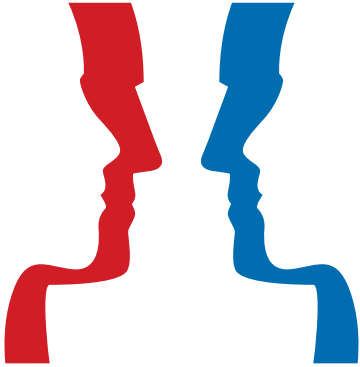


### POLITICAL SCIENCE

## Polarization of women in power

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Credit: RobinOlimb / DigitalVision Vectors / Getty

Do women in political office vote differently from men? Past research on female legislators in the United States has found that women in Congress tend to be more liberal than men in their votes. However, there is evidence that this pattern might be changing over time, and it is unclear whether it holds up beyond the U.S. Congress.

A recent study by Tracy Osborn, of the University of Iowa, and colleagues brings new evidence to this question by examining the voting patterns of female members of all state legislative chambers across all 50 U.S. states between 1999 and 2014. They find that, over time, these elected women have become more polarized, with Democratic women voting for more liberal positions than Democratic men and Republican women voting more conservatively than Republican men. The authors examine different potential mechanisms for this shift and find that it cannot be fully explained by overall trends in the polarization of state legislatures. Instead, the replacement of legislators by more polarized new female members also plays an important role.

These results highlight the complex and dynamic nature of the question of how women in political office differ from men in their voting behaviour.

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