have asked if this study had focused exclusively on black political participation (for example, specific questions about the impact of the civil rights movement on the political development of blacks). Thus, while this report does not provide a comprehensive account of all aspects of the backgrounds and experiences which may have affected the political development of black women officeholders, it gives a part of that account by focusing on one of the many questions which need to be answered: How are black women officeholders similar to or different from women overall in the routes they take into public office?

The analysis of black women's routes to elective office is divided into six chapters, each of which largely corresponds to Chapters 1-6 in the previous segment (Part One) of this report. Chapter 7 examines the background and family characteristics of black women officeholders. Chapter 8 examines the political experience which black women bring with them into elected office. Chapter 9 examines the role which the political parties played in helping black women achieve their current offices. Chapter 10 examines the role which organizations played in black women's routes to office. Chapter 11 examines the impact of other factors, ranging from the availability of money to the ability to combat discrimination, on black women's decisions to run for their current offices. Chapters 7 through 11 are largely descriptive, reviewing a great deal of information with minimal interpretation. We save most of the interpretation for Chapter 12 where we discuss the general pattern that we see emerging from the data and summarize our major findings regarding black women's routes into elective office.

This section provides a general profile of the demographic and family char-
acteristics of black women who were holding elected office in 1981. Black
women officeholders' age, education, occupations, marital status, age of
children if any, and spouses' attitudes are described. Also discussed are
black women's evaluations of the impact of family situations on their de-
cisions to run for their current offices.

AGE

     Black women in elected office range in age from under thirty years old
to over sixty years old, but the majority are between the ages of forty and
sixty (Table 1). This finding is consistent with previous research which
showed that the majority of black women serving in state legislatures in
the early 1970s were above the age of forty.[1]

     Black women officeholders are similar in age to all women office-
holders (Table 1). However, among state representatives and county com-
missioners, black women are more concentrated between the ages of forty and
forty-nine, whereas women officeholders overall are as likely to be in
their fifties as in their forties. The median ages of black women state
representatives and county commissioners are a year younger, at forty-eight
and fifty respectively, than the median ages of all women in those offices.

EDUCATION

     The majority of black women officeholders are well educated (Table 2).
One-half of local council members and more than one-half of county com-
missioners and state representatives have graduated from college. More
than one-third of black women at all levels of office have advanced degrees.
Almost one-fifth of black women state representatives have law degrees.
Like the black women legislators of nearly a decade ago, all black female
state representatives in our sample have at minimum some college education.[2]
Only a handful of county commissioners and local council members do not
have high school diplomas.

     Black women officeholders have more education on the average than do
women officeholders generally (Table 2). At all levels of office, pro-
portionately more black women than all women have advanced degrees. Almost
three times as many black female county commissioners and local council
members as all women in those offices have completed graduate degrees.
Black women state representatives are more likely than all women repre-
sentatives to have law degrees or Ph.Ds. In addition, black women at all

TABLE 1: BLACK WOMEN ARE SIMILAR IN AGE TO WOMEN OVERALL

Age[b]	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All[a] Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Under 30 years old	6.7	6.0	5.3	2.0	2.4	2.0
30-39 years old	20.0	15.8	5.3	16.2	16.9	19.6
40-49 years old	40.0	31.9	36.8	29.3	31.3	28.4
50-59 years old	26.7	32.1	31.6	31.3	31.3	30.4
60 years old or older	6.7[c]	14.2	21.1	21.2	18.1	19.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total[d]	(15)	(430)	(19)	(99)	(83)	(148)
Median age	48	49	50	51	49	49

[a]Throughout Part Two, "all women" refers to the samples of women described in "Description of the Study" at the beginning of this report and analyzed in Part One. These samples represent the entire population of women officeholders at various levels of government. While these samples consist primarily of white women, they include women of color in proportion to their presence in the population of women officeholders.

[b]Reflects the age of officeholders at the beginning of 1981.

[c]In this and all subsequent tables, percentages may not add precisely to 100 because of rounding.

[d]In this and all subsequent tables, the numbers in parentheses refer to the number of respondents on which proportions are based.

TABLE 2: BLACK WOMEN ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE ADVANCED DEGREES

Education	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Some or no high school	0.0	0.7	5.3	1.0	7.2	3.3
High school graduate	0.0	8.2	15.8	25.7	19.3	36.4
Some college	43.8	28.9	21.1	37.6	24.1	23.2
College graduate	19.8	37.1	21.1	21.8	13.3	24.5
Advanced degree[a]	37.5	25.1	36.8	13.9	36.1	12.6
M.A.	12.5	15.5				
J.D.	18.8	6.8				
Ph.D.	6.3	2.1				
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(16)	(439)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

[a]County and local officeholders were not asked to specify the nature of their advanced degrees.

levels of office are more likely than all women in these offices to have continued their formal education beyond high school. For example, while almost one-tenth of all black female state representatives did not go beyond high school, all black state female representatives have attended college.

The fact that black women officeholders have more education on the average than do women officeholders overall suggests the importance of education for black women in public office. In the face of the double barriers of racial and sex discrimination, high educational attainment more often may be necessary as a ticket of entry into politics.

OCCUPATION

More than two-thirds of black women local council members and more than three-fourths of black women county commissioners and state representatives have professional/technical or managerial/administrative occupations (Table 3). Although women officeholders overall are also primarily in professional/technical or managerial/administrative occupations, black women are even more likely to be drawn disproportionately from these occupations. However, black women county commissioners and state legislators

TABLE 3: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES AND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO BE MANAGERS AND LESS LIKELY TO BE PROFESSIONALS

Occupation[a]	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Professional/technical	38.9	45.8	17.6	33.7	45.0	34.3
Manager/administrator	38.9	17.7	58.8	27.6	23.8	20.3
Sales worker	0.0	5.2	0.0	5.1	1.3	7.7
Clerical worker/ secretary	5.6	10.4	5.9	23.5	8.8	23.1
Craftsperson	5.6	0.5	0.0	1.0	0.0	4.9
Operative	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	2.8
Farmer	0.0	1.6	0.0	3.1	0.0	1.4
Service worker	0.0	1.1	11.7	2.0	10.0	2.1
No occupation outside the home	11.1	17.7	5.9	4.1	8.8	3.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(18)	(441)	(17)	(98)	(80)	(143)

[a]Officeholders who have ever worked outside the home aside from holding office were asked to list current or past primary occupation. Occupations are classified using census categories.

more often than all women report that they have held managerial/administrative positions and less often report that they have held professional/technical positions.

Another difference between black women and all women is that black women officeholders generally are more likely than all women officeholders to be in service occupations and less likely than all women officeholders to be in clerical occupations. This finding parallels the fact that in the population as a whole, black women are less likely than white women to be clerical workers and are more likely than white women to be service workers.[3] Nevertheless, only small proportions of black women officeholders are drawn from either clerical or service occupations.

An examination of specific occupations which are typically sex-segregated shows that, like women officeholders in general, many black women officeholders are elementary or secondary school teachers (Table 4). However, black women officeholders are somewhat less likely than all women officeholders to be concentrated in teaching and other predominantly female occupations. Black women officeholders are more likely than women officeholders overall to be lawyers, and among state legislators and local council

TABLE 4: BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO BE LAWYERS
AND LESS LIKELY TO BE TEACHERS

Selected Occupations	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Nurse or other health worker[a]	0.0	4.1	0.0	6.1	8.8	4.2
Social worker	5.6	1.6	0.0	1.0	3.8	0.0
Elementary or secondary school teacher[b]	11.1	20.0	11.8	19.4	12.5	16.8
College professor	5.6	2.5	0.0	2.0	3.8	0.7
Lawyer	11.1	6.3	5.9	1.0	2.5	1.4
Physician or dentist	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Public administrator	0.0	1.6	11.8	3.1	6.3	3.5
Editor or reporter	0.0	1.1	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.8
Real estate or insurance sales worker	0.0	3.6	0.0	4.1	1.3	5.6
Total	(18)	(441)	(17)	(98)	(80)	(143)

[a]Excludes physicians.
[b]Includes all teachers who are not teaching in colleges or universities.

members, black women are more likely to be college professors. Black women county commissioners and local council members also are more likely than women overall to work in public administration, probably reflecting that career opportunities for blacks are greater in the public than in the private sector.

Black women officeholders' occupations may reflect more than a differential opportunity structure. Occupations in public administration and law in particular may provide black women with politicizing experiences which may motivate them to run for office or may provide them with the resources and contacts necessary for winning elective office.

Table 5 shows that more than one-half of black female county commissioners and local council members and about one-third of black female state representatives are employed in addition to holding office. At all levels of office, these proportions are larger than the proportions of all women who are working while holding office.

MARITAL STATUS

Fewer than one-half of black female state representatives and county commissioners and only slightly more than one-half of local council members are currently married (Table 6). The proportions who are divorced or separated range from one-fifth of local council members to more than one-third of county commissioners. Smaller proportions are widowed or single. Compared with all women officeholders, black women officeholders are much less likely to be married and more likely to be divorced or separated.

TABLE 5: BLACK WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN WOMEN OVERALL ARE EMPLOYED OUTSIDE THE HOME IN ADDITION TO HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Employed in addition to holding office[a]	31.6	27.5	57.9	35.6	68.7	55.6
Total	(19)	(440)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

[a]Legislators were asked the question slightly differently than were county and local officeholders. Legislators were asked to name their primary occupation and were then asked whether, aside from holding office, they were presently employed in this occupation. Local and county officeholders were asked whether, aside from holding office, they were presently employed.

However, more black women state representatives are married and fewer are divorced than was true of black women legislators in the early 1970s.[4]

SUPPORT FROM SPOUSE

We asked married officeholders whether their spouses are supportive of their officeholding activities. Married black women officeholders almost universally report that their husbands are supportive (Table 7). Similar to women officeholders overall, three-fourths of married black women local council members and county commissioners and more than four-fifths of married state representatives say their husbands are very supportive. Although few women officeholders, regardless of race, report that their

TABLE 6: BLACK WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO BE CURRENTLY MARRIED AND MORE LIKELY TO BE DIVORCED/SEPARATED

Marital Status	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Currently married	43.8	72.1	42.1	69.3	56.1	76.8
Widowed	18.8	8.2	15.8	21.8	15.9	14.6
Divorced/separated	25.0	11.0	36.8	4.0	19.5	4.6
Single	12.5	8.7	5.3	5.0	8.5	4.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(16)	(437)	(19)	(101)	(82)	(151)

TABLE 7: MARRIED BLACK WOMEN, LIKE WOMEN OVERALL, ALMOST UNIVERSALLY REPORT THAT THEIR SPOUSES ARE SUPPORTIVE OF THEIR OFFICEHOLDING

Spouse's Attitude	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Very supportive	85.7	82.7	75.0	79.7	73.9	73.3
Somewhat supportive	14.3	14.3	25.0	14.5	21.7	19.0
Indifferent	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.4	2.2	5.2
Somewhat resistant	0.0	2.0	0.0	4.3	2.2	2.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(7)	(307)	(8)	(69)	(46)	(116)

husbands are not at least somewhat supportive, married black women office-holders are less likely than all married women officeholders to have hus-bands who are indifferent or somewhat resistant to their officeholding activities.

EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE OF SPOUSAL SUPPORT

Were black women officeholders affected in their decisions to run by the degree of support they received from their spouses? As Table 8 shows, about two-fifths of local council members and county commissioners and one-half of state representatives report that the support of a spouse was an important consideration in the decision to seek office. Black women officeholders are less likely than all women officeholders to say spousal approval was important in their decisions to run. This difference largely reflects the fact that fewer black women officeholders than all women officeholders are married. The proportions of black women officeholders who report that their spouses' approval was important are only slightly smaller than the proportions who are currently married.

TABLE 8: JUST AS BLACK WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO BE MARRIED, BLACK WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY TO EVALUATE SPOUSAL SUPPORT AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Support of Spouse[a]	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Very important	43.8	65.9	36.8	57.4	42.0	44.6
Somewhat important[b]	6.3	11.1	0.0	6.9	3.7	20.3
Not important/not applicable[c]	50.0	23.1	63.2	35.6	54.3	35.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(425)	(19)	(101)	(81)	(148)

[a]Legislators were asked to evaluate the importance of the approval of their spouses, while county and local officeholders were asked to evaluate the importance of the support of their spouses.

[b]Includes "slightly important" responses for local and county office-holders.

[c]The category "not applicable" includes officeholders who are not currently married.

TABLE 9: MUCH LARGER PROPORTIONS OF BLACK WOMEN THAN WOMEN OVERALL HAVE NO CHILDREN

Age of Youngest Child	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Under 6 years old	11.1	3.7	10.5	2.0	3.6	5.3
6-11 years old	11.1	7.5	10.5	12.9	18.1	11.3
12-17 years old	22.2	22.1	15.8	18.8	14.5	25.8
18 years old or older	16.7	50.3	36.8	58.4	50.6	51.0
No children	38.9	16.3	26.3	7.9	13.3	6.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(18)	(429)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

CHILDREN

The higher the level of office, the less likely black women officeholders are to have children (Table 9). Among state representatives, nearly two-fifths have no children; this proportion is slightly larger than the proportion of black women legislators without children a decade ago. However, relative to a decade ago, more black women representatives also have children who are younger than eighteen years old.[5]

Across all offices, much larger proportions of black women officeholders than of all women officeholders do not have children (Table 9). However, this does not mean that black women are less likely to have child-rearing responsibilities that might conflict with their officeholding activities. Young children are likely to require the most parental attention, and black women are more likely than all women officeholders to have children under the age of twelve.

EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE OF GROWN CHILDREN

In order to assess the impact of children on black women's decisions to run for their current offices, we asked officeholders whether the factor "My children being old enough for me to feel comfortable not being at home as much" figured into their decisions to run for office. Sizable proportions of black women officeholders ranging from nearly one-half of county commissioners to about two-thirds of local council members report that this factor was an important consideration in their decisions (Table 10). Most of these say that the age of their children was a very important factor.

TABLE 10:   BLACK WOMEN, WHO ARE LESS LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE
            CHILDREN, ARE LESS LIKELY TO EVALUATE THE AGE OF THEIR CHILDREN
            AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Children Being Old Enough[a]	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Very important	47.1	57.3	36.8	66.3	58.0	49.3
Somewhat important	11.8	15.7	10.5	11.9	8.6	19.3
Not important/not applicable[b]	41.2	27.0	52.6	21.8	33.3	31.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(17)	(426)	(19)	(101)	(81)	(150)

[a] The precise wording of the factor which officeholders were asked to evaluate is as follows: "My children being old enough for me to feel comfortable not being at home as much."

[b] The category "not applicable" includes officeholders who do not have children.

Black women officeholders are less likely than all women officeholders to report that their "children being old enough" was a very or somewhat important consideration in their decisions to seek office (Table 10). This finding largely reflects the fact that black women officeholders are less likely than all women officeholders to have grown children or any children.

This section assesses the degree of political experience which black women officeholders bring to their current offices. We examine whether black women officeholders have held previous elective and appointive offices, worked on officeholders' staffs or campaigns, attended candidate training programs, or had role models and mentors. Officeholders' evaluations of the importance of their previous political experience are also discussed.

TERM OF OFFICE

Most black women officeholders have some degree of seniority in their current offices (Table 11). Few state representatives, less than one-sixth, are first-term legislators. This proportion is smaller than that of a decade ago when more than one-third of black women state legislators were in their first terms in the legislature.[1] Black women at county and local levels are more likely to be newly elected to their offices, with more than one-fifth of local council members and almost one-half of county commissioners in their first terms. Compared with all women officeholders, more black women county commissioners and fewer black women state representatives and local council members are in their first terms in their current offices (Table 11).

PREVIOUS OFFICEHOLDING EXPERIENCE

About one-third of black women state representatives and local council members and nearly one-half of black women county commissioners have held prior elective or appointive offices before holding their current offices (Table 12). At all levels of office, but especially at the state legislative level, black women officeholders are less likely than all women officeholders to have held an office previously.

Elective Experience

At least partly reflecting the fact that the doors to elective officeholding have opened to black women only relatively recently, few black women at any level of office have previously held an elective office (Table 13).

Black women state representatives and local council members are less likely than all women to have previously held elective office. Moreover, the proportion of black women state representatives with previous elective experience has not increased over the last decade. Only 9.3% of the black women serving in state legislatures in the early 1970s, compared with 10.5% in 1981, had previously held elective office.[2] Black women county

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TABLE 11: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES AND LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, BLACK
WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO BE IN THEIR FIRST
TERMS IN THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Serving in first term[a]	15.8	32.1	47.4	37.6	22.9	39.3
Total	(19)	(443)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(150)

[a]Includes county commissioners and local council members who recently left
office but who served only one term.

TABLE 12: BLACK WOMEN LESS OFTEN THAN WOMEN OVERALL HAVE HELD PREVIOUS
OFFICES

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Held at least one other elective or appointive office	36.8	54.4	47.4	50.5	32.5	41.1
Total	(19)	(447)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

commissioners are more likely than other black women officeholders to have
elective experience. Similar proportions of black women county commis-
sioners as all women county commissioners have previous elective experience,
although proportionately more of the black women have previously held two
or more elective positions.

Most of the black women officeholders with previous elective experience
served in municipal-level positions (Table 14). One notable difference
between black women officeholders and all women officeholders is that a few
black women county commissioners and local council members have previously
held state-level elective offices. One black woman currently serving as a
county commissioner previously held a seat in the U.S. Congress.

TABLE 13: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES AND LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, BLACK WOMEN LESS OFTEN THAN ALL WOMEN HAVE HELD PREVIOUS ELECTIVE OFFICES

Number of Previous Elective Offices	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
None	89.5	74.7	78.9	81.2	95.2	88.7
One	10.5	18.8	10.5	15.8	3.6	10.6
Two or more	0.0	6.5	10.5	3.0	1.2	0.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(447)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

TABLE 14: SIMILAR TO WOMEN OVERALL, MOST BLACK WOMEN WITH PREVIOUS ELECTIVE EXPERIENCE SERVED IN MUNICIPAL OFFICES

Level of Previous Elective Office[a]	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Federal	0.0	0.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
State	0.0	2.2	10.5	0.0	1.2	0.0
County	0.0	5.8	0.0	2.0	0.0	3.3
Municipal	10.5	20.4	15.8	17.8	3.6	7.9
Total	(19)	(447)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

[a]For each level of office, the figures shown include those who held one or more offices at that level of government.

Appointive Experience

Similar to women officeholders generally, black women officeholders are more likely to have previous appointive than elective experience. About one-third of black women state representatives and local council members and more than two-fifths of black women county commissioners have held one or more appointive offices (Table 15). About one of every eight county and local officeholders and about one of every six state representatives have held two or more appointed positions.

Black women in county and local offices are about equally as likely as all women in those offices to have some appointive experience (Table 15).

TABLE 15: AMONG COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, BLACK
WOMEN ARE ABOUT EQUALLY AS LIKELY AS WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE HELD
APPOINTIVE POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT

Number of Previous Appointive Government Positions	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
None	68.4	58.4	57.9	59.4	68.7	63.6
One	15.8	20.4	31.6	18.8	19.3	23.8
Two or more	15.8	21.3	10.5	21.8	12.0	12.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(447)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

TABLE 16: THE LARGEST PROPORTIONS OF BLACK WOMEN STATE REPRESENTATIVES AND
LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS WITH PREVIOUS APPOINTIVE EXPERIENCE HAVE
HELD POSITIONS IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Level of Previous Appointive Government Position[a]	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Federal	5.3	2.9	5.3	3.0	2.4	1.3
State	15.8	21.3	21.1	15.8	9.6	5.3
County	5.3	10.1	10.5	21.8	8.4	6.6
Municipal	21.1	20.6	10.5	13.9	18.1	28.5
Total	(19)	(447)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

[a]For each level of office, the figures shown include those who held one or
more offices at that level of government.

However, among state representatives, black women are less likely than all
women to have held appointive positions. Nevertheless, more black women
representatives have appointive experience today than a decade ago when
18.7% of black women state legislators had previous appointive experience.[3]

With the exception of county commissioners, most black women with
appointive experience have held municipal-level appointive positions;
county commissioners most often have held state-level appointive positions
(Table 16).

TABLE 17: AMONG COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE WORKED ON THE STAFF OF AN ELECTED PUBLIC OFFICIAL

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Worked on the staff of an elected public official	27.8	23.5	36.8	14.9	10.8	6.0
Total	(18)	(370)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)
Worked on the staff of a woman public official	5.9	5.0	5.3	4.0	2.4	2.0
Total	(17)	(362)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

WORKING FOR A PUBLIC OFFICIAL

A substantial proportion of black women came into public office with staff experience (Table 17). About one-fourth of state representatives, one-third of county commissioners, and one-tenth of local council members worked on the staffs of public officials before themselves running for office. Among county commissioners, black women are notably more likely than all women to have worked on the staffs of public officials. Similar proportions of black women officeholders as all women officeholders--about one in twenty among state representatives and county commissioners--worked for female public officials (Table 17).

WORKING IN A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

Of all the types of political experience we examined, campaign experience is the one most common among black women officeholders. Just as campaigns seem to serve as training grounds for women officeholders overall, the same appears to be true for an even larger proportion of black women officeholders. At every level of office, black women are substantially more likely than women overall to have worked in political campaigns (Table 18). Black women state representatives and county commissioners almost universally report campaign experience, with close to 95% reporting that they worked in political campaigns before themselves running for office (Table 18). About two-thirds of local council members also worked in political campaigns.

TABLE 18: BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE WORKED IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS AND FOR WOMEN CANDIDATES

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Worked in a political campaign	94.7	82.5	94.7	70.3	67.5	47.7
Total	(19)	(440)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)
Worked for a woman candidate	72.2	44.4	31.6	28.7	36.1	14.6
Total	(18)	(414)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

Black women officeholders are also more likely than all women office-holders to have worked for women candidates. Almost three-fourths of black women state representatives, compared to about two-fifths of all women state representatives, worked on the campaigns of female candidates (Table 18). About one-third of black women serving on county commissions and local councils campaigned for female candidates. Among black women local council members, this proportion is more than double the proportion of women local council members overall who worked for female candidates.

PARTICIPATION IN CANDIDATE WORKSHOPS

Participation in a candidate training program or workshop is a direct way to prepare for a candidacy. Fairly similar proportions of black women across all offices, from about one-fourth to almost two-fifths, sought such preparation (Table 19). The proportions of all women officeholders participating in candidate workshops show much more variation across various offices. As a result, black women state representatives are less than half as likely as all women state representatives to have attended candidate workshops, but black women on local councils are more than four times as likely as all women on local councils to have attended candidate workshops (Table 19).

Although one-fourth of black women state representatives participated in candidate workshops, none attended workshops sponsored by the major political parties, not including women's divisions of parties (Table 20).[4] This finding is striking when compared to the fact that the largest pro-portion of women state representatives overall, nearly two-fifths, attended workshops sponsored by the two major parties. Party affiliation may partly

TABLE 19: ONE-FOURTH TO TWO-FIFTHS OF BLACK WOMEN ACROSS VARIOUS LEVELS
OF OFFICE ATTENDED CANDIDATE TRAINING WORKSHOPS

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Attended a candidate training program or workshop	26.3	57.3	36.8	31.7	38.6	8.6
Total	(19)	(436)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

TABLE 20: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES, NO BLACK WOMEN COMPARED WITH
TWO-FIFTHS OF WOMEN OVERALL WENT TO CANDIDATE WORKSHOPS
SPONSORED BY POLITICAL PARTIES[a]

Sponsor of Candidate Workshop[b]	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Political party[a]	0.0	39.2	15.8	18.8	7.2	2.0
Women's division of political party or partisan women's club	5.3	3.4	0.0	3.0	1.2	0.0
Nonpartisan women's organization	10.5	12.2	5.3	3.0	4.8	2.0
Total	(19)	(436)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

[a]The category "political party" does not include women's division of political party.

[b]Officeholders could name one or two sponsors of workshops.

account for this difference, since fewer Democratic women than Republican
women attended party-sponsored workshops (see Table 2.15 in Part One of
this report). However, even among Democrats, no black women state repre-
sentatives, compared with 20.4% of Democratic women state representatives
overall, went to party-sponsored candidate workshops.[5] Only one black
woman state representative attended a workshop sponsored by either a women's
division of one of the political parties or a partisan women's club.

Some black women county commissioners and local council members do report having attended a candidate workshop sponsored by a major political party (Table 20). Also, at county and local levels, the proportions of black women and women overall who went to party-sponsored workshops are fairly similar.

Small proportions of black women at all levels of office, similar to the proportions of women officeholders overall, participated in candidate workshops sponsored by nonpartisan women's organizations.

ROLE MODELS

Majorities of black women in elected offices report that the inspiration of a role model played a part in their political development. Asked whether they could single out one political leader whom they had particularly admired and whose example had inspired them to become politically active, one-half to two-thirds of black women officeholders report they have had role models (Table 21). Across all levels of office, these proportions are notably larger than the proportions of all women officeholders with role models.

Of the black women who report having had role models, one-third to two-fifths have had women as role models (Table 22). Among county and local officeholders with role models, black women are more likely than all women to have been inspired by women; among state representatives with role models, black women are almost equally as likely as all women to have had female role models (Table 22).

TABLE 21: BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE HAD ROLE MODELS[a]

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Has had a role model[b]	61.1	49.5	68.4	33.0	49.4	22.8
Total	(18)	(434)	(19)	(100)	(79)	(149)

[a]The precise wording of the question officeholders were asked is the following: "Can you single out one political leader whom you particularly admired and whose example inspired you to become politically active?"

[b]Excludes officeholders who said that they could not name just one role model.

We also asked officeholders to specify the position which their role models held at the time they served as role models. Like women officeholders overall, most of the black women officeholders who have had role models named elected or appointed officials in municipal, county, state, or federal government (data not presented).

MENTORS

While role models provided inspiration, other people may have helped officeholders more directly in achieving their current status. In order to determine whether such "mentors" played a role in officeholders' political careers, we asked officeholders whether any one political leader or activist had helped their political careers along in some significant way.

TABLE 22: BLACK WOMEN ARE EQUALLY OR MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE HAD WOMEN AS THEIR ROLE MODELS

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Has had a woman as a role model	36.4	34.7	38.5	27.3	43.6	26.5
Total	(11)	(213)	(13)	(33)	(39)	(34)

TABLE 23: BLACK WOMEN ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE HAD MENTORS[a]

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Has had a mentor[b]	72.2	51.4	50.0	24.8	48.1	19.9
Total	(18)	(424)	(18)	(101)	(79)	(151)

[a]The precise wording of the question officeholders were asked is the following: "Has there been one political leader or activist who has helped your political career along in some significant way?"

[b]Excludes officeholders who said that they had several mentors.

TABLE 24: ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF BLACK WOMEN STATE REPRESENTATIVES WITH
MENTORS HAVE HAD WOMEN AS THEIR MENTORS

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Has had a woman as a mentor	30.8	24.5	11.1	16.0	18.4	13.3
Total	(13)	(216)	(9)	(25)	(38)	(30)

Just as mentors seem to have been instrumental for women officeholders overall in providing access to a power structure from which women have been excluded in the past, mentors appear to have been even more critical for black women officeholders. At all levels of office, larger proportions of black women than of women overall have had mentors (Table 23). Three-fourths of black women state representatives compared to one-half of all women state representatives have received assistance from mentors. Half of black women county commissioners and local council members, about double the proportions of all women in those offices, have had mentors.

Of the black women who have had mentors, state representatives are the most likely to have had women as their mentors; about one-third have had female mentors (Table 24). Among state representatives and local council members with mentors, black women are more likely than all women to have had female mentors.

Black women are similar to women overall in the kinds of mentors they have had. Black women most often have had mentors who held elected or appointed offices in municipal, county, or state government. A few state representatives and local council members have had federal officials as mentors (data not presented).

EVALUATION OF POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

We asked officeholders to evaluate the importance of their previous political experience in their decisions to run for their current offices. We asked a general question about the overall importance of political experience as well as more specific questions about the importance of the experiences of holding a previous office, working in a campaign, working on the staff of an elected official, and participating in a candidate training program.

TABLE 25: AMONG COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, BLACK WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN WOMEN OVERALL EVALUATE THEIR PRIOR POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Prior Political Experience[a]	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Very important	26.3	23.8	42.1	29.0	32.9	13.4
Somewhat important	21.1	31.5	26.3	26.0	19.5	24.2
Not important/not applicable	52.6	44.8	31.6	45.0	47.6	62.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(429)	(19)	(100)	(82)	(149)

[a]The precise wording of the factor which officeholders were asked to evaluate is the following: "Making sure I had sufficient prior political experience."

Asked whether the factor "Making sure I had sufficient prior political experience" influenced their decisions to run for their current offices, about one-fourth of black women state representatives, two-fifths of county commissioners, and one-third of local council members evaluate this factor as very important (Table 25). Black women state representatives are slightly less likely than women state representatives overall to have taken prior political experience into account when deciding whether to run, while black women county commissioners and local council members are notably more likely than women overall in those offices to say that their political experience was an important consideration in their decisions (Table 25).

We also asked legislators to select, from a list of nine factors, the three factors that were most important in influencing their decisions to run for their current offices.[6] The list of factors included former officeholding experience, experience working in campaigns, experience working on the staff of an elected public official, and participation in a candidate training program or workshop. County and local officeholders were not asked to evaluate various types of experience relative to other factors but, rather, were asked to evaluate separately the experiences of holding a previous office, working in a campaign, and working on a staff of an elected public official.

TABLE 26: LIKE WOMEN OVERALL, BLACK WOMEN STATE REPRESENTATIVES OFTEN
CITE CAMPAIGN EXPERIENCE AS ONE OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT
FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR OFFICE

Ranked as One of the Three Most Important Factors In-fluencing Decision to Run for Current Office[a]	State House	
	Black Women %	All Women %
Former public officeholding experience	18.8	27.1
Experience working in campaigns	50.0	43.7
Experience working on the staff of an elected public official	12.5	12.6
Participation in a candidate training program or workshop	0.0	5.8
Total	(16)	(428)

[a]Legislators were given a list of nine factors and asked to select the
three factors that were most important in influencing their decisions to
run for their current offices. The list included the following factors:
former public officeholding experience, experience working in campaigns,
experience working on the staff of an elected official, participation in
a candidate training program or workshop, the support of groups or or-
ganizations related to officeholder's occupation, the support of women's
organizations, the support of other types of organizations, the support
of officeholder's political party, and the support of officeholder's
husband and/or family.

At all levels of office, black women cite campaign experience more
often than other types of political experience as important (see Table 26
and Table 27). One-half of black women state legislators report that the
experience of working in a campaign was one of the three most important
factors influencing their decisions to run for the legislature (Table 26).
Similarly, the experience of working in a campaign was a somewhat or very
important factor in the decisions of a majority of black women on county
commissions and local councils; about one-half of county commissioners and
two-fifths of local council members rate campaign experience as very im-
portant (Table 27).

A slightly higher proportion of black women legislators than of all
women legislators rate campaign experience as one of the top three factors
affecting their decisions to run (Table 26). Similarly, black women in
county and local offices are more likely than women overall in those of-
fices to view campaign experience as an important influence on their
decisions to seek office (Table 27). Differences between black women and
all women stem largely from the fact that black women are more likely to
have worked in campaigns.

TABLE 27: BLACK WOMEN IN COUNTY AND LOCAL OFFICES MORE OFTEN THAN WOMEN OVERALL EVALUATE CAMPAIGN EXPERIENCE AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

	County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Importance of campaign experience				
Very important	47.4	39.0	39.8	10.0
Somewhat important[a]	31.6	19.0	15.7	21.3
Not important/not applicable	21.1	42.0	44.6	68.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(100)	(83)	(150)
Importance of former officeholding experience				
Very important	23.5	32.0	22.9	14.7
Somewhat important[a]	5.9	11.0	8.4	10.0
Not important/not applicable	70.6	57.0	68.7	75.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(17)	(100)	(83)	(150)
Importance of working on the staff of an elected official				
.Very important	21.1	6.9	8.4	3.3
•Somewhat important[a]	15.8	5.9	2.4	0.7
Not important/not applicable	63.2	87.1	89.2	96.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

As Table 26 indicates, less than one-fifth of black women state representatives single out either former officeholding experience or staff experience as one of the three most important factors influencing their decisions to run; none choose candidate training as one of the top three factors. Similarly, as Table 27 indicates, at least three-fifths of black women on county commissions and local councils report that former officeholding experience and staff experience did not enter into their decisions

to run; a majority of black women do not attach importance to these experiences largely because a majority do not have former officeholding or staff experience.

Black women are fairly similar to women overall in according less importance to former officeholding and staff experience than to campaign experience. No consistent differences across all levels of office emerge between black women and all women in their evaluations of former officeholding and staff experience.

This section discusses the relationship between black women and the major
political parties. Specifically, we examine the role, if any, which poli-
tical parties played in helping black women officeholders achieve their
current offices. To what extent did the Democratic and Republican parties
support black women in their bids for office? To what extent did party
support affect the decisions of black women officeholders to run for office?

PARTY AFFILIATION OF OFFICEHOLDERS IN PARTISAN RACES

Because party leaders generally are not involved in recruiting and
supporting candidates in nonpartisan elections, only the responses of
officeholders who ran in partisan races are examined in those parts of
this chapter which pertain to the activities of party leaders. As Table 28
indicates, all black women state representatives in our survey ran in par-
tisan races. About four-fifths of black women county commissioners and
about two-fifths of black women local council members ran in partisan con-
tests. Compared with women officeholders overall, black women at county
and local levels are somewhat more likely to have run in partisan contests.

The vast majority of black women officeholders who ran in partisan
races are Democrats (Table 29).[1] Moreover, relative to all women office-
holders, black women disproportionately ran on the Democratic ticket. A
small proportion of black women on local councils, like their counterparts
among women officeholders generally, ran as Independents in partisan races.

TABLE 28: AMONG COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, BLACK
WOMEN ARE SOMEWHAT MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE RUN
IN PARTISAN RACES

Nature of Race	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Partisan	100.0	100.0	81.3	61.6	42.0	34.7
Nonpartisan	0.0	0.0	18.8	38.4	58.0	65.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(447)	(16)	(99)	(81)	(147)

TABLE 29: AMONG OFFICEHOLDERS WHO RAN IN PARTISAN RACES, BLACK WOMEN ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO BE DEMOCRATS[a]

Political Party Affiliation	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Democrat	100.0	51.5	92.3	68.3	83.9	52.1
Republican	0.0	48.5	7.7	31.7	9.7	41.7
Independent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.5	6.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(447)	(13)	(60)	(31)	(48)

[a] In this table and Tables 30, 31, and 32, officeholders who ran in non-partisan races are excluded from the analysis.

TABLE 30: A MAJORITY OF BLACK WOMEN, LIKE WOMEN OVERALL, WERE RECRUITED AND/OR SUPPORTED BY PARTY LEADERS WHEN THEY FIRST RAN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Party Leaders' Reactions to Candidacy of Officeholder	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Recruited and/or supported[a]	64.7	67.5	61.5	78.0	76.9	83.7
Opposed	11.8	6.2	7.7	3.4	0.0	0.0
Divided, some supported and some opposed	5.9	12.6	7.7	13.6	11.6	0.0
Neutral, neither supported nor opposed	17.6	13.6	23.1	5.1	11.5	16.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(17)	(419)	(13)	(59)	(26)	(43)

[a] This response includes those who said that party leaders actively sought them out and encouraged them to run for office and/or those who said that party leaders supported their candidacies after they had decided to run.

SUPPORT FROM PARTY LEADERS

We asked officeholders whether party leaders had actively sought them out and encouraged them to run the first time they ran for their current offices. Those officeholders who were not sought out by party leaders

TABLE 31: AMONG DEMOCRATIC COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, BLACK WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE BEEN RECRUITED AND/OR SUPPORTED BY PARTY LEADERS

Party Leaders' Reactions to Candidacy of Officeholder	County Commission Democrats	
	Black Women %	All Women %
Recruited and/or supported[a]	58.3	75.0
Opposed	8.3	5.0
Divided, some supported and some opposed	8.3	15.0
Neutral, neither supported nor opposed	25.0	5.0
	100.0	100.0
Total	(12)	(40)

[a]See note for Table 30.

were asked whether party leaders were generally supportive, opposed, neutral, or divided in their reactions to their candidacies.

Table 30 shows that more than one-half of black women officeholders were recruited and/or supported by party leaders. Three-fourths of local council members and nearly two-thirds of state representatives and county commissioners were recruited and/or supported by party leaders.

Among state representatives and local council members, black women and women overall do not differ greatly in the proportions who were recruited and/or supported by party leaders (Table 30). However, among county commissioners, black women appear to be less likely than women overall to have received party leaders' support and encouragement. The fact that black women are disproportionately Democratic does not account for the difference between black women and women overall on county commissions. As Table 31 shows, even when only Democratic women are examined, notably fewer black women county commissioners than all women county commissioners were recruited and/or supported by party leaders.

An examination of just those women at all levels of office who were sought out and encouraged to run by party leaders shows that party leaders recruited about one-half of black women officeholders to run for their current offices (Table 32). These proportions are about equal to the proportions of women officeholders overall who were recruited by party leaders.

TABLE 35: AMONG COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, BLACK
WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN WOMEN OVERALL EVALUATE PARTY SUPPORT
AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR
THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of Political Party Support	County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Very important	47.4	30.3	35.4	7.3
Somewhat important[a]	26.3	30.3	17.1	10.7
Not important/not applicable	26.3	39.4	47.6	82.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(99)	(82)	(150)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

The fact that most black women officeholders are Democrats does not
entirely account for the differences between black women officeholders and
women officeholders overall in the importance they accord to political
party support (Table 36).[3] Among county commissioners, differences in
evaluation of the importance of party support lessen when only Democrats
are compared. Among state representatives and local council members,
however, Democratic black women and Democratic women overall do differ in
their assessment of the impact party support had on their decisions to run
for office.

PARTY SUPPORT FOR INCUMBENTS

Most of the questions thus far have dealt with the role of political
parties in officeholders' first bids for their current offices. The level
of party support for an officeholder may change once an officeholder is an
incumbent who is seeking re-election. In order to gauge whether party
support for an officeholder did change from a first bid to a re-election
bid, we asked state legislators who have been re-elected to their current
offices whether party leaders were more supportive, equally supportive,
or less supportive of their candidacies during their re-election bids.

Table 37 shows that the majority of black women state representatives
found party leaders to be more supportive. No black women claim that
party leaders were less supportive during their re-election bids than they
had been during their initial races. Nonetheless, black women state

TABLE 36: AMONG COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, BLACK DEMOCRATIC WOMEN ARE SIMILAR
TO DEMOCRATIC WOMEN OVERALL IN EVALUATING PARTY SUPPORT AS
IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Democrats		Democrats		Democrats	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Importance of political party support[a]						
Very important	....	....	44.4	35.5	39.1	11.1
Somewhat important[b]	....	....	27.8	35.5	17.4	17.5
Not important/not applicable	....	....	27.8	29.0	43.5	71.4
			100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Ranked political party support as one of three most important factors[a]	31.3	42.5	....	....	....	....
Total	(16)	(221)	(18)	(62)	(69)	(63)

[a] Legislators and local and county officeholders were asked different ques-
tions evaluating party support. Local and county officeholders were
asked to evaluate the importance of political party support in their
decisions to run the first time for their current offices. Legislators
were given a list of nine factors, including political party support,
and asked to select the three factors that were most important in
influencing their decisions to run for their current offices. For a
complete list of the factors, see note "a" for Table 26.

[b] Includes "slightly important" responses.

TABLE 37: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES, BLACK WOMEN LESS OFTEN THAN WOMEN
OVERALL REPORT THAT THEY RECEIVED GREATER SUPPORT FROM PARTY
LEADERS IN THEIR RE-ELECTION BIDS THAN IN THEIR INITIAL BIDS
FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Supportiveness of Party Leaders in Officeholder's Re-election Race Compared with Initial Race	State House	
	Black Women %	All Women %
More supportive	53.3	70.6
Equally supportive	46.7	26.8
Less supportive	0.0	2.6
	100.0	100.0
Total	(15)	(313)

representatives are less likely than all women state representatives to
report that party leaders were more supportive, and black women are more
likely than all women to report that party leaders were about equally as
supportive. This difference between black women officeholders and women
officeholders overall also persists when only Democrats are compared (data
not presented). These findings suggest that incumbency less often for
black women officeholders than for women officeholders generally led to a
boost in support from party leaders.

In the context of the civil rights movement and the women's movement, or-
ganizations have been a central force in challenging a predominantly male
and predominantly white political power structure. But aside from a
general impact, have organizations, including those which seek to change
the concentration of political power, played an important role in bringing
black women into public office? Are black groups central today to black
women's political participation? Has the women's movement--often accused
of failing to address the needs of women of color--helped black women to
achieve their current positions as officeholders? Have traditional sources
of support for men, such as labor unions or business groups, played a role
in encouraging and supporting black women to run for office? To begin to
answer these questions, we examine whether organizations other than poli-
tical parties--black groups, women's groups, church groups, occupation-
based groups, or other groups--have encouraged and supported black women
to run for their current offices.[1] Black women officeholders' evaluations
of the importance of the support of organizations in their decisions to
run for office are also discussed.

OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONS

We asked officeholders, "Excluding your political party, was there an
organization that played a particularly important role in getting you to
run the first time for the office you now hold?" As Table 38 indicates,
organizational encouragement was important for about two-fifths of black
women state representatives and county commissioners and about one-third
of black women local council members. Furthermore, a comparison with all
women officeholders shows that these proportions are larger than the pro-
portions of all women officeholders who view organizations as having
played instrumental roles in their decisions to run for office.[2]

The organizations which black women officeholders cite as important
in motivating their candidacies vary according to level of office (Table
39). A base of power and support rooted in community and civil rights
groups is evident among black women local council members and county
commissioners. Similar to all women on local councils, black women local
council members most often mention community groups as having played
important roles. However, in contrast to local council members overall,
black women on local councils mention civil rights groups, including the
NAACP, with the second greatest frequency.

TABLE 38: BLACK WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN WOMEN OVERALL REPORT THAT AN
ORGANIZATION PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN GETTING THEM TO RUN
THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women $\bar{x}$	All Women $\bar{x}$	Black Women $\bar{x}$	All Women $\bar{x}$	Black Women $\bar{x}$	All Women $\bar{x}$
An organization played a particularly important role	38.9	33.9	42.1	19.8	32.9	22.5
Total	(18)	(434)	(19)	(101)	(82)	(151)

Among black women county commissioners, church-related groups as well as civil rights groups stand out in importance. About one-eighth of black women county commissioners compared to only 1% of all women county commissioners report that a church-related organization played a role in getting them to run for office.

While church-related and civil rights organizations also were instrumental in motivating some black women state representatives to run for the legislature, partisan groups and women's groups more often played a role (Table 39). Women's groups were especially important for black state legislators. If black women's groups as well as other women's groups are considered, about one of every four women legislators reports that women's groups played an important role in motivating their candidacies.[3] Black women state representatives are similar to women state representatives overall in that notable proportions mention women's organizations.

Although black women officeholders are about as likely as all women officeholders to have been influenced by women's groups, the specific groups named by black women often are different from those mentioned most frequently by women officeholders overall. For example, while the League of Women Voters is often named by all women officeholders as an organization which helped motivate them to run for office, fewer black women state representatives than all women state representatives and no black women county commissioners and local council members report that the League played such a role in their decisions. In fact, black women state representatives are equally as likely, and black women county commissioners are more likely, to mention black women's groups than to mention the League of Women Voters as having been important in motivating them to run for office.

TABLE 39: BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO CITE CIVIL RIGHTS AND CHURCH-RELATED GROUPS AS HAVING PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN GETTING THEM TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Type of Organization Which Played an Important Role in Getting Officeholder to Run the First Time for Current Office[a]	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Women's	22.2	23.5	5.3	7.9	4.9	6.6
Black women's[b]	5.6	0.2	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
League of Women Voters (LWV)	5.6	11.8	0.0	5.0	0.0	3.3
Civil rights[c]	5.6	0.2	10.5	0.0	8.5	0.0
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)	5.6	0.2	5.3	0.0	6.1	0.0
Church-related	5.6	1.4	15.8	1.0	1.2	0.0
School-related	5.6	1.2	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.3
Teachers'	0.0	3.2	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Labor	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Business or professional	0.0	0.5	5.3	1.0	0.0	1.3
Political or partisan	11.1	2.1	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0
Governmental boards or commissions	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Community	0.0	3.0	0.0	2.0	11.0	8.6
Environmental	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Service	0.0	0.2	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	2.5	5.3	2.0	3.7	2.0
Organization played a role, but organization not specified	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	2.4	0.7
Organization did not play a role	61.1	66.1	57.9	80.2	67.1	77.5
Total	(18)	(434)	(19)	(101)	(82)	(151)

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 for legislators because legislators could name one or two organizations.

[b]The category 'black women's' includes other race-related or ethnic groups for all women.

[c]The category "civil rights" does not include black women's groups.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

This section delves more deeply into the relationship between black women officeholders and women's organizations. Women's organizations which have emerged over the last decade, such as the Women's Political Caucus and the National Organization for Women, have been instrumental in promoting the representation of women and women's concerns in public life.

More longstanding women's organizations such as the League of Women Voters
and the American Association of University Women have been instrumental in
providing a public forum for women and a training ground for women leaders.
However, as important as these organizations have been for women, the rele-
vance of women's groups for women of color has been a matter of controversy.
Have women's groups addressed the needs and concerns of women of color, and
have women of color embraced the women's movement? In order to begin to
clarify one aspect of the relationship between black women officeholders
and women's organizations, we asked black women officeholders about member-
ships in women's organizations and about the support they received from
women's organizations.

Membership in Women's Organizations

The vast majority of black women state representatives and county com-
missioners and a near majority of black women local council members have

TABLE 40: BLACK WOMEN ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO BELONG
TO FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Member of at least one major women's organi- zation (AAUW, BPW, LWV, NOW, WPC)[a]	84.2	77.1	63.2	58.4	47.0	37.1
Member of at least one feminist organiza- tion (NOW, WPC, or other feminist group)[b]	68.4	45.8	47.4	28.7	30.1	6.6
Total[c]	(19)	(441)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

[a] The category "major women's organization" includes the American Associa-
tion of University Women (AAUW), the National Federation of Business and
Professional Women's Clubs (BPW), the League of Women Voters (LWV), the
National Organization for Women (NOW), and the Women's Political Caucus
(WPC).

[b] The category "feminist organization" includes the National Organization
for Women (NOW), the Women's Political Caucus (WPC), and other feminist
groups. To some degree, the categories "feminist organization" and
"major women's organization" overlap.

[c] Officeholders were provided with a list of women's organizations and
asked to indicate whether or not they had ever belonged to any of the
specific organizations listed. Officeholders who did not answer the
question are excluded from the total.

belonged or currently belong to at least one of the following women's or-
ganizations: the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW), the
League of Women Voters (LWV), the National Organization for Women (NOW),
and the Women's Political Caucus (WPC) (Table 40).[4] As is the case for
all women officeholders, the proportion of black women officeholders who
belong to these major women's organizations increases with the level of
office. More than four-fifths of black women state representatives belong
to at least one of these women's organizations. Across all levels of
office, black women officeholders are somewhat more likely than all women
officeholders to belong to at least one of the major women's organizations.

Across all levels of office, black women officeholders are notably more
likely than all women officeholders to belong to feminist organizations in
particular (Table 40).[5] More than two-thirds of black women state repre-
sentatives, compared with slightly less than one-half of all women state
representatives, belong to at least one feminist organization. Among local
council members, nearly one in three black women belongs to a feminist
organization compared with only about one of every twenty women office-
holders generally.

An examination of black women's membership in specific women's organi-
zations shows that from one-third to two-thirds of black women state repre-
sentatives have belonged to each of the following groups: the BPW, the
League of Women Voters, NOW, the Women's Political Caucus, and associations
of women public officials (Table 41). Fewer black women county commis-
sioners and local council members, but substantial proportions nevertheless,
belong to these organizations.

Black women are, with few exceptions, much more likely than all women
to be members of almost every women's organization which we examined (Table
41). Black women's participation in feminist organizations is particularly
high relative to that for all women. Among state representatives, nearly
two-thirds of black women compared with about one-third of all women are
members of the Women's Political Caucus; more than one-third of black
women, compared with about one-fifth of all women, are members of NOW.
Furthermore, unlike the negligible proportions of all women county com-
missioners and local council members who have belonged to the Women's
Political Caucus or NOW, one-seventh to one-third of black women county
commissioners and local council members have belonged or currently belong
to these organizations. Black women officeholders also are about equally
if not more likely than all women officeholders to belong to at least two
of the longstanding women's groups--the BPW and the League of Women Voters.
Finally, black women officeholders are somewhat more likely than all women
officeholders to be members of an association of women public officials.

TABLE 41: BLACK WOMEN ARE EQUALLY OR MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO
BE MEMBERS OF MOST MAJOR WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Member of	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
American Association of University Women (AAUW)	10.5	25.4	21.1	12.9	7.2	7.9
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW)	47.4	28.6	31.6	28.7	19.3	15.9
Junior League	5.3	6.1	0.0	6.9	2.4	2.6
League of Women Voters (LWV)	63.2	49.7	36.8	34.7	33.7	17.9
National Organization for Women (NOW)	36.8	22.2	21.1	6.9	14.5	2.6
Women's Political Caucus (WPC)	63.2	37.4	36.8	13.9	14.5	3.3
An association of women public officials	52.6	44.2	36.8	21.8	19.3	11.3
Total[a]	(19)	(441)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

[a]Officeholders were provided with a list of women's organizations and
asked to indicate whether or not they had ever belonged to any of the
specific organizations listed. Officeholders who did not answer the
question are excluded from the total.

Some of the differences between black women and all women may be due
to the fact that black women officeholders are disproportionately Demo-
cratic. Among state representatives, Democratic women are more likely
than Republican women to belong to women's groups (see Table 4.7 in Part
One of this report). Table 42 shows that when only Democrats are compared,
the proportion of black women state representatives belonging to at least
one of the major women's groups is equal to the proportion of all women
state representatives belonging to these groups. However, political party
affiliation cannot fully account for differences between black women and
all women in participation in women's groups. Black Democratic women at
county and local levels of office are slightly more likely than all Demo-
cratic women in those offices to belong to women's groups (Table 42).
The comparison of only Democrats also shows that black Democratic women
at all levels of office are more likely than all Democratic women to
belong to feminist organizations. Additionally, an examination of

TABLE 42: AMONG DEMOCRATIC OFFICEHOLDERS, BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY
THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO BELONG TO FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Democrats		Democrats		Democrats	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Member of at least one major women's organization (AAUW, BPW, LWV, NOW, WPC)[a]	84.2	83.5	61.1	58.7	47.1	38.1
Member of at least one feminist organization (NOW, WPC, or other feminist group)[b]	68.4	59.6	44.4	30.2	32.9	7.9
Total[c]	(19)	(230)	(18)	(63)	(70)	(63)

[a] See note "a" for Table 40.
[b] See note "b" for Table 40.
[c] See note "c" for Table 40.

membership in specific women's organizations (data not presented) shows
that black Democratic women are more likely than all Democratic women to
belong to the BPW, the League of Women Voters, and the Women's Political
Caucus and about equally as likely to belong to NOW and associations of
women public officials.

Encouragement from Women's Organizations

In order to assess the role which women's organizations played in re-
cruiting women officeholders to run for office, we asked officeholders
whether any women's organizations had actively encouraged them to run the
first time for their current offices. As Table 43 indicates, more than
one-half of black women serving in state legislatures were actively en-
couraged by women's organizations to run for office. The proportion of
black women officeholders who were encouraged by women's organizations
successively decreases by level of office. Nevertheless, black women are
more likely than women overall at all three levels of office to report
that women's organizations actively encouraged them to seek office. This
difference is especially pronounced at the state legislative level, with
twice the proportion of black women state representatives as all women

TABLE 43: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES, BLACK WOMEN ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY
THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY WOMEN'S
ORGANIZATIONS TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Actively encouraged by a women's organization	58.8	27.3	31.6	23.8	18.1	14.6
Total	(17)	(432)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

state representatives receiving encouragement from women's organizations.[6]

Black women officeholders were encouraged by a variety of women's groups (Table 44). The Women's Political Caucus, the League of Women Voters, women's church groups, and groups of black women were most often important for state representatives. Among county commissioners and local council members, no single women's group or type of group stands out as substantially more important than others.

The biggest difference between black women officeholders and all women officeholders is the role of church-related women's groups and black women's groups in black women's political careers. Black women officeholders, especially among state legislators, often mention these groups as having encouraged them to run for office, while very few women in our predominantly Caucasian sample of all women officeholders mention these groups as important (Table 44). The added encouragement black women received from church-related and race-related women's groups in large part accounts for the larger proportions of black women than all women officeholders who received encouragement from women's organizations.

Support from Women's Organizations

In addition to encouraging women to run for office, some women's organizations can endorse and/or support women candidates. In order to determine whether women's organizations played such a role, we asked officeholders whether any women's organizations formally or informally supported their candidacies after they had decided to run for their current offices.

Nearly two-thirds of black women state representatives and nearly one-third of black women county commissioners report that women's organizations

TABLE 44: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES, BLACK WOMEN MUCH MORE OFTEN THAN WOMEN OVERALL—CITE CHURCH-RELATED AND BLACK WOMEN'S GROUPS AS THE ORGANIZATIONS WHICH ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED THEM TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Type of Women's Organization Which Encouraged Office-holder[a]	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Feminist[b]	11.8	9.0	5.3	3.0	4.8	0.7
National Organiza-tion for Women (NOW)	5.9	1.6	0.0	1.0	2.4	0.0
Women's Political Caucus (WPC)	11.8	8.1	5.3	2.0	2.4	0.7
General social service[c]	17.6	7.9	5.3	8.9	0.0	6.0
American Association of University Women (AAUW)	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.3
League of Women Voters (LWV)	17.6	6.5	5.3	7.9	0.0	4.6
Business or professional[d]	5.9	2.3	0.0	5.0	1.2	0.7
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW)	5.9	1.6	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.7
Partisan	0.0	6.5	10.5	5.9	4.8	0.7
Church-related	11.8	1.6	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.7
Black women's[e]	17.6	0.7	10.5	0.0	3.6	1.3
Other[f]	11.8	3.9	15.8	4.0	8.4	6.0
Encouraged by women's organization, but organization not specified	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.7
Women's groups did not play a role	41.2	72.7	68.4	76.2	81.9	85.4
Total	(17)	(432)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

[a] Percentages do not add to 100 because officeholders could name one or two women's organizations which encouraged them to run the first time for their current offices.

[b] The category "feminist" includes the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Women's Political Caucus (WPC), and other explicitly feminist groups.

[c] The category "general social service" includes the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the Junior League, and the League of Women Voters (LWV).

[d] The category "business or professional" includes the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW) and occupation-related women's groups such as nurses' groups.

[e] The category "black women's" includes other race-related or ethnic women's groups for "all women".

[f] The category "other" includes women's clubs, sororities, community-based women's groups, and other groups.

TABLE 45: BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE RECEIVED
FORMAL OR INFORMAL SUPPORT FROM WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS WHEN THEY
RAN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Formally or informally supported by a women's organization[a]	64.7	53.9	31.6	18.0	13.3	6.6
Total	(17)	(425)	(19)	(100)	(83)	(151)

[a] Officeholders were asked whether any women's organizations formally or informally supported their candidacies after they had decided to run the first time for their current offices.

formally or informally supported their candidacies (Table 45). Further-
more, across all levels of office, a larger proportion of black women than
of all women were formally or informally supported by women's organiza-
tions.[7]

We asked legislators to specify the women's organizations which aided
their candidacies. Black women state representatives most often mentioned
feminist groups (Table 46). Three of every ten report that the Women's
Political Caucus gave them support, and over one of every ten reports that
NOW gave support. Together, these and other feminist organizations gave
some form of campaign support to more than one-third of the black women
who won seats in state legislatures. Black women's groups also were im-
portant, with nearly one-fourth of black women state representatives re-
porting that they were supported in their candidacies by a black women's
organization. Church-related women's groups and business or professional
women's groups also were mentioned by more than one-tenth of black women
state representatives.

The most notable difference between black women state representatives
and all women state representatives is the role of black women's and
church-related women's groups. Substantial proportions of black women
state representatives, compared with almost no women state representatives
overall, report support from these groups (Table 46). Black women are also
slightly more likely than women overall to have received support from
feminist organizations. In contrast, no black women state representatives,

TABLE 46: BLACK WOMEN STATE REPRESENTATIVES ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY THAN
WOMEN STATE REPRESENTATIVES OVERALL TO NAME CHURCH-RELATED
AND BLACK WOMEN'S GROUPS AS THE WOMEN'S GROUPS WHICH FORMALLY
OR INFORMALLY SUPPORTED THEIR CANDIDACIES

Type of Women's Organization Which Supported Officeholder's First Candidacy for Current Office[a]	State House	
	Black Women %	All Women %
Feminist[b]	35.3	28.5
National Organization for Women (NOW)	11.8	8.2
Women's Political Caucus (WPC)	29.4	21.9
General social service[c]	5.9	9.6
American Association of University Women (AAUW)	0.0	4.0
League of Women Voters (LWV)	5.9	5.9
Business or professional[d]	11.8	6.1
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW)	5.9	5.2
Partisan	0.0	12.7
Church-related	11.8	1.2
Black women's[e]	23.5	0.9
Other[f]	17.6	9.9
Supported by women's organization, but organization not specified	5.9	1.9
Did not receive support from a women's organization	35.3	46.1
Total	(17)	(425)

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 because officeholders could name one or two
women's organizations which supported their candidacies. County and local
officeholders were not asked to specify which women's organizations gave
them support.

[b]The category "feminist" includes the National Organization for Women (NOW),
the Women's Political Caucus (WPC), and other explicitly feminist groups.

[c]The category "general social service" includes the American Association
of University Women (AAUW), the Junior League, and the League of Women
Voters (LWV).

[d]The category "business or professional" includes the National Federation
of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW) and occupation-related
women's groups such as nurses' groups.

[e]The category "black women's" includes other race-related or ethnic
women's groups for "all women".

[f]The category "other" includes women's clubs, sororities, community-based
women's groups, and other groups.

compared to more than one-tenth of all women in state houses, report that they were supported by partisan women's groups.

OCCUPATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Since proportionately more black women officeholders than all women officeholders are working outside the home while holding public office (see Table 5 in Chapter 7 of Part Two of this report), one might expect black women officeholders to have stronger ties to occupational organizations. To determine whether occupational organizations played a role in the campaigns of black women officeholders, we asked them whether they had ever belonged to organizations related to their occupations and whether they received encouragement or support for their candidacies from these groups.

TABLE 47: BLACK WOMEN ARE SLIGHTLY MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF ORGANIZATIONS RELATED TO THEIR OCCUPATIONS

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Member of organization related to occupation	55.6	48.8	57.9	43.6	53.0	46.4
Total	(18)	(432)	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

TABLE 48: BLACK WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN WOMEN OVERALL WERE ENCOURAGED TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES BY THE OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS TO WHICH THEY BELONGED

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Actively encouraged by occupational organization	13.3	8.0	22.2	4.0	9.6	3.3
Total	(15)	(412)	(18)	(101)	(83)	(151)

Membership in Occupational Organizations

A majority of black women at every level of office have at one time belonged to organizations related to their occupations (Table 47). Compared with women officeholders overall, black women are somewhat more likely to belong to occupational organizations. As is the case for all women officeholders, the proportions of black women who have belonged or currently belong to occupational organizations do not vary much by level of office.

Among black women state representatives, 5.6% were affiliated with the National Education Association, 5.6% with the American Federation of Teachers, and 11.1% with the American Bar Association (data not presented).[8] Unlike women state representatives overall (see Table 4.20 in Part One of this report), no black women have belonged to a women's professional organization or to an organization related to a predominately "female" profession.

The Role of Occupational Organizations

Few black women officeholders were encouraged to run for office by the occupation-related organizations to which they belonged (Table 48). Black women county commissioners are the most likely to have been actively encouraged by the occupational groups to which they belonged, with more than one-fifth of black women county commissioners reporting that occupational groups played a role in motivating their candidacies. Also, although occupational groups did not play an active recruitment role among most black women officeholders, black women at every level of office--and especially among county commissioners--are more likely than women officeholders overall to have been encouraged by occupational organizations to run for office.

Occupational organizations were more important in supporting black women once they had declared their candidacies than they were in helping to motivate their candidacies. Proportions ranging from more than one-fifth of black women local council members to about one-third of black women county commissioners received formal or informal support for their candidacies from the occupation-related organizations to which they belonged (Table 49). Black women county commissioners and local council members are notably more likely than all women in those offices to have been supported during their campaigns by occupational organizations of which they were members.

EVALUATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Just as substantial proportions of black women officeholders report that organizations encouraged and supported them, substantial proportions of black women attach considerable value to that support. In order to determine how important the support of organizations was to officeholders, we gave legislators a list of nine factors and asked them to select the

TABLE 49: BLACK WOMEN ARE EQUALLY OR MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO
HAVE RECEIVED FORMAL OR INFORMAL SUPPORT FOR THEIR CANDIDACIES
FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH THEY BELONGED

	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Formally or informally supported by occupational organization[a]	25.0	21.7	31.6	8.9	22.0	7.3
Total	(16)	(406)	(19)	(101)	(82)	(151)

[a]Officeholders were asked whether groups related to their occupations and
to which they belonged had formally or informally supported their candi-
dacies after they had decided to run the first time for their current
offices.

three factors which were most important in influencing their decisions to
run for office.[9] Included in that list were the following factors per-
taining to organizations: "the support of women's organizations," "the
support of organizations or groups related to my occupation," and "the
support of other types of organizations." Organizational support of every
kind was a central factor in the decisions of substantial proportions of
black women state representatives (Table 50). The support of organizations
other than women's and occupational organizations was important for the
largest proportion of black women state representatives, with one-half
citing such support as one of the top three factors affecting their
decisions to run for office. In contrast, only about one-fifth of all
women state representatives chose this factor. This finding for black
women seems to affirm the importance of the role of organizations such as
civil rights groups and church-related groups in motivating the candi-
dacies of black women officeholders.

Black women also evaluate the support of women's groups as critically
important. One-fourth of black women state representatives, almost twice
the proportion of all women state representatives, rate the support of
women's organizations as one of the three most important factors in their
decisions to seek office (Table 50). Of the factors related to organiza-
tions, the support of occupational organizations least often influenced
the decisions of black women state representatives. Yet, even if other

TABLE 50: BLACK WOMEN STATE REPRESENTATIVES MORE OFTEN THAN WOMEN STATE
REPRESENTATIVES OVERALL RANK THE SUPPORT OF ORGANIZATIONS AS
ONE OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR
DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Ranked as One of the Three Most Important Factors Influencing Decision to Run for Current Office[a]	State House	
	Black Women %	All Women %
Support of women's organizations	25.0	13.6
Support of occupation-related organizations	18.8	12.1
Support of other organizations[b]	50.0	20.8
Total	(16)	(428)

[a]Legislators were given a list of nine factors and asked to select the
three factors that were most important in influencing their decisions to
run for their current offices. For a complete list of the factors, see
note "a" for Table 26.

[b]Excludes women's organizations and occupation-related organizations.

organizations were more often important for black women state representa-
tives than were occupational organizations, organizations related to of-
ficeholders' occupations were still more important for black women state
representatives as a whole than they were for women state representatives
overall.

Black women on county commissions and local councils also highly value
the support they received from organizations. County and local office-
holders were asked whether the support of organizations and the support
of women's organizations respectively were very important, somewhat or
slightly important, or not at all important in their decisions to run the
first time for their current offices. More than one-fourth of black female
county commissioners and local council members evaluate the support of
organizations as very important (Table 51). While only about one-fifth of
county and local elected women overall evaluate the support of organiza-
tions as at all important, more than two-fifths of black women county
commissioners and about one-third of black women local council members
evaluate support of organizations as an important factor in their decisions
to run for office.

The support of women's organizations acted as an important influence
on the decisions of two out of every ten black women on county commissions

TABLE 51: BLACK WOMEN AT COUNTY AND LOCAL LEVELS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN
WOMEN OVERALL TO EVALUATE THE SUPPORT OF ORGANIZATIONS IN
GENERAL AND WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN PARTICULAR AS IMPORTANT
IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN THE FIRST TIME FOR THEIR CURRENT
OFFICES

	County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Importance of support of organizations				
Very important	26.3	11.0	28.9	8.7
Somewhat important[a]	15.8	6.0	2.4	11.4
Not important/not applicable	57.9	83.0	68.7	79.9
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(100)	(83)	(149)
Importance of support of women's organizations				
Very important	5.3	5.0	7.2	2.0
Somewhat important[a]	15.8	8.9	4.8	3.3
Not important/not applicable	78.9	86.1	88.0	94.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(101)	(83)	(151)

[a]Includes "slightly important" responses.

and about one out of every ten black women on local councils (Table 51).
Although these proportions are not large, black women county commissioners
and local council members are more likely than all women officeholders to
report that the support of women's organizations affected their decisions
to run for their current offices. This finding appears to correspond to
the fact that proportionately more black women than women overall in county
and local offices belonged to major women's organizations and received en-
couragement and support from women's organizations.

Other factors in addition to those discussed in previous chapters may have entered into officeholders' decisions to run for their current offices. In this chapter, we first examine officeholders' assessments of the importance of a variety of factors in their decisions to run for their current offices and then discuss the reasons which the officeholders themselves give for their decisions to run.

MONEY

Because money can be a critical resource in a campaign, we asked officeholders to evaluate whether considerations about money were important in their decisions to seek their current offices.[1] Specifically, we asked officeholders to evaluate the importance of the factor: "Assurance that I would have sufficient financial resources to conduct a viable campaign."

The higher the level of office, the more likely black women officeholders are to have taken money considerations into account when making the decision to run (Table 52). The increased importance of money for officeholders at successive levels of office mirrors the fact that the costs of campaigns tend to increase with each level of office. At the state legislative level, where in many states the costs of campaigning are likely to be greatest, four-fifths of black women say that having enough money to conduct a viable campaign was very or somewhat important.

Black women officeholders are similar to women officeholders overall in that the importance which they accord to money increases with their level of office; however, black women at both the state legislative and local levels--although not at the county level--are notably more likely than women overall to report that money considerations were important in their decisions to run (Table 52). These differences between black women and women generally probably stem from higher costs of campaigning in the areas represented by black women. In fact, more than one-half of black women state representatives, compared with about one-fourth of state representatives overall, come from the eleven states where state legislative salaries were highest in 1981. Because of the higher salaries, competition for state legislative seats and thus campaign costs probably were greater in these states. Similarly, a larger proportion of black women local council members than women local council members overall--28.9% of black women on local councils compared with 8.6% of women overall--come from municipalities with populations over 30,000, where costs of campaigning are likely to be greater.

TABLE 52: AMONG STATE REPRESENTATIVES AND LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, BLACK
WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN WOMEN OVERALL RATE MONEY AS IMPORTANT IN
THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "Assurance that I would have suffi-cient financial resources to conduct a viable cam-paign"a	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Very important	36.8	26.5	15.8	13.9	18.3	6.0
Somewhat important	42.1	37.9	26.3	25.7	14.6	11.9
Not important/not applicable	21.1	35.6	57.9	60.4	67.1	82.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(430)	(19)	(101)	(82)	(151)

a In this and subsequent tables in this chapter, the precise wording of the factors which officeholders were asked to evaluate is placed in quotation marks.

SUPPORTERS

For black women officeholders as well as for women officeholders over-all, a loyal group of friends and supporters was more often an important factor affecting decisions to run than was money. The vast majority of black women officeholders, ranging from four-fifths of local council mem-bers to nearly all state representatives, report that "Having a loyal group of friends and supporters behind me" was a very important consideration in deciding to run for office (Table 53). Furthermore, although most women officeholders rate this factor as important, black women at all levels of office are notably more likely than women overall to evaluate friends and supporters as very important.

FLEXIBLE OCCUPATION

Because conducting a campaign and serving in office requires a signifi-cant time commitment, we asked officeholders about the flexibility of their occupations. Specifically, we asked officeholders to evaluate the impor-tance in their decisions to run of the factor: "Having an occupation that would allow me sufficient time and flexibility to hold office."

Working in a flexible occupation was a very important consideration for almost one-half of black women state representatives and well over one-half of black women county commissioners and local council members (Table 54). The fact that fewer black women at the state legislative level than at county or local levels evaluate a flexible occupation as important may

TABLE 53: BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO RATE HAVING
           A LOYAL GROUP OF FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS AS VERY IMPORTANT IN
           THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "Having a loyal group of friends and supporters behind me"	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Very important	94.7	82.9	89.5	70.3	80.5	62.7
Somewhat important	5.3	13.9	0.0	18.8	8.5	23.3
Not important/not applicable	0.0	3.2	10.5	10.9	11.0	14.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(438)	(19)	(101)	(82)	(150)

TABLE 54: AMONG COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, BLACK
           WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN WOMEN OVERALL RATE HAVING A FLEXIBLE
           OCCUPATION AS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR
           THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "Having an occupation that would allow me sufficient time and flexibility to hold office"	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Very important	47.4	43.5	73.7	57.0	65.4	45.3
Somewhat important	10.5	19.2	5.3	17.0	17.3	21.3
Not important/not applicable	42.1	37.3	21.1	26.0	17.3	33.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(432)	(19)	(100)	(81)	(150)

be at least partly related to the large proportion of black women representatives who serve in states where legislative salaries are high. Because more than one-half of black women representatives are concentrated in the eleven states paying the highest salaries, most of these women probably do not need to work outside the home in addition to holding office in order to support, or to help support, themselves and their families. In fact, as discussed earlier (see Table 5 in Chapter 7 of Part Two), fewer black women in state houses than on county commissions and local councils are working

outside the home in addition to holding office. Positions on most local councils and county commissions are doubtless less lucrative than seats in the eleven highest paying legislatures; the black women who serve at these levels may more often have to work outside the home in addition to holding office and thus, may more often require flexible occupations.

Black women at state and county levels are slightly more likely, and at the local level much more likely, than women overall in those offices to report that having a flexible occupation was a very or somewhat important factor in their decisions to run (Table 54). These differences probably stem from the fact that black women officeholders are more likely than all women officeholders, whether by choice or necessity, to be working outside the home while holding office.

ISSUES

A concern with public policy issues was an important factor in the decisions of a large majority of black women officeholders (Table 55). When asked to evaluate the importance of "My concern about one or two particular public policy issues" in their decisions to seek their current offices, three-fourths of black women at every level of office report that a concern with issues was very or somewhat important (Table 55). While a concern with issues had an impact on the decisions of black women at every level of office, issues appear to have been most important for local council members. More black women local council members than county commissioners or state legislators evaluate a concern with issues as a very important factor affecting their decisions to campaign for office.

TABLE 55: LARGE MAJORITIES OF BLACK WOMEN, LIKE WOMEN OVERALL, RATE A CONCERN WITH PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "My concern about one or two particular public policy issues"	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Very important	37.5	32.4	42.1	43.0	57.3	41.3
Somewhat important	37.5	35.7	31.6	26.0	17.1	24.0
Not important/not applicable	25.0	31.9	26.3	31.0	25.6	34.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(16)	(426)	(19)	(100)	(82)	(150)

Across all levels of office, black women are somewhat more likely than women officeholders overall to report that a concern with issues was an important factor motivating their decisions to run for office (Table 55). However, this difference may stem from differences between black women officeholders and all women officeholders in party affiliation. When black Democratic women are compared with Democratic women officeholders overall, roughly equal proportions of black women and all women evaluate a concern with issues as having been important (data not presented).[2]

AMBITION FOR HIGHER OFFICE

Did more personal goals, such as political ambition, also enter into black women's decisions to run for office? In order to determine whether political ambition played a role, we asked officeholders to evaluate the importance in their decisions to run of the factor: "My perception that this office was an important stepping stone toward higher office."

Proportions of black women ranging from about one-sixth of state representatives to one-third of local council members report that ambition was a very important consideration (Table 56). Only about one-half of black women county commissioners and local council members and slightly more than one-half of black women state representatives report that ambition played no role in their decisions to run. Compared with women officeholders generally, black women are strikingly more likely to claim that they were influenced in their decisions to run for their current offices by a perception that the offices they sought could potentially lead to higher office.[3]

TABLE 56: BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO RATE POLITICAL AMBITION AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "My perception that this office was an important stepping stone toward higher office"	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Very important	15.8	4.0	26.3	7.0	35.8	7.9
Somewhat important	26.3	10.1	21.1	13.0	13.6	8.6
Not important/not applicable	57.9	85.9	52.6	80.0	50.6	83.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(426)	(19)	(100)	(81)	(151)

TABLE 57:   LARGE MAJORITIES OF BLACK WOMEN, LIKE WOMEN OVERALL, RATE
AWARENESS OF THEIR CAPABILITIES AS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR
DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "The realization that I was just as capable of holding office as most officeholders"	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Very important	77.8	80.3	89.5	89.0	81.5	74.0
Somewhat important	22.2	14.4	10.5	10.0	14.8	22.0
Not important/not applicable	0.0	5.3	0.0	1.0	3.7	4.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(18)	(436)	(19)	(100)	(81)	(150)

REALIZATION OF CAPABILITY

A recognition that one is as capable as current officeholders, a recognition that in essence involves a simultaneous demystification of politics and acknowledgement of one's own abilities, can often be an important aspect of the decision-making process which leads one to run for office. In order to assess the role this factor played in officeholders' decisions to run for their current offices, we asked officeholders to evaluate the importance of the factor: "The realization that I was just as capable of holding office as most officeholders."

Black women officeholders almost universally report that the realization that they were just as competent as most officeholders was important in influencing their decisions to run (Table 57). Among black women, four-fifths of state representatives and local council members and nine-tenths of county commissioners claim that a realization of their capabilities was very important, and almost none say this factor was unimportant. Black women are roughly similar to all women officeholders in the importance which they accord to a realization of their capabilities.

STRENGTH TO COUNTER DISCRIMINATION

We asked officeholders to evaluate the importance in their decisions to run of the factor: "Belief that I was strong enough to combat any discrimination that I might encounter." While this question taps whether the possibility of encountering sex discrimination figured into the decisions of women officeholders overall, the question for black women taps the issues of race discrimination as well.

TABLE 58: BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN OVERALL TO RATE THE
ABILITY TO COMBAT DISCRIMINATION AS VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR
DECISIONS TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Importance of "Belief that I was strong enough to combat any discrimination that I might encounter"	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Very important	78.9	54.9	83.3	73.0	76.8	68.2
Somewhat important	15.8	22.7	11.1	15.0	14.6	16.2
Not important/not applicable	5.3	22.5	5.6	12.0	8.5	15.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	(19)	(432)	(18)	(100)	(82)	(148)

More than nine of every ten black women at every level of office view
the strength to combat discrimination as having been important in their
decisions to run for their current offices, and more than three-fourths
view such strength as having been very important (Table 58). Probably
because of the "double" discrimination to which black women are vulnerable,
notably more black women than all women evaluate the strength to combat
discrimination as a very or somewhat important factor in their decisions to
run. This difference is especially pronounced among state representatives;
whereas only about one-half of women overall report that being able to
combat discrimination was a very important consideration, this factor was
very important for about three-fourths of black women.

MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR SEEKING OFFICE
     In addition to the variety of factors which we asked officeholders to
evaluate, we also asked officeholders to tell us about the most important
influences leading them to run for their current offices. In an open-ended
question designed to elicit responses more specific than general references
to public service, we asked officeholders, "In addition to a desire to
serve the public, what would you say were the one or two most important
factors, influences, or events that led you to run the first time for the
office you now hold?"
     Black women officeholders cite a variety of factors (Table 59). One
of the factors that most often motivated black women at every level of
office was a desire to bring about social or political change. Close to

TABLE 59: BLACK WOMEN GIVE A VARIETY OF RESPONSES WHEN ASKED TO LIST THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS, INFLUENCES, OR EVENTS THAT LED THEM TO RUN FOR THEIR CURRENT OFFICES

Most Important Factor, Influence, or Event That Led Officeholder to Run the First Time for Current Office[a]	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
General interest in politics and government						
To learn about or participate in the political process	11.8	12.6	5.3	17.8	17.1	20.1
Social or political change						
Concern with specific policy area or issue[b]	17.6	13.1	10.5	17.8	32.9	23.6
Concern with intergovernmental relations	5.9	3.0	0.0	1.0	2.4	0.0
Dissatisfaction with politics or incumbent politicians	11.8	9.4	5.3	14.9	2.4	11.1
General concern with social change	17.6	7.2	26.3	23.8	18.3	11.1
Representation of specific interests						
To represent women or women's issues	0.0	9.1	10.5	12.9	9.8	8.3
To represent minorities or civil rights issues	5.9	1.2	26.3	3.0	20.7	0.0
Civic pride						
Civic pride or responsibility	5.9	3.7	15.8	10.9	22.0	22.2
Experience and qualifications						
Prior experience in campaigns, party, government	5.9	17.0	31.6	8.9	2.4	7.6
Experience in community, neighborhood, organization	5.9	6.4	0.0	9.9	3.7	0.0
Perception that she/he was qualified or capable	0.0	9.6	5.3	10.9	8.5	6.9
Recruitment						
Recruited by party or political leaders	11.8	10.1	0.0	1.0	1.2	0.0
Recruited or encouraged by organizations, associates, friends	17.6	11.6	0.0	5.0	8.5	15.3
Opportunity						
Challenge of the office or career opportunity	5.9	4.0	10.5	9.9	1.2	2.1
Opportune political circumstances	0.0	15.1	5.3	3.0	0.0	0.0
Other reasons						
Other political reasons (e.g., lack of candidates, wanted a turn in office)	5.9	3.2	5.3	4.0	1.2	7.6
Concern for the party	0.0	3.0	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0
Inspiration of a specific leader or event	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

TABLE 59 (Continued)

Most Important Factor, Influence, or Event That Led Officeholder to Run the First Time for Current Office[a]	State House		County Commission		Local Council	
	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %	Black Women %	All Women %
Other reasons (continued)						
Influence of a professor or course of study	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4
Inspiration or support of family member	23.5	12.1	10.5	10.9	4.9	9.7
Personal	0.0	7.9	10.5	4.0	0.0	10.4
Other	0.0	3.0	5.3	3.0	1.2	4.2
Total	(17)	(405)	(19)	(101)	(82)	(144)

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 because officeholders could name one or two factors, influences, or events.

[b]Does not include civil rights or women's issues.

one-fifth of state representatives and local council members and about one-fourth of county commissioners mention a general concern with social change; additionally, proportions ranging from one-tenth of county commissioners to one-third of local council members specifically mention a concern with a particular policy area or issue as one of the critical reasons they decided to run for office.

With the exception of reasons related to social change, however, most of the reasons which stand out in importance for black women vary by level of office, suggesting that the important factors behind a decision to run for local council or county commission are somewhat different than those behind a decision to run for the state house. Most notable in this regard is the desire to represent minorities or civil rights issues. Among black women, one-fifth of local council members and one-fourth of county commissioners report that one of the main reasons they ran for their current offices was to represent minorities or civil rights issues; in contrast, only a small proportion of state representatives give this reason. About one-tenth of black women on local and county offices, but no state representatives, cite a desire to represent women or women's issues as one of the most important reasons why they ran for office. As one might expect, sizable proportions of local council members and county commissioners, but few state representatives, ran primarily because of a sense of civic pride or responsibility. A sizable proportion of local council members

also mention a desire to learn about or participate in the political process as one of the main reasons they ran for local council, and a sizable proportion of county commissioners mention their prior political experience as an important influence.

In contrast to local and county officeholders, state representatives often mention factors involving the support of others or recruitment by others. Black women state representatives more often attribute their decisions to run for the state house to the inspiration or support of a family member than to any other specific reason; about one-fourth cite this reason. A sizable proportion also report that they were influenced by the encouragement of organizations, associates, or friends. Party support, while mentioned by no black women county commissioners and virtually no black women local council members, was important for some black women state representatives; about one-tenth report that they ran largely because they were recruited by their party or by political leaders. These findings suggest that the support of family, friends, organizations, and political party are particularly important for a black woman if she is seeking an office beyond the local or county level.

Black women are fairly similar to women officeholders overall in the range of factors, influences, or events which led them to seek their current offices, although the emphasis placed on the various reasons are somewhat different (Table 59). For black women officeholders as for all women officeholders, social change was often a motivating factor; however, black women are somewhat more likely than women overall to cite a general concern with social change but, at the county and local levels, are somewhat less likely to cite dissatisfaction with politics or incumbent politicians. Black women on county commissions less often than women county commissioner overall mention a desire to learn about or participate in the political process and more often cite prior political experience; among state legislators, however, black women less often than all women cite prior political experience as a major influence on the decision to run.

Black women state representatives are more likely than all women in that office to mention the inspiration and support of family members and recruitment by and encouragement from organizations, associates, and friends; among county and local officeholders, however, black women are equally or less likely than all women to mention the support of others as a critical influence on their decisions to run.

As might be expected, black women officeholders are much more likely than women officeholders overall—almost all of whom are white—to have run for office primarily in order to represent minorities or civil rights issues. With the exception of black women state representatives, black women are about equally as likely as women overall to have run for office in order to represent women or women's issues.

The black women who serve on municipal and county governing boards and in
state legislatures are a group of highly qualified, politically experienced,
and self-confident women. They are exceptional, and our findings suggest
that being exceptional is the prerequisite to--or perhaps the result of--
succeeding as a black female in a political arena long dominated by white
men. To the extent that both racism and sexism still put black women at a
disadvantage in society and in politics specifically, our findings reflect
the ways in which black elected women have overcome those barriers.

The routes which women officeholders overall take into office differ
from those of men, build on their collective strength as women, and reflect
the ways they have surmounted the barriers they face as women. But if
women officeholders overall have succeeded because of their individual and
collective determination, this is all the more true of black women office-
holders. In a whole range of areas--from their educational credentials to
the organizational support they receive--we find black women "outdoing"
women overall, who are themselves "outdoing" men. By implication, these
findings reflect the ways in which black women officeholders have met the
challenge of the "double jeopardy" of race and sex discrimination.

In education and occupation, black women officeholders are by and
large very accomplished women. While women officeholders overall are more
likely than their male counterparts to have some college education, black
women officeholders are even more likely than either women overall or men
to have attended college. Black women officeholders, especially at the
county and local levels, also are more likely than female officeholders
overall or male officeholders to hold advanced degrees.

Similarly, while female officeholders overall are in general about
equally as likely as their male counterparts to be concentrated in pro-
fessional/technical and managerial/administrative occupations, black women
officeholders even more often come from these occupations. Black women are
only slightly less likely than men to be lawyers, and they are slightly more
likely than women overall to be lawyers and public administrators.

These findings illustrate well the effects of double discrimination.
If gaining entry as a woman into a traditionally male-dominated field such
as politics requires having as good or better an education and equal or
stronger professional backgrounds than men, being both black and female in
politics may require even stronger educational and occupational credentials.

In the area of political experience, a similar pattern appears. Black
women largely lack experience in elective public offices, reflecting their

- traditional exclusion from the electoral realm. The lack of greater elective experience is a disadvantage for women in politics generally, and since black women collectively have less elective experience than women overall, they are put at an even greater disadvantage. However, black women have sought out a whole variety of other political experiences, and consequently, they are more politically experienced in some respects than are either female officeholders overall or male officeholders. To the extent that, whether by choice or necessity, women overall acquire greater political experience than do men before running successfully for office, black women acquire even more experience.

Except for state representatives, black women are about equally as likely as women overall to have held appointive government positions. As women generally are more likely than men to have appointive experience, black women have more appointive experience than do men.

Black women have a substantial degree of staff experience relative to officeholders overall. While in general, female officeholders are more likely than male officeholders to have worked on the staffs of public officials, black female officeholders are equally or more likely than female officeholders overall to have staff experience.

Differences in levels of experience among black female officeholders, female officeholders overall, and male officeholders are even more pronounced in the area of campaign work. While women overall are more likely than men to have worked in political campaigns before themselves running for office, black women are even more likely to have campaign experience. Almost every black woman state representative and county commissioner in our sample worked in a campaign before running for office. Moreover, black women are more likely than women overall to have worked on women's campaigns and are more likely to evaluate their campaign experience as critically important in their decisions to run for office.

The extra effort that is needed to run successfully in the face of dual discrimination also is reflected in the support black women received from organizations and individuals. While support from individual women and women's organizations is one of women's greatest resources in countering formal and informal obstacles that hinder their movement into elective office, such support is even more important for black women. Black women more often than women overall relied on the support of individuals and organizations in order to arrive at their current positions as officeholders.

Personal support networks more often played a critical role for black women officeholders than for officeholders overall. The significance of key individuals in black women officeholders' careers is underscored by

the fact that black women are more likely than either women overall or men to have had role models and mentors. Moreover, among those whose political activism was inspired by particular individuals, black women more often named women as their role models. Among state representatives and local council members, black women also are slightly more likely to credit women as their mentors. In addition, larger proportions of black women state representatives than women representatives overall say that the inspiration or support of a family member was one of the most important influences on their decisions to seek office. Black women also are more likely than all women to rate having a loyal group of friends and supporters as very important in their decisions to run.

In addition to individual support, support from organizations--especially women's, church-related, and civil rights organizations--played a key role in black women's campaigns. While organizations were more important in motivating and supporting women's candidacies than men's, black women even more often than women overall report that organizations played an important role in preparing and motivating them to run for office. Moreover, large proportions of black women--and larger proportions of black women than of women overall--evaluate the support of organizations as important in their decisions to run for office. In fact, organizational support may be more critical than party support for black women state representatives, since more chose organizational support than party support as one of the top three factors in their decisions to run.

If one way to succeed in spite of dual discrimination is to find alternative sources of personal affirmation and practical campaign support, women's groups--whether black women's groups, feminist groups, or other groups--served as one source of such support for many black women. As was true for women overall, women's organizations in general and feminist organizations in particular were especially important, and in some respects, even more important for black women than for women generally. Black women are equally or more likely than women overall to belong to women's organizations in general and substantially more likely to belong to feminist organizations in particular. Black women also are more likely to have been encouraged to run and supported in their candidacies by women's organizations. While feminist organizations were about equally as important for black women as for women overall in encouraging and supporting their candidacies, black women's groups and church-related women's groups also were key sources of encouragement and support for black women.

Just as organizational support is more important for black women than for women overall or for men, the importance of financial support looms larger for black women. While women officeholders generally are more likely than their male counterparts to say that financial resources were an important consideration in their decisions to run for office, black

women state representatives and local council members are even more likely to view money as having been critical.

To a large extent, the importance of money for black women office-holders seems to be a consequence of the fact that they are most likely to be elected in areas where the costs of campaigning are high. Black women state representatives are almost twice as likely as women representatives overall to serve in the state legislatures in which the salaries--and hence the competition and costs of campaigning--are greatest. Black women local council members are three times as likely to come from large municipalitie those with populations over 30,000--where campaigning is likely to be more expensive. As long as black women are most likely to run for and win seats in legislatures and big cities where campaign costs are high, money is likely to remain a particularly critical factor for black women candidates

A final area where differences between black female officeholders and male officeholders are more pronounced than those between female and male officeholders generally is in family situations. Probably because women traditionally bear the main responsibility for children and family, we found that female officeholders as a group are more likely than their male counterparts to have grown children and to be married to spouses who are supportive of their partners' officeholding activities or not to be married Black women officeholders even more often than women officeholders generally have such family situations. Black women are less likely than women overall to be married, more likely to have supportive spouses if married, and much less likely to have children.[1]

We have found many differences between black women and women overall that seem to reflect the effects of, and perhaps in some cases black women compensation for, the systemic dual discrimination which black women face. In addition to these differences, however, we have found that several factors are critically important for women regardless of race. These factors while no more important for black women than for women generally, are essential to understanding black women's entry into elective office.

Large majorities of black women, like women overall, say that the realization that they were just as capable of holding office as most of-ficeholders was a very important factor in their decisions to run for office. This recognition of one's own abilities appears to be more criti-cal for women, regardless of race, than for men. A concern with issues was also as important for black women as for women overall in motivating a decision to run for office. More than one-third to more than one-half of black women across various levels of office report that a concern with pub lic policy issues was very important. Also, substantial proportions of black women, like female and male officeholders overall, report that one of the main reasons they decided to run for office was their desire to

bring about social or political change. Also, small but significant proportions of black women in county and local offices, like women officeholders overall, say they ran for office largely to represent women or women's issues.

Black women's routes to office also are influenced by factors which are distinctive to black women as blacks. While we have not examined all of these factors, those which we did examine emerge as critical to understanding black women's entry into elective office. One of the clearest examples of race-specific differences between black women officeholders and all women officeholders is the important role of black women's groups, civil rights groups, and church-related groups in black women's political activism. As we have already mentioned, larger proportions of black women than women overall were motivated and encouraged to run and supported in their candidacies by organizations. The difference between black women and women overall is due almost entirely to the additional support which black women received from black women's groups, women's church groups, and general civil rights and church-related groups. Another difference, which might be expected because of the small proportions of women of color among women officeholders generally, is that one-fifth to one-fourth of black women county commissioners and local council members, in contrast to a very small proportion of women officeholders overall, report that one of the main reasons they ran for office was to represent minorities or civil rights issues. Finally, more than three-fourths of black women evaluate the ability to combat discrimination as very important in their decisions to run for office. Although a majority of women overall evaluate this factor as very important, the larger proportions of black women who view this factor as critical stems undoubtedly from the fact that they potentially confront race as well as sex discrimination.

Future Research

This exploratory study of black women's routes to elective office has begun to answer some questions about the ways in which the experiences of black women officeholders are different from the experiences of women officeholders generally. However, several questions about black women's political experiences remain for future research. Many of these questions relate to the ways in which routes into office for black female officeholders are similar to and different from those for black male officeholders. Black women's experiences are shaped not only by being female but also by being black, and more research is needed to help separate the effects of race and sex as well as to identify the aspects of black women's experiences which are the products of the interaction of both.

One major question is the role which blacks, and in particular black women, played in inspiring and supporting the candidacies of black women.

Many black women were influenced by role models, mentors, candidates for whom they campaigned, and public officials for whom they worked. In many cases, these individuals were women. Future research should explore whether the people who were critical to black women's political careers were of the same race as well as the same sex as the women themselves. To what extent are other black women particularly critical in black women officeholders' political development? Do black women choose different role models and mentors than do black men?

The role of church-related, civil rights, and black women's groups in the political development of black women officeholders needs further exploration. What kind of support did black women receive from civil rights groups? Was this support different from the support that black men received? Which particular black women's and church-related women's groups were important for black women? What specific role did these groups play in motivating and supporting black women's candidacies?

The impact of the civil rights movement on the political development of black women officeholders also needs to be researched. Were black women officeholders active in the civil rights movement? To what extent did the movement have a formative impact in shaping their political outlook or in spurring their interest in politics?

Finally, several questions arise about the exigencies of running for office as a black woman. If many black women were recruited to run for "women's seats," are these seats ones which were held by black women? Are party leaders more likely to recruit black women for seats previously held by blacks than for other seats? What is the racial composition of the districts in which black women serve? What special demands do black women face because they disproportionately tend to run in areas where campaign costs are high?

Conclusion

Black women officeholders differ from women overall in ways that reflect the effects of the dual discrimination which black women encounter. The factors which we identified as facilitating and obstructing women's entry into elective office are evident to a greater extent among black women officeholders. At least two reasons account for the fact that black women officeholders have stronger credentials, experience, and support than women officeholders overall. Just as for women in general, the price of inclusion after a history of exclusion has often been that they are held to higher standards than are men, black women may be held to even higher standards. They may have to do more to "prove" themselves to voters and to influential political people. Additionally, the discrimination and barriers which black women must confront in the political arena may make them reluctant to run for office unless they have acquired

stronger credentials, greater bases of support, and more experience than most officeholders.

Regardless of the precise way in which dual discrimination works to restrict the numbers of black women officeholders, most of the black women who have succeeded thus far in electoral politics are "superwomen" in many ways. Yet, if the number of black women officeholders is to increase substantially, the effects of historical discrimination must be overcome. In the long term, a comprehensive effort to rid society of racism and sexism is necessary to bring more black women into public office. In the short term, measures to recruit and support black women to run for office can be the basis for increasing their numbers in public life.

Description of the Study

1. Marilyn Johnson and Kathy Stanwick, Profile of Women Holding Office (New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for the American Woman and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1976); Marilyn Johnson and Susan Carroll, Profile of Women Holding Office II (New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for the American Woman and Politics, Rutgers University, 1978). Reports are available from the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP).

2. Although CAWP's 1977 study compared women and men holding elective offices, the sample of men was limited to sixteen states and was characterized by a low response rate (under 25%).

3. Copies of the questionnaires are available from CAWP.

4. Lists of women officeholders for all our samples were contained in CAWP's National Information Bank on Women in Public Office (NIB). The National Information Bank: keeps a current count of the numbers of women serving in federal, statewide, state legislative, county, and municipal offices in all fifty states; maintains a current listing of names and addresses of women officials; houses biographical information and attitudinal data about political women from CAWP's national surveys of women in office conducted in 1975 and 1977; and disseminates data about women in public office to a wide range of users including the media, political institutions, government agencies, organizations, scholars, and interested individuals.

5. Council of State Governments, State Elective Officials and the Legislatures 1981-82 (Lexington, Kentucky: Council of State Governments, 1981).

6. Connecticut, Rhode Island and Vermont do not elect county officials.

7. Lists of male members of county governing boards were contained in the published county directories from which CAWP compiles the list of women officials for its National Information Bank.

8. Each woman in the 100-case sample was contacted by telephone. Those women who were no longer in office, deceased, or unreachable were replaced with a woman from the 75-case replacement sample. After the interview with the woman was completed, a man from the same governing body was contacted. For each woman in our sample and replacement sample, three men were randomly selected from the same governing body. This procedure was used to ensure that a "paired" interview could be completed even if the first or second man who had been selected was no longer serving, deceased, or unreachable.

9. In four states--Delaware, Michigan, Ohio and South Carolina--1980 data were not available at the time the sample was drawn. Thus, 1979 data were used. No data were available from Wisconsin. The list of municipal elected officials from New York was incomplete. It included only officials from villages and towns, not incorporated cities.

10. Lists of male municipal council members were contained in the directories published by state municipal leagues from which CAWP compiles the list of women officials for its National Information Bank.

11. Each woman in the 150-case sample was contacted by telephone. Those women who were no longer in office, deceased, or unreachable were replaced with a woman from the 150-case replacement sample. After the interview with the woman was completed, a man from the same governing body was contacted. For each woman in our sample and replacement sample, three men were randomly selected from the same governing body. This procedure was used to ensure that a "paired" interview could be completed even if the first or second man who had been selected was no longer serving, deceased, or unreachable.

12. 1980 data for Delaware, Ohio and South Carolina were not available. Thus, 1979 data were used. In Massachusetts, most communities are governed by a Board of Selectmen. Chairs of Board of Selectmen in Massachusetts were considered local council members in CAWP's 1980 National Information Bank list of women elected officials.

13. Names of male mayors were contained in the directories published by state municipal leagues from which CAWP compiles the list of women officials for its National Information Bank.

14. Each woman and man in the sample was contacted by telephone. Those who were no longer in office, deceased, or unreachable were replaced with others from the replacement samples.

15. The list obtained did not include state legislators because all female legislators were surveyed by mail for our study.

16. Each woman in our 100-case sample was contacted by telephone. Those women who were no longer in office, deceased, or unreachable were replaced with a woman from the 75-case replacement sample.

PART ONE   WOMEN'S ROUTES TO ELECTIVE OFFICE

Overview

1. For some evidence that women and men serving in public office do in fact have different perspectives on several policy issues, see Kathy A. Stanwick and Katherine E. Kleeman, Women Make A Difference (New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for the American Woman and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983), another monograph available from CAWP as part of the series, Bringing More Women Into Public Office.

2   See Katherine E. Kleeman, Women's PACS (New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for the American Woman and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983), another monograph available from CAWP as part of the series, Bringing More Women Into Public Office.

Chapter 1
BACKGROUND AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

1. Differences between elected officials and the general population were a central concern of our 1975 and 1977 studies of women holding public office. See Marilyn Johnson and Kathy Stanwick, Profile of Women Holding Office (New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for the American Woman and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1976); Marilyn Johnson and Susan Carroll, Profile of Women Holding Office II (New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for the American Woman and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1978).

2. See, for example, James E. Conyers and Walter L. Wallace, Black Elected Officials (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1976), pp. 83-84; Paula J. Dubeck, "Women and Access to Political Office: A Comparison of Female and Male State Legislators," Sociological Quarterly 17 (1976): 42-52; Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, Political Woman (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 38; and Emily Stoper, "Wife and Politician: Role Strain among Women in Public Office," in A Portrait of Marginality, ed. Marianne Githens and Jewel L. Prestage (New York: David McKay Company, 1977), p. 323.

3. Our 1977 study of public officeholders (see Johnson and Carroll, Profile of Women Holding Office II, p. 16A) found women to have a median age two years older than a comparison sample of men. While that difference was within the range of differences found here, it is important to note that the women and men who were compared in that study were drawn from sixteen states rather than from the entire country. Also, the sample for each sex included officials in four different offices, while in this analysis, officeholders in each office are examined separately.

4. For example, among state senators sixty years old or older, 93.3% of the fifteen women and 90.9% of the eleven men are beyond their first term. Among state representatives sixty years old or older, 79.7% of the fifty-nine women and 73.3% of the forty-five men are beyond their first term.

5. For 1977 findings, see Johnson and Carroll, Profile of Women Holding Office II, p. 8A.

6. Ibid., p. 9A.

7. Ibid., p. 8A.

8. Ibid., p. 10A.

9. While larger proportions of women than men across all offices report that they have never worked outside the home, larger proportions of women legislators than women in county and local offices report that they have never worked outside the home (Table 1.8). This difference is largely an artifact of differences in the way the question was asked for state and county/local officeholders. Women legislators were asked whether they ever worked outside the home for an extended period of time. Women holding county and local offices were asked whether they ever worked outside the home, with no length of time specified. Thus, women at local and county levels who had worked, for example, for a short period after high school or during the summers probably replied affirmatively to the question. As a result, the number of female local and county officeholders who list clerical and sales occupations probably is somewhat inflated and the number who say they had no occupation outside the home probably is somewhat deflated relative to the numbers for state legislators.

10. For 1977 findings, see Johnson and Carroll, _Profile of Women Holding Public Office II_, p. 10A.

11. The health care category excludes physicians.

12. A major reason why many officeholders are able to maintain jobs while holding office is that most officeholding is part-time rather than full-time.

13. For 1977 findings, see Johnson and Carroll, _Profile of Women Holding Public Office II_, p. 10A.

14. Ibid., p. 13A.

15. Ibid., p. 13A.

16. These are very similar to our 1977 findings. See Johnson and Carroll, _Profile of Women Holding Public Office II_, p. 13A.

Chapter 2
POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

1. For example, see Jeff Fishel, _Party and Opposition: Congressional Challengers in American Politics_ (New York: David McKay Company, 1973), pp. 49-50; Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, _Political Woman_ (New York: Basic Books, 1974), pp. 65-69; and Jerome M. Mileur and George T. Sulzner, _Campaigning for the Massachusetts Senate_, University of Massachusetts Series in Government, vol. 1 (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974), pp. 65-68.

2. Marilyn Johnson and Susan Carroll, _Profile of Women Holding Office II_ (New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for the American Woman and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1978), p. 21A.

3. Ibid., p. 22A. Mayors are the one exception to this generalization.

4. Ibid., p. 29A.

5. See Ruth B. Mandel, _In the Running: The New Woman Candidate_ (New Haven and New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1981), ch. 2.

6. We have not presented a separate table showing the positions of role models for newcomers because overall the positions held by newcomers' role models closely resemble the positions held by the role models of officeholders generally.

7. These proportions are based on the fifty-nine women and thirteen men among newcomer state representatives who had role models. Insufficient numbers of county and local newcomers with role models prevent an examination of the proportions of newcomers at those levels of office with female role models.

8. Among officeholders who have held appointive or elective office, and who answered the evaluation question, 72.2% of the 54 female state senators compared with 66.7% of the 45 male state senators, 65.5% of the 220 female state representatives compared with 56.6% of the 92 male state representatives, 68% of the 50 female county commissioners compared with 49.1% of the 59 male county commissioners, and 46.3% of the 54 female mayors compared with 58.5% of the 65 male mayors claim that having sufficient political experience was very or somewhat important in their decisions to run for office.

3. The complete list included the following nine factors: former public officeholding experience, experience working in campaigns, experience working on the staff of an elected public official, participation in a candidate training program or workshop, the support of groups or organizations related to officeholder's occupation, the support of women's organizations, the support of other types of organizations, the support of officeholder's political party, and the support of officeholder's husband and/or family. Male legislators were presented with a list of only eight factors, as they were not asked to evaluate the factor "support of women's organizations."

10. These proportions are based on the fifty female and fifty-three male county commissioners who have held a previous office and who answered the evaluation question.

11. The numbers of county and local officeholders who worked in campaigns and who answered the evaluation question are as follows: among county commissioners, seventy women and fifty-five men; among mayors, thirty-five women and forty men; among local council members, seventy-one women and forty-nine men.

Chapter 3
THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

1. For a report on the meetings with women activists in California, Minnesota, and New Jersey, see Kathy A. Stanwick, Political Women Tell What It Takes (New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for the American Woman and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983), another monograph available from CAWP as part of the series, Bringing More Women Into Public Office.

2. See, for example, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, Political Woman (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 100; Naomi B. Lynn, "American Women and the Political Process," in Women: A Feminist Perspective, 2nd ed., ed. Jo Freeman (Palo Alto, Calif.: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1979), pp. 416-417; and Ruth B. Mandel, In the Running: The New Woman Candidate (New Haven and New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1981), pp. 102-103.

3. Races for seats in the unicameral legislature in Nebraska are non-partisan.

4. One woman ran as a Republican and later switched her party identification to Independent.

5. See, for example, Frank J. Sorauf, Party Politics in America, 4th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), p. 399.

6. See, for example, Malcolm E. Jewell and David M. Olson, American State Political Parties and Elections (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1978), p. 87; Sorauf, Party Politics in America, pp. 221-222; and John C. Wahlke et al., The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior (New York and London: John Wiley, 1962), p. 100.

7. This question, as well as several others throughout this section, was not asked of county and local officeholders. Because much smaller proportions of local and county officials than of state legislators ran in partisan races, we devoted less time to party-related questions on the survey administered.

8. Officeholders in their first term, rather than "newcomers" (i.e. those in their first term without any previous elective officeholding experience), are examined throughout this chapter. The focus here is somewhat different from that of other chapters of the report that examine the responses of newcomers. The purpose of examining new entrants in this chapter is to ascertain whether party recruitment of women has changed over time, rather than to assess the relative importance of various factors in helping to bring women previously uninvolved in electoral politics into elected office.

9. Too few officeholders ran in partisan races at county and local levels to permit a meaningful analysis of differences between Democrats and Republicans.

10. While Democratic women are less likely (10.5%) than Democratic men (15.4%) to have been defeated in a previous bid for a state senate seat, the differences are especially pronounced among Republicans among whom only 9.1% of the women compared with 28.6% of the men had lost a previous bid for the state senate. Percentages are based on thirty-eight Democratic women, thirty-nine Democratic men, thirty-three Republican women, and twenty-eight Republican men.

11. Because we asked officeholders about the electoral situations of the time when they first ran for their current offices, and because we are interested in assessing the types of situations in which women most often run successfully, we have excluded from analysis in this section all officeholders who lost their initial bids for the offices they now hold. Only the electoral situations of candidates who were elected in their first bids for their current offices are examined here.

12. The small number of local and county officeholders who ran in partisan races prevents an analysis of the electoral situations which local and county officeholders faced when running for office.

13. See Sorauf, Party Politics in America, p. 218.

14. It is possible that a few of the candidates who ran in these situations were simply so strong that no one dared to challenge them in primaries. However, they undoubtedly were the exceptions among candidates who ran in these situations in which the incumbent was a member of the opposing party.

15. Of the forty-eight female state representatives who ran for "women's seats," twenty were Democrats and twenty-eight were Republicans. Of these, thirteen, or 65.0%, of the Democrats were recruited by party leaders; eighteen, or 64.3%, of the Republicans were recruited. These figures are higher than the recruitment rates for female state representatives that appear for both parties in Table 3.9.

16. For a complete list of the nine factors, see Note 9 for Chapter 2, in Part One of this report. Male legislators were presented with a list of only eight factors, as men were not asked to evaluate the factor "support of women's organizations."

17. See, for example, Mandel, In the Running, p. 100.

18. See, Stanwick, Political Women Tell What It Takes.

Chapter 4
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

1. Throughout this report, we define women's groups as those groups whose membership consists entirely or primarily of women.

2.   The number of newcomers on local councils is fifty-three women and fifty-two men.

3.   We have grouped the following five large membership organizations into the category "major women's organizations": the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW), the League of Women Voters (LWV), the National Organization for Women (NOW), and the Women's Political Caucus (WPC).

4.   We define feminist groups as those groups whose goals focus entirely or primarily on eliminating inequities between women and men and/or improving women's status in society. The category "feminist organizations" includes the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Women's Political Caucus (WPC), and other explicitly feminist groups. To some degree, the categories "feminist organizations" and "major women's organizations" overlap.

5.   In 1977, 31% of female state senators, 31% of female state representatives, 13% of female county commissioners, and 4% of female mayors and local council members were members of feminist groups. Marilyn Johnson and Susan Carroll, Profile of Women Holding Office II (New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for the American Woman and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1978), p. 12A.

6.   Although the League of Women Voters cannot formally recruit candidates, it does provide nonpartisan encouragement and preparation for political activity. A more complete discussion of the nature of LWV's support follows later in the chapter.

7.   Numbers are not shown in a table. Among 105 female newcomers in state houses, 3.8% received encouragement from the League of Women Voters and 9.5% received encouragement from partisan women's organizations. Among newcomers at county and local levels, 12.1% of 33 county commissioners, no mayors, and 1.9% of 53 local council members received encouragement from partisan women's organizations.

8.   The proportions of male legislators receiving support from organizations for their candidacies are based on totals of 64 male state senators and 191 male state representatives.

9.   Of the 102 newcomer women in state houses, 29.4% received support from feminist groups, 6.9% received support from general social service groups, and 4.9% received support from business or professional groups.

10. Among male senators, 64.9% of the 37 Democrats and 34.6% of the 26 Republicans received support. Among male representatives, 53.3% of the 105 Democrats and 33.7% of the 86 Republicans received organizational support.

11. Information for local and county officeholders is not shown in a table because local and county officeholders were not asked explicitly to specify the occupational organizations to which they belonged. Rather, the conclusion here was derived by examining the occupations of those local and county officeholders who said they belonged to an organization related to their occupation.

12. Data for newcomers are not shown in a table. Totals of newcomers in state houses are 105 women and 28 men. The information for county and local newcomers is derived as discussed in Note 11.

13. Of the ninety-eight female newcomers in state houses, 6.1% listed the National Education Association. The numbers of county and local newcomer

women receiving support from organizations related to their occupations is
too small to provide reliable information about ties to specific groups.

14. For a complete list of the factors, see Note 9 for Chapter 2 in Part
One of this report.

Chapter 5
OTHER FACTORS AFFECTING DECISIONS TO RUN

1. Quoted in Jimmy Breslin, How the Good Guys Finally Win: Notes from an
Impeachment Summer (New York: Ballantine Books, 1975), p. 14.

2. See, for example, Ruth B. Mandel, In the Running: The New Woman
Candidate (New Haven and New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1981), pp. 181-187;
Suzanne Paizis, Getting Her Elected (Sacramento, Calif.: Creative Edi-
tions, 1977), pp. 17-24; and Martin Tolchin and Susan Tolchin, Clout:
Womanpower and Politics (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973),
pp. 189-195.

3. Edmond Costantini and Kenneth H. Craik, "Women as Politicians: The
Social Background, Personality, and Political Careers of Female Party
Leaders," Journal of Social Issues 28 (1972): 236.

Chapter 6
IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

1. Readers can refer back to earlier chapters for the precise proportions
who evaluate various factors as important. Because these factors were
evaluated on different scales of response, it is not possible to make a
precise quantitative comparison.

2. Among women state legislators, 70.9% of the 55 senators and 57.1% of
294 representatives who have staffs report that they frequently recruit
women when hiring staff; 80.8% of 73 senators and 71.6% of 436 representa-
tives say that they frequently encourage individual women to become active
in politics; 75.3% of 73 senators and 58.3% of 432 representatives report
that they frequently speak to various groups of women, urging them to
become active in politics.

3. For a discussion of political action committees that provide support
primarily to women candidates, see Katherine E. Kleeman, Women's PACs
(New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for the American Woman and Politics,
Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983), another mono-
graph available from CAWP as part of the series, Bringing More Women Into
Public Office.

PART TWO   BLACK WOMEN'S ROUTES TO ELECTIVE OFFICE:
               AN EXPLORATORY ESSAY

Introduction to Part Two

1.   For more extensive discussion of black women's participation, see
for example, Sandra Baxter and Marjorie Lansing, Women and Politics: The
Invisible Majority (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980),
pp. 73-90; Herrington J. Bryce and Alan E. Warrick, "Black Women in Elec-
toral Politics," in A Portrait of Marginality, ed. Marianne Githens and
Jewel L. Prestage (New York: David McKay Company, 1977), pp. 395-400;
Ghussan Rouse Greene, "Contributions of Black Women in Politics and
Government," in Contributions of Black Women to America, vol. 2, ed.
Marianna W. Davis (Columbia, South Carolina: Kenday Press, 1982),
pp. 181-260; Jewel L. Prestage, "Political Behavior of American Black
Women: An Overview," in The Black Woman, ed. La Frances Rodgers-Rose
(Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications, 1980), pp. 233-245; and
Eddie N. Williams, "Introductory Essay: Black Women in Politics and
Government," in Contributions of Black Women to America, vol. 2, ed. Davis,
pp. i-xi in Part 2.

2.   See Baxter and Lansing, Women and Politics, pp. 73-90, for an analysis
of black women's voting behavior in presidential elections.

3.   These proportions are based on figures provided by the Joint Center
for Political Studies. 1981 figures are used because they correspond to
the year in which we surveyed black women officeholders. The percentage
of black women among all women officials excludes school board members
while the percentage of black women among all black officials includes
school board members. It should be noted that while only 20% of black
officeholders are women, this proportion is roughly twice as large as the
proportion of officeholders overall who are women.

4.   Joint Center for Political Studies, National Roster of Black Elected
Officials, vol. 12 (Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political Studies,
1982), p. x.

5.   Among respondents in our study who were local council members, 28.9%
of black women compared with 8.6% of women overall serve in cities with
populations of over 30,000.

6.   For a description of the sampling procedure and response rate for
black women, see "Description of the Study" at the beginning of the report.

7.   In our sample of black women officeholders, seventy (87.5%) of the
eighty local council members who designated their party affiliation,
eighteen (94.7%) of nineteen county commissioners, and all nineteen state
legislators are Democrats.

8.   See, for example, Jewel L. Prestage, "Black Women State Legislators:
A Profile," in A Portrait of Marginality, ed. Marianne Githens and
Jewel L. Prestage (New York: David McKay Company, 1977), pp. 401-418;
and Bryce and Warrick, "Black Women in Electoral Politics," pp. 395-400.

— Chapter 7
BACKGROUND AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

1.   Jewel L. Prestage, "Black Women State Legislators: A Profile," in
A Portrait of Marginality, ed. Marianne Githens and Jewel L. Prestage
(New York: David McKay Company, 1977), p. 410.

2.   Ibid., p. 407. Of the thirty-two black women state legislators whom
Prestage interviewed in the early 1970s, all had high school diplomas and
at minimum some post-secondary education.

3.   In January 1981, 30.0% of employed black women, compared with 17.1%
of employed white women, were in service occupations (census categories).
In comparison, 29.5% of employed black women, compared with 35.7% of em-
ployed white women, were in clerical occupations. Information from U.S.,
Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings,
vol. 20, no. 2 (February 1981), p. 36.

4.   Prestage, "Black Women State Legislators," p. 410. Of the thirty-two
black women legislators whom Prestage interviewed in the early 1970s,
34.3% were married and 43.7% were divorced or separated.

5.   Ibid., p. 411. Of the thirty-two black women legislators whom
Prestage interviewed in the early 1970s, 31.2% had no children. Fifteen
percent had children under 18 years old.

Chapter 8
POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

1.   Jewel L. Prestage, "Black Women State Legislators: A Profile," in
A Portrait of Marginality, ed. Marianne Githens and Jewel L. Prestage
(New York: David McKay Company, 1977), p. 412. Eleven of the twenty-nine
black women state legislators in 1974 were in their first terms in legis-
latures.

2.   Ibid., p. 411.

3.   Ibid., p. 411.

4.   The references to workshops sponsored by a major political party do
not include workshops sponsored by a women's division of a political party
or a partisan women's club.

5.   The total of Democratic women state representatives on which the pro-
portion is based is 225.

6.   The complete list included the following nine factors: former public
officeholding experience, experience working in campaigns, experience
working on the staff of an elected official, participation in a candidate
training program or workshop, the support of groups or organizations re-
lated to officeholder's occupation, the support of women's organizations,
the support of other types of organizations, the support of officeholder's
political party, and the support of officeholder's husband and/or family.

Chapter 9
THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

1.   The vast majority of all black women officeholders, including those who ran in partisan and nonpartisan races, are Democrats. In our sample of black women officeholders, seventy (87.5%) of the eighty local council members who designated their party affiliation, eighteen (94.7%) of nineteen county commissioners, and all nineteen state legislators are Democrats.

2.   This difference between black women and all women in county and local offices is not due to the fact that black women are more likely to run in partisan races. Among only those county and local officeholders who ran in partisan races, black women more often than women overall rate party support as very important. Legislators' evaluations are based on their selection, from a list of nine factors, of the three most important factors affecting their decisions to run for their current offices. For a complete list of the factors, see Note 6 for Chapter 8 in Part Two of this report.

3.   Among county commissioners and local council members, Democratic women are more likely than Republican women to evaluate party support as important. Among state legislators, Democratic women are less likely than Republican women to evaluate party support as one of the three most important factors in their decisions to run for office (see Table 3.20 and 3.21 in Part One).

Chapter 10
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

1.   Throughout this report, we define women's groups as those groups whose membership consists entirely or primarily of women.

2.   The difference between black women and all women among state representatives may be due partly to the fact that all black women state representatives in our sample are Democrats. When only Democratic state representatives are compared, similar proportions of black women (38.9%) and all women (40.4%) report that organizations were important. (The differences between black women and all women in the other offices persist even when only Democrats are compared.)

3.   For the purpose of comparing black women officeholders with women officeholders overall, we have categorized black women's groups as women's groups, although we could well have categorized such groups as civil rights groups.

4.   We have grouped the following five large membership organizations into the category "major women's organizations": the League of Women Voters (LWV), the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW), the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the Women's Political Caucus (WPC) and the National Organization for Women (NOW).

5.   We define feminist groups as those groups whose goals focus entirely or primarily on eliminating inequities between women and men and/or improving women's status in society. The category "feminist organizations" includes the Women's Political Caucus (WPC), the National Organization for Women (NOW) and other feminist groups. To some degree, the categories "major women's organizations" and "feminist organizations" are overlapping.

6. The difference between black women officeholders and all women officeholders is slightly smaller but still present when only Democratic women are compared. Thus, the greater probability of black women being encouraged by women's organizations is largely not explained by the fact that black women are disproportionately Democratic.

7. This difference is not explained by the fact that most black women officeholders are Democrats. The difference between black women and all women is smaller but still present when only Democratic women are compared.

8. Data are not presented. Listing "other" organizations are 27.8%. The proportions are based on a total of eighteen black women state representatives. Local and county officeholders were not asked to specify the occupational organization to which they belonged.

9. For a complete list of factors, see Note 6 for Chapter 8 in Part Two of this report.

Chapter 11
OTHER FACTORS AFFECTING DECISIONS TO RUN

1. For a discussion of the costs of campaigns and the potential need for money, see Chapter 5 of Part One of the report.

2. Among black Democratic women, 25% of 16 state representatives, 27.8% of 18 county commissioners, and 27.5% of 69 local council members evaluate a concern with issues as not important or not applicable to their decisions to run for their current offices. Similarly, among Democratic women overall, 28.5% of 221 state representatives, 29% of 62 county commissioners and 22.2% of 63 local council members evaluate a concern with issues as not important or not applicable.

3. For an analysis of levels of ambition among black officeholders, see Pauline Terrelonge Stone, "Ambition Theory and the Black Politician," Policy Studies Journal 7 (1978): 94-107.

Chapter 12
SUMMARY OF BLACK WOMEN'S ROUTES TO OFFICE

1. The issue of how women officeholders juggle family responsibilities, officeholding, and occupation is worthy of future research. Among black women legislators, we find that although only a minority are married, only a minority report that they are working outside the home in addition to holding office. We suspect that the explanation for this finding may lie in the fact that black women legislators are concentrated in states in which being a legislator is a full-time and well-paid job.

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This series comprises seven reports. In addition to this report, Women's Routes to Elective Office, the series includes the following reports, all available from the Center for the American Woman and Politics:

Carroll, Susan J., and Geiger-Parker, Barbara. Women Appointed to State Government: A Comparison With All State Appointees.
Carroll, Susan J., and Geiger-Parker, Barbara. Women Appointed to the Carter Administration: A Comparison With Men.
Kleeman, Katherine E. Women's PACs.
Stanwick, Kathy A. Getting Women Appointed: New Jersey's Bipartisan Coalition.
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