

4-1-2010

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Repository Citation

Fox, Richard L. and Lawless, Jennifer L., "If Only They'd Ask: Gender, Recruitment, and Political Ambition" (2010). *Political Science Faculty Works*. 13.

http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/poli_fac/13

Recommended Citation

Fox, Richard L., and Jennifer L. Lawless. 2010. "If Only They'd Ask: Gender, Recruitment, and Political Ambition." *Journal of Politics* 72(2):310-326.

If Only They'd Ask: Gender, Recruitment, and Political Ambition

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Based on data from the second wave of the Citizen Political Ambition Panel Study—our national survey of more than 2,000 “potential candidates” in 2008—we provide the first thorough analysis of the manner in which gender interacts with political recruitment in the candidate eligibility pool. Our findings are striking. Highly qualified and politically well-connected women from both major political parties are less likely than similarly situated men to be recruited to run for public office by all types of political actors. They are less likely than men to be recruited intensely. And they are less likely than men to be recruited by multiple sources. Although we paint a picture of a political recruitment process that seems to suppress women’s inclusion, we also offer the first evidence of the significant headway women’s organizations are making in their efforts to mitigate the recruitment gap, especially among Democrats. These findings are critically important because women’s recruitment disadvantage depresses their political ambition and ultimately hinders their emergence as candidates.

The United States ranks in the top 10 countries in terms of gender equity in economic opportunities, education, and family law (Inglehart and Norris 2003). Individual accounts of women who face overt gender discrimination once they enter the public arena are increasingly uncommon (Woods 2000). And scores of studies find that in both congressional and state legislative races, women perform at least as well as their male counterparts on Election Day (e.g., Fox 2006; Plutzer and Zipp 1996; Thompson and Steckenrider 1997). Indeed, based on an analysis of a series of public opinion polls and election results, Dolan concludes, “Levels of bias are low enough to no longer provide significant impediments to women’s chances of election” (2004, 50).

There may be no evidence of widespread bias at the ballot box, and relative to other nations, societal norms might not suppress women’s advancement, but the fact remains that 83 nations surpass the United States in the percentage of women serving in the national legislature (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2009). When the 111th Congress convened in January 2009, 83% of its members were men. Large gender disparities are also evident at the state and local levels, where more than three-quarters of statewide elected officials and state legislators are men. Further, men

occupy the governor’s mansion in 43 of the 50 states, and men run City Hall in 89 of the 100 largest cities across the country (CAWP 2009).

For much of the last 20 years, political scientists have generated myriad explanations to reconcile women’s slow ascension into electoral politics with the lack of widespread discrimination in the political sphere. Many scholars, for instance, point to a series of structural factors that hinder women’s candidate emergence. Most notably, the incumbency advantage limits the pace at which members of any previously excluded group can move into elective office (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994). Other investigators point to a “situational” explanation for the dearth of women in politics. Women’s historic underrepresentation in the professions that typically lead to political careers inhibits their rise to positions of political power (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Duerst-Lahti 1998). A series of circumstantial factors also contribute to women’s underrepresentation, since they make navigating the political terrain more complex and complicated for women than men. Examinations of campaigns continue to show, for instance, that gender stereotypes affect the manner in which the news media (Fox 1997; Kahn 1996) and voters (Koch 2000; Lawless 2004) assess women candidates. Geographic differences also facilitate women’s election in

some congressional districts, but lessen their chances of success in others (Palmer and Simon 2006). Finally, traditional gender role socialization continues to convey to prospective candidates that politics is a domain better left to men. Thus, educated, well-credentialed, professional women—as a consequence of long-standing patterns and norms—are substantially less likely than men to exhibit political ambition (Lawless and Fox 2005).

Structural barriers, situational and circumstantial factors, and gender role socialization certainly all contribute to the gender disparities in U.S. political institutions. But the power of these explanations and overcoming the obstacles they pose is fundamentally linked to the broad and sustained recruitment of women candidates (see Fowler 1993; Sanbonmatsu 2006). There is no question, for instance, that as women increase their proportions in the pipeline professions that precede political careers, there will be an increase in the number of women candidates. Without recruitment efforts to expedite women's emergence into the political arena, though, these increases may be very incremental. Similarly, if women are not recruited to fill open seats, then the power of incumbency will continue to inhibit their numeric representation. In addition, only with the active recruitment of women candidates will women's presence in politics be less anomalous and, therefore, less conducive to gender stereotyping. And since potential candidates are more likely to consider running for office when they receive encouragement from political actors, recruitment is also a vital ingredient for closing the gender gap in political ambition (Lawless and Fox 2005).

Despite its pivotal role in the candidate emergence process, we know little about political recruitment from the perspective of the potential candidates who are well positioned to enter the electoral arena. Scholars certainly recognize the importance of gender and political recruitment, but the difficulties inherent in assembling a sample of potential candidates hamper direct and nuanced investigations. Instead, most studies of candidate recruitment rely on samples of declared candidates and office holders, thereby limiting the extent to which we can assess the impact of recruitment on political ambition (see Fowler 1993). Sanbonmatsu (2006) moves beyond a sample of candidates and office holders by analyzing the behavior of political gatekeepers in various states. But she cannot shed light on the perceptions of the men and women whom gatekeepers do or do not tap to run for office (see also Niven 1998). And in the one study of gender and potential candidates' recruitment

experiences, we only scratch the surface (Lawless and Fox 2005). We address neither the scope, breadth, and frequency of the recruitment men and women receive, nor whether gender plays a role in who is discouraged from running for office. Moreover, our earlier work predates the emergence of a diverse array of women's organizations whose mission is to increase women's representation at all levels of political office.

In this article, we utilize data from the second wave of the Citizen Political Ambition Panel Study—our national survey of more than 2,000 “potential candidates” in 2008—to provide the first thorough analysis of the manner in which gender interacts with political recruitment in the candidate eligibility pool. Our findings are striking. Highly qualified and politically well-connected women from both major political parties are less likely than similarly situated men to be recruited to run for public office by all types of political actors. They are less likely than men to be recruited intensely. And they are less likely than men to be recruited by multiple sources. Although we paint a picture of a political recruitment process that seems to suppress women's inclusion, we also offer the first evidence of the significant headway women's organizations are making in their efforts to mitigate the recruitment gap, especially among Democrats. These findings are critically important because women's recruitment disadvantage depresses their political ambition and ultimately hinders their emergence as candidates.

A Gendered Political Recruitment Process? Background and Hypotheses

When individuals consider running for any office and launching successful campaigns, they must rely on the support of numerous political institutions. As Enloe explains, most of these institutions are dominated by men and embody a perpetually ingrained ethos of masculinity:

Patriarchy is the structural and ideological system that perpetuates the privileging of masculinity . . . Legislatures, political parties, museums, newspapers, theater companies, television networks, religious organizations, corporations, and courts . . . derive from the presumption that what is masculine is most deserving of reward, promotion, admiration, [and] emulation. (2004, 4–5)

Indeed, scholars have identified, to varying degrees, this type of masculinized ethos within all three

branches of the federal government (Borelli and Martin 1997; Mezey 2003; O'Connor 2002). State legislatures have also been very slow to include women and their distinct policy agendas (Thomas 1994). And women's full integration into the Democratic and Republican parties has been a long and difficult road; no woman has led either of the national party organizations in the last 35 years (Freeman 2000). Even if we assume that the men who occupy positions in these institutions no longer exhibit overt signs of bias against women, years of traditional conceptions about candidate quality, electability, and background persist.

This characterization is particularly relevant when we turn to the political recruitment process. Political parties are often critical in candidate recruitment and nomination, especially at the state legislative and congressional levels (Aldrich 2000; Jewell and Morehouse 2001). Party organizations' leaders, elected officials, and activists serve as electoral gatekeepers who groom potential candidates to run for office. Although encouragement from the parties can be instrumental in propelling a candidacy for anyone, scholars have long known that electoral gatekeepers are strategic in their recruitment efforts (Maestas, Maisel, and Stone 2005) and that recruitment to public office is a selective process that reflects various dimensions of social stratification (e.g., Aberbach, Putnam and Rockman 1981; Matthews 1984). More specifically, political parties have historically been enclaves of male dominance (Freeman 2000; Fowlkes, Perkins, and Tolleson Rinehart 1979). Thus, it is not surprising that early studies of women's election to office argued that gender bias in the recruitment process contributed to women's underrepresentation (Carroll 1994; Diamond 1977; Rule 1981; Welch 1978).

Although political parties demonstrated a tendency to recruit women to relatively hopeless state legislative and congressional races in the 1970s and early 1980s (Bernstein 1986; Carroll 1985), contemporary studies of candidate recruitment paint a more complex picture. Moncrief, Squire, and Jewell (2001) and Niven (2006) find that women officeholders and candidates are *more* likely than men to report that they were recruited by political gatekeepers. We find that, among a national sample of candidates seeking positions at the local, state, and national level, women are just as likely as men to have received encouragement from an electoral gatekeeper (Lawless and Fox 2005). And in a study of state legislators' ambition to run for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, Fulton et al. (2006) find that men

and women are not only equally likely to be recruited, but also equally receptive to the encouragement they receive. Some researchers go so far as to argue, then, that more party involvement in recruitment can reduce women's underrepresentation because party leaders do not treat women and men potential candidates differently (e.g., Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994).

When we move from the experiences of candidates and officeholders to electoral gatekeepers, though, we glean important evidence of both actual and perceived gender bias. Sanbonmatsu (2006), in a six-state study of electoral gatekeepers, uncovers little overt gender bias in the recruitment process of state legislative candidates; she does find, however, that networks of electoral gatekeepers are still overwhelmingly male and that they identify and recruit candidates from these networks. Consequently, in states with strong political parties and systematic recruitment activities, women are disadvantaged. Niven's (1998) four-state study of political recruitment reveals that a majority of local women officeholders believe that party leaders discourage women from running for office, both by openly belittling politically ambitious women and by channeling them into low-profile political roles (see also Niven 2006). His surveys of local party leaders in these states corroborate the officeholders' suspicions of bias; male party leaders prefer male candidates. Data from electoral gatekeepers, therefore, suggest that recruitment practices continue to favor the selection of male candidates.

From the perspective of potential candidates, however, the extent to which gender affects the early candidate recruitment process remains a largely open question. The research that focuses on actual candidates and elected officials is limited in the extent to which it can speak to the impact of recruitment or the differential effect it might exert on women and men; all declared candidates and elected officials opted to enter the electoral arena, regardless of whether a political gatekeeper extended the invitation. Further, in cases in which an individual is not recruited to run, once he/she announces the candidacy, support from political leaders often follows. Candidates' retrospective accounts of their recruitment experiences may be clouded by the support and encouragement they received upon entering the actual race. The research that relies on gatekeepers for information about recruitment cannot speak to the process as experienced by the women and men who are (or are not) recruited. Moreover, party organizations' recruitment patterns vary so much across locality that it is too complex and costly to construct a national sample of political

informants and gatekeepers at the local level. This limitation is particularly relevant when studying gender differences in recruitment since the initial decision to run for office tends to occur at the local level. Thus, a complete assessment of gender and political recruitment demands that we also investigate in-depth the experiences of women and men who are well positioned to run for office, including those who are neither recruited, nor choose to take the plunge.

Consistent with studies of electoral gatekeepers, we expect women in the pool of potential candidates to be disadvantaged in the candidate recruitment process and gender bias in recruitment to stunt women's political ambition. More specifically, we test the following two overarching hypotheses:

Recruitment Disadvantage Hypothesis: Women in the pool of potential candidates will be less likely than their male counterparts to experience broad and sustained political recruitment and more likely to be discouraged from running for office.

Recruitment Impact Hypothesis: Potential candidates who receive the suggestion to run for office will be significantly more likely to exhibit political ambition; and broad-based, sustained encouragement will be particularly important for women candidates' emergence.

Operationalizing these hypotheses will allow us to offer the first nuanced assessment of the manner in which gender influences potential candidates' recruitment experiences, and how political recruitment, in turn, affects the initial decision to run for office. This endeavor is long overdue and key to gauging prospects for women's full integration into U.S. politics.

Research Design and Dataset: The Citizen Political Ambition Panel Study

In order to examine fully potential candidates' political recruitment experiences, we rely on data from the second wave of the Citizen Political Ambition Panel Study. This national panel—the first wave of which we conducted in 2001, and the second wave of which we completed in 2008—represents the only broad, cross-section of equally credentialed women and men who are well positioned to serve as future candidates for all elective offices. We drew our 2001 “candidate eligibility pool” from the professions that yield the highest proportion of political candidates for congressional and state legislative positions: law, business, education, and political/community activism (Moncrief, Squire, and Jewell 2001). We dispro-

portionately stratified by sex, so the sample includes roughly equal numbers of women and men. The 2,036 respondents who completed the 2008 survey are a representative subsample of the original eligibility pool.¹ Controlling for sex, race, and profession, individuals who expressed some degree of political ambition in 2001 were no more likely than respondents who had never considered a candidacy to complete the 2008 survey. Similarly, potential candidates who reported high levels of political interest and activism at the time of the 2001 survey were no more likely than those who did not to respond to the questionnaire (regression results not shown). Moreover, no significant demographic factors distinguish the 2001 and 2008 samples (see Appendix A for a description of the sample; and see Lawless and Fox (2005) for a more thorough description and justification of the eligibility pool approach).

Our method and sample uniquely position us to examine the recruitment experiences of a general population of potential candidates who are well situated to run for office at the local, state, and federal level. Further, the results from the first wave of the panel provided guidance for the types of questions that would leverage our understanding of the gender dynamics of political recruitment. Accordingly, the 2008 survey includes detailed questions about the frequency and breadth of recruitment contacts, discouragement from running for office, and potential candidates' proximity to the political arena. In addition, the 2008 survey allows us to assess for the first time the recent and increased role women's organizations have come to play in attempting to mitigate the gender gap in candidate emergence.

Although the Citizen Political Ambition Panel Study represents a methodological breakthrough, it is important to acknowledge two limitations. First, our method depends on a broad conception of the candidate eligibility pool. The absence of a specific office focus means that we must forego a nuanced analysis of the recruitment patterns and their impact

¹Through extensive Internet searches and phone calls, we obtained current address information for 2,976 members (82%) of the original sample of respondents who completed the questionnaire in 2001. After employing standard mail survey protocol, we heard from 2,060 men and women, 2,036 of whom completed the questionnaire. This represents a 75% response rate for the second wave of the panel. The response rates for the 2008 survey varied somewhat by profession, but not by sex: lawyers—77%; business leaders—59%; educators—71%; political activists—73%. High response rates for the second wave are to be expected, since each respondent had already demonstrated a propensity to complete the questionnaire. The rates we calculate take into account 205 undeliverable surveys.

as they pertain to any individual races or levels of office. Second, our approach relies on potential candidates' perceptions of whether they were encouraged to run for office. What feels like recruitment to one potential candidate may not resonate the same way with another. Because we are interested in how recruitment affects potential candidates' decision-making processes, though, perceptions are perhaps as relevant as empirical reality (Githens 2003). Overall, by focusing on a broad sample of potential candidates and all levels of elective office, our approach provides an important complement to investigations of electoral gatekeepers and officeholders' recruitment experiences.

Findings and Analysis

Gender and Political Recruitment in the Candidate Eligibility Pool

In order to assess the degree to which gender affects patterns of political recruitment, we asked respondents whether they ever received the suggestion to run for any political office from a party leader, elected official, or political activist (including nonelected individuals working for interest groups and community organizations). Figure 1 illustrates that women are less likely than men to receive the suggestion to run from each type of electoral gatekeeper. Certainly, not all political offices are alike, and patterns of recruitment might vary across level of office. But at the aggregate level, the gender gap is noteworthy, especially in light of the fact that the women and men in this sample of potential candidates exist in the same tier of professional accomplishment and express comparable levels of political interest.

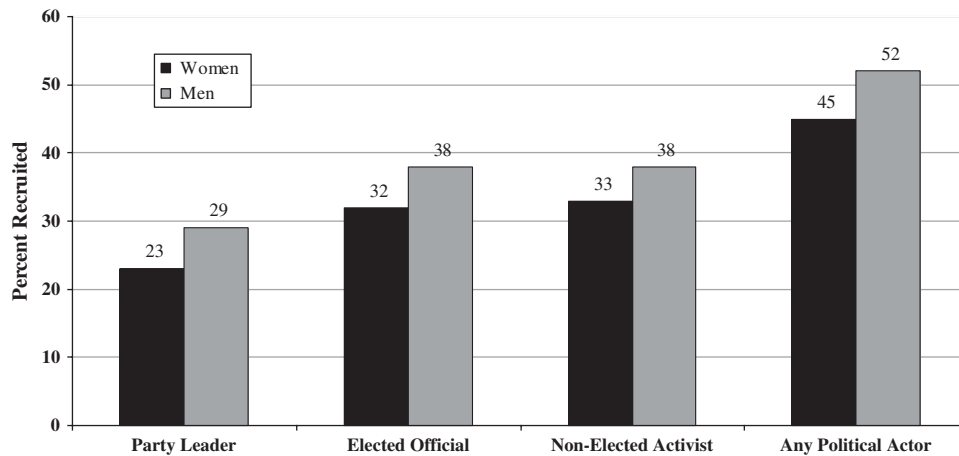
The aggregate data paint a general picture of how women fare relative to their male counterparts in terms of political recruitment. But they obscure two larger gender differences across party identification and profession. Turning first to professional differences, women attorneys and educators are far less likely than men to be tapped to run for office by party leaders, elected officials, and political activists (see top of Table 1). Among business people, the ratio of men to women who have been recruited is comparable, although not statistically significant. The bivariate data suggest, therefore, that professional subcultures may play a role in positioning potential candidates for political recruitment.

When we turn to party affiliation, the bottom half of Table 1 reveals additional gender differences. Among Republicans, men are one-third more likely than women ever to have received the suggestion to run for office from a gatekeeper; among Democrats, the gender gap is still substantively important, but only about half that size.² These party differences are consistent with the party gap among elected officials; 69% of female state legislators and 71% of women in the U.S. Congress are Democrats. The party gap in women's political recruitment, however, does not appear to be the result of more concerted or systematic recruitment activities by Democratic party organizations. Democratic and Republican women are equally unlikely to have received encouragement to run for office from elected officials (32%). And Republican women (25%) are just as likely as Democratic women (23%) to report recruitment from party leaders. The smaller recruitment gap among Democrats, therefore, can be attributed to the party gap in recruitment from political activists. Thirty-six percent of Democratic women, compared to 24% of Republican women, have been recruited to run for office by a political activist in the community (gender difference significant at $p < .05$).

Gender differences in political recruitment across parties may be the result of the work of women's organizations, both nonpartisan and those affiliated with a particular political party or its positions and priorities. These organizations have come to play an increasing role in the electoral process over the last several years. Many cast a wide net, drawing more women into the political process through voter registration drives, organizing volunteer activities on political campaigns, and soliciting contributions for candidates who support "women's issues." Some of these organizations also encourage women to run for office and help them navigate the political process. Because the objective of many of these organizations is to promote progressive women's candidacies, they likely disproportionately propel

²Among Independents, we uncover no gender gap in recruitment from political actors; 40% of women and 39% of men received the suggestion to run for office from a party leader, elected official, or political activist. Independents, however, are less likely to receive support for a candidacy from any of the gatekeepers, regardless of sex. This is not surprising, since Independents are less likely to participate in the party activities and partisan networks through which candidates tend to emerge.

FIGURE 1 Political Recruitment Experiences of Women and Men in the Candidate Eligibility Pool



Notes: Chi-Square tests comparing differences between women and men are significant at $p < .05$ in each category. Sample sizes: for women, $N = 916$; for men, $N = 1102$.

Democratic women into the circles and networks from which candidates tend to emerge.³

Encouragement to run for elective office is perceived more seriously as the number of recruitment contacts increases; many candidates and officeholders recount the multiple suggestions to run for office they received before choosing to enter a race (Moncrief, Squire, and Jewell 2001). Any gender differences in the extent to which potential candidates are recruited systematically by electoral gatekeepers, therefore, are of particular importance. Figure 2 presents data pertaining to two types of recruitment “intensity”: whether the respondent received encouragement to run by all three types of gatekeepers and whether the respondent has been recruited to run at least three times by any one

gatekeeper. On both measures of rigorous recruitment, we uncover substantive and statistically significant gender gaps. These results indicate that not only are women less likely than men to be targeted by gatekeepers and political actors overall, but also that sustained and broad recruitment efforts are less likely to be directed at women.

Despite compelling evidence of the gender gap in political recruitment, the data do not lend support to our expectation that women will be more likely than men to be actively discouraged from running for office. Similar to the manner in which we asked respondents whether anyone ever suggested that they

³These organizations vary in mission and target group, but collectively, they move more women into the networks from which candidates emerge. The White House Project, for example, is a national, nonpartisan organization that, since 1998, has advanced women’s leadership and attempted to fill the candidate pipeline. In 2007, the Women’s Campaign Forum launched its “She Should Run” campaign, a nonpartisan, online effort to build the pipeline of Democratic and Republican pro-choice women and inject them into the networks that can promote eventual candidacies. Emerge America, founded in 2002, trains Democratic women across the country to develop networks of supporters so that they can successfully run for and win elective office. The EMILY’s List Political Opportunity Program, which began in 2001, trains and supports pro-choice Democratic women to run for all levels of office. Many statewide and local women’s organizations have also recently launched aggressive campaigns to bring more women into political circles and positions of power.

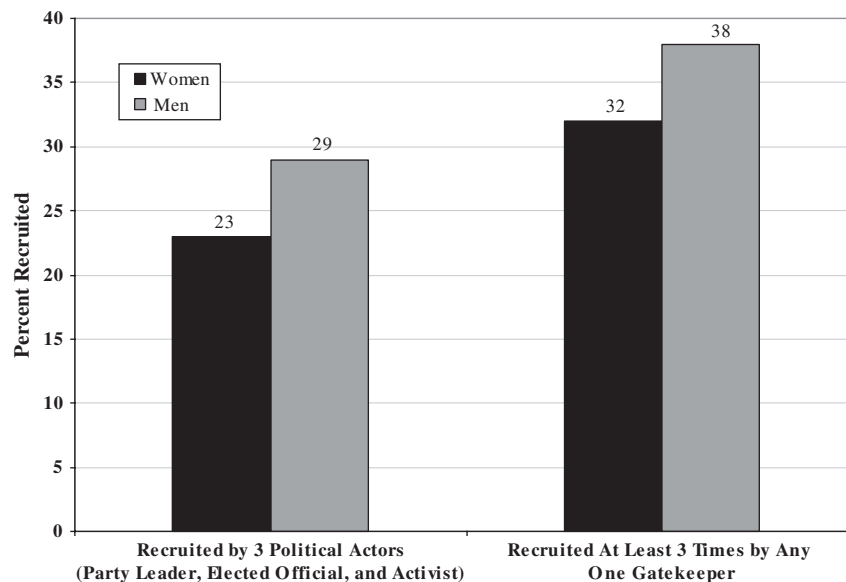
TABLE 1 Gender and Recruitment by Political Gatekeepers, by Profession and Party

Percentage of respondents who have ever received the suggestion to run for office by a party leader, elected official, or political activist

	Women	Men
Professional Background		
Business Leader	29 %	35 %
Lawyer	44**	54
Political Activist	71	76
Educator	30**	38
Political Party Affiliation		
Democrat	48*	54
Republican	40**	53
N	916	1102

Notes: Number of cases varies slightly, as some respondents omitted answers to some questions. Significance levels of chi-square test comparing women and men: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

FIGURE 2 Frequency and Breadth of Political Recruitment Received by Women and Men in the Candidate Eligibility Pool



Notes: Chi-Square tests comparing differences between women and men are significant at $p < .05$ in each category. Sample sizes: for women, $N = 916$; for men, $N = 1102$.

run for office, we asked if anyone ever tried to dissuade them from entering the electoral arena. The data presented in Table 2 indicate that discouragement from running for office is quite rare among potential candidates; roughly one in 20 men and one in 30 women report having been discouraged from running by at least one political actor. Because levels of negative recruitment are so low, we must be careful about making too much out of this finding. The results, however, do speak to women's absence from discussions with gatekeepers. When an individual is recruited to run for office, that act often triggers a series of discussions about a potential campaign. Naturally, some of these discussions will involve attempts to talk the potential candidate out of entering the fray. Indeed, whereas only 1% of women and men who have not been encouraged to run for office report experiencing negative recruitment, 10% of the men and 5% of the women who have been encouraged by a gatekeeper also report having been discouraged from running (gender difference significant at $p < .05$). Regardless of the reasons underlying the gender gap in negative recruitment, it is important to recognize that the data do not reveal widespread discouragement of women's candidacies.⁴

⁴These results withstand controls for party identification, proximity to the political arena, political interest, age, race, income, education, and professional background.

The Gender Gap in Political Recruitment: A Multivariate Analysis

The bivariate gender gap in recruitment provides evidence of a political environment that favors the emergence of male candidates. In order to confirm the *Recruitment Disadvantage Hypothesis*, however, the gap must withstand controls for a series of sociodemographic and political factors that may affect a potential candidate's likelihood of being recruited. More specifically, it is important to control for several demographic factors, including age, income, and education. Given the cost of campaigns, political leaders often seek candidates with personal resources or the credentials and experiences necessary to raise money. Political factors, such as potential candidates' party affiliation and the political culture in the state where they live, can also affect recruitment experiences. Among citizens who choose to run for office, after all, women are more likely to emerge as candidates in states with a "moralistic" culture that established an early pattern of electing women to the state legislature (Nechemias 1987; Palmer and Simon 2006). Finally, potential candidates' proximity to politics may increase their likelihood of being recruited. Individuals who are already active in politics—for example, those who work and volunteer on campaigns, attend political and party meetings,

TABLE 2 Gender and “Negative Recruitment” in the Candidate Eligibility Pool

	Women	Men
Party Leader	2 %	3 %
Elected Official	2	3
Non-Elected Political Activist	1*	3
Any Electoral Gatekeeper / Political Actor	3*	5
N	916	1102

Notes: Number of cases varies slightly, as some respondents omitted answers to some questions. Significance levels of chi-square test comparing women and men: * $p < .05$.

interact professionally and in the community with elected officials, or are involved with women's organizations—not only more regularly come into contact with gatekeepers, but also may be particularly attractive to gatekeepers because proximity to politics can serve as a gauge of political experience.

In order to determine the extent to which the sex of the potential candidates affects political recruitment, we performed two series of logistic regression analyses. The regression equations in Table 3 predict whether a respondent received the suggestion to run for office from a party leader, elected official, political activist, or any of the three gatekeepers. Table 4 presents models of the frequency with which potential candidates have been recruited by any one gatekeeper, as well as whether the recruitment has come from all three gatekeepers. In addition to the respondent's sex, each equation includes controls for the sociodemographic and political factors that might spur recruitment, as well as the potential candidate's proximity to the political arena.

The regression coefficients in Tables 3 and 4 reveal that sex remains statistically significant even after controlling for the variables that facilitate direct contact with political actors who might suggest a candidacy. When we take into account these demographic and political factors, the gender gap in political recruitment is substantially greater than that which we uncovered at the aggregate level; the “average” woman has a 0.60 predicted probability of being recruited to run for office, compared to the 0.76 likelihood of her “average” male counterpart.⁵

⁵Our analysis sets all continuous variables to their means and dummy variables to their modes.

And as we see from the predicted probabilities presented in Table 5, the gender differences are even larger when we turn to breadth and frequency of recruitment (24 and 19 percentage points, respectively).

Comparing the effect of sex relative to other factors highlights its importance. As expected, political recruitment depends significantly on the degree to which an individual participates politically and operates within the political sphere. When we consider, for example, the likelihood of being recruited to run for office by a party leader, we find that serving on the board of a nonprofit organization or foundation increases women and men's likelihood of being recruited by 10 percentage points. Attending political and party meetings each boost the likelihood of recruitment by roughly 13 percentage points. And working for a candidate or volunteering on a campaign increases the probability that a potential candidate will receive the suggestion to run for office by 16 percentage points.⁶ But the substantive effect of sex (17 percentage points) trumps all of the political proximity variables. Thus, even when comparing women and men who are politically active and connected, women are substantially less likely than men to be recruited to run for office from a party leader (see Table 5).⁷

The final gender-related finding to emerge from the analysis demonstrates that women's organizations play an important role mitigating the gender gap in political recruitment. Not only does contact with a women's organization serve as a statistically significant predictor of all six measures of recruitment, but it can also offset the recruitment disadvantage women face. All else equal, a potential candidate who has contact with a women's organization is at least 35 percentage points more likely than a potential candidate with no such contact to be recruited to run for office by an electoral gatekeeper.⁸ The effect, therefore, means that a woman who has contact with one of these organizations is more likely than the average man in the candidate eligibility pool to be recruited.

⁶The substantive and relative effects of the political proximity variables are generally comparable across all six equations. Further, a difference of means test reveals no significant gender gap in overall levels of political proximity. Based on our six measures of political proximity, the mean “proximity score” for women is 3.64, compared to 3.55 for men.

⁷When we interact these proximity variables with the sex of the potential candidate, none of the interaction terms in any of the equations achieves conventional levels of statistical significance.

⁸Although women's organizations tend to focus on progressive candidates, an interaction between contact with a women's organization and the respondent's party affiliation is not significant.

TABLE 3 Gender and Political Recruitment by Electoral Gatekeepers (Logistic Regression Coefficients and Standard Errors)

	Recruited by a Party Leader	Recruited by an Elected Official	Recruited by a Political Activist	Recruited by Any Political Actor
Socio-Demographic Factors				
Sex (Female)	-.768 (.162)**	-.624 (.143)**	-1.007 (.151)**	-.758 (.137)**
Age	.003 (.008)	.003 (.007)	.007 (.007)	.000 (.007)
Income	.092 (.064)	.066 (.059)	-.146 (.060)*	-.007 (.059)
Education	-.139 (.075)	-.139 (.072)	-.237 (.073)**	-.208 (.074)**
Race (White)	-.099 (.184)	-.004 (.174)	-.536 (.175)**	-.349 (.178)
Political Factors				
Democrat	.118 (.261)	.114 (.223)	.357 (.238)	.539 (.225)*
Republican	.592 (.271)*	.578 (.244)*	-.045 (.252)	.539 (.236)*
Percent Women in the State Legislature	-.932 (1.232)	-.960 (1.143)	.819 (1.163)	-1.101 (1.128)
Moralistic Political Culture	.162 (.169)	.126 (.157)	.207 (.159)	.162 (.156)
Proximity to the Political Environment				
Worked or Volunteered for a Candidate or Campaign	1.089 (.187)**	1.138 (.160)**	1.054 (.164)**	1.106 (.146)**
Attended School Board, City Council, or Local Political Meeting	.833 (.232)**	.788 (.196)**	.671 (.197)**	.842 (.176)**
Served on the Board of a Foundation or Non-Profit Organization	.585 (.179)**	.840 (.159)**	.856 (.163)**	.749 (.145)**
Attended Political Party Meeting or Event	.884 (.184)**	.638 (.156)**	.507 (.159)**	.527 (.144)**
Interacted with Elected Officials as Part of Job	.945 (.174)**	1.005 (.151)**	.770 (.152)**	.932 (.139)**
Contact with Women's Organization(s)	1.758 (.192)**	1.575 (.187)**	2.277 (.203)**	2.440 (.238)**
Constant	-4.224 (.808)**	-3.693 (.744)**	-.966 (.739)	-1.718 (.725)*
Pseudo-R ²	.342	.367	.393	.424
Percent Correctly Predicted	78.5	75.8	77.0	75.5
N	1584	1584	1584	1584

Significance levels: **p < .01; *p < .05.

Although men benefit from the support of women's organizations as much as women do, 27% of the women in the sample, compared to 4% of men, report contact with one of these organizations (difference significant at $p < .01$).⁹ Hence, women's

⁹An interaction between the sex of the potential candidate and contact with a women's organization fails to achieve statistical significance in all six models.

groups facilitate women's candidate emergence, so much so that their effect obscures at the aggregate level the magnitude of the gender differences we uncover in a multivariate context.

Despite the important role gender continues to play in the candidate recruitment process, it is important to note one null gender-related finding. It is well known that the amount of time a potential

TABLE 4 Gender and the Frequency and Breadth of Political Recruitment by Electoral Gatekeepers (Logistic Regression Coefficients and Standard Errors)

	Recruited At Least 3 Times by Any One Political Actor	Recruited by a Party Leader, Elected Official, and Political Activist
Socio-Demographic Factors		
Sex (Female)	-.829 (.158)**	-1.344 (.222)**
Age	-.004 (.008)	-.006 (.009)
Income	.075 (.063)	.015 (.077)
Education	-.298 (.074)**	-.199 (.088)*
Race (White)	-.319 (.176)	-.101 (.213)
Political Factors		
Democrat	.394 (.256)	-.191 (.308)
Republican	.148 (.270)	.128 (.321)
Percent Women in the State Legislature	1.419 (1.207)	.016 (1.485)
Moralistic Political Culture	.122 (.164)	.094 (.204)
Proximity to the Political Environment		
Worked or Volunteered for a Candidate or Campaign	1.143 (.183)**	1.276 (.258)**
Attended School Board, City Council, or Local Political Meeting	.540 (.214)**	.987 (.322)**
Served on the Board of a Foundation or Non-Profit Organization	.721 (.178)**	.897 (.244)**
Attended Political Party Meeting or Event	.362 (.172)*	1.226 (.264)**
Interacted with Elected Officials as Part of Job	1.057 (.173)**	1.502 (.260)**
Contact with Women's Organization(s)	1.614 (.188)**	2.330 (.238)**
Constant	-2.799 (.776)**	-4.792 (.890)**
Pseudo-R ²	.319	.392
Percent Correctly Predicted	78.2	85.2
N	1584	1584

Significance levels: **p < .01; *p < .05.

candidate has available to devote to an often long, arduous campaign can affect gatekeepers' political recruitment choices (see Moncrief, Squire, and Jewell 2001). Because women continue to be responsible for the majority of the household tasks and childcare

(Lawless and Fox 2005), it is possible that gatekeepers perceive them as less likely than men to have time to devote to a political career. Indeed, party leaders frequently cite women's family obligations as major reasons that women are more likely than men to

TABLE 5 The Substantive Effect of Sex on Political Recruitment: Women and Men's Predicted Probabilities of Receiving Support for a Candidacy

	Predicted Probability of Being Recruited to Run for Office by . . .					
	Party Leader	Elected Official	Political Activist	Any Electoral Gatekeeper	All 3 Electoral Gatekeepers	Any One Gate- Keeper At Least 3 Times
Women	.27	.42	.56	.60	.13	.29
Men	.44	.58	.77	.76	.37	.48

Note: Predicted probabilities are based on the logistic regression results presented in Tables 3 and 4. These probabilities were calculated by setting all continuous independent variables to their means and dummy variables to their modes. The gender gap for all categories of political recruitment is significant at p < .01.

TABLE 6 Implications of the Gender Gap in Political Recruitment: The Impact of Political Recruitment on Women and Men's Political Ambition (Logistic Regression Coefficients and Standard Errors)

	Considered Running for Office	Actually Ran for Office	Took At Least One Concrete Step that Precedes Running for Office	Expressed Interest in Running for Office in the Future
Sex (Female)	-.864** (.173)	.172 (.479)	-.523 (.242)*	-.508* (.247)
Age	-.024** (.006)	.058** (.010)	-.009 (.007)	-.050** (.008)
Income	-.065 (.054)	-.030 (.087)	-.087 (.058)	-.002 (.066)
Education	.021 (.070)	-.002 (.102)	-.025 (.072)	-.006 (.080)
Race (White)	.053 (.166)	-.305 (.257)	.057 (.176)	-.027 (.195)
Democrat	-.255 (.215)	-.233 (.376)	-.446 (.240)	-.300 (.267)
Republican	-.159 (.225)	.395 (.388)	-.181 (.249)	.108 (.277)
Political Knowledge	.056 (.073)	.129 (.168)	.036 (.088)	-.116 (.094)
Political Interest	.077** (.032)	.215** (.074)	.119** (.046)	.247** (.053)
Political Efficacy	.019 (.058)	.029 (.094)	-.131* (.063)	.035 (.070)
Political Participation	.179** (.036)	.136* (.068)	.171** (.040)	.147** (.045)
Recruited to Run by At Least One Political Actor	1.291** (.164)	.676* (.310)	1.662** (.185)	.446* (.207)
Recruited to Run by At Least One Political Actor * Sex	.308 (.238)	.012 (.520)	.287 (.282)	.616* (.297)
Constant	-.340 (.648)	-7.345** (1.165)	-1.729** (.695)	-.979 (.772)
Pseudo-R ²	.278	.211	.302	.149
Percent Correctly Predicted	70.4	77.6	73.1	81.5
N	1538	767	1538	1505

Notes: Sample size for the "Actually Ran for Office" is restricted to the respondents who had considered a candidacy. Significance levels: **p < .01; *p < .05.

decline opportunities to run for office (Sanbonmatsu 2006). When we include in our regression analyses measures of household and childcare responsibilities, neither measure approaches statistical significance, either on its own or when it is interacted with the sex of the potential candidate. The null findings may result from gatekeepers' unfamiliarity with the potential candidates' family arrangements. It may also be the case that the proximity to politics variables account for free time; indeed, five of the six proximity variables correlate negatively with whether a woman has a child

under the age of six living at home. The extent to which a potential candidate is politically active and involved in the community, in other words, may speak to the freedom with which he/she can pursue a political career, regardless of family circumstances.

In short, the multivariate analysis confirms the *Recruitment Disadvantage Hypothesis*. Politically active women who occupy the same professional spheres as politically active men are significantly less likely than men to report being sought out by electoral gatekeepers. The intensity of the recruitment

they receive also pales in comparison to the levels of encouragement from which their male counterparts benefit. The bivariate professional and party differences we uncovered do not withstand multivariate controls. Across the board, regardless of profession and party, women are less likely than men to be recruited to enter the electoral arena.

The Implications of Gendered Patterns of Candidate Recruitment

Because recruitment reflects political viability and the promise of support, we posit in the *Recruitment Impact Hypothesis* that potential candidates who are recruited to run for office will be more likely than those who are not to exhibit political ambition. Forty-nine percent of the respondents in our sample have considered running for office, and 12% have actually launched a campaign. But significant gender differences exist across these measures of political ambition. Fifty-six percent of men, compared to 41% of women, have considered a candidacy; and 14% of men actually ran for office, whereas only 10% of women have done so (gender differences significant at $p < .05$). Moreover, men are roughly 30% more likely than women to have taken any of the concrete steps that tend to precede a candidacy; 34% of men, compared to 26% of women, investigated how to get on the ballot, or discussed running for office with potential campaign contributors, supporters, community members, or friends (gender differences significant at $p < .05$). Hence, we are well situated to assess the manner in which patterns of recruitment contribute to the gender gap in political ambition.

We present four logistic regression equations in Table 6, each of which taps into an aspect of candidate emergence. The first two columns in the table model the impact of recruitment on whether a respondent ever considered running for office, and whether he/she actually ran. This analysis provides the first test of the impact of recruitment following the emergence of women's organizations as a political force. The third and fourth columns in the table further extend the extant research by introducing two new gauges of political ambition. We model whether a potential candidate took any concrete steps that tend to precede a campaign, and we also predict whether a potential candidate expressed interest in running for office at some point in the future. In addition to the main explanatory variable—whether the respondent ever received the suggestion to run from an electoral gatekeeper—we control for the baseline correlates of political ambition (see Lawless and Fox 2005). And

because studies of candidates and officeholders report no gender differences in political recruitment, it may be that recruitment is especially important for women's candidate emergence. Each equation, therefore, includes an interaction term between the sex of the potential candidate and whether he/she was recruited to run for office.¹⁰

Across equations, the regression coefficients indicate that support from electoral gatekeepers provides a critical boost in a potential candidate's likelihood of exhibiting political ambition. In fact, encouragement from political actors is the single most important predictor of considering a candidacy. Both men and women who received encouragement to run are significantly more likely than those who received no such support to think about running for office. Women who have not been recruited by a gatekeeper have a 0.22 likelihood of considering a run for office. The predicted probability jumps to 0.59 for an otherwise "average" woman who is recruited. Political recruitment increases a man's likelihood of considering a candidacy from 0.41 to 0.71.¹¹ The results are similar for ever having taken a concrete step that precedes a candidacy. In each of these cases, sex remains a significant predictor of political ambition, but recruitment by a gatekeeper partially closes the gender gap.

When we turn to entering an actual political race and expressing interest in a future candidacy, the effects of political recruitment are more powerful. Both women and men who receive the suggestion to run from a gatekeeper have a 0.14 probability of entering a race (this is nearly double the predicted probability that a potential candidate will enter a race without being recruited); sex is not statistically significant. A similar finding emerges when predicting interest in a future run. Although sex remains

¹⁰When we substitute measures of recruitment intensity for the overall measure of ever having been recruited to run for office by a gatekeeper, the same variables achieve statistical significance and the magnitude of recruitment's impact is greater for both women and men. The interaction term behaves consistently, regardless of the measure of political recruitment we include.

¹¹Although our data cannot speak to recruitment efforts targeted to any one particular office, they do suggest that recruitment tends to be most important for state legislative and congressional candidacies. Among respondents who have been recruited to run for office, 45% report having considered running for the state legislature, compared to 22% of respondents who report no recruitment. A gap of a similar magnitude exists when we focus on interest in running for the U.S. House of Representatives; 23% of respondents who have been recruited to run for office have considered running for Congress, compared to 11% of respondents who have not been recruited (differences significant at $p < .05$). The pattern is the same (and statistically significant) for mayor, city council, governor, other statewide offices, and U.S. Senate.

significant, the statistically significant interaction term offsets the gender gap. More specifically, among potential candidates who have not been recruited to run for office, women are half as likely as men to be open to the idea of a candidacy at some point in the future (0.08 predicted probability for women, compared to 0.12 probability for men). That gender gap disappears entirely when potential candidates receive support from gatekeepers; women who are recruited have a 0.20 likelihood of expressing ambition for a future candidacy, compared to men's 0.18 predicted probability.

The fact that men report more contact with electoral gatekeepers is critical because of recruitment's impact on candidate emergence. Consistent with the *Recruitment Impact Hypothesis*, potential candidates who receive the suggestion to run for office are significantly more likely to express political ambition, regardless of how we measure it. Somewhat unexpectedly, for three of the four measures of political ambition, the interaction term fails to achieve statistical significance. Recruitment, in other words, does not exert a differential impact on women and men; for the most part, women's political ambition is propelled to the same extent as that of their male counterparts when they receive the suggestion to run for office. In the current political environment, however, far fewer women than men, across parties, are encouraged to seek any elective office.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the first detailed and thorough survey of a national sample of potential candidates' recruitment experiences, we provide strong evidence that women are significantly less likely than men to be recruited to run for office by political actors. The gender gap in recruitment emerges regardless of whether the gatekeeper is a party leader, elected official, or political activist. Moreover, in terms of breadth and frequency of recruitment, women in the candidate eligibility pool are disadvantaged. The recruitment patterns reported by the potential candidates we surveyed reflect entrenched stereotypical conceptions of candidates and corroborate studies that find that gatekeepers more actively seek men than women to run for office (Niven 1998; Sanbonmatsu 2006). Considering the heavy weight potential candidates place on recruitment and the degree to which support for a candidacy bolsters levels of political ambition, both major political parties will

continue to field an overwhelming majority of male candidates unless they make conscious efforts to recruit more women.

Our results indicate that women of both major political parties are less likely than men to be recruited, but prospects for gender parity in electoral institutions are particularly bleak for Republicans. All else equal, the gender gaps in political recruitment and political ambition persist across political parties. But all else is not equal. Far fewer Republican than Democratic women comprise the candidate eligibility pool. In addition, and of paramount importance, our analysis reveals the extent to which women's organizations—which appear to focus on increasing the number of progressive women's candidacies—mitigate the severity of the gender gap in political recruitment. Their effect is particularly powerful in light of the fact that more than one-quarter of the women in our sample report having been in contact with them. Hence, if current recruitment patterns persist, then the party gap in women's representation will continue to grow at all levels of office.

Although the results paint a picture of gender bias in the political recruitment process, they also highlight two areas in which women are not disadvantaged. Foremost, women do not appear to require more frequent or more elaborate recruitment efforts than men to convince them that running for office is worth considering. Potential candidates of both sexes express greater levels of political ambition when they perceive that they have been encouraged to run. Second, women are less likely than men to be dissuaded from running for office by electoral gatekeepers. This finding may speak to the fact that women are less likely than men to engage in conversations with a broad array of recruiters, but it also indicates that widespread negative recruitment does not serve as a particular impediment for women.

Because gender interacts with the recruitment process so fundamentally, gender differences in support for a candidacy critically impede women's full inclusion as candidates in the electoral process. Overcoming structural barriers to women's numeric representation in the U.S. government, such as incumbency and gender differences in the pipeline professions, requires that well-qualified and well-positioned candidates be sought out to run for elective office, regardless of their sex. Closing the gender gap in political ambition—another factor contributing to the dearth of women in elective office—also depends on closing the gender gap in political recruitment. As long as local, state, and national political networks and institutions continue

to operate with a gendered lens, progress pertaining to women's emergence in the political arena at all levels of government will continue to trail the gains they have made in the economic, social, and legal domains.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Barbara Burrell, Kathy Dolan, Brian Frederick, and Kira Sanbonmatsu for comments on earlier drafts.

Appendix A: The Candidate Eligibility Pool

Despite the theoretical importance of studying political recruitment and ambition, a number of methodological and sample design issues make conducting an empirical investigation quite difficult. Not only are the overwhelming majority of individuals never recruited to run for office, but most men and women in the subset of people who are recruited ultimately opt not to enter the electoral arena. Thus, the complexity of assembling a national sample of potential candidates, alone, explains why most research on political recruitment and candidate emergence focuses on declared candidates and officeholders.

In an attempt to overcome these difficulties, we developed the "eligibility pool approach," which we carried out in the Citizen Political Ambition Panel Study. In 2001, we drew a national sample of 6,800 individuals from the professions and backgrounds that tend to yield the highest proportion of political candidates for congressional and state legislative positions: law, business, education, and political/community activism. In 2008, we completed the second wave of the panel study.

Table A1 presents a demographic breakdown of the respondents who participated in each wave of the study. Column 1 summarizes the profile of potential candidates who completed the survey in 2001. The second and third columns in the table present demographics at two points in time of the subset of respondents who completed the 2008 survey.

In terms of sex, race, level of education, household income, and age, the respondents who completed the second survey are a representative subset of the original respondents. They were slightly more liberal and Democratic in 2001 than was the overall sample, but these differences are minor. The data presented in column 3, however, highlight that the

TABLE A1 Sample Demographics: A Comparison of Wave 1 and Wave 2 Respondents

	Wave 1 Respondents (in 2001)	Wave 2 Respondents (in 2001)	Wave 2 Respondents (in 2008)
Sex			
Men	53 %	54 %	54 %
Women	47	46	46
Party Affiliation			
Democrat	46	49	60
Republican	30	28	32
Independent	21	21	8
Political Ideology			
Liberal	28*	32	36
Moderate	52*	50	44
Conservative	20	18	20
Race			
White	83	84	84
Black	10	9	9
Latino / Hispanic	5	5	5
Other	3	2	2
Highest Level of Education			
No College Degree	7	6	6
Bachelor's Degree	21	17	17
Graduate Degree	72	78	78
Household Income			
Less than \$50,000	9	10	4
\$50,001– \$75,000	12	12	8
\$75,001– \$100,000	18	17	13
\$100,001– \$200,000	34	34	34
More than \$200,000	27	29	40
Mean Age (Years)	48	48	54
Sample Size	3568	2036	2036

Note: In 2001, we used a 3-point scale to measure party identification; in 2008, we used a 7-point scale. Included in our 2008 partisan categories are "Independent Leaners," who comprise 17% of "Democrats" and 11% of "Republicans."

profile of the eligibility pool has changed, at least somewhat, over the course of the last seven years. Household incomes, overall, have increased. In addition, a significant portion of respondents have increased their identification with the Democratic party. Included in our partisan categories in 2008, however, are "Independent Leaners," who comprise 17% of "Democrats" and 11% of "Republicans." Considering

APPENDIX B: Variable Description

Variable	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coding
Dependent Variables				
Recruited by a Party Leader	0, 1	.26	.44	Indicates whether respondent was recruited to run for office by a party leader (1) or not (0).
Recruited by an Elected Official	0, 1	.35	.48	Indicates whether respondent was recruited to run for office by an elected official (1) or not (0).
Recruited by a Political Activist	0, 1	.36	.48	Indicates whether respondent was recruited to run for office by a political activist (1) or not (0).
Recruited by Any Political Actor	0, 1	.49	.50	Indicates whether respondent was recruited to run for office by any political actor (1) or not (0).
Recruited At Least 3 Times by Any One Political Actor	0, 1	.26	.44	Indicates whether respondent was recruited to run for office at least 3 times by any one gatekeeper (1) or not (0).
Recruited by All 3 Political Actors	0, 1	.17	.37	Indicates whether respondent was recruited to run for office by a party leader, elected official, and political activist (1) or not (0).
Considered Running for Office	0, 1	.49	.50	Indicates whether respondent considered running for local, state, or federal office (1) or not (0).
Actually Ran for Office	0, 1	.12	.32	Indicates whether respondent ever sought local, state, or federal level office (1) or not (0).
Took At Least One Concrete Step that Precedes Running for Office	0, 1	.30	.46	Indicates whether respondent ever took a step that typically precedes running for office (1) or not (0). Steps include investigating how to get on the ballot, discussing running for office with potential contributors, supporters, and community members.
Expressed Interest in Running for Office in the Future	0, 1	.18	.39	Indicates whether the respondent is “definitely” interested or willing to run for office in the future if the “opportunity presents itself” (1) or not (0).
Independent Variables: Socio-Demographic Factors Predicting Political Recruitment				
Sex (Female)	0, 1	.46	.50	Indicates whether respondent is a woman (1) or a man (0).
Age	27–90	54.24	10.21	Indicates respondent’s age.
Income	1–6	5.00	1.11	Indicates respondent’s annual household income. Ranges from under \$25,000 (1) to more than \$200,000 (6).
Education	1–6	5.60	.91	Indicates respondent’s highest level of completed education. Ranges from less than high school (1) to graduate degree (6).
Race (White)	0, 1	.84	.37	Indicates whether respondent is White (1) or not (0).
Independent Variables: Political Factors Predicting Political Recruitment				
Democrat	0, 1	.59	.49	Indicates whether respondent self-identifies as a Democrat (1) or not (0).
Republican	0, 1	.32	.47	Indicates whether respondent self-identifies as a Republican (1) or not (0).
Percent Women in the State Legislature	.09–.38	.24	.06	Indicates percentage of women in the state legislature where the respondent lives.
Moralistic Political Culture	0, 1	.30	.46	Indicates whether respondent lives in a state with a “moralistic” political culture (1) or not (0).

APPENDIX B: (Continued)

Variable	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coding
Independent Variables: Proximity to the Political Environment Predicting Political Recruitment				
Worked for a Candidate or Campaign	0, 1	.65	.48	Indicates whether respondent worked or volunteered for a candidate or campaign (1) or not (0).
Attended Political Meeting	0, 1	.79	.41	Indicates whether respondent attended a school board, city council, or local political meeting (1) or not (0).
Served on the Board of Non-Profit or Foundation	0, 1	.71	.46	Indicates whether respondent served on the board of any organization or foundation (1) or not (0).
Attended Party Meeting or Event	0, 1	.64	.48	Indicates whether respondent attended any party meeting or event (1) or not (0).
Interacted with Elected Officials as Part of Job	0, 1	.66	.47	Indicates whether respondent interacts with elected officials as part of his/her job (1) or not (0).
Contact with Women's Organization(s)	0, 1	.15	.35	Indicates whether respondent has had contact with a women's organization (1) or not (0).
Independent Variables: Factors Predicting Political Ambition (not previously listed)				
Political Knowledge	0–3	2.52	.91	Indicates how many of respondent's members of Congress (House and Senate) he/she can name.
Political Interest	2–8	5.77	1.62	Indicates how closely respondent follows local and national news. Ranges from not closely (2) to very closely (8).
Political Efficacy	1–5	3.03	1.03	Indicates whether respondent agrees that government officials pay attention to people like him/her. Ranges from strongly disagrees (1) to strongly agrees (5).
Political Participation	0–9	5.71	2.21	Indicates level of respondent's political participation (over the course of the last year) based on 9 activities. Lower numbers indicate lower levels of political engagement.

that political ideology has remained fairly constant, it is likely that the shift in party identification also reflects disillusionment with the Republican party's face and name, as opposed to its ideological underpinnings, perhaps spurring a disproportionate share of Independents to align with Democrats.

No remarkable sociodemographic or professional differences distinguish the men from the women, thereby making the sample very appropriate for an examination of the gender dynamics in the candidate recruitment process. The subsamples are comparable in terms of race, educational background, household income, and geographic variation. It is important to note two statistically significant gender differences, though. Women are more likely to be Democrats, while men are more likely to be Republicans. Further,

women in the sample are, on average, three years younger than men, a probable result of women's relatively recent entry into the fields of law and business. Our empirical analyses are sensitive to these differences and always control for them.

Manuscript submitted 22 October 2008

Manuscript accepted for publication 2 June 2009

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