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# Ain't We Women? Assessing the Place of Women of Color in Campaign Training Programs

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# Ain't We Women? Assessing the Place of Women of Color in Campaign Training Programs

## **Abstract**

While descriptive representatives enhance democratic legitimacy and deliver substantive results to their constituents, women remain underrepresented in American politics. Recent literature regarding electoral politics has concluded that this is because women do not run for office. Scholars identify many reasons for this candidacy gap including the lack of an institutional support structure and barriers on the campaign trail. In this thesis, I argue that women of color face additional barriers not addressed by traditional literature. I use in-depth interviews with the founder of a campaign training program, and a review of their recruitment and training materials, to examine how the efforts of such organizations are influenced by the candidacies of women of color. I find that any attempts to increase the number of women in office must account for the unique, and intersectional, experiences of women of color. This research will guide other political organizations as they look to recruit and train a diverse group of candidates for office.

## **Keywords**

elections, gender, race, recruitment, Political Science, Social Sciences, Dawn Teele, Teele, Dawn

## **Disciplines**

American Politics

Ain't We Women? Assessing the Place of Women of Color in Campaign Training  
Programs

By

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This thesis is submitted in fulfillment of

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College of Arts and Sciences  
University of Pennsylvania

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## *Abstract*

While descriptive representatives enhance democratic legitimacy and deliver substantive results to their constituents, women remain underrepresented in American politics. Recent literature regarding electoral politics has concluded that this is because women do not run for office. Scholars identify many reasons for this candidacy gap including the lack of an institutional support structure and barriers on the campaign trail. In this thesis, I argue that women of color face additional barriers not addressed by traditional literature. I use in-depth interviews with the founder of a campaign training program, and a review of their recruitment and training materials, to examine how the efforts of such organizations are influenced by the candidacies of women of color. I find that any attempts to increase the number of women in office must account for the unique, and intersectional, experiences of women of color. This research will guide other political organizations as they look to recruit and train a diverse group of candidates for office.

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## *Introduction*

When the African American civil rights advocate Sojourner Truth delivered her impassioned “Ain’t I A Woman” speech at the Women’s Rights Convention in 1851, she gave voice to the lived experiences of non-white women in the United States — an experience of marginalization and invisibility at the hands of supposed allies (Branch 2011). As Wendy Smooth recognized, “In her impassioned rhetoric, Truth sought recognition from both white female suffragists and black male suffragists, who willfully neglected the fate of African-American women in early suffrage debates” (Smooth 2006, 403).

Although Truth exposed the inherent hypocrisy in the arguments made by white women and black men, legal and social reform was slow to react. The Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution extended suffrage to black men, at least by name, and the Nineteenth Amendment extended it to white women (Branch 2011). Due to the “interlocking nature of oppression” of race and gender, however, the same voting rights were not granted to women of color until much later (Smooth 2006, 404). As Cathy Cohen notes, “Whether because of oppressive voter registration and immigration laws, racial discrimination through Jim Crow in the south, or the denial of the vote through strict language requirements, women of color have only recently acquired consistent access to the ballot” (Cohen 2003, 195). For example, not until 1965 were African-American women explicitly granted the vote, “a modicum of citizenship in the United States” (Smooth 2006, 401).

While women of color now have equal access to the ballot box, legacies of racial and gender inequality contribute to wider disparities in the political arena. This paper seeks to identify those barriers and highlight the strategies of women of color who seek to enter public office. To do so, I first unpack various theories of political representation and analyze the gender gap in political

ambition and other contributing factors to women's underrepresentation. I then concentrate on the intersectional experiences of women of color and place them in the context of their role as descriptive representatives. Finally, I scrutinize campaign training programs as the ultimate recruitment tool and take a closer look at one such organization.

By conducting a case study on a women-oriented campaign training program, including in-depth interviews with the organization's founder and a review of its recruitment materials, this study will determine the impact of devoting unique resources to training and electing women of color. While there is a diversity of lived experiences among women of different ethnic and racial groups, and women of the same ethnic group, this paper focuses on the commonalities that these individuals face as women of color (Sanbonmatsu 2015).

### ***Political Representation***

Under the United States' framework as a representative democracy, political elections allow voters to send select individuals, whom they believe will best represent their interests and advocate on their behalf, to local, state, and federal offices. In their role as representatives, those individuals' first responsibility is to act "on the basis of what they themselves have concluded is the right policy for their constituents and their nation" (Mansbridge 1999, 644). Representatives fulfill this mandate by crafting and voting on legislation that is in line with the needs of the people they serve. While it is widely understood that, "representation is the primary responsibility of any member of Congress," there is no singular way to accomplish that goal (Dittmar et al. 2018, 25).

One form of representation, descriptive representation, is at the root of any discussion about the placement of underrepresented groups in positions of power. Descriptive



representation, “the extent to which a representative resembles or ‘stands’ for those he or she represents,” is the idea that representatives who share similar descriptive characteristics or experiences as voters will best be able to promote those interests in office (Dittmar et al. 2018, 25). Using the example of the citizenship and residency requirements for the United States presidency, Jane Mansbridge argues that the American political system has long believed that, “Being ‘one of us’ is assumed to promote loyalty to ‘our interests’” (Mansbridge 1999, 629).

Yet not all scholars agree that descriptive representation inevitably leads to substantive policy results. Substantive representation, the idea that representatives do not need to resemble the represented in order to “act for” them, argues that representatives can respond to the concerns of constituents without having lived them (Dittmar et al. 2018, 25). Iris Marion Young argues that, “Having such a relation of identity or similarity with constituents says nothing about what the representative does” (Young 1997, 254). Similarly, Carol Swain concludes that, “more black faces in political office will not necessarily lead to more representation of the tangible interests of blacks” (Swain 1993, 5).

Young and Swain raise an important point. The value of descriptive representatives is diminished if non-descriptive representatives are better able to represent the substantive interests of minority groups. As previously stated, “The primary function of representative democracy is to represent the substantive interests of the represented through both deliberation and aggregation” (Mansbridge 1999, 630). Nonetheless, while it is true that the actions of descriptive representatives are more important than their simple presence, descriptive representatives do have a conclusive substantive impact, as will be expanded upon later in this paper.

Some critics of descriptive representation also worry that any effort to promote the election of specific groups will lead to public servants who are unqualified to hold office.

However, Mansbridge argues that the competition provided by elections mitigate that risk, especially as more descriptive representatives enter the field (Mansbridge 1999). Moreover, “The institutional tools that have recently been used to promote relevant descriptive representation (e.g., redrawing district lines in the United States or changing the composition of party lists in Europe) do not seem to have resulted in representatives with noticeably lesser skills or commitment to the public good” (Mansbridge 1999, 633).

Other forms of representation describe how public officials use their position to represent individuals outside of their voter base. Known as dyadic representation, representatives’ first loyalty is to the people in their districts or states with the power to elect them to office: their constituents (Dittmar et al. 2018). It seems as though voters perceive that loyalty. Using evidence that Americans approve more highly of their individual member of Congress than they do Congress as body, Kelly Dittmar, Kira Sanbonmatsu, and Susan Carroll conclude, “This discrepancy between the level of approval for individual members and that for Congress as a whole suggests that most members are indeed attentive to the overall needs and interests of the districts or states they represent” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 27).

Nonetheless, many officials feel the responsibility to address the concerns of individuals beyond a particular geographic border, known as collective representation (Dittmar et al. 2018). Dittmar, Sanbonmatsu, and Carroll continue, “But members also have life experiences, personal preferences, and political preferences that may affect the policies to which they devote their attention. And sometimes these interests take them well beyond the borders of their district or state” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 27).

In 1993, Carol Moseley-Braun, the only African American members of the U.S. Senate at the time, was instrumental in blocking the effort of the United Daughters of the Confederacy to

renew their design patent that featured the confederate flag (Mansbridge 1999). Mansbridge explains why she believes the legislation would have passed without Moseley-Braun's intervention, "As an African-American, Moseley-Braun was undoubtedly more likely than even the most progressive White representative to notice and feel it important to condemn the use of the Confederate flag on the design patent of the United Daughters of the Confederacy" (Mansbridge 1999, 646).

Mansbridge argues that the Senator was so affected because she had a "particular sensibility, created by experience, that led her to notice the Confederate flag and be offended by it" (Mansbridge 1999, 647). To be clear, this particular piece of legislation should not have been an obvious priority to Moseley-Braun, due the lack of demonstrated impact on her constituents. "The flag issue had not previously appeared on the active political agenda of either the nation or the state of Illinois, Moseley-Braun's constituency" (Mansbridge 1999, 647). However, her identity as an African-American woman pushed her to make a policy decision on behalf of African-Americans across the country who would have been affected by the legislation's passage. In doing so, she acted as a collective representative.

A similar form of representation, surrogate representation, draws on the collective idea of extended borders to be responsive to those with "shared ideological perspective or group identity" wherever they may live (Dittmar et al. 2018, 41). Surrogate representatives are "responsive to groups based on personal experiences/identities that live beyond their districts/states" (Dittmar et al. 2018, 41). In this way, surrogate representation can aid in the communication between underrepresented groups and the majority in the legislature, even if their designated representative is not descriptive. Mansbridge writes, "It is in this surrogate process that descriptive representation often plays its most useful role, allowing representatives who are

themselves members of a subordinate group to circumvent the strong barriers to communication between dominant and subordinate groups” (Mansbridge 1999, 642).

The identity does not have to be descriptive, but Mansbridge argues that the “sense of surrogate responsibility becomes even stronger when the surrogate representative shares experiences with surrogate constituents in a way that the majority of the legislature does not” or “when the legislature includes few, or disproportionately few, representatives of the group in question” (Mansbridge 2003, 523).

In an effort to understand how women attempt “to have a meaningful impact on public policy and provide effective representation in an institutional and political environment characterized by gridlock and party polarization,” Dittmar, Sanbonmatsu, and Carroll interviewed more than three-fourths of the female legislators serving in the 144<sup>th</sup> Congress (Dittmar et al. 2018, 1). Representative Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) explained why she felt the need to act as a surrogate representative for Latino communities, “There are so few Latinos...still in the Congress... [relative to the number of] Latinos across the nation. If they don’t have someone in their area,...they can reach out to us and...ask us to work on issues for them” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 42). Similarly, Representatives Robin Kelly (D-IL), Marcia Fudge (D-OH), Joyce Beatty (D-OH), and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) highlighted their commitment to women and minorities in addition to the people in the districts they represent (Dittmar et al. 2018). The district administrator to former Representative Mickey Leland (D-TX) told Carol Swain, “What people don’t understand is that Mickey Leland must be the [Black] Congressman for the entire Southwest” (Swain 1993, 218). Women of color, then, can act as descriptive representatives for their constituents and surrogate representatives for minority communities across the country.

Notably, not all female representatives interviewed felt that they have a “particular responsibility to represent women” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 43). Representative Vicky Hartzler (R-MO) is “more concerned about advancing issues of my district, my priorities and things” and said that “philosophically, I don’t think there are women’s issues” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 43-44). Similarly, Representative Louise Slaughter (D-NY) said, “I feel a responsibility to all of my constituents—man, woman, child, all of them. There are some issues that women live that only we know, and those are certainly part of an agenda as a woman that I know about. But no, I don’t compartmentalize myself” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 44).

Nevertheless, most of the women “expressed a commitment to represent women in their legislative work and/or the importance of having their lived experiences as women represented in legislative deliberations and decision-making” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 44). The women also mentioned the importance of taking advantage of their position to advance women’s interests. For example, Representative Jackie Speier (D-CA) noted,

When I got elected to the state legislature, my campaign consultant said to me at the time, you have to broaden your area of interest beyond women. And I thought about it,...but in the end I realized if I didn’t take on the issues that were important to women, who was going to? So it [women’s issues] have been a strong component of my legislative agenda, really since the very beginning (Dittmar et al. 2018, 45).

### ***The Path to Elected Office***

Women make up 50.8% of the U.S. population, but as of 2018, female elected officials represented only 23% of the U.S. Senate, 19.3% of the U.S House, 12% of Governorships, and 25.5% of all State Legislature seats.<sup>1</sup> Previous scholarly work has attempted to address the reasons behind this underrepresentation. More recent literature finds that traditional ideas of gender bias at the ballot box can no longer fully explain women’s political underrepresentation

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts n.d.; Current Numbers 2015)

(Fox and Lawless 2010). While present, “[l]evels of bias are low enough to no longer provide significant impediments to women’s chances of election” (Dolan 2004, 50). In fact, women perform as well as men on Election Day. However, it is the decision to become a candidate, and their experience on the campaign trail, that explain the unequal political representation of women.

In an examination of gender discrepancies in political office, Mirya Holman and Monica Schneider looked at how demand and supply factors contribute to the political representation of women. With regard to a demand for potential candidates, Holman and Schneider found that party elites still play a major role in controlling access to political office and are less likely to recruit women, thus maintaining their “old boys network” (Holman and Schneider 2018, 266). While party leaders no longer serve as absolute gatekeepers to political office, they “encourage some individuals to run for office and discourage others” (Herrnson 2008, 37). Those discouraged often do not fit the traditional mold of an electable candidate, i.e. white and male. This is crucial as women respond just as well to the suggestion of candidacy; they are just less likely to receive it (Lawless, Fox, and Baitinger 2014).

It is clear that support from electoral gatekeepers (whom Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox defined as party leaders, elected officials, non-elected activist, or other political actor) is important for aspiring candidates (Fox and Lawless 2010). Lawless and Fox found that “encouragement from political actors is the single most important predictor of considering a candidacy” (Fox and Lawless 2010, 321). While women are not *discouraged* from running, they are not encouraged to the same degree as their male counterparts. Even when comparing women and men with equal professional accomplishments and political interest, “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” (Fox and Lawless 2010, 315).

Career choices come into play when elites look to specific occupations for candidates such as doctors, lawyers, and business professionals and ignore other potential avenues such as non-profit work, education, or homemakers (Herrnson 2008). Lawless and Fox found that this professional pipeline leads to higher rates of men into politics than women. Often, professions that traditionally precede a career in politics have their own gender and racial inequities. They write that the underrepresentation of women will “naturally lesson as women’s career paths become more like those of men” (Lawless, Fox, and Baitinger 2014, 30).

Identifying, and solving, issues of supplying candidates is important because women are underrepresented in politics because they do not run (Lawless, Fox, and Baitinger 2014). Mark Rozell found that since 1972, “women have constituted only 7% of all candidates for Congress and 6% of gubernatorial candidates” (Rozell 2000, 102). Differences in self-esteem and political ambition between genders underlie this candidacy gap. Holman and Schneider found that women are more likely to discount their qualifications when thinking of running for office and that women overall are less likely to report having an interest in politics (Holman and Schneider 2018). This lack of interest begins in the home as parents are less likely to talk about politics with their daughters than their sons (Holman and Schneider 2018).

In their quest to explore the persistent gender gap in political ambition, Lawless, Fox, and Gail Baitinger surveyed 1,925 men and 1,843 women roughly equal in terms of race, region, education, household income, profession, political participation, and interest in politics and compiled their results in the Citizen Political Ambition Study (Lawless, Fox, and Baitinger 2014). In this 2011 study, 23% of men and 14% of women reported having “ever considered

running” for office (Lawless, Fox, and Baitinger 2014). A primary reason for this gap was the respondents’ view of their qualifications.

Men were 60% more likely than women to view themselves as “super qualified” and women were more than twice as likely to view themselves as not at all qualified, even though the two groups had almost equal experience within fields such as public speaking, attending political meetings, fundraising, interacting with elected officials, and conducting public policy research (Lawless, Fox, and Baitinger 2014). Even among those who did not think themselves as qualified, men were sixteen percentage points more likely to have considered running than women (Lawless, Fox, and Baitinger 2014). Relatedly, men were more likely to engage in campaign steps, including determining how to raise money, speaking with other candidates, investigating how to get on the ballot, and discussing running with friends and family (Lawless, Fox, and Baitinger 2014).

Women’s misconceptions about the likelihood of their election often dissuade them from considering a run. Women were 50% more likely to think that their chances of winning were “very unlikely” and 31% of women had unequivocally ruled out running compared to 23% of men (Lawless, Fox, and Baitinger 2014). A poll conducted by the National Women’s Political Caucus found similar results, “The pollsters found that women are less likely (by half) to consider running for political office. Citizens believe that women have a harder time than men winning office. Women, more than men, are concerned about their own qualifications. And women, more than men, tend to lack confidence without substantial levels of candidate training” (Thomas 2003, 101). Sanbonmatusu also identified common barriers to entry such as family responsibilities, difficulty fundraising, difficulty being taken seriously, and exclusion from political networks (Sanbonmatsu 2015). In sum, women do not think they are qualified to run, do



not discuss the possibility of running with their social network, and do not think that they would win if they did run.

Women's past absence from elected positions contributes to their current underrepresentation due to the advantages enjoyed by current office holders. Incumbents have a demonstrable advantage over challengers when running for re-election for political office. While in office, incumbents develop "bonds of trust that have electoral implications" (Herrnson 2008, 39). It becomes difficult for challengers to ask voters to divert this trust to an unknown individual. Additionally, while on the campaign trail, incumbents can advertise their record of service to demonstrate their effectiveness in office. This could include a voting record on legislation relevant to their constituents, a history of increasing jobs and services, and/or support of a particular industry. The advantage that past office holders have over challengers affects not only women, but also "limits the pact at which members of any previously excluded group can move in elective office" (Fox and Lawless 2010, 310).

After women decide to run, they must face the difficult path to election on the campaign trail. While problems of gender and racial bias certainly followed the women into office, some women noted that obstacles to entry were even more significant. Representative Brenda Lawrence (D-MI) noted that, "Being here in Congress is not as hard as it was to get here" (Dittmar et al. 2018, 60). Carroll found that women "encounter more dislike and rejection than men do for showing dominance, expressing disagreement, or being highly assertive or self-promoting", traits that are necessary on the campaign trail (Carroll 2009, 5). Additionally, female candidates must be able to demonstrate their qualifications while remaining "feminine" and conveying an ability to handle certain issues, such as national security, to a potentially skeptical audience (Carroll 2009).

Some of the challenges on the campaign trail that the congresswomen highlighted included the lack of ready campaign infrastructure and the standards by which candidates are evaluated (Dittmar et al. 2018). Representative Kathleen Rice (D-NY) reflected, “We [women] know the struggle of actually trying to put together a winning campaign—to put together a financial infrastructure and a political infrastructure that is not already premade for us like it is for men” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 60). A campaign infrastructure can include staffers, voter databases, and donor lists.

Fundraising, one of the most important aspects of any successful campaign, was especially viewed as a challenge, in line with past literature on the topic. Studies show that female candidates raise as much money as men, but receive more individual contributions, meaning that they must spend more time fundraising in order to match men’s totals (Dittmar et al. 2018). Again highlighting exclusion from traditional networks, Representative Lois Capps (D-CA) noted, “It is so much harder for women to raise money than men. We don’t have the same natural circles” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 61). Money is so important in a successful campaign that Barbara Burrell argues, “How well candidates perform on Election Day is a direct function of how much money they raise and spend” (Burrell 2003, 73).

Gender can also impact a candidate’s decision to contribute money to his or her own campaign. Joan McLean finds that male candidates are willing to invest more of their own money in their campaigns (McLean 2003). She speculates this is true because women may have less disposable income or contribute less to family’s income so might not have the means to heavily invest in their own campaign (McLean 2003). Similar to recruitment efforts, women’s organization have begun filling in the gaps in fundraising. “The belief that lack of early money is a major obstacle to increasing women’s numerical representation in Congress served as a catalyst

for the founding of EMILY's List for Democratic female candidates and more recently the WISH List on the Republican side" (McLean 2003, 81).

The female representatives also noted that their personal lives were scrutinized to a greater degree than their male counterparts, including their family members, marital status, and personal histories. Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) commented that this level of scrutiny might dissuade women from running as they ask themselves, "Why would I put my family through that?" (Dittmar et al. 2018, 63). Her colleague, Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) added, "I think women are more reluctant to have their lives examined up and down, and in and out... Women are more inclined to say, 'Who needs it?!'" In fact, "even the mere prospect of an invasive campaign has been shown to deter women from considering a run for political office" (Dittmar et al. 2018, 63).

The 2013 findings of Pearson and McGhee that women come to office with more qualifications than men can be partly explained by theories that "voters seek greater competence-related information for women candidates than they do for men" (Dittmar et al. 2018, 63). In line with previous work describing the additional expectations placed on women of color, Jessica "Carew (2012) finds some evidence that Black women candidates are evaluated more harshly than their opponents with respect to their policy competency outside of issues most explicitly characterized as race or gender issues" (Dittmar et al. 2018, 63).

After a successful campaign, some of the women viewed the obstacles faced on the campaign trail as evidence that they were prepared to execute the duties required of the job. Representative Jackie Walorski (R-IN) said, "If you can come through that and you have proven yourself to people that believe in you, [if you have proven] that you are the best person to fight for them, I think that's the key" (Dittmar et al. 2018, 64). Representative Niki Tsongas (D-MA)

“similarly claimed that women have ‘earned the right’ to be in Congress after going through ‘the fire of a campaign’” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 64). Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) remarked, “There’s not a question of whether or not somebody is qualified to be here” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 64).

### ***Women of Color: Doubly Bound***

Notably, women of color interested in elected office face unique barriers not often addressed by traditional literature. These barriers specific to women of color include the “failure of men of color to share power with minority women,” insufficient number of role models, segregated communities, hesitant party leaders, and additional fundraising difficulties (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 127). For example, Sanbonmatsu noted the different income and wealth levels of white and minority communities. “The disadvantages that women of color face in the labor force, their higher rate of poverty, and limited or nonexistent assets have consequences for their ability to seek elected office” (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 14).

Women of color face additional hesitation by party leaders who make decisions on whom to support based on their view of who will be a winning candidate. Sanbonmatsu writes, “Party leaders are more likely to be actively involved in candidate selection for races that are expected to be competitive, making it less likely that a woman of color would be able to attract party support. Risk averse party leaders should be less likely to coalesce around candidates of nontraditional backgrounds (e.g., a candidate other than a white male)” (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 10). However, racially inclusive nominations have certain political appeals, as Sanbonmatsu continues, “On the other hand, if women of color are thought by party leaders to be electorally valuable—either due to the diverse party image that they may convey, or because of the

coalition-building opportunities of such candidates—more party involvement in nominations might aid women of color” (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 10).

Role models play an important part in encouraging young women of color to enter the political arena. Minyon Moore, former Director of the Office of Public Liaison under President Bill Clinton and senior political consultant to the Hillary Clinton’s 2008 presidential campaign, illustrated the positive effect of a role model in describing her experience watching Barbara Jordan deliver her speech at the 1976 Democratic National Convention,

It was the most riveting speech I had ever watched on TV. The fact that she was the first African American Women to deliver a keynote address to a national convention wasn’t lost on me, even at eighteen years old. While I was barely aware of the political importance or influence this speech would have on the nation, what wasn’t lost on me was the fact that she looked familiar, she sounded familiar, and she spoke with that deep preacher-like voice that caused you to hang on to her every word. She was someone that you wanted to emulate (Donna Brazile et al. 2018, 12).

Unfortunately, this experience of descriptive representation is limited. As of 2018, minority women represented only 4% of the U.S. Senate, 7.8% of the U.S House, 4% of Governorships, and 6.2% of all State Legislature seats (see Appendix A).<sup>2</sup>

Cathy Cohen explains why existing literature on women, particularly survey data, cannot be directly applied to women of color. She writes that women of color when disaggregated by racial group “rarely comprise a sub-sample large enough to examine rigorously” (Cohen 2003, 191). While oversampling is often used to combat this reality, that measure brings its own problems as “this process can produce a skewed view of the community of color under consideration, disproportionately including those who live in neighborhoods predominated by the racial-group being over-sampled” (Cohen 2003, 191). Finally,

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<sup>2</sup> “Women of Color in Elective Office 2018.” 2018. *CAWP*. <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-color-elective-office-2018> (December 19, 2018).

Even in those rare instances when data on women of color have been gathered at sufficient levels, often the survey questions were designed with a focus on the majority of respondents, specifically white respondents, and thus the questions are unable to tease out the variation and unique political behavior and circumstances of Latina, Asian, and Pacific Islander, Native American, and African American women (Cohen 2003, 191).

Past attempts to study race and gender as separate identities in politics, often fail to address the equal salience of both. Carroll used the 2008 race for the Democratic presidential nomination between Barack Obama (a black man) and Hillary Clinton (a white woman) to explore how racism and sexism independently unfolded in the political arena. She noted that, “One of the truly troubling aspects of this nominating contest was the way that racism and sexism were pitted against each other” (Carroll 2009, 3). The public was intent on deciding which wrong was more pervasive in American society—racism or sexism.

Either/or questions such as this “reflect an assumption that somehow, sexism and racism can be compared on a common metric when, in fact, the underlying dynamics, manifestations, and genealogies of the two are completely different and render any comparisons meaningless” (Carroll 2009, 3). In keeping with the understanding that women of color face dual oppression, Carroll noted that the election underscored the reality that the “emergence of a black woman or a Latina or an Asian American woman is not yet possible or imaginable as a serious contender for the presidency” (Carroll 2009, 4).

It is clear that the unique perspective of women of color, stemming from the interaction between race and gender, has been historically minimized in favor of one or the other. This applies even to W.E.B Du Bois when he declared in 1903 that “the problem of the Twentieth century is the problem of the color line” (Branch 2011, 8). Even within social justice movements, women of color have been “doubly bound” by the intersection of race and gender (Gay and Tate 1998, 170). Elements of both the Women’s Movement and the Civil Rights Movement have

attempted to convince women of color that identifying with their race *or* their gender was the only way to combat oppression (Gay and Tate 1998).

Sexism under the Civil Rights Movement manifested itself in the belief that “an alliance among gender lines is considered dilutive to the strength of the black struggle for equality, whose primary resources for affecting change is the black group consciousness” (Gay and Tate 1998, 170). Similarly, racism under the Women’s Movement manifested itself in the belief that “a high level of black consciousness may block the rise of feminist consciousness and result in a tendency [among black women] to focus on the differences between black and white women” (Gay and Tate 1998, 171). This minimization ensures that the concerns of women of color often go unheard. In her 1904 speech, “The Progress of Colored Women, Mary Church Terrell said,

Not only are colored women with ambition and aspiration handicapped on account of their sex, but they are almost everywhere baffled and mocked because of their race. Not only because they are women, but because they are colored women are discouragement and disappointment meeting them at every turn” (Branch 2011, 8). Gender and race are mutually reinforcing identities and Black women “experience the world differently from those who are not black and female (Gay and Tate 1998, 172).

As such, scholarly work that references a “fictitious monolithic group ‘women’” diminishes the importance of the lived experiences of women of color (Smooth 2006, 409). Any analysis that seeks to study women of color in politics must use this understanding to inform their research approach. H.Y Choo and M.M. Ferree highlighted the importance of practicing intersectionality in research. This type of research entails “placing multiply-marginalized groups and their perspectives at the center of the research” (Choo and Ferree 2010, 129). It challenges the idea that race and gender can be treated as separate variables that have different effects (Choo and Ferree 2010).

Intersectional research is an approach that understands that “lived experiences of oppression cannot be separated into those due to gender, on the one hand, and race, on the other, but rather are simultaneous and linked” (Choo and Ferree 2010, 132). As Smooth said, it is “clear that we as scholars, pundits, and political strategists miss important aspects of these critical issues when we adhere to using race or gender as separate, distinct spheres of inquiry” (Smooth 2006, 402). These interactions have “unique implications for political activism”, including how we recruit and train candidates (Stokes-Brown and Dolan 2010, 474).

It must be emphasized that, just as “women” are not a monolithic group, neither are “women of color.” As Sanbonmatsu writes,

Categorizing any group as a group—whether it be women of color, people of color, or women—can obscure variation within the group; factors such as citizenship status, sexuality, educational attainment, income, occupation, and language can create inequalities among women regarding the likelihood of political participation within and across racial/ethnic categories (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 3).

However, what women of color do share, “the common experience of being underrepresented,” supports this study’s focus on racial and gender underrepresentation in politics (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 4). As Sanbonmatsu argues, “grouping “women of color” can be analytically useful given the structural situation of disadvantage created by race and gender inequalities” (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 4). Moreover, given the limited research on women of individual racial and ethnic backgrounds in politics, “combining women across racial/ethnic backgrounds makes an analysis more feasible” (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 4). Thus, while a great wealth of knowledge can be gained from studying the whole of women of color, more research is needed to clarify the political implications of difference among racial, ethnic, and class subsets of women of color.



### *Where it Counts: The Benefits of Women of Color*

Proponents of increasing the number of women of color in political office point to three rationales for why increased minority representation is beneficial to the broader electorate: bolstering democratic legitimacy, distinct policy differences, and symbolic importance. The underrepresentation of women of color is a threat to legitimacy of the political system as it challenges “democratic ideas of the electoral process that are predicated on widespread participation by a variety of societal groups” (Rozell 2000, 103). This participation includes the candidacy and election of minority groups to office. It is important that the electorate feel included in the governing body, in order for the decisions of that body to hold weight. “This feeling of inclusion in turn makes the polity democratically more legitimate in one’s eyes” (Mansbridge 1999, 651).

Scholars argue that any participation gap naturally evolves into a disparity of political incorporation or “the extent to which self-identified groups are articulated, represented, and met in public policy making” (Fraga, Lius Ricardo et al. 2008, 158). In his study of the impact of LGBT legislators, Andrew Reynolds found that “inclusive legislatures are better at crafting stable societies and, more broadly, “‘just’ policy prescriptions” (Reynolds 2013, 259). Studying best practices to elect women of color, then, is in the best interest of America’s democracy (Sanbonmatsu 2015).

Literature tells us that “symbolic” and “substantive” styles of representation are not in conflict (Mansbridge 1999). Women’s needs are best met in public policy making as female lawmakers enact corresponding legislation. This link between descriptive and substantive representation is a result of unique life experiences that translates to different policy priorities, including a focus on education, children, healthcare, and other “women friendly” policies (Fraga,

Lius Ricardo et al. 2008). Mansbridge argues that, “Having more women in office unquestionably makes government policies more responsive to the interests of most women” (Mansbridge 1999, 647). Moreover, Sue Thomas finds that “women legislators have achieved passage of legislation in these areas [women, children, family] at a greater rate than men” (Thomas 2003, 93).

Women’s experiences growing up and their roles in society (as mothers, grandmothers, daughters, and caregivers) instill in them a different sense of responsibility and influence the work they do (Dittmar et al. 2018). Likewise, women of color’s unique perspective impact the policy making process and the resulting legislation. They take advantage of their power to work on issues of importance to communities of color and strive to represent multiple communities, not just the racial, ethnic, or gender group they themselves are a part (Dittmar et al. 2018).

For example, Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) explains how she’s influenced by her background, “And so I, like other Black women bring and other women of color bring kind of whatever they went through and the barriers they faced, [and I’m] trying to knock down some of those things to make things better for everybody” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 39). Representative Lee’s awareness of certain barriers, due to her having lived them, makes her uniquely qualified to address them in Congress. Other women of color interviewed similarly expressed a “responsibility to speak” on issues important to communities of color given their identities and experiences (Dittmar et al. 2018, 39). As Lisa Bedolla, Katherine Tate, and Janelle Wong argue, “female and Black legislators are the most consistent advocates of the dominant interests of women and Blacks” (Bedolla, Tate, and Wong 2014, 235).

Not only do members of underrepresented societal groups craft policy themselves that can be beneficial to their groups, their presence can further equality in less overt ways, including

impacting the decision making of other legislators. Reynolds argued, “But without some visible inclusion of the faces and voices of the historically marginalized, it is unlikely that the interests of such groups will be at the forefront of decision makers’ minds” (Reynolds 2013, 259).

Proponents of increased minority representation point to the established consequences of being present, or absent, when decisions are being made. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), the first openly gay or lesbian person elected to the US Senate, explained the importance of being in the room, “But certainly in the Senate, when you’re a first, you change the dynamic. So one of the ways I put it rhetorically is: when you’re not in the room, people are having a conversation about you. And when you’re in the room, they’re having a conversation with you” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 40). Similarly, Representative Alma Adams (D-NC) declared,

I just want to reiterate that women need to be here, and they need to be here because everything impacts us and our families and our communities. And if we’re not here, then the issues that need to be talked about the most won’t be talked about. They won’t be addressed. You know, they’ll never get to the table. So we need to be...in the room, at the table, feet planted firmly under the table, so that we in fact have the kind of voice that we need to have (Dittmar et al. 2018, 45).

Being in the room also brings awareness to subjects that otherwise might not receive much attention. Representative Donna Edwards (D-MD) explained how she is able to balance her traditional duties in representing her district and make an effort to bring the issue important to women of color to the table,

I’d say that in representing my district, I really reflect the needs and concerns of some broader populations. And so, for example, the work that I do more broadly here in Congress around issues that people call women’s issues, although I don’t like to think of them that way, obviously has a direct impact on my district, but [also] has a broader impact across the country. And so I think one of the elements that I brought to the discussion around equal pay for equal work, for example, was to always put that in terms of what those overall numbers been for Black women, for Latinas. Because numbers like 78 cents on the dollar [for women overall compared with White men] and saying 64 cents [for Black women] or 49 cents for Latinas helped my district relate to an issue that was thought of as a broader women’s concern, but not really a concern for women of color. And I think that helped our [Democratic] caucus to understand that as well (Dittmar et al. 2018, 50).

Tangible effects are not excluded to policy prescriptions. Since the increase of women in Congress, women's bathrooms have been added near the House and Senate floors, dress codes have changed, and the Congressional swimming pool no longer excludes women (Dittmar et al. 2018, 219). In terms of changes due specifically to women of color, in 2016, three black women in Congress, Representatives Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ), Robin Kelly (D-IL), and Yvette D. Clarke (D-NY), founded the Congressional Caucus on Black Women and Girls (Dittmar et al. 2018). Moreover, as discussed with surrogate representatives, women of color in elected office offer benefits to their constituents other than simply representing their political interests.

Scholars find that women bring a more collaborative work style, actively try to avoid conflict and are more responsive to constituent needs (Dittmar et al. 2018). Past research has shown that “[w]omen are more likely to rely on and respond to constituents as they conduct their work and that women in power boost citizens’ perceptions of government responsiveness and their own capacity to influence government policy” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 218). This is particularly evident in the rate of communication between constituents and representatives. Mansfield’s finding that “A history of dominance and subordination typically breeds inattention, even arrogance, on the part of the dominant group and distrust on the part of the subordinate group” might contribute to the communication gap between minority constituents and their nondescriptive representatives (Mansbridge 1999, 641). Moreover, “The deeper the communicative chasm between a dominant and a subordinate group, the more descriptive representation is needed to bridge that chasm” (Mansbridge 1999, 643).

In fact, Claudine Gay found that “African American constituents in districts represented by an African American legislator are more likely to contact their representative than African American constituents in districts represented by a White legislator” (Mansbridge 1999, 641).

Representative Donald Payne (D-NJ), a Black legislator, told Carol Swain, “Black constituents feel comfortable with me, and see that I feel comfortable with them” (Swain 1993, 219).

By contrast, Elizabeth Haynes found that “women in districts represented by a woman are not more likely to contact their representatives than women in districts represented by a man” (Mansbridge 1999, 641). Mansfield contextualizes Hayes’ finding by writing, “Problems in communication between men and women certainly exist, but the size of the male-female gaps in communication may well be smaller than the size of gaps in communication created by race, ethnicity, nationality, or class” (Mansbridge 1999, 641-642).

The literature also suggests that a diversity of legislators enhances the quality of discussion and deliberation of legislation (Fraga, Lius Ricardo et al. 2008). Mansbridge highlights the importance of descriptive representation by noting that a society that values the process of deliberation when addressing challenges facing the public must include representatives from all groups in society in the discussion. She writes,

*The deliberative function of representative democracy aims at understanding which policies are good for the polity as a whole, which policies are good for a representative’s constituents, and when the interests of various groups within the polity and constituency conflict. It also aims at transforming interests and creating commonality when that commonality can be genuinely good for all. In its deliberative function, a representative body should ideally include at least one representative who can speak for every group that might provide new information, perspectives, or ongoing insights relevant to the understanding that leads to a decision. (Mansbridge 1999, 643)*

The perspectives and interests of the minority “should be represented in deliberation when their perspectives are relevant to a decision...” are especially important when discussing policy that affects the whole (Mansbridge 1999, 635). When including others in the discussion, one voice is not sufficient. Mansbridge argues that some level of critical mass is needed to convince the majority of pressing problems and be present in multiple policy areas (Mansbridge 1999).

Outside of the legislative halls, women of color serve as role models who aim to inspire women and girls to consider a future in politics. Stokes-Brown and Dolan find that the presence of women of color in elected positions increases the participation of women of color in politics generally (Stokes-Brown and Dolan 2010). Even their presence as public officials “conveys the symbolic message that women of color are suitable to rule,” or what Charles Taylor calls, “equal dignity” (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 1; Taylor 1992). This is especially important following the work of Richard Fenno who “suggested that symbolic connections were even more important for African Americans than for whites” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 52).

The importance of being an example for women and girls across the country was not lost on many of the congresswomen interviewed. As Representative Susan Davis (D-CA) succinctly put it, “You can’t be what you can’t see” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 52). Representative Susan Brooks (R-IN) adds, “We have...an opportunity to try to be role models for women and men in our states and in the country and [to] try to change the mindset about women and girls’ thinking about running for office” (Dittmar et al. 2018, 52). It appears as though the strategy is working as some evidence shows that a female presence in office enhances female political engagement (Dittmar et al. 2018). As Bedolla, Garcia, Tate, and Wong wrote, “The effects of these experiences, while difficult to measure, are in fact indelible and cannot be erased from the fact of American politics” (Bedolla, Tate, and Wong 2014, 236).

The view of politics as an “old boys’ club” has created a narrow perception of who can rule and contributed to the uneven rates of political ambition between the genders. Fox and Lawless write that, “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” (Fox and Lawless 2010, 311).

A continuous influx of diverse candidates can work to change that norm and create a pathway for future women, people of color, and women of color. Virginia Sapiro “argued that increased descriptive representation of women in the legislatures would undermine the perception that politics is a ‘male domain’” (Sapiro 1981, 712). In a 1976 study, Mack Jones found similar results with Black legislators (Mansbridge 1999). Some officials ran with this explicit goal in mind. “In 1989, a Black member of the Arkansas House of Representatives said he worked to help Blacks get elected in local races because he wanted to dispel ‘the myth that some white kids might have that blacks can’t serve or shouldn’t be serving at the courthouse’” (Mansbridge 1999, 649).

Finally, diverse legislators not only bring their unique identities and experiences to office, but also increase diversity in their surroundings. Thomas writes, “diversity in political office begets diversity among those who surround the office holder. Given that employees and volunteers contribute to policy development and decisions as well as to the ways in which policy is effectuated, it is imperative to investigate the people women politicians bring to the arena” (Thomas 2003, 101). She attributes this tendency to female legislators’ desire to actively include different viewpoints in the conversation.

### ***Recruitment, Recruitment, Recruitment: The Role of Campaign Training Programs***

Interest groups have long been aware that recruiting and training targeted individuals to run for office is an effective strategy to gain political representation. Institutions such as civil rights groups, religious organizations, and unions have similarly used methods to recruit and develop candidates that will represent their interests (Rozell 2000). Rozell argued that,

“Recruitment is especially important for interests that seek to increase the numbers of policy makers from previously underrepresented groups, such as women, racial and ethnic minorities, blue collar workers, and conservative Christians” (Rozell 2000, 105).

Some campaign training programs deliberately select for descriptive representation.

Mansbridge writes that,

Selective forms of descriptive representation are necessary, if at all, only when some form of adverse selection operates within an existing system to reduce the proportions of certain groups below what they would achieve by chance. Otherwise, one would expect all the characteristics of the population to be duplicated, more or less, in the legislature in proportion to their occurrence in the population. Selective representation should thus be conceived as compensating for the effects of some other process that interferes with an expected proportionality (Mansbridge 1999, 632).

The proliferation of campaign training programs focused on women (currently 82 such organizations in 38 states) has built upon this foundation, dedicated to addressing the structural change needed to increase women’s representation (Sanbonmatsu 2015). Lawless and Fox add, “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” (Fox and Lawless 2010, 311).

As discussed, an increase in women represented in the professional pipelines will naturally contribute to the increase in female candidates, but progress made in this way is incremental compared to the progress made with recruitment. Recruitment is also a way to combat the incumbency advantage, close the gender gap in political ambition, and contribute to the normalization of women in politics (Fox and Lawless 2010). Lawless and Fox find that “Highly qualified and politically well-connected women from both major political parties are less likely than similarly situation 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. They are less likely than men to be recruited by multiple sources” (Fox and Lawless 2010, 311). The mission of women’s organizations, like women-focused campaign training programs, is to mitigate that recruitment gap. Clearly their efforts to encourage women to run are effective. “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 (Fox and Lawless 2010, 317).

Recognizing that the “most viable strategy for increasing female representation in public office at all levels is candidate recruitment and training”, campaign training programs aim to increase representation by recruiting and training women as they start their political journey (Rozell 2000, 102). The trainings look different depending on the mission of the specific organization, but each aims to give candidates a roadmap for success in politics (Sanbonmatsu 2015). By identifying the value that women bring to politics, and the difficulties they face in the field, the programs tailor trainings to the unique needs of female candidates. The programs offer skills, inspiration, and information that female candidates and their staff can use leading up to the election (Sanbonmatsu 2015). For example, a training manual from the National Women’s Political Caucus included a section on “Special Speaking Tips for Women” Candidates (Rozell 2000, 110). These tips included:

- Candidates must have a strong ego, but many women are afraid to blow their own horn. Go ahead and brag about your strong points.
- Control your emotions, especially anger or tears.
- Avoid tilting your head or using other body language which suggests a lack of confidence.
- Recognize that some voters question a woman's leadership skills. Highlight any experience that shows you leading others or making tough decisions.
- Be prepared to speak on all issues that the winner will have to face. Some voters still link female candidates only with "family" issues such as health care and education.
- Voters may pay more attention to your family status than that of your male opponent(s). If you're single, be prepared for curiosity about your sex life or speculation about your sexual preference. You may want to find an appropriate escort for some events. If you have children, find a good, reliable babysitter, preferably a relative.
- Prepare answers for stupid questions. For example, "What does your husband think about your candidacy?" Possible response: "He supports me and recognizes that my background and work in our community make me the best candidate for this office."
- Avoid drinking alcohol or smoking cigarettes in public.

[Source: NWPC, "Campaigning to Win," p. VII 10]

## ***Methodology***

A case study on a campaign training program will assess how such institutions, which aspire to contribute to the election of women, recruit and train women of color to tackle the barriers they will face in their candidacy. Founded in 2013 by a native of the city, the campaign training organization included in this study "is a nonpartisan training program that provides support, mentorship, and education to women with a passion for civic leadership" (About Us). As part of the project, I will interview the program's founder as well as review program recruitment and training materials. My goal for the study is to understand how trainers view the process and how they see programs such as gender or race focused trainings contributing to wider election of women of color. The interviews will last approximately 30 minutes. Below is the sample of questions that will guide me during the interviews:

1. Can you tell me about your recruitment process?
a. Where do you look for potential candidates?
b. How do you advertise Emerge resources?
c. Is there an application for the program?
2. Can you give me a brief overview of your trainings? Their goals?
3. How many women of color are typically in each class?
4. Why do you think women of color are underrepresented in politics?
5. Do you believe that women of color face additional barriers in running for office?
a. If so, do trainings address those barriers? How so?
6. Do you think traditional ideas of gender and race affect women in politics?
7. Do you believe that it is necessary to encourage women of color to run for office?
8. Does any of your recruiting literature specifically target/mention women of color?
9. Are your run rates for women comparable for women of color?
10. Where does the organization receive its funding?
11. How do political parties fare in recruiting women of color?
12. Anything else you would like to add?

The analysis of recruitment and training materials will demonstrate how the program selects the women they wish to train, and the process of training. Because women of color face additional barriers, tasked with double jeopardy of race and gender, the program might have an interest in devoting resources specifically to the recruitment and support of women of color. Interviews with the program administrator will show if the programs take into account the unique situation of women of color. Results of this case study will show if the program uses targeting recruitment methods to attract candidates of color or alter their trainings in any way.

### *Analysis*

The campaign training organization was founded with an initial desire to create a sisterhood of women, who could support each other as they faced the difficult path to office. This support not only included words of encouragement, but tangible mentorship and education resources. Propelled by the goal of electing 100 women to local, state, and federal government

by the year 2021, this campaign training program is rooted in the promise of descriptive representation. The organization's mission is,

to recruit, educate, and support women who desire leadership roles in the civic space. Furthermore, to inspire young girls in future generations to soar and reach they're (sic) full potential. The vision of [REDACTED] is to create parity in the political realm. We believe that by providing the necessary resources and trainings that we are not only encouraging more women, but are placing more women in elected seats. [REDACTED] will act as a contribution in promoting equal representation by the year 2020.

Jasmine was moved to action by an unnerving observation. In an interview, she recalled a moment, after a move back to the city where the organization is now housed, when she looked at the political landscape and noticed a distinct void in representation of women and minority candidates. She wondered to herself, "Why are no women elected and especially no women of color?" She then decided to reach out to her political social circles to get a better idea of the underlying forces at play. "I started asking around and I really did want to talk serious. People are like 'Oh my God. It's so hard for a woman to balance life. It's like an old boys' club. You don't even know all of the unspoken rules.'"

These challenges that Jasmine and her colleagues discussed, especially the feelings of an "old boys' club" track with the one's scholars find in their research. To face these real-world barriers, she created a "safe space for us to learn the rules together," in the hopes that doing so would encourage more women to run. Calling it a "simple" evolution, these conversations snowballed into a full-fledged campaign training organization.

One of the inaugural women of the program was a friend of Jasmine's who was getting ready to run for a seat in the state House of Representatives. Her primary concern was feeling comfortable enough to ask for advice in an environment where "everybody assumes when you're launching your campaign that you know everything." The friend was particularly concerned with being perceived as unqualified, stating, "There are certain things I'm afraid to even ask in a room

full of men.” One of these unknowns was the minimum signature requirement to appear on the ballot—the first, and arguably only essential, obstacle in running for office. Ballot requirements and other basics were the things Jasmine and her colleagues started to address in their safe space. The friend won her election to the State House and provided support for the idea that their fledgling organization could work.

After the success of that first election, the group brought together a dozen more women whom they knew were running for office or working on a campaign. They met together about a half dozen times to educate themselves on the political process and create action plans. Out of that group, four ran for office and three won their seats. This began the official campaign training initiative as Jasmine explains, “After that, people kept coming back like, ‘Hey, I heard that you have this group, that teaches women how to run for office. I’m in. How can I sign up?’ I was like, ‘Oh yeah, it’s not really a thing.’ But then it did become a thing. So, now it’s a whole thing.”

This “whole thing” has grown to include pop-up boot camps, a more detailed module training for candidates interested in running, and a political action committee (PAC) that offers a separate support system for Black women. The boot camps, where women learn how to run for office, vary in size (they range from 30-100 participants) and subject areas and are open to all interested women. The days’ events include presentations on fundraising, election law, branding, communications, and other campaign related topics. The goal of the day long boot camps is to encourage women to make the leap to announce their campaign. Jasmine says, “Every time we do a boot camp and I hear women say, ‘I’m running for this and I’m running for this’ an angel gets its wings and I smile even harder” (Kuznits 2019).

The actual training, available to candidates and their staffers, is a nine-module training that runs for four weekends during the spring and fall sessions, culminating in a total of 50 hours of instruction and hands-on projects. The module programs have a class cap of 20 participants who must submit an application and be approved by the organization's board. Notably, in order to be considered for an endorsement, potential participations must "have been active or involved in some way, shape, or form in a boot camp."

As a result of the organization's continued success using word of mouth as a means of marketing its services, that tool has remained the group's primary mode of recruiting potential candidates. Jasmine says that women will email, text, and call her, saying, "Hey, a friend of a friend of a friend, referred me." This recruitment method is designed to reach women interested in politics, but who may have been overlooked by traditional political networks. Jasmine says she also gives "a lot of talks" where she is able to spread information about the program and attract potential participants. The organization also has a robust social media presence that promotes their boot camps and fundraising events, spotlights recently elected Black female officials, and advertising apparel with catchy "Elect Black Women" and "You Owe Me 37 Cents" slogans.

When asked about the biggest factor contributing to the underrepresentation of women and women of color, Jasmine pointed to the role of money in politics and the rising cost of campaigns. The already exorbitant costs can be amplified by unexpected circumstances such as if the election draws national attention, is unexpectedly competitive, or takes place outside of the normal election time frame and qualify as special elections. These special elections are triggered by the unexpected vacancy of a seat due to the death, appointment to another office, or resignation of the previous occupant.

Jasmine highlighted one such election for state Representative, noting that while a normal campaign for the district's seat "should cost \$25,000" it "has easily turned into a six-figure race" due to the short timeline and the crowded field. As discussed, women and minority candidates face additional fundraising challenges, and any escalation in cost to entry can deter from those individuals running or hamper their campaigns. Jasmine reflects, "I think that the money barrier sometimes prevents people of color, but especially women of color." She continued, "The unspoken rules for sure, it being like an all-boys club. All of those things play a part." All of these potential barriers are addressed in the trainings. Jasmine says the sessions, "kind of teaches you and makes you more savvy. And it's really an attempt to level the playing field."

As a non-partisan organization, the group does not partner with any political parties, but does work with certain unions. While Jasmine said she sometimes facilitates trainings for the Democratic and Republican parties, they do not officially partner with either group in its commitment to remaining non-partisan. When asked about the parties' willingness to diversify their field of candidates, Jasmine said that they were "[o]pen to having women run."

To date, the program has worked with over 200 women who have gone on to occupy seats in the City Council, the State House, and Congress (Briggs, Salisbury, and Shaw 2017). This demonstrated success has prompted the group to look into expansion. Already, they have started working with women in another major city in the state and are reviewing options to open chapters in the tri-state area.

While all women are welcome to the organization's trainings and boot camps, additional resources are set aside for Black women in particular. When asked why she thought it important to diversify those in government, Jasmine responded, "I've always been of the thought [that] a fair government representation is important. So, when you have a fair and balanced government

that reflects those they govern, more things get done, better laws are made. You want all opinions for all people.”

The campaign training program employs various means of supporting Black women through recruitment and training efforts. Its “Women of Color Project” was initiated to focus on Black women’s election to public office. As the program remarks, “Women of Color face a different sort of challenges when seeking public office. [REDACTED] is part of a coalition that is dedicated to making sure that Women of Color are represented in all levels of government.”

The program also houses a PAC that, in following its mission is to elect Black women to public office, endorses Black women candidates and offers them financial resources for their run. The PAC “works to elect Black women to office in order to advance policies that champion Black women’s interests. We have a vested interest in increasing representation of Black women in elected office and creating legislative parity.”

In order for a candidate to receive such an endorsement, she must submit an application declaring her intent and discussing her background, campaign needs, and ideas for office. Notably, the application asks the applicants to discuss their commitment to advance the needs of Black women and minority communities (see Appendix B). When discussing the details of their campaign, applicants must indicate their number of paid staff members, number of paid women on the staff, and the number of paid Black women on the staff. Some of the application questions in particular ask how about their positions on issues relevant to minority communities. The questions in this section include:

- What are the 3-4 issues you are campaigning on, and why? Explain in depth.
- How do these issues affect black women and/or communities of color?
- If you currently hold, or previously held, public office, how have you worked to advance progressive policy that benefits black women and/or communities of color?
- If you do not hold, or never have held, public office, how has your work helped to effect social or political change for black women and/or communities of color?



While the goal of the PAC is to help elect Black women, the application seeks to ensure that the women will legislate with the needs of all minority communities in mind. The application questions demonstrate the organization's belief that Black women will represent the interests of a wide range of individuals, supporting literature that finds that women of color strive to represent multiple communities (Sanbonmatsu 2015). As a "one-stop-shop", this program recruits women with an interest in civic engagement, arms them with the knowledge needed to run, and helps them carve out a space for themselves in a field that is slow to progress.

### ***Conclusion***

Since the passage of the Voting Rights Act, women of color's share of the voting population has increased, along with their political capital (Baxter, Holmes, and Griffin 2015). While slowly, political apparatuses are widening their support of diverse candidacies in response to the calls for change within leadership. Like similar campaign training programs at the forefront of this push, the organization in this study was borne out of a desire to see more diversity among elected representatives. Jasmine understand that when considering a life in politics, "what often held potential candidates back was a lack of knowledge about how to navigate the system" (Briggs, Salisbury, and Shaw 2017). Thus, she created a framework to help women learn how to navigate said system.

A discussion with the organization's founder and a review of its marketing, training, and recruitment materials, clearly depicts a group that understands the real-world impacts of the challenges facing women, both minority and not, found in relevant literature and is dedicated to combating them. In its belief that women and women of color face additional barriers in running

for office, and that there is a particular need for parity in elected officials, the administrators structure their programming accordingly.

The broad mandate of the group, to not only elect more women, but also to engage them in the political process, reflects the growing understanding that success in this area is more nuanced than one woman's win on election night. While that individual win is certainly an achievement, and necessary in the ultimate goal of achieving parity in the political sphere, it is also important to get more women involved in politics. Knowing that doing so will lead to a natural increase to elected women, they aim to provide interested parties with support, mentorship, and education to enter the field.

The answer to Jasmine's original question of "why are no women of color elected" is complex and multi-faceted. While racial and gender biases are no longer stunt the upward trajectory of women and minorities in politics in ways they have historically, the legacies of those biases are present in the current underrepresentation in the political process, including an exclusion from traditional means of support. In her "safe space," Jasmine created a place where potential candidates could learn about politics, what it takes to run, and build a sisterhood. At the end of the day, progress will be accomplished when women change the norms of who can rule, government becomes reflective, and parity is achieved in politics. Jasmine reflects, "Success for me really does look like a government where there is parity in our statehouse. Where there are more than 12% of women of color elected to office and more than 30% of just women elected. So, success for me is parity."

*Weaknesses of the project*

Due to the limited scope of this study, it would not be appropriate to extrapolate its particulars to all campaign training programs. However, its basic findings that such organizations use tailored trainings to prepare individuals to run for office can be generalized. The process that this particular organization uses, from application to in-depth trainings, allows board members to select and train candidates whom they believe will be present strong and display a commitment. It follows that similar organizations would use a similar vetting process as well.

Nevertheless, there are some aspects of the project that are not as generalizable to other groups. For example, the organization included in this study is a smaller organization that currently is only operated in one city, although it works with women across the state and is looking to expand to the tri-state area, and primarily works with women who are interested in running in local and state elections. This contrasts some of the national women-centered campaign training organizations that have chapters in states across the country and work with women who are interested in election to federal office.

It is also important to point out that the organization included in this study has a “women of color project” that only works with Black women. While all women of color face racial barriers on the path to office, each racial minority faces its own challenges, and one should not assume that the needs of all women of color will be met by a group with a focus on Black women. An additional study that looks at a campaign training program that welcomes all women of color would be helpful to this end.

Additionally, this study only includes interviews with the program’s administrator, and does not account for the view points of the women who attend the boot camps or enroll in the training program. Adding this perspective would illuminate any disconnect between program leaders and the participants regarding subject such as effectiveness of the program, relevance of topics

presented, feelings of preparedness, and overall attitudes towards the experience. Topic relevance and feelings of preparedness are especially important because it speaks to the perceived challenges on the campaign trail and the political reality of the candidates.

### *Areas of Future Study*

The use of campaign training programs is only one facet in the election of women of color to political office. In order to develop our understanding of why racial and gender disparities exist and persist in the political sphere, and the best approach to closing those gaps, political scientists need to expand the study of women of color and American politics. Future researchers must first be open to focusing on women of color, as opposed to women as a group, and be willing to drill into the details of minority candidacies.

It is essential that future research on women of color and politics expand its scope beyond Black women. While the term “women of color” is sometimes used to refer to Black women, it is not sufficient to only study that one group. Just as a study of women will mask the experiences of women of color, a study of Black women may mask the experiences of members of other racial and ethnic groups. Cohen writes,

documented or written knowledge on the political involvement of women of color is not evenly distributed across racial groups. There has been significantly more written on the experiences of Black women within and outside of traditional modes of political expression. Unfortunately, the political actions and ideas of other women of color have only recently made their way onto the research agendas of those who study women and politics, and those who study American politics generally. In part, this disturbing phenomenon is due to the limited ways in which political scientists continue to conceptualize issues of race, namely in terms of a simple dichotomy between whites and Blacks (Cohen 2003, 193).

To do so, we need to first disaggregate the meaning of women of color as,

...any attempt to understand or explain the political activity of women of color must pay direct attention to and account for those unique experiences that define their opportunity structure. This

is not to say that there are to systemic trends influencing the life chances of women of color, and we should surely be in the business of drawing universal conclusions when they are appropriate. However, the varied lived experiences of women of color, as well as the unequal and skewed distribution of the limited knowledge we do have, necessitates that we further break down our categories of analysis (Cohen 2003, 203).

Additionally, the challenges facing women of color in politics do not end after a victory is called on election night. Once in office, the representatives must find their place in such “racialized institutions that adhere to the gender and racial norms and preferences” that the women “defy by their very existence” (Smooth 2008, 177). In order to determine the broader circumstances surrounding a woman of color’s experience in office, researchers must study the different components of their work life including their relationships with fellow lawmakers, effectiveness in office, and decision to run for re-election.

Not only is it important for one’s constituents to perceive them as effective, but it is equally important for a lawmaker’s colleagues to perceive them in that manner as well. Being seen as influential by fellow lawmakers is critical in getting legislation passed which contributes to one’s legislative success. Gender and race play an important part in determining if one is seen as influential and “[b]eing considered influential is an important step in successfully representing constituents and the policies that are key to their political, economic, and social interests” (Smooth 2008, 176). Research should study if women of color have equal access to leadership rolls, and other signifiers of formal power, as well as informal circles of power (Smooth 2008).

Further research should also study the partisan split in the number of women of color who run for office. In 2014, only 6.7% of minority women in Congress, and 7.2% of minority women state legislators, from the two major parties identified as Republican (Sanbonmatsu 2015). Looking at all party affiliations, “among all minority female members of Congress, 28 are Democrats and just 2 are Republicans, whereas among minority female state legislators across

the fifty states, 347 are Democrats and 27 are Republicans” (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 6). This disparity is reflected in the candidacy gap as well. Sanbonmatsu found that in 2014,

The women of color who ran for statewide office were primarily Democrats (79.5%), while about one-fifth (20.5%) were Republicans. Among the Democratic women running statewide, 83.3% were white and 16.7% were women of color; among Republican women, 94.5% were white and only 5.5% were women of color. Thus, Democratic women of color are dramatically outpacing Republican women of color as statewide candidates (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 6).

Sanbonmatsu argues that this candidacy and representation gap, and the apparent “relationship of women of color with the parties” is “consistent with the two parties’ realignment on civil rights. The parties’ distinct orientations toward racial politics continue, most recently with Republican Party support of voter identification laws and the party’s internal divisions on immigration policy” (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 9). She also points to uneven recruitment efforts led by the parties, again due to the trend that party leaders seek out candidates who look like themselves.

This close relationship with the Democratic Party is not confined to women of color. Overall, “racial minorities, like women as a group, tend to be aligned with the Democratic Party” (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 10). This is not to say that there have not been prominent women of color to serve as Republicans on the national stage. Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, former Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, and former Governor of New Mexico Susana Martinez, all gained attention for their election to office. A closer study of women of color who choose to run as Republicans and Democrats, can shed light on the internal discussion had when deciding which political party best aligns with their views.

The majority of elected women of color hail from districts where the majority of the population are racial and ethnic minorities, i.e. majority-minority districts (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 2). This understanding serves as an explanation for why women of color are a higher percentage

of the U.S. House of Representatives than in the U.S. Senate (see Appendix C). The increased representation of women of color in office will require the election of minority women in districts and states that do not have such an automatic voter base. Bedolla, Tate, and Wong argue that unless women of color make gains in majority-white districts, “it is unlikely that underrepresentation will decrease significantly in the near term” (Bedolla, Tate, and Wong 2014, 251).

Further research is needed to fully explain why women of color overwhelmingly represent minority districts and how they can build electoral relationships and support in majority white districts. It would be useful to compare the women of color who run in, and represent, majority-minority districts with those who run from, and represent majority-majority districts with particular attention compared to campaign style and issue priorities. Sanbonmatsu argues that “Statewide candidates of color typically need to balance a moderate campaign appeal to whites at the same time that they attract minority voters...” and more research can offer a new perspective on this assessment (Sanbonmatsu 2015, 10).

Finally, in order for women of color in American politics to be properly studied, the field of political science needs to diversify and expand its curriculum for future researchers. Cohen argues that the current state of political science does not allow for a significant exploration of women of color. As seen with the civil rights and women’s movements, discussions of political science can overlook the unique experiences of women of color. Cohen writes that even when studying racial politics, it is the male experience that is discussed,

For example, inclusion of a Black politics course in a political science department does not guarantee any systemic examination of the politics of Black women. Instead, courses on Black politics, like courses on other marginal communities, have generally meant the study of Black leaders or more specifically Black men, with limited attention given to the distinct political histories and activities of Black women (Cohen 2003, 192).

She continues, “Similarly, courses and research on women and politics generally assume whiteness as the norm and reference women of color in an additive manner. As a result, in both cases Asian, Latina, Native American, and Black women are subsumed under more easily identifiable and supposedly inclusive categories, such as race or gender” (Cohen 2003, 192). As political scientists, “We must expect all those who study women and politics to consistently address the issues confronted by women of color, challenging the unspoken normative standard of whiteness in this field and making central the interaction of gender, race, and ethnicity in our field” (Cohen 2003, 208).



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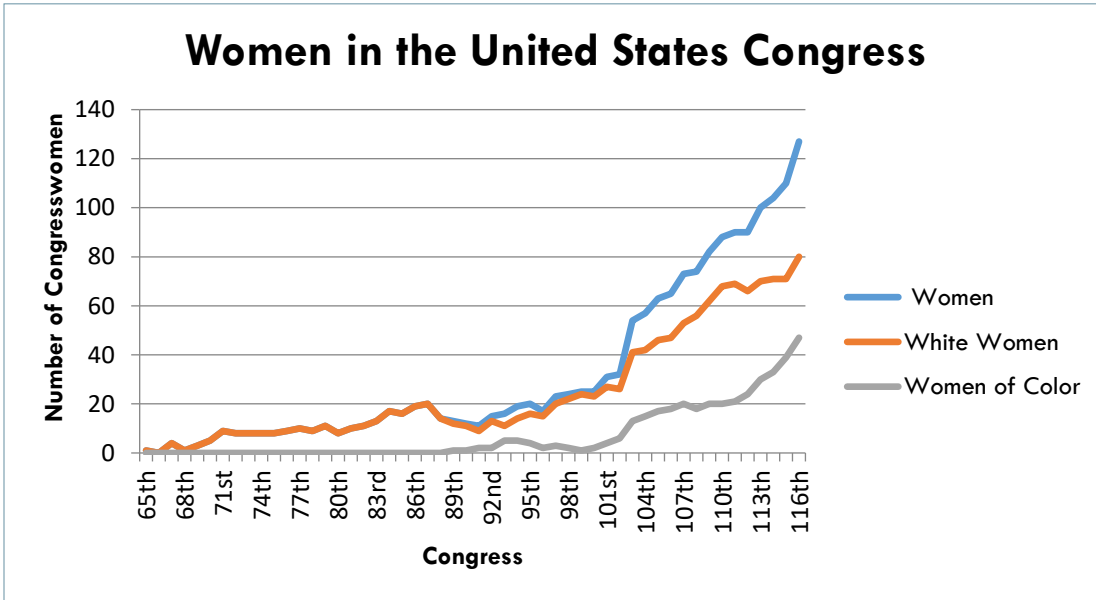
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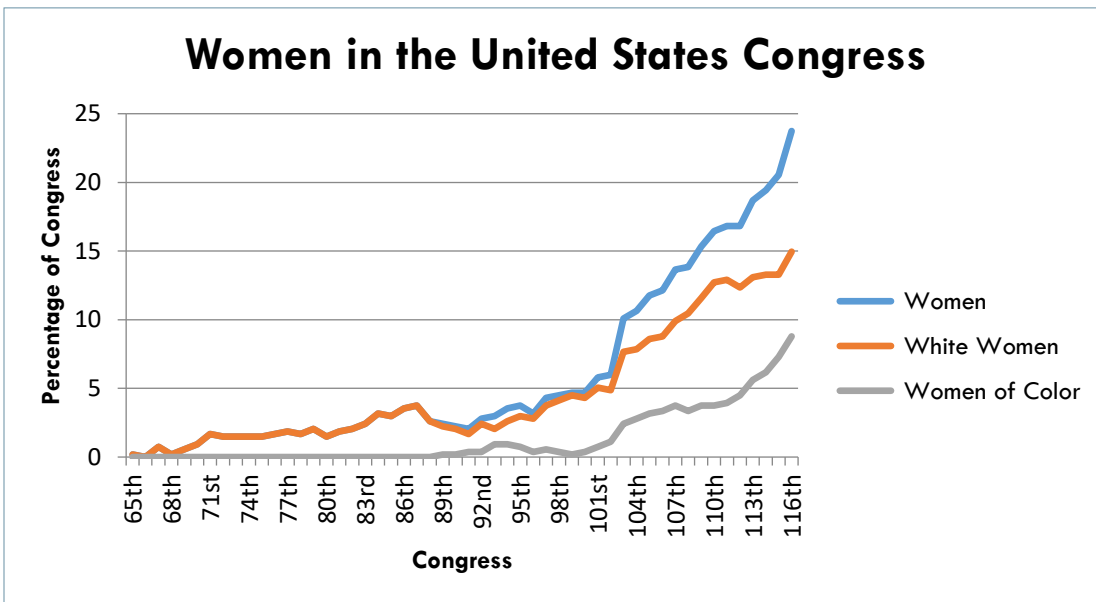
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Appendix A

A.1



A.2



Source: Center for American Women and Politics- History of Women in the U.S. Congress

\*Note: Numbers for Congresses prior to the current one shows maximum number of women elected or appointed to serve in that Congress at one time. Some filled out unexpired terms and some were never sworn in.

*Appendix B*

**Campaign Training Program PAC Candidate Questionnaire**

First Name	Middle Name	Last Name
State	District	Party
<input type="checkbox"/> Incumbent <input type="checkbox"/> Challenger <input type="checkbox"/> Open		
Do you currently hold, or have you previously held, public office(s)? Describe.		
If you do not currently hold, or previously held, public office, tell us what makes you qualified to run.		
Official Campaign Committee Name		
Campaign Address		
City	State	ZIP
Campaign Manager	Email	Cell Phone
Total # of paid staff	Total # of paid women on staff	Total # of paid black women on staff
Total # of paid black women on staff	How much money do you plan to spend?	What is your current cash on hand?
How do you plan to raise the money needed to run a viable campaign? <b>Be specific and detailed.</b> Attach campaign finance plan and/or additional information, as needed.		

Why are you seeking <b>The Cap Win</b> PAC's endorsement?
Have you received additional endorsements? From whom?
Are you now or have you ever been a union member? Union(s) and local(s)?

**Please return this questionnaire by Monday, February 25, 2019 to:**

*If any response requires more space than allotted, provide full responses to said question(s) in an attached document.*

**1. What are the 3-4 issues you are campaigning on, and why? Explain in depth.**

**2. How do these issues affect black women and/or communities of color?**

**3. What will be your top legislative priorities if elected (or re-elected), related to these 3-4 issues? Explain in depth.**

**4. If you currently hold, or previously held, public office, how have you worked to advance progressive policy that benefits black women and/or communities of color?**

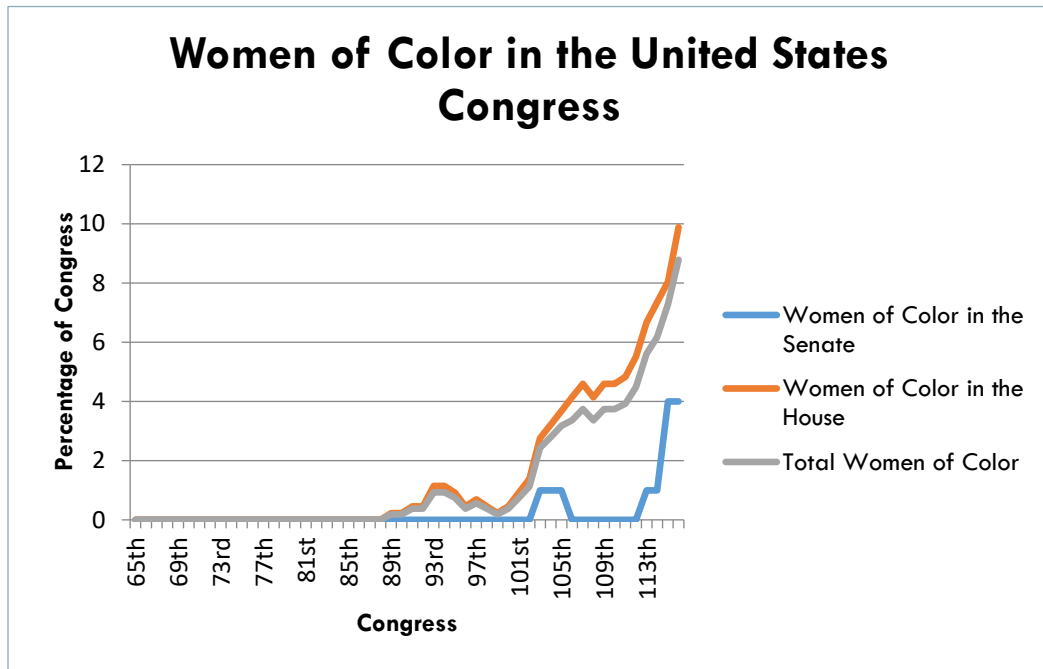
**5. If you do not hold, or never have held, public office, how has your work helped to effect social or political change for black women and/or communities of color?**

**6. What is your strategy to win office?**

**7. Beyond our public endorsement, what specific support are you seeking from  Win PAC?**



Appendix C



Source: Center for American Women and Politics- History of Women in the U.S. Congress

\*Note: Numbers for Congresses prior to the current one shows maximum number of women elected or appointed to serve in that Congress at one time. Some filled out unexpired terms and some were never sworn in.