



A REPUBLIC, If We Can Keep It

A Woman's Place is in the Resistance: Women, Gender, and American Democracy

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MEMO PREPARED FOR CONFERENCE: A REPUBLIC, IF WE CAN KEEP IT

On April 12-13th, 2018, researchers, scholars, journalists, and policymakers came together at New America in Washington D.C. to address questions about the health and resiliency of American democracy. This conference considered questions such as: Can a liberal democracy and representative government persist in the United States? Are we experiencing a breakdown of democracy? Are checks and balances that are built into the political system and the mediating institutions that link citizens and government strong enough to sustain liberal democracy?

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The 2016 presidential election was expected by many to be a milestone for women in American politics. The nomination of Hillary Clinton—the first woman at the top of a major American political party ticket—was indeed ceiling-shattering and historic. Yet, Clinton's presidential nomination would turn out to be only one of the many exceptional aspects of the 2016 presidential election, and the campaign would highlight sex and gender in ways few could have predicted.

The election and presidency of Donald Trump raises questions about the state of American democracy and about the status of women in American politics. In this memo, I situate the role of women and gender in the 2016 presidential election and first fifteen months of the Trump administration in historical, and to a lesser extent comparative, context to better understand what this moment reveals about women and gender in American politics and what a gendered lens can tell us about the state of American democracy. I focus on both *women*, as a social group traditionally excluded from politics, and *gender*, typically understood as the socially-constructed meaning given to sex, sexual identity, and gender identity, including the stereotypes, norms, and expectations assigned to the idealized categories of women and men.¹ Keeping with common practice, I also use the word gender to denote social categories—e.g., “the gender gap” to describe differences in the political choices of women and men. The election of 2016 is a reminder that gender is not a characteristic of women alone, but that masculine and feminine norms and expectations apply to women *and* men, as well as to institutions (including the presidency), political processes, and mass behavior.

The election of 2016 also is a reminder of women's long and continued exclusion from full political equality. While vast strides have been made, women remain unequal in opportunity, influence, and integration into American politics. Discrimination and bias on the basis of social group membership is not an exception to the American system of democracy, but, as Rogers Smith has shown, “ascriptive hierarchy”—an ideology of inequality based on ascribed characteristics such as race and sex—is as central to American political thought and development as liberalism and republicanism.² In “Trumpism and American democracy,” Lieberman and his collaborators rightfully emphasize the centrality of racial inequality to political status, institutions, and public attitudes throughout American history and today.³ This paper focuses on women and gender to expand and deepen our understanding of ascriptive hierarchy and American democracy at this political moment. Any gender lens must necessarily be intersectional, with particular attention to how race complicates and informs gender hierarchies.

This memo has three goals: (1) place President Trump's views and actions with regards to women and gender within the American ascriptive hierarchy tradition, (2) review how women and gender have shaped the response to Trump's election and presidency, and (3) briefly consider what these developments indicate about the state of American democracy in 2018.

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Donald Trump and the American Tradition of Ascriptive Gender Hierarchy

In the nineteenth century, the challenge to the established order posed by the American woman suffrage movement compelled suffrage opponents to articulate traditional understandings of women's distinctive place in American politics. While gender norms and women's rights have been transformed over time, Trump's rhetoric and actions in 2016 and since suggest that many of these ideas remain potent and prevalent.

Ascriptive Gender Hierarchy and Suffrage Opposition

The core of the argument against extending the right to vote to women was that women were simply not suited for public life. Men and women occupied "separate spheres" with men's domain the public sphere of business and politics, and women's place the private sphere of home and family.⁴ The characteristics of idealized manhood—man as the head of the patriarchal family, strength, autonomy, and authority—were reproduced in requirements for political participation in a democracy: physical defense of the state, independence, and power.⁵

If women were naturally excluded from direct political action, what was women's place in the American constitutional system? The ideology of "Republican Motherhood" held that women's private role had a political dimension. Inherently more pious and moral, women educated and encouraged civic virtue in her husband and sons, thereby tempering the passions of men that might harm the republic.⁶ Direct engagement in politics would undermine this important contribution by corrupting women and encouraging dangerous ambition.

Suffrage opponents emphasized that women were naturally emotional (meaning unstable and impulsive), while logic—necessary for sound political judgment—was the province of men.⁷ Women also were assumed to be physically weak, unfit for the rigors of politics, and unable to defend the republic against threats, foreign or internal.⁸ As Justice Bradley explained in *Bradwell v. Illinois* (1873), "The natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex evidently unfits it for many of the occupations of civil life."⁹

Exclusion from politics thus protected women from debasement and corruption, and allowed them to maintain their innate virtue and vulnerability. It was, suffrage opponents explained, because they held women in such high esteem that they denied them the vote. Women who entered politics, on the other hand, relinquished any right to chivalry, dignity, and respect.¹⁰ An anti-suffrage cartoon offered women a choice: Reject the right to vote and retain the safety and happiness of the home, or obtain the vote and accept the degradation of the "street corner."¹¹

Ascriptive Gender Hierarchy and the 2016 Presidential Campaign

Nearly one hundred years after women won the right to vote, the unprecedented candidacy of Donald Trump included misogynistic rhetoric, sexist insults lobbed at opponents and reporters, and multiple accusations of sexual misconduct and assault. Moreover, Trump's actions occurred within the context of the first major party woman nominee and Clinton's own long history as a lightning rod for debate over gender roles.

Trump's behavior toward women during the campaign drew widespread condemnation. Yet, Trump's views are rooted in the same tradition of ascriptive gender hierarchy as anti-

suffragists' arguments. When Trump said of Clinton, "Well, I just don't think she has a presidential look, and you need a presidential look," many understood him to be echoing the assumption that women are unfit for political leadership.¹² Presidential politics has always invoked masculine strength and power, but this theme was perhaps never as overt as when Trump used a primary debate to assure the American people: "He [Marco Rubio] referred to my hands, if they are small, something else must be small. I guarantee you there is no problem. I guarantee."¹³ This theme emerged again in recent months, with Trump tweeting about North Korea's Kim Jong Un that "I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is much bigger & more powerful than his, and my Button works!"¹⁴

The persistent expectation that women embody the highest moral standards may help explain the fervor with which Trump and his supporters attacked Clinton for perceived ethical and management errors with impassioned cries to "Lock her up!"¹⁵ Doubts about the capacity of women to meet the physical demands of politics, particularly in national defense, were reiterated in Trump's claims that Clinton was "low energy" and lacked "the mental and physical stamina" to confront America's enemies.¹⁶ Women's emotionalism and instability were once again reasons to dismiss their political judgment as Trump insinuated that Fox News' Megyn Kelly was an erratic debate moderator because of her menstrual cycle.¹⁷

Just as anti-suffragists claimed their opposition was grounded in their deep esteem for women, Donald Trump assured voters, "Nobody has more respect for women than I do. Nobody."¹⁸ Yet, once a woman demeans herself by entering politics, she becomes a "nasty woman" deserving of humiliation and defamation. Contemporary evidence that a woman who dares enter politics has relinquished any right to respect, much less chivalry, could be easily found on many T-shirts, buttons, and bumper stickers at Trump campaign events.¹⁹

Women and Gender in the Trump Era

Given the content of the campaign, it is perhaps not surprising that responses to the Trump presidency have been deeply gendered, in the sense that women are responding differently from men and in the sense that gender roles and stereotypes both inspire responses and shape their content and form. How exceptional is the political behavior of women since 2016? What do these developments suggest about the state of American democracy?

Mass Behavior

While ascriptive gender hierarchy is not new to American politics, Trump is distinguished among recent presidential candidates in his clear embrace of such views. For this reason, observers expressed widespread shock and dismay at the willingness of women to cast their ballots for him. In general, voting patterns among women were characterized by far more consistency than change in 2016. The gender gap (the difference between the percentage of women who voted for the winner compared to the percentage of men who did so) was 11 points, only one point larger than in 2012. Overall, 41% of women cast ballots for Donald Trump, down just three points from the 44% who voted for Mitt Romney.²⁰ Commentators expressed particular surprise that more than half (53%) of White women cast ballots for a man who boasted about sexual assault.²¹ Yet, while more likely to vote Democratic than are White men, a majority of

White women have voted for the Republican nominee in all but two presidential elections since 1952.²²

Voting patterns in 2016 were consistent with recent electoral trends in other ways as well. Astonishment over women voting for Trump highlights the extent to which the social category of woman continues to be implicitly defined as White women. Trump himself recently claimed that 52% of women supported him in 2016, a statement that is only true if one limits the definition of women to White women.²³ In contrast, overwhelming majorities of Black women opposed Trump (94% voted for Clinton compared to 82% of Black men), as did majorities of Latinas (86% favored Clinton compared to 71% of Latino men). This too is consistent with historic patterns. What is changing is the racial diversity of women voters: Non-white women made up a full 27% of the female electorate in 2016 compared to 14% just thirty years ago.²⁴ The impact of women of color was highlighted in the upset of Republican Senate candidate Roy Moore in the 2017 Alabama special election; while two-thirds of White women voters supported the Republican candidate, Democrat Doug Jones secured the Senate seat with 98% of Black women voters' ballots.²⁵

In sum, the behavior of women voters in 2016 was surprisingly ordinary compared to the extraordinary campaign that preceded it. Expressions of perplexity over *any* women casting a ballot for Trump also reveal the persistence of the expectation that women's gender is the central determinant of women's politics. Women were disenfranchised on the basis of their sex, and are now often expected to vote on that basis as well. But women, like men, have multiple relevant identities and interests. In particular, the election highlighted what *is* exceptional about this period of mass politics: the extraordinarily potent power of partisan identity within the contemporary electorate. Almost 90% of women who identified as Republicans voted for Trump in 2016, the same rate as Republican men.²⁶

Moreover, amazement at women voters casting ballots for Trump ignores the political choices of men. The unstated assumption is that women should be affronted by sexism and sexual assault to such a degree that they vote against the offending candidate, regardless of other political allegiances. Similarly unstated—and similarly problematic—is the expectation that men tolerate gender prejudice and assault without any consequences for their political choices. If we ask, as many have, why so many women voted for the 2016 GOP nominee, we ought to also ask the same question about men.

One answer is sexism. While voting patterns among voters who identify as women were not particularly unusual, sexism appears to have played a unique role in the 2016 election. Research finds the dramatic gap in party preference between non-college-educated and college-educated Whites in 2016 was less attributable to economic dissatisfaction than to racist and sexist attitudes;²⁷ on contrast, sexism did not predict vote choice among African-American voters.²⁸ Rather than authoritarianism rooted in economic and racial fear, other work demonstrates that sexism, particularly when motivated by anger, most powerfully predicted presidential vote choice in 2016. Trump's distinctive (among recent candidates) rhetoric of ascriptive gender hierarchy against a female opponent had a historically unique impact as well: While sexism predicted presidential vote choice in 2016, it fails to explain vote choice in other recent presidential contests.²⁹

That sexism can be effectively activated in a presidential election highlights the persistence of ascriptive gender hierarchy in American politics. Moreover, Lieberman and his colleagues emphasize the dangers of increased polarization around identity and place. Has Trump's election and presidency enhanced polarization around gender equality? On the one hand, women as a social group remain decidedly less partisan than other groups. For example, the pro-Democratic gender gap in presidential voting has never exceeded 10-11 points, while the Black-White racial gap in voting regularly exceeds 40 points. It is possible we may see an increase in the gender gap as a result of the Trump presidency, however. Republican women and men were equally likely to vote for Trump in 2016, but recent polls show a greater drop in Trump approval among Republican women than Republican men.³⁰

While women and men may not (yet) be particularly polarized around party, attitudes about gender and equality are strikingly partisan. A recent poll showed nearly 70% of Democrats believe that more work is needed to bring about gender equality compared to just 26% of Republicans. In comparison, the gap between women and men on this item was only 13 points.³¹ The issue of gender equality has long divided the parties. Republican and Democratic party elites have diverged on women's rights policies, such as equal pay and abortion rights, since the 1970s.³² Even the parties' images are gendered: Citizens increasingly associate Democrats with stereotypically feminine traits, and Republicans with idealized male traits.³³

Polarization on women's rights within the general public also is not new: At least since the early 1990s, surveys show Republicans less supportive of women in non-traditional roles than are Democrats, for example.³⁴ That does not mean that mass level polarization cannot increase. The parties also have been divided on civil rights for more than 50 years. Yet, recent work suggests that while the level of racial resentment among Whites has remained stable across recent decades, the association of racial resentment with other attitudes, including partisanship and vote choice, has grown considerably in recent years.³⁵ Given the strong, and new, association between sexism and vote choice in 2016, we might expect to observe a similar sorting in terms of sexism and partisanship going forward, potentially expanding and enhancing polarization around divergent gender views and identities.

Civic culture and activism

One of the most visible responses to the 2016 election has been a dramatic upsurge in activism on the left. The post-inauguration Women's Marches in D.C. and around the country are estimated to have involved more than one in every 100 people in the U.S. and likely comprise the largest single-day demonstration in American history.³⁶ The marches were organized and dominated by women who reclaimed and reworked gender stereotypes with pink hats and feminist slogans. Other organizations which emerged to challenge Trump's agenda have been founded by women and/or have a membership base that is overwhelmingly female.³⁷ For example, Theda Skocpol reports that about 70% of activists in Indivisible groups are women. More than 80% of activists who called members of Congress since the election were women.³⁸ Women in general are more likely than men to say they have participated in a political event or protest since the election.³⁹ The presidential election of 2016 inspired heightened interest in engaging in protest among (Democratic) adolescent girls.⁴⁰

Other movements which have emerged or resurged during Trump's first fifteen months in office also have been explicitly gendered and/or comprised of women. The #MeToo movement has generated historic attention to sexual harassment and assault.⁴¹ The renewed push for gun control in the wake of the Parkland, Florida high school shooting has been supported by—and reveals the latent organizing efforts of—women in such groups as Everytown for Gun Safety and Moms Demand Action.⁴² The vast majority of the West Virginia teachers who secured better salaries and benefits not only for themselves but for all state employees in early 2018 (and inspired similar efforts in other states) were women.⁴³

The role of women of color in leading and shaping the activist response has been notable. The leaders of the Women's March include African-American, Latina, and Palestinian-American women.⁴⁴ The #MeToo hashtag was created by an African-American woman, Tarana Burke. A speech by Cuban-American student Emma Gonzalez helped the gun control advocacy of Parkland students go viral.⁴⁵ Activism by women of color also has helped expand the reach and representation of these movements. For example, the leadership of Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, an organization representing current and former women farmworkers, helped spur the anti-sexual harassment #TimesUp initiative (led by leading actresses and female film producers) to acknowledge their relative privilege and commit resources to support more economically and socially vulnerable women.⁴⁶ At the same time, the divergent public and press responses to different movements and activists highlights the persistence of racial and class bias in politics and the press.

If a vibrant civic culture is evidence of democratic flourishing, women once again rose to the challenge following the election of 2016. This is not a new development, as women have been at the forefront of social movement organizing—from abolition and temperance to civil rights and the New Right—throughout American history. In recent years, women have been central to political movements on the right—the Tea Party movement, in particular—as well as the current progressive wave. Across American history, ascriptive gender hierarchy has not only been a cause for women (both for and against), but has spurred the development of modes of organizing and activism on the left and the right.⁴⁷ For example, denied access to traditional means of political influence, women in the nineteenth century helped pioneer effective political organizing tactics and structures from lobbying to marches.⁴⁸ Today, women activists employ and rework conceptions of motherhood, femininity, and gender equality to mobilize, legitimize, and organize for political goals.

In 2018, many of the activist groups on the left have shifted their attention to elections, with campaigns promising “Power to the Polls” (Women's March) and threatening to “Throw Them Out” (Moms Demand Action).⁴⁹ The focus on traditional electoral politics among activist women (and men) opposed to the current administration also may be viewed as an indicator of democratic resilience. One measure of the functioning and relevance of democratic elections is the interest of citizens in participating in them. Women activists appear to view the selection of elected office holders as key to the achievement of their policy goals. Citizens abandoning regularized democratic selection mechanisms for other options would raise concerns about the deterioration of democratic trust and the legitimacy of elections. Whether the electoral process is perceived as rewarding that commitment in 2018 and 2020, or if the electoral map, restrictions on voting rights, or the influence of media and major funders are blamed for frustrating efforts remains to be seen.

Representation

Advocacy organizations report unprecedented interest among women in running for political office in the first year of the Trump administration. EMILY's List, which supports pro-choice Democratic women candidates, usually receives fewer than 1,000 inquiries annually from potential women candidates; they report more than 26,000 inquiries since Trump's election.⁵⁰ Early indicators are that women of color are an important part of this shift. Of the fourteen seats Democrats picked up in the 2017 state legislative election in Virginia, eleven were won by women. These include Asian, Pacific Islander, and Latina women, as well as the first openly lesbian member and the first transgender member of the House of Delegates.⁵¹ After winning the recent Texas primary, Veronica Escobar (TX-16) and Sylvia Gonzalez (TX-29) are well-situated to become the first Latina women to represent Texas in Congress.⁵²

This surge of women candidates also is clearly partisan. That the vast majority of women candidates are Democrats is not so much a new outcome as an acceleration of a comparative and historical trend. In developed democracies around the world, left parties have increasingly nominated and elected more women to national legislatures than have right parties.⁵³ This trend is particularly strong in the US. Since at least the early 1990s, Democratic women have outpaced Republican women as political candidates and office-holders at every level, with the difference growing over time.⁵⁴ In 2017, one-third of Democratic office-holders in Congress were women compared to fewer than one in ten Republicans.⁵⁵

Democratic women already in office are visible leaders of the opposition. The attempt by Republican majority leader Mitch McConnell to silence Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D, MA) from speaking created a feminist meme: "Nevertheless, she persisted." Rep. Maxine Waters' (D, CA) insistence on "reclaiming my time" became a slogan for women activists. The leadership of Sen. Kristin Gillibrand (D, NY) on sexual harassment issues has made her a perceived contender for the 2020 nomination. Coverage of House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's record-breaking eight-hour speech in defense of DACA highlighted her four-inch heels, consistent with the vision of women leaders as achievers who overcome distinctly gendered barriers. The prominent leadership of women legislators at this moment is particularly notable as women remain dramatically under-represented in the US, where women hold approximately 20% of seats in the national legislature and which ranks 99th in women's representation worldwide.⁵⁶

Indeed, Trump's presidency may ultimately be credited with doing more than any recent development to address the long-standing and seemingly intractable gender imbalance in political representation. While some expected the sexism of 2016 to discourage women's political ambition, all available evidence is that disappointment over Clinton's loss and furor over Trump's win has helped overcome many of the structural and attitudinal barriers that have long been held responsible for women's underrepresentation. Since the early 1990s, the conventional wisdom has been that when women run, women win; that is, women's underrepresentation in elected office is a function, not of discrimination against women by voters, donors, or parties, but rather the reluctance of women to put themselves forward as candidates.⁵⁷ Problem solved: Women are (expressing interest in) running.

Yet, there are reasons for caution. The number of Democratic women running for Congress has more than doubled since 2016, but so has the number of Democratic men. The

increase among women is larger (146%) than that among men (126%), but not by much. The increase on the Republican side is smaller, but still similar for women (35%) and men (25%). Despite the dramatic increase in women running, women are currently still just 23% of all congressional candidates in 2018—an increase from 18% in 2016, but far from parity.⁵⁸

Moreover, upcoming elections may remind us of the importance of structural factors in facilitating or obstructing representation. Cross-nationally, the American electoral system—single-member districts with plurality elections—is less conducive to the success of women candidates than other system types.⁵⁹ A key barrier to women’s office-holding is the incumbent men already occupying those seats. Historic precedent is instructive. In 1992, the so-called Year of the Woman, an unprecedented number of women ran for, and won, election to the U.S. Congress. Similar to today, many women candidates were motivated to run by what they viewed as injustice done to women. Yet, the less well-told part of this story is that women’s success in 1992 was greatly facilitated by a record number of retirements as a result of scandal, redistricting, and campaign finance law.⁶⁰ An historically-high number of House Republicans have announced their retirements in 2018, but the number of retirements in the competitive districts Democrats have the best shot at flipping is not dramatically out of the range of recent election trends.⁶¹ In 2018, approximately 60% of women candidates for the House and Senate are opposing incumbents, a higher percentage than in 2016 or in 1992.⁶² Perhaps more GOP retirements and a pro-Democratic swing will provide the opening for women to convert candidacies into offices in 2018 and beyond, but it is important to note that the conditions which generate candidates are not necessarily sufficient conditions to secure seats.

Other factors, however, may facilitate women’s election to office. One of the reasons we know that there are an unprecedented number of women running for office in 2018 is that potential candidates are reaching out to national, state, and local organizations which promote and aid the election of women. Throughout the US, there are now hundreds of organizations which recruit, train, and fund women candidates. The distribution of these groups is not random: While a small and similar number of groups are explicitly partisan, a significant portion require an abortion litmus test for candidates, usually pro-choice, and thus are often partisan in practice. While many claim candidate diversity as a goal, only a very small number focus on women of color specifically.⁶³ These organizations have already shown themselves to be effective in helping to equalize the likelihood that a woman will be recruited to run for office;⁶⁴ 2018 may be, among other things, a test of whether these organizations can help women not just run, but win. These organizations also highlight the importance of a non-governmental organizations and civic society to democratic functioning. Contesting elections requires resources and skills. Efforts to equalize the distribution of those resources has the potential to facilitate more equal democratic representation.

Would the election of more women improve the state of American democracy? If we view representation and full membership in the political community as central to liberal democracy, then the election of women could be viewed as a positive indicator of democratic legitimacy.⁶⁵ Moreover, evidence suggests women may in fact offer better representation. Women legislators give more floor speeches on a broader range of issues, sponsor more bills, and move bills through the legislative process more successfully. They are more responsive to constituent requests, more likely to advance legislation of interest to constituents, and secure more federal dollars for their districts.⁶⁶ Women legislators are more likely to advocate for

women, women's issues, and issues traditionally associated with women, such as education and health care.⁶⁷ Women thus may help to make government more representative of their constituents and of diverse interests. Women politicians also may encourage greater political engagement amongst women, particularly young women.⁶⁸

Research indicates that much of women's exceptional performance can be attributed to the real and perceived vulnerability of women in office. Women are more likely to perceive that the ideological, competitive, and media environment are biased or unfavorable toward them. They appear to respond by investing greater efforts into pleasing constituents, shoring up support, and producing accomplishments.⁶⁹ Here again we see the persistent impact of ascriptive gender hierarchy, as political socialization, processes, and structures continue to convey to women that they are unwelcome in and unqualified for the political arena. While contributing to women's underrepresentation, real and perceived bias also appears to encourage greater effectiveness and impact when women are legislators and leaders.

We should also recognize that the expectations for women in politics are often rooted in the same stereotypes that have long informed ascriptive gender hierarchy. This too has historical precedent. Many suffragists accepted, and argued for suffrage on the basis of, an understanding of women's nature as different—more honest, ethical, and moral—than men's. Once enfranchised, the perceived failure of women voters to save or transform politics led to disillusionment and disappointment and undermined the political influence and impact of women.⁷⁰ As the suffrage case indicates, it is not at all clear that stereotyping women as more ethical, honest, and responsible is less problematic (or accurate) when used to advocate *for* women's engagement in politics, rather than their exclusion. At worst, male actors are let off the hook, women are judged by unrealistic and impossible standards, and the obligation for the political community as a whole to act in good faith and address pressing problems is elided.

Conclusion

While presidential election contests are always gendered, 2016 stood out in many ways. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that responses to the Trump presidency have been deeply gendered as well. Women are responding in different ways than are men, while gender roles, stereotypes, and expectations have both inspired responses and shaped their content and form. Observing that women have played a leading role in opposition does not indicate that all or even most women oppose the current administration. Indeed, what we have repeatedly observed is the considerable diversity (particularly racial and partisan) of women and their responses to the current political moment. Moreover, in evaluating the state of American democracy, we must distinguish between legitimate disagreements over policy and politics, and threats to democratic integrity.⁷¹ Many of the issues which have inspired activism are topics of reasonable debate within a democratic system. On the other hand, the persistent differential representation, treatment, and influence of women in the political community continues to raise concerns about the quality of American democracy.

A common thread running through the various gendered responses to the Trump presidency is the importance of—and women's consistent aptitude for—effective political organization. Political influence requires the purposeful creation and maintenance of political networks and resources: The coordination, networking, and management that translated

disappointment and anxiety into the Women's March, the largest single day demonstration in American history. The years of local, state, and national level organizing efforts that prepared Moms Demand Action to provide valuable assistance to the Parkland high school students, as well as to channel the reform activism those students inspired around the country.⁷² The expertise and dedication of organizations like Alianza Nacional de Campesinas which helped translate a Twitter hashtag (#MeToo) into effective advocacy, especially for the most vulnerable women. The hundreds of established groups dedicated to helping elect women to political office that became a resource and conduit for the thousands of women, many inexperienced, who have sought to run for office in the past 15 months. These organizations vary in their purpose and form. Some were created in the wake of 2016, some were long standing and ready to act when the opportunity emerged. All of them have been a necessary condition for many of the developments reviewed in this memo.

A popular Women's March poster featured General Leia Organa from the movie Star Wars with the slogan, "a woman's place is in the resistance." The 2016 election reminds us that the "place" of women in politics has always been contested and unequal, and highlights the extent to which gender equality remains an unfinished project today. Not all or even most women identify the resistance. Yet the current political activism of women on the left is part of the long-standing tradition of American women organizing for political and social change across the spectrum by both embracing and challenging gender stereotypes and bias, affirming the potential of democratic politics as a "place" where women can and do pursue their diverse interests.

Endnotes

¹ Those distinctions are problematic and complicated for many reasons, including gender identity fluidity and essentialism. For a discussion, see: Beckwith, Karen, "A Common Language of Gender?"; Burns, Nancy, "Finding Gender;" Hawkesworth, Mary, "Engendering Political Science: An Immodest Proposal;" Htun, Mala, "What It Means to Study Gender and the State," *Gender & Politics* 1(1 2005):128-66; Sanbonmatsu, Kira, "Representation by Gender and Parties" In *Political Women and American Democracy*, eds. Christina Wolbrecht, Karen Beckwith, and Lisa Baldez (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

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⁴ See, for example, Kerber, Linda K., Nancy F. Cott, Robert Gross, Lynn Hunt, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Christine M. Stansell, "Beyond Roles, Beyond Spheres: Thinking about Gender in the Early Republic." *William and Mary Quarterly* 41(July 1989):565-81; Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place."

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- ⁹ *Bradwell v. State of Illinois*, 18 U.S. (16 Wall.) 130 (1873).
- ¹⁰ Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* .
- ¹¹ Advertising image: "Which do you prefer? The home of street corner for women: Vote No on Woman Suffrage" 1915 lithograph, The History Project digital collection, University of California, Davis. Accessed January 30, 2017 < http://marchand.dss.ucdavis.edu/ic/image_details.php?id=2815>
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