

The History and Efficacy of Women's State-Level PACs

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Abstract

On a national, state, and local level, women are underrepresented in governmental roles. Though women have made political progress in numbers and status, progress has been gradual rather than radical. This paper will explore and analyze a potential avenue for increasing women's representation in state legislatures. Specifically, the study will address the structure, ideology, funding, and efficacy of state-level women's PACs. Female candidates often cite fundraising as an obstacle in their campaigns; therefore, an effective state-level women's PAC could drastically improve women's ability to win in state legislative contests. I expected to find a consistent PAC structure; however, I did not find a clear, consistent strategy of staff, ideology, and financial status. Based on my analysis, I provide insight as to how PACs can function more effectively and therefore elect more women to office.

Introduction

When it comes to women's representation in politics, the United States still has a substantial way to go to reach political parity. Women makeup a clear minority of government positions while making up the majority of the US population. Less than one hundred years ago, women of the United States of America lacked the fundamental right of a vote, but as a result of strategy, furor, and organization, women have begun to progress as political figures and can continue to do so. On a national level, women hold just 18 percent of seats in the House and 20 percent in the Senate. Specific to this study, women are also underrepresented in state legislatures. Currently, women hold 24.1% of all state legislative seats in the country. This percentage has risen slowly since 1971 when women held just 4.1% of legislative seats. Women's representation in state legislatures rose to 20% with the 1992 elections, but since then the proportion has risen less than 5% over ten years (Women in State Legislatures, 2013). Some speculate that, specifically in 2012, redistricting disproportionately affected women at the state level. Because of new district lines and open seats, women had a unique opportunity to win a

record number of seats; however, these new district lines, drawn by legislators in power (predominantly white men) caused many women to be double bunked (put against another incumbent) or placed them in a district heavily monopolized by their opposite party (Libby, 2012). Despite rising numbers, overall, progress has been slow for women in state legislatures.

The percentage of women in legislatures ranges from 41 percent in Colorado to only 11 percent in Louisiana (Women in State Legislatures, 2013). Though Colorado is the closest state to political parity, no state has truly reached a gender-equal legislature. Moreover, when it comes to statewide office, things do not look any more promising. Beginning in January of 2013 there will be a total of five female governors, exactly 10 percent of all governors. Less than half of the fifty states have ever even had a female to serve as governor (Hart, 2012).

I expect to find that women's state level PACs can increase women's representation in government through a consistent strategy in their structure, ideologies, and monetary tactics. These strategies will allow the PAC to be a positive and relevant force in increasing women's political representation.

Representation

These slow rates of progress will inevitably delay women's equality. Something must change in order to increase women's representation in state government to ensure that treatment is truly equal under the law. There are two academic theories of representation that differentiate between the ultimate goal of electing women to office: descriptive representation and substantive representation. Descriptive representation

refers only to the number of female bodies in office while substantive refers to the representation of “women’s issues” (Espirito-Santo, 2009). According to descriptive representation, the absence of a specific group from the overall image of government significantly lessens the assumed role these persons should play in governance.

Ultimately this lessens their political voice. If women want to be represented on a substantive level, it must start with descriptive representation, i.e. rapidly electing women to public office. Low descriptive representation has been linked to low substantive representation for women, especially in the case of majority rule as employed in state legislatures (Goedert, Karpowitz, & Mendelberg, 2012). Descriptive representation includes minority women as well. Once the governing body reflects its constituency, only then does the government is truly equal and just (Reingold, 2006). To illustrate the importance of descriptive representation, many countries institute gender quotas that require a certain number of women elected in office (Hoard, 2011). These quotas ensure that woman, regardless of ideology, have a voice and presence in the political sector (Hoard, 2011). For example, in Nordic countries, where quotas are widely used, women hold 42% of legislative seats (Women in National Parliaments, 2013). Quota proponents in this country argue that gender quotas will create a better opportunity for diversity with women candidates, allowing more minority women to seek and win seats. Though the number of gender quotas around the world has dramatically increased in the last two decades, the United States government does not utilize gender quotas at the state or federal level (Hoard, 2011). Descriptive representation should perhaps be the goal when referring to political parity; however, some scholars argue, “descriptive representation is neither absolutely necessary nor entirely sufficient for substantive representation to

occur” (Reingold, 2006) and that is because it does not necessarily alter the current patterns of legislation. On the other hand, substantive representation supporters believe that the importance of electing women lies with the policy changes that will result from more women in office. The right women in office will prioritize “women’s issues” (choice, healthcare, education) and make positive changes for women in the US (Celis, 2009). Additionally, substantive representation refers to representation in terms of issues and ideology, claiming that women more effectively legislate on behalf of other women(Reingold, 2006). Because I will be examining all state-level women-centered PACs, this comprehensive approach will include PACs of both parties and ideologies that attempt to increase both women’s substantive and descriptive representation. According to the PAC’s mission statement and structure, I will assess whether their goal is descriptive or substantive representation.

“Where are the Women?” An Explanation for Low Numbers and Slow Progress

Scholars throughout the country use the question “Where are the Women?” to understand why there are still so few women serving in our governments. A variety of theories suggest reasons why women still struggle to break into the political realm.

One reason for this struggle points to a lack of viable female candidates. The process of candidate emergence describes how and when women consider running for office. Studies show that women psychologically convince themselves that they must be twice as good as the male candidate to be competitive in a race. Women are more likely to negatively scrutinize their own experience, competence, and abilities. On the other hand, men are more likely to assume they are qualified when they are not. One study

found, “56 percent of men, compared to 42 percent of women, have considered running for office. Put somewhat differently, men are nearly 35 percent more likely than women to think of themselves as potential political candidates” (Lawless & Fox, 2008). Women tend to underestimate their electability for many reasons, one of which being because they have more recently become members of the corporate, senior management, and law world. Furthermore, even when women are successful members of the corporate/business arena, they remain hesitant about assuming political roles (Ford, 2006). Studies have also shown that women are more interested than men in avoiding risks and are also more likely to predict negative outcomes (Lizzotte & Sidman, 2009). Consequently, women more often assume that they will lose elections and actively avoid that scenario.

Candidate emergence is not the only reason for the lack of women in office. There is a lingering argument that women seem “out of place” in the political world. Women, therefore, take a backseat because it is the societal norm. This idea is even present with the younger the generation. Nearly a third of young women see women as outsiders in the political arena (Turning Point, 2011). Although young women are members of a modern society, gender norms are ever-present. “While the degree to which traditional family dynamics continue to prevail in American culture is, in and of itself, striking, an additional important issue to address is whether these dynamics affect interest in running for office” (Lawless and Fox, 2008). As women’s responsibilities for household tasks decrease, their interest in considering running for office increases, albeit only slightly (Lawless and Fox, 2008). Moreover, the “Motherhood Bind,” causes women to be torn between expectations of being a good mother and engagement in the political arena (Ford, 2006). Women that choose to raise families and/or are members of

the workforce oftentimes lack the time and energy to participate in the political arena and lack the time to fully participate in all arenas.

Moreover, recent studies show that gender stereotypes continue to permeate what voters think about female candidates. The stereotypes, however, seem to be policy stereotypes linked to a candidate's sex that suggest in which policy areas they are most qualified to govern rather than whether or not a female candidate is "good" or "bad" (Dolan, 2010). For example, healthcare and education are stereotypical "women's issues" while the economy and national security are not. Though this can sometimes work in a woman's favor, more often than not, it portrays the woman as more of an emotional caretaker than a logical, powerful political actor.

What can we conclude from these theories? There is certainly a combination of factors that obstruct the presence of women in government on a national, state, and local level. Is it because voters are unwilling to elect women, or because too few women are willing to run for office? Perhaps a contributing factor is the lack of financial support for women candidates. Women consistently cite fundraising as an issue when considering entering a political race. Moreover, most women believe that it is more difficult for women to fundraise than men even though that is not empirically true. (Sabonmatsu, Carroll, and Walsh, 2009). Political Action Committees, known as PACs, were created to support candidates and assist in them in their fundraising efforts. Therefore, a strong presence of women's Political Action Committees could specifically target the issue of financial support and could therefore result in the increased representation of women.

Political Action Committees

In 1944, The Congress of Industrial Organizations legally created a PAC in an effort to re-elect President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. PACs are known as “separately segregated funds” because their monies are kept in specific accounts that are used only for “the purpose of raising and spending money to elect and defeat candidates” (“What is a PAC?,” 2013). Under the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, PACs are able to donate \$5,000 to any federal candidate per election. This can include a primary election, a general election, or a special election. Moreover, PACs are able to give a maximum of \$15,000 annually to any national party committee and \$5,000 annually to any other PAC of its choice. Donors may contribute up to \$5,000 per PAC per year (“What is a PAC?,” 2013). States also employ campaign finance laws that can further restrict PAC funding; however, federal law supersedes any state law when the funding is given to a federal candidate (Federal and State Campaign Finance Law, 2013). Though these contributions are limited, these large sums of money can quickly accumulate during a candidate’s campaign. Over the last thirty years PAC activity and funding has drastically increased. On a national level, PAC donations saw a 200% increase from 1974 to 1992. By 1998, PACs accounted for over one-third of all campaign contributions in House races, and one-fourth of contributions to Senate candidates (Levitt, 1998). Though this speaks only to a national level, state PACs are oftentimes created to model and emulate national PACS and, therefore, follow a similar growth and increase pattern.

Though PACs have recently grown both numerically and financially, PACs saw unprecedented growth as a result of two Supreme Court cases, *Citizens United V FEC* and *Speechnow.org V FEC* in 2010. These decisions created what is commonly known as a Super PAC. A Super PAC is a PAC that may spend and accept money freely from

corporations, unions, and individuals with no contribution limitations. With the rapid growth of PACs and Super PACs, PAC funding is sometimes viewed as attempting to “buy” an election. Super PACs received especially bad press in the 2012 presidential election, the first presidential election since the ruling in 2010. During this election Republican Super PACs spent over \$700 million dollars to secure the victory of Mitt Romney. Some political analysts, however, suggest that Super PAC money is not as powerful as it may seem since Romney was still defeated despite his larger PAC money total (Blumenthal, 2012). Super PACs have blurred the lines between traditional-candidate PACs and Super PACs. In August of 2012, only 40% of Americans could correctly identify a Super PAC (Kreig, 2012). The addition of Super PACs has drastically changed the face of political funding by allowing astronomical amounts of money to be spent in the name of interest groups, but traditional candidate PACs operate under strict limitations and therefore do not “buy” elections like Super PACs. That being said, because my paper will only focus on direct candidate donations, I will not include Super PACs in my analysis because they cannot directly fund candidates (Super PACs, 2012).

On the state level, the influence of PACs is also an issue of debate. The debates mirror the federal debates regarding ethical and financial concerns. State-level PACs are governed by their state Constitutions (Fleischmann & Nice, 1988). While most are similar to federal regulations, I will note any substantial variances on a state-by-state basis that affect the PAC’s ability to support or finance candidates.

Scholarship regarding PACs suggests that PACs operate for two possible reasons: to affect legislation through roll-call voting accountability or to influence voters (Levitt,

1998). The PAC's primary goal (be it voting accountability or influencing voters) aides in selecting the candidates they fund. For example, if the PAC's goal is to influence a candidate's voting once in office, it is more sensible to fund a candidate that is highly likely to win, typically an incumbent. On the other hand, if a PAC is attempting to influence an election outcome, it is most likely to "concentrate contributions on staunch supporters" of their mission and of their candidates (Levitt, 1998). Affecting election outcomes is of greater importance than influencing the way legislators roll-call vote. It seems to be the more common motivator for PAC support (Levitt, 1998). In theory, if a PAC supports a candidate that aligns with their principles (for purposes of this paper, electing women), this will ultimately increase representation for the specified population or interest group because the candidate will win their race and therefore hold a seat in government (Levitt, 1998). Following this logic, PAC money can, perhaps, allow female candidates to win elections by providing necessary seed money and early confidence and therefore increase representation.

Women's PACs

In 2012 there were a total of 60 women's PACs and donor networks that supported females in their pursuit of office (CAWP, 2012). For the purposes of this paper, these PACs and donor networks are defined as organizations that seek to increase female governmental representation through the election of female candidates. Donor networks are organizations that do not have official PACs, but exist with the mission of helping women win elections and raise money by connecting women to potential financial resources (CAWP, 2012). Of these 60 PACs and donor networks, 16 focus on

female candidates on the national level, while 43 are state-specific. Out of the 43 state-specific networks and PACS, 16 are state-specific PACs that *directly* fund women's campaigns. Many PACs put money into candidate recruitment and training, but this paper will examine only those making direct contributions.

There are clear indicators that PACs are still viewed as a means for change and are pursued to enhance voter's political voices. For example, in 2012 a new direct-funding PAC was formed in response to the attacks on women's reproductive rights in Virginia (Terkel, 2012). The PAC, Women's Strike Force, will help fund candidates of any party that support women's reproductive rights (Womensstrikeforce.org, 2012). There has been a marked surge in donation funding to pro-choice women's PACs, presumably as a result of the "War on Women" that graced headlines across the country in early 2012 (Mundy, 2012). Although this surge of donations and excitement was fairly uniform across national Democratic pro-choice PACs as well, it also increased giving within some national conservative women's PACs such as The Susan B. Anthony List (Mundy, 2012). This is a result of conservative women retaliating against what they saw as an unsolicited attack on their "anti-woman" stance. Clearly, PACs are still considered a viable for option for increasing women's political participation.

Because PACs continue to have a large presence in the political world and are still used as a vehicle for change, this topic needs to be studied further. Though current research on women's PACs is both limited and dated, there are specific foundational ideas that are important to informing this research project. A general consensus amongst scholars asserts that the ability to outspend one's opponent is an effective indicator of success (Alexander, 2005). However, when considering funding sources, public funding

is seen as most favorable by voters, followed closely by PAC funding. Self-financing tends to have more of a negative impact on candidacies (Alexander, 2005). Specifically on a state level, the impact of campaign funding is dependent on persuadable voters and the professionalism and term limits of the legislature (Seabrook, 2010). Though money does not guarantee success, candidates that win tend to be the candidates with the most money. For example, currently a victorious Senate campaign raises between 7 and 8 million dollars while a successful race for the House raises between 1 and 2 million dollars (Babb, 2012). Major elections from the past several years indicate the correlation between money and winning. In the 2008 election, the highest spender won in 397 of 426 Congressional races and in 30 out of 32 Senate races. In 2006, top spenders won 94% of House seats and 73% of Senate races. Even in 2004, these highest spenders won 98% of House seats and 88% of Senate seats (Money Wins Presidency, 2008). Furthermore, when examined on a national level, especially in the case of non-incumbents, there is a strong correlation between early seed money and a viable campaign (Francia, 2001). Because women tend to be challengers in elections (Women in State Legislatures, 2013), PACs may be absolutely vital to women's candidacies.

Other research surrounding women's PACs examines who gives to women's PACs and why they do so. This research is vital in understanding PAC donors and how PACs to expand. Although the majority of donors to women's PACs are female, research suggests that different women's PACs appeal to different donors. Women are more likely than men to respond that they believe there should be more women serving in office (Sanbonmatsu, 2003). This aligns with the idea that more females give money to women's PACs than do males (Day, 2002). Moreover, there seems to be a stronger

alignment with the commitment to more women in office from the Democratic Party (Sanbonmatsu, 2003). This provides support for exactly why there are more Democratic-affiliated women's PACs (Francia, 2001). As discussed, some PACs endorse on party lines, some on racial lines, some on ideals, and some on gender only (Day, 2002). For example, donors to EMILY's List donate on the basis of equality via a feminist perspective, while WISH List donors (supports Republican pro-choice women) do so in the name of equality through an "individual freedom" approach (Day, 2002).

Although there are vast differences among types of PACs, there appears to a discrepancy between PAC giving and seed money success between Democrats and Republicans. More pro-choice and/or Democratic women's PAC's exist in sheer number in comparison to those geared towards Republicans, therefore, Republican women struggle more to receive PAC funding because the resources are more scarce for Republican women currently (Francia, 2001). There are 10 Democratic PACs and 6 multi- or non-partisan PACs examined in this paper. Of the 6 multi- or non- partisan PACs, 5 of these PACs are "progressive" while one is "conservative." These numbers alone illustrate the discrepancy between the availability of PAC resources for women on the state level.

Although EMILY's List is a national PAC, it is a quintessentially effective women's PAC and many state models follow the structure of EMILY's List (Mitchell, 2011). It seems that EMILY's List is used as the standard for the ways in which PACs differ from one another in donors and methods. EMILY's List employs various strategies to heighten their efficacy. For example, EMILY's List uses the strategy of bundling to provide a maximum amount of monies to their endorsed candidates. This entails

EMILY's List putting women "On their List" and asking members and supporters to send monies to the candidates on the list. This strategy circumvents direct PAC limits and multiplies EMILY's List's efficacy because they are able to donate much more money to each candidate. EMILY's List has accumulated millions of dollars in contributions to candidates from its members, and in 2004, was the wealthiest PAC in the country (Conniff, 2005). Many other PACs follow patterns similar to EMILY's List and some are consciously founded to resemble EMILY's List in structure and purpose (Hannagan, Pimlott, and Littvay, 2010). The List looks at multiple facets of a woman's campaign including her monetary standing, her campaign organization, and her existing support network (Hannagan, Pimlott, and Littvay, 2010).

In a more recent study, an endorsement from EMILY's List showed varying effects on candidates, depending on the likelihood of the candidate's endorsement from EMILY's List. For example, if the candidate was a typical endorsable candidate (outwardly pro-choice, known Democrat), the endorsement had little to no impact on the candidate's electoral success. By contrast, if the candidate was not an expected endorsee (initially less visible), the endorsement quadrupled the candidate's likelihood of electoral success (Hannagan, Pimlott, and Littvay, 2010). Although, this evidence is exclusive to EMILY's List and therefore, not applicable to all women's PAC's, especially on the state level, it does make a clear argument for PAC funding as a factor in the success of female candidates. In addition, it provides great insight on how PACs can most efficiently and effectively function—strategically and on the basis of evidence.

There is less evidence in support of state-level PAC efficacy. Exclusively considering 2010 state legislative elections, one study asserts that women's PAC

beneficiaries won their primaries at a much higher rate than their actual elections. Some state PACs won 18% (Women's Investment Network) of the seats they endorsed and some won 100% (Women's Political Caucus) of their seats. Because this data only examines one election cycle, it is nearly impossible to assert any definite patterns in the results. In addition, 2010 was a unique election year with the rise of the Tea Party and the surge of Republican candidates seeking office. This could have altered the political climate as well as the opportunity for women's PAC effectiveness (Mitchell, 2011). Moreover, this study did not address the overall political climate. It is important to note whether the candidate was running in a district at least moderately favorable to her party alignment.

Women's PACs can be judged on strength and success in a variety of ways including the amount of money they contribute to the number of candidates they are able to support to the percentage of wins their endorsed candidates experience. The leading state PAC in contributions is Annie's List, a PAC directly modeled after EMILY's List (Annieslist.com, 2012). In 2010, Annie's List directly contributed over \$500,000 to its selected candidates while the second most money contributed by a single women's PAC was under \$35,700. On another hand, the Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy Committee of New York, another PAC that supports pro-choice Democratic women, supported the most candidates in the 2010 election, totaling 21 candidates (Eleanorslegacy.com, 2012). Lastly, when looking at candidate success rate, the PAC that supported the most number of candidates with a 100% candidate success rate was the Arizona List (supported 11 candidates in 2010) (Mitchell, 2011). The Arizona List, also like EMILY's List, focuses exclusively on pro-choice Democratic women running for office in Arizona (Arizona

List, 2012). Monetary totals for all of these PACs are shockingly low. If the idea behind EMILY's List and therefore most state-level women's PACs is "Early Money Is Like Yeast," then where is this money? Can these PACs possibly accomplish their goal of funding with such low amounts of money for candidates? Though these are only a few examples of women's PACs, I will detail each state focused PAC that directly funds women candidates later in this paper. With the assertion that more money leads to more success in the world of political campaigns, it would follow that the accumulation of PAC funding for women will increase their ability to win elections. Perhaps those PACs with a specific structure are more successful than others (i.e. those structured like EMILY's List). My research will examine the efficacy (measured by the amount of money the PAC distributes and the number of successful campaigns they endorse) of PACs in state legislative elections across the country. I expect to find a consistent strategy in the structure, ideologies, and monetary tactics that will make state-level women's PACs highly effective. These strategies will allow the PAC to be a positive and relevant force in increasing women's political representation.

Data and Methods

In order to conduct my research, I studied state-level women's PACs from across the country. To identify state-level PACs I used the official PAC listing from the Center for American Women in Politics of the Eagleton Institute at Rutgers University. This is not an exhaustive list, but lists the most prevalent state-level women's PACs. The Center for American Women in Politics is the foremost authority on data regarding women in politics on a state and national level. I also included two newly formed PACs in my study. These PACs, both in the state of Virginia, provided unique structural and ideological data that contributed to my analysis.

With this listing of PACs, I then investigated whether or not these PACs directly funded women's campaigns by using information provided by the National Institute for Money in State Politics. The National Institute data allowed me to determine the amount of funding each PAC provided for a candidate and whether or not the candidate won her election.

The sample in this study includes sixteen state-level women's PACs that attempt to increase women's representation in state legislatures. I studied each PAC on an individual basis. I analyzed the structure and ideological perspective by interviewing with PAC staff and by website content analysis. Website content analysis provided most of the information regarding when the PAC was founded, what they support, and how they are staffed and structured. Interviews asked PAC staff about the importance of PACs, the goal of their specific PAC, and the importance of staff and structure. I was able to conduct interviews with staff from 10 PACs. These interviews provided a more qualitative aspect to my analysis.

Additionally, I performed financial and efficacy analysis using the data from The National Institute for Money in State Politics. I looked at the 2010 and 2012 state legislative elections, including the amount of money the PAC distributed to its endorsed candidates as well as the number of candidates they endorsed and the number of successful candidates.

After gathering this data, I compiled the results in a series of tables. This table was then split into parts to provide context for each section of my analysis. I analyzed the PACs in terms of structure, indirect funding, endorsements, amount of direct funding, and efficacy. I measured efficacy as the percentage of women who won their races out of the number of women the PAC directly funded. These percentages provide a limited view of efficacy, as they only consider the number of women that the PAC endorsed in the total number, not the number of women that ran in that particular election year. I also included an in-depth look at a potentially new model for state-level women's PACs. My analysis assesses the success of the PACs and suggests what could make them more or less successful.

Analysis

PAC Structure

PAC Name	Percent of Women in State Legislature	Location	Paid Staff	Board of Directors
Annie's List	35.6%	TX	6	Yes
Women's Strike Force	17.9%	VA	1	Yes
The Farm Team	17.9%	VA	0	Yes
Virtus PAC	17.9%	VA	_____	_____
Arizona List	35.6%	AZ	3	Yes
DAWN's List ¹	23.3%	IA	0	Steering Committee ²
Eleanor's Legacy	22.1%	NY	1	Yes
WIN List ³	22.9%	GA	1	Yes
MOLLI's List	21.8%	MO	Part-time ⁴	Yes
Lillian's List	22.9%	NC	3	Yes
MWPC ⁵	25.5%	MA	3	Yes
Patsy T Mink PAC	31.6%	HI	0	Endorsement Committee ⁶
Women's Democratic Club of DE	25.8%	DE	0	State party member ⁷
WIN-PAC ⁸	28.9%	OR	Hiring ⁹	Yes
WPC-NJ ¹⁰	29.2%	NJ	1	Yes
Women Winning	33.3%	MN	3	Yes

¹ DAWN's List=Democratic Activist Women's Network

² DAWN's List's Steering Committee is equivalent to a Board of Directors for other PACs.

³ WIN List=Women In Numbers

⁴ MOLLI's List employs a part-time staffer to plan fundraisers for the organization at various times in the year.

⁵ MWPC=Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus

⁶ The Endorsement Committee meets with a sole purpose to vote on candidates

⁷ The Women's Democratic Club of DE, as a member of the state party was governed by the Party

⁸ WIN-PAC=Women's Investment Network

⁹ WIN-PAC is currently hiring an Executive Director.

¹⁰ WPC-NJ=Women's Political Caucus of New Jersey

On a surface level, most of the state-level women's PACs are very similarly structured. Seven out of the sixteen PACs in the analysis actually formally align themselves with EMILY's List, meaning that they actively promote a relationship to EMILY's List via their website and marketing materials. This affiliation is predominantly in the form of training partnerships that teach women how to run the most effective campaign. These officially partnered PACs recruit candidates often using the EMILY's List title and hold trainings with EMILY's List staff and training materials. Candidate recruitment is not unique to women's PACs (Rutenberg, 2009). In fact, some PACs exist with the sole mission of recruiting candidates. Although this is not the type of direct funding that I am addressing in my paper, it is a large part of the way state-level women's PAC money is used. Some PACs even have a "List" name to closely associate with EMILY's List in hopes of gaining donors and credibility, for example, MOlli's List, Lillian's List, Annie's List, DAWN's List, and the WIN List.

As a general theme in most of the PACs there is an Executive Director, a Political Director, and a Board of Directors. An Executive Director is the overseer of the PAC, and the figurehead and spokesperson for the organization (sometimes the figurehead/spokesperson role is the President of the Board of Directors). A Political Director is in charge of seeking candidates and compiling candidate information to propose to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is typically a diverse group of successful women that have the final say as to which candidates receive funding. Some PACs, like Annie's List, have Communications Directors, Deputy Directors, and Finance Directors. In addition, staff for these PACs seem equally important. As pointed out by Yvonne Lau, Vice-Chair of The Patsy T. Mink PAC, most of the women involved in the

volunteer-only PACs work full time jobs as well. Rather than devoting their days to advancing the PAC, these women are contributing to the PAC through volunteer hours. As evidenced by the Democratic Women's Club PAC of Delaware, some PACs simply cannot function without a full staff and cease to exist. Clearly, staff is of significance to the functionality of the PAC. An Executive Director, a Political Director, and a Board of Directors are necessary for a PAC to function. The highest funded PAC, Annie's List employs the most staff members; however, their efficacy is not higher than any other PAC.

Indirect Funding

In addition to name and structure, many of the state-level women's PACs provide indirect funding of candidates through the EMILY's List founded concept of bundling. The EMILY's List affiliates and the other state-level PACs (with exception of the PACs that will begin endorsing in 2013) publicly declare their endorsed candidates online. This practice, similar to EMILY's List's "On the List" campaign, attempts to build credibility and garner support for the endorsed candidates. Most of the PACS link their endorsed candidate pages directly to the candidates website. This public declaration of support serves the ultimate goal of PACs functioning to influence voter's decisions. As discussed previously, PACs exist for two main reasons: to influence roll call voting or to influence voters' decisions to support a candidate. As evidenced in this study, state-level women's PACs have the primary goal of electing more women to office, therefore assuming the role of the latter.

Indirect funding can be defined as PAC funded programs such as the training programs that PACs offer for women’s campaigns that will be discussed further. Although I am only considering PACs that directly fund candidates, the research simply can not ignore a crucial part of these PACs—the network they provide. As stated by Brette McSweeney of The Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy Committee stated, state-level PACs serve as “multipliers” (McSweeney, 2013). This assertion illustrates that these networks connect women with other candidates and donors that strengthen their ability to win elections. According to McSweeney, PACs can multiply funding, recognition, endorsements, and, ultimately, votes (McSweeney, 2013). No matter the funding level, some scholars argue that networks are the most valuable asset to a woman’s political activism (Cook, 1977). Further, “networks of love and support are crucial to our ability as women to work in a hostile world where we are not in fact expected to survive” (Cook, 1977). Between staff, donors, Boards of Directors, and endorsees, these PACs serve as networks unprecedented by much else. I chose to only look at PACs that directly fund candidates; however, the fact that these direct-funding PACs rely so heavily on networks speaks to the importance of these women’s “clubs” that link women to women and in theory create an unbeatable network.

Who to Endorse?

In terms of linking women to women, the inclusion/exclusion of males as supported candidates in women’s PACs is also an unavoidable factor when it comes to these state-level women’s PACs. Out of all of the PACs in this analysis, only one PAC (Women’s Strike Force) chose to endorse males in addition to females. This brings to

light the important issue of descriptive and substantive representation that was discussed earlier. When discussing women's state level PACs, it is necessary to understand whether the goal is to elect more women regardless of their political positions (descriptive representation), or whether it is to elect women that will represent "women's issues," or regardless of gender. In a contemporary political sense, "women's issues" are primarily choice, and secondarily healthcare, child/eldercare, and education (National Women's Political Caucus, 2013). Based upon the state PACs in this analysis, the overwhelming majority choose to support women that will represent "women's issues" (substantive representation), but what about men that support women's issues? When speaking on the issue of men endorsed by women's PACs, Lisa Kaado, former WPC-NJ director noted, "Men *can* champion for women. The WPC-NJ used to recommend men, but only fund women. The men appreciated the support and always showed up to help our endorsed women raise money. If you take away the support from these championing men, you risk losing support and money for your PAC" (Kaado, 2013). However, we also saw the importance of PACs only supporting women. As the WomenWinning Executive Director noted, "Political science research tells us that women are more likely than their male counterparts to introduce and champion legislation that impacts women and families" (Beecham, 2013). Which is better? Depending on the goal of the PAC (substantive or descriptive representation), a critical evaluation of the inclusion of men is necessary in any PAC looking to expand. Although this was only suggested in one interview, the idea of recommending men and funding women seems to be a winning formula. This way, you recognize and praise men that support women in office, but concentrate resources on getting women elected (Kaado, 2013).

Ideology

PAC Name	Party Affiliation	Endorsement Criteria
Annie's List	D ¹¹	Multiple topics ¹²
Women's Strike Force	NP ¹³ --Progressive	Legislation-based ¹⁴
The Farm Team	D	Choice
Virtus PAC	NP--Conservative	Character
Arizona List	D	Choice
DAWN's List	D	Choice
Eleanor's Legacy	D	Choice
WIN List	D	Democratic values
MOLli's List	NP--Progressive	Multiple topics ¹⁵
Lillian's List	D	Choice
MWPC	MP ¹⁶ --Progressive	Choice
Patsy T Mink PAC	D	Choice
Women's Democratic Club of DE	D	Choice
WIN-PAC	D	Choice
WPC-NJ	MP	Choice
Women Winning	MP	Choice

Ideologically, the majority of women's groups and PACs are affiliated with the Democratic Party and liberal interests on both a national and state level. Some are multi- or bi- partisan but are still affiliated with being "Pro-Choice." The issue of "choice" seems to be *the* issue when it comes to PAC support. Within these PACs, there are varying levels of support for choice. From supporting *Roe V. Wade* to supporting government-funded abortions to supporting abortion rights for minors, most candidates are rated on just how "pro-choice" they are. This, in conjunction with the candidates' viability, constitutes whether or not the PAC will support these women. While choice is undoubtedly a hot topic, it seems to be one of the only topics used to deem whether or not a woman should be supported. No PACs endorsed or supported on the sheer fact that the candidate was female (descriptive representation), and only one PAC (Virtus PAC) was found to be conservative. As noted, Republican women struggle to find PAC support due

¹¹ D=Democratic

¹² Endorsement criteria includes Choice, healthcare, education, economy, domestic violence

¹³ NP=Non-partisan

¹⁴ Legislation is choice-centered (Personhood Amendment and Trans-vaginal Ultrasound Bill)

¹⁵ Endorsement criteria include ten topics, including choice, economic, and educational issues

¹⁶ MP=Multi-partisan

to the sheer number of Democratic options for female candidates. Republican women can potentially change the face of politics as much as Democratic women. It seems inconsistent with the women's movement to exclude an entire ideologically-affiliated group of women.

The current goals of women's state-level PACs are more aligned with that of a choice PAC, not a PAC that elects more women to office. The PACs studied in this paper possess missions that state their intent to elect more women, but they are so focused on this issue of choice that actually electing these women may come secondary. For example, Lillian's List self-proclaims that they are a "Committee dedicated to electing pro-choice Democratic women to the North Carolina General Assembly" (Lillians List, 2012). The Massachusetts Political Caucus states that they are "a nonpartisan organization committed to increasing the number of women elected to public office and appointed to public policy positions" (MWPC, 2012). Perhaps we need PACs that are more focused on electing women to office that support women just because they are women, regardless of party or their position on choice. Though this could elect more women by sheer number, it could, however, lead to the election of women that do not legislate on behalf of "women's issues," as previously defined. Perhaps choice should stay as the caveat for support; however, it is certain that there could be a more diverse, inclusive source of criteria for PAC support. By suggesting that a woman in office can be reduced to her position on abortion conceivably limits the idea of women's representation as a whole and pigeonholes women to one issue only. However, it seems that blindly supporting a woman because she is a woman will not make the type of progress one would expect to come from political parity.

Amount of Funding

Money is necessary when engaging in most political campaigns, but raising enough money can be daunting. Specifically, we know that women more often than men cite fundraising as a campaign issue (Sabonmatsu, Carroll, & Walsh, 2009). Former Executive Director of the Women’s Political Caucus of New Jersey noted why PACs are “not only relevant but critical” (Kaado, 2013). She stated, “With elections costing more and more, men have more access to money and people with money. We need to promote the idea that women should engage in politics financially and PACs do just that” (Kaado, 2013). In other words, women should donate to these state-level women’s PACs. Moreover, The Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy Committee believes that early financial support allows the candidates to “focus on meeting the voters, talk[ing] to constituents, and discuss[ing] the issues” (McSweeney, 2013).

These ideas are certainly true, but when considering the amount of funding that these state-level women’s PACs provide, the numbers are rather disappointing and surprising. It is clear that these PACs are entirely under-funded. Annie’s List, the largest PAC in terms of money, distributed over \$800,000 to candidates in the most recent election cycle. Though this seems substantial, the next highest PAC funder totals at under \$100,000. As noted, most of these PACs are modeled after EMILY’s List; however, there is little money to act as “yeast” from these committees. The amounts dwindle dramatically from there. How can these PACs possibly revolutionize the amount of women in office when some do not even have enough money to make a maximum contribution to even one candidate?

PAC funding seems to be a secondary priority to the PAC staff as well. Many of the PAC staffers cited the importance of connecting women to women, a donor network activity, as the primary importance of PACs. When asked the importance of state-level women's PACs, one staffer replied, "The PAC strives to provid[e] a similar collective, multiplier effect that a union, professional association, or alumni association would provide to their members (McSweeney, 2013)." All of the PAC organizations trained and recruited women for office; however, PACs exist to fund campaigns and the low amounts of money seem to handicap the PAC's efficacy as a whole.

Efficacy Measure

PAC Name	2010 Efficacy ¹⁷	2012 Efficacy ¹⁸
Annie's List	24% (4/17) \$780,910	65% (7/13) \$893,352
Women's Strike Force	N/A	State party contribution: \$150 ¹⁹
The Farm Team	42% (5/12) \$15,300	14% (1/7) \$7,250
Virtus PAC	N/A	N/A
Arizona List	40% (4/10) \$11,404	67% (6/9) \$12,472
DAWN's List	No 2010 record	State party contribution: \$250
Eleanor's Legacy	40% (10/25) \$44,400	50% (10/20) \$41,450
WIN List	83% (5/6) \$19,200	89% (8/9) \$18,600
Molli's List	N/A	50% (6/12) \$16,950
Lillian's List	50% (8/16) \$74,000	67% (8/12) \$62,000
MWPC	67% (14/21) \$7,175	80% (12/15) \$2,950
Patsy T Mink PAC	100% (6/6) \$14,000	59% (10/17) \$47,000
Women's Democratic Club of DE	70% (7/9) \$2,600	N/A
WIN-PAC	17% (2/12) \$58,500	60% (6/10) \$33,300
WPC-NJ	100% (9/9) \$6,000	95% (18/19) \$10,900
Women Winning	0/1 (0%) \$500	2/2 (100%) \$1,000

Efficacy measurements from National Institute on Money in State Politics

¹⁷ In the case of VA and NJ, 2009 efficacy is measured.

¹⁸ In the case of VA and NJ, 2011 efficacy is measured.

¹⁹ State party contribution given to Democratic party

Efficacy percentages for each PAC and election cycle ranged from 0% to 100%. Numbers of funded candidates ranged from one to twenty five. My measure of efficacy did not correlate with funding, staff, number of endorsed candidates, or ideology. Because these PACs are so underfunded, it does not seem that they currently have a significant direct effect on these women's campaigns. Even if 100% of the PAC-funded candidates won their races, this cannot conclusively be contributed to the PAC's funding. Consequently, efficacy is not relevant at this juncture. This measure of efficacy may be more useful once funding has increased to a level of impact.

A New PAC Model?

One PAC has brought a new strategy to the forefront of state-level women's PACs that could revolutionize the potentially limiting nature of state-level women's PACs. The Women's Strike Force in Virginia has created a PAC surrounding anti-woman legislation. Although the legislation in VA (transvaginal ultrasounds and the Personhood Amendment) did have to do with choice, the Strike Force named itself multi-partisan and willing to endorse men *or* women that opposed this legislative attack on women. According to Kris Amundson, a founding member of the Strike Force "Republican women are as appalled as Democratic women by the [anti-choice] legislation that has been introduced in the Virginia General Assembly this year (Feld, 2012). She also stated, "This new group will be a place where men and women appalled by this intrusive legislation can go" (Feld, 2012). This PAC uses opposition to legislation as the caveat for support. This legislation-centered PAC structure, however, poses a question regarding the staying-power of the PAC. Once the legislation fades, perhaps the

PAC funding itself will fade; however, from my study, I see no issue with a strong temporary PAC. The PACs that have been around for years have maintained a presence, but are not making as groundbreaking progress as one may expect.

Conclusions and Future Work

Women have a long way to go before reaching political parity in state legislatures. With the current growth rate of 1.7 percent every ten years, it will take over 150 years for women to achieve 50% representation. Scholarship suggests a variety of reasons that women are underrepresented, with fundraising a major component. Because money is correlated with campaign success, findings show that PACs can be a powerful tool for leveling the playing field for women.

The number of PACs continues to grow each year. As evidenced with the growth associated with Super PACS, voters consistently contribute to PACs in an effort to make a greater impact in the political arena. For example, EMILY's List serves as the quintessential example of the impact that women's PACs can have.

A combination of website content analysis, financial analysis, and staff interviews, finding show that PACs are useful tools, but as it stands the world of state-level women's PACs could use ideological evaluation and financial development. State level PACs have the potential to revolutionize the political climate for women, but they may be stuck in a pattern that has the potential to become stagnant or ineffective.

Structurally, staff positions beyond an Executive and Political director should only be added if the PAC is operating at a high rate of efficacy (more than 75%) and is consistently increasing in size of donors and of women supported. Too many staff members can detract from the amount of funding for candidates, but too few can cause a

PAC to quickly fail. Moreover, funding allotted for staff members could be used to increase the financial impact of these PACs.

In order to stay relevant, findings suggest that PACs can center around legislation that specifically puts women at risk. While state-level PACs should continue to support their specific interest areas, new legislation-centered PACs could be the future of state-level women's PACs.

When it comes to funding, EMILY's List says it best with their "Early Money Is Like Yeast" slogan, but these PACs must raise and contribute more money to truly impact a candidate's campaign. When female candidates are well-funded early-on, it seems to be a sound recipe for success, but, without funding, PACs are essentially useless.

It would follow that more work should be done on PAC donors. Are the same EMILY's List donors donating to EMILY's List-affiliated state-level women PACs? What prompts donors to give to state-level PACs as opposed to national level PACs? Further, as efficacy is relative to region and state, how should a PAC determine their goal? What factors in the states should cause PACs to focus on a number of endorsements, a number of wins, or simply have a monetary focus? How can PACs transition from a single-issue of choice to a broader spectrum of issues? Lastly, work should be done to explore whether or not PACs are willing to broaden their endorsement criteria from party and choice to a more inclusive set of qualifications. Could this potentially hurt the women's movement for political parity?

Overall, this study provides an introduction to state-level women's PACs across the country. State-level women's PACs are often overlooked at the expense of EMILY's

List—*the* women’s PAC. Though EMILY’s List has done extensive work to promote and elect women in politics, this one PAC cannot and should not define PACs across the country and centralize women around choice only. State-level women’s PACs have a true opportunity to revolutionize women in state legislatures by using an effective staff structure, broadening their endorsement criteria, and using current legislative opportunities to mobilize support for women in office.

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