

Does Running with a Woman Help? Evidence from U.S. Gubernatorial Elections

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A higher percentage of women consistently run as candidates and serve as the lieutenant governor when running on the same ticket with the governor than for any other state elective office. In this article, we provide the first examination of how running with a woman affects vote choice. We conclude that running-mate sex does influence vote choice in gubernatorial elections, even when we take into account a wide range of individual-level and electoral characteristics that are related to voter preference. Further, voter preference for tickets containing women running mates is not consistent, but rather depends upon certain electoral circumstances. Our findings have implications for assessing how voters respond to women candidates and how gender plays into strategic calculations in state-level politics.

The gender dynamics of elections in the United States have changed dramatically since the 1980s. As recently as 20 years ago, women held only two state governorships, two Senate seats, and barely 5% of seats in the House of Representatives. For almost the entirety of U.S.

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history, women candidates were novelties. Today, though the overall number of women serving in these offices is still low, women are regularly running for high-level elective positions, and one woman, Hillary Clinton, is even the early front-runner to receive her party's nomination for president in 2008. Consistent with the rise in numbers of women candidates, recent examinations of voting behavior have found that women tend to perform just as well as men at the ballot box (Dolan 2004; Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton 1997). This is not to say that the current context of elections is gender neutral. Investigators have continued to find myriad ways in which the electoral process is gendered, including candidate recruitment (Sanbonmatsu 2006), voter perceptions that men are better at handling certain policy issues than women and vice versa (Lawless 2004), and campaign strategy (Fox 1997). More generally though, as intolerance of women in the political sphere has declined and women have begun succeeding as candidates for public office, political parties and other electoral gatekeepers have begun to strategize about when it is best to try to capitalize on the new prominence of women candidates.

One of the first, and perhaps most dramatic, examples of the strategic selection of a woman candidate occurred when Walter Mondale chose Geraldine Ferraro to be his running mate on the Democratic presidential ticket in 1984. The hope of the Mondale campaign was that by selecting Ferraro, many independent and moderate female voters would flock to the ticket (Bonk 1988). While no other presidential candidate has opted for the strategy of selecting a woman, this decision has been taking place at the state level with great regularity. In 24 states, the governor and lieutenant governor run on the same ticket. And male gubernatorial candidates have been running with women in high numbers. Of all the elected positions in American politics at the state level, a higher percentage of women run as candidates and serve as the lieutenant governor when running on the same ticket with the governor than for any other elective office (CAWP 2005). In 2002, for example, in races where the governor and lieutenant governor ran on the same ticket, a *majority* of lieutenant gubernatorial candidates were female.

Clearly, the strategy of running with a woman has become widespread practice for male gubernatorial candidates. While it can be difficult to know precisely why specific women have been chosen as running mates, a few examples from recent elections can be instructive.¹ In 1994,

1. The selection of lieutenant governor candidates is typically accomplished via a primary election, at a party convention, or directly by the gubernatorial candidate.

campaign analysts suggested that Republican candidates George Pataki in New York and George Voinovich in Ohio both were compelled to select a female running mate to demonstrate that they were sensitive to the concerns of women.² In Minnesota in 2002, gubernatorial Republican candidate Tim Pawlenty went to the unusual step of selecting state representative Carol Molnau four months before the nominating convention, where running mates are usually announced. Pawlenty asserted that he wanted to “shake up the race” and show he was running an “unconventional campaign.”³ Highly strategic selections of women running mates also appeared to occur in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania in 2002.

What we do not know is whether this strategy is successful. In this article, we directly examine the electoral effects of having a woman as a running mate in gubernatorial elections. This research represents the first examination of the electoral importance of running mates in gubernatorial contests and also of the role gender plays in that process. To assess whether running with a woman candidate has a significant impact on voters, we analyze election exit poll data for gubernatorial elections in selected years between 1990 and 2002. We conclude that running-mate sex does influence vote choice in gubernatorial elections, even when we take into account a wide range of individual-level and electoral characteristics that are related to voter preference. Our research makes two contributions to the literature on gender and elections. First, from a practical perspective, we determine whether the electoral strategy of running with a woman is effective—does it lead to more votes? This will allow us to extend the research on gender and voting to a previously unexamined office. Secondly, and more broadly, our research allows us to gauge whether and to what degree strategic calculations about gender are influencing the outcomes of state elections.

THE ELECTORAL IMPACT OF RUNNING WITH A WOMAN: HYPOTHESES AND EXPECTATIONS

What is the impact on voter choice if a male gubernatorial candidate has a woman lieutenant governor candidate as his running mate? In developing our specific hypotheses to answer this question, we must acknowl-

2. Gail Collins, “Capt. Al Flies Starship GOP,” *Newsday*, May 25, 1994, 6; Mike Curtin, “Voinovich Aims for Appalachia,” *Columbus Dispatch*, January 20, 1994, C2.

3. Dane Smith, “Pawlenty Announces Running Mate; Rep. Carol Molnau from Cologne is his Choice for Lieutenant Governor,” *Star Tribune*, January 15, 2002, B3.

edge that there is no research examining the impact of running-mate selection on gubernatorial vote choice. The literature on vote choice in gubernatorial elections focuses primarily on traditional predictors (e.g., party, ideology, and so forth); economic conditions, both for the individual voter and the entire state; and the national political context (Atkeson and Partin 1995; Carsey and Wright 1998; Svoboda 1995). In light of the lack of research in this area, we must draw upon the women and electoral politics literature and apply it to predict how voters might respond to women lieutenant governor candidates.

Ultimately, we believe that the sex of the running mate will influence voters. The literatures on candidate stereotyping and campaign strategy provide clear indicators that having a woman running mate will be a significant factor. The position of lieutenant governor is an executive office, a type of position for which women have had a harder time gaining acceptance (Adams 1975; Dolan 1997). Yet it is often a position with little political power, one that is clearly subordinate to the position of governor, and therefore may be viewed by reluctant or stereotyping voters as more appropriate for women (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b). Overall, while we expect that running-mate sex will matter, because of the constantly evolving role of gender in electoral politics, the effects should not be static. The effects of a woman running mate will matter with some voters in some electoral environments. Specifically, we develop five hypotheses that draw upon past findings regarding voter reactions to women candidates. Our goal here is to be thorough in combing the literature for reasonable expectations regarding how and when the sex of a running mate will influence vote choice for the candidate at the top of the ticket. Therefore, we do not a priori anticipate that we will find more support for one of the following hypotheses, and the hypotheses themselves are not mutually exclusive. Instead, we propose what we feel is a comprehensive list of possible hypotheses generated from existing literature.

The *Positive Association Hypothesis* suggests that voter perceptions of a male gubernatorial candidate may improve by the selection of a woman running mate. By running with a woman, these candidates demonstrate the quality of inclusiveness, because women are still a small minority in most elective positions. Further, the male gubernatorial candidates may also have transferred to them many of the positive traits and issue competencies that voters associate with women electoral candidates. Gender stereotyping scholars have found that women politicians are identified as more compassionate, willing to compromise, and oriented toward people. Male politicians are stereotyped as more assertive, active, and self-

confident. In terms of issue expertise, female candidates are perceived as better suited than men to address issues such as education, health care, and helping the poor, while male candidates are seen as more competent to address economic and business issues as well as crime (Burrell 1994; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a; Leeper 1991; Rosenwasser and Dean 1989; Rosenwasser and Seale 1988; Sapiro 1981–82). By running with a woman on the ticket, male gubernatorial candidates might become associated with many of the positive traits and issues associated with women, which are particularly well received by voters in state-level politics (Adams 1975; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b). If this assessment holds true, we expect that all male candidates running with a woman lieutenant governor candidate will receive more votes than candidates running with a man.

The *Ideological Balancing Hypothesis* also relies on the stereotyping literature. In terms of belief stereotypes, female candidates are viewed as more liberal than male candidates (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Koch 2000; McDermott 1997, 1998). In fact, Koch (2002) has shown that women candidates are perceived to be more liberal than they actually are. In contrast, to determine the ideological leanings of male candidates, voters rely on the candidate's party affiliation rather than on gender stereotypes of men (Koch 2002). These findings suggest that running with a woman will cause a male gubernatorial candidate to appear more liberal than if he ran with a man. If the Ideological Balancing Hypothesis holds true, we would expect Republican male candidates to benefit from running with a woman. A conservative man (as voters perceive Republican men to be) paired with a liberal woman (as voters perceive all women to be) is a more ideologically balanced Republican ticket than is one with two men (conservative plus conservative, in the voters' minds). Alternatively, we would expect Democratic male candidates to perform worse when they run with women. In this case, voters would perceive both Democratic candidates to be liberal, but since women are perceived to be more liberal than men, a male-female ticket appears more ideologically extreme to voters than would a male-male ticket. In deriving these expectations, we are relying on the well-established supposition that American voters prefer moderate to ideologically extreme candidates. In addition to these overall effects, this hypothesis also suggests that certain voters, particularly ideological moderates, will be influenced more than others. If voters are reacting to a ticket's ideological balance, we would expect moderate voters to be especially drawn to Republican male gubernatorial candidates with women running mates and

deterred from voting for Democratic candidates who have a woman running mate.

The *Appeal to Women Voters Hypothesis* is based on the premise that men select women running mates to help appeal to women voters. The conventional reasons suggested for putting a woman on a ticket are to demonstrate that a male candidate is comfortable with and also in touch with the concerns of female voters. In support of this reasoning, several studies of voters suggest that women voters may prefer women candidates (Dolan 1997, 2004; Plutzer and Zipp 1996; Rosenthal 1995; Sanbonmatsu 2002). If this Appeal to Women Voters Hypothesis holds true, then, we expect that male gubernatorial candidates running with a woman will perform better among women voters than male gubernatorial candidates running with a man.

The previous three hypotheses all assume that the sex of the running mate will influence voters regardless of the electoral context. Yet prior research demonstrates that the role of gender in elections can be conditioned by environmental factors (e.g., Dolan 2004; Herrnson, Lay, and Stokes 2003). Thus, we identify two additional hypotheses that bring into focus two features of the electoral context that we expect may influence the degree to which candidate sex will matter. The first of these, the *Social Acceptance Hypothesis*, anticipates change over the course of the four elections that we study. Since 1990, as women have become more frequent candidates, public acceptance of women candidates has grown tremendously (Thomas and Wilcox 1998). We would expect that this changed environment should lead to increased voter support for gubernatorial tickets containing women in more recent years compared to 1990.

The second contextual hypothesis is the *Issue Environment Hypothesis*. This hypothesis recognizes that not all electoral environments are the same. Specifically, the policy issues that dominate in an electoral contest are not always identical. Some research has shown that women candidates perform better in electoral environments where the most important policies being debated are “women’s issues” (Burrell 1994; Fox 1997; Lawless 2004). As the literature on gender stereotyping discussed earlier finds, voters ascribe different policy expertise to women and men candidates. Therefore, in electoral contexts that are dominated by “women’s issues,” such as education or health care, the advantage of running with a woman candidate should be greater than in environments dominated by “men’s issues,” such as crime or the economy.

While each of these hypotheses identifies the manner in which having a woman running mate will impact vote choice, it is important to

acknowledge the literature suggesting that having a woman running mate could have little or no impact on voter behavior in gubernatorial elections. For one, lieutenant governor candidates have quite low visibility. While there is no survey concerning voter knowledge of lieutenant governor candidates, we know from studies of Congress that voters recall the name of the incumbent less than half the time and challengers less than 20% of the time (Jacobson 2004, 123). It seems reasonable to assume that similar or even lower percentages of voters could recall the name of lieutenant governor candidates. Secondly, assuming that voters do know the name and identity of the lieutenant governor candidate, there is no reason to expect that candidate sex will affect vote choice. Research across the 1990s has found that there is little or no evidence of voter bias for or against women candidates (Burrell 1994; Dolan 2004; Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton 1997). Given the low-information aspect of lieutenant governor candidacies and the lack of gender bias in voting in general elections, we might find that having a woman running mate will neither hurt nor help male gubernatorial candidates with the voters. Our general expectation, though, as we have detailed, is that running-mate sex will influence voters' preferences in gubernatorial contests.

DATA AND STATE CONTEXT

To conduct our analyses, we rely primarily on general election exit polls conducted by the Voter News Service (VNS) and made available by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan. More specifically, we use the national exit poll files for 1990, 1994, 1998 and 2002.⁴ Not all states hold their gubernatorial elections during the same year, of course. Of the 24 states where the governor and lieutenant governor run on the same ticket, 19 hold gubernatorial elections in midterm election years. In contrast, only 4 states (Indiana, Montana, North Dakota, and Utah) hold these elections during presidential election years, while Kentucky's gubernatorial elections occur in odd years. By focusing on the midterm election years from 1990 through 2002, our analyses attempt to capture voters from 19 of the 24

4. Those who watched the electoral returns in 2002 might recall that reports of exit poll results were discontinued early that evening. This was due to a problem with VNS's computer system, not to any problems with the questionnaire or sampling procedures. After the election, the data were analyzed by a panel of academics who "judged the data to be comparable in quality to previous exit polls" (Introduction, Voter News Service 2002 exit poll documentation).

Table 1. Characteristics of states holding gubernatorial elections on midterm election years

	<i>State Party Competition^a</i>	<i>State Political Culture^b</i>	<i>Percentage of Female State Legislators^c</i>
Alaska	Competitive	Individualistic	18.3%
Colorado	Competitive	Moralistic	33.8%
Connecticut	Competitive	Individualistic	26.9%
Florida	Competitive	Traditionalistic	20.5%
Hawaii	Democratic	Individualistic	22.7%
Illinois	Competitive	Individualistic	23.5%
Iowa	Competitive	Moralistic	18.8%
Kansas	Republican-Competitive	Moralistic	29.0%
Maryland	Democratic	Individualistic	27.2%
Massachusetts	Democratic-Competitive	Individualistic	22.1%
Michigan	Competitive	Moralistic	20.3%
Minnesota	Competitive	Moralistic	26.5%
Nebraska	Democratic	Individualistic	22.4%
New Mexico	Competitive	Traditionalistic	22.6%
New York	Competitive	Individualistic	18.0%
Ohio	Republican-Competitive	Individualistic	20.3%
Pennsylvania	Republican-Competitive	Individualistic	11.1%
South Dakota	Republican	Moralistic	18.1%
Wisconsin	Competitive	Moralistic	25.0%

Only states where the governor and lieutenant governor run on the same ticket are included.

^aSource: Austin Ranney's (1976) index of state party competition, as updated for 1990 and more recent years.

^bSource: Daniel Elazar's (1984) state political culture classification.

^cEntries for this column are averages of the percentage of state legislators who were women for 1990, 1994, 1998, and 2002. Source: CAWP 1990, 1994, 1998, and 2002.

states that pair their gubernatorial and lieutenant gubernatorial candidates on the same ballot.⁵

Table 1 presents a list of these 19 states. While it would not be accurate to label these as fully representative of all American states, they do vary along important electoral dimensions. In contests for state offices (both legislative and executive), a majority have competitive two-party systems, as assessed by Austin Ranney's index of state party competition. Four states have either a Democratic dominant system or a competitive-leaning Democratic system, while four other states are competitive-

5. Unfortunately, though, the national exit poll files do not contain respondents from all of these 19 states in each election. Specifically, the 1990 file did not include South Dakota voters, while voters from both Alaska and South Dakota were excluded in 1994. In 1998, New Mexico is not represented, and Alaska and Hawaii were not included on either the 1998 or 2002 files.

leaning Republican or Republican dominant states. Ten of the 19 states have individualistic political cultures, seven are moralistic, and two are characterized as having a traditional culture. A state's political culture is related to the presence of women in electoral politics; those with traditional cultures witness fewer women candidates, and moralistic cultures, with their emphasis on fairness and equality, foster more female candidates (Norrande and Wilcox 1998; Rule 1990). A more direct measure of a state's willingness to elect women is presented in the final column of Table 1: the percentage of a state's legislators that are women (averaged across the four election years of our study). There is considerable range across these states for this measure, with a low of 11.1% for Pennsylvania and a high of 33.8% for Colorado. Further, all geographic regions of the United States are represented in these 19 states, albeit some more heavily than others. In particular, midwestern states are much more common than are southern or southwestern states.

In the analyses that follow, we examined only those contests where the gubernatorial candidate was male. Our hypotheses assume that the candidate on the top of the ticket is male, and so races with female gubernatorial candidates were excluded from all analyses.⁶ For the states for which we have exit poll data available, and when the gubernatorial candidate was male, 42% of the lieutenant gubernatorial candidates in 1990 were female. Female running mates were even more common in more recent years. In fact, a majority of gubernatorial running mates were women in 1994, 1998, and 2002 (57%, 59%, and 53%, respectively).

DOES RUNNING WITH A WOMAN HELP? EXAMINING VOTER PREFERENCES

To begin our empirical examination, we analyze vote choice in gubernatorial contests. Specifically, we estimated a series of logistic regression models that predict two-party support for the Democratic governor/lieutenant governor ticket.⁷ We have included a number of variables

6. Among states in our analyses, there were four female gubernatorial candidates in 1990 (the Democratic candidate in Kansas and the Republicans in Alaska, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania), four in 1994 (the Democrats in Illinois and Iowa and the Republicans in Hawaii and Maryland), three in 1998 (the Democrats in Colorado and Connecticut and the Republican in Maryland), and four in 2002 (the Democrats in Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Michigan).

7. Vote choice for the gubernatorial ticket was assessed by the following exit poll question: "In today's election, did you just vote for: [name of Democratic candidate], [name of Republican candidate], Other: Who?" We recoded responses so that a vote for the Democratic ticket was coded as 1 and a vote for the Republican ticket was coded as 0.

designed to test our hypotheses. Two variables (female Democratic lieutenant governor and female Republican lieutenant governor) assess the overall impact of running-mate sex on gubernatorial vote choice (refer to the Appendix for the coding of variables included in the models). The inclusion of these two variables allows us to test the Positive Association and Ideological Balancing Hypotheses. Support for the Positive Association Hypothesis would be provided if the coefficient for the Democratic lieutenant governor variable is positive and significant or if a negative and significant coefficient for the sex of the Republican lieutenant governor candidate emerges (since the dependent variable is support for the Democratic ticket). Finally, if both of the lieutenant governor variables are significant and negative, the Ideological Balancing Hypothesis would be supported. If voters are basing their choices on ideological balancing, we should see stronger support for Democratic tickets with male versus female running mates since voters tend to perceive women as more liberal than men. In contrast, voters should show more support for Republican tickets with female versus male running mates for this balancing hypothesis to be supported.

To test further the Ideological Balancing Hypothesis, we included interaction terms. Since this hypothesis assumes that moderates will be especially likely to engage in ideological balancing, a dummy variable for moderates was interacted with each of the two female lieutenant governor variables. This hypothesis predicts a decrease in moderate support for Democratic tickets containing women running mates and an increase in moderate support for Republican tickets with women. Keeping in mind that the dependent variable is support for the Democratic ticket, negative coefficients for both of these interaction terms would demonstrate support for the Ideological Balancing Hypothesis. Similarly, interaction terms assess the Appeal to Women Voters Hypothesis. In this case, a female voter dummy variable was interacted with the two lieutenant governor candidate dummies. If tickets with female running mates are more appealing to women voters, the interaction term for the Democratic lieutenant governor candidate will be positive, while the interaction term for the Republican candidate will be negative.

Our models also include control variables, some of which capture elements of the state's electoral context. The first (safe Democratic contest) is a race outcome prediction. Data for this variable were collected from *Congressional Quarterly*, whose staff labels each gubernatorial race as safe or likely for Democrats, safe or likely for Republicans or a toss-up. These predictions are published a few weeks before the election. This

summary measure incorporates a wide range of relevant electoral circumstances, such as whether either of the candidates is an incumbent, the strength of any challengers, the party congruency of candidates and the state, and financial strength of the candidacies. Since vote choice is based not only on voter attitudes but also on the strength of candidates who appear on the ballot, it is important that our models control for the latter.⁸ We also include variables that capture a state's openness to voting for women, under the assumption that voters are currently more likely to vote for women in states that have a tradition of electing women (Hill 1981; but see Hansen 1993). To assess a state's likelihood to elect women, we include the percentage of women serving in the state's legislature. Since we expect the presence of women in the state legislature to be related to voting for female running mates (rather than related to our dependent variable, vote preference for the Democratic ticket), we interacted this variable with the sex of the Democratic and sex of the Republican gubernatorial candidates.⁹

Finally, we include a number of individual-level predictors that other researchers have found to be related to vote choice. In particular, voting theories and past research find that gubernatorial vote preference is influenced by political attitudes, such as party identification, ideology, and

8. Including this variable has an additional benefit. It is possible that women have been selected as running mates for only certain types of contests, such as when the gubernatorial candidate was likely to win. If this were the case, then our analyses of voter preferences could demonstrate that voters prefer female to male running mates, when an alternative explanation would be that voters prefer strong over weak gubernatorial candidates. Thus, controlling for the strength of the gubernatorial candidates is crucial for us to test accurately our hypotheses.

9. These interaction terms are highly correlated with one of their component variables. Specifically, the correlation between the women in state legislature by sex of Democratic running-mate interaction term and sex of Democratic running-mate variable is higher than .9 for each year. Similarly, the Republican running-mate interaction term and sex of Republican running-mate variable are also correlated at .9 or greater. Multicollinearity is thus present in the models, possibly inflating the standard errors (Schroeder, Sjoquist, and Stephan 1986). Yet this problem is less severe when multicollinearity is present between interaction terms and their component variables largely because the standard errors for interaction terms are quite likely to be smaller than are standard errors present in simple additive models. This difference is due to the fact that standard errors for interaction terms are conditional: The effect of an independent variable on the dependent variable depends upon the value of a second independent variable. Therefore, as Robert Friedrich (1982, 803) concludes, "Though a multiplicative term and its constituent variables are often highly correlated, this multicollinearity does not pose problems for the interpretation of the regression results" (also see Jaccard, Turrisi, and Wan 1990). Further, solving for multicollinearity is typically achieved by removing one of the variables that is correlated with another. For us, this would entail removing the women in state legislature by sex of running-mate interaction terms, but in so doing, we risk specification bias and its accompanying biased coefficient estimates (Schroeder, Sjoquist, and Stephan 1986). Given the unfortunate choice of selecting between two potential problems—specification bias or multicollinearity—and given that multicollinearity is less concerning when due to the inclusion of interaction terms, we opted to keep the state legislature interaction terms in our model.

Table 2. Logistic regression models of vote choice for Democratic gubernatorial/lt. gubernatorial candidates

	1990	1994	1998	2002
<u>Electoral context:</u>				
Female Democratic lt. governor	.44 (.87)	4.53 (1.05)***	-6.84 (1.43)***	3.12 (.76)***
Female Republican lt. governor	-.00 (.59)	-.74 (.76)	-4.07 (1.13)***	.35 (1.33)
Safe Democratic contest	.41 (.07)***	.93 (.09)***	.24 (.12)*	.18 (.08)*
Women in state legislature	.04 (.02)+	.03 (.03)	-.29 (.06)***	.07 (.05)
Women state leg. * fem. Dem. LG	-.06 (.05)	-.15 (.05)**	.30 (.06)***	-.13 (.03)***
Women state leg. * fem. Rep. LG	-.03 (.03)	-.01 (.03)	.18 (.05)***	-.03 (.05)
<u>Political attitudes:</u>				
Democratic party identification	1.06 (.06)***	1.27 (.10)***	1.04 (.08)***	1.42 (.07)***
Presidential approval	-.74 (.09)***	1.51 (.17)***	1.49 (.16)***	-1.57 (.13)***
Liberal	.81 (.12)***	.67 (.22)**	1.17 (.22)***	1.37 (.19)***
Moderate	.36 (.11)**	.36 (.24)	.16 (.25)	.79 (.20)***
Moderate*female Dem. LG	.32 (.20)	-.06 (.30)	.15 (.27)	.43 (.29)
Moderate*female Rep. LG	-.04 (.20)	.65 (.29)*	.06 (.27)	-.29 (.29)
<u>Economic attitudes:</u>				
National economic conditions	-.07 (.07)	.10 (.12)	.21 (.12)+	-.54 (.09)***
Personal financial situation	-.07 (.06)	.12 (.11)	-.06 (.10)	.15 (.08)+
<u>Demographics:</u>				
Female	-.16 (.10)	-.10 (.21)	.07 (.23)	-.00 (.17)
Female*female Dem. LG	-.00 (.20)	.04 (.30)	-.23 (.26)	.39 (.28)+^a
Female*female Rep. LG	.38 (.20)+	.25 (.29)	.05 (.26)	-.34 (.28)
Constant	-3.42 (.52)***	-7.61 (.72)***	1.89 (1.54)	-4.00 (1.14)***
Number of cases	2961	1727	2019	2724
% Predicted correctly	73.0%	81.6%	78.9%	84.7%
Modal category	51.4%	63.9%	56.2%	54.1%
Model chi-square	1019.0***	795.0***	786.9***	1950.5***

Entries are logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. See Appendix for the coding of variables. Levels of statistical significance are noted as follows: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$ and + $p < .10$. Significance tests are two tailed unless marked with an ^a. All analyses have been weighted.

presidential approval (Atkeson and Partin 1995; Carsey and Wright 1998; Svoboda 1995). Perceptions of the national economy and of one's personal financial situation influence the vote for governor (Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox 1994; Stein 1990), as do demographics such as sex (Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox 1994). Data for these variables were contained on the exit polls.¹⁰

We estimated models separately for each year, results of which appear in Table 2 (the bolded variables are the ones that directly test the hypotheses; nonbolded variables are controls). Considering first the control vari-

10. For the years of our analyses, VNS used two versions of their exit poll questionnaire, with approximately one-half of respondents receiving each version. The questions of interest to us were not contained on both questionnaire versions for any of the four years, and so each of our models includes roughly one-half of the possible respondents in each state.

ables, the electoral context faced by the voters was related to their vote choices. For all years, in states where the gubernatorial contest was predicted to be safer for the Democratic candidate, more voters supported the Democratic gubernatorial–lieutenant gubernatorial ticket. The presence of women in the state legislature was also related to vote choice, but not always in the anticipated direction. Voters were more likely to support Democratic tickets with female running mates in states with more women in the legislature for a single year (1998). However, voters in states with more women in the legislature were actually less likely to support Democratic tickets with female running mates in 1994 and 2002, and less likely to support such Republican tickets in 1998. While we are not the first to find that the presence of women in a state's legislature can be negatively related to the presence of women in its executive offices (Hansen 1993), we are not certain what accounts for this result. Since the lieutenant governor position is a subordinate one, perhaps voters in states with fewer women in the state legislature (and likely more traditional attitudes toward women's roles) will be more supportive of tickets containing women running mates. Alternatively, it is possible that voter preference for women lieutenant governors (a statewide office) would be related to the presence of women in leadership roles, rather than simply their numbers in the legislature. Just as the likelihood of a state adopting women's health policies is more likely when women serve in leadership positions in the state legislature (Tolbert and Steuernagel 2001), voters could be more attracted to gubernatorial tickets containing women when women serve in higher-profile legislative roles in a state.

Turning to the individual-level control variables, there is much consistency in the results across the four elections. The key political attitudes of party identification, presidential approval, and liberal ideology were related to vote choice in expected directions for all years. For only 1998 and 2002 were economic attitudes significantly related to gubernatorial voting. Preference for Democratic over Republican tickets was more likely for those who felt that the national economy was strong in 1998 and poor in 2002, likely because evaluations of the national economy are tied to presidential evaluations. Finally, voter sex, when controlling for a range of other characteristics, is not related to gubernatorial vote choice for any of the four elections.

More importantly for our research, we find that the sex of the lieutenant gubernatorial candidate does influence voter choice. However, the effect of running-mate sex was not constant across years or parties. In 1990, for neither party was overall voter support for gubernatorial tickets

influenced by the sex of the running mate. In this year, though, we do find one pocket of voter hostility toward female running mates: Women voters were less likely to vote for Republican tickets containing female versus male running mates, in contradiction to the Appeal to Women Voters Hypothesis. Some hostility toward Republican female running mates also existed in 1994, this time among moderate voters. For Democratic tickets, however, men running with women were advantaged this year, as the Positive Association Hypothesis predicts.

Four years later, however, Democratic gubernatorial candidates were disadvantaged when running with women. When the Democratic running mate was female, voters were less supportive of the Democratic ticket than when the running mate was male. Republicans, on the other hand, received more voter support when running with women. This overall pattern does support the Ideological Balancing Hypothesis, although we do not find that the vote choices of moderate voters were influenced by running-mate sex in 1998, as this hypothesis also predicts. Moderates thus do not appear to base their vote choices on whether the gubernatorial ticket is ideologically balanced (in this or any of the other years). Finally, in 2002, we find no evidence that voter preference for Republican tickets was influenced by running-mate sex (among all voters, moderates, or women). Democratic gubernatorial candidates, in contrast, did benefit when running with female running mates among all voters (supporting the Positive Association Hypothesis) and among women voters (as the Appeal to Women Voters Hypothesis predicts).

SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OR FRIENDLY ISSUE ENVIRONMENTS?

At first glance, our results demonstrate some support for the Social Acceptance Hypothesis that voters would be less hostile to tickets containing women in more recent elections. This result is clearest among Republicans, where in 1990 and 1994, subgroups of voters (women and moderates, respectively) clearly preferred Republican tickets with male versus female running mates. This hostility disappears in 1998 (when voters prefer female running mates) and in 2002 (when running-mate sex was not related to vote choice). Among Democrats, the over-time trend demonstrates the irrelevance of running-mate sex in 1990, voter preference for female running mates in 1994, for male running mates in 1998, then again for female running mates in 2002. With the interrup-

tion of 1998, then, the Social Acceptance Hypothesis also appears to have some support for Democratic tickets. Yet these analyses do not allow us to sort out whether decreasing voter hostility to female running mates was due to greater social acceptance of women candidates or due to differences in the issue environments surrounding these elections. The trends we uncovered could have been due to variation, across election contests, in whether women-friendly issues dominated political discourse.

To systematically examine the relationship between voter preference for female running mates and the issue environment, we rely on two different types of data. First, we turn to a measure from the exit polls that assesses which issue voters deemed to be most important to them on each election day. Unfortunately for our purposes, this particular poll question asked voters specifically which issue mattered most in their congressional vote. While the issues at play in gubernatorial elections are often the same as those that dominate congressional elections, the issue environments are not always identical.¹¹ There is, however, no other source of voter-issue salience for gubernatorial elections across all of our states, and so if we wish to know which issues were on voters' minds in the voting booth, we must rely on this exit poll measure. We collapsed voters' responses to this query into two categories: 1) women's issues and 2) men's or neutral issues. We rely on the gender-stereotyping literature to classify the issues; women's issues include health care, education, social security, the environment, and abortion.

The Issue Environment Hypothesis predicts that female running mates will fare better when women's issues dominate the issue space. To test this hypothesis, we compared the percentage of voters who felt a women's issue mattered most for their vote to the sex of the lieutenant gubernatorial candidate on their ballot, separately by party. We then linked this comparison to the results from Table 2, which demonstrate when (and which) voters preferred female over male running mates. If our multivariate results can be explained by the issue environment, in situations where voters showed a preference for female running mates, voter salience of women's issues should be higher when the lieutenant gubernatorial candidate was female. So, for example, our Table 2 results demonstrated that voters preferred tickets with female Democratic running mates in 1994 (to ease interpretation, Table 2 results are summarized in Table 3). If women running mates were advantaged by the issue environment in

11. David E. Rosenbaum, "The 1998 Elections: The Nation—Governors," *New York Times*, November 4, 1998, B5.

Table 3. Analysis of issue environment

	<i>Voter Preferences: Sex of Lt. Gov.^a</i>	<i>Salience of Women's Issues (Voter Data)^b</i>		<i>Salience of Women's Issues (Media Data)^c</i>	
		<i>Male Lt. Gov.</i>	<i>Female Lt. Gov.</i>	<i>Male Lt. Gov.</i>	<i>Female Lt. Gov.</i>
<u>1990:</u>					
Democrats	Neither	39.7%	38.5%	Data not	Data not
Republicans	Neither	38.0% **	41.4% **	available	available
(women only)	(Men)	(44.8%)	(47.6%)		
<u>1994:</u>					
Democrats	Women	36.4%	38.3%	26.0%	42.0%
Republicans	Neither	37.8%	36.9%	38.2%	26.6%
(moderates only)	(Men)	(39.0%)	(40.5%)		
<u>1998:</u>					
Democrats	Men	44.4%	42.6%	38.1%	45.9%
Republicans	Women	44.7%	42.3%	32.1%+ ^d	52.1%+ ^d
<u>2002:</u>					
Democrats	Women	39.7%+	43.2%+	34.2%	26.0%
(women only)	(Women)	(50.2%)	(47.6%)		
Republicans	Neither	47.9% ***	39.4% ***	36.6%	25.5%

^aEntries in this column summarize the results from Table 2.

^bEntries in these columns represent the percentage of voters who selected a women's issue as the most important issue for the electoral cycle. The cases are voters. Statistical significance tests are based upon chi-square tests examining the relationship between issue salience (women's versus men's/neutral issues) and sex of the lieutenant gubernatorial candidate, conducted separately by table row.

^cEntries in these columns represent the percentage of all issues mentioned in news coverage of a state's gubernatorial election outcome that were women's issues. The cases are states. Statistical significance tests are based upon t-tests that compare means of women's issue salience by sex of the lieutenant gubernatorial candidate, conducted separately by table row.

Levels of statistical significance are noted as follows: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$ and + $p < .10$. Significance tests are two tailed unless marked with a ^d.

this year, we would see a higher salience of women's issues among voters who were faced with a ticket containing a female running mate. A glance at the middle two columns of Table 3 does not demonstrate such a difference; the salience of women's issues did not differ by Democratic running-mate sex for 1994. Of the other three situations when voters preferred female running mates (Republican tickets in 1998, Democratic tickets in 2002, and women voters' support for Democratic tickets in 2002), in only one do we find support for the Issue Environment Hypoth-

esis. In 2002, 43.2% of voters in states where the Democratic running mate was female ranked women's issues as mattering most to their vote, whereas only 39.7% of voters faced with a male Democratic running mate felt women's issues were most important to their vote.

A corollary to this hypothesis is that female running mates should be disadvantaged when voters are especially unconcerned with women's issues. Yet in the three situations where we uncovered voter hostility toward female candidates (women voters choosing among Republican tickets in 1990, moderate voters choosing among Republican tickets in 1994, and all voters choosing among Democrats in 1998), the salience of women's issues in voters' minds did not differ by running-mate sex. Thus, when using voter attitudes to test the Issue Environment Hypothesis, we find little support that it explains why voters prefer women running mates in some years rather than others.

Our second measure of the degree to which women's issues existed in the political discourse surrounding gubernatorial elections comes from news accounts of these elections. Specifically, we examined newspaper stories about gubernatorial election outcomes that were printed the day after election day in each state contained in our multivariate analyses. In the rare case when there were no stories on the day after election day, we read stories that were published in the days leading up to the election. News articles were obtained via a search of the Lexis-Nexis archive. This search resulted in sufficient data for all years except 1990, where we could not locate any stories about the gubernatorial elections in eight of the states in our analysis (largely because many newspapers are not archived in Lexis-Nexis until after 1990).

To determine the salience of women's issues in each state's gubernatorial election, we read the news stories for each year and calculated the percentage of all issues mentioned in the stories that were women's issues. We then compared the salience of women's issues in the state to the sex of the Democratic and Republican lieutenant gubernatorial candidates. Results of this analysis appear in the final columns of Table 3. The cases for these data are states, not voters, and so we are able to tabulate results only for the overall effect of running-mate sex on voter choice and cannot present results for specific types of voters. Using the same analytical method we employed with the voter data, we find little support for the Issue Environment Hypothesis. For the three situations when our regression analyses demonstrate voter preference for women running mates, in only one was the mention of women's issues in the gubernatorial election higher for female versus male running mates (among

Republican tickets in 1998).¹² Further, for the one situation where voters preferred male running mates, the prevalence of women's issues in the election discourse did not differ by running-mate sex.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Ultimately, our research provides the first empirical assessment of whether seeking office with a woman running mate influences a candidate's electoral prospects. Our results clearly indicate that the selection of a woman running mate does indeed impact vote choice in gubernatorial elections. Even when controlling for many key individual voter characteristics and electoral circumstances, gubernatorial vote choice was influenced by the sex of the lieutenant governor candidates in each of the four elections we examined. Above and beyond the normal predictors of the vote in these contests, the choice of running mate, at least in terms of his or her sex, matters. For example, voters clearly preferred viable candidates, such as those with the advantages of incumbency. Yet in some situations, vote selections were also influenced by whether a woman was on the ticket.

Among our three specific hypotheses predicting that running with a woman would generally help male gubernatorial candidates, we find some support for each. The strongest support appears for the Positive Association Hypothesis, in that this prediction is supported in two different election cycles (1994 and 2002) when voters overall preferred Democratic tickets with female versus male running mates. In contrast, support for the Appeal to Women Voters Hypothesis was mixed but generally not very strong. Female voters were actually less likely to vote for tickets containing women running mates in 1990. In 2002, however, women voters showed a preference for female running mates. This could signal an overtime change, with women being more likely to vote for tickets containing women now compared to in the past. Analyses of future election cycles will be necessary to determine whether this is indeed a trend.

We uncovered support for the Ideological Balancing Hypothesis in 1998, when voters overall preferred Republican tickets with female running mates and Democratic tickets with male running mates. Why would ideological balancing have occurred only for this year? In retrospect, we

12. The difference in mean percentages for some of these comparisons is large, but fails to reach statistical significance for two reasons. First, the number of cases is low (under 10) for each comparison group. Second, the variation within many of these groups is quite large.

believe that broader factors explain this result. Gubernatorial election results are often influenced by national trends, as was the case for the years of our analysis. The “story” of 1994 was voter preference for Republicans, both in Congress and the states, while bleak economic conditions influenced gubernatorial voting in 2002 and, to a lesser extent, 1990.¹³ In 1998 though, voters across the United States demonstrated a preference for moderate candidates.¹⁴ Journalists in particular singled out specific Republican gubernatorial candidates who benefited from the voters’ centrist mood: Tom Ridge (PA), George Pataki (NY), John Rowland (CT), and Paul Cellucci (MA)—the final three of whom ran with female running mates. Given Bill Clinton’s success two years earlier in winning reelection by running as a centrist, and given the fact that the 1998 elections occurred under the cloud of much national partisan fighting over the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, it is not surprising that voters turned to moderate gubernatorial tickets in this year.

Another conclusion from our research is that the effect of running-mate sex on gubernatorial vote choice is not static, but rather depends upon the electoral context. Among the many contextual factors that could influence voter preferences, our results most consistently demonstrate that the increasing visibility of female politicians has translated into voter support for tickets containing women running mates. Further, a women-friendly issue environment did contribute occasionally, but not always, to voters selecting tickets containing women. However, women running mates were not disadvantaged when the issue environment was instead dominated by men’s issues. Finally, national-level trends, such as voter moods, can influence whether running-mate sex will matter for voters in the polling booth. Thus, our primary conclusion here, and it is a significant one, is that the electoral context interacts with voter attitudes in important ways in determining when voters will turn to tickets containing female running mates.

Finally, our results show the importance gender continues to play in electoral politics at the state level. As with many electoral decisions, the selection of a running mate is almost entirely a strategic decision whereby political actors are looking for some sort of campaign advan-

13. Maureen Groppe and Jennifer Babson, “Republican Surge Gives Party Bigger Share of Statehouses,” *CQ Weekly*, November 12, 1994, 3247; Jonathan Allen and Rebecca Adams, “States’ Priorities Vs. Funds,” *CQ Weekly*, November 9, 2002, 2945; Holly Idelson, “Governors Find Re-election a Trickerier Proposition,” *CQ Weekly*, November 10, 1990, 3838.

14. Alan Greenblatt with Karen Foerstel and Geoff Earle, “For GOP, a Few Points of Light,” *CQ Weekly*, November 7, 1998, 2999; Geoff Earle, “Governors: States of Suspense,” *CQ Weekly*, October 24, 1998, 2876.

tage. We conclude that the seemingly innocuous and low-profile choice of a female rather than a male gubernatorial running mate does have consequences in the voting booth. Further, we find that the preference for women running mates is more common among all voters, rather than only subsets of voters (such as women or moderates), suggesting that the importance of selecting a female running mate is widespread across the electorate. Campaign strategists probably assume this to be true, as they are increasingly utilizing gender considerations to appeal to voters. In response, voters appear to be reacting to these cues.

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Appendix: Description and Coding of Variables

Electoral Context Variables

Female Democratic/Republican Lt. Governor: 0 if candidate is male, 1 if female.

Safe Democratic Contest: *Congressional Quarterly's* prediction of gubernatorial race outcome; 1 = safe Republican, 2 = likely Republican, 3 = toss-up, 4 = likely Democratic, 5 = safe Democratic

Women in State Legislature: percentage of a state's legislators that are female.

Exit Poll Questionnaire Items (including full question wording)

Democratic Party Identification: "No matter how you voted today, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, Independent, Something else?" Recoded as 1 = Republican, 2 = Independent, 3 = Democrat.

Presidential Approval: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way George Bush [1990]/ Bill Clinton [1994, 1998]/George W. Bush [2002] is handling his job as president?" Recoded as 0 = disapprove, 1 = approve.

Liberal and Moderate: "On most political matters, do you consider yourself liberal, moderate, conservative?" Liberal: 1 = liberal, 0 = other. Moderate: 1 = moderate, 0 = other.

National Economic Conditions: "Do you think the condition of the nation's economy is excellent, good, not so good, poor?" Recoded as 1 = poor, 2 = not so good, 3 = good, 4 = excellent.

Personal Financial Situation: "Compared to two years ago, is your family's financial situation better today, worse today, about the same?" Recoded as 1 = worse today, 2 = about the same, 3 = better today.

Female: "Are you male, female?" Recoded as 0 = male, 1 = female.