



## Center for Effective Lawmaking

A joint partnership between the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy and Vanderbilt University. The Center seeks to advance the generation, communication, and use of new knowledge about the effectiveness of individual lawmakers and legislative institutions in Congress.

### Highlights from the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress LES Scores:

In the minority party in the U.S. House of Representatives, Democrat women outperformed their male counterparts at lawmaking, as four of the top ten positions were held by women, even though they comprise only a fifth of congressional seats. In the Senate, two female lawmakers, Amy Klobuchar, and Claire McCaskill, top the list as the minority party's most effective lawmakers. Klobuchar's LES score places her fifth overall in the Senate, an impressive feat for a minority party female, as she put forward 69 pieces of legislation, four of which became law.

### Are women more effective lawmakers than men?

Female lawmakers engage more fully in coalition building than their male counterparts. While they may be outperformed in the majority party, the Center for Effective Lawmaking has discovered strong evidence that minority party women in the U.S. House of Representatives are better able to build coalitions and keep sponsored bills alive through later stages of the legislative process as compared to minority men.

#### Are women more effective legislators than men?

Being a female lawmaker translates to a 10 percent increase in legislative effectiveness

#### Is there a difference in minority versus majority party?

Women in the minority party are about 33 percent more effective and women in the majority are about 5 percent more effective than their male counterparts, all else equal.

#### What about minority men versus women?

Minority party women are more effective than minority party men, majority party women are not significantly more effective than their male counterparts

### The Power of Allies, Compromise and Coalitions:

One of the reasons women are cited as being more successful at lawmaking than men is their ability to create strong coalitions. Qualitative research has indicated that being open to compromise, even with those who are not natural allies, and cultivating a broad set of allies, even beyond Congress are two of the five habits of highly effective lawmakers. Research has found that women, especially those in the minority party, may be more effective at building coalitions across ideological divides, parties and branches of government.



## Advancing Women's Issues Through Female Legislators

The Center has published a working paper exploring that that research supports that women, both Democrats and Republicans, engage in legislative specialization in areas identified as “women’s issues.” However, policy proposals supporting women’s issues put forward by women are dismissed relative to those put forward by men. This research suggests that increasing gender diversity in Congress may lead to greater success for passage of women’s issues bills.



## New Research on Women's Advancement in Politics and the Gender Gap on Capitol Hill

One of the Center for Effective Lawmaking's grantees, Melinda N. Ritchie and Hye Young You are exploring how gender influences advancement in politics within Congress and congressional staff. Their research finds that female staff members experience slower rates of promotion and lower levels of compensation than male staff members of the same level. Their research indicates that there may be other factors contributing to this gap beyond electoral factors, supply lag, and institutional inertia. Factors unique to the individual legislator's office; including, the gender of the legislator themselves, the party, the salience of gender issues and the role of female staff members, may be contribute to this male/female divide.

The New York Times THE CHOICE

Amy Klobuchar and Elizabeth Warren



## A Disconnect Between Effectiveness and Promotion?

The Center's research indicates that women are more effective at moving their pieces of legislation through the lawmaking process than their male counterparts, due partially to their ability to effectively form coalitions, being consensus-oriented, especially in the minority party. Given their success at turning policies into law, why is there still a gender gap within the staff on Capitol Hill?