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Beyond the Year of the Woman

Pooja Patil

Illinois Wesleyan University, ppatil@iwu.edu

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Beyond the Year of the Woman

Abstract

Women make up about 50% of the American population but currently only 24% of Congress. This persistent underrepresentation is a matter of concern because Congress often votes on issues that disproportionately affect women. Prior research has established a consistent set of variables that factor into the supply of and demand for women in elected offices, namely incumbency, party, district characteristics, candidate characteristics and voter stereotypes. In 1992, deemed the "Year of the Woman" where a record number of women won seats in Congress, an increased number of those candidates embraced stereotypically female strengths and employed those in their campaign strategies. Is "running as a woman" an effective strategy when a female candidate is pitted against a male candidate? There is a gap in the literature on the factors that explicitly affect whether and under what conditions female candidates can outperform male opponents. This research seeks to address that deficiency by directly examining whether "running as a woman" affects a female candidate's likelihood of success against a male opponent in a focused-structured comparison of seven such races in the 2018 Midterm elections. Analysis of campaign materials reveals that emphasizing gender is a useful campaign strategy for women.

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Abstract

Women make up about 50% of the American population but currently only 24% of Congress. This persistent underrepresentation is a matter of concern because Congress often votes on issues that disproportionately affect women. Prior research has established a consistent set of variables that factor into the supply of and demand for women in elected offices, namely incumbency, party, district characteristics, candidate characteristics and voter stereotypes. In 1992, deemed the “Year of the Woman” where a record number of women won seats in Congress, an increased number of those candidates embraced stereotypically female strengths and employed those in their campaign strategies. Is “running as a woman” an effective strategy when a female candidate is pitted against a male candidate? There is a gap in the literature on the factors that explicitly affect whether and under what conditions female candidates can outperform male opponents. This research seeks to address that deficiency by directly examining whether “running as a woman” affects a female candidate’s likelihood of success against a male opponent in a focused-structured comparison of seven such races in the 2018 Midterm elections. Analysis of campaign materials reveals that emphasizing gender is a useful campaign strategy for women.

Introduction

“Women belong in all places where decisions are being made”

-Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States

Women are underrepresented in politics. This is particularly true in national-level elections and particularly in places like the United States. While many other countries are significantly increasing the descriptive representation of women at the national level, the United States remains ranked at 78th in the world for the percentage of women in the lower house (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2019). According to a widely accepted model of candidate recruitment and election in democratic systems, there are three stages where women may face

particular challenges in moving toward being elected: (1) moving from eligible to aspirant, (2) moving from aspirant to party nominee, and (3) moving from candidate to elected office-holder (Norris 1996; Thomas 1998). Much has been written about an ambition gap, conditioned by a number of socialization and economic factors, that may make women less likely to seek office than similarly qualified men (Lawless and Fox 2018; Cheng and Tavits 2009). There has also been considerable research on the perceptions of party gatekeepers of women as potentially risky candidates (Duerst-Lahti 1998). This research focuses on the last stage in the process, the movement from candidate to elected official. It is now well-established that women candidates are about as likely to win their races as male candidates are, so voters are not the primary obstacle to female legislative recruitment. However, what happens when a female candidate is pitted directly against a male candidate? Are there conditions beyond incumbency or district characteristics that allow women to outperform their male opponents? Are there campaign strategies that help women stand out as women?

This is a question with concrete consequences. The underrepresentation of women in the federal government means that important voices and perspectives are excluded from the policy-making table. This is particularly detrimental for issues that disproportionately affect women, including affordable child care, paid family leave, equal pay for equal work, and minimum wage, to name a few. If women can outperform male opponents in federal elections that would mean better representation and more votes in their favor of woman-friendly policies, and better outcomes in general (Ladam, Harden and Windett 2018). It would also provide evidence to party gatekeepers that women are not risky candidates, encouraging them to reach out more purposively to women eligibles. The traditional belief has been that women need to be

very careful with their campaigns and ensure that they appear assertive but not aggressive and feminine but not too feminine. According to conventional wisdom, female candidates should downplay family and children, features of private life invariably seen as assets for male candidates. In more recent elections, women have noticeably started to embrace the fact that they are women rather than trying to downplay it. Does this work, or is it still the case that she has to walk that narrow line when campaigning? Can women sometimes outperform men by emphasizing their gender-specific traits and life experiences?

Gender Stereotypes in Political Campaigns

From the early 1970s to approximately 1990, the number of women running for and winning political offices in the United States has gradually risen “with women from each party increasing as a proportion of their party’s delegation at approximately equal rates” (Bucchianeri 2017). During the 1992 election cycle, a record number of women won seats in Congress, doubling the number of women representatives, and seemingly debunking the notion that women candidates are automatically at a disadvantage simply due to their gender (Bucchianeri 2017; Hoffman, Palmer and Gaddie 2001).

Whether involving policy issues, the candidate’s characteristics, or political ideology, voters have different perspectives on candidates based on the gender of the candidate. As a result, women base their campaign decisions and styles heavily off of these voter stereotypes. In terms of policy competencies, women are seen as better equipped with handling “softer issues” such as education and healthcare, while men are considered better at handling policies concerning economy and the military (Dolan and Lynch 2017). When considering the candidate’s characteristics, women candidates as well as officeholders are usually seen as more

compassionate, expressive, honest, and better able to deal with constituents than men (Dolan 2014; Ono and Burden 2018).

Men, on the other hand, are viewed as stronger, more competent leaders that are more decisive, and possess a greater ability to handle crises (Dolan 2014). In one 1982 study, respondents read a political speech by a hypothetical candidate on the subject of the economy (Rosenwasser, Rogers, Fling, Silvers-Pickens, and Butemeyer 1987). Half of the respondents believed that the hypothetical candidate was a man and the other half believed it was a woman. After evaluating the speech, study participants were then asked to indicate whether or not they believed the candidate would win, and it was ultimately concluded that more participants thought the man would win the election. (Rosenwasser, Rogers, Fling, Silvers-Pickens, and Butemeyer 1987).

While gender stereotypes absolutely play a factor in campaigns and elections, it is also true that voters know more about candidates than simply their sex. Because of this, it is important to recognize that these candidates exist in a complex environment where they need to be aware of multiple influences (Dolan 2014). There is significant literature that emphasizes the importance of party and incumbency in shaping candidate evaluations and voter decisions (Dolan 2014). In the 1992 election, deemed the “Year of the Woman,” a record number of women who won were Democrats. That partisan gender gap still continues to exist today (Bucchianeri 2017). In recent years, party identification has been considered possibly the most important factor behind most voting decisions, especially in today’s polarized political climate (Ono and Burden 2018). It is also true that Republican women candidates experience more difficulty winning

primaries than Democratic women and easily appeal more to Democratic and Independent voters than members of their own party (Dolan 2014).

There is a definite overlap between gender stereotypes and partisanship as the issues and character traits that are stereotyped as more feminine are also similarly stereotyped as Democratic (Dolan and Lynch 2017; Deason, Greenlee and Lagner 2014). This also proves to be true for the convergence of Republican and masculine issues and traits, making public perceptions of the two parties seem increasingly gendered (Winter 2010). If this was truly the case, then we would expect candidates to make campaign decisions based on what they would perceive the public to expect about both their party affiliation as well as their gender. A fuller understanding of a woman's campaign should include consideration of both influences (Dolan and Lynch 2017).

It is important to briefly recognize the incumbency advantage any incumbent candidate possesses, whether it be a man or a woman. Regardless of gender, incumbents possess an advantage in any given electoral race, and hypothetically if a woman were to run against an incumbent man, she would automatically be placed at a disadvantage. Similarly, if a woman incumbent office-holder were to run against a male challenger, he would be placed at a disadvantage (Palmer and Simon 2008). As far back as the 1976 House elections, women and men fared about equally well in terms of vote share when incumbency was controlled for (Sanbonmatsu 2005).

The stereotypes discussed above affect the substantive issues that women candidates emphasize in their campaigns. Traditionally, women candidates and officeholders have focused their attention on issues that are perceived as women's issues described above (Herrnson, Lay

and Stokes 2003). It is true that women have also downplayed these perceived women's issues and emphasized issues stereotyped as male. For example, Dianne Feinstein emphasized her support for the death penalty, which is stereotypically a male policy competency, in her gubernatorial race in California in 1990 (Herrnson, Lay and Stokes 2003).

However, in the previously mentioned 1992 elections, an increasing number of women candidates emphasized stereotypically female strengths and adopted campaign strategies that further emphasized their greater competence in handling women's issues (Kahn 1996). For example, in 1992, female candidates televised campaign ads emphasizing their "feminine image traits" (Williams 1994). This change in strategy was significant because voters were now more likely to recall a female candidate's family and appearance rather than her campaign activities, whereas they would be more likely to remember men candidates' campaign activities (Herrnson, Lay and Stokes 2003). It used to always be the conventional wisdom that family, especially ones with children at home, were a liability for women. However, a controlled experiment in 2010 also found that a woman's status as a mother garners higher levels of support for her than running for office without having any children. Also in 1992, a majority of House candidates of both genders stressed economic issues, but women were significantly more likely to emphasize women's issues, including social issues than were men (Herrnson, Lay and Stokes 2003).

In the 2018 midterm elections, record numbers of women since the Year of the Woman ran for elective office and several of them made history with their elections. In these campaigns, many of these female candidates displayed their feminine sides, including Gina Ortiz Jones, who explained that she moved home to take care of her sick mother because it was the right thing to do (Dolan, Deckman and Swers 2018). Ortiz Jones emphasized healthcare and displayed her

empathy for LGBTQ individuals, which are both stereotypically women's issues and characteristics. Although she did not win, she was a Democrat who lost by less than 100 votes to the incumbent in a traditionally Republican district, dignifying it not a complete loss (Dolan, Deckman and Swers 2018).

It has also been evident that since 2016, there are women that have run for office that mobilize on specifically feminist platforms, like abortion and sexual assault. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand is a prime example of this, having kept her Senate seat with landslide victories both times she ran for re-election (Lieberman 2017). Gillibrand has spent her time in the Senate advocating heavily for women's rights through her focused efforts on legislation that will prevent sexual assault and has campaigned on that fact in her latest campaign for the presidency. (Lieberman 2017). Also in light of the 2016 Presidential election, feminists hoped that the amount of political activity and engagement would increase in people, specifically women, who care about women's rights (Lawless and Fox 2018). Hundreds of thousands of women exemplified this in the Women's March on Washington the day after the inauguration to show that they supported women's rights, and opposed the President's sexist attacks on them. (Lawless and Fox 2018).

Most of the literature about women and campaigning refers to the 1992 election and predates this most recent and significant new mobilization of women and specifically women motivated into politics by the 2016 Presidential election. Organizations promoting more women in office have reported that in light of the 2016 elections, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of women interested in seeking political office (Carroll and Fox 2018). This research

will study candidates that won their House races in the 2018 elections and determine whether women can outperform men by emphasizing their gender.

Research Design and Methodology

This study draws upon data collected from seven cases chosen out of all of the women that won House races against men in the 2018 midterm elections. To gather a list of the 60 women that won House races against men, the 2018 Statistics of the Congressional Election from the House of Representatives' Office of the Clerk was cross checked with a list of women serving in the 116th Congress from the Center for American Women and Politics. In order to control for the incumbency advantage, the case universe was further narrowed to non-incumbent women that won against men. The dependent variable, the dichotomous variable stating whether she won or lost the election, is also technically a constant throughout all of the cases in an attempt to focus on the independent variables and various conditions that result in a woman's victory against a man. The independent variables evaluated in this study can be grouped in the following categories: Candidate and opponent characteristics, district characteristics and demographics, and campaign strategies. This research focuses specifically on the effect it has on her victory if she decides to run "as a woman" which would be listed under campaign strategies, and is categorized as a nominal variable, since this variable really has no numerical. To see how the independent variables are operationalized, refer to the established coding rules in Appendix A.

This research consists of a content analysis of the campaign websites of the seven cases: Abby Finkenauer (D-IA-1), Abigail Spanberger (D-VA-7), Carol Miller (R-WV-3), Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14), Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX-7), Kendra Horn (D-OK-5), and Elissa Slotkin

(D-MI-8). As mentioned, Appendix A consists of the explicitly identified coding rules that are used to translate quotes from these websites into my final codes which are the independent variable categories: district characteristics, opponent characteristics, candidate characteristics, emphasis of gender and downplay of gender. The last two come from one overarching category about gender stereotypes, but since that is what this research focuses on, the two variables are intentionally separated for comparison. For example, if the website mentions that she is a wife, mother and a grandmother who has raised her family with Christian values, the mention of her gendered roles and of her family would be translated into one instance of her emphasizing her gender. The instances of each independent variable are then counted to measure their effects on their victory, since these are cases where the women have already won. The websites of course do not have an identical format, so this research specifically analyzes the content on the tabs that they all have in common, specifically their “Meet the Candidate” page and their “Issues” pages.

Women were chosen from districts where it was hard for them to win or from where a woman had never been elected in an attempt to control for the vast effect that party has on voters (Ono and Burden 2018). For example Kendra Horn, a Democrat, was elected in an R+10 district where she would not have been guaranteed a victory unlike in a far more liberal district. If the model of female outperformance of male candidates applies to such hard cases, then it should be widely generalizable.

Analysis

Table 1: Content Analysis Data

	Abby Finkenauer	Abigail Spanberger	Carol Miller	Lauren Underwood	Lizzie Fletcher	Kendra Horn	Elissa Slotkin
Candidate Characteristics	2	3	1	3	3	1	3
Opponent characteristics	1	1	0	2	0	0	1
District characteristics	2	1	1	0	2	2	1
Emphasize gender	7	3	3	5	5	5	4
Downplay gender	2	2	3	2	3	3	3

The data was initially collected and compiled in Table 1, which shows the frequencies of each independent variable as they appear on the candidates' websites. However, it should be noted that some of the websites were more underdeveloped than others. For example, only eight data points were able to be collected from Carol Miller's website, whereas there were fourteen instances of the independent variables on Abby Finkenauer's website. For this reason, the data was then expressed as percentages. Of Rep. Finkenauer's 14 data points, two were coded as Candidate characteristics, thus 14.3% of her website employed the independent variable Candidate characteristics to ensure her victory.

Table 2: Data Expressed as Percentages

	Abby Finkenauer	Abigail Spanberger	Carol Miller	Lauren Underwood	Lizzie Fletcher	Kendra Horn	Elissa Slotkin
Candidate Characteristics	14.3%	30%	12.5%	23%	23%	9.1%	25%
Opponent characteristics	7.1%	10%	0	16.7%	0	0	8%
District characteristics	14.3%	10%	12.5%	15.3%	15.3%	18%	8%
Emphasize gender	50%	30%	37.5%	38%	38%	45%	33%
Downplay gender	14.3%	20%	37.5%	23%	23%	27%	25%

This table shows that emphasizing gender as a campaign strategy was employed more than any other variable on every campaign website except for Carol Miller’s who emphasized her gender just as often as she appeared to downplay it. This was not unexpected, as Rep. Miller was the only Republican in my cases, and the literature has already stated that the Republican Party is increasingly gendered as male. Even so, Rep. Miller did not downplay her gender more often than she emphasized it, therefore emphasis on gender was still technically tied for the most occurrences.

It is also important to note that the candidates had various ways of emphasizing their gender. Refer to Appendix B for the complete charts for each candidate showing how the raw data was translated into the final codes to see the different ways the candidates emphasized their gender. Rep. Finkenauer, who has the highest display of emphasizing her gender, talks about how she is a vocal advocate for women and about how she supports equal pay for equal work, which are both feminist standpoints. She also discusses her progressive stances on a variety of social issues, including Social Security, healthcare and education, which were then coded as

stereotypically softer issues and ultimately an emphasis of gender. Lauren Underwood also had a high percentage of emphasis of gender on her campaign website. On her Meet the Candidate page, she mentioned the fact that she was a nurse and an avid member of Girl Scouts when she was younger, which is a traditionally female dominated field and a girl's group, respectively and were both eventually coded as emphasizing her gender.

Conclusion

In recent elections beyond the year of the woman, especially in light of the 2016 Presidential election, the literature suggests that more women have been motivated to run for office, and this research aimed to conclude whether these candidates find it useful to employ the fact that they are women as campaign strategies. This study found that employing "running as a woman" as a campaign strategy through varied methods proved to be a practical strategy and a major influence versus any other variable that was evaluated. Whether she ran as a mother or by emphasizing stereotypically softer issues like social security and medicare or ran with feminist standpoints and emphasizing women's issues, the strategy works in congressional campaigns, as all of the cases I studied outperformed their male opposition and employed these as primary strategies.

The limitations to this study are due to the fact that there were only four Republican women that won House races against men in 2018, and of those four only one was not running as an incumbent. Furthermore, the singular case that could be chosen from this pool under the established conditions for selection ran in an already red district and does not represent the Republican party well in this study or do much to control for party. However, the literature already suggests that party is a main factor in the voter's decision and a candidate's victory, and

this research never questioned that, only sought to determine other factors that influence a woman's victory over a man.

Appendix A: Independent Variables and Coding Rules

If the literature explicitly mentions the following it will be considered an instance of that Independent Variable:

Emphasize gender (Run as a woman):

- Mentions social, or stereotypically female, issues (i.e. healthcare, education, social security)
- Mentions her children and family and/or her role as a wife/mother/daughter
- Emphasizes feminist issues such as abortion and sexual assault
- Talks about the mobilization of women in the Trump era
- Talks about her roles in traditionally women's careers (i.e. nursing, teaching)

Downplay of gender:

- Mentions stereotypically male issues (i.e. the military and the economy)
- Takes stances on issues that are considered not feminist (i.e. being pro-life)
- Talks about experience in traditionally male fields, such as serving in the military

Candidate characteristics:

- Refers to work experience that pertains to politics (law careers, public service careers, non-profit organizations, other state or local office-holders)
- Talks about previous education that would validate her bid for office
- Talks about her race (i.e. her ability to relate to the problems certain communities face as a part of that community)
- Utilizes her age as a positive (i.e. talks about the fact that she is young and has a lot of energy)

Opponent Characteristics:

- Refers to a scandal opponent has been involved in
- Talks about the opponent's flaws in office (i.e. ignorance of office, maltreatment of constituents)
- Contrasts their view of issues versus opponent (i.e. "he's pro-life but I'm pro-choice")

District Characteristics:

- Refers to the demographics of their district (i.e. education level, size of district, etc.)
- Talks about the infrastructure needs and/or physical aspects of district

Appendix B: Research Data

Abby Finkenauer Codes

Raw Data	Preliminary Codes	Final Codes
a vocal advocate for women	Vocal advocate//feminist issue	Emphasize gender
In the State House Abby led the fight for Iowa's working families, small businesses and main streets. Never one to back down from a fight, she has opposed massive corporate giveaways to out of state companies	Businesses and massive corporate giveaways//economy	Downplay gender
fought to make high-quality healthcare available to all Iowans and supported affordable education for all students	Healthcare and education//stereotypically softer issues	Emphasize gender
She chose to stay in Iowa for college, earning her degree from Drake University, and although she still has over \$15,000 in student loan debt she is committed to making...	Her education	Candidate characteristics
After college, she worked at the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque with Jackson County, Jones County, Delaware County, Clayton County, and Allamakee County affiliate foundations. She formerly served...	Work experience	Candidate characteristics
I'll always fight for Iowans to have good jobs with fair wages they can rely on to support their families	economy//stereotypically male dominant issue	Downplay gender
Women still earn less than their male counterparts and parents too often have to choose between a paycheck or staying home with their newborn	Equal pay//women's issue//feminist standpoint	Emphasize gender
Healthcare is a human right, and extending access to quality and affordable care to every American must be a top priority in Congress. It will certainly be one of mine	Healthcare emphasis//stereotypically softer issue	Emphasize gender
Sadly, that's not the case for our current representative. Rod Blum has made clear where he stands on this critical issue by voting to raise monthly premiums on Iowans	Contrasting viewpoint on issues	Opponent characteristics

It should be incredibly simple – a woman’s health should be an issue considered by herself, her doctor, and her family.	Women’s health advocate//women’s issue//feminist standpoint	Emphasize gender
We need to invest in our public schools to put our students on the path to a good job or college after graduation... And we must ensure that college is affordable for all Iowans, including relief for those burdened with student loan debt and greater transparency	Education//stereotypically softer issue	Emphasize gender
Here in Eastern Iowa and across the county, we have countless businesses and manufacturers looking for qualified workers... We have many motivated high school graduates who want to enter the workforce for whom college may not be the best path. And we have nontraditional students, like adults looking to embark on a new career path or gain new skills	Demographics of district	District Characteristics
We must invest in our deteriorating and underfunded infrastructure in Eastern Iowa to support entrepreneurs and create jobs. The majority of our roadways were built 50 to 60 years ago with few updates since then, and have received only a C- rating from the American Society of Civil Engineers	Physical characteristics of district	District characteristics
Social Security and Medicare are sacred promises we have made to our seniors, who spent a lifetime paying into these critical programs that support tens of thousands in the 1st district	Social security and medicare//social issues//stereotypically women’s issues	Emphasize gender

Abigail Spanberger Codes

Raw Data	Preliminary Codes	Final Codes
Abigail began her career of public service as a federal law enforcement officer working narcotics and money laundering cases with the US Postal Inspection Service...	Work experience	Candidate characteristics
In 2014, Abigail left government service to begin a career in the private sector and bring her and her family back home to Virginia...	Work experience	Candidate characteristics

Abigail moved to Germany and earned her MBA from a dual-degree German-American program between the GISMA business school and Purdue University.	Education	Candidate characteristics
I will work to ensure that every person has quality, affordable healthcare.	Healthcare emphasis//stereotypically softer issue	Emphasize gender
Thousands of Americans die each year due to violence, suicide, or accidents involving firearms, and our lawmakers' unwillingness to address this problem leaves our citizens and our children vulnerable.	Gun control//stereotypically male issue	Downplay gender
I will work to protect Social Security and Medicare so we can meet our obligations to seniors, now and into the future.	Social security and medicare//social issues//stereotypically women's issues	Emphasize gender
We must take steps to acknowledge and understand how this impacts individuals, salaries, and the economic growth across our country, so that we can plan accordingly and ensure that our workforce training meets the needs of the changing economy	Jobs and economy//stereotypically male issue	Downplay gender
Our strength as a nation comes from the idea that anyone with a good idea can make it happen — the recent craft brewing renaissance we've experienced throughout central Virginia is just one example.	Refers to district "renaissance"	District characteristics
I believe deeply in the value of public education. I will advocate for and work to strengthen our public education system.	Education//stereotypically softer issue	Emphasize gender
across the campaign trail, I have been struck by how often people share the view that Congress is not working for them.	Opponent's ignorance of office	Opponent characteristics

Carol Miller Codes

Raw Data	Preliminary Codes	Final Codes
I'm pro-life, pro-jobs, pro-coal, pro-Second Amendment	Economy and second amendment//Stereotypically men's issues and stances	Downplay gender
I strongly support protecting Medicare and Social Security	Medicare and social security//Stereotypically softer issues	Emphasize gender

I've seen first hand how the taxes and regulation from Washington DC hurt West Virginia families and businesses.	District demographics	District characteristics
As a State Delegate, I've protected our Second Amendment rights and fought for good-paying jobs West Virginians deserve.	Work experience	Candidate Characteristics
As a wife, mother, and grandmother I've raised my family with our Christian values and worked to help those most in need in our community.	Gender roles//family values	Emphasize gender
Carol Miller will work to fund education	Education//stereotypically softer issue	Emphasize gender
Miller vows to create jobs, and support farmers and businesses	Jobs and economy//stereotypically male issue	Downplay gender
She will defend the 2nd Amendment	second amendment//Stereotypically men's issue	Downplay gender

Lauren Underwood Codes

Raw Data	Preliminary Codes	Final Codes
Lauren Underwood grew up in Naperville, Illinois where she earned her first Girl Scout badge and attended Neuqua Valley High School.	Girl scouts//women's leadership organization	Emphasize gender
Today, Lauren Underwood is a registered nurse, with hands-on experience in America's healthcare industry.	Nursing and healthcare//traditionally women's field/issue	Emphasize gender
Lauren was appointed by President Obama to serve as a Senior Advisor at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).	Work experience	Candidate characteristics
As an American with a pre-existing condition, Lauren also understands the real-life importance of quality, affordable health care for working families and their children.	Champions healthcare//stereotypically softer issue	Emphasize gender
Most recently, Lauren worked with a Medicaid plan in Chicago to ensure that it provided high-quality, cost-efficient care.	Work experience	Candidate characteristics

Lauren is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Johns Hopkins University.	Education	Candidate characteristics
Lauren attended Mr. Hultgren's one and only public event of 2017.	Opponents ignorance of constituents	Opponent characteristics
Mr. Hultgren later voted for the American Health Care Act, the version of Obamacare repeal that could make health coverage cost prohibitive for individuals with pre-existing conditions	Contrasting viewpoint on issues	Opponent characteristics
We have a moral obligation to address the gun violence epidemic that is threatening communities across our country... We absolutely need universal background checks for all gun sales, whether through federal licences, over the internet, or through private exchanges.	Gun control//stereotypically male issue	Downplay gender
I believe that every child deserves a high quality public education... Additionally, we should be making it easier for students to afford college by increasing our investment in higher education institutions.	Education//stereotypically softer issue	Emphasize gender
I support women's rights to the full range of reproductive health services, without restrictions. This includes access to safe, legal, and affordable abortions.	Women's health advocate//women's issue//feminist standpoint	Emphasize gender
Diplomacy and leadership, backed by a strong military, are critical for our national security.	Foreign policy and military//stereotypically men's competencies	Downplay gender

Lizzie Fletcher Codes

Raw Data	Preliminary Codes	Final Codes
After graduating from St. John's School, I went to Kenyon College in Ohio, where I earned highest honors in History and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1997.	Education	Candidate characteristics
My legal career began in 2006 at Vinson & Elkins, an international law firm founded in Houston more than 100 years ago.	Work experience	Candidate characteristics

For years, I have worked for real Houstonians, with real problems, who need common-sense solutions—not platitudes, theories, or empty promises...	Work experience	Candidate characteristics
Understanding our challenges means making our city more resilient by bolstering infrastructure to keep us safe from increasing and more frequent weather events, and partnering with our local agencies to make smart investments in mass transit.	Infrastructure//Physical characteristics of district	District characteristics
Quality education is essential to our democracy. Good schools are the foundation for an informed community, better jobs, and a strong economy.	Education//stereotypically softer issue	Emphasize gender
Much of Houston’s future will be determined by how we manage the threat of flooding, including our recovery from Hurricane Harvey.	Physical characteristics of district	District characteristics
But if we truly want to save lives and protect our children, we need leaders who aren’t afraid to take on the corporate gun lobby.	Gun control//stereotypically male issue	Downplay gender
Many people in our community and across the country do not have access to quality healthcare. We have an obligation to make sure they do. This takes many forms, from maintaining and improving the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to defending reproductive healthcare and women's right to choose.	healthcare//stereotypically softer issue(1) Women’s health advocate//women’s issue//feminist standpoint(1)	Emphasize gender (2)
We should embrace Houston’s role as the energy leader, while continuing to diversify our economy.	Jobs and economy//stereotypically male issue	Downplay gender
We must work to repair our reputation and secure our alliances. And we must maintain our focus on stopping terrorist and other threats around the globe, including providing law enforcement the resources and training needed to prevent terrorism.	Foreign policy and military//stereotypically men’s competencies	Downplay gender

We have an absolute obligation to keep these promises and protect Social Security and Medicare. I will oppose efforts to privatize Social Security and Medicare, and I will oppose efforts to cut benefits for seniors or the disabled.	Medicare and social security//Stereotypically softer issues	Emphasize gender
Protecting women's access to safe and affordable health care is one of my top priorities.	Women's health advocate//women's issue//feminist standpoint	Emphasize gender

Kendra Horn Codes

Raw Data	Preliminary Codes	Final Codes
Kendra holds a passionate belief that more people need to get involved in community leadership, including women.	Encourages mobilization of women//feminism	Emphasize gender
Her professional background includes running two nonprofits focused on developing leadership skills and encouraging women to run for public office.	Encourages mobilization of women//feminism	Emphasize gender
She brings a deep understanding of how government should work and, as an attorney and mediator, has experience bringing people with differing opinions together.	Work experience	Candidate characteristics
Kendra will prioritize investing in our children by properly funding education, making college affordable, and expanding job training programs -- giving every child the ability to compete in today's economy.	Education//stereotypically softer issue	Emphasize gender
Kendra will fight to protect and expand access to quality, affordable health care by holding the insurance industry accountable, fighting to lower the cost of prescription drugs, and safeguarding Medicare for Oklahoma families.	Healthcare//stereotypically softer issue	Emphasize gender
Kendra has been an advocate for getting women a seat at the table and in elected office. She will be a leader in fighting for equal pay for equal work and expanding paid family leave policies for all Oklahomans.	Women's equality//feminist issue	Emphasize gender

End bump stocks, strengthen background checks, and allow the Center for Disease Control to research gun violence in a meaningful way. I support the 2nd Amendment, and common sense gun safety laws don't threaten it.	Gun control//stereotypically male issue	Downplay gender
Kendra supports fixing our crumbling roads and bridges, and corporations who stash money overseas to avoid taxes should pay for it. Most politicians think infrastructure ends at roads and bridges, but our economy and our families depend on things like our electric grid, internet access and clean water, among other things.	Infrastructure//Physical characteristics of district	District characteristics
The 5th District isn't just Oklahoma County, it's Seminole and Pottawatomie Counties as well. They have unique challenges and opportunities that are different from the suburban and urban parts of the district.	Rural characteristics of district	District characteristics
According to the Commerce Department, there are over 85,000 open jobs in Oklahoma because we don't have a skilled workforce to fill them... Congress needs to ensure middle class Oklahoma families have the opportunity to succeed, including raising the minimum wage.	Jobs and the economy//stereotypically male issues	Downplay gender
Kendra believes we should incentivize good corporate behavior: if they create jobs, raise wages, offer good benefits, and are responsible community citizens then let's reward that behavior - true tax reform should help everyone, not just shareholders and CEO's.	Tax reform//stereotypically male issue	Downplay gender

Elissa Slotkin Codes

Raw Data	Preliminary Codes	Final Codes
*After college at Cornell University and a few years working for non-profit organizations, I went to graduate school at Columbia University in New York City.	Education	Candidate characteristics
*I was recruited to join the Central Intelligence Agency as a Middle East analyst, and within a year of joining the	Work Experience	Candidate characteristics

agency, I was deployed to Baghdad...		
*I took on a series of leadership roles at the Defense Department, and until January 2017, I oversaw policy at the Pentagon on Russia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa as Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense	Work experience	Candidate characteristics
In contrast, last May, Rep. Bishop stood in the Rose Garden and celebrated his vote for a bill that not only would have gutted protections for those with pre-existing conditions like my mom, but included what the AARP calls an “age tax,” which would have allowed insurance companies to charge older Americans up to five times more than young people.	Contrasting viewpoint on issues	Opponent characteristics
I believe all Americans should have access to healthcare they can afford, regardless of pre-existing conditions.	Healthcare//stereotypically softer issue	Emphasize gender
I believe that all children deserve access to a high-quality education that will allow them to compete in the 21st century economy — both the practical skills <i>and</i> the critical thinking they need to succeed.	Education//stereotypically softer issue	Emphasize gender
Growing economic opportunity begins by investing in talent in our communities. We must train the next generation to take on roles in Michigan’s 21st century economy by connecting our workforce to the training that will prepare them for the trades, advanced manufacturing, technical, and cyber jobs of the future.	Jobs and the economy//stereotypically male issues	Downplay gender
Michigan’s infrastructure is at near crisis levels and in serious need of investment. We all know the challenges, and we have the skilled workforce in our state ready to rebuild the roads, bridges, pipelines, and other critical infrastructure that our economy depends on.	Infrastructure//Physical characteristics of district	District characteristics
Social Security and Medicare are a promise — one that seniors have paid into through a lifetime of hard work.	Medicare and social security//Stereotypically softer issues	Emphasize gender

<p>The United States must be ready to confront both existing international challenges and new threats, from terrorism to sophisticated cyber-attacks. To do so, the United States must make investments in its military, intelligence, and diplomatic power – and continue to work with allies and partners around the globe – to confront common challenges</p>	<p>National security//stereotypically male competency</p>	<p>Downplay gender</p>
<p>We must do more to ensure women have every opportunity to chart their own paths, rise up in their careers, and provide for their families.</p>	<p>Women’s equality//feminist issue</p>	<p>Emphasize gender</p>
<p>It is precisely because of my experience both operating firearms and working in national security that I believe we must pass common-sense gun safety legislation.</p>	<p>Gun control//stereotypically male issue</p>	<p>Downplay gender</p>

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