

Half-Broke Ceilings: Women Leaders in U.S. State Legislatures

Jordan Butcher*

Abstract

Advocates of legislative term limits have long promised that this institutional shift would increase diversity. Since their implementation, however, scholars have found that these changes did not come to fruition. Despite these unfulfilled promises, individuals can no longer occupy leadership positions for 20 + years. While the initial effects of term limits stunted efforts to create more diverse legislatures, those same limits created opportunity. This study uncovers the different factors that contribute to more women gaining power in state legislatures. Originally collected data from state legislatures reveals that by removing long-standing incumbents, women were able to make some gains in leadership. However, this is highly restricted by position. This research suggests that limitations on service may benefit minority legislators beyond what was previously understood, but not in all cases.

*Prepared for the annual State Politics and Policy, Conference May 22, 2025

“It’s about time. A lot of ceilings are being broken today.”

Representative Charlotte Warren (ME), 2022

In 2007, Nancy Pelosi made history as the first woman Speaker of the House and she remains the only woman to serve in the role. In contrast, Minnie Davenport Craig became Speaker of the North Dakota House of Representatives in 1933. Since then, more than 50 other women have served in the same role across the states. Women have been involved in state politics for far longer and to greater levels of success than women in Congress. The number of women serving in state legislatures continues to increase, which led to Nevada securing the first-ever women-led majority. This was followed by women securing more than 70 percent of the leadership positions. Yet, in 2023, there were nine states without a single woman serving in leadership in any capacity. With the increase in the number of women serving over the last decade, women are receiving more attention than ever before. Despite this, there is still a great deal of unknown about the careers of women legislators.

With the push for more women to pursue office and subsequent success, there is a resurgence in evaluating and understanding women as legislators. Much of the previous research is dedicated to exploring the pursuits of women when in office, how they behave, and the policies that they champion. This research explores how women secure office and how they behave once in office. There is far less known about the career of a woman, and what is known of careers is derived from the perspective of men. Even though women win at the same rate as men (Cox 1996), they run for office less often and serve for shorter amounts of time (Mariani 2008). What is clear is that women tend to be older and leave more frequently (due to distance, family, etc.). Yet, women continue to serve in state legislatures, making steady gains with each election. The increase in the number of women serving is an important first step for women to gain leadership positions in the states (Hansen and Clark 2020).

Building from previous works evaluating the successes of women in office and the barriers that they face, I theorize that there are institutional and relational factors that affect

the likelihood of women becoming leaders. As is established in literature, legislatures are gendered institutions designed around the careers and aspirations of men. I argue that the desirability of serving in office, those institutions with greater benefits and resources, ultimately harms prospects for women. However, more recent research has demonstrated the importance of networks and community for women, I theorize that women can overcome some of these gendered norms when there is a greater relational support network.

To better understand the roles of women in our state legislatures I offer 2 distinct analyses exploring the incentives of serving and the resources provided to support women. The first is centered on understanding the institutional factors that either contribute to or hinder women from attaining a leadership role. Specifically, I introduce three types of institutional power and how they can affect the women who serve and their prospects at becoming a leader. Using original data, I evaluate a sample of legislative leaders from 17 states to explore the opportunities for women facing a number of different institutional rules. Second, I compare men and women and the likelihood of attaining four different leadership positions in the state legislature.¹ Centered on both institutional and relational aspects, this research reveals that the gendered norms of the legislature carry a great deal of weight in the task of becoming a leader. When there are greater institutional resources there are fewer women leaders, but when there is a supportive network of women, for women, women are more likely to succeed.

Women's Representation in the States

There is a great deal of scholarship dedicated to understanding how women behave in office, including how they legislate and how they respond to constituent interests (Holman, Mahoney and Hurler 2022; Swift and VanderMolen 2021; Whistler and Ellickson 2011). Others demonstrate how women fare in elections and what the recruitment process is like (Anzia and Bernhard 2021; Badas and Stauffer 2019; Bauer and Cargile 2023; Clark and Kimondo 2024; Rhinehart 2020). Despite the growing attention on representation (Butcher and Haynes

¹Also included are robustness checks including all 50 states utilizing recent data from the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP).

2024; Thomsen and King 2020), there is little information on women as leaders. One such work from Hansen and Clark (2020) explored the representation of minority groups, including women, in state legislatures and found that women were no less likely to serve in leadership roles.

An often overlooked component to understanding women's representation in the states is the institution itself. Legislatures are gendered, meaning that the rules and norms of the institution lead to different behaviors, advantages, and possibilities when in office based on gender (Grahn 2024; Lowndes 2020). Recent research has attempted to bridge the gap between institutionalism and gender and politics by offering theories on how institutions themselves are gendered and thus affect individual behavior differently (Kenny 2007; Chappell 2010). Legislatures in the United States were designed by men and as a result have been structured to benefit how men behave in office, making it difficult for women to challenge these norms (Kenny 2007; Chappell 2010).

Schwindt-Bayer and Squire (2014) took a comparative approach to understanding the role of the legislature and theorized two types of power: institutional policy power and personal professional power. They stipulate that institutional policy power is about the legislature, its ability to make laws, and operate as a singular actor among the other branches (Schwindt-Bayer and Squire 2014, 626). Personal policy power, however, is related to how the "rules and norms" of the institution influence the individuals (Schwindt-Bayer and Squire 2014, 627). Borrowing from their work, I look at the institution in three ways but adapt the framework to a context fitting of U.S. state legislatures. In place of their first component of institutional power, I evaluate *electoral power*. Similar to the original theory, this can affect who is interested in serving. Second, I continue with their mechanism, *personal power*, which can influence those that are serving and their trajectory within the legislature. Adding to their work, I suggest a third component, *relational power* or the ability to build oneself based on the others around them. Namely, women can build off the power of other women in the legislature.

Women are finally reaching higher numbers in the state legislatures and it is important to evaluate how this might play out in leadership. This evaluation is preliminary and works to connect institutional literature with gender and politics literature. To begin, I outline the three key types of power that affect a woman's career in office, in particular, the ability to become a leader. First, there is *electoral power*, which influences who serves in the legislature. Second, following Schwindt-Bayer and Squire (2014), there is personal power, which "refers to the rules and norms about the influence of individual legislators on the political and policy-making process" (627). In particular, I explore the barriers that women face regarding institutional capacity and the desirability of legislative service, which can in turn affect the number of women serving. Here, I introduce a new component, relational power. Women focus more on personal relationships with their colleagues, therefore it is necessary to evaluate the effects of legislative support networks on legislative service. In short, I theorize that the barriers women face to legislative service carry over to leadership, but that strong relational power can ultimately benefit women as they attempt to gain recognition in state legislatures.

Electoral Constraints

To put it plainly, running for office can be intimidating and even a bit scary. Especially for women who tend to deal with harassment and have less support in their endeavors. While there are a number of organization dedicated to helping women run for office there are a number of hurdles that prevent women from even considering a run. One such organization is, *She Should Run*, which lists out "26 Common Barriers to Running" and offers potential solutions and support for women who feel that they are not qualified or do not have the adequate resources to run an election campaign.² The barriers to election extend beyond the difficulties that women feel, these trends are noticeable on a broad scale.

Scholars have pinpointed several different reasons why women have struggled to reach

²Last accessed April 9, 2025 <https://sheshouldrun.org/resources/26-common-barriers-to-running-for-office/>

parity in office. Most of which begin with the electoral system (Rule and Norris 1994). First, women are often treated inequitably in elections (Niven 2006; Rule and Norris 1994). Women are less likely to be elected to competitive seats (Diamond 1977) and receive more negative feedback when running for office (Niven 2006). There are some efforts to mitigate the difficulties that women face, one such move is the allowance of campaign funds for childcare costs. Women running for office tend to be older than men and feel a greater familial obligation, the use of campaign funds to assist with childcare while campaigning can make it less burdensome for women when running for office.

Second, women face heightened expectations when in office as compared to their male colleagues. The job is tough for anyone, but women tend to receive far more criticism than their male counterparts. Men, however, tend to receive support from constituents and parties that women do not, this is exacerbated because women tend to value this input more than men (Niven 2006, 486). Women also tend to have different experiences in the legislature than their male colleagues. Despite this, much of the research on legislative service and legislative careers is about men.

Expectations

Elections have a clear effect on women as candidates and their pursuit of office. But does this extend to women in leadership? Given that women are less likely to run in competitive elections and face tougher criticisms, the pipeline to leadership will be limited in states with more electoral restrictions. In particular, it is established that women are typically steered toward more competitive, difficult to win seats. *Hypothesis1_a: Open seat elections will result in fewer women securing office and attaining leadership positions.* In order to account for the resources offered to women when running for office, I account for the use of campaign funds to assist with childcare.³ *Hypothesis1_b: States that allow for use of funds to support women running for office will have higher numbers of women in office and attaining leadership positions.*

³It is important to note that the use of campaign funds for childcare can be used for both men and women, but is most likely to be an added benefit for women.

Institutional Desirability

Women wanting to serve in state legislative office face some unique challenges, but once elected these changes do not disappear but they might shift. Historically, numerous institutional changes promised to encourage more women to serve. One such change was legislative professionalization. With added resources, legislative professionalization would not only help incumbents stay in office but would also potentially provide resources for women to serve when they were previously unable. Another institutional shift was to implement legislative term limits. By limiting tenure and forcing out white male incumbents, women were poised to take advantage of the open seats and have a stronger presence in the legislature (Thames 2017). Building from this, I test whether these institutional shifts, which were in part to help women gain a place in the legislature, helped women to rise to leadership.

Institutions shape member behavior and career choices like seeking out a leadership position (Rosenthal 1974; Squire 1992). Legislative professionalization and the resources that are offered, time, pay, and staff support, help to counter some of the difficulties of serving in a state legislature (Squire 1992). With an increase in legislative professionalization, women have been less encumbered with the role of serving in office. However, research has shown that professionalization has benefited men to a greater extent than women. Legislative professionalization was thought to make the legislature more enticing and competitive for men to seek out a lengthy career, different from the behavior of women (Diamond 1977). Even though this turned out to not be what happened, women have had difficulties attaining equal representation in state legislatures. By increasing the desirability of office, incumbency grew, and so did the stronghold that men had on legislative seats.

To counter professionalization, which was intended to increase the desirability of the job, term limits were meant to break down the barriers to incumbency. Whether literally or metaphorically, term limits were intended to create change. Term limits were a way to deal with the increased level of professionalization, offering a new pathway for women to attain office (Greene 1995; Rule and Norris 1994; Thompson and Moncrief 1992). Term

limits were designed to remove entrenched incumbents and they did just that by banning legislative service. The changes, however, would not end there. Term limits promised more diversity in terms of background, gender, and race (Will 1992; ?). Many scholars predicted that the number of women serving in office would increase as a result of term limits (See Cain and Kousser (2004); Sarbaugh-Thompson et al. (2004)). Early examinations of change under term limits revealed that there was no change in the number of women serving (McLin 2001). While the number of women serving nationally held steady there was a slight decline for women in term-limited states (Carroll and Jenkins 2001*a,b*). In the few instances where there were increases in the number of women serving, it was due to an increase in the number of women pursuing office (Carroll and Jenkins 2001*a*). Seats that opened as a direct result of term limits forcing someone out saw a loss in the number of women serving in state lower chambers, but a slight increase in upper chambers (Carroll and Jenkins 2001*b*).

In a legislature where it is more desirable to serve, with high pay and resources, seats are going to be more competitive. This is amplified by the expectation that men focused on a career in politics were thought to be uninterested in positions in term-limited state legislatures (Petracca and O'Brien 1996). Similarly, the appeal for the position matters. Positions that offer additional pay or incentives will be more desirable, whereas positions with term limits will be less so. There are costs, or added difficulties, for those seeking out a leadership position. Namely, the effect of supply and demand. As more people attempt to make a name for themselves in a shorter period leadership openings have become more competitive (Little and Farmer 2007).

After the implementation of term limits, not only was there a shift in turnover among members but there was a drastic shift in who occupied the most important roles in the chamber. Leaders were poised to feel the effects of term limits to the greatest extent (Malbin and Benjamin 1992). Term limits would entirely change who is a leader and how members would rise to leadership positions because of the limits on experience (Farmer and Little 2007, 56).

Expectations

Institutions are gendered and therefore men and women have different experiences (Lowndes 2020). For instance, certain rules may favor a man over a woman and vice versa. To evaluate the personal power, or the desirability of serving in the legislature and how it can affect men and women differently, I offer three hypotheses. First, *Hypothesis2_a: Professional legislatures are less likely to have women in leadership*. Legislative professionalization is associated with an increase in incumbency, offering greater security to men in the legislature. The added benefits of service make the seats more competitive and the job more enticing. The second hypothesis is, *Hypothesis2_b: Legislative term limits did not create intended opportunities for women*. Term limits were intended to overcome the incumbency advantage held by men serving in leadership roles, however, members serve longer and retire less (Butcher 2021) allowing men to maintain their seats. Last, *Hypothesis2_c: Legislatures with more opportunities for men to advance will have more women as leaders*. Based on the understanding that more prestigious positions are held for men, only when men have easier ability to advance will women then have an opportunity to serve in leadership. Put another way, women can serve as leaders because the most experienced men are advancing to roles in the state Senate or Congress rather than within the chamber.

Relational Power

To this point, the focus of this work has been to extend pre-existing knowledge of women in politics specifically to leadership. This extension, however, suggests that much like the lack of women in office there will be a lack of women serving in leadership. How can institutions bridge the biases that women face in office to allow them to become leaders? I propose that this is through personal relations, particularly through the pipeline of having more women in office and institutional support via caucuses. Additionally, the presence of women in Congress representing a state can give women something to aspire to, amplifying personal political goals.

Women's caucuses around the world have successfully advocated for women candidates (Krook and Norris 2014). Women tend to be more concerned about the personal component than their male counterparts, a fact that can greatly benefit them in the legislature (Kloot 2004). In other fields, women tend to stay at their job longer when they have mentors (Butler and Felts 2006; Leners et al. 2006), when there are beneficial leaders (Kyndt et al. 2009), and when there is greater emphasis on overall well-being (Wright and Huang 2012). In a legislative context, when women have more diverse networks this tends to be rewarded with policy outcomes (Wojcik and Mullenax 2017).

Compared to other countries, few women run for elected office, which weakens the pipeline to Congress from state office (Rule and Norris 1994). Even though more women are elected to office currently, the turnover rate for women has not improved much over time (Whistler and Ellickson 2011). It is worth noting there is an underlying partisan component to this. Democrats tend to drive an increase in women serving, but there are noticeable drops in the number of women serving without a strong party presence post-term limits (Sarbaugh-Thompson et al. 2004, 71). This particular finding indicates the importance of recruiting and supporting women candidates, but that much of this success is vested in party recruitment (Sarbaugh-Thompson et al. 2004).

Expectations

Women face barriers from the time they decide to seek out office, but there are circumstances where working together women can help to bridge the gap in legislative service. It is worth noting, that even when women are able to overcome certain barriers the institution still has the potential to hinder growth. To test this relational aspect I offer two hypotheses: *Hypothesis3_a: There are more women leaders when there is greater support within the institution for women* and *Hypothesis3_b: Support networks help to counter the institutional barriers that prevent women from attaining leadership.*

Data

Utilizing originally collected data I explore the different avenues to which women attain leadership in U.S. state legislatures. The first analysis centers on the three types of power within the legislature that can influence the number of women serving in leadership. The second pivots to focus on the types of roles that women get in leadership, while prioritizing the factors that affect women serving in leadership. There are some barriers to this line of inquiry, which is why the diversity of legislative leadership is under-explored. While there are individual components of leadership, diversity, and legislative careerism that are more attainable to assess empirically this becomes far more difficult when focusing on the individual.

There are two key restrictions to examining the depth of leadership diversity in the states. First and foremost there is the difficulty of attaining data. Many leadership records are either unattainable (because they are not recorded) or simply poorly kept. For example, the information on Nebraska's leadership (1 formal role and 1 informal role) was written down on yellow legal paper and scanned to me, because it simply was not recorded anywhere except for files attained by the legislature.

Second, there is the difficulty of assessing leadership roles, which vary in number and title by state. Louisiana for instance only has chamber leaders (i.e. Speaker/Speaker Pro Tem) and no party leaders. This makes it difficult to compare to other term-limited states like Oklahoma which frequently elects multiple party whips in any given session. Given this, I focus on the following leadership roles (for each the majority and minority party): top leader (Speaker/President), chamber leader (Chamber/Majority/Minority), assistant leader (both top and chamber), and party whips.⁴

For this examination, I utilize two datasets to gain better leverage on various legislative components. The *TLS-Leaders* dataset is a sub-sample of legislative leaders who served

⁴Full titles are excluded for consistency. The number of each position can vary from year to year.

in states with and without term limits (Butcher 2023a).⁵ The second dataset comes from Butcher (2023b) and contains turnover data and broader legislative information from all 50 states. Merging the two datasets provides complete information for 17 states between 2002-2018.

Given the unique task at hand, tracing women in leadership over time, the data contain leadership information for each year, not session. While it is rare for a member to serve as a leader for only a partial term, there is the possibility of a member resigning from a position or serving as an interim leader. While the possibility is low, there are some, and year-to-year observations would be lost by only looking at the start of the session.

Independent Variables

As outlined above, three distinct areas of institutional power contribute to the behavior of women in office, especially when it comes to their careers. These components include electoral, personal, and relational, each of which can affect the members who serve and the roles that they take on within the legislature. First, electoral powers affect the ability to serve, to test this I focus on three factors that influence the likelihood of women to run for office and their potential success. Second, personal power captures the desire to continue to service in the legislature, here the focus is on the benefits and resources provided to lawmakers in office. Last, there is relational power, which speaks to the ability of women to situate themselves based on those around them, including their fellow members and those in higher offices that they may aspire to.

The first component that can affect women and their service is rooted in elections. Specifically, I focus on different types of elections that women may be pushed to participate in. Women are often directed toward more competitive seats, while men are pushed toward a guaranteed win. To account for the electoral variation, I include percentages of *uncontested seats* and *safe seats* from Klarner (N.d.). There is the third component of *campaign funding*

⁵While there are currently 16 states with term limits this dataset includes the 12 states that have had term limits in place the longest. These states are Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, and South Dakota. There are 5 states included that do not have term limits: New Jersey, North Dakota, Oregon, Texas, and Wyoming.

support, which is currently seeing growth in the states. Specifically, provisions that allow for campaign funds to be used to pay for childcare costs for those running for office. As of 2025, there are 39 states that allow individuals running for office to use funds to offset childcare.⁶ While this is not a gendered provision, it is of greater benefit to women who are often tasked with childcare.

The second component is the personal power that the legislature helps a member to maintain while in office, these components are largely centered on the desirability of serving in the legislature (Schwindt-Bayer and Squire 2014). To encapsulate various components of institutional design and its effects on careers I include *professionalization*, *term limits*, and *career opportunities*. Legislative professionalization from Squire (2017), is comprised of three components—time in session, salary, and staff support—where a 1 indicates a more professional legislature or a more desirable place to serve long-term (Squire 2017). Second, there is a binary indicator for states that have legislative term limits for each year that they have been in place (term limits have been in place in different states for varying lengths). Last, is a measure of *career opportunities* from Moncrief and Squire (2013), which measures the potential for a member to advance beyond the state lower chamber to the upper chamber. This measure serves as a proxy for how a legislature can launch a politician on an upward trajectory.

The final component of individual power that members can attain from the legislature is relational power, particularly focused on women. There are three measures of relational power, each variable was originally collected. The first variable is the total number of women serving in the legislature. This is a simple count variable of all women serving in the state legislature. While including the total number of women may seem endogenous on the surface it is essential to the pipeline of women in office and one of the well-known factors contributing to more women in office. Second, there is an indicator for each state-year where there is a women's caucus, this incorporates Democratic women's caucus and bipartisan women's

⁶This information comes from the Vote Mama Foundation, last accessed April 16, 2025 <https://www.votemamafoundation.org/cfcstates>

caucuses. Last, there is a count of each state's women in Congress in any given year. This is rooted in the idea that women support women and that having women in Congress gives state lawmakers solidifies that women can seek out higher-level positions.

Controls

Outside of electoral difficulties and dealing with negative feedback various other factors may inhibit a woman's electoral career. The explanatory variables of interest include prior experience, benefits of the position, and occupation.

To capture the desirability of a particular position, or assuming a leadership role, there are averaged measures for *pay* and the type of position. Given that the data is collapsed down to state/year observations each of these variables is the average for the state in any given year. *Pay* indicates whether there is any additional pay for a position, across all positions in all states roughly 40 percent are paid. Last, there is a variable for the average number of positions that are *elected*. Leadership positions can either be elected or appointed in the most simple of terms, but there are further particulars beyond that such as whether these positions are elected/appointed by the party or caucus or Speaker. Whether a position is appointed by leadership or elected by the body may influence the likelihood of a woman serving.

There is thought to be an occupational disadvantage for women in office. Men, tend to be lawyers or in law-related fields while women tend to be homemakers or educators. While these takes may seem outdated, these assumptions are part of the bias that plays a role in a woman's political career. Women who serve are less likely to have a background in law than men, which might play a role in them leaving for other non-legal professions (Mariani 2008). Additionally, men are viewed as better suited for the legislature because of their legal background. In short, the "gender roles" or what women ought to be doing often disadvantage women, especially in terms of money and resources (Krook and Norris 2014). Specifically, I account for occupations in *law*, which tend to be men. For clarification, in this sample, roughly 250 men have careers in law compared to 41 women. Comparatively, there

are roughly the same number of teachers, 30 women and around 50 men.

Personal attributes account for some of the variation among the states while revealing some of the factors that are more likely to affect women attaining a leadership position. These control variables capture four key areas that affect a woman's likelihood of obtaining a position as a leader. The first is the level of *prior experience* that a woman has in office. There are some clear changes to leadership post-term limits. First, the level of experience of leaders has declined (Little and Farmer 2007), although those serving in leadership positions do not serve for a different amount of time than leaders in non-term limited states (Butcher 2023a). Overall, the possibility of attaining a leadership position has increased for women as more women are serving (Rosenthal 2005). As women gain more experience, they are viewed as more qualified to serve as a leaders.

Last, there are expected variations based on geographic location. Women in the West have a far longer history of serving in legislatures and attaining leadership positions, followed in short order by Northern states. However, the Midwest and the South have seen far less growth in the number of women lawmakers (Cox 1996, 29). Given the expected variation, there is a control for *southern states* where there are historically fewer women in office and fewer Democrats.

Methods & Analysis

The *TLS-Leaders* data is a panel dataset containing information from 17 different states. In order to test the different factors that affect women attaining leadership positions I utilize a times series cross-sectional regression with the percentage of woman leaders as the dependent variable.⁷ The results of these tests can be found in Table 1. The first three models are narrowly focused on each particular legislative power affecting membership: electoral, personal, and relational. The last model incorporates all independent variables and the controls that are likely to affect women's membership.

⁷This variable is a measure of the number of women leaders in a state in any given year, divided by the total number of leaders in that state and then multiplied by 100 to attain the percentage.

Table 1: Time Series Regression of Women in Leadership

	(1) Electoral	(2) Personal	(3) Relational	(4) Full
Uncontested Seats (%)	-0.051 (0.082)			0.068 (0.065)
Safe Seats (%)	0.176 (0.143)			-0.047 (0.095)
Campaign Support	11.075** (4.684)			11.678*** (3.196)
Professionalization		3.693 (13.968)		-10.389 (10.158)
Term Limit		0.201 (2.432)		-7.631** (3.533)
Career Opportunities		50.535*** (11.881)		23.861** (9.705)
Bipartisan Women's Caucus			8.005*** (1.758)	3.711* (2.107)
Democratic Women's Caucus			8.959*** (1.965)	10.292*** (3.046)
Women in the Legislature			0.795*** (0.093)	0.572*** (0.104)
Women in Congress			0.084 (0.620)	-1.223 (0.878)
Position Pay				-0.217 (3.256)
Elected Position				-26.199** (12.953)
Job in Law				4.908 (7.636)
Prior Experience				-0.319 (0.391)
Southern State				-8.622 (5.517)
Constant	9.598 (9.319)	5.164 (4.294)	-7.896** (3.241)	32.146*** (12.410)
Observations	405	459	459	405
Number of states	15	17	17	15

Robust standard errors by state in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The test of *Hypothesis1*, that elections favoring incumbents decrease the number of women in leadership, is in column 1. This theory is research that has demonstrated women face difficult electoral climates and are less likely to run in competitive elections. If women are less likely to be in office depending on the electoral variability then women would be less likely to be in leadership roles. This does not appear to be true, there is no significant effect on the percentage of women in leadership.

However, when looking at *campaign support*, or those states that allow candidates to use funds for child support, there appears to be an increase in women attaining leadership. Of course, this is likely a lagged effects and largely attributed to the presence of women in office, but allowing greater resources for newcomers does appear to ultimately help women. This particular resource likely plays a role in making the pursuit of office less intimidating, because even though these funds can be used by men and women, childcare is typically a task that falls to women.

Column 2 contains the results of the regression focusing on those institutional factors that contribute to personal leadership power (Schwindt-Bayer and Squire 2014). There are 3 separate hypotheses tested to better understand personal power and its effects on leadership, only one of these components is significant. Beginning with *professionalization* and *term limits*, both of which are insignificant but were previously thought to have varying effects on women in office. While professionalization worked to secure the incumbency advantage, often benefiting men, term limits were thought to potentially open new opportunities to office for women. Previous research has shown that professionalization and term limits have hindered the number of women in office (Carroll and Jenkins 2001*b*; Diamond 1977). In contrast, that effect does not appear to extend to leadership or a woman's ability to serve in an elevated position. The final component of personal power is *career opportunities*, or opportunities to advance to higher office. Interestingly this is both positive and statistically significant ($p < .05$). While this may seem counter to theory, the substantive results are great—men are more likely to be selected to pursue higher office and more competitive seats than women

when this occurs men leave the legislature opening the door for senior women to assume leadership positions.

Hyptohesis3_a posits that there are more women leaders when there are more women's support networks in the legislature. This holds for both having more women in the legislature and having a women's caucus in the legislature. However, there is not a significant relationship between the number of women in leadership and the number of women in Congress. These findings indicate that an immediate support network of serving in a legislature with *more* women and providing greater support matters more so than having support from the top down or knowing that a career in Congress can be achieved.

Last, it is important to see how all of these components work together, as well as with other control variables that tend to affect a lawmaker's success in office. In column 4, the results for *career opportunities*, *women in the legislature*, and *women's caucus* all hold. Additionally, there are two significant control variables. First, *prior experience*, as the average years of prior experience increases so does the percentage of women in office. Second, *southern states* has a significant negative effect on the percentage of women in leadership. This is unsurprising given that southern states both tend to have fewer women and fewer Democrats.

To compare the results from Table 1 across the 3 different categories and to understand their effects on women in leadership I calculate the predicted rate of leadership for each of the 9 independent variables. For each prediction, all values are set to their mean except for indicators for women's caucus (set to 0) and term limits (set to 1). Using the same time series regression as above the predictions in Figure 1 illustrate how the predicted rate of women's leadership changes when moving from the 25th percentile of any given variable to the 75th percentile.⁸ In the instances where there is overlap between the values for the 25th and 75th percentiles, there is no significant change indicated for women in leadership. As such, no electoral factors appear to have a significant effect on how many women are in leadership. Turning to the personal power aspect and the opportunities that are presented

⁸Again, because women's caucus and term limits are binary indicators the values set here are 0 and 1.

to serve in office, only career opportunities provide a significant difference. Even with that, the rate is only roughly 25 percent of positions being held by women.

The factors that matter the most for increasing women in office are those personal support networks. When women make up only 23 percent (25th percentile) of the legislatures roughly only 15 percent of leadership is made up of women. This increases to more than 20 percent when a legislature is 40 percent women (75th percentile). The biggest jump in women serving in leadership is when there is a dedicated women's caucus. There is more than a 10 percent jump in the predicted rate of women attaining leadership when there is a women's caucus in the legislature (regardless of party affiliation). This illustrates the importance of women in office and that women cannot be fully ingrained in the institution if women are not there to rise to leadership positions or support each other.

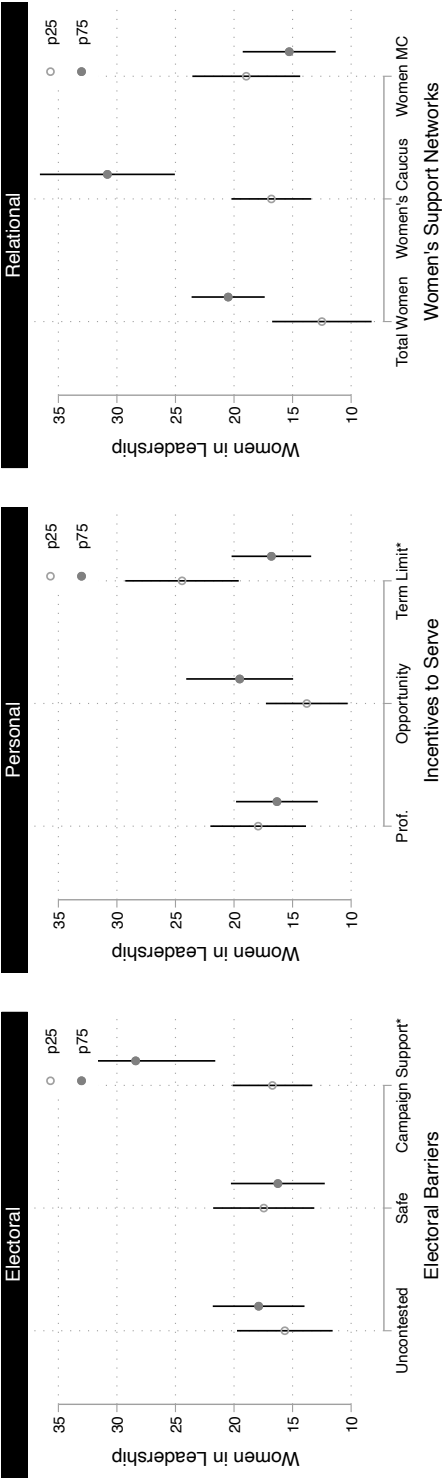
Existing research highlights the differences in how women are treated by where they serve and what positions they occupy. As a secondary analysis, I explore the different roles that women are more likely to fulfill in leadership and what circumstances contribute to their success. While the above analysis takes an aggregate view of leadership in the states this analysis is centered on the individual-level shifts for women in the legislature. Given this, it is necessary to explore where women are more likely to be successful and in what roles.

Women as Leaders

In addition to institutional constraints, each leadership role can carry its own difficulties. Perhaps surprisingly, women have a long history of serving as legislative leaders, but a rather sparse one. In this section, I present an overview of the history of women as state leaders and how the differences in leadership positions can affect the women who serve. Broadly, I expect that women tend to be pushed toward “lower-level” leadership positions such as party whips or assistant leaders, rather than top-ranking chamber and party leaders.

The first woman to serve as a leader was Clara Cressingham, one of the first women elected to office, who served as Caucus Secretary in Colorado in 1895 (Cox 1996). Despite this early

Figure 1: Predicted Rate of Women in Leadership



success, a woman would not become Speaker until 1933, Minnie D. Craig in North Dakota, or Senate President, Consuelo Northrop Bailey of Vermont, until 1955 (Cox 1996, 334). In 1987 91.1 percent of legislative leaders were white men (Jewell and Whicker 1994). Greater restrictions on service, and increasing turnover, would theoretically create the opportunity for more women to lead. By 2003 women held a mere 13 percent of leadership positions (Rosenthal 2005). Even though there was notable progress, in the early 2000s, there were still 26 states that had never had a woman serve in leadership (Rosenthal 2005, 200).

To prepare women for leadership positions, there need to be more women serving in the legislature (Jewell and Whicker 1994). The increase in the number of women serving as of late is unrefuted, more women are serving now than in the 1990s. However, this is a nationalized trend and not a result of legislative term limits. The national trend of more women serving in state legislatures has provided the pool of women to serve while term limits have created the opportunity for women to attain leadership positions that are otherwise difficult to secure.

Once in office women are less likely to receive positions on prestigious committees (Thomas and Welch 1991). It can be assumed that women would be treated similarly for leadership positions beyond committees. Early evaluations of women in leadership revealed that “important leadership” positions tended to be reserved for men, whereas women were relegated to lesser positions of assistant party leaders or secretaries (Diamond 1977, 46). In a review of New Hampshire and Connecticut in the 1970s women, regardless of their presence in the legislature, were more likely to be appointed as committee clerks than committee chairs (Diamond 1977). While women in New Hampshire did have a presence as committee leaders, no women served in such a role in Connecticut (Diamond 1977, 157).⁹

To capture the various positions there are indicators for each of the 4 key positions of interest: *top leader*, *chamber leader*, *assistant leader*, and *party whip*. Last, I explore the different factors that affect leaders, by looking specifically at traits that can increase the

⁹One reason for the difference in these states is that New Hampshire, being a larger legislature with few incentives, had fewer men with a desire to serve.

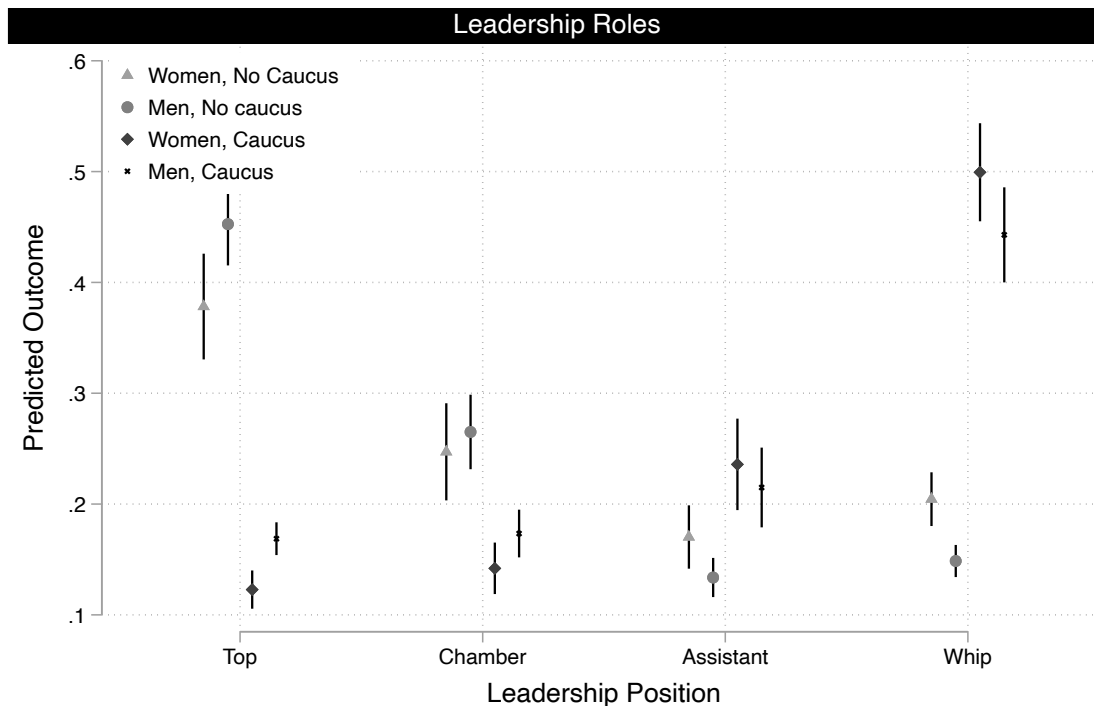
percentage of women holding a leadership position. Unlike the previous analyses, these factors are more about the candidate and less about the institution or the positions where they serve. Similar to other explorations, the dependent variable of interest is the percentage of women serving as leaders.

While the multinomial logit offers valuable insight into the differences between men and women in attaining a leadership position, the results are quite difficult to interpret given the number of comparisons occurring. For this reason, the base models are in Appendix 1 and I focus instead on the predictive margins.¹⁰ The data contain information on both men and women, as well as their level of prior experience, this can be used to predict the outcome for women and men in all potential positions. In this first exploration, I evaluate the differences between men and women, holding all else constant.

Figure 2 illustrates the predicted rate of men and women attaining four different leadership positions. This figure also contains variation based on whether or not the legislature has a women's caucus, the most important relational factor noted in the previous analysis.

¹⁰All other values are set at their means.

Figure 2: Predicted Rate of Attaining Certain Leadership Positions



There are a couple of key findings worth noting from Figure 2. First, Men are more likely than women to be in higher-level leadership positions. Specifically, men are more likely than women to be a *top leader* or a *chamber leader*. Conversely, women are more likely to serve as assistant leaders or party whips. However, there is not a statistically significant difference between men and women in attaining these positions.

Second, men are more likely to become top leaders when there is no women's caucus. However, no women's caucus women are just as likely to become leaders as men who serve in a legislature without a women's caucus. Interestingly, women having a caucus does more harm than good when it comes to top leadership positions. In all other circumstances, women are either more likely or equally likely, to attain a leadership position with a caucus.

Third, in states where there is no caucus women tend to do better than their male counterparts at attaining positions as *Assistants* and *Whips*. This is further amplified in states where there is a women's caucus. Of all positions, women are most likely to become

party whips and least likely to become *top leaders*, such as the Speaker or President.

Robustness Test

The above analysis is limited to 17 states, despite the number of years that are included there is concern that these findings are less applicable in other states without term limits. As a robustness test, I utilize data from the *Center for American Women and Politics*.¹¹ The drawback of these data are that they do not go back as far and do not include as much information on different leadership positions. However, they serve as an excellent test of the theory for all 50 states. When merged with the necessary variables, this leaves a sample of 4 years, 2017-2020 and leadership for all 50 states. There are some differences in how leaders are counted as compared to the test above, but they are counted consistently within the sample.¹²

The most notable finding is perhaps that campaign support remains strong and consistent. Including more states that have provisions for such policies appears to yield the same result. Offering greater resources for women to pursue office leads to more women in the legislature and in leadership. Counter to the example above, having a higher percentage of uncontested seats does appear to increase the number of women in leadership across all states. This could be a result of including more states, but is likely a result of the limited years in the sample where there is a notable increase in women serving across the states. Also worth noting is that the institutional variables appear to matter very little for women's leadership in this short time frame, however, there is little variation within these variables during this time.

As a test of how different factors matter for women in leadership, this CAWP provided data can be used to explore predicted outcomes for women in leadership. In Figure 3, I

¹¹Center for American Women and Politics, *Women in State Legislative Leadership* reports 2017-2022.

¹²For the CAWP data, "senate presidents and presidents pro tempore; house speakers and speakers pro tempore; majority and minority leaders of the senate and house as listed on each state legislature's website" (?). This does exclude lower-level positions, which are more numerous and have less consistency from state to state.

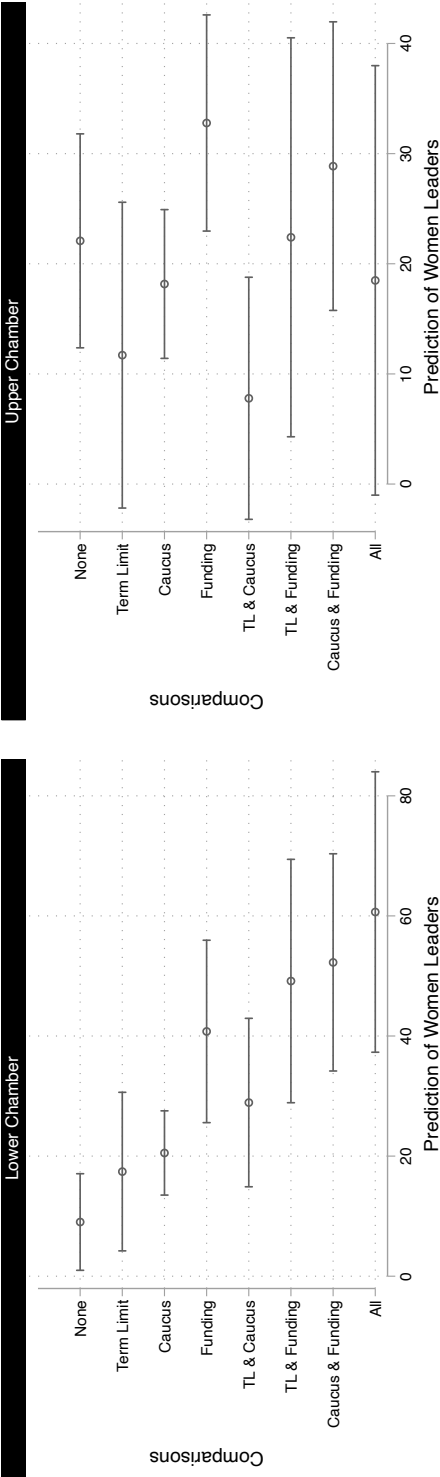
Table 2: Time Series Regression of Women in Leadership, CAWP 50 States Sample

	(1) Electoral	(2) Personal	(3) Relational	(4) Full
Uncontested Seats (%)	0.110* (0.058)			0.105 (0.064)
Safe Seats (%)	-0.388*** (0.121)			-0.136 (0.119)
Campaign Support	10.428*** (3.383)			8.586** (3.763)
Professionalization		-1.604 (12.105)		-9.026 (13.517)
Career Opportunity		48.471*** (16.562)		45.905* (24.227)
Term Limit		-4.770 (4.390)		-0.926 (5.124)
Bipartisan Women's Caucus			-3.732 (2.431)	-1.643 (2.738)
Democratic Women's Caucus			3.521 (2.331)	2.673 (2.493)
Women in the Legislature			0.285*** (0.089)	0.212*** (0.077)
Women in Congress			0.745 (0.461)	0.234 (0.691)
Southern State				-7.795* (4.277)
Constant	46.945*** (9.208)	10.219*** (3.599)	6.995* (3.967)	11.223 (10.477)
Observations	191	195	199	187
Number of states	48	49	50	47

Robust standard errors by state in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Figure 3: Predicted Comparisons for Women in Leadership, all states



focus on the different comparisons of the three factors that were the most significant in the original analysis—campaign support, term limits, women’s caucus— and how they affect women as leaders.

Focusing on the lower chamber, left hand side, there do appear to be clear differences in how different variables affect women. When there are no provisions in place women are far less likely to become leaders. Recall, term limits were found to decrease the number of women in leadership, however, with no other provisions in place they do increase the likelihood but not significantly so. When it comes to *funding*, this is where there is a distinguishable difference between having no provisions and an increase in the number of women as leaders. Having funding, with or without the caucus, tends to outweigh the restrictions of having term limits, this is also true when all factors are at play.

Turning now to the upper chamber, the results are somewhat mixed, which is likely a result of fewer women leaders in the upper chamber. Here, term limits do appear to weigh down the likelihood of women attaining leadership roles, which can only really be mitigated with funding (but only at the margins). Here, term limits tend to carry greater weight than in the lower chamber. In fact, those states with no beneficial provisions and no term limits are more likely to have women in leadership.

These additional analyses, which explore the types of leadership roles women are more likely to fill and how different factors affect women across all states, further support the findings in Table 1. That is, while there are many barriers to women attaining a leadership position, support while campaigning and further support when in office can make all the difference. In short, support for women matters greatly for their professional legislative successes.

Discussion & Conclusion

Although women remain underrepresented in state legislatures, they are the center of a surge in scholarly research. Yet, much of what we know about women in office is about

their electoral prospects or policy-making behavior, far less is known about their career or role as a leader. As a result, much of the understanding of women's careers and the effects of the institutions where they serve is based on men's careers. However, there is a push for understanding our legislatures as gendered, meaning they affect genders differently. Put another way, men and women face different challenges, establish different roles, and therefore have different careers all because of their gender. For example, research has long maintained that legislative professionalization benefits incumbency, but upon viewing the breakdown between men and women it turns out that a professional legislature benefits men more than it does women.

With this in mind, I utilize the literature on institutionalism and gender and politics to better understand how women are influenced by the legislature and what this means for their careers. Borrowing from Schwindt-Bayer and Squire (2014), different components of the institution affect members differently because of the powers that they can confer to members, specifically I theorize that electoral, personal, and relational factors affect men and women differently. I find that counter to other research, elections and personal factors matter less for women and their ability to attain leadership positions. Instead, women are far more likely to become leaders when they have a strong network of women.

In a secondary analysis I compare men and women and their likelihood of becoming four different kinds of leaders. Overall, regardless of circumstance, men are more likely to become top leaders whereas women are relegated to lower leadership positions. While this finding may substantively small, as women are still attaining leadership positions, it matters greatly for the pipeline to Congress. The roles that women fill in office are important for their future prospects. Prior political experience, especially in a leadership capacity, is more important for women candidates than men (Diamond 1977). But, as this research shows, women have less of an opportunity to get these more prestigious positions.

This work is largely preliminary and designed to better understand the relationship between the institution and how it can affect the roles of women in office. In the most recent

elections, women have made significant gains, even solidifying a legislative majority, but discrepancies in leadership remain. Without more women serving in office and supporting other women, women are simply not going to be equipped to gain more leadership roles, especially those at the top. Women lawmakers must come to understand that not only are there differences in their service, but there are differences in how the institution shapes the opportunities of what women can do. Understanding this is the first step to making a change in women's political careers.

References

- Anzia, Sarah F and Rachel Bernhard. 2021. "Gender Stereotyping and the Electoral Success of Women Candidates: New Evidence from Local Elections in the United States." *British Journal of Political Science* pp. 1–20.
- Badas, Alex and Katelyn E Stauffer. 2019. "Voting for women in nonpartisan and partisan elections." *Electoral Studies* 57:245–255.
- Bauer, Nichole M and Ivy AM Cargile. 2023. "Women Get the Job Done: Differences in Constituent Communication from Female and Male Lawmakers." *Politics & Gender* 19(4):1110–1133.
- Butcher, Jordan. 2021. "Rethinking retirement: ambition in term-limited legislatures." *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 27(2):285–299.
- Butcher, Jordan. 2023a. *Navigating Term Limits: The Careers of State Legislators*. Palgrave Macmillin.
- Butcher, Jordan. 2023b. "Parties and professionals, an exploration of turnover in US state legislatures." *The Journal of Legislative Studies* pp. 1–24.
- Butcher, Jordan and Noah Haynes. 2024. "Already Gone: Retaining Women in State Legislatures." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 49(1):33–73.
- Butler, Martha R. and Joan Felts. 2006. "Tool kit for the staff mentor: Strategies for improving retention." *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing* 37(5):210–213.
- Cain, Bruce E. and Thad Kousser. 2004. *Adapting to Term Limits: Recent Experiences and New Directions*. Public Policy Institute of California.
- Carroll, Susan J and Krista Jenkins. 2001a. "Do term limits help women get elected?" *Social Science Quarterly* 82(1):197–201.

- Carroll, Susan J and Krista Jenkins. 2001*b*. “Unrealized opportunity? Term limits and the representation of women in state legislatures.” *Women & Politics* 23(4):1–30.
- Chappell, Louise. 2010. “Comparative gender and institutions: Directions for research.” *Perspectives on Politics* 8(1):183–189.
- Clark, Jennifer Hayes and Gathoni Kimondo. 2024. “When women run: explaining the emergence of women state legislative candidates.” *The Journal of Legislative Studies* pp. 1–16.
- Cox, Elizabeth M. 1996. *Women, state, and territorial legislators, 1895-1995: a state-by-state analysis, with rosters of 6,000 women*. McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.
- Diamond, Irene. 1977. *Sex Roles in The State House*. Yale University Press.
- Farmer, Rick and T. H. Little. 2007. Legislative Power in the Buckeye State: The Revenge of Term Limits. In *Legislating without experience: case studies in state legislative term limits*. Lexington Books.
- Grahn, Michal. 2024. “Gendered Institutions and Where to Find Them: A Critical Realist Approach.” *Politics & Gender* 20(2):449–473.
- Greene, Jay P. 1995. “Term limits: A measure of our ignorance.” *Social Science Quarterly* 76(4):717–719.
- Hansen, Eric R and Christopher J Clark. 2020. “Diversity in Party Leadership in State Legislatures.” *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 20(1):81–107.
- Holman, Mirya R, Anna Mahoney and Emma Hurler. 2022. “Let’s Work Together: Bill Success via Women’s Cosponsorship in US State Legislatures.” *Political Research Quarterly* 75(3):676–690.
- Jewell, Malcolm E and Marcia Lynn Whicker. 1994. *Legislative Leadership in the American States*. The University of Michigan Press.

- Kenny, Meryl. 2007. "Gender, institutions and power: A critical review." *Politics* 27(2):91–100.
- Klarner, Carl. N.d. "State Legislative Election Results, by contest."
- Kloot, Louise. 2004. "Women and leadership in universities: A case study of women academic managers." *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 17(6):470–485.
- Krook, Mona Lena and Pippa Norris. 2014. "Beyond quotas: Strategies to promote gender equality in elected office." *Political Studies* 62(1):2–20.
- Kyndt, Eva, Filip Dochy, Maya Michielsens and Bastiaan Moeyaert. 2009. "Employee retention: Organisational and personal perspectives." *Vocations and Learning* 2(3):195–215.
- Leners, Debra Woodard, Vicki W. Wilson, Peggy Connor and Joanne Fenton. 2006. "Mentorship: increasing retention probabilities." *Journal of nursing management* 14(8):652–654.
- Little, Thomas H and Rick Farmer. 2007. Legislative leadership. In *Institutional Change in American Politics: The Case of Term Limits*, ed. Bruce Cain Karl Kurtz and Richard G. Niemi. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press chapter 4, pp. 55–72.
- Lowndes, Vivien. 2020. "How are political institutions gendered?" *Political Studies* 68(3):543–564.
- Malbin, Michael J. and Gerald Benjamin. 1992. Legislatures after Term Limits. In *Limiting Legislative Terms*, ed. G. Benjamin and M. J. Malbin. Congressional Quarterly pp. 209–222.
- Mariani, Mack D. 2008. "A gendered pipeline? The advancement of state legislators to congress in five states." *Politics & Gender* 4(2):285–308.
- McLin, Rhine L. 2001. "The Hidden Effects of Term Limits: Losing the Voices of Experience and Diversity." *University of Toledo Law Review* 32(4):539–548.

- Moncrief, Gary and Peverill Squire. 2013. *Why States Matter*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Niven, David. 2006. "Throwing your hat out of the ring: Negative recruitment and the gender imbalance in state legislative candidacy." *Politics & Gender* 2(4):473–489.
- Petracca, Mark and Karen Moore O'Brien. 1996. *Legislative Term Limits: Public Choice Perspectives*. Kluwer Academic Publishers chapter The Experience With Municipal Term Limits in Orange County California, pp. 289–308.
- Rhinehart, Sarina. 2020. "Mentoring the next generation of women candidates: A field experiment of state legislators." *American Politics Research* 48(4):492–505.
- Rosenthal, Alan. 1974. "Turnover in state legislatures." *American Journal of Political Science* pp. 609–616.
- Rosenthal, Cindy Simon. 2005. Women Leading Legislatures, Getting There and Getting Things Done. In *Women and Elective Office: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox. Oxford University Press chapter 10.
- Rule, Wilma and Pippa Norris. 1994. *United States Electoral Systems: Their Impact on Women and Minorities*. Greenwood Press chapter Anglo and Minority Women's Underrepresentation in Congress: Is the Electoral System the Culprit?, pp. 41–54.
- Sarbaugh-Thompson, Marjorie, Lyke Thompson, Charles Elder, John Strate and Richard Elling. 2004. *The political and institutional effects of term limits*. Springer.
- Schwindt-Bayer, Leslie and Peverill Squire. 2014. "Legislative power and women's representation." *Politics & Gender* 10(4):622–658.
- Squire, Peverill. 1992. "Legislative professionalization and membership diversity in state legislatures." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* pp. 69–79.
- Squire, Peverill. 2017. "A Squire index update." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 17(4):361–371.

- Swift, Clint S. and Kathryn VanderMolen. 2021. "Marginalization and Mobilization: The Roots of Female Legislators' Collaborative Advantage in the States." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* pp. 1–25.
- Thames, Frank C. 2017. "Understanding the impact of electoral systems on women's representation." *Politics & Gender* 13(3):379–404.
- Thomas, Sue and Susan Welch. 1991. "The impact of gender on activities and priorities of state legislators." 44(2):445–456.
- Thompson, J. A. and G. Moncrief. 1992. The evolution of the state legislature: institutional change and legislative careers. In *Changing Patterns in State Legislative Careers*, ed. Gary Moncrief and Joel Thompson. The University of Michigan Press.
- Thomsen, Danielle M and Aaron S King. 2020. "Women's representation and the gendered pipeline to power." *American Political Science Review* 114(4):989–1000.
- Whistler, Donald E and Mark C Ellickson. 2011. "Women and Men's Legislative Success in the 21st Century Professional and Citizen State Legislatures." *American Review of Politics* 32:213–231.
- Will, George F. 1992. *Restoration: Congress, term limits, and recovery of deliberative democracy*. Maxwell Macmillan International.
- Wojcik, Stefan and Shawna Mullenax. 2017. "Men idle, women network: how networks help female legislators succeed." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 42(4):579–610.
- Wright, Thomas A. and Ching-Chu Huang. 2012. "The many benefits of employee well-being in organizational research." *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 33(8):1188–1192.

Table 3: Time Series Regression of Women in the Legislature

	Full
Uncontested Seats (%)	0.129** (0.054)
Safe Seats (%)	-0.146* (0.084)
Campaign Support	7.281*** (1.962)
Professionalization	4.802 (7.476)
Career Opportunities	35.703*** (7.968)
Term Limit	-0.218 (2.160)
Women in the Legislature	0.478*** (0.036)
Bipartisan Women's Caucus	-2.518* (1.441)
Democratic Women's Caucus	2.521* (1.405)
Women in Congress	-1.153*** (0.335)
Job in Law	-4.573 (3.193)
Position Pay	1.124 (2.219)
Elected Position	-4.205 (8.198)
Prior Experience	-0.138 (0.150)
Southern State	-2.507 (3.120)
Constant	13.139 (10.628)
Observations	405
Number of states	15

Robust standard errors by state in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4: Multi-Nomial Logit of Gender and Leadership in State Legislatures, compared to Chamber Leader

Position	Lower Chamber			Upper Chamber			Both Chambers		
	Top	Assistant	Whip	Top	Assistant	Whip	Top	Assistant	Whip
Gender (<i>Men</i>)	0.407 (0.318)	-0.694* (0.411)	-0.603** (0.303)	0.187 (0.277)	-0.309** (0.149)	-0.707*** (0.258)	0.268 (0.255)	-0.487** (0.224)	-0.654*** (0.210)
Uncontested Seats (%)	0.005 (0.006)	0.001 (0.011)	0.004 (0.011)	0.006 (0.004)	-0.013 (0.009)	-0.013* (0.008)	0.005 (0.004)	-0.007 (0.008)	-0.003 (0.008)
Safe Seats (%)	0.020* (0.012)	-0.057*** (0.017)	-0.002 (0.016)	0.025*** (0.009)	-0.044*** (0.016)	0.004 (0.012)	0.021** (0.010)	-0.048*** (0.017)	0.003 (0.012)
Professionalization	2.800 (2.318)	4.951 (4.644)	-2.096 (2.400)	5.608** (2.322)	5.068 (3.235)	-1.637 (2.456)	4.102* (2.149)	4.909 (3.685)	-1.560 (1.912)
Term Limit	-0.064 (0.612)	0.834 (1.327)	18.927*** (1.592)	-0.942 (0.597)	1.403 (0.951)	19.252*** (1.636)	-0.577 (0.548)	1.091 (1.104)	20.541*** (1.520)
Career Opportunities	5.488*** (1.970)	-11.655*** (4.419)	-1.602 (2.759)	5.255*** (1.839)	-10.951*** (3.161)	4.984** (2.215)	5.440*** (1.549)	-10.481*** (3.476)	0.724 (1.695)
Women in the Legislature	-0.022 (0.014)	0.038* (0.023)	-0.003 (0.027)	-0.012 (0.015)	0.022 (0.018)	-0.051*** (0.018)	-0.017 (0.013)	0.027 (0.019)	-0.021 (0.018)
Bipartisan Women's Caucus	-1.181** (0.579)	2.954* (1.510)	19.638*** (1.725)	-1.437* (0.736)	2.197** (0.927)	18.451*** (1.540)	-1.291** (0.601)	2.133** (1.082)	20.267*** (1.411)
Democratic Women's Caucus	-1.581** (0.735)	3.618** (1.799)	2.938** (1.377)	-1.859* (1.017)	3.209** (1.528)	3.200** (1.385)	-1.751** (0.737)	3.230** (1.616)	2.999** (1.220)
Women in Congress	0.011 (0.057)	-0.007 (0.169)	-0.099 (0.109)	-0.108* (0.060)	-0.068 (0.137)	-0.139 (0.134)	-0.021 (0.059)	0.010 (0.129)	-0.099 (0.100)
Job in Law	-0.225 (0.331)	-1.072*** (0.302)	-0.702*** (0.210)	-0.208 (0.291)	-0.578* (0.326)	-1.068** (0.419)	-0.228 (0.229)	-0.729*** (0.179)	-0.724*** (0.166)
Position Pay	0.584 (0.620)	-2.595** (1.255)	-3.495*** (1.155)	0.823 (0.838)	-2.230* (1.235)	-4.504*** (1.373)	0.673 (0.614)	-2.440** (1.207)	-3.977*** (1.120)
Elected Position	0.233 (1.406)	-0.149 (0.358)	0.362 (0.877)	-1.518* (0.909)	-1.411* (0.824)	0.553 (0.481)	-0.305 (1.102)	-0.316 (0.279)	0.557 (0.805)
Prior Experience	0.057* (0.030)	-0.236*** (0.073)	-0.377*** (0.091)	0.033 (0.021)	-0.056*** (0.020)	-0.130*** (0.047)	0.032* (0.017)	-0.084*** (0.020)	-0.169*** (0.034)
Southern State	0.245 (0.628)	-0.628 (1.262)	-18.695*** (1.585)	0.396 (0.522)	-0.229 (0.923)	-16.064*** (1.313)	0.361 (0.539)	-0.128 (0.923)	-18.935*** (1.386)
Constant	-3.761** (1.883)	5.601** (2.423)	-15.712*** (2.091)	-2.373* (1.314)	5.142*** (1.501)	-17.531*** (1.416)	-3.177** (1.526)	4.456*** (1.640)	-18.481*** (1.791)
Observations	1,817	1,817	1,817	1,742	1,742	1,742	3,559	3,559	3,559

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1