

Apr 25th, 2:45 PM - 3:45 PM

# The Efficacy of Gender Quotas in Politics: The United States and Europe

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Larson, Emily, "The Efficacy of Gender Quotas in Politics: The United States and Europe" (2019). *Carroll College Student Undergraduate Research Festival*. 128.  
<https://scholars.carroll.edu/surf/2019/all/128>

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## Abstract:

- Globally, women are underrepresented political office.
- More research must be done on solving this problem, not just why it exists.
- Gender quotas have effects in other countries, but have not been implemented in United States politics
- This research seeks to answer whether gender quotas could work in the U.S.

## Background:

- Gender biases effect women's electoral prospects.
- Psychological and systemic barriers to participation.



## Gender Quotas: Not One Size Fits All

- Reserved seats: create a mandate for minimum number of female legislators, usually established through reforms to the constitution.
- Party quotas: most common, adopted by individual parties to set new criteria for selection of candidates.
- Legislative quotas: enacted through reforms to electoral laws, and require all parties to follow the quota.



House of Commons, with and without men in the picture.

## European Gender Quotas:

- Gender inequality: a key issue in European democracies  
The creation of gender quotas typically occur due to societal pressures for change.
- Since the first gender quotas, a new wave revising the old quotas to make them even more effective.
- European models of gender parity aim *not for equal rights and opportunities, but for equal empowerment and balanced participation*



## Gender Quotas in the United States?

- There is societal pressure in the U.S. for increased gender parity in political offices
  - But, not seeing the same policy implementation as in Europe
- Gender bias in the Constitution itself.
- Some countries implement gender equity policy through amendments.
- Women in the US remain in the private sphere and men in the public sphere.

## Analysis: It's a Start

- Legislative candidate quotas have a positive influence on boosting the number of women candidates and elected women.
- Not whether quotas work. But must also identify the root of the problem.
- Gender quotas can balance representation, and normalize women in positions of political power, but they can't be the only answer.