

**Unrealized Opportunity?
Term Limits and the Representation of Women in
State Legislatures**

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ABSTRACT. Using data from the state legislative elections of 1998 and 2000, this article examines empirically the expectation prevalent in the women and politics literature that the implementation of term limits will lead to increases in the numbers of women legislators. At the state house level, in both elections more women were forced to leave state house seats because of term limits than were elected to house seats which were vacated by term-limited incumbents. In contrast, at the state senate level, women increased their numbers in term-limited seats in 1998 and maintained their numbers in 2000. Thus far women have fared better in term-limited seats for state senates than for state houses because of a “pipeline” effect whereby some women representatives who have been term-limited out or who face a term-limited future have successfully taken advantage of opportunities to seek senate seats that opened up because of term limits.

KEYWORDS. Women, term limits, state legislatures, elections, candidates, public officials, representation.

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In 1990 voters in California, Colorado, and Oklahoma passed the first initiatives limiting the terms of state legislators. Subsequently, other states adopted term limits, and by July 2001, 19 states had restricted the number of terms which can be served by state lawmakers (National Conference of State Legislators, 2001).

Scholars of women and politics, with few dissenters,¹ have long looked to term limits as a political reform that could lead to substantial increases in the number of women holding public office. Several major studies have concluded that incumbency is one of the most critical barriers to increasing the number of women serving in elective office since very high proportions of incumbents who seek re-election are re-elected (e.g., Darcy, Welch, and Clark, 1994; Carroll, 1994a; Burrell, 1994). Scholars have argued that term limits, by breaking the stranglehold of incumbency and increasing legislative turnover, would create more winnable open-seat opportunities for women. More open-seat opportunities should lead to increased numbers of women legislators.

Increased numerical or descriptive representation of women in legislatures is important because it is likely to lead to increased substantive representation of women. Several studies have demonstrated that women legislators at both state and national levels are more likely than their male colleagues to support feminist positions on so-called “women’s issues,” to actively promote legislation to improve women’s status in society, and to focus their legislative attention on issues such as health care, the welfare of family and children, and education (e.g., Dodson and Carroll 1991; Carroll 1994b; Thomas 1994; Tamerius 1995; Flammang 1997). Consequently, if more women are elected to the state legislatures as a result of term limits, women’s interests and concerns are likely to be better represented in the policy process.

R. Darcy, Susan Welch, and Janet Clark are among those who have suggested that term limits should lead to larger numbers of women legislators. According to these scholars, “Term limitations, when used as a way to weaken the power of incumbency for example, will speed up the election of women” (1994, 194). As evidence for this assertion, they examined cohorts of legislators in the lower houses of 21 state legislatures and found that the most recently elected cohorts had about twice as many women proportionately as did the more senior cohorts (146). They concluded, “since women are a much larger proportion of newly elected legislators, many of the men forced to step down will be replaced by women” (146).

While expressing reservations about some of the possible negative effects of term limits, other scholars have joined Darcy, Welch, and Clark in suggesting that term limits are likely to lead to increases in the number of women serving in legislatures. For example, Susan J. Carroll and Wendy Strimling have argued:

Any reform that weakens the staying power of incumbents... is likely to work to the collective advantage of women. Although it might have some undesirable consequences, a reasonable proposal that would place an upper limit on the number of terms an individual could serve in offices now characterized by low turnover would, by creating more open seats, work to the benefit of women and other underrepresented groups (1983, 6).

Similarly, while acknowledging potential negative effects of term limits on the policy-making process, Barbara Burrell observed, “If terms of office were limited..., as has been adopted in some states and has been proposed for the U.S. Congress, that should at least in the short run increase the number of women legislators as it would remove long term incumbents, disproportionately men, from the electoral equation” (1994, 191). Wilma Rule and Pippa Norris also have joined the chorus of academic voices pointing to the potential positive effects of term limits on women’s representation, suggesting that term limits “would create more open seats” and “move the United States toward equal representation for white and minority women” (1992, 52).

These arguments by scholars have been echoed by term-limit advocates.² Edward H. Crane, President of the Cato Institute, for example, testified before a congressional subcommittee that women fare better in open seat races and that term limits would “enhance the competitiveness of elections and... increase the number and diversity of Americans choosing to run” (1995).³

To date, little research has examined the likely or actual effects of the implementation of term limits on the numbers of women serving in office. Some researchers have analyzed retention rates (Thompson and Moncrief, 1993) or employed simulation models (Reed and Schansberg, 1995) to estimate the likely impact of term limits on the representation of women in state legislatures and Congress. However, empirical research examining the actual impact of term limits on the representation of women has been very limited, largely because data have not been available until very recently. The first forced retirements of legislators occurred in two states in 1996; in that election 30 Maine legislators and 22 members of the California Assembly were deemed ineligible to run again because of term limit statutes (National Conference of State Legislatures, 1999). Some research focusing

on California was conducted in the aftermath of the 1996 elections. Mark Petracca (1998) examined California's early experience with term limits and found that the number of women had increased. Renee Van Vechten (2000) also found that women have been elected to the California legislature at a higher rate since the implementation of term limits; however, she argued that only in the case of the senate could the increases clearly be attributed to term limits. Finally, Stanley M. Caress (1999) concluded that term limits generated only negligible gains for women in the California legislature.⁴

Because several other states joined California and Maine in implementing term limits for some of their legislative seats in 1998 and 2000,⁵ the 1998 and 2000 elections present the first opportunity to examine the impact of term limits on the representation of women with a data base that extends across several states and more than one election. In 1998, 203 state legislators in seven states were forced to leave office because of term limits (Table 1). In 2000, 377 state legislators in 12 states vacated their seats due to term limits (Table 1).⁶

In this article we use data from the 1998 and 2000 elections to assess the effect of term limits on the numbers of women serving in state legislatures. We examine empirically the expectation prevalent in the women and politics literature that the implementation of term limits will lead to increases in the numbers of women legislators.

Table 1: Numbers and Proportions of Seats in Various States Which Were Term-Limited and Up for Election in 1998 and 2000

State	1998				2000			
	Senate		House		Senate		House	
	N=	%=	N=	%=	N=	%=	N=	%=
Arizona	--	--	--	--	7	23.3	15	25.0
Arkansas	--	--	49	49.0	13	76.5	24	24.0
California	11		16	20.0	8	40.0	23	28.8
Colorado	9		18	27.7	11	57.9	10	15.4
Florida	--	--	--	--	11	52.4	54	45.0
Maine	1		11	7.3	7	20.0	16	10.6
Michigan	--	--	64	58.2	--	--	21	19.1
Missouri ^a	1	--	--	--	--	--	8	--
Montana	--	--	--	--	13	50.0	34	34.0
Ohio	--	--	--	--	6	37.5	43	43.4
Oregon	2 ^b	--	21	35.0	5	33.3	15	25.0
South Dakota	--	--	--	--	13	37.1	20	28.6
N=	24		179		94		283	

^a We have excluded Missouri from our analysis because term limits will not be implemented across-the-board for the Missouri House and Senate until 2002; in other words, 2002 will be the first year in which incumbents who were serving when the term limits measure passed will be forced to retire. However, 1 senator in 1998 and 8 representatives in 2000 became subject to term limits before other members of their respective houses because they filled mid-term vacancies.

^b We have excluded these two senators in Oregon from our analysis because of the exceptional circumstances under which they became subject to term limits. They were originally appointed to mid-term vacancies and consequently became subject to term limits before other members of the Oregon senate.

Description of the Data Set and the Analysis

For purposes of this analysis, we compiled a data set for:

- all 1998 state house races in the six states that had by then implemented term limits for house seats (Arkansas, California, Colorado, Maine, Michigan, and Oregon);
- all 2000 state house races in the above six states plus all house races in the five states that implemented term limits for house seats for the first time in 2000 (Arizona, Florida, Montana, Ohio, and South Dakota);
- all 1998 state senate races in the three states that had by then implemented term limits for state senate seats (California, Colorado, and Maine);
- and all 2000 state senate races in the above three states plus all senate races in the seven states that implemented term limits for senate seats for the first time in 2000 (Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Montana, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota).

Each legislative seat was identified as either term-limited, other open (i.e., no incumbent running for re-election but not term-limited), or not open (i.e., incumbent seeking re-election).⁵ For each legislative race (seat), we also coded additional information about the number and sex of the candidates in the primary election in each party; the sex of the general election candidates and winner; and the sex and party of the incumbent. Most information on candidates was obtained from the Project Vote Smart⁶ web site and the office of the secretary of state in each state.

In the first section of our analysis, we examine longitudinal national and state-level data for evidence of possible effects of term limits on the numbers of women serving in state legislatures. We then examine the effects of term limits on the numbers of women serving in both state houses and state senates using the legislative seat-level data described above. Finally, we look at possible explanations for the patterns we find, focusing on the numbers of women who entered primaries for term-limited seats and the numbers of women who ran for seats previously held by term-limited women incumbents.

The Big Picture: Longitudinal National and State-Level Data

If term limits are having the positive effect on women's representation anticipated by women and politics scholars and term-limit advocates, then this effect might well be evident in both national and state-level data tracking the representation of women in legislatures over time. If term limits were having a significant impact on women's representation, then one might expect to see notable increases in the proportions of women among state legislators in the period after the implementation of term limits as compared to the proportions of women among state legislators in the period before the implementation of term limits.

Data from the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), tracking the numbers of women serving in state legislatures over time,⁷ suggest that nationally this has not been the case. The proportion of state senators who are women has increased over the past decade and a half from 10 percent in 1985 to 20 percent in 2001. Similarly, the proportion of women state representatives has increased from 17 percent in 1985 to 23 percent in 2001. However, since 1996 when the first round of term limits went into effect, the proportion of women state representatives has leveled off at 23 percent, and the proportion of women state senators has increased only slightly from 18 percent in 1997 to 20 percent in 1999 and 2001 even as more term-limited seats have become open.

While the national data provide no evidence that term limits have had a strong positive effect on the representation of women since they began to go into effect in 1996, term limits may have had an effect even before they were implemented. Some legislators in the 19 states that have passed term limits since 1990, including legislators in those states where they have not yet gone into effect, may have chosen to retire early to take advantage of other opportunities in anticipation that they would be forced out of office in the near future. These early retirements would have created additional open seat opportunities even before the actual date of the implementation of term limits. Yet, the CAWP data provide no evidence that anticipatory retirements had an impact nationally on the numbers of women serving as legislators. The proportions of women among state senators and state representatives did not increase more dramatically in the years after 1990, the first year that a term limit statute was approved in any state, than they did in the years from 1985 to 1989.

Nevertheless, the nationwide statistics, which include women from the 31 states that have not enacted term limits as well as women from the 19 states that have, may obscure patterns evident in individual states. In

Figures 1, 2, and 3, we present longitudinal data on the proportions of women among state representatives for each of the states that by 2000 had implemented term limits for house seats, grouped according to the year term limits first went into effect in the state. If term limits have led to notable increases in the number of women serving in any state, then the proportions of women serving in the post-term limits era should be noticeably greater than the proportions serving in the pre-term limit period, especially the earlier part of the pre-term limit period before the passage of a term limit statute in any state.

Figure 1: Proportions of Women in State Houses, 1985-2001, for States That Began to Implement Term Limits in 1996

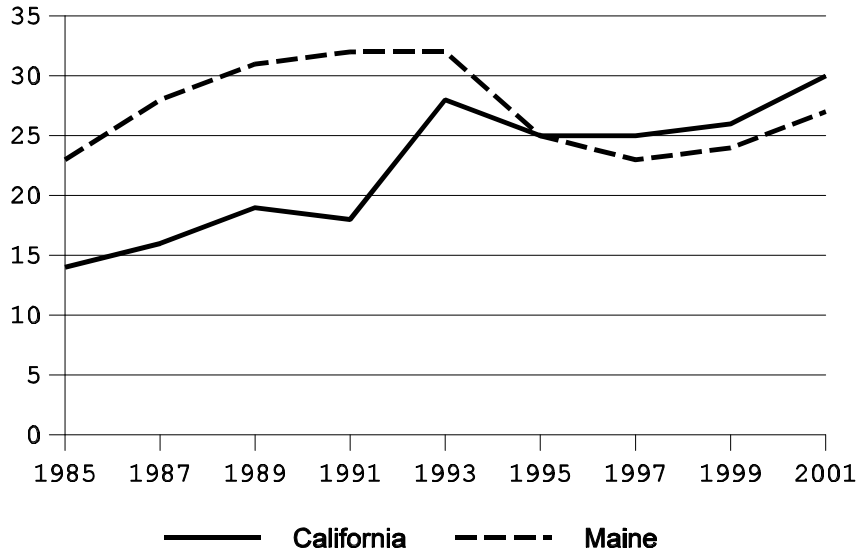
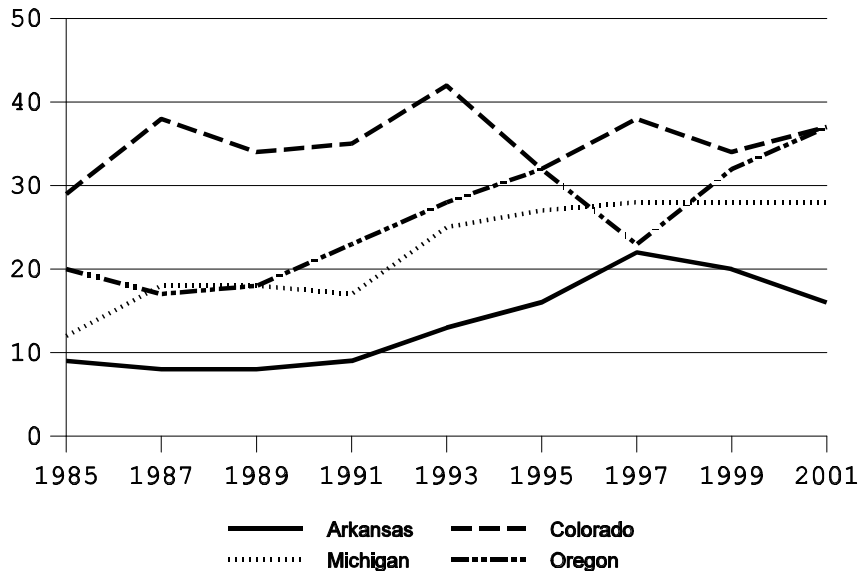


Figure 2: Proportions of Women in State Houses, 1985-2001, for States That Began to Implement Term Limits in 1998

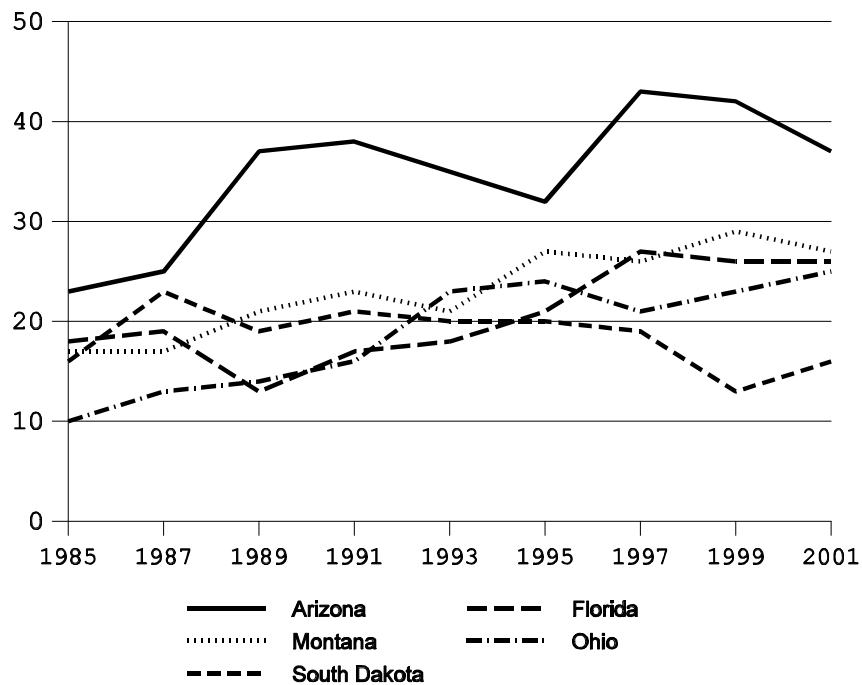


The effects of term limits should be most evident in California and Maine since these are the two states that began to implement term limits in 1996 and thus have the longest history with term limits (Figure 1). However, rather than the post-1996 increase one might expect if the implementation of term limits had a positive effect on

the representation of women, the proportions of women serving in the post-term limits period generally have not been greater than the proportions serving in 1993. In both states there was a slight upswing in proportions of women representatives following the 2000 elections, suggesting the possibility that the long-term effects might prove to be more positive than the short-term effects. But clearly it is too early after the implementation of term limits to draw that conclusion; we will have to wait to see if this upswing continues in future elections.

Figure 2 presents data for the four states that first implemented term limits for state house races in 1998. While the patterns for the four states vary, Oregon is the only state that resembles the pattern one would expect to see if term limits had a strong positive impact on the representation of women. In Oregon, the proportion of women in the house has increased in both elections since the implementation of term limits began in 1998. Nevertheless, the proportion of women representatives in 1999 just matched that for 1995, due to a drop following the 1996 elections. In Arkansas, the proportion of women in the state house reached its zenith in 1997 and has declined in the two elections since the implementation of term limits. In Colorado, the representation of women has fluctuated, but in the two elections since the implementation of term limits, the proportion of women has been lower than the proportions who served in both 1993 and 1997. In Michigan, the proportion of women representatives has not changed since term limits went into effect.

Figure 3: Proportions of Women in State Houses, 1985-2001, for States That Began to Implement Term Limits in 2000



Data for the states that first implemented term limits in 2000 are presented in Figure 3. Two states, Arizona and Montana, showed declines following the 2000 elections while for one state, Florida, the proportion of women serving in the state house remained the same following the election. In South Dakota, the proportion of women increased slightly after term limits were implemented although the proportion of women was lower in 1999 and remained lower in 2001 that it had been throughout most of the 1990s. Ohio best fits the anticipated pattern of a positive gain following the implementation of term limits. In Ohio, the proportion of women in the state house climbed to its highest level ever in 2001 although the magnitude of the increase following the 2000 election was not larger than the increases that had occurred in some of the years before term limits were implemented.

Focusing In: Election Outcomes for Term-Limited State House Seat Races

Although the longitudinal national and state-level data presented above provide little evidence that the implementation of term limits has led to widespread and notable increases in the numbers of women legislators, the effects of term limits might not be fully evident in these data. Perhaps women fared well in races for term-limited seats but retired in large numbers from, and/or fared particularly poorly in races for non-term-limited seats, resulting in the lack of overall increases in proportions of women legislators found above. To test for this possibility, we examined election outcomes for races within each of the individual states, comparing the numbers of incumbent women who were forced to step down because of term limits with the numbers of women who were elected in races for term-limited seats (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Numbers and Proportions of Term-Limited, Other Open, and Non-open State House Seats Represented by Women Before and After the 1998 Elections in Six States

State	Type of Seat	Pre- N=	Election %=	Post- N=	Election %=
Arkansas	Term-Limited	9	18.4	8	16.3
	Other Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	12	26.1	11	23.9
California	Term-Limited	6	37.5	6	37.5
	Other Open	2	20.0	3	30.0
	Not Open	11	20.4	11	20.4
Colorado	Term-Limited	9	50.0	2	11.0
	Other Open	4	66.7	3	50.0
	Not Open	15	36.6	15	36.6
Maine	Term-Limited	2	18.2	1	9.1
	Other Open	5	27.8	3	16.7
	Not Open	27	22.1	30	24.6
Michigan	Term-Limited	16	25.0	17	26.6
	Other Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	14	30.4	15	32.6
Oregon	Term-Limited	5	23.8	9	42.9
	Other Open	0	0.0	1	20.0
	Not Open	8	23.5	10	29.4
All 6 States	Term-Limited	47	26.3	43	24.0
	Other Open	11	25.0	10	22.7
	Not Open	87	25.4	92	26.8

Table 3: Numbers and Proportions of Term-Limited, Other Open, and Non-open State House Seats Represented by Women Before and After the 2000 Elections in Eleven States

State	Type of Seat	Pre- N=	Election %=	Post- N=	Election %=
Arizona	Term-Limited	4	26.7	4	26.7
	Other Open	4	50.0	2	25.0
	Not Open	16	43.2	16	43.2
Arkansas	Term-Limited	6	25.0	1	4.2
	Other Open	1	12.5	1	12.5
	Not Open	12	17.6	12	17.6
California	Term-Limited	5	21.7	8	34.8
	Other Open	2	25.0	3	37.5
	Not Open	14	28.6	14	28.6
Colorado	Term-Limited	3	30.0	1	10.0
	Other Open	4	44.4	6	66.7
	Not Open	15	32.6	17	37.0
Florida	Term-Limited	11	20.3	11	20.3
	Other Open	3	33.3	2	22.2
	Not Open	17	30.4	18	32.1
Maine	Term-Limited	5	31.3	4	25.0
	Other Open	4	26.7	7	46.7
	Not Open	28	23.3	30	25.0
Michigan	Term-Limited	7	33.3	4	19.0
	Other Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	26	29.5	25	28.4
Montana	Term-Limited	7	20.6	6	17.6
	Other Open	4	36.4	5	45.4
	Not Open	17	30.9	17	30.9
Ohio	Term-Limited	12	27.9	14	32.6
	Other Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	10	19.2	11	21.2
Oregon	Term-Limited	7	46.7	7	46.7
	Other Open	2	22.2	4	44.4
	Not Open	10	27.8	11	30.6
South Dakota	Term-Limited	3	15.0	5	25.0
	Other Open	1	10.0	1	10.0
	Not Open	5	12.5	4	10.0
All 11 States	Term-Limited	70	25.5	65	23.6
	Other Open	25	27.2	31	33.7
	Not Open	170	26.2	175	27.0

Contrary to the expectations of most scholars and term-limit advocates who have argued that term limits will lead to increases in the number of women legislators, the number of women serving in state house seats that became open because incumbents were term-limited *decreased* following both the 1998 and 2000 elections. Across the six states that implemented term limits for state house races in 1998, 47 incumbent women were forced to leave office as a result of term limits while only 43 women won election to the house seats vacated by these women and other term-limited incumbents (Table 2). Similarly, across the 11 states in which term limits were in effect for house seats in 2000, 70 women who served in term-limited seats were forced to resign while only 65 new women were elected to seats that opened up as a result of term limits (Table 3). In both elections, then, the number of women who were forced to leave office because of term limits was greater than the number of women elected to seats vacated by term-limited incumbents.⁸

The total number of women serving in the lower houses of the six states that implemented term limits in 1998 remained the same--145--before and after the 1998 elections. For the 11 states in which term limits were in effect for house seats in 2000, the total number of women state representatives actually increased following the 2000 elections from 265 to 271. The explanation for the stability of numbers in 1998 and the increase in 2000, despite the decrease in the number of women serving in term-limited seats, lies with the outcomes of races for other types of seats (Tables 2 and 3).

In 1998, 11 women across the six states left office for reasons other than forced retirement as a result of term limits while only 10 women were elected to seats open for reasons other than term limits, resulting in a decrease of 1 in non-term-limited open seats. The stability in the overall numbers of women representatives in 1998 was actually due to women's victories against incumbents. Across the six states, the number of women elected in districts where incumbents sought re-election in 1998 actually increased by five (from 87 to 92) (Table 2).

In 2000, across the 11 states with term-limited house seats, women increased their numbers both in seats that were open for reasons other than term limits and in races involving incumbents. Although 25 women who were not term-limited chose to step down, women were elected to 30 open seats which were vacated for reasons other than term-limits, resulting in a gain of five in non-term-limited open seats. Similarly, the number of women elected in districts where incumbents sought re-election in 2000 also increased by five (from 170 to 175)(Table 3).

Even though the number of cases in each state is quite small, some variation is apparent across the states in terms of how women fared both overall and in term-limited seats (Tables 2 and 3). In 1998, women had overall gains of one to seven house seats in three of the six states (California, Michigan, and Oregon)(Table 2). The number of seats held by women remained the same before and after the election in one state (Maine) while the numbers of women decreased in two states (Arkansas and Colorado). In three states (Arkansas, Colorado, and Maine) more women were forced to leave house seats because of term limits than were elected to house seats that became open because of term limits. In one state (California) the number of women serving in term-limited seats was the same before and after the election. In only two states (Michigan and Oregon) were more women elected to seats that became open because of term limits than were forced to retire because of term limits. Thus, only in the states of Michigan and Oregon were there increases in women's representation in house seats in 1998 which are partly attributable to gains in term-limited seats.

Some variation across the states was also apparent in 2000. Women had net gains of one to four house seats in six of the eleven states (California, Colorado, Maine, Ohio, Oregon, and South Dakota) where term limits were in effect (Table 3). Two states (Florida and Montana) showed no change in numbers, and in three states (Arizona, Arkansas, and Michigan) the total number of women representatives declined slightly following the elections.

Similarly, in three states (California, Ohio, and South Dakota), more women were elected to house seats which became open as a result of term limits than were forced to retire because of term limits (Table 3). In three states (Arizona, Florida, and Oregon), the number of women serving in term-limited house seats was the same before and after the 2000 elections. However, in five of the states (Arkansas, Colorado, Maine, Michigan, and Montana), more women vacated house seats because of term limits than were elected to fill house seats that were open because of term limits. Thus, only three states (California, Ohio, and South Dakota) in 2000 had overall gains in women's representation in house seats which are partly attributable to gains in term-limited seats.

Focusing In: Election Outcomes for Term-Limited State Senate Seat Races

The expectation that term limits would lead to increases in the number of women legislators finds some support at the state senate level, but only for the 1998, and not the 2000, elections. In contrast to the pattern of decreases in the number of women serving in term-limited seats found for house races in both elections, the number of women serving in senate seats where an incumbent was term-limited *increased* as a result of the 1998 elections (Table 4) and *stayed the same* as a result of the 2000 elections (Table 5) across the states in each election which implemented term limits for senate seats. In 1998, three women were forced to give up their senate seats because of term limits, but 10 other women were elected to senate seats which were vacated because of term limits (Table 4). In 2000, 19 women had to step down from senate seats due to term limits, and 19 other women were elected to term-limited seats (Table 5).⁹

Table 4: Numbers and Proportions of Term-Limited, Other Open, and Non-open State Senate Seats Represented by Women Before and After the 1998 Elections in Three States

State	Type of Seat	Pre- N=	Election %=	Post- N=	Election %=
California	Term-Limited	1	9.1	5	45.5
	Other Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	1	11.1	1	11.1
Colorado	Term-Limited	2	22.2	4	44.4
	Other Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	2	28.6	2	28.6
Maine	Term-Limited	0	0.0	1	100.0
	Other Open	0	0.0	2	66.7
	Not Open	13	41.9	13	41.9
All Three States	Term-Limited	3	14.3	10	47.6
	Other Open	0	0.0	2	40.0
	Not Open	16	34.0	16	34.0

In 1998 women made gains both overall and in term-limited seats in each of the three states that had implemented term limits for state senate seats (Table 4). In California only one woman senator was forced out by term limits and five new women were elected to seats that opened up because of term limits. In Colorado two women senators lost their seats because of term limits while four new women were elected in races for term-limited seats. Finally, in Maine the only senator forced out because of term limits was a man, and he was replaced by a woman. Thus, in each of these three states, there were overall increases in women's representation in senate seats due at least partially to gains women made as a result of term limits.

In 2000 the picture was decidedly more mixed. The overall number of women serving in state senates increased in only three states (Arizona, Arkansas, and Oregon). In five states (California, Colorado, Maine, Montana, and Ohio) the numbers of women senators decreased following the 2000 elections, and in two states (Florida and South Dakota) the numbers stayed the same. Similarly, the number of women in term-limited senate seats increased in some states, remained the same in others, and decreased in still others (Table 5). In two states (Arkansas and Arizona), more women were elected to senate seats that were open because of term limits than were forced to vacate seats because of term limits. In four states (Florida, Maine, Oregon, and South Dakota), the numbers of women serving in term-limited senate seats was the same before and after the 2000 elections. Finally, in four states (California, Colorado, Montana, and Ohio), more women were forced out by

term-limits than were elected in seats that were open because of term limits, resulting in decreases in the numbers of women serving in term-limited seats (Table 5). Thus, in only two of the 10 states, Arizona and Arkansas, were there overall increases in women’s representation which are partly attributable to gains made by women in term-limited seats.

Table 5: Numbers and Proportions of Term-Limited, Other Open, and Non-open State Senate Seats Represented by Women Before and After the 2000 Elections in Ten States

State	Type of Seat	Pre- N=	Election %=	Post- N=	Election %=
Arizona	Term-Limited	1	14.3	4	57.1
	Other Open	1	33.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	5	25.0	5	25.0
Arkansas	Term-Limited	0	0.0	3	23.1
	Other Open	0	0.0	1	100.0
	Not Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
California	Term-Limited	2	25.0	1	12.5
	Other Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	2	18.2	2	18.2
Colorado	Term-Limited	5	45.5	2	18.2
	Other Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	1	12.5	3	37.5
Florida	Term-Limited	2	18.2	2	18.2
	Other Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	1	11.1	1	11.1
Maine	Term-Limited	3	42.9	3	42.9
	Other Open	1	16.7	1	16.7
	Not Open	13	59.1	11	50.0
Montana	Term-Limited	2	15.4	1	7.8
	Other Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	4	30.8	4	30.8
Ohio	Term-Limited	2	33.3	1	16.7
	Other Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
Oregon	Term-Limited	1	20.0	1	20.0
	Other Open	0	0.0	1	50.0
	Not Open	4	50.0	4	50.0
South Dakota	Term-Limited	1	7.8	1	7.8
	Other Open	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Open	4	18.2	4	18.2
All 10 States	Term-Limited	19	20.2	19	20.2
	Other Open	2	13.3	3	20.0
	Not Open	34	27.2	34	27.2

Explaining the House Findings

Why is it that the number of women legislators elected from term-limited seats actually decreased across all state houses, considered together, where term limits were in effect in both 1998 and 2000? And what explains the variations across the states?

As a first step in answering these questions, we looked to see whether women failed to enter races for many of the house seats that were vacated as a result of term limits. One of the assumptions made by those who believe that term limits will increase the representation of women is that women will take advantage of the political opportunities that occur when incumbents are forced to retire. Obviously, if women do not enter primaries and run for vacated seats, retiring incumbents will inevitably be replaced by men.

Table 6 suggests that, in fact, women failed to take advantage of a substantial proportion of the political opportunities provided by forced turnover in 1998 and 2000. For both elections across all term-limited states, in more than two-fifths of all races for house seats vacated because of term limits, no woman entered either the Republican or the Democratic primary (Table 6). Races for term-limited seats were about equally as likely as races for other open seats, and only somewhat less likely than races for incumbent-occupied seats, to have had no woman candidate in either party's primary.¹⁰

Table 6: Proportions of Term-Limited State House Seats Where No Woman Candidate Ran in Either Party's Primary

	1998	2000
State	% of Term-Limited Seats With No Woman Candidate in Major Party Primaries ^a	% of Term-Limited Seats With No Woman Candidate in Major Party Primaries ^b
Arkansas	57.1	87.5
California	18.8	21.7
Colorado	38.9	70.0
Maine	90.9	56.3
Michigan	31.3	33.3
Oregon	38.1	20.0
Arizona		6.7
Florida		42.6
Montana		52.9
Ohio		41.9
South Dakota		40.0
All Term-limited States	42.5	43.6

^a Number of term-limited seats = 49 for Arkansas, 16 for California, 18 for Colorado, 11 for Maine, 64 for Michigan, 21 for Oregon, and 179 for all six states combined.

^b Number of term-limited seats = 24 for Arkansas, 23 for California, 10 for Colorado, 16 for Maine, 21 for Michigan, 15 for Oregon, 15 for Arizona, 54 for Florida, 34 for Montana, 43 for Ohio, 20 for South Dakota, and 275 for all 11 states combined.

Of course, the state representatives who were forced to relinquish their seats in the 1998 and 2000 elections had been re-elected several times. In most cases, it seems reasonable to assume that a candidate from the same party as the incumbent would have had the best chance of winning the general election. Yet, in a majority of the seats where incumbents were forced out by term limits, all the candidates in the primary of the retiring incumbent's party were men. Across the states where term limits were implemented, a woman entered the Democratic primary to try to win the seat of a term-limited Democratic incumbent in only 42.2 percent of the

cases in 1998 (N=102) and 46.6 percent of the cases in 2000 (N=131). A woman entered the Republican primary to run for the seat previously held by a term-limited Republican incumbent in only 48.1 percent of the cases in 1998 (N=77) and 41.7 percent of the cases in 2000 (N=144).

There was considerable variation across the states in the proportion of term-limited seats uncontested by a woman, ranging from only about one-fifteenth of term-limited seats in Arizona in 2000, one-fifth in Oregon in 2000, one-fifth in California in 1998, and one-fifth in California in 2000 to about nine-tenths in Maine in 1998 and Arkansas in 2000 (Table 6). The failure of women to enter races for term-limited seats is useful in helping to explain some of the variation across the states in the number of women elected to term-limited seats. For example, the fact that fewer races for term-limited seats were contested by women for the Maine House in 1998 and the Arkansas House in 2000 than for the Oregon House in 2000 or the California Assembly in either year helps to explain why women’s representation in term-limited seats declined in Maine in 1998 and Arkansas in 2000 but not in Oregon in 2000 or California in either year. Moreover, the failure of more women to enter primaries is important in helping to explain the overall decrease that occurred in the number of women representing term-limited seats across the states. Nevertheless, this explanation does not account for all the variation; for example, it does not help to explain why women fared worse in term-limited house races in Colorado than in Oregon in 1998. Both of these states had roughly equal proportions of term-limited seats uncontested by a woman (Table 6).

Table 7: Proportions of Term-Limited State House Seats Previously Held by Women Incumbents Where No Woman Ran in Major Party Primaries

	1998	2000
State	% of Term-Limited Women’s Seats with No Woman Candidate in Major Party Primaries ^a	% of Term-Limited Women’s Seats with No Woman Candidate in Major Party Primaries ^b
Arkansas	44.4	66.7
California	16.7	20.0
Colorado	55.6	66.7
Maine	100.0	80.0
Michigan	18.8	42.9
Oregon	20.0	0.0
Arizona		0.0
Florida		18.2
Montana		71.4
Ohio		58.3
South Dakota		33.3
All Term-limited States	34.0	41.4

^a Total number of term-limited seats previously held by women incumbents = 9 in Arkansas, 6 in California, 9 in Colorado, 2 in Maine, 16 in Michigan, 5 in Oregon, and 47 across all six states.

^b Total number of term-limited seats previously held by women incumbents = 6 in Arkansas, 5 in California, 3 in Colorado, 5 in Maine, 7 in Michigan, 7 in Oregon, 4 in Arizona, 11 in Florida, 7 in Montana, 12 in Ohio, 3 in South Dakota, and 70 across all 11 states.

However, when the term-limited house seats that were vacated by women incumbents are examined, clear differences are evident between Oregon and Colorado in 1998 (Table 7). In Colorado, where the numbers of women occupying term-limited seats decreased following the 1998 elections, five of nine (55.6%) of the term-limited seats vacated by women incumbents were uncontested by women candidates. By contrast, in Oregon, where the numbers of women occupying term-limited seats increased following the 1998 elections, only one of the five (20.0%) term-limited seats vacated by women incumbents was uncontested by a woman candidate (Table 7).

Similarly, four of the five states (Arkansas, Colorado, Maine, and Montana) with decreases in the number of women serving in term-limited seats following the 2000 elections also had high proportions of seats where women were forced out and which were uncontested by a woman candidate (Table 7). In each of these states, at least two-thirds of the contests for seats previously held by term-limited women had no woman candidate of either party in the race. Michigan, the fifth state with a decrease in the number of women in term-limited seats had no woman present in a more modest 42.9 percent of races for seats previously held by a term-limited woman incumbent.

Overall, term-limited seats that had previously been held by women were slightly more likely than seats previously held by men to be sought by women candidates. For example, at least one woman candidate entered the race for 66.0 percent of the term-limited seats (N=47) vacated by women in 1998 compared with only 55.3 percent of the seats vacated by men (N=132). Similarly, women sought 58.6 percent of the house seats (N=70) vacated by women in 2000 but only 53.2 percent of the seats vacated by men (N=205).¹¹ Nevertheless, a substantial proportion of term-limited seats previously held by women were uncontested by a woman candidate. No woman entered either party's primary as a candidate in races for about one-third in 1998 and two-fifths in 2000 of all house seats which had previously been held by a term-limited woman incumbent (Table 7).

For an even larger proportion of these house seats, all of the candidates in the primary of the retiring woman incumbent's party were men. For 48.1 percent of the house seats in 1998 (N=27) and 45.5 percent of the house seats in 2000 (N=44) previously held by Democratic women, no woman entered the Democratic primary. For 40.0 percent of the house seats in 1998 (N=20) and 57.7 percent of the house seats in 2000 (N=26) previously held by Republican women, no woman ran in the Republican primary. Since in most cases a woman would have a better chance of winning the seat if she were of the same party as the retiring incumbent, the lack of women candidates in the primary of the incumbent's party certainly worked to depress the number of new women who were elected to replace women incumbents forced out by term limits.

Because there were so many races for house seats previously held by a term-limited woman incumbent where no woman entered the race in either party, many of the term-limited seats held by women before the elections were occupied by men following the election. Across all six states only 25.5 percent of the term-limited house seats in 1998 (N=47) and 28.6 percent of the term-limited house seats in 2000 (N=70) held by women before the election continued to be held by women following the election.

In Colorado where a majority of house seats held by term-limited women incumbents in 1998 went uncontested by women, women retained only 11.1 percent of the seats where women incumbents were forced out (N=9). By contrast, in Oregon where most seats previously held by term-limited women incumbents were sought by other women in 1998, women continued to hold 80.0 percent of the seats which women incumbents were forced to relinquish (N=5). In Maine and Arkansas where women failed to enter primaries for most of the term-limited seats previously held by women in 1998, neither of the Maine seats (N=2) and only 11.1 percent of the Arkansas seats (N=9) were retained by women. In California and Michigan a woman ran in a primary for most of the term-limited seats previously held by women in 1998 (Table 7); nevertheless, many of the women who ran were unsuccessful in winning election, and consequently only 33.3 percent of the term-limited women incumbents in California (N=6) and 25.0 percent of the term-limited women in Michigan (N=16) were replaced by women.

The relationship between women running for term-limited women's seats and the retention of those seats by women was also evident in 2000. In Arkansas, Colorado, Maine, Montana, and Ohio where large majorities of seats held by term-limited women incumbents went uncontested by women, women retained only small proportions—none in Arkansas (N=6), 33.3 percent in Colorado (N=3), 20.0 percent in Maine (N=5), none in Montana (N=7), and 25.0 percent in Ohio (N=12)—of the seats where women were forced out. In Arizona and

Oregon, where at least one woman ran for all of the seats previously held by other women, women continued to hold larger proportions of the seats—50.0 percent in Arizona (N=4) and 71.4 percent in Oregon (N=7)—vacated by term-limited women incumbents.¹²

Thus, it appears that several factors contributed to the overall decrease across all states in the number of women serving in term-limited house seats following the 1998 and 2000 elections, and these factors help to explain variations that are apparent across the states as well. In a substantial proportion of races for term-limited house seats, no woman entered the primary in either party. Moreover, in a majority of primary contests in both parties, no woman entered the primary of the party of the retiring incumbent. Obviously, if women do not run, and often if they do not run as candidates of the dominant party in their districts, they cannot win.

In addition, a majority of elections for term-limited seats previously held by women were won by men in 1998 and 2000. Thus, women were not even able to recapture a majority of the house seats formerly held by women; in fact, in a substantial number of races for seats vacated by women there was no woman candidate in either party's primary and thus no woman who even had a chance of winning the seat.

Of course, the overall representation of women in the legislatures is influenced by how women fare in gaining seats previously held by men as well as women. And women were able to capture a notable proportion of term-limited house seats formerly held by men (23.5 percent in 1998 and 21.5 percent in 2000 across all term-limited states), demonstrating that women's viability as candidates is not limited to districts previously represented by women but rather extends across many different districts in these states. Nevertheless, the low proportion of house seats previously held by women which were retained by women is important in explaining why the opportunities presented by term limits did not translate into gains in the numbers of women serving in term-limited state house seats following the 1998 and 2000 elections. If women had been able to recapture even a bare majority of term-limited house seats formerly held by women in addition to their victories in term-limited seats formerly held by men, women's representation in term-limited house seats would have increased, rather than decreased, in both 1998 and 2000 across the states that implemented term limits.

Explaining the Senate Findings

The data also provide some insight as to why in 1998 women were able to increase their representation in term-limited seats in state senates at the same time that their numbers decreased in term-limited state house seats. In addition, the data help to explain why women did not fare as well in senate seats in 2000 as they had in 1998, merely maintaining rather than increasing their numbers, but nevertheless were able to avoid the decreases evident at the state house level.

The fact that the implementation of term limits at the state senate level has not led to the decreases in women's representation apparent at the state house level may be due, in part, to the fact that fewer women serve in the upper houses than in the lower houses of state legislatures. As a result, women have been a somewhat smaller proportion of those forced to leave office in state senates than in state houses. In 1998, only 14.3 percent of all senators forced out of office by term limits were women compared to 26.3 percent of all term-limited state representatives.

In addition, in 1998 women were more likely to enter primaries for term-limited seats at the senate level than at the house level; only 23.8 percent of contests for term-limited seats had no women candidates compared with 42.5 percent of house contests. Moreover, unlike the case for term-limited women state representatives where no woman ran for one-third of their seats, five women ran in primaries for the three seats vacated by term-limited women senators in 1998 (although only one of the five won her race).

The picture changed in 2000 in ways that help to explain why women fared less well at the senate level in 2000 than they had in 1998 while still faring better at the senate level in 2000 than at the house level in either election. A larger proportion of term-limited senators, 20.2 percent, were women in 2000 than in 1998. Consequently, proportionately more women had to be elected to term-limited senate seats in 2000 than in 1998 simply to maintain pre-election numbers. While the proportion of term-limited women senators was larger in 2000 than in 1998, it was still smaller than the 25.5 percent of all term-limited state representatives who were women. Unlike 1998 when the number of women candidates was greater than the number of seats relinquished by term-limited women incumbents, only 10 women ran in primaries for the 19 seats vacated by term-limited women senators in 2000. In addition, women ran for a smaller proportion, only 47.4 percent, of the seats

vacated by term-limited women senators (N=19) in 2000, a smaller proportion than the 58.6 percent of seats vacated by term-limited women representatives which were contested by a woman candidate.

While the above patterns help to account for the fact that women fared better in term-limited senate seats than in term-limited house seats in both elections, an examination of the backgrounds of the women who won races for term-limited senate seats is perhaps most telling about why women at the state senate level were better able to take advantage of the opportunities provided by term limits. Building on the work of political ambition theorists such as Joseph Schlesinger (1966), women and politics scholars have both theorized and observed that offices at lower levels constitute a “political pipeline” providing potential women candidates for higher levels of office. Women who run for higher levels of office often have served in political offices at lower levels (e.g., Carroll 1994a; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Duerst-Lahti 1998; Dolan and Ford 1998). Our data suggest that the lower houses of state legislatures clearly act as a direct pipeline providing experienced women candidates who are able to take advantage of state senate seats that become open as a result of term limits.

In 1998, nine of the 10 women who were elected to seats that opened up because of term limits were former state representatives. Four were forced to vacate their house seats in 1998, one had been term limited out of the house in 1996, and four voluntarily gave up their house seats to take advantage of opportunities to run for the senate when state senate seats in their districts opened up because of term limits.

In 2000, a smaller proportion than in 1998, but a still sizeable proportion, two-thirds, of the women elected to senate seats that were open because of term limits were former state representatives. Of the 19 women elected to term-limited senate seats, 13 had served in the lower houses of their legislatures. Eight of the 13 had been forced to give up their house seats because of term limits (seven in 2000 and one in 1998), and three had voluntarily vacated their house seats in 2000 in order to run for senate seats that were open because of term limits.

Thus, it appears that the decreases in the number of women serving in term-limited seats that were apparent in state houses following the 1998 and 2000 elections did not occur in state senates at least in part because some women state representatives, who had been term limited out or who would have faced term limits in the future, chose to take advantage of opportunities to run for senate seats that became open as a result of term limits and proved to be formidable candidates. Women increased their numbers in term-limited senate seats in 1998 and maintained their numbers in term-limited seats in 2000 in large part because experienced women, who had served in office and thus had well established networks and records, stepped forward to take advantage of the opportunities presented by open senate seats and won.

Discussion and Conclusions

For the most part, this analysis of the effects of term limits on the representation of women in state legislatures has provided evidence counter to the expectation that the implementation of term limits is likely to lead to increases in the number of women legislators. To date, the effects of term limits on the numerical representation of women appear neither as simple nor as straightforward as women and politics scholars and term limit advocates had anticipated.

The outcomes of races for state senate seats that were term-limited in 1998 provide the strongest support for the expectation that the numbers of women legislators will increase as term limits are implemented. While the numbers of women and states involved were small, more women were elected to senate seats that opened up as a result of term limits in 1998 than were forced to resign from senate seats because of term limits. Nevertheless, the outcomes of term-limited state senate races in 2000 were not as positive for women. In the 2000 elections the number of women elected to term-limited senate seats did not surpass, as it had in 1998, but did equal the number of women who were forced to vacate their senate seats because of term limits.¹³

At the state house level, the evidence from both elections was clearly counter to the expectation prevalent in the literature. In both 1998 and 2000, more women were forced to leave state house seats because of term limits than were elected to house seats which opened up when term-limited incumbents stepped down.

The gains made by women in term-limited state senate seats in 1998 demonstrate that term limits can lead to increased numbers of women in office if women candidates, especially politically experienced candidates, come forward to take advantage of the opportunities that term limits provide. However, there are no guarantees that the number of women officeholders will increase as the failure of women to increase their representation in

term-limited house seats shows. The mere existence of more political opportunities does not seem sufficient to increase the number of women serving in office, especially in circumstances where sizeable numbers of women incumbents are also forced out of office by term limits. Although women were successful in winning election to a minority of the term-limited house seats vacated by men, a majority of the women legislators who relinquished their house seats in both 1998 and 2000 were replaced by men. Many of the seats vacated by incumbents, even women incumbents, went uncontested by women candidates.

Thus far women have fared better in term-limited seats for state senates than for state houses because there seems to be a “pipeline” effect at work. Some women representatives who have been term-limited out or who face a term-limited future have successfully taken advantage of opportunities to seek senate seats that opened up because of term limits. State representatives appear to constitute an obvious pool of strong potential candidates for the state senate, and so far, this pool has been sufficient to increase (in 1998) or maintain (in 2000) women’s numbers among state senators serving in term-limited seats.

At the state house level, however, an obvious pool of potential candidates sufficient to maintain or increase women’s numbers in term-limited seats does not appear to exist. Although local and county elected officials would seem to constitute one possible pool of potential house candidates, local and county offices do not seem to be as clear a stepping stone to the legislature as one might expect. A major nationwide study of the recruitment of state legislators, now somewhat dated but still the most comprehensive available, found that only 20.4 percent of women state representatives had served in a local/municipal elective office and only 5.8 percent had served in an elective office at the county level. The proportions for men were only slightly higher. Moreover, about half the women and men serving in the state house had never held any previous appointive or elective position at any level of office (Carroll and Strimling 1983, 33-34).¹⁴

Previous research has demonstrated that women who run for state legislatures are less likely than their male counterparts to be “self-starters.” Women more often than men seek office only after receiving encouragement from others (Carroll 1994a; Carroll and Strimling 1983; Moncrief, Squire, and Jewell 2001, Table 5.5, 102). The lack of an obvious and automatic pool of women candidates for the state house and the fact that relatively few women are self-starters suggest the critical importance of recruitment efforts if women are to translate the opportunity presented by term limits into gains in the number of women serving in state houses. In the absence of greater efforts to identify and recruit women candidates, the evidence from the 1998 and 2000 elections suggests that term limits could actually prove detrimental to women’s representation at the state house level.

For advocates who are concerned with increasing the numbers of women in public office, our findings point strongly toward the need for concerted recruitment efforts focused on term-limited districts (as well as on open seats more generally). Advocacy organizations could help by identifying and recruiting potential women candidates in districts where incumbents will be forced to retire because of term limits. PACs could provide much needed financial support and technical assistance for women running for term-limited seats. Incumbent women legislators, who know in advance that they will be forced to leave office because of term limits, could help maintain or increase the number of women in office by identifying and grooming successors for their seats. Efforts such as these could help to insure that the opportunities offered by term limits translate into actual increases in the number of women legislators.

Additional research is certainly needed as term limits continue to be implemented in subsequent elections. The long-term effects of term limits could prove to be different from the short-term effects analyzed here. Nevertheless, the data from 1998 and 2000 clearly suggest that term limits, like many other reforms, are neither inherently bad nor inherently good, at least when it comes to increasing women’s numerical representation. Rather, in the long run, the effect of term limits on the number of women officeholders is likely to be strongly influenced by the degree and effectiveness of efforts to recruit women candidates within term-limited states.

Notes

1. A small number of scholars, like Linda L. Fowler, have questioned the predominant assumption that term limits will lead to increases in the number of women serving in legislatures at state and national levels. While acknowledging that women are likely “to benefit selectively from term limits,” Fowler has argued, “women are not going to gain by this reform across the board, however, because the more basic problem remains: too few women run in most states—in either primaries or open seat races—to produce significant increases in the number of female office holders” (1992, 182).
2. On the other side of the debate over term limits, many activists concerned with increasing the number of women in public office have opposed term limits, some arguing that term limits are not likely to be an effective mechanism for increasing women’s representation. Becky Cain, for example, writing as president of the League of Women Voters of the United States, suggested that campaign finance reform would be a preferable reform to term limits, allowing women challengers to run competitive races (1994, 48).
3. See also Ferry 1994. This argument has been only one of many that proponents of term limits have put forward, and other arguments related to increasing the competitiveness of elections and changing legislative behavior have played more central roles in their advocacy efforts. See Chi and Leatherby 1998 and Crane and Pilon 1994 for overviews of the arguments for and against term limits.
4. John M. Carey, Richard G. Niemi, and Lynda W. Powell also briefly examined the effects of term limits on the representation of women in states that had passed term limits in their study conducted in 1995 prior to the implementation of term limits in any state (2000, 24-27). Although the differences were small, they found proportionately more women were serving in states that had adopted term limits than in non-term-limited states. However, women were better represented in term-limited states among old-timers (those elected in 1992 or before in non-term-limited states and those elected in or before the year in which term limits were adopted in term-limited states) as well as among newcomers (those elected since the implementation of term limits), suggesting that term limits may not be the major reason for differences in the representation of women in these two groups of states.
5. Term limits generally are phased in over multiple election cycles so that the entire legislature does not turn over at the same time. Consequently, only a portion of the legislators in either chamber of any of the affected states was subject to term limits in each of the years 1996, 1998, or 2000.
6. Our numbers are based on information provided both by the National Conference of State Legislatures and by the offices of each state’s secretary of state. We have excluded two senators from Oregon in 1998, one senator from Missouri in 1998, and eight representatives from Missouri in 2000 from the analysis in this paper because of the exceptional circumstances under which they became subject to term limits before term limits were implemented more broadly for their legislative bodies. See Table 1 for more information.
5. All term-limited seats in this analysis were in single-member districts except for term-limited house seats in Arizona and South Dakota in 2000, where two representatives were elected from each district. For districts in these two states, we coded two races per district but included all new candidates running in the district as possible candidates for each seat. Thus, if a district had one seat where an incumbent was seeking re-election and another which was open due to term limits, we coded the two races as separate cases, one as an incumbent-occupied seat and one as a term-limited seat with all candidates in the race counted as candidates for the incumbent-occupied seat and all candidates except for the incumbent counted as candidates for the term-limited seat.
6. Project Vote Smart is the major program of The Center for National Independence in Politics, a national non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization focused on providing citizens/voters with information about the political system, issues, candidates, and elected officials. Vote Smart collects demographic data on candidates in statewide and state legislative races across the country. Additionally, Vote Smart administers a “National Political Awareness Test” which measures candidates’ stances on issues of importance in each state. Vote Smart has collected independent, factual information on over 13,000 candidates and elected officials. Data from Vote Smart were obtained from their web site (www.vote-smart.org).
7. See CAWP’s web site at www.cawp.rutgers.edu for detailed information on the numbers and proportions of women serving in state legislatures over time.

8. Although the relationship between gender and pre- and post-election occupancy of term-limited seats is weak statistically (Yules Q= -.06 for 1998 and -.05 for 2000), the decreases in the number of women serving in these seats, while small, are nevertheless politically significant since they are contrary to the expectations of the literature which suggests a moderate, positive relationship between gender and pre- and post-election occupancy of term-limited seats.
9. In contrast to 1998 when the relationship between gender and pre- and post-election occupancy of term-limited states was strongly positive (Yules Q = .68), in 2000 the relationship was nonexistent (Yules Q = .00).
10. There was no woman candidate in either party's primary for 43.2 percent (N=44) in 1998 and 42.4 percent (N=92) in 2000 of non-term-limited open seats and for 56.9 percent (N=343) in 1998 and 53.5 percent (N=648) in 2000 of incumbent-occupied seats.
11. A similar pattern was apparent for non-term-limited open seats in 2000 but not in 1998. In 2000, women sought 80.0 percent of the non-term-limited open seats (N=25) previously held by women but only 50.0 percent of the seats previously held by men (N=66). In contrast, women were about equally likely to run for open seats previously held by women or by men in 1998; a woman candidate entered the race for 54.5 percent of the non-term-limited open seats (N=11) previously held by women and 57.6 percent of the seats previously held by men (N=33).
12. In California and Florida, women ran for most of the term-limited seats given up by women but met with limited success so that only 40.0 percent in California (N=5) and 36.4 percent in Florida (N=11) of the term-limited women incumbents were replaced by women. In Michigan and South Dakota, women ran for a majority of seats relinquished by term-limited women incumbents, but they were not particularly successful with only 28.6 percent in Michigan (N=7) and none (N=3) of the term-limited women incumbents replaced by other women.
13. It is possible that some potential women candidates chose not to run in 2000 anticipating that, if elected, they might be forced to run for re-election in a different district following redistricting.
14. Despite the lack of a strong pipeline effect from the local level to the state house, an interesting topic for future research would be the question of whether the implementation of term limits at the local level results in an increase in the number of women candidates for state house seats.

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