

UC Berkeley
California Journal of Politics and Policy

Title

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/57n1828z>

Journal

California Journal of Politics and Policy, 1(1)

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Publication Date

2009-07-08

DOI

10.5070/P2DK5H

Peer reviewed

Legislative Women: Getting Elected, Getting Ahead, Beth Reingold (ed.), Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008.

Review of *Legislative Women:
Getting Elected, Getting Ahead*

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It is an interesting time for gender and American politics. Recent events, such as the candidacies of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin, President Obama's selection of Judge Sonia Sotomayor for the Supreme Court, and the presence of Nancy Pelosi as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives demonstrate that women have achieved many "firsts" in American politics and remind us of the challenges that women continue to face.

The new volume *Legislative Women: Getting Elected, Getting Ahead*, edited by Beth Reingold, sheds light on one area—legislative women—with implications that extend to the entire subfield. While the volume does not seek to advance a singular framework or theory about gender and politics, it showcases important work in the field. It also demonstrates the value of using an intersectional approach to study gender and the importance of studying gender over time.

The volume includes 10 discrete studies conducted by leading scholars—both junior and senior. The first half of the volume focuses on electoral politics and the second half on life inside legislative institutions with studies of state legislatures and Congress included in both sections. The chapters, which cover a range of topics from voting behavior and campaign communication to legislative committees and leadership contests, use a range of methodologies such as quantitative analysis, case studies, interviews, content analysis, and surveys. In introductory and concluding

chapters, Beth Reingold and Karen O'Connor encourage the field to "think harder and dig deeper."

The complexity of gender effects is apparent in many of the unexpected results in the book, such as Kathleen Dolan's chapter on symbolic mobilization and that by Atiya Kai Stokes-Brown and Melissa Olivia Neal. Jennifer Lawless and Kathryn Pearson challenge the notion that women and men fare the same when they run for office, finding that women face more competition in congressional primaries than men do. Though Barbara Burrell finds that women congressional candidates fare well in terms of fundraising, she also points to the lack of campaign finance reform as a possible explanation for the dearth of women candidates.

One of the strengths of the book is its attention to intersectionality. For example, Wendy Smooth asks how state legislative institutions respond to difference with a focus on African-American women legislators, finding that race and gender pose significant barriers to influence. In contrast, Luis Fraga and coauthors suggest that Latina state legislators can benefit from "strategic intersectionality" because of their location at the intersection of multiple communities. These innovative works are sure to lead to further investigation and tests in additional states, race/ethnic groups, and time periods.

We also learn about the intersection of gender with party. For example, Michele Swers considers the ways that women senators address gender and party stereotypes

in their activity on defense policy and Dianne Bystrom asks if gender differences in campaign communication can be explained by party. Several chapters highlight the challenges faced by Republican women and remind us that their numbers are dwindling.

The volume demonstrates the leverage gained by looking at gender over time. For example, Susan J. Carroll finds that gender differences in state legislative committee assignments narrowed in 2001 compared to 1988. Carroll notes that women's greater propensity to serve on education and health and human services committees appears to be the result of women's preferences rather than gender stereotypes. In another chapter, Cindy Simon Rosenthal develops a method for evaluating the role of gender in leadership contests in the U.S. House from 1975 to 2007.

Because the book is accessible with broad coverage and original research, it would make a valuable teaching tool for both undergraduate and graduate courses.