Antifeminism and Women’s Representation in the States

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Abstract

To what extent and under what conditions are the descriptive and substantive representation of women linked when it comes to conservative, anti-feminist women’s interests? The few existing studies that examine representational activity on anti-feminist or conservative women’s issues in particular find that what little activity there is, is primarily driven by conservative Republican men. While suggestive, these studies provide only a partial glimpse into the politics of anti-feminism in the U.S., and one that pre-dates 21st century waves of polarized politics and anti-feminist activism. This paper takes an in-depth look at the heart of anti-feminist legislative activity in 21 state houses, from 1997 to 2012: the sponsorship of “pro-life” abortion and abortion-related measures. We find that conservative Republican women have been at the forefront of recent surges in pro-life advocacy in state legislatures, especially as more and more chambers fall under Republican Party control. These conservative Republican women are much more likely than even their equally conservative male co-partisans to sponsor restrictive abortion measures, but only when those measures can be framed in terms of women’s interests. When we examine the sponsorship of bills framed in terms of protecting fetuses or religious/moral principles, significant gender gaps are no longer apparent. These findings, we argue, have important implications for how we think about the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation as well as how we conceptualize and operationalize women’s interests and issues.
To what extent and under what conditions are the descriptive and substantive representation of women linked when it comes to conservative, antifeminist women’s interests and issues? Voluminous research has established that women’s descriptive and substantive representation are strongly linked: women in public office are more likely to champion women’s interests than their male counterparts are, all else being equal. Yet, with very few exceptions, the women’s issues examined in the research literature are defined and operationalized as either exclusively feminist or ideologically inclusive. The few studies that examine representational activity on antifeminist or conservative women’s issues in particular find that what little activity there is, is primary driven by conservative Republican men (Osborn 2012; Swers 2002, 2013). While suggestive, these studies provide only a partial and speculative glimpse into the politics of antifeminism in the U.S., and one that pre-dates 21st century waves of polarized politics and antifeminist activism.

This paper picks up where other studies left off, taking an in-depth look at the heart of antifeminist legislative activity in 21 state houses, from 1997 to 2012: the sponsorship of “pro-life” abortion and abortion-related measures. Our analysis focuses on who sponsors such legislation and, for comparison’s sake, who sponsors contending “pro-choice” measures. Our sample of state-years allows us to gauge the links between women’s descriptive and substantive representation amongst a large number of diverse lawmakers situated in a wide array of partisan and gendered environments. Most notably, we are able to track the representational politics of antifeminism (and feminism) leading up to and including the most recent and unprecedented surge of pro-life advocacy in the states. Does the link between women’s descriptive and substantive representation falter once we cross the line separating conservative, antifeminist
women’s interests from all others, or have newly empowered conservative women in public office taken up the call to act for women?

Our findings indicate that conservative Republican women in state legislatures (1997-2012) are more likely than their male counterparts to sponsor antifeminist abortion measures, all else being equal. Thus, much like their liberal Democratic sisters, conservative Republican women are representing women’s interests as they define them – more so at least, than their male colleagues are. In fact, these gender gaps in antifeminist bill sponsorship are most pronounced when the legislation is likely to be framed in terms of protecting women’s health and safety. Thus, antifeminism may be the exception that proves the rule that women’s descriptive and substantive representation are intricately linked. Indeed, our evidence suggests that conservative Republican women may be at the forefront of the 21st-century wave of restrictive abortion policy adoption.

This has important implications for the study of women’s political representation, but not simply because it extends the generalizability of theories regarding the link between descriptive and substantive representation. Rather, our attention to the context of state legislatures and state legislative parties, the contingencies of issue framing, and intricacies of gender, partisanship, and ideology all point to a more complex theory or understanding of women’s representation and women’s political interests. As we elaborate in the conclusion, our study provides further evidence that women’s representation is not only deeply gendered, but also a very political process of careful, complicated, and strategic decision-making.
Antifeminism in Women’s Representation – or the Lack Thereof

Decades of research on the impact of women in elective office have demonstrated quite forcefully that representation in the U.S. is gendered. Throughout the policymaking process female officeholders are often more likely than their male colleagues to act for women or women’s interests.¹ In terms of the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation, public officials who “stand for” women are more likely to “act for” women (Pitkin 1967). Nowhere is this link between gender identity and representational activity more clearly and consistently demonstrated than in the research on legislators’ policy leadership.

Across time, office, and political parties, legislative women, compared to their male counterparts, care more about, know more about, and do more about women’s issues and interests.² In interviews, surveys, press releases, and newsletters, women officeholders are more likely to express concern about such issues and claim them as their own (Barrett 1995; Boles 2001; Carroll 2002; Diamond 1977; Dolan and Kropf 2004; Fridkin and Woodall 2005; Garcia Bedolla, Tate, and Wong 2005; Reingold 2000). They are more likely to serve on committees relevant to women’s interests (Carroll 2008; Diamond 1977; Reingold 2000; Thomas 1994; Thomas and Welch 1991); and in those committees and on the floor, women are more likely to advocate for women and women’s interests, as women (Berkman and O’Connor 1993; Dodson 2006; Gerrity, Osborn, and Mendez 2007; Levy, Tien, and Aved 2002; Norton 2002; Osborn and Mendez 2010; Pearson and Dancey 2011a, 2011b; Swers 2002, 2013; Walsh 2002). And perhaps most importantly, they are more likely to introduce or sponsor legislation addressing such

¹ For comprehensive reviews of this literature, see Reingold (2008); Swers and Rouse (2011).
² We use the terms “women’s issues” and “women’s interests” to distinguish the more general and abstract “interests” or concerns of women from the more specific, empirically manifested “issues” that address or articulate them (Beckwith 2014). When the distinction is blurred or both terms seem applicable, we often use terms like “interests/issues.”

These studies have employed a variety of conceptual and operational definitions of women’s issues or interests. For example, while most scholars broadly conceive of women’s issues as those particularly salient to women (Carroll 1994), they differ on how directly salient those issues are. Some issues are salient because they primarily or most directly concern or affect women as women, while others are salient because they reflect the more “traditional” concerns (or interests) that women as primary caretakers presumably have about others, especially children and those in need. Accordingly, some studies distinguish “women’s” or “women-specific” issues like abortion, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and child care from more general social welfare issues, such as education, health care, and poverty assistance (e.g., MacDonald and O’Brien 2011; Osborn 2012; Reingold 2000; Saint-Germain 1989; Swers 2002, 2013; Thomas 1994). Similarly, researchers differ in whether they draw ideological lines, especially when dealing with issues more directly salient to women. Thus, some studies distinguish and compare leadership on feminist initiatives that promote women’s rights or equality from/to more general, liberal or conservative, social welfare issues (e.g., MacDonald and O’Brien 2011; Saint-Germain 1989; Swers 2002, 2013). Others restrict designated women’s issues to only those that are feminist (and women-centered), or at the very least not antifeminist

³ Some studies also report that male legislators are more active on “men’s issues” such as fiscal affairs or commerce (Diamond 1977; Dodson and Carroll 1991; Thomas and Welch 1991; Thomas 1994; Reingold 2000; Fridkin and Woodall 2005). Swers (2007, 2008, 2013) highlights the great lengths women in the U.S. Senate go to in order to take leadership roles on defense policy and to advocate for women and families and re-gender that very male-dominated policy realm.
(e.g., Bratton 2002; Bratton and Haynie 1999; Dodson and Carroll 1991; Wolbrecht 2002). Still others impose no ideological restrictions (e.g., Gerrity, Osborn, and Mendez 2007; Osborn 2012; Reingold 2000; Thomas 1994). Remarkably, gender gaps in policy leadership appear across all of these definitions of women’s issues/interests; but they are most pronounced on women-specific and/or feminist issues.

Yet, amidst all this conceptual variation, there is one very notable omission: hardly any of these studies delineate conservative or antifeminist women-specific issues or interests as a distinct analytic category, or examine legislative leadership on such matters. Moreover, the very few studies that do analyze antifeminist advocacy among lawmakers uncover a glaring exception to the “rule” that women are more likely to act for women. What little we know about antifeminist policymaking suggests it is – or, at least, has been – dominated by Republican men (Osborn 2012; Swers 2002, 2013). In stark contrast to the unwavering feminist leadership of Democratic women, Republican women have been in the shadows of antifeminist legislative advocacy.

In her study of the U.S. House of Representatives during the 103rd and 104th Congresses, for example, Swers (2002) finds that “Republican men sponsor the overwhelming majority of antifeminist bills” (p. 43); and that Republican women were no more likely to sponsor such legislation than Republican men. In the 103rd Congress, no Republican woman sponsored a single antifeminist bill, while six percent of Republican men offered 13 antifeminist measures. Antifeminist bill activity picked up considerably when House Republicans gained a majority in the 104th Congress, but an equal percentage (12%) of Republican men and women took up the cause. In her study of the U.S. Senate during the 107th and 108th Congresses, Swers (2013) once

4 One House Democrat, a man, sponsored one antifeminist bill in each Congress.
again finds that antifeminist legislation was sponsored by a small number of conservative Republican men (only), and that GOP men were “the most prolific” cosponsors of such measures (p. 61). At best, some of the more conservative Republican women supported such measures when asked, but none took an active or visible role in doing so.

Similarly, Osborn’s (2012) study of women’s representation in ten state houses at the turn of the century (1999-2000) reveals that Republican men controlled the lion’s share of the antifeminist agenda. More specifically, “men Republicans tended to dominate bill introduction in three subcategories: sex offenders, marriage and divorce, and abortion” (p. 108), and unlike their female co-partisans, their initiatives were uniformly conservative or antifeminist. Osborn and Kreitzer’s (2014) time-series analysis (1987-2010) of bill sponsorship in the Washington state House provides further evidence that antifeminist abortion policymaking in particular is almost always dominated by Republican men. In only one session (2003-04) did Republican women’s initiatives significantly outnumber Republican men’s – despite the relatively large number of Republican women present (pp. 188 and 192).

In some ways, these findings are quite puzzling. Invariably, studies like Swers’ and Osborn’s that compare legislative leadership on women-specific issues versus more general social welfare issues find much larger and more consistent gender gaps in the former. The more directly salient the issue is to women’s specific interests, the more likely women legislators are to take the lead. The logic behind that, as Swers (2002, 2013) explains it, should be just as applicable to antifeminist causes as to feminist causes. When policy debates clearly impact women’s lives and their place in American society, female lawmakers clearly have more at stake and more to offer – as women and, perhaps, especially as mothers. Their commitment to the issue is deeper, more personal and their authority – both experiential and moral – is enhanced. If
women do not already assume leadership roles on such issues, others will certainly look to them for such leadership. The controversial nature of many women’s issues only enhances the gender difference in policy leadership as others who are less personally committed would rather avoid taking a stand and alienating too many would-be supporters (see especially, Swers 2013, pp. 41 and 47).

Conceivably, conservative women should possess just as much moral authority and personal commitment on women’s issues as liberal women. Indeed, U.S. history is replete with pivotal examples of conservative women leading antifeminist causes, from suffrage to the ERA to abortion politics (Ginsburg 1989; Klatch 1987; Luker 1984; Mansbridge 1986; Marshall 1997; Rymph 2006; Schreiber 2012). Conservative and avowedly antifeminist women’s political organizations are alive and well – and have been for quite some time (Schreiber 2012). Swers and Larson (2005, 125) identify a growing number of women in Congress who share the characteristics of what they call the “socially conservative woman” archetype. “Viewing gender as central to their identity” and “motivated by [their] religious beliefs and a desire to protect the traditional family and a woman’s role in the home and the care of children,” these women do not shy away from antifeminist causes. In justifying their conservative leadership, they do not hesitate to highlight their own roles as wives and mothers.

Antifeminist women leaders certainly exist, but as Schreiber points out, the one place where their presence “has been significantly lacking” is in elected office, especially at the national level (2014, 111). Indeed, a large part of the explanation for the lack of antifeminist leadership among congressional women in Swers’ studies is that precious few conservative Republican women served in the House during the 103rd and 104th Congresses or in the Senate.
during the 107th and 108th Congresses. As Swers (2014, 165) explains, “polarization among Republican women [in Congress] has lagged that among Republican men.” It was not until the 108th and 109th Congresses (2003-2006) that Republican women in the House of Representatives voted just as conservatively as Republican men (Elder 2008; Frederick 2009). At last check, GOP women in the Senate remained more moderate than their male counterparts (Swers 2013). Similarly, among the state lawmakers in Osborn’s (2012) study, Republican women – while considerably more conservative than Democratic women (and men) – were significantly more likely than Republican men to support a number of feminist issues, including unlimited access to abortion and safe sex programs in schools. More generally, Thomsen (2015) points to the relatively small number of state-legislative Republican women who “fit” the increasingly conservative party mold (and are therefore willing and able to launch a competitive campaign for higher office) as one of the primary explanations for the lack of Republican women in Congress.

To some extent, then, it remains to be seen whether large numbers of truly conservative women lawmakers avoid representing antifeminist women and women’s interests, relative to their equally conservative male counterparts. If it is any indication however, even the very few conservative Republican women in Swers’ (2013) study appear reluctant to enter the antifeminist fray. None of the three conservative female Senators in the 108th Congress, for example, took to the floor to promote the impending ban on “partial birth” abortions, or to defend their party’s position on the issue. Doing so, from their perspective, would entail multiple risks.

These women do not want to become the public face of the Republican position on women’s issues because they will attract heightened media scrutiny as women acting against women’s interests. Moreover, they fear the demand to provide the Republican Party with cover on these initiatives will lead women’s issues to

5 The fact that there have been so few Republican women of any ideological stripe in Congress makes it “difficult to systematically analyze” their policy priorities more precisely (Swers 2014, 165-66).
dominate their legislative portfolio. This is not a desirable outcome since women’s issues are not the path to power and influence in the Republican Party in the same way that issues like lower taxes, deregulation, and national security are (Swers 2013, 246).

Social conservatives had high hopes for the 2010 congressional elections as more conservative GOP women candidates than ever were poised to win seats and help consolidate Republican control of both the House and the Senate. Pundits speculated that it could be “the Year of the Conservative Woman” (McManus 2010). Yet, despite Sarah Palin’s Mama Grizzlies rallying cry for “an emerging conservative feminist identity,” scholars and journalists alike noticed that even these conservative women shied away from women’s issues. Instead of drawing upon their moral authority as mothers to fight for antifeminist causes such as abortion, one after another chose “to cast themselves as competent on masculinized issues” with allegedly more “broad-based appeal,” such as the economy, health care, energy, the budget, and tax cuts (Schreiber 2014, 121; McManus 2010).

Perhaps, then, research on antifeminism and women’s representation has looked all too quickly in the wrong place and at the wrong time. Too few conservative women running for and gaining seats in Congress have found the increasingly polarized national Republican Party a hospital place for such gendered advocacy. While more numerous, the conservative Republican women in Osborn’s (2012) 1999-2000 dataset also may have had very few opportunities or incentives for antifeminist activism. We propose that a more expansive and up-to-date analysis of state legislative behavior may yield a different picture; for it is within those state legislative years where one encounters not only larger numbers of conservative Republican women, but also more incentives and opportunities for such women to be at the forefront of a more women-centered conservative movement that is more eagerly embraced by party leaders.
Since the mid-1990s, party politics have become ever more polarized and women’s issues (abortion especially) have played a central role (Sanbonmatsu 2002; Swers 2014; Wolbrecht 2000). Feminist organizations (including but not limited to EMILY’s List) are key players in Democratic politics (Barakso 2004); social conservatives, many of whom place deeply gendered ‘family values’ at the top of their agenda, are just as crucial to the Republican base. At the same time, competition for women’s votes is as strong as ever. Democrats take advantage of whatever opportunities they can get to accuse Republicans of being anti-women; and Republicans often find themselves on the defensive – especially given the lack of gender diversity in their candidate pools and leadership ranks.

In this context, conservative Republican women in elective office should have every incentive to take the lead on antifeminist legislation.

For conservative women engagement of women’s rights debates [under such circumstances] can provide opportunities for advancement in the caucus. Republican leaders seek out like-minded conservative women to push back against the Democratic narrative of a Republican war on women and to diversity the public face of the party. Taking on this role for the party allows conservative women to curry favor with the caucus and leadership while raising their public profile (Swers 2014, 167).

Yet, at the congressional level at least, conservative women remain reluctant – largely because they remain unconvinced that such issues really are central to the Republican Party and power within it (Swers 2013). We argue, however, that conservative women in state legislatures may be less reluctant – eager, even – to be the face of antifeminism in part because such issues likely play a more central and powerful role in state-level party politics.

A central tenet of American federalism is that the states have primary jurisdiction over many of the “social” issues that define social conservatism and antifeminism, including abortion, marriage, and other aspects of family law. Thus, state party organizations and leaders are more
likely than their national/congressional counterparts to place such issues at the very top of their priority list, especially in the absence of competing national security and defense issues. Recent trends in state-level abortion policymaking can be viewed as a testament to the very high level of importance such issues enjoy among state legislative Republicans especially. As Kreitzer’s (2015a) research confirms, the fact that an unprecedented surge of state laws restricting access to abortion immediately followed the “historic” Republican takeover of state legislatures in 2011, is no coincidence (Boonstra and Nash 2014; Storey 2010; Nagourney and Davey 2014).

Other trends in conservative movement politics also present new opportunities and incentives for conservative women to take the lead on antifeminist legislation – as conservative women. While organizations such as Concerned Women for America and the Independent Women’s Forum have been pushing the movement toward a more women-centered approach for some time (Schreiber 2012), their efforts may have gathered more momentum with the advent of Mama Grizzlies and women’s activism and leadership within the Tea Party movement (Rosen 2012; Vogel 2010). Within the pro-life movement, moreover, “pro-woman” factions have gained considerable headway in recent years (Trumpy 2014). Leaders such as David C. Reardon and organizations like Feminists for Life have introduced a new “pro-woman, pro-life” (PWPL) frame to the movement’s repertoire, effectively challenging (or, at least, extending) the dominant fetal rights approach (Oaks 2009; Reardon 1987, 1996; Rose 2011; Trumpy 2014).

For conservative women in state legislatures who might be weighing the costs and benefits of becoming “the public face” of abortion politics, this “frame extension” has profound implications. First, it “seeks to redefine the terms of the American abortion debate by recasting it as a dispute regarding which position best represents the rights, health, and interests of women” (Trumpy 2014, 164). Women’s interests, not fetal interests, are center stage. Second, PWPL
efforts to protect pregnant women from (presumably) coercive and corrupt “abortionists” and the (alleged and widely refuted) physical and emotional violence of abortion itself stand in stark contrast to “a pro-fetal frame that casts fetuses as victims and abortive women as perpetrators… undeserving of both empathy and rights” (Rose 2011, 4; see also, Daniels 1993). Third, PWPL organizations like Reardon’s Elliot Institute place a premium on the moral and experiential authority of women who have had abortions in ways that echo and bolster the representational privilege of legislative women acting for women. “Unlike past generations of male pro-life activists who make claims about abortion’s harm to the fetus (and who are therefore vulnerable to the charge that their true aim is to control women), Elliot uses post-abortive women as authorities—turning the pro-choice claim that pro-life groups do not represent women’s interests on its head” (Rose 2011, 13). In all these ways, the PWPL frame may very well empower conservative women activists and legislators who advocate an anti-abortion rights platform and inoculate them from the stigma of being labeled anti-woman.

**Our Approach and Expectations**

If previous research on women’s representation in antifeminist policymaking looked in the wrong place at the wrong time, our approach is to look in the right place at the right time: in state legislatures immersed in recent waves of polarized politics, Republican takeovers, and abortion policymaking. More precisely, by taking a closer look at the relationship between gender identity and legislative leadership on abortion-related issues in state legislatures from 1997 to 2012, we test the robustness and generalizability of previous research. Will conservative

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6 The most recent controversy over Planned Parenthood may be gaining so much traction because it confirms the fears of both the fetal rights and the pro-woman factions of the pro-life movement: evil, profiteering abortion providers are committing heinous crimes against fetal humanity.
and/or Republican women remain in the shadows of antifeminist advocacy and policymaking and will the links between women’s descriptive and substantive representation therefore remain uncommonly weak even under these very conducive conditions? We expect not. More precisely, we expect to see conservative Republican women in the forefront of the recent surge in abortion related legislative activity in the states.

In addition to providing a more conducive environment for women’s antifeminist leadership, our state legislative time series data also provide considerably more variation with which to examine the complex interactions between gender, partisanship, ideology, and issue-framing and test some of the explanations for the lack of women’s representation on antifeminist issues (Squire and Hamm 2005). First, we expect to see the strong influence of partisanship and ideology such that:

**H1**: Liberal Democrats are most likely to sponsor abortion rights legislation while conservative Republicans are most likely to sponsor restrictive or anti-abortion rights legislation.

Second, we expect gender identity (or women’s descriptive representation) to exert distinctive effects beyond ideology and partisanship such that:

**H2**: Liberal/Democratic women will be more likely than liberal/Democratic men to sponsor abortion rights legislation; and conservative/Republican women will be more likely than conservative/Republican men to sponsor antifeminist abortion legislation.

Third, we expect that conservative Republican women will feel most empowered and, thus, most likely to act for women, when the issues they are called upon to champion can be readily framed and interpreted as pro-women. Thus:

**H3**: Conservative/Republican women will be most likely to sponsor “pro-woman, pro-life” legislation and least likely to sponsor more traditional fetal rights legislation.
In fact, it is entirely possible that the effect of gender identity (in H2) depends upon or is conditioned by the issue-frame or bill topic, such that:

**H4: Legislator gender identity has little or no effect on the sponsorship of traditional fetal rights legislation and a much stronger effect on the sponsorship of pro-women, pro-life legislation.**

Given the increasing salience of and polarization on women’s issues – especially those having to do with women’s reproductive rights and health – in partisan politics, we also explore the relationship between women’s representation and the institutional partisan environment (Osborn 2012), or party control of the legislative chamber. The literature suggests, however, that party control or majority party status could have any number of effects on bill sponsorship, depending on party, ideology, and gender.

Standard theories of institutional parties and agenda control posit that, regardless of gender (or issue), sponsorship activity will increase when the legislator enjoys majority party status and greater access to and control over legislative agendas and outcomes (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005). Some evidence suggests this is the case for women’s issues in particular. Osborn and Kreitzer (2014, 193) report that, in general, “Party control of the legislative process appears to coincide with spikes in women’s issues bill introductions by both men and women in the majority party” (see also Osborn 2012). Swers (2013) also finds that, with regard to feminist advocacy, this pattern holds for everyone except Democratic women. Foregoing the sidelines of minority party status, Democratic women in the Republican-controlled Senate intensified their efforts to champion feminist legislation in order “to protect feminist causes from the Republican Party’s more socially conservative agenda” (p. 55). Interestingly, their efforts were particularly focused on protecting women’s reproductive rights (p. 56).
Other research also indicates that Republican women can be quite ambivalent about gaining majority party status. All the more wary of alienating their conservative colleagues and constituents, moderate GOP women in the House shrunk from their feminist initiatives when Republicans gained control in the 104th Congress (Swers 2002). And as noted above, even the more conservative women in the Republican-controlled Senate seemed reluctant to become “the public face” of GOP gender politics, especially on abortion (Swers 2013). Indeed, only in the most recent effort to defund Planned Parenthood have we seen any indication that the reticence of conservative Republican women in Congress is dissipating (Phillips 2015). Nonetheless, if our assumptions about the greater centrality of women’s issues in state party agendas are valid, then majority party control may be just as much an incentive for conservative GOP women in state legislatures to take up antifeminist issues as it is for conservative GOP men. It may even be a stronger incentive for female leadership in the Republican Party, as GOP men and women, leaders and rank-and-file alike look to conservative women to counter Democrats’ “Republican war on women” narrative.7

Thus, we test the standard party theory hypothesis that:

\[ H5: \] Regardless of gender, (liberal) Democrats in the majority party are more likely to sponsor feminist abortion measures than are (liberal) Democrats in the minority; and (conservative) Republicans in the majority party are more likely to sponsor antifeminist abortion measures than are (conservative) Republicans in the minority.

7 Osborn and Kreitzer (2014, 192-93) and Swers (2014, 166) suggest that heightened party competition also provides increased incentives for Republican and Democrats to step up their efforts – especially their women-led efforts – to advocate for women and gain women’s votes. Thus, we could also see increased sponsorship of abortion bills, especially among women, in the sessions leading up to and, perhaps, immediately after a change in party control.
However, we recognize that a number of alternative hypotheses are also plausible and worth testing.

**H5a**: Majority party status has a negative effect on the likelihood of (liberal) Democratic women sponsoring feminist abortion legislation.

**H5b**: Majority party status has no effect on the likelihood of (conservative) Republican women sponsoring antifeminist abortion legislation.

**H5c**: Majority party status has a stronger positive effect on Republican women’s anti-abortion rights activity than on Republican men’s.

### Data, Measures, and Methods

We employ multiple datasets, some original and some secondary, to examine the hypotheses above. First, to gauge the sponsorship of abortion-related legislation, we constructed a data set of all abortion bills introduced by state legislators in 21 state houses from 1997-2012. Importantly, though we do not measure change over time in this study, our data encompass several years of the recent resurgence in anti-feminist abortion activism in the states. We focus on bill sponsorship as our measure of legislators’ priorities and leadership in the chamber, consistent with the women-and-politics and legislative politics literature. While other measures, such as amending activity, floor activism, and media advocacy also capture legislators’ priorities well, particularly on a visible issue like abortion politics (e.g. Swers 2013), these measures are less easily acquired at the state legislative level and across multiple institutions. Conversely, the benefit of examining state legislative activity is to allow us a data set large enough to contain both a significant number of conservative Republican women to study and variation in party control across chambers and time.
To measure our dependent variable of interest, abortion bill sponsorship, we used data scraped from Lexis Nexus State Capital’s Bill Tracking function. The data include all state bills with the word “abortion” in the text of the bill. Using information available on state legislative websites, we identified and recorded the name of the primary sponsor(s) of each abortion bill introduced. To code these data for content (type of abortion bill) and feminist/anti-feminist implications (ideological direction), we developed a coding scheme based on the Guttmacher Institute’s abortion policy categories and the Representation in America’s Legislatures Project. We expanded these categories using data from Kreitzer’s (2015b) study of state abortion policy. This coding scheme appears in the Appendix. Once we coded each bill for content, we determined whether the bill was feminist or anti-feminist. Specifically, we classified a bill as feminist or anti-feminist based on if the effect or intention of the bill would be supported by abortion rights groups like NARAL or Guttmacher Institute or by anti-abortion rights groups such as Americans United for Life (AUL) or the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC). For instance, if the bill proposed a waiting period or a new informed consent procedure, we coded it as anti-feminist. In some cases, the bill had no clear feminist or anti-feminist orientation; we dropped these bills from the analysis.

In total, then, we identified every feminist and anti-feminist abortion bill introduced in the lower houses of Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas. 

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8 We thank Graeme Boushey and Julie Pacheco for providing these raw Lexis-Nexus data.
9 We used chamber rules and other information available on state legislative websites to distinguish “primary” sponsors from other types of sponsors or cosponsors. In each case, we designated primary sponsors as the ones on record as most responsible or accountable for shepherding the bill through the originating chamber. In most state houses, only one legislator is allowed to serve as primary sponsor of any given bill. We recorded and gave equal weight to multiple primary sponsors in the few states that formally allow multiple individuals to assume primary responsibility (and/or fail to distinguish between them).
Maryland, Mississippi, North Dakota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. While we do not intend for this sample to be fully representative of particular state characteristics, we are confident that these states encompass a significant amount of the variety of abortion legislation and legislator ideology across the states. Importantly, these 21 state houses also provide sufficient variation in partisan control, including many that experienced a Republican “takeover” during this time period (1997-2012).

From these codes, we create five dependent variables for our analysis. Two of these variables measure whether each legislator introduced an anti-feminist/restrictive abortion bill or a feminist/pro-rights abortion bill. Though we have in our original data a count of the number of anti-feminist or feminist bills each legislator introduced, these data are significantly weighted toward zero. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate the severity of this skewed distribution in our data. In the far left-hand bar of Figure 1, nearly 96 percent of state legislators introduce no anti-abortion bills to the legislative agenda. Similarly, in Figure 2, 99.6 percent of legislators introduce no pro-abortion rights bills in our data. Therefore, we use binary variables in our analysis that indicate whether a legislator introduced at least one anti-feminist/restrictive (1=yes) or feminist/pro-rights (1=yes) bill in that legislative session. The latter three variables measure the type of anti-abortion bill the legislator introduced: a women-centered, pro-women frame; a religious or moral frame; or a fetal rights frame. As Figure 3 demonstrates, these categories

11 Note, these figures only show the observations at zero (0) going up to 20% on the y-axis. This limitation enables the reader to see the variation in the rest of the observations above zero. If the y-axis extends to 100%, it becomes impossible to see the variation among the remaining small bars.
capture a theoretically and substantively important distinction in framing for our research.\textsuperscript{12} Anti-feminist, yet “pro-woman” framed, bills are the most common type of anti-feminist proposals in the states during the time period our data cover. For each of these sub-categories of the anti-abortion bills, we use binary variables as well (1=anti-abortion bill of each frame). To determine the type of abortion frame for anti-abortion bills, we rely on reports from the AUL and NLRC. The appendix details this information.

For our unit of analysis, the legislator-session, we pooled a number of sources to measure our independent variables. First, we extracted the names, districts, and party affiliations of all individuals elected to serve in our sample of state-house sessions from the State Legislative Elections Returns (SLER) database.\textsuperscript{13} To get a full sample of all legislators serving during each session, we used state legislative websites to identify and include the same information for all midterm replacements as well. Our three key concepts, gender, legislator ideology, and political party, come from several sources. To measure legislator gender, we use the sex of the legislator. We collected this information from Kreitzer’s (2015b) data set of abortion bills in the states and state legislative websites. For legislator ideology, we use Shor and McCarty’s common space legislator ideology data (Shor and McCarty 2011).\textsuperscript{14} These data place each legislator over our time span on a common ideological space across chambers, allowing us to compare legislators across states ideologically. We use these data to identify legislators as liberal, moderate, or conservative by breaking each party’s legislators across chambers into equal thirds by ideology.

\textsuperscript{12} Note that Figure 3 also does an excellent job of demonstrating the remarkable growth in anti-feminist abortion measures in state legislative agendas beginning in 1997.
\textsuperscript{14} http://americanlegislatures.com/.
For legislator party, we used the SLER database and state legislative websites to fill in details for midterm replacement legislators. Because our hypotheses emphasize the importance of the interaction of these three key variables, to measure their impact in our analysis we use a series of dummy variables of various party, sex, and ideology combinations. For instance, one dummy variable measures and distinguishes the behavior of liberal, Democratic women – those women in the data who are Democrats and of the most liberal 1/3 of Democrats ideologically. This measurement strategy has the added benefit of providing maximum flexibility in our models, allowing, for example, the effects of gender to vary across party and ideology.

We also control for two other key independent variables in our analysis. First, to address hypothesis 5 above, we use a measure of Democratic or Republican party control of each legislative chamber in each year (Klarner 2003). Second, to address a legislator’s propensity to introduce bills in the chamber, we collected a count of total bills introduced in the original chamber (i.e., bills that originated in the House/Assembly) for each legislator in each session. We collected these data using information available on state legislative websites. In our analysis, we use a modified measure of sponsorship activity that accounts for a legislator’s bill introductions relative to his or her chamber in that particular year. This measure (legislator bills introduced/chamber average bills introduced) accounts for the fact that some legislatures have official and/or traditional limits on the number of bills a legislator can sponsor in a session. This control variable, measuring the propensity of a legislator to sponsor bills, also roughly accounts for the effects of legislator seniority, as more senior legislators tend to introduce more bills to the agenda.

The rarity of the event we study (abortion bill introduction) and the over-time nature of our data set require some attention to the best way to model the relationships we seek to understand. In this analysis, we use logistic regression to analyze the probability of abortion bill introduction by our legislator types. As an alternative test, we employed rare-events logistic regression to account for the limited number of events (bill introductions) relative to non-events (zeros) in our dependent variables. Rare-events logistic regression corrects for the propensity of logistic regression to underestimate the probability of rare events (King and Zeng 2001). However, we find that our results hold under the less-restrictive conditions of ordinary logistic regression, and so we choose to employ the latter as our strategy. Moreover, using logistic regression allows us to evaluate the substantive effects of our models more easily. Despite the drawbacks of our modeling strategy, that our results hold indicates that the findings we present below are quite robust. Finally, in our models, we cluster our standard errors according to the legislator and chamber to account for both the appearance of legislators multiple times in our data across years and differences between chambers in their focus on abortion bills.

Results

Our results evaluate the probability that ideal types of legislators, for example, conservative women Republicans or liberal women Democrats, will introduce either feminist or anti-feminist abortion legislation in the U.S. state legislatures. To begin this analysis, Table 1 shows the results of the logistic regressions of legislator characteristics on the introduction of anti-abortion rights, pro-abortion rights, and three types of anti-abortion rights frames in the state legislatures.

[Table 1 about here]
As a reminder, our hypotheses state that liberal Democratic legislators will be the most likely to introduce pro-abortion rights legislation; whereas, conservative Republican legislators will be most likely to sponsor anti-abortion rights legislation. We expect that gender will have an independent effect on abortion bill sponsorship such that liberal Democratic women will be more likely to introduce pro-abortion rights legislation than liberal Democratic men, all else equal. Alternatively, conservative Republican women will be more likely to sponsor anti-abortion rights legislation than conservative Republican men. We also predict that conservative Republican women will be more likely to sponsor anti-abortion rights legislation with a “pro-woman” frame than they are to sponsor anti-abortion rights legislation with other frames, particularly the fetal rights frame. As a result, we expect to see larger gender gaps among conservative Republicans on the sponsorship of pro-woman anti-abortion bills than on the sponsorship of other types of anti-abortion bills. Finally, party control of the legislature will affect a legislator’s propensity to sponsor certain types of abortion legislation, although previous work is mixed on which party’s control (Republican or Democrat) of the chamber will influence which group of legislators, and how.

In Table 1, we find significant support for our first four hypotheses. Beginning with column 2 of Table 1, results indicate that both conservative Republican women and conservative Republican men are more likely to introduce anti-abortion rights legislation than any other type of legislator, including the more moderate-to-liberal Republican women and men. Conversely,

16 Our models test the hypothesis that gender has an independent effect across all types of legislators, but allow for the direction (and even the strength) of that effect to vary depending on the combination of legislator party and ideology, as well as the type of bill. Our primary expectation is that gender (or, more precisely, being female) has a positive effect on liberal Democrats’ likelihood of sponsoring pro-choice bills and on conservative Republicans’ likelihood of sponsoring pro-life bills. We are open to the possibility that gender has a negative effect among more moderate partisans – such that female moderates are less likely to tow the party-line (on abortion) and more likely to defect.
all Democrats are less likely than all Republicans – even the moderate-to-liberal Republicans – to introduce an anti-feminist abortion bill. But liberal Democratic women and liberal Democratic men are least likely to do so. This pattern largely holds for the three sub-categories of anti-abortion legislation in columns 3, 4, and 5 of Table 1. Conservative Republican women and men are consistently more likely to introduce legislation with all three possible anti-abortion frames. Liberal Democratic men and women are less likely to introduce pro-women framed anti-abortion rights legislation, and liberal Democratic men are significantly less likely to introduce fetal rights, and religious/moral framed anti-abortion rights legislation. The lack of significance for the Liberal Democratic women in the fetal rights and moral/religious framed bills is likely due to the very small number of observations in these categories. Overall, these results offer significant support for Hypothesis 1.

Column 1 of Table 1 considers the other side of Hypothesis 1, or whether liberal Democratic women and men are most likely to sponsor pro-abortion rights legislation. Again, we find significant support for this portion of Hypothesis 1 in our results. Both liberal Democrat men and women introduce significantly more feminist abortion legislation than the other ideal legislator types. Interestingly, conservative Republican women and men appear no less likely than their more moderate-to-liberal co-partisans to sponsor feminist abortion bills, perhaps because so few Republicans (or even Democrats) in our sample sponsor any pro-abortion rights bills (see Figure 2).\(^\text{17}\)

Figure 4 offers a box plot to illustrate the substantive distinctions among these types of legislators’ propensities to sponsor anti-feminist abortion legislation. At the far left of Figure 4, conservative Republican women have a 17\% chance of sponsoring any anti-feminist abortion legislation.\(^\text{17}\)}

\(^{17}\) To bolster this claim, the rare event logistic results (not shown) demonstrate that conservative Republican women and men are significantly less likely to sponsor feminist abortion legislation.
bill, compared to a 10% chance for conservative Republican men (p<.01). Following Figure 4 to the right, a legislator’s propensity to introduce anti-feminist abortion legislation drops precipitously for moderate Republican women and men, moderate Democratic women and men, and especially liberal Democratic women and men. Moderate Republican men and women have roughly a 3-4% chance of introducing any anti-feminist abortion legislation; this drops to about 1.5% for moderate Democrat men and women. Thus, we find support for both Hypotheses 1 and 2 in these results. Conservative Republicans are most likely to introduce anti-abortion legislation, and conservative Republican women are even more likely to introduce anti-abortion bills than conservative Republican men.

Finally, we also find some support for Hypotheses 3 and 4 in this graph. Conservative Republican women have a higher likelihood of introducing pro-women framed anti-abortion bills (13%) than either moral/religious (3.5%) or fetal rights (5%) (p<.01). Conservative Republican men also have the highest likelihood, among the types of anti-abortion bills, to sponsor pro-women bills (6%), but the difference between this propensity and the likelihood of sponsoring religious (2%) or fetal rights (3%) bills is modest compared to that for conservative Republican women (though it too is statistically significant, p<.01). As a result, the gender gap in conservative Republican sponsorship of pro-women, pro-life abortion bills is much larger (and statistically significant, p<.01) than the (statistically insignificant) gender gaps in conservative Republican sponsorship of other types of pro-life measures. This provides strong support for Hypothesis 4.

To put these effects of ideology, gender and party in the larger legislative context, Tables 2 and 3 evaluate whether the results in Table 1 change with Democratic or Republican control of

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18 The differences between conservative Republican women/men and moderate Republican women/men are statistically significant (p<.01).
the legislative process. Again, Hypothesis 5 addresses the potential of this relationship, as the legislative literature generally finds a relationship between majority party status and agenda control, of which bill sponsorship is a significant part. This relationship between majority party status and sponsorship behavior is complicated, however. Previous research in women and politics suggests two possibilities. First, majority party status may have a straightforward effect, whereby members of the majority party feel empowered under their own party’s leadership to put greater numbers of their preferred type of abortion legislation on the agenda. Second, majority party status may have a competition effect, where members of the majority party introduce greater numbers of their preferred abortion legislation, leading members of the minority party to respond in turn with a competing set of their preferred abortion legislation. To evaluate Hypothesis 5, we use a split sample of legislators under Democratic majority control (Table 2) and Republican majority control (Table 3).

[Tables 2 and 3 about here]

The results in Tables 2 and 3 suggest that the competition effect, rather than the straightforward effect, explains the impact of majority/minority party status on legislators’ abortion bill sponsorship. Under Democratic control (Table 2, column 1), liberal Democratic women are more likely to introduce feminist abortion bills than the other party/ideology/gender legislator types. Yet, for anti-feminist abortion measures (the latter 4 columns of Table 2), conservative Republican women and men introduce significantly more anti-abortion rights bills than the other legislator types. Liberal Democrat women and men introduce significantly fewer of these bills (with the exception of religious/moral orientation bills) than do other legislator types under Democratic control. Overall, Democratic majority control does appear to facilitate pro-abortion rights bill introduction for liberal Democratic women; however, Democratic
majority control does not stop conservative Republican women and men from placing anti-abortion rights items on the legislative agenda.

A similar pattern emerges in the Republican-controlled houses in Table 3. In column 1 of Table 3, Republican legislative control does not stop liberal Democratic women and men from sponsoring significantly more feminist abortion measures to the agenda, compared to the other legislator categories. Republican control also appears to empower conservative Republican women and men legislators to place anti-abortion rights legislation of all frames on the agenda. Therefore, our data demonstrate that under either party’s control, both groups engage in a tit-for-tat exchange of feminist and anti-feminist abortion measures.

Figures 5 and 6 offer a visualization of the distinction in party control. Under Democratic control (Figure 5), conservative Republican men and women’s chances of introducing any anti-abortion bill are fairly close together, at 11% for women and 9% for men. In fact, this gap is so small that it is statistically insignificant (p = 0.2553). Under Republican control (Figure 6), however, conservative Republican women appear empowered, as their chance of introducing any anti-abortion bill rises to 22%, much higher than the 12% for conservative Republican men (p < .01). Interestingly, conservative Republican women’s tendency to introduce more pro-women, anti-feminist abortion bills relative to conservative Republican men holds across either party’s majority control; this gender gap is statistically significant across both types of chambers. Republican moderates, on the other hand, appear largely unaffected by the change from Republican to Democratic party control.

To gain a clear understanding of the substantive implications of our independent variables, Figures 7-9 show the predicted probability of abortion bill introduction for the key legislative types in our hypotheses, liberal Democratic women and men and conservative
Republican women and men, under Democratic or Republican majority party control. Importantly, these predicted probability comparisons allow us to gauge the relative substantive impact of gender, ideology, and party across the two legislative contexts. To support our hypotheses, we would expect to see four key items in these figures. First, we would expect that women, all else equal, are more active in abortion bill sponsorship (of choice) than men. Second, we would expect that liberal Democrat women and men, all else equal, introduce more pro-abortion rights bills; whereas, conservative Republican women and men focus on anti-abortion rights bills. Third, within the anti-abortion rights bills, we expect conservative Republican women will be more likely than conservative Republican men to introduce anti-abortion bills with a “pro-women” focus. Alternatively, conservative Republican men will introduce similar numbers of fetal rights and religious/moral focused anti-abortion rights bills to conservative Republican women. Fourth, we expect that all else equal, Democrats’ pro-abortion rights bill sponsorship will increase under Democratic control, and Republicans’ anti-abortion rights bill sponsorship will increase under Republican control. Given the results in Tables 2-3, however, we also expect that both groups will remain active on abortion legislation regardless of majority or minority status.

Figure 7, featuring the predicted probabilities of conservative Republican women and men and liberal Democratic women and men on all anti-abortion bills, demonstrates that each of our hypotheses receives significant support. All else equal, conservative Republican women have the highest probability of introducing anti-abortion rights legislation. This high probability increases under Republican control (red bar) to 22 percent compared to under Democratic control (blue bar) at 12 percent. The comparative probabilities for conservative Republican men are 12 percent and 9 percent, respectively. Again, the difference between conservative
Republican men and conservative Republican women is significant in Republican chambers (p<.01), but not in Democratic chambers. The probabilities that liberal Democratic women or men will introduce anti-abortion legislation under either party majority are, as one would expect, quite low.

Figure 8 validates our prediction that conservative women and men will focus on different types of anti-abortion bills in the legislature. The probability that conservative Republican women will introduce a pro-women anti-abortion bill is 18 percent under Republican control and 8 percent under Democratic control. For conservative Republican men, these figures are lower: 8 percent under Republican control and 4 percent under Democratic control. These gender differences again are significant; under Democratic control, the difference between conservative women and men on pro-women, anti-feminist bills is significant at p<.05 and under Republican control at p<.01. Furthermore, the differences in probabilities between sponsoring a pro-women anti-abortion bill and sponsoring a fetal rights anti-abortion bill are significant for conservative Republican women (p<.001) and conservative Republican men (p<.01), without distinguishing between which party is in the majority. Nonetheless, gender differences among conservative Republicans in the sponsorship of fetal-right bills and moral/religious bills remain statistically insignificant. These distinctions suggest results for Hypotheses 3 and 4 are somewhat mixed. Though both conservative Republican men and women have a higher chance of sponsoring pro-women, rather than fetal rights or religious/moral anti-abortion legislation, conservative Republican women generally have a higher propensity for sponsoring pro-women legislation compared to conservative Republican men.

Finally, in Figure 9, we see that liberal Democratic women are slightly (yet significantly) more likely to introduce pro-abortion rights bills than liberal Democratic men under Democratic
party control. Liberal Democratic women have a 1.25% chance of sponsoring a pro-choice bill under Democratic control, compared to nearly no chance for liberal Democratic men (p<.01). Interestingly, liberal Democratic women’s chance of introducing pro-choice bills under Republican majority control (2.25%) appears higher than that under Democratic party control (1.25%). If in fact this relationship is stronger under Republican rather than Democratic majority control, it is not majority status that inspires liberal Democratic women to sponsor feminist abortion legislation. Rather, minority party status and increased conservative Republican anti-feminist bill introduction spurs liberal Democratic women to defensive action. With regard to Hypothesis 5, these results suggest a hybrid straightforward and competitive abortion bill introduction strategy in the state legislatures. Republican control increases anti-feminist abortion bill sponsorship; Democratic control decreases, but does not stop, these bill introductions. Yet, Republican control increases feminist abortion bill sponsorship as well; whereas, Democratic control does not facilitate greater attention to feminist abortion measures. This relationship between majority party status and feminist/anti-feminist abortion bills suggests that as Republican state legislatures increasingly focus on anti-abortion rights legislation, pro-abortion rights legislators may double their efforts to sponsor countervailing legislation as well.

Conclusions

Together, our analyses of abortion policymaking indicate that the link between women’s descriptive and substantive representation is by no means severed when women’s interests are defined in antifeminist terms. In recent decades, conservative Republican women in state legislatures have indeed taken up the call to act for women and women’s interests by standing at

\[^{19}\text{We use the words “appears stronger” here because we have not yet tested the significance of this difference.}\]
the forefront of anti-abortion rights campaigns. Far from the shadows, they are the ones most likely to introduce and sponsor bills calling for further restrictions on abortion access and rights, especially when such measures are likely to be framed in terms of women’s health, safety, and well-being.

These findings stand in sharp contrast to previous research on antifeminist leadership in Congress and in state legislatures of an earlier era, which highlighted the predominant role of conservative Republican men. Our results suggest multiple reasons why state legislatures in the 21st century appear more conducive to women’s antifeminist leadership. First, they contain relatively large numbers of conservative Republican women. Indeed, our sample of state-sessions contains roughly equal percentages of conservative and moderate Republican women. And as expected, it was conservative Republican women, not moderate Republican women, who were most willing to put antifeminist abortion measures on the legislative agenda. Second, many of these state houses fell under Republican control at a time and place where abortion held a privileged position on the Party’s agenda. Under these conditions, it seems unlikely that any party member would hesitate to take the lead on pro-life legislation for fear of jeopardizing her influence and status in the Party. As we discovered, rates of anti-abortion rights bill introductions increased considerably in Republican controlled chambers, especially among conservative Republican women. Finally, the advent of more women-centered, or “pro-woman” advocacy in the pro-life movement provided added incentive for conservative women in particular to assume highly visible and active roles within state legislative chambers. As our results indicate, conservative Republican women lawmakers were particularly attracted to measures that could be framed in terms of protecting women’s health and safety – so much so that these were the only types of pro-life abortion bills examined that generated significant gender gaps in sponsorship
rates. No longer at risk of being labeled anti-woman, state legislative Republican women no longer shied away from becoming the public face of anti-abortion rights policymaking.

While our study suggests that antifeminism is no longer the exception to the rule of women representing women, it has significant implications for further study of the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation. Most importantly, our attention to institutional context (state-level vs. national), party control, issue framing, partisanship, and ideology strongly suggests that the effects of descriptive representation are highly complex and contingent. Clearly, gender identity matters, but not above or apart from all else. These patterns of female-led antifeminist legislative activity do not bear the markings of a uniform, gut reaction to “identity politics.” To the contrary, they appear to be very careful, strategic choices. Legislative women in our study appear to be taking many different factors into consideration when weighing their bill sponsorship choices; for in the end, their decisions appear to closely adhere not only to their gender-related personal commitments and authority, but also to their particular ideological, partisan, and career interests.

Even more fundamentally, this study calls attention to the elusive, politically “endogenous” nature of women’s issues and interests (Reingold and Swers 2011). Our evidence regarding the different frames of antifeminist abortion measures suggests that what is and what is not a women’s issue cannot be taken for granted. Heretofore, many of us would never question whether any abortion related proposal were a women’s issue – though we may be quick to qualify efforts to restrict abortion rights and access as conservative or antifeminist women’s issues. Yet the relative unwillingness of even the most conservative Republican women to take the lead on fetus-centered pro-life measures or even the more religiously or morally framed abortion initiatives suggests that not every abortion-related matter will automatically qualify as
representing women. Women’s issues, in other words, do not occur naturally. Rather, they are deeply embedded in political processes of strategic framing. If our research is any indication, the recent surge in state legislative antifeminist abortion policymaking may be attributed – not coincidentally – to both the strategic framing of such measures in term of women’s interests and the leadership of conservative Republican women who sponsor them.
References


Table 1. Sponsorship of Abortion Legislation in State Houses, 1997-2012
by Gender, Party, and Ideology

Logistic Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislator Ideology/Party/Gender</th>
<th>1. Sponsored ≥1 Feminist/Pro-Choice Measure</th>
<th>2. Sponsored ≥1 Antifeminist/Pro-Life Measure</th>
<th>3. Sponsored ≥1 Antifeminist/Pro-Life Pro-Woman Measure</th>
<th>4. Sponsored ≥1 Antifeminist/Pro-Life Fetal Rights Measure</th>
<th>5. Sponsored ≥1 Antifeminist/Pro-Life Moral-Religious Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Republican Woman</td>
<td>-.487 (.1064)</td>
<td>1.882 (.200) ***</td>
<td>2.362 (.239)***</td>
<td>1.622 (.323)***</td>
<td>1.875 (.390)***</td>
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<td>Conservative Republican Man</td>
<td>-.565 (.613)</td>
<td>1.288 (.150) ***</td>
<td>1.488 (.196)***</td>
<td>1.296 (.254)***</td>
<td>1.300 (.320)***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mod-Lib Republican Woman</td>
<td>-.250 (.657)</td>
<td>.262 (.240)</td>
<td>.356 (.314)</td>
<td>.270 (.377)</td>
<td>.667 (.435)</td>
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<td>Mod-Lib Republican Man</td>
<td>-.585 (.485)</td>
<td>Excluded category</td>
<td>Excluded category</td>
<td>Excluded category</td>
<td>Excluded category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mod-Cons Democratic Man</td>
<td>Excluded category</td>
<td>-.810 (.203) ***</td>
<td>-.511 (.261)**</td>
<td>-1.112 (.376)**</td>
<td>-.940 (.541)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mod-Cons Democratic Woman</td>
<td>.352 (.627)</td>
<td>-.760 (.297)***</td>
<td>-.633 (.427)</td>
<td>-1.384 (.652)**</td>
<td>-2.049 (.827)**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal Democratic Man</td>
<td>.856 (.446)*</td>
<td>-1.313 (.337)***</td>
<td>-.980 (.372)***</td>
<td>-2.651 (.946)***</td>
<td>-2.049 (.827)**</td>
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<td>Liberal Democratic Woman</td>
<td>2.033 (.414)***</td>
<td>-1.243 (.401) ***</td>
<td>-1.495 (.557)***</td>
<td>-1.364 (.832)***</td>
<td>-.798 (.584)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Bills Sponsored (rel. to mean)</td>
<td>.153 (.044)***</td>
<td>.239 (.059) ***</td>
<td>.213 (.038)**</td>
<td>.253 (.041)***</td>
<td>.197 (.036)***</td>
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<td>Democratic Control of House</td>
<td>-.820 (.291)***</td>
<td>-.359 (.107) ***</td>
<td>-.579 (.133)***</td>
<td>-.102 (.171)</td>
<td>-.557 (.215)***</td>
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<td>Constant</td>
<td>-5.835 (.336)***</td>
<td>-3.515 (.138) ***</td>
<td>-4.149 (.168)***</td>
<td>-4.829 (.223)***</td>
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<td>Pseudo $R^2$</td>
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<td>.1195</td>
<td>.1318</td>
<td>.1125</td>
<td>.0980</td>
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</table>

Robust standard errors clustered by state and legislator in parentheses
*Denotes significance at 0.10 level (two-tailed)
Table 2. Sponsorship of Abortion Legislation in Democratic-Controlled State Houses, 1997-2012 by Gender, Party, and Ideology

Logistic Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislator Ideology/Party/Gender</th>
<th>6. Sponsored ≥1 Feminist/Pro-Choice Measure</th>
<th>7. Sponsored ≥1 Antifeminist/Pro-Life Measure</th>
<th>8. Sponsored ≥1 Antifeminist/Pro-Life Pro-Woman Measure</th>
<th>9. Sponsored ≥1 Antifeminist/Pro-Life Fetal Rights Measure</th>
<th>10. Sponsored ≥1 Antifeminist/Pro-Life Moral-Religious Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Republican Woman</td>
<td>.479 (.1095)***</td>
<td>1.343 (.290)***</td>
<td>1.753 (.338)***</td>
<td>1.047 (.466)**</td>
<td>1.782 (.728)**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservative Republican Man</td>
<td>.501 (.654)</td>
<td>1.025 (.228)***</td>
<td>1.009 (.298)***</td>
<td>1.096 (.365)***</td>
<td>1.302 (.641)**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mod-Lib Republican Woman</td>
<td>Predicts failure perfectly</td>
<td>.176 (.367)</td>
<td>.081 (.484)</td>
<td>.413 (.526)</td>
<td>.910 (.768)</td>
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<td>Mod-Lib Republican Man</td>
<td>-.756 (.831)</td>
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<td>Excluded category</td>
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<td>Mod-Cons Democratic Man</td>
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<td>-1.087 (.278)***</td>
<td>-1.347 (.368)***</td>
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<td>Mod-Cons Democratic Woman</td>
<td>-.048 (.829)</td>
<td>-1.129 (.376)***</td>
<td>-1.248 (.504)**</td>
<td>-2.345 (.925)**</td>
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<td>Liberal Democratic Man</td>
<td>-1.119 (1.125)</td>
<td>-1.347 (.368)***</td>
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<td>Predicts failure perfectly</td>
<td>-1.338 (.919)</td>
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<td>Liberal Democratic Woman</td>
<td>1.873 (.524)***</td>
<td>-1.798 (.455)***</td>
<td>-2.829 (1.031)***</td>
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<td>-5.20 (.832)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Control Variables

| Total Bills Sponsored (rel. to mean) | .135 (.044)***                           | .203 (.053)***                            | .187 (.036)***                                     | .230 (.044)***                                         | .134 (.042)***                                            |
| Constant                            | -6.410 (.429)***                          | -3.599 (.195)***                          | -4.345 (.246)***                                   | -4.7147 (.321)***                                      | -5.492 (.619)***                                          |

Number of Observations | 11,623 | 12,245 | 12,245 | 11,187 | 12,245 |
Number of Clusters | 3,321 | 3,523 | 3,523 | 3,265 | 3,523 |
Wald $\chi^2$ | 33.33 | 176.68 | 115.65 | 95.46 | 49.30 |
P-value | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | 0.0000 |
Pseudo $R^2$ | 0.0664 | 0.1025 | 0.0950 | 0.1081 | 0.1059 |

Robust standard errors clustered by state and legislator in parentheses
*Denotes significance at 0.10 level (two-tailed)
**Denotes significance at 0.05 level (two-tailed)
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Table 3. Sponsorship of Abortion Legislation in Republican-Controlled State Houses, 1997-2012
by Gender, Party, and Ideology

Logistic Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislator Ideology/Party/Gender</th>
<th>11. Sponsored ≥1 Feminist/Pro-Choice Measure</th>
<th>12. Sponsored ≥1 Antifeminist/Pro-Life Measure</th>
<th>13. Sponsored ≥1 Antifeminist/Pro-Life Pro-Woman Measure</th>
<th>14. Sponsored ≥1 Antifeminist/Pro-Life Fetal Rights Measure</th>
<th>15. Sponsored ≥1 Antifeminist/Pro-Life Moral-Religious Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Republican Woman</td>
<td>Predicts failure perfectly</td>
<td>2.170 (.241)***</td>
<td>2.617 (.278)***</td>
<td>1.831 (.373)***</td>
<td>2.112 (.382)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Republican Man</td>
<td>Predicts failure perfectly</td>
<td>1.441 (.174)***</td>
<td>1.663 (.221)***</td>
<td>1.340 (.285)***</td>
<td>1.405 (.295)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mod-Lib Republican Woman</td>
<td>0.089 (.757)</td>
<td>0.319 (.289)</td>
<td>0.447 (.375)</td>
<td>0.175 (.420)</td>
<td>0.656 (.438)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mod-Lib Republican Man</td>
<td>-0.535 (.645)</td>
<td>Excluded category</td>
<td>Excluded category</td>
<td>Excluded category</td>
<td>Excluded category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mod-Cons Democratic Man</td>
<td>Excluded category</td>
<td>-0.655 (.283)***</td>
<td>-0.684 (.385)*</td>
<td>-0.978 (.442)***</td>
<td>-0.291 (.583)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mod-Cons Democratic Woman</td>
<td>0.841 (.875)</td>
<td>-0.477 (.437)</td>
<td>-0.273 (.613)</td>
<td>-1.683 (1.028)</td>
<td>-0.648 (.747)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democratic Man</td>
<td>1.745 (.529)***</td>
<td>-0.816 (.357)***</td>
<td>-0.243 (.372)</td>
<td>Predicts failure perfectly</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democratic Woman</td>
<td>2.383 (.603)***</td>
<td>-0.750 (.507)</td>
<td>-0.689 (.560)</td>
<td>-0.361 (.832)</td>
<td>-1.403 (1.035)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Bills Sponsored (rel. to mean)</td>
<td>.632 (.130)***</td>
<td>.359 (.058)***</td>
<td>.303 (.066)***</td>
<td>.350 (.078)***</td>
<td>.408 (.076)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-6.712 (.470)***</td>
<td>-3.792 (.157)***</td>
<td>-4.402 (.203)***</td>
<td>-4.993 (.259)***</td>
<td>-5.390 (.276)***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Observations: 8,246 10,194 10,194 9,298 9,298
Number of Clusters: 2,720 3,367 3,367 3,063 3,063
Wald χ²: 34.98 235.11 184.86 86.07 80.26
P-value: 0.0000 0.0000 0.0000 0.0000 0.0000
Pseudo R²: 0.1051 0.1200 0.1321 0.0899 0.0887

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Figure 3. Frame Occurrence over Time

Note: Count of all bills in two-year periods (starting in odd years), by the type of frame
Note: Predicted Probability of a legislator type introducing a restrictive, anti-feminist abortion policy, by frame. The dot represents the point estimate and the bars represent the standard error.
Figure 5.

Prob. of Introducing A Restrictive Bill in Democratic Chambe

Note: Predicted Probability of a legislator type introducing a restrictive, anti-feminist abortion policy, by frame. The dot represents the point estimate and the bars represent the standard error.
Figure 6.

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Figure 7. Probability of Sponsoring an Anti-Abortion Rights Bill

Note: Predicted probabilities of Conservative Republicans and Liberal Democrats sponsoring anti-feminist abortion policy by legislator gender and party control.
Figure 8. Probability of Sponsoring a Pro-Woman Anti-Abortion Rights Bill

Note: Predicted probabilities of Conservative Republicans and Liberal Democrats sponsoring pro-woman, pro-life policy by legislator gender and party control.
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**Protecting Women**
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The most common type bill in this category requires that abortion providers give women informed consent of the abortion procedure. While informed consent is a staple of any surgical procedure, these informed consent policies require that providers give specific information. Often called Women’s Right to Know acts, these bills require that physicians given information about medical risks (such as the largely discredited claims that abortion lead to increased incidences of breast cancer or mental illness), or about the gestational development of the fetus.

“It is essential to the psychological and physical well-being of a woman considering an abortion that she receive complete and accurate information on abortion and its alternatives. The knowledgeable exercise of a woman’s decision to have an abortion depends on the extent to which she receives sufficient information to make an informed choice between two alternatives: giving birth or having an abortion” (AUL 2013, pg 181).

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The women-protective frame is also frequently employed in parental consent and parental notification bills. While pro-abortion rights organizations like NARAL refer to “minor women,” AUL and NRLC refer to “immature minors” and “girls.” The AUL argues for more parental involvement by reiterating the claim that abortion causes long-term physical and psychological injury, and that minor women need the support of their parents.

“Immature minors often lack the ability to make fully informed choices that take into account both immediate and long-range consequences. The medical, emotional, and psychological consequences of abortion are sometimes serious and can be lasting, particularly when the patient is immature. The capacity to become pregnant and the capacity for mature judgment concerning the wisdom of an abortion are not necessarily related. ... Parents who are aware that their minor daughter has had an abortion may better ensure that she receives adequate medical attention after her abortion. Parental consultation is usually desirable and in the best interests of the minor” (AUL 2013, pg 202).

The Women Protective frame is also employed in policies whose intent is to protect women from the “unregulated abortion industry.” In their description of why more regulation is needed, the AUL report states that, “that abortion clinics are the true “back alleys” about which abortion advocates warned us. A quick review of just a few cases of substandard abortion care poignantly contrasts the reality of abortion in America today with what abortion advocates promised legalized abortion would eradicate” (AUL 2013, 102). For instance, the AUL provides legislation for various bureaucratic requirements, such as increased reporting, inspections, and admitting privileges.

For example, the Abortion Complication Reporting Act requires abortion providers collect and make public certain information. (“The purpose of this Act to promote the health and safety of women, by adding to the sum of medical and public health knowledge through the compilation of relevant data on all complications and maternal deaths resulting from abortion in the State of [Insert name of State ”], pg 241). A bill that would require abortion clinics meet the standard of ambulatory surgical centers similarly emphasizes protecting women from substandard clinics, Women's Health Protection Act (“To provide for the protection of public health through the development, establishment, and enforcement of medically appropriate standards of care in abortion clinics,” pg 230).

Abortion opponents perceive the emergence of medical abortions as a common procedure as particularly insidious. The AUL has many policies that would restrict or prohibit "chemical abortions." Several of the bills deal with the potential dangers of the Mifeprex drug, or restrict the off-label use of Mifeprex. For instance, the Abortion-Inducing Drugs Safety Act would "Protect women from the dangerous and
potentially deadly off-label use of abortion-inducing drugs” (AUL 2013, pg 245).24 The AUL also opposes the use of telemedicine abortion, which allows physicians to prescribe abortion inducing drugs to women via telecommunication technology.

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**Fetal Centric**

Fetal centric policies use language that focuses on “unborn” or “preborn” children. The most ideological fetal centric policies establish the separate personhood or citizenship of the fetus. Some of these bills are proposed statutory declarations, joint resolutions, or days of remembrance that mimic the language of the well-known Missouri Preamble, “The life of each human being begins at conception. Unborn children have protectable interests in life, health, and wellbeing” (AUL 2013, 161). Other bills are proposed constitutional amendments. For example, the AUL suggests the language of, “The policy of [State] is to protect the life of every unborn child from conception to birth, to the extent permitted by the federal constitution” (AUL 2013, 162).

Many fetal centric bills are less ideological in nature, and focus on the details of surgical abortion. These bills emphasize the “violent destruction” of human embryos. Among the most well-known of these policies are those that prohibit a specific late term abortion procedure. Policies that ban intact Dilation and Extraction, more commonly known by the political name “partial birth abortion,” describe the procedure as “a gruesome and inhumane procedure that is never medically necessary” (AUL 2013, pg 172). Other gestational bans on surgical abortion are based on beliefs about the fetus’ development. For example the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act prohibits abortion “at or after 20 weeks based on the pain experienced by an unborn child” (AUL 2013, pg 57).

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24 According to recent research, the FDA required dose of Mifeprex is 2-3 times larger than necessary. Many doctors prescribe lower doses to keep costs for women low, and to avoid giving women more medication than necessary given the possible complications and side effects of the drug.
A final type of fetal-centric bills concerns fetal tissue. These bills variously require that aborted fetal tissue be disposed of in a specific manner, prohibit the use of fetal tissue in medical research, or oppose certain infertility treatments. The AUL describes these policies as needed to prevent the loss of dignity and dehumanization of the embryo or fetus (for example, see page 336).

**Moral or Religious**
The final category of abortion restriction has a relatively neutral framing that articulates opposition in terms of religious or moral beliefs. Oftentimes these bills do not attempt to restrict legal abortion; instead, they protect against willful support of abortion-related activities by religious opponents.

The most well-known bill in this category prohibits the use of public funds to pay for abortions for low-income women, except under specific circumstances. These bills are often based on the Hyde Amendment. A new crop of bills that concerns the use of taxpayer funds on abortion arose after the Affordable Care Act was passed. For example, the *Federal Abortion-Mandate Opt Out Act* contends that, "The provision of federal funding for health insurance plans that provide abortion coverage is nothing short of taxpayer-funded and government-endorsed abortion" (AUL 2013, pg 250). Other policies prohibit teachers, counselors or nurses at public schools from discussing or providing support for abortions (for example, see pg 261).

The same justification of moral or religious opposition to the funding of abortions is used to prohibit both public and private insurance policies. The justification of opposition to abortion funding in public insurance plans is framed in terms of taxpayers and public funds. The AUL also provides model legislation that would prohibit abortion coverage in private insurance plans on the grounds that people don't know abortion is covered, "the vast majority of private health insurance plans, often unbeknownst to employers and consumers, covered abortion-on-demand" (AUL 2013, pg 252). Policies that restrict access to contraception and emergency contraception use similar language. For example, the AUL report states that, "access to contraception is not enough; abortion advocates want employers to pay for it, regardless of conscientious objections. ... contraceptive equity laws (laws that require insurance coverage of contraception if other prescription coverage is provided) serve only to burden a healthcare system already in crisis" (AUL 2013, pg 133).

**Conscience exemptions** are policies that allow health professionals (such as doctors, nurses, and pharmacists) to refuse to provide certain services based on personal beliefs. The AUL explains the need for this policy,

"Legal protection for healthcare freedom of conscience affirms the need to provide quality care to patients, but also acknowledges that certain demands of patients—usually for procedures that are life-destructive and not life-saving—must not be blindly accommodated to the detriment of the rights of healthcare providers. Individuals and institutions do not lose their right to
exercise their consciences or their moral and religious beliefs once they decide to enter the healthcare profession” (AUL 2013, 367).

A final bill type included in this category relates to the funding of Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs), often through the sale of “Choose Life License Plates.” CPCs, called “pregnancy resource centers” by supporters, are facilities that seek to persuade women with unintended pregnancies to chose an alternative to abortion. In many states, the sale of special license plates are a way that states raise funds for CPCs and other organizations that emphasize “abortion alternatives” (see pg 150).
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5 According to recent research, the FDA required dose of Mifeprex is 2-3 times larger than necessary. Many doctors prescribe lower doses to keep costs for women low, and to avoid giving women more medication than necessary given the possible complications and side effects of the drug.
A final type of fetal-centric bills concerns fetal tissue. These bills variously require that aborted fetal tissue be disposed of in a specific manner, prohibit the use of fetal tissue in medical research, or oppose certain infertility treatments. The AUL describes these policies as needed to prevent the loss of dignity and dehumanization of the embryo or fetus (for example, see page 336).

**Moral or Religious**
The final category of abortion restriction has a relatively neutral framing that articulates opposition in terms of religious or moral beliefs. Oftentimes these bills do not attempt to restrict legal abortion; instead, they protect against unwillful support of abortion-related activities by religious opponents.

The most well-known bill in this category prohibits the use of public funds to pay for abortions for low-income women, except under specific circumstances. These bills are often based on the Hyde Amendment. A new crop of bills that concerns the use of taxpayer funds on abortion arose after the Affordable Care Act was passed. For example, the *Federal Abortion-Mandate Opt Out Act* contends that, “The provision of federal funding for health insurance plans that provide abortion coverage is nothing short of taxpayer-funded and government-endorsed abortion” (AUL 2013, pg 250). Other policies prohibit teachers, counselors or nurses at public schools from discussing or providing support for abortions (for example, see pg 261).

The same justification of moral or religious opposition to the funding of abortions is used to prohibit both public and private insurance policies. The justification of opposition to abortion funding in public insurance plans is framed in terms of taxpayers and public funds. The AUL also provides model legislation that would prohibit abortion coverage in private insurance plans on the grounds that people don’t know abortion is covered, “the vast majority of private health insurance plans, often unbeknownst to employers and consumers, covered abortion-on-demand” (AUL 2013, pg 252). Policies that restrict access to contraception and emergency contraception use similar language. For example, the AUL report states that, “access to contraception is not enough; abortion advocates want employers to pay for it, regardless of conscientious objections. ... contraceptive equity laws (laws that require insurance coverage of contraception if other prescription coverage is provided) serve only to burden a healthcare system already in crisis” (AUL 2013, pg 133).

**Conscience exemptions** are policies that allow health professionals (such as doctors, nurses, and pharmacists) to refuse to provide certain services based on personal beliefs. The AUL explains the need for this policy,

“Legal protection for healthcare freedom of conscience affirms the need to provide quality care to patients, but also acknowledges that certain demands of patients—usually for procedures that are life-destructive and not life-saving—must not be blindly accommodated to the detriment of the rights of healthcare providers. Individuals and institutions do not lose their right to
exercise their consciences or their moral and religious beliefs once they
decide to enter the healthcare profession” (AUL 2013, 367).

A final bill type included in this category relates to the funding of Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs), often through the sale of “Choose Life License Plates.” CPCs, called “pregnancy resource centers” by supporters, are facilities that seek to persuade women with unintended pregnancies to choose an alternative to abortion. In many states, the sale of special license plates are a way that states raise funds for CPCs and other organizations that emphasize “abortion alternatives” (see pg 150).