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Women Representing Women's Interests in Congress

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Eastern Illinois University

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"Women Representing Women's Interests in Congress"

By

Carmen R. Allen

Thesis

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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Abstract

Do congresswomen try to represent women’s interests in Congress? Are congresswomen more likely than congressmen to sponsor bills dealing with women’s issues? In the past, research has shown that women do seem to sponsor more legislation than men that deals directly with women. Research has also shown that women legislators feel that they are responsible for representing the interests of all women. This research looks at bill sponsorship in the U.S. House of Representatives during the 106th and 107th Congresses. The data from these two Congresses show that women do sponsor more women’s issue legislation than men do. They also sponsor more gender gap issue legislation than do men. This research supports previous findings that women in Congress are more likely than men to sponsor women’s issue legislation.
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Chapter One

Introduction

Representation is one of the essential concepts in the study of Congress. Many studies have examined how congressmen and women represent their constituents. Research by Miller and Stokes (1963) analyzed the difference between the beliefs of constituents and the way legislators voted. Fenno’s *Home Style* (1978) explores the different ways congressmen try to represent their districts.

Whom do congresswomen try to represent? Do they try to represent only the interests of the constituents of their district? Or, do they try to represent the interests of all American women?

Since the early 1900’s, women have been serving in the U.S. Congress. In 1917, Jeanette Rankin was the first woman ever elected to Congress. Rebecca Latimer Felton, a Democrat, became the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate in 1922 (CAWP 2003). Between 1917 and 2003, 215 women have served in the U.S. Congress (CAWP 2003). Many of these women have been appointed or elected to succeed their husbands who had died while in office. By 1962, forty-five percent of all female House members had been congressional widows (Gertzog 2002). There have been only seven women who have served in both the House and the Senate (CAWP 2003). In the 108th Congress, fourteen women serve in the Senate and fifty-nine women serve in the House of Representatives. This is the most women ever to serve at one time in the U.S. Congress.

Women are not only increasing in numbers in Congress; they are also gaining important leadership positions in Congress. In 2003, Nancy Pelosi gained
the highest position ever achieved by a woman in Congress when she became House Democratic Leader (CAWP 2003). In the Senate, five women serve in leadership roles and two serve as committee chairs. Senator Susan Collins is chair of the Committee on Governmental Affairs and Senator Olympia Snowe chairs the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship (CAWP 2003). Women have also achieved several leadership roles in the House. Republican Deborah Pryce is currently the chair of the House Republican Conference. Democrats Jan Schakowsky and Maxine Waters are both Chief Deputy Whips. Women are beginning to reach higher leadership positions in Congress; however, they still have a long way to go.

With more and more women in Congress, questions arise about women as legislators. Do women primarily sponsor legislation that affects women? Do they try to represent women’s issues? Would electing more women to Congress change the type of legislation that is sponsored?

Hanna Pitkin differentiates between symbolic and substantive representation (Pitkin 1967). Are women in Congress a symbolic or a substantive representation? It is important to determine if women are merely symbolically representing women by just being in Congress or are they truly acting and legislating on the behalf of women’s interests.

In 1999, Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones said, “Women need to be encouraged to be right here on the floor...they need to think about how can we be here on the floor of the U.S. Congress talking about issues that impact the entire country and only fifty-seven of us are women” (Swers 2002). Her comment implies
that electing more women will influence the range of policy issues considered by Congress (Swers 2002). In 1967 Hanna Pitkin believed that increasing “descriptive representation” will lead to better “substantive representation” (Swers 2002). She believed that electing more women would lead to better representation of women’s interests.

Many Congresswomen claim to feel a commitment to represent women’s interests in Congress. Representative Leslie Byrne (D-VA) said that although most of them did not come in as “women’s issue people”, they found that if they did not step in then women’s issues would not be addressed (Carroll 2000). The women entering Congress found that family concerns were not being addressed. Representative Marge Roukema (R-NJ) commented “Well, nobody else is going to do it; I’m going to do it” when asked about advocating for women’s issues (Carroll 2000). Many Congresswomen have made similar comments. The question then becomes, “Do women in Congress sponsor more women’s issue legislation than men?”

This research looks at what type of legislation women in Congress sponsor. Do women sponsor more legislation than men dealing with women’s, children’s, and family issues? If women sponsor more legislation that is important to all women, then electing more will provide better representation of women’s interests in Congress. Dodson et al. (1995) showed that more women in Congress make a difference. There was a significant increase of women elected in the 103rd Congress. During this Congress, there was also a jump in legislative activity on women’s issues. The 103rd Congress passed pieces of legislation on women’s
health programs, domestic violence, expanded access to abortion, and increased childcare spending (Dodson et al. 1995). For example, Congresswomen Pat Schroeder (D-CO), Louise Slaughter (D-NY), and Connie Morella (R-MD) were among the chief sponsors of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) that was signed by President Clinton in 1994 (Hawkesworth et al. 2001). The Women's Health Equity Act (WHEA) is another example of how women were very influential during the 103rd Congress. Congresswomen Pat Schroeder (D-CO) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) were concerned that medical research and health studies only included results for men. Along with other women in Congress, they worked on improving research on women's health (Hawkesworth et al. 2001). Women in Congress can increase the attention paid to women's issues.

Women make a difference in Congress. Women legislators can be agenda-setters. Legislators help set the agenda in the House through bill sponsorship and cosponsorship. By sponsoring or cosponsoring women's issue legislation, women in the House can focus the agenda more on women's issues. In a study by Ainsworth and Hanson (1996), they said that one of the reasons Senators sponsor legislation is to alter the issue agenda. In an article by Whitby (2002), he says that bill sponsorship is critical because it sets the legislative agenda. They also set the agenda through committee and sub-committee work. Certain committees are more likely to handle women's issue bills. Women can influence women's issue bills by being on committees that deal with these issues. Through committees and sponsorship of legislation, women legislators can act as agenda-setters in the House.
One way women have influence in Congress is through bill sponsorship. Bill sponsorship is important in Congress. This is one area that each member of Congress has control over. Bills must be sponsored before they can be voted on. This gives the individual member control over what types of bills are sponsored and voted on. Hall (1996) notes that a roll-call vote represents a preference, but not the intensity of the preference. He says, "It is the intensity of the representative’s preferences that determines which issues become priorities" (Hall 1996). Bill sponsorship shows what issues have become priorities to the representative.

Women can use bill sponsorship to address women’s issues in Congress. Women can use bill sponsorship to represent women’s interest in Congress. Women in the 106th and 107th Congresses have used bill sponsorship to address women’s issues. For example, Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) sponsored a resolution that would promote the economic security and safety of victims of domestic and sexual violence. Another example is a resolution sponsored by Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) that stressed the importance regarding prenatal care for women and children. Women use bill sponsorship to represent women’s interest in Congress.

This paper will examine legislation sponsored in the 106th and 107th Congress. It will look at all pieces of legislation sponsored by the 435 members of the House of Representatives during these two terms. It will compare the type of legislation sponsored by women in the House compared to the men in the House. A case study of six congresswomen is also included. This shows how some
congresswomen approach women’s issues. Do they mention it on their web sites? Are they on committees that handle women’s issues? What types of women’s issue legislation are they sponsoring? The case study provides a more in-depth look into how congresswomen represent women’s interests in Congress. The data answers the question “What type of legislation do women Congress sponsor?” The research determines if women really do try to represent all women’s interests in Congress. Are women transforming Congress through bill sponsorship? This research is important because if women sponsor different types of legislation than men, electing more women will have an impact on Congress and the bills that are sponsored. If women sponsor types of bills that are similar to the types sponsored by men, then electing more women to Congress will not have much of an impact. This research will show if gender is an important variable in bill sponsorship.

The first chapter in this thesis is a literature review that includes an overview of previous research on bill sponsorship, women’s issues, gender differences in Congress, and women representing women in Congress. The next chapter is a discussion about the methods used in this analysis and lists the hypotheses that are tested. Next is a chapter that describes six short case studies about some of the women in Congress. Following the case study chapter is the analysis of the data. The final chapter discusses the findings and conclusions.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

This literature review provides an overview of previous research. There has been some research on bill sponsorship. Schiller's (1995) study provides a good overall analysis of bill sponsorship. There has also been some research on the influence of party on bill sponsorship. A study by Swers and Caiazza (2000) briefly discusses some of the influences of party on bill sponsorship. There has also been research examining cosponsorship and committees, and how members of Congress use these activities to set the agenda in Congress. Research has been conducted looking at women's issues and how to define women's issues. Other research has described the differences between men and women in Congress. A study by Carroll (2000) examines how congresswomen feel about representing women's interests in Congress. This literature review covers these topics of research.

Research on Bill Sponsorship

This research uses bill sponsorship to determine if women try to represent women's interests in Congress. Other measures could have been chosen, such as roll call vote analysis. One could analyze if women vote for or against legislation that relates to women's interests. So, why choose bill sponsorship? Bill sponsorship is important for many reasons. Bill sponsorship is one of the ways members of Congress set the agenda. Another reason members sponsor legislation is in hopes of passing legislation (Pearson 2001). Women may sponsor legislation that they hope will pass and improve the lives of women throughout the United
States. Bill sponsorship is a good indicator of which members of Congress are trying to sponsor women’s issues legislation (Swers and Caiazza 2000).

In an article looking at why Senators sponsor legislation, Schiller (1995) found that sponsorship is a strong indicator of which issues Congressmen or women want to be associated with. Before sponsoring a bill, members of Congress must carefully consider the costs of associating with a bill while ignoring other issues. For one reason, every bill that is sponsored by a member could be seized upon by a challenger in a reelection campaign. Many factors influence the types of bills members choose to sponsor. Party is one factor that influences the types of bills members sponsor. Democrats and Republicans have different attitudes and opinions about the size and role of government. Because of party identification, members may sponsor bills based on their party’s ideology. Seniority is another factor that influences the bills sponsored (Schiller 1995). In the Senate, members with more seniority sponsor a greater number of bills compared to the newer members. There are factors that influence bill sponsorship such as the size of state the member represents, the state’s economic interests, and the number of committees that a member sits on. Bill sponsorship is important because it gives an overall definition of what the member of Congress supports. Looking at bill sponsorship gives us a good idea about who is representing women’s interests in Congress.

There have been a few other studies on bill sponsorship. Ainsworth and Hanson (1996) suggest that Senators sponsor legislation in an attempt to change policy, alter the issue agenda, appease constituents and groups, and establish a
reputation in a policy area. Browne and Ringquist (1985) believe that bill sponsorship also serves the personal goals of the legislator. Whitby (2002) examined bill sponsorship among African American representatives. He shows that there is a connection between Black descriptive and substantive representation. However, he also found that the senior Black members were more likely to sponsor Black-interest legislation compared to the junior Black members. He also found that Black members that come from safe-districts were more likely to sponsor Black-interest legislation than ones that come from competitive districts. These studies show that there are many variables that influence what types of bills members decide to sponsor.

**Research on the Influence of Party on Bill Sponsorship**

The literature also shows that party and the President may also play a role in the types of legislation that is sponsored. During the 103rd Congress, Bill Clinton’s campaign benefited from the gender gap and highlighted women’s issues (Swers and Caiazza 2000). The agenda during this Congress was open to women’s issue proposals (Swers and Caiazza 2000). In 1994, the Republicans regained the majority in Congress, and there was a smaller opportunity for women’s issues (Swers and Caiazza 2000). The party in control of Congress and the party in control of the White House are important variables to consider when looking at the number of women’s issues legislation sponsored. Certain times provide more opportunity for women’s issues legislation sponsorship.
Research on Cosponsorship and Committees

Congresswomen also influence the congressional agenda through cosponsorship of legislation and committee work. In her study, Swers (2002) finds that liberal Democratic women cosponsored the largest number of women’s issue bills in the 103rd and 104th Congresses. She also found that Republican women were more likely to cosponsor feminist legislation than were Republican men (Swers 2002). Other research has reached similar conclusions. Wolbrecht (2000) found that between 1953 to 1992, congresswomen were more likely to cosponsor bills concerning women’s rights than congressmen were. Swers concludes that gender differences in cosponsorship is more evidence that more women in Congress would lead to more women’s issue legislation on the agenda. Through work on committees and subcommittees, congresswomen also help set the agenda. On committees, legislators set the agenda by convening hearings, drafting bills, and moving or blocking legislation. In her book, Swers (2002) examines whether or not congresswomen are more likely than men to use their committee positions to include women’s interests in committee legislation. She found that both Democratic congresswomen and Republican congresswomen use their committee positions to advocate for women’s interests. She believes that increasing women’s presence on key committees and subcommittees will improve congressional attention to women’s issues. One example of the work congresswomen do on committees comes from the appropriations bills funding the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education during the 103rd Congress. Because the sub-committee was not all-male as in the past but included four women, a record
$600 billion for breast cancer and ovarian cancer research and funding for breast and cervical cancer prevention programs was included in the appropriations bill (Dodson et al 1995).

Research on Women’s Issues

The literature shows that women in Congress do seem to sponsor more legislation that deals with women’s issues. Jeanette Rankin, the first woman elected to Congress, introduced legislation that led to the enfranchisement of all women citizens of the U.S. (Kaptur 1996). Being the first woman in Congress, she had to consider how her vote would reflect upon women (Kaptur 1996). Before World War II, even if legislation dealt with women’s issues, most bills introduced by women reinforced women’s traditional roles (Flammang 1997). Scholars that looked at women in Congress during the 1970’s found that women were more reluctant to press for women’s issues (Thomas 1994). During the early 1970’s, women officials wanted to distance themselves from the women’s liberation movement (Flammang 1997). Many women legislators felt a need to represent women, but were self-proclaimed anti-feminists (Flammang 1997). By the 1980’s, research shows that women in Congress and in state legislatures placed a higher priority to bills dealing with children’s, women’s, and family issues (Thomas 1994). Thomas (1994) found that in 1988 forty-two percent of women had at least one priority bill dealing with women’s, children’s, and family issues, but only sixteen percent of men had at least one priority bill dealing with these issues. By the 1990’s more congresswomen had a strong commitment to represent the interests of American women (Hawkesworth et al 2001). In more recent years, the literature
also shows that women sponsor more legislation that deals with women’s issues. A study of the 103rd and 104th Congresses shows that female representatives will work to incorporate the interests of women, children, and families into the congressional agenda (Swers 2002).

**Research on Defining Women’s Issues**

Other research tries to determine exactly what are women’s issues. Women’s issues can be defined as bills that are important to women because they seek to achieve equality for women, address women’s special needs, or confront issues with which women have traditionally been concerned in their role as caregivers (Swers 2002). Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney lists several issues that directly impact women such as women’s health research, abortion rights, and domestic violence (Maloney 2001). Sapiro gives three interpretations of women’s issues: “issues that women are more interested in as a result of their domestic concerns; issues that women are more interested in than men, or issues that women have a particular viewpoint from which preferences are derived” (Sapiro 1981). In a study on different images of men and women in Congress, David Niven and Jeremy Zilber define women’s issues as initiatives that exclusively affect women, initiatives that primarily affect women, and initiatives that “fall at the intersection of family, children, and compassion” (2001).

It is difficult for women to represent women’s interests if they can not be defined. Because of the diversity of women in the United States, legislating for women is a difficult task (Hawkesworth 2001). For instance, the issue of reproductive rights can be very divisive among women. During the 104th Congress,
six out of the seven newly elected Republican women adopted a pro-life stance (Hawkesworth 2001). With the Congresswomen divided between pro-life and pro-choice, which position should they take to represent all women's interest on abortion? Certain issues tend to affect women more than men. During welfare reform in the 103rd Congress, two of every three poor adults in the U.S. were women (Hawkesworth 2001). Clearly legislation dealing with welfare reform was very important to a large number of women. In some ways, crime legislation has become a woman's issue. During the 103rd Congress, women members worked on passing the Violence Against Women Act, anti-stalking legislation, and legislation to ban assault weapons (Hawkesworth 2001). Although it can be difficult to determine what is the interest of American women, there are many issues that most agree on that are in the best interest of American women.

**Research on Gender Differences in Congress**

There are a number of studies that deal with the different ways men and women legislate. Some studies suggest that women will not only change the types of legislation in Congress, but also the process. Gelb and Palley (1996) said that congresswomen are better at constituent service and building consensus. Others studies suggest that women will make the legislative process more humane, more cooperative, and less cutthroat (Thomas 1994). Wolgast (1987) suggests that women’s natural capacities for compassion, cooperation, and patience are exactly the qualities that ought to be brought into the political realm.

A large amount of research deals with the differences is the types of legislation men and women sponsor. A study in 1977 showed that after party was
controlled for, congresswomen were more supportive of social welfare legislation and were less supportive of defense spending and interventionist foreign policies than congressmen (Flammang 1997). Swers (2002) found that in the 103rd and 104th Congresses, women are more likely to sponsor women’s issue bills than are the male legislators. From research of the 103rd and 104th Congresses, there is evidence that women in Congress exhibit greater interest in the pursuit of women’s issue legislation than do their male colleagues (Swers 2002). Women have consistently been shown to support a larger role in government in assisting the poor (Swers 2002). Swers (2002) also says that women are more likely to support increased spending on social services. Other studies have also shown that women are less likely than men to support military intervention (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999).

Besides sponsoring more women’s issues legislation, women legislators are generally more liberal than men legislators. A 1977 Center for American Woman and Politics study found that female officials at all levels of government were more liberal than male officials (Flammang 1997). A study by Burrell (1994) also showed that congresswomen are generally more liberal than congressmen. Swers (1998) shows that women are more liberal than men especially on gender-related issues.

Within each party, women are more likely to sponsor women's issue legislation than are Congressmen (Swers and Caiiazza 2001). During the 103rd Congress, eighty-three percent of Republican women sponsored women’s issue bills compared to only thirty-seven percent of Republican men (Swers and Caiiazza
Even though women compared to men sponsor more women’s issue legislation, women still sponsored seventy-eight percent of their legislation dealing with other issues not related toward women, children or family (Niven and Zilber 2001). However, men devoted eighty-nine percent of their legislative agenda to non-women’s issues (Niven and Zilber 2001). Women still spend a great amount of time on matters outside of women’s issues.

**Research on Women Representing Women**

Other literature deals with how women feel about representing all women. Democrat and Republican Congresswomen believe they have an obligation to represent women in Congress (Hawkesworth et al 2001). Jane Mansbridge defines “surrogate representation” as representation that occurs when a representative represents the interests of voters beyond the boundaries of the representative’s district (Carroll 2000). Do congresswomen feel that they represent the issues of all women in America? In October 1995, Representative Patsy Mink (D-HI) said,

“When I first came to Congress in 1965, I had a notion that my basic responsibility was to my constituents and my state. And gradually as I took my place here, I realized that I had a far greater role to play and that it extended far beyond just caring for the constituents needs – that I had to speak for all women in America” (Carroll 2000).

Representative Rosa DeLauro also believes that women in Congress must represent all women. In 1995 she said,

“I’ve always thought that there was probably more that women had in common, whether they’re people from urban areas, inner cities, or
suburban areas, or people who are from rural and farm
districts....There are what I call 'the ties that bind’” (Carroll 2000).

The responsibility to represent all women gives the Congresswomen a different
perspective on all legislation, even if it is not specifically a women’s issue.
Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehitnen (R-FL) says,

“The responsibility to represent all women makes us more sensitive
to the legislation that we’re passing; how that legislation would
impact families, and especially single mothers and children
(Hawkesworth et al 2001).”

A study of congressional members’ websites shows that eighty-four percent of
women compared to only sixty-three percent of men mention their record on
women’s issues on the website (Niven and Zilber 2001). The literature shows that
most congresswomen feel a responsibility to represent all women in America.

Conclusion

The literature shows that bill sponsorship is an important indicator of what
issues a member of Congress thinks are important. Research has also shown that
women feel an obligation to represent the interests of all American women.
Congresswomen seem to be fulfilling this obligation according to past research.
Studies have shown that women do try to sponsor more women’s issue legislation
than men do.

This research will provide more support for the idea that women in
Congress try to represent all women. It will show that through bill sponsorship
women are influencing the legislative agenda. This research will show that women
not only say that they feel obligated to represent women that they actually do represent women. This study provides an update of research done by Thomas, Pearson, and Swers.
Chapter Three

Methodology

Case Study Methods

This research includes a case study about six congresswomen: Jo Ann Emerson, Sue Myrick, Deborah Pryce, Rosa DeLauro, Carolyn Maloney, and Nita Lowey. This provides a more in-depth analysis of the women's issue and gender gap issue legislation sponsored by congresswomen. It also describes some of the information listed on the websites by the congresswomen regarding women's issues. The case studies are important because they examine some of the other ways congresswomen act as agenda-setters. Cosponsorship is another way women in Congress help set the agenda. According to Swers (2002), cosponsorship allows members to take positions on a wide range of issues; however, this does not reveal the depth of members' commitment to the issues. Women can help set the agenda in Congress through bill sponsorship, cosponsorship, and committee assignments. The case studies will show how some of the congresswomen are using these methods of agenda setting to press for women's interests in Congress.

For the case study, I selected three Republican women, Jo Ann Emerson, Sue Myrick, and Deborah Pryce, and three Democratic women, Rosa DeLauro, Carolyn Maloney, and Nita Lowey. The women that I selected were chosen because they sponsored many women's issue bills and gender gap issue bills. These were congresswomen that really tried to bring attention to women's issues through bill sponsorship. I also selected these women because they were members of both the 106th and 107th Congress. The case study adds to the quantitative
research that is examined later on in the thesis. It provides a more detailed look at how women try to represent women's interests in Congress.

**Bill Sponsorship Methods**

In 2002, Michelle Swers conducted a study looking at bill sponsorship by women in Congress. She analyzed a sample of bills sponsored in the 103rd and 104th Congress (Swers 2002). She then divided the women’s issues bills into three categories: feminist, social welfare, antifeminist (Swers 2002). In the late 1980’s, Sue Thomas also conducted a similar study of women state legislators and divided proposed legislation into eight categories: women’s issues, child and family issues, issues of education and medical care, welfare, criminal justice, energy and environment, budget and governmental efficacy, and business and transportation (Thomas 1994). A third study conducted by Kathryn Pearson (2001) examined Congresswomen in the 106th Congress. Her study divides women’s interests into two categories. The first category is women’s issues, which include women’s health, abortion rights, women’s rights, violence against women, women’s economic and educational equity, and childcare (Pearson 2001). The second category includes issues in which there is a significant gender gap in public opinion (Pearson 2001).

The methodology used for this research is similar to that of Pearson’s. This method was selected because Pearson uses three broad categories to compare the legislation by men and women in Congress. Swers’ research examines how many bills are feminist and antifeminist. She is more concerned with the types of women’s bills that are being sponsored. This research is not concerned with
whether or not the bills are feminist or antifeminist, as long as it is a women's issue bill. The research by Thomas uses eight different categories. This creates too many categories to get a clear picture if women are sponsoring legislation for women. The categories used by Pearson combine several of the categories used by Thomas. The three categories show whether women sponsor more women's issue bills or gender gap issues bills than men in Congress do.

For this research, data were collected for the 106th and 107th Congresses. It analyzes the bills sponsored by the 435 members of the House of Representatives in both terms. This study looks only at the House of Representatives. In doing this research, there were not enough women in the Senate at the time to get an accurate examination of how legislation sponsored by women in the Senate differs from that sponsored by men in the Senate. The research is an analysis of all legislation sponsored by the members. This includes bills, resolutions, and amendments. The research includes only sponsorship of legislation. Co-sponsorship for all 435 members of the House for both terms would be too lengthy, and moreover, would not give a clear enough picture about what issues are important to members of the House, because many members may co-sponsor a bill.

The data for the research were collected from THOMAS. The list of Representatives came from the Congressional Directory for the 106th and 107th Congresses. This list also includes party identification. Because there were only three Independents in the House during the 106th and 107th Congresses, they will be excluded. The list of women members was collected from the Center for the American Woman and Politics.
The legislation was divided into three categories: women's issues, gender gap issues, and other issues. This is similar to the categories used by Pearson. The women's issues are legislation that directly affects the lives of women. This category includes: women's health, reproductive rights, women's economic equity, childcare, recognition of women's accomplishments, domestic violence, anti-stalking legislation, and child support legislation. Unlike the study done by Swers that divided the women's issues based on feminism, the women's issues category does not mean feminist legislation. For example, reproductive rights can include legislation that is pro-choice and also legislation that is pro-life. For example, Representative Tom Coburn, a Republican from Oklahoma, sponsored an amendment that would prohibit the development or approval of any drug intended solely for the chemical inducement of abortion (THOMAS 2003). There were several pieces of legislation sponsored dealing with women's health. For example, Representative Jim Saxton (R-NJ) sponsored a resolution that would provide for coverage of annual screening pap smears, screening pelvic exams, and clinical breast exams under the Medicare Program (THOMAS 2003). There was also legislation sponsored in the House dealing with child support. Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) sponsored a resolution to improve the collection of child support in interstate cases (THOMAS 2003). The women's issue legislation directly affects the lives of women.

The gender gap issues are ones, based on opinion polls such as the National Election Study; women generally rank as most important or very important. They are issues that women rank more important than men do. One example of this is a
questioned asked in a CBS/New York Times poll in 1996. When asked, “Do you think the government in Washington should guarantee medical care for all people who don’t have health insurance?”, sixty-nine percent of women compared to only fifty-eight percent of men believed that the government should guarantee medical care for those who do not have health insurance (CAWP 1997). In another example, women respondents in a 1998 GSS favored gun control more than men by an eleven percent margin (Pearson 2001). The gender gap issues category includes: education, gun control, welfare reform, Social Security and Medicare legislation, environmental regulations, and health care reform. One example of gun control legislation was a resolution sponsored by Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), which would prohibit the importation of dangerous firearms that have been modified to avoid the ban on semiautomatic assault weapons (THOMAS 2003). A resolution sponsored by Representative David Wu (D-OR) is an example of education legislation. The resolution would amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to reduce class size through the use of fully qualified teachers (THOMAS 2003). One example of environmental regulation legislation was a resolution sponsored by Representative Rick Lazio (R-NY). The resolution would address the acid rain and greenhouse gas impacts of electric utility restructuring and to encourage the development of renewable energy resources (THOMAS 2003). Gender gap issues are ones that women in opinion polls say are important to them more than men.
The third category is other issues. This would include legislation dealing
with defense, international relations, economic issues, and anything else that does
not fit into the first two categories.

After dividing the date into these categories, there are several hypotheses
that can be tested.

Hypothesis 1: Female members in the House of Representatives sponsor
more women’s issues legislation than male members in the House of
Representatives.

The data can be used to show if female members do sponsor more women’s issues
legislation than men do. Do women members try to represent women’s interests in
Congress?

Hypothesis 2: Women members in the House of Representatives sponsor
more gender gap issues legislation than do male members in the House of
Representatives.

The issues defined as gender gap issues are the ones that in public opinion polls
women rate as more important to them than men. Do women in Congress try to
sponsor issues that women have stated in polls that are more important to them than
to men?

Hypothesis 3: Democrat members in the House of Representatives sponsor
more women’s issues legislation than do Republican members in the House
of Representatives.
Hypothesis 4: Democrat members in the House of Representatives sponsor more gender gap issues legislation than do Republican members in the House of Representatives.

Party is an important variable in determining if women try to represent women's interest in Congress. Do women sponsor more women's issues legislation because they are women, or is it because of their party identity? Most female representatives are Democrats. In the 107th, forty-four women were Democrats and only eighteen were Republicans (CAWP 2000). It may not be that women are sponsoring more women's issues legislation, but that because most women are Democrats, they sponsor more women's legislation. Are there differences in the parties between genders?

Hypothesis 5: Democrat women sponsor more women's issue legislation than Democrat men in the House.

Hypothesis 6: Democrat women sponsor more gender gap issue legislation than Democrat men in the House.

Hypothesis 7: Republican women sponsor more women's issue legislation than Republican men in the House.

Hypothesis 8: Republican women sponsor more gender gap issue legislation than Republican men in the House.

The difference between the 106th Congress and the 107th Congress is the party that controls the White House. Does it make a difference in the type of legislation that is sponsored if the President is a Democrat, as during the 106th Congress, or a Republican, as during the 107th Congress?
Hypothesis 9: Members of the 106th Congress sponsor more women’s issues legislation than do members of the 107th Congress.

Hypothesis 10: Members of the 106th Congress sponsor more gender gap issues legislation than do members of the 107th Congress.

These ten hypotheses will be tested using the data that has been collected and broken down into the three categories.
Chapter Four

Case Study of Women in the House of Representatives

This chapter includes case studies on six congresswomen. This chapter is divided by Party. Although women in general sponsor more women’s issue and gender gap issue legislation than men, there are differences between Republican congresswomen and Democrat Congresswomen. In her research, Swers (2002) shows that Democrat women sponsor more women’s issue legislation than Republican women. These two chapters contain a short biography about the congresswoman and also some important issues that each woman lists on her website. These six congresswomen were chosen, because they each sponsored many women’s issue bills and gender gap bills. There is also an account about the congresswoman as an agenda-setter. This includes a description about some of the bills the congresswoman sponsors. It also includes a look at some of the bills that the congresswoman cosponsors. There is also a list of the committees that the congresswoman was on during the 107th Congress. These case studies will provide a more detailed description of how the congresswomen try to represent women’s interest in Congress. The case studies will explore some of the other ways that congresswomen represent women in Congress, and the different ways they can influence the legislative agenda.

Republican Women in the House of Representatives

Jo Ann Emerson

Representative Jo Ann Emerson is a Republican from the eighth district of Missouri. She was first elected in 1992. During the 107th Congress, Emerson
served on the Appropriations Committee. Although this is not a committee that directly handles women’s issues, this committee decides on spending. Congresswomen on this committee could have a lot of influence on the amount of money being spent on women’s issues, such as women’s health. On her website, she says that she is an “advocate for farm families”. She believes in the promotion of America’s agriculture, hunger relief, pro-life issues, and access to affordable prescription drugs. There is no direct mention of women’s issues on her website, although she does mention health care and education.

During the 106th and 107th Congresses, Representative Emerson sponsored four women’s issue bills and seventeen gender gap issue bills. Three of her women’s issue bills were resolutions proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States with respect to the right to life. These resolutions reflect her pro-life position on abortion. The other women’s issue bill that she sponsored was a resolution that would develop monitoring systems to promote safe motherhood. She also sponsored several gender gap issue bills including resolutions proposing an amendment to the Constitution relating to voluntary school prayer, and amending the Social Security Act to provide affordable prescription drugs to low-income Medicare beneficiaries. Another example of a gender gap bill that was sponsored by Representative Emerson was an amendment that expressed the sense of Congress by calling on the entertainment industry to stop portrayals of pointless acts of brutality by eliminating gratuitous violence in movies, televisions, music, and video games. The House passed this amendment.
During the 106th and 107th Congresses, Emerson cosponsored 628 bills. About five percent of these bills that she cosponsored were women's issue bills. For example, she cosponsored a resolution during the 106th Congress that expressed the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the importance of education, early detection and treatment, and other efforts in the fight against breast cancer. She also cosponsored a resolution that honored the women who served the United States in the military during World War II. Although Representative Emerson has not sponsored as many women's issue bills as other women, she has cosponsored many women's issue bills. She also seems to be working on gender gap issues such as education and health care.

**Sue Myrick**

Representative Sue Myrick is also a Republican. She was first elected in 1994 from North Carolina. She is on the Rules Committee and also serves as the Vice-Chair of the Subcommittee on Technology and the House. She is also serving as a deputy whip during the 108th Congress. The Rules Committee is an important committee, but not one that is directly dealing with women's issues. She also works on the Speakers' Drug Task Force and a member of President Bush's Working Group on Iraq. There is no direct mention of women's issues on her website.

During the 106th and 107th Congresses, Myrick sponsored nine women's issue bills and one gender gap issue bill. One of her women's issue bills was a resolution honoring the life and work of Susan B. Anthony. Another women's issue bill sponsored by Representative Myrick was a resolution that would provide for the
consideration of the bill that would prohibit the procedure known as partial-birth abortion. She also sponsored a women’s issue bill that would amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide medical assistance for certain women screened and found to have breast or cervical cancer under a federally funded screening program. The reason for sponsorship of this resolution is related to her advocacy on breast cancer, because she was a breast cancer survivor.

Myrick cosponsored 587 bills during the 106th and 107th Congresses of which six percent were women’s issue bills. One of the resolutions that she cosponsored was a resolution that expressed the importance of prenatal care for women and children. She also cosponsored a resolution that expressed the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to crisis pregnancy centers. Through sponsorship and cosponsorship, Representative Myrick is bringing women’s issues to the agenda.

**Deborah Pryce**

Congresswoman Deborah Pryce, a Republican, was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1992 from Ohio. In the 108th Congress, she is serving as the Republican Conference Chairman, the highest-ranking Republican woman to serve in the House. She also serves on the House Rules Committee. During the 107th Congress, she served on the Rules Committee and Homeland Security Committee. Neither of these committees deals with women’s issues. She was instrumental in the enactment of the Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act in 1999. She also founded Hope Street Kids, a non-profit organization focused on pediatric cancer research. She has also been active on adoption issues such as
expanding the adoption tax credit to make it more financially feasible for families to adopt. On her website, she mentions the issues of health care and education but does not directly mention women’s issues.

During the 106th and 107th Congresses, Representative Pryce sponsored seven women’s issue bills and twenty-two gender gap issue bills. An example of a women’s issue bill sponsored by Representative Pryce was one that would authorize the provision of educational and health care assistance to the women and children of Afghanistan. She was not only advocating for women in the United States, but also for women in other countries. Another women’s issue resolution sponsored by Pryce was one that would improve grants to states for improved access to childcare. Some of her gender gap issue bills were related to children. One example was the bill that would increase efforts for childhood cancer awareness, treatment, and research. This bill passed the house by a 415-0 vote in 2000. Another example was a resolution that would reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect. During the 106th and 107th Congresses, she cosponsored 502 bills. Approximately five percent of the bills she cosponsored were women’s issue bills. She cosponsored a bill that would close the achievement gap in education with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind. This bill is considered a gender gap issue bill, not a women’s issue bill. She also cosponsored a resolution that expressed the sense of the House of Representatives with regard to the United States Women’s Soccer Team and its winning performance in the 1999 Women’s World Cup tournament. Representative Pryce works for women’s interests through bill sponsorship and cosponsorship.
The Republican women in the House of Representatives use bill sponsorship, cosponsorship, and committees to represent women’s interests. Although they might not be directly involved in many of the “liberal” women’s issues, they are still very active in promoting women’s interests. They work for women’s health issues, education, and family issues.

**Democrat Women in the House of Representatives**

*Rosa DeLauro*

Representative Rosa DeLauro is a Democrat from Connecticut and was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1990. She serves on the House Appropriations Committee and House Budget Committee. During the 107th Congress, she served on Appropriations and Homeland Security. She was also Assistant to the Democratic Leader. Through Appropriations and being the Assistant to the Democratic Leader, she can bring women’s issues to the agenda in Congress. She has worked for tax cuts for children’s health care and tax cuts for education. She has also been influential in increasing funding for breast and cervical cancer. Representative DeLauro has also been active on legislation that would make childcare more affordable, improve public education, and improve gun safety. She does directly mention women’s issues on her website.

During the 106th and 107th Congresses, DeLauro sponsored fourteen women’s issue bills and five gender gap issue bills. One women’s issue bill was a resolution that recognized the unique effects that proposals to reform Social Security may have on women. Another women’s issue bill sponsored by Representative DeLauro was a resolution that would establish a grant program to
improve the quality of childcare services for families with children less than 3 years of age. Another resolution that she sponsored recognized the importance of sports in fostering the leadership ability and success of women. One example of a gender gap issue resolution sponsored by DeLauro was to increase tax incentives for higher education. Representative DeLauro sponsored a lot of women's issue bills during the 106th and 107th Congresses. She cosponsored 925 bills during the 106th and 107th Congresses. Almost nine percent of bills cosponsored by DeLauro were women's issue bills. One of the bills she cosponsored was a resolution recognizing the severity of cervical cancer. She also cosponsored a resolution that recognized the significance of Equal Pay Day to demonstrate the disparity between wages paid to men and women. Through committee assignments, leadership positions in the Democratic Party, bill sponsorship, and cosponsorship, Representative DeLauro is working to bring women's issues to the congressional agenda.

**Carolyn Maloney**

Representative Carolyn Maloney is a Democrat from the 14th District of New York. She was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1992. During the 107th Congress, she served on Economic, Financial Services, and Government Reform Committees. These committees do not deal directly with women's issues. She has been active in increasing funding for breast cancer. On her website, she mentions several issues dealing with older Americans such as Older Americans' Protection from Violence and Women and Social Security. She also has a long list of women's issues on her website. This includes Breast Feeding Legislation, Equal Rights Amendment, Reproductive Choice, Celebration of the Women's Right
Movement, and several other women's issues. She also includes several family issues such as the Family Medical Leave Act.

Representative Maloney sponsored twenty-nine women's issue bills and nineteen gender gap issue bills during the 106th and 107th Congresses. One example of a women's issue bill sponsored by Representative Maloney was a resolution that would propose an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to equal rights for men and women. Another women's issue resolution would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to protect breastfeeding by new mothers. She also sponsored a resolution that would provide vouchers for the purchase of educational books for infants and children participating in the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. She also sponsored several gender gap issue bills. One example was the resolutions that would amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to permit leave to care for a domestic partner, parent-in-law, adult child, sibling, or grandparent in the case of a serious health condition.

Representative Carolyn Maloney sponsored many women's issue bills and gender gap issue bills during the 106th and 107th Congresses. She cosponsored 1015 bills during the 106th and 107th Congresses of which around ten percent were women's issue bills. One resolution that she cosponsored was one that recognized the unique effects that proposals to reform Social Security may have on women. This resolution was sponsored by Representative DeLauro. She also cosponsored a resolution that expressed the sense of the House of Representatives regarding government procurement access for women-owned businesses. Representative
Maloney tries to promote women's issues. She mentions them on her website, and she sponsors and cosponsors women's issue bills in Congress.

**Nita Lowey**

Representative Nita Lowey is a Democrat from New York. She was first elected in 1988. In 2001, she became the first woman to chair the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. The *Journal News* called Lowey “one of the most influential members of Congress.” *Congressional Quarterly* named her one of the 50 most effective members of Congress. During the 107th Congress, Representative Lowey served on the Appropriations Committee. Again, this committee is an important committee, and the influence of congresswomen on the committee could result in more money being appropriated for women’s issues. She currently is also on the Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services, and Education. This subcommittee does deal directly with women's issues and gender gap issues. Her website mentions that she is a strong advocate for women, children, and families. On her website, she says that she is a strong proponent of “educational opportunities, health care reform and biomedical research, stricter gun control and public safety laws, environmental protection, women’s issues, and national security.” Almost all of the issues she mentions are women’s issues or gender gap issues. On her website, she also states that she is a champion of human rights and enhancing the role of women in development.

Representative Lowey sponsored sixteen women’s issue bills and eighteen gender gap issue bills. One example of a women’s issue bill that she sponsored was a resolution that would amend the Social Security Act to provide coverage of
pregnancy-related assistance for targeted low-income pregnant women. Another example was a resolution that she sponsored that would protect women’s reproductive health and constitutional right to choice. She also sponsored several gender gap issue bills. One example of a gender gap issue bill that she sponsored was a resolution that would rebuild and modernize America’s school facilities. She also sponsored a bill that would expand the educational and work opportunities of welfare recipients under the program of block grants to states for temporary assistance for needy families.

During the 106th and 107th Congresses, Lowey cosponsored 764 bills. Approximately ten percent of the bills she cosponsored were women’s issue bills. One of the bills she cosponsored recognized the importance of inheritance rights of women in Africa. She also cosponsored a bill that expressed the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the goals of International Women’s Day.

Representative Lowey works hard to promote women’s and children’s issues. She mentions them on her website. She is on important committees and subcommittees that address these issues. Because she is an influential member in Congress, she has the power to bring women’s issues to the agenda in Congress.

The Democratic women in Congress promote women’s interests in Congress. All of the Democratic women in this case study mention women’s issues on their websites. They use bill sponsorship and cosponsorship to bring attention to women’s issues in Congress. They sponsor many bills dealing with women’s issues and gender gap issues.
Comparing Republican Women and Democrat Women

Although women in Congress promote women’s issue more than men in Congress, these case studies illustrate some differences between Republican women and Democrat women. For the most part, the women of both parties are on the same types of committees. There is a difference between what congresswomen put on their website. Out of the six women in the case study, the Republican women do not directly mention women’s issues on their websites. However, the Democrat women directly mention women’s issues and how they have supported women’s issues. One reason for this may be that Republican women do not want to be labeled as a feminist. Most of the Republican women mention issues that could be considered women’s issues, but they do not directly name them as such.

There are slight differences in bill sponsorship between the parties among women. Democrat women sponsor more women’s issue bills than Republican women. The Democrat women also cosponsor more women’s issue bills than do the Republican women. The Republican women, on average, cosponsored about five percent women’s issue bills. The Democrat women cosponsored around ten percent. One explanation for this may have to do with the fact that women’s issues are considered to be liberal. This could explain why Democratic women would sponsor more women’s issue bills than Republican women would. Another explanation may have to do with the relatively few Republican women in Congress. If there were more Republican women in the House, they may be bold enough to sponsor more women’s issue legislation.
The case study does not seem to point to other differences among women. There is not any seniority differences in the case study. However, most of these women were elected around the same time. The most senior member of the case study is Nita Lowey and the most junior member is Sue Myrick. Representative Lowey did sponsor more women’s issue bills than did Representative Myrick, but this may be because of the differences between Republicans and Democrats not due to differences related to seniority. There are also no regional differences in the case study. The three Republican women are from the Midwest and the South. The three Democrat women are from the Northeast. One interesting finding that did appear in analyzing the data for bill sponsorship was that leaders in the House sponsor very few bills. Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) was the House Democratic Whip during the 107th Congress. During that Congress, she sponsored only fifteen bills including zero women’s issue bills and two gender gap bills. During the 107th Congress, Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-IL) only sponsored one bill. Although the case study does not show any real seniority differences or regional differences, these are areas that may want to be looked at in the future.

There are some differences in the type of women’s issue bills sponsored by women. Women of both parties sponsor and cosponsor legislation promoting women’s health and honoring the accomplishments of women. Democrat women seem to sponsor and cosponsor more child care legislation in the House than do Republican women. The Republican women sponsor and cosponsor legislation limiting abortions, while the Democrat women sponsor and cosponsor legislation
supporting abortions. This upholds the previous research by Swers (2002) in which she shows that Democratic women are more likely than Republican women to sponsor feminist legislation. Although there are some differences, women of both parties work to promote women’s interests. They use their committee assignments, websites, bill sponsorship, and cosponsorship to push for women’s interests in the congressional agenda.
Chapter Five

Analysis

The data for this research include bills, amendments, and resolutions sponsored in the House of Representatives during the 106th and 107th Congresses. There were a total of 15,366 pieces of legislation sponsored during these two sessions of Congress. Table 1 shows the breakdown of legislation in the three categories. Women’s issues bills made up almost three percent of the total legislation sponsored during the two Congresses. Just over seventeen percent of the legislation sponsored falls into the category of gender gap issues. The remaining eighty percent are categorized as other issues. The 870 members, 435 in the House during each Congress, sponsored an average .49 women’s issues legislation and an average of 3.09 gender gap issues legislation. The average number of pieces of legislation sponsored by a member in the 106th and 107th Congress was 17.66.

Types of Legislation Sponsored by Men and Women

During the two Congresses, there were 756 male members of the House of Representatives and 114 female members of the House. The male members sponsored 13,109 pieces of legislation and the female members sponsored a total of 2,257 pieces of legislation. As shown in Table 2, less than two percent of all legislation sponsored by male members is classified as women’s issues legislation, compared to almost ten percent of the legislation sponsored by female members. Women members sponsored almost five times the percentage of women’s issue bills than men sponsored. The male members sponsored almost seventeen percent
of gender gap issues, compared to about twenty-three percent sponsored by female members.

The first hypothesis deals with gender and the sponsorship of women's issue legislation.

Hypothesis 1: Female members in the House of Representatives sponsor more women's issues legislation than male members in the House of Representatives.

The data clearly shows that women sponsor more women's issue legislation than men do. The 114 women during the two Congresses sponsored a total of 218 bills dealing with women's issues compared to the 210 sponsored by 756 men during the two Congresses. Of the legislation sponsored by women, almost ten percent dealt with women's issues compared to the men that sponsored only two percent dealing with women's issues. This difference is statistically significant. The data clearly supports the hypothesis that women sponsor more women's issue legislation than men in the House of Representatives do.

We can also compare average bill sponsorship by gender. Women, on average, sponsor more bills than men. Congressmen sponsored an average of seventeen bills, while congresswomen sponsored an average of twenty bills. As Table 3 shows, the male members sponsored an average of .28 women's issues legislation and an average 2.86 gender gap legislation. Male members sponsored an average of 17.34 total pieces of legislation. Female members sponsored an average of 1.91 women's issues legislation and an average of 4.61 gender gap issues legislation. Female members sponsored an average of 19.8 total pieces of
legislation. Female members, on average, sponsored more legislation than male members did. They also sponsored a greater number, on average, of women's issue legislation and gender gap issues legislation.

The second hypothesis is similar to the first hypothesis; it looks at the difference between gender in regards to gender gap issue legislation.

Hypothesis 2: Women members in the House of Representatives sponsor more gender gap issues legislation than do male members in the House of Representatives.

The differences between men and women on bill sponsorship of gender gap issues are not quite as large as the differences on women's issue bills. However, this difference is still statistically significant. Men sponsored an average of 2.86 pieces of gender gap issue legislation compared to the 4.61 pieces sponsored by women. There is still a significant difference between the number sponsored by women compared to men, but it is not quite as large as the difference of bill sponsorship of women's issues. However, the data does support the second hypothesis. Women in the House of Representatives sponsor more women's issue legislation and gender gap issue legislation than male members.

Types of Legislation Sponsored by Party

Party identification is an important variable when looking at bill sponsorship. Members of both parties tend to sponsor bills that support their parties' position. For the 106th and 107th Congresses, there were 425 Democrats, 442 Republicans, and 3 Independents in the House of Representatives. The Democrats in the House over the four years sponsored a total of 6,554 pieces of
legislation. Out of this legislation, four percent was women's issue legislation, twenty percent was gender gap issue legislation, and seventy-five percent was other legislation. The Republicans sponsored a total of 8,737 pieces of legislation. Of which, nearly two percent was women's issues legislation, fifteen percent was gender gap issue legislation, and eighty-three percent was other legislation. The Democrats in the House of Representatives did sponsor a higher percent of women's issue and gender gap issue legislation than did Republicans or Independents. Table 4 shows the legislation sponsored by House members according to party.

Table 5 shows the average number of bills sponsored by Republicans and Democrats. When comparing averages, Democrats sponsored an average of .62 women's issue legislation compared to only .37 sponsored by Republicans and .33 sponsored by Independents. Democrats sponsor, on average, almost twice as many women's issue legislation than do Republicans. With only one Independent in the 106th Congress and two in the 107th Congress, it is difficult to make any conclusions about the types of legislation sponsored by Independent members in the House.

The third and fourth hypotheses tested look at bill sponsorship by party. Do Democrats sponsor different types of legislation than Republicans?

Hypothesis 3: Democrat members in the House of Representatives sponsor more women's issues legislation than do Republican members in the House of Representatives.
Hypothesis 4: Democrat members in the House of Representatives sponsor more gender gap issues legislation than do Republican members in the House of Representatives.

Party does seem to play a significant role in the types of legislation sponsored by members of the House. The data shows that Republicans during the 106th and 107th Congresses sponsored more legislation than did Democrats in the House. The Democrats sponsored on average almost twice as many women's issue bills than Republican members, however this difference is not statistically significant. They also sponsored a higher percentage of gender gap issue legislation than did Republican members, but this difference also is not statistically significant. The data supports hypothesis 3 and 4. Democrats sponsor more women's issue legislation and gender gap issue legislation than do Republicans.

Who sponsors more women's issue legislation and gender gap legislation, Democrat males, Democrat females, Republicans males, or Republican females? Democrat males sponsored 5,132 pieces of legislation. Nearly two percent of the legislation was women's issue and twenty percent of the legislation was gender gap issue legislation. On average, the Democrat male sponsored .28 pieces of women's issue bills and 2.94 gender gap issue legislation. The Democrat females sponsored a total of 1,422 pieces of legislation including 11.6 percent of women's issue legislation and 23.63 percent of gender gap issue legislation. The average number of women's issue legislation sponsored by a Democrat female was 2.12, and an average of 4.31 gender gap issue legislation. The Republican males sponsored a total of 7,902 pieces of legislation. They sponsored 1.4 percent of women's issue
legislation and 14.31 percent of gender gap issue legislation. On average, the Republican males sponsored .27 pieces of women’s issue legislation and 2.79 pieces of gender gap issue legislation. The thirty-six female Republicans sponsored a total of 835 pieces of legislation. They sponsored 6.35 percent of women’s issues legislation and 22.75 percent of gender gap issue legislation. They sponsored an average of 1.47 pieces of women’s issue legislation and an average of 5.28 pieces of gender gap issue legislation. The percents of legislation by gender and party are shown in table 6, and the averages are shown in table 7.

Do both Democrat women and Republican women sponsor more women’s issue legislation than Democrat men and Republican men? Hypothesis 5, 6, 7, and 8 predict that women of both parties sponsor more women’s issue and gender gap issue legislation than men do.

Hypothesis 5: Democrat women sponsor more women’s issue legislation than Democrat men in the House.

Hypothesis 6: Democrat women sponsor more gender gap issue legislation than Democrat men in the House.

Hypothesis 7: Republican women sponsor more women’s issue legislation than Republican men in the House.

Hypothesis 8: Republican women sponsor more gender gap issue legislation than Republican men in the House.

The female Democrats clearly sponsor the highest percentage of women’s issue legislation. On average, they sponsor almost twice as many women’s issue bills than female Republicans. Republican men sponsor the smallest amount of
women's issue legislation, however not much less than Democratic men. When it comes to gender gap issues, the female Democrats sponsor the highest percent of gender gap issue legislation; however female Republicans sponsor the highest average number of gender gap issue legislation. Women Democrats sponsor the highest percents of women's issue legislation and gender gap issue legislation. The Republican women sponsor a greater number of women's issue legislation and gender gap issue legislation than do male Democrats or male Republicans.

Females, regardless of party, sponsor more women's issue legislation and gender gap issue legislation than do male members of the House of Representatives.

Types of Legislation Sponsored by Congresses

Is there a difference between the legislation sponsored during the 106th and 107th Congresses? During the 106th Congress, the Democrats were in control of the White House. During the 107th Congress, the Republicans were in control of the White House. Does Congress sponsor different types of legislation because of the party controlling the Presidency? The President plays an important role in setting the agenda for Congress. According to research by Kingdon (1984), through agenda-setting, the President influences the issues to which legislators pay attention. There is also a difference in agenda-setting control for majority Presidents compared to minority Presidents. Majority Presidents, ones that their party controls Congress, have an advantaged because their agenda blends with the members of Congress. Minority Presidents compete with the majority party in Congress for space on the legislative calendar (Steger 1997). Especially in cases such as the 107th Congress, the majority President is very influential in setting the
agenda in Congress. In the case with the 106th Congress, President Clinton was a minority President with maybe a little less influence over the agenda in Congress. However, in either case, the President has an important role in setting the agenda in Congress and influencing the types of legislation that is being sponsored.

During the 106th Congress, the House members sponsored 7,871 pieces of legislation. They sponsored almost three percent women's issue legislation and twenty percent of gender gap issue legislation. The members of the House during the 107th Congress sponsored 7,495 bills, slightly less than the 106th Congress. They sponsored nearly three percent of women's issue legislation and fifteen percent of gender gap issue legislation. The 106th and 107th Congresses sponsored almost the same percentage of women's issue bills, but the 106th Congress sponsored a greater percentage of gender gap issue legislation. In the 106th Congress, the members sponsored an average of .51 pieces of women's issue legislation and an average of 3.57 pieces of gender gap issue legislation. In the 107th Congress, the members sponsored an average of .47 pieces of women's issue legislation and an average of 2.62 pieces of gender gap issue legislation. Table 8 shows the types of legislation sponsored during the 106th and 107th Congresses. Table 9 shows the average number of legislation sponsored during the 106th and 107th Congresses.

Hypothesis 9 and 10 predict bill sponsorship according to Congresses. Does it matter which party is in control of the White House?

Hypothesis 9: Members of the 106th Congress sponsor more women's issues legislation than do members of the 107th Congress.
Hypothesis 10: Members of the 106th Congress sponsor more gender gap issues legislation than do members of the 107th Congress.

The data does not seem to support hypothesis 9. There is very little difference in the percentage of women’s issue legislation sponsored during the 106th and 107th Congresses, and the difference is not statistically significant. However, there is a greater difference in gender gap issue legislation, and this difference is statistically significant. Members during the 106th sponsored on average 3.57 pieces of gender gap issue legislation, which is greater than the 2.62 pieces of gender gap issue legislation sponsored by the 107th. The data supports hypothesis 10, but not hypothesis 9. There is a very slight difference between the number of women’s issue legislation sponsored by the 106th and 107th Congresses. Members of the House during the 106th Congress did sponsor more gender gap issue legislation than did members of the House during the 107th Congress.
Chapter Six
Discussion and Conclusions

Gender, party, and control of the White House all seem to influence sponsorship of women's issue legislation and gender gap issue legislation. But which variable is correlated with sponsorship of women's issue and gender gap legislation? Table 10 shows the correlation between gender, party, and control of the White House and sponsorship of women's issue legislation and gender gap issue legislation.

It is clear from the correlation that gender is most highly correlated with sponsorship of women's issue legislation and gender gap issue legislation, although the correlation with gender gap issues is not nearly as high as the correlation with women's issues. Party is statistically negatively correlated with sponsorship of women's issue legislation, but not with sponsorship of gender gap issue legislation. Negative correlation means that when one variable increases the other decreases. In this case, if a member is a Republican, he or she is less likely to sponsor women's issue legislation. If the member is a Democrat, he or she is more likely to sponsor women's issue legislation. Congress is significantly correlated with sponsorship of gender gap issue legislation, but not with women's issue legislation. If a member is in the 106th Congress, he or she is more likely to sponsor gender gap issue legislation. Sponsorship of gender gap issue legislation is related to who is in control of the White House, but women's issue legislation is not related. Although party and control of the White House are related to bill sponsorship, gender is
highly correlated with sponsorship of women’s issue legislation and gender gap issue legislation.

It is clear from the data that men and women sponsor different types of bills. Women, regardless of party, sponsor more women’s issue legislation and gender gap issue legislation than men do. If women continue this trend, then electing more women to Congress would increase the number of women’s issue legislation being sponsored in the House of Representatives. Although women Democrats sponsor the highest percent of women’s issue legislation, electing Republican women would even increase the number of women’s issue legislation being sponsored.

Congresswomen say that they feel obligated to represent women’s interest in Congress. They fulfill that obligation in the House of Representatives by sponsoring more women’s issue legislation than men do. If women want their interests represented in Congress, then they need to elect more women to Congress.

**Overall Impact**

This research is important because it shows that women in Congress represent women’s interest. Through bill sponsorship, they try to bring attention to women’s issues in Congress. This research shows that electing more women to Congress would give women more representation and more attention to women’s issues. This research reinforces and updates past research including studies by Swers, Pearson, and Thomas.

The case study is useful because it demonstrates other ways women may work to represent women’s interest in Congress. Through bill sponsorship, the Republican women and Democratic women in the case study bring attention to
women's issues and gender gap issues. They also work for women's interests through cosponsorship and committee assignments. The Democratic women even use their websites to promote women's issues. The case study provides other examples of ways that women in Congress are working to represent women's interests.

The analysis is useful because it shows that there is a significant difference between the types of bills men and women sponsor. It also shows that even though there are differences between parties, these differences are not significant. This research also is useful because it made comparisons between Congresses. There is a significant difference between the 106th and 107th Congresses and the sponsorship of gender gap issue bills. This difference may be related to which party controls the White House.

**Links to Research Literature**

This research adds to and updates previous research. In her research, Schiller (1995) looked at what influences bill sponsorship. In her research, she concluded that party and ideology were not strong predictors of bill sponsorship. This research supports her findings. Although party was influential in sponsorship of women's issue bills and gender gap issue bills, gender was more important in sponsorship of women's issue bills and gender gap issue bills. In other research by Ainsworth and Hanson (1996), they suggest that Senators sponsor legislation in an attempt to change policy and appease constituents and groups. Congresswomen are trying to influence policy on women's issues and are trying to appease not only the constituents in their districts but women across the country.
This research also supports findings on the differences of the types of bills men and women sponsor. Thomas (1994) found that in the 1980's women in Congress placed a higher priority on bills dealing with women's, children's, and family issues than men in Congress. Women in the 106th and 107th Congresses place a higher priority on women's issue bills and gender gap issue bills than men. In her study, Swers (2002) shows that congresswomen are more likely to sponsor women's issue bills than are congressmen. This research supports her findings.

This research also supports the literature about how women feel about representing all women. According to studies by Hawkesworth et al (2001) and Carroll (2000), women feel an obligation to represent all women. Women in Congress feel that obligation and try to fulfill it by sponsoring women’s issue legislation and gender gap issue legislation according to this data on the 106th and 107th Congresses.

**Strengths and Weaknesses**

There are several strengths to this research. One of the strengths is the updating of past research. Pearson conducted the most recent research on congresswomen and bill sponsorship on the 106th Congress. Her study compared men and women during just the 106th Congress. This study includes the 106th Congress, but also add data from the 107th Congress. This created another strength of this research. Comparisons were made between the two Congresses in which a different party controlled the White House during the two Congresses. Although it is difficult to draw conclusions about the impact of the White House on bill sponsorship in Congress, there were some differences between the two Congresses.
Another strength of this research is that it includes all of the legislation sponsored in the House of Representatives during the 106th and 107th Congresses, not just a sample. The Swers study of the 103rd and 104th Congresses includes only a sample of the bills sponsored.

A final strength of this study is that in the 106th and 107th Congresses there were a greater number of women in the House of Representatives. This gives us a clearer picture of the types of legislation women sponsor. Previous research was conducted when there were fewer women in Congresses. This may have limited the overall conclusions that could be drawn from the research.

There are also several weaknesses with this research. One of the weaknesses is in the case study. The case study provides only a very small sample, approximately ten percent, of women in Congress. Depending on the women that were chosen, some of the findings may have been very different.

Another weakness is that this study only includes bill sponsorship in the House of Representatives. It would be helpful to also include bill sponsorship in the Senate. There may be differences between women in the House and the Senate. Because there are fewer women in the Senate, they may not be as willing to sponsor women's issue legislation. On the other hand, because there are so few women, they may feel an even greater responsibility to represent women's interests, so they may sponsor more women's issue bills than women in the House.

A third weakness is the methods of classifying the bills as women's issues or gender gap issues. For the most part, most of bills clearly fit into one of the categories. However, there are a few bills that it was difficult to decide which
category a bill should be placed into. If someone else looked at the few bills that were difficult to place into a category, they may have placed them into a different category.

**Future Research on Women and Sponsorship**

Where do we go from here? Future research on women in Congress could build on some of the weaknesses of this research. One of the best ways to build on this research is to expand it. One way to expand it would be to add more years into the research. Another way to expand it would be to include bill sponsorship in the Senate. As more women become Senators, it would be very useful to look at bill sponsorship in the Senate and compare it to the House of Representatives. A final way that this research could be expanded would be to add more data on cosponsorship or committee activity as other types of agenda-setting methods. This would provide a more detailed picture about how much women work to represent women’s interests in Congress.

Examining what else may influence bill sponsorship could also expand this research. This research looked at gender, party, and the Congress as variables that may influence bill sponsorship. However, many other variables may also influence bill sponsorship. The study by Schiller (1995) suggests that ideology, seniority, and committee assignments influence bill sponsorship. The district that the representative represents may also influence bill sponsorship. Region of the country could also be included as a variable that influences bill sponsorship. Future research could also examine the difference between women who are from urban,
suburban, and rural districts. There are many different variables that could be examined in the future on gender and bill sponsorship.
Table 1: Total Legislation Sponsored in the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Sponsored Bills in the 107th and 108th Congresses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Issues</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Gap Issues</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Issues</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>15,366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Legislation sponsored in the House according to Gender during the 106th and 107th Congresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women's Issues</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Gap Issues</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Issues</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>13,109</td>
<td>2257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi Square for Gender and Women’s Issues = 182.982**
Chi Square for Gender and Gender Gap Issues = 61.622 **
** Significant at the .01 level
Table 3: Average Number of Legislation Sponsored According to Gender for 106th and 107th Congresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women's Issues</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Gap Issues</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Issues</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17.34</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: Legislation Sponsored in the House of Representatives by Party for the 106th and 107th Congresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Issues</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Gap Issues</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Issues</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>6554</td>
<td>8737</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi Square for Party and Women’s Issues = 16.551*  
Chi Square for Party and Gender Gap Issues = 41.585*  
* Not Statistically Significant
Table 5: Average Number of Legislation Sponsored by House Members by Party for the 106th and 107th Congresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Issues</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Gap Issues</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Issues</td>
<td>11.62</td>
<td>16.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15.42</td>
<td>19.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Legislation Sponsored by Gender and Party in the House of Representatives for the 106th and 107th Congresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrat Men</th>
<th>Democrat Women</th>
<th>Republican Men</th>
<th>Republican Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Issues</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Gap Issues</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Issues</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>5232</td>
<td>1422</td>
<td>7902</td>
<td>835</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7: Average Number of Legislation Sponsored by Party and Gender in the House of Representatives for the 106th and 107th Congresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrat Men</th>
<th>Democrat Women</th>
<th>Republican Men</th>
<th>Republican Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Issues</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Gap Issues</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>5.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Issues</td>
<td>11.59</td>
<td>11.79</td>
<td>16.38</td>
<td>16.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14.81</td>
<td>18.23</td>
<td>19.46</td>
<td>23.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Types of Legislation during the 106th and 107th Congresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>106th Congress</th>
<th>107th Congress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Issues</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Gap Issues</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Issues</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>7871</td>
<td>7495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi Square for Congress and Women’s Issues = 11.84*
Chi Square for Congress and Gender Gap Issues = 40.514**
*Not Statistically Significant
** Significant at the .01 level
Table 9: Average Number of Legislation Sponsored During the 106th and 107th Congresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>106th Congress</th>
<th>107th Congress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Issues</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Gap Issues</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Issues</td>
<td>14.01</td>
<td>14.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18.09</td>
<td>17.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10: Correlation of Gender, Party, and Congress and Sponsorship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Congress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Issues</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>-.10**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Gap Issues</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.13**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=870
** Significant at the .01 level
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