

Gubernatorial Elections and Coattail Effects of Women Candidates

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Abstract: Much existing research on coattail effects focuses on the president's ability to attract votes for congressional candidates of the same party. However, in addition to candidates' parties being noted on the ballot, voters can often infer candidate gender, meaning it could also influence voter perceptions of candidates. In this paper, we examine whether coattail effects exist not just at the party-level, but also with respect to gender. Using electoral data from gubernatorial and state legislative races from 2010 and 2014, we examine the degree to which women candidates for governor attract votes for female candidates for state legislative races down-ballot. We find that women state legislative candidates can benefit from having a woman at the top of the ticket, but the context and frequency of this benefit differs by party.

Keywords: coattails; women candidates; gubernatorial elections; state legislative elections

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When Hillary Clinton won the Democratic nomination for president in 2016, pundits questioned whether she might be able to help women candidates in down-ballot Senate races in places like Arizona, Illinois, Nevada, and Pennsylvania (Hohmann 2016). Even though Clinton did not win the presidency, her presence on the ballot may have affected vote totals of women candidates in down-ballot races. Although gender and politics research has answered many questions regarding women's position in politics, there is little research exploring how gender functions as a coattail effect. Does gender operate similarly to party in terms of connecting the electoral success of down-ballot candidates to candidates at the top of the ticket?

In this paper, we consider whether women gubernatorial candidates in 2010 and 2014 increased vote totals for women candidates in state legislative races. In contrast to the federal level, there are both Democratic and Republican women running for governor in these years, allowing us to analyze differential effects for parties with respect to gender coattails. We ultimately find that gender coattails do affect women state legislative candidates' success, but that the effects differ by party. Although legislative candidates of both parties benefit from partisan coattails (increased voter support for the state legislative candidates when the gubernatorial candidate is of the same political party), the added effect of gender coattails (both the gubernatorial and within-party state legislative candidate being women) varies depending on the strength of partisan coattails in a district² and by party.

Gender coattails affect Republican women running for state legislature in two types of districts: those with extremely low or extremely high support for the Republican gubernatorial

² Throughout the paper, when we refer just to "coattail effects" we are referring to the party-based coattails previous literature explores. When we talk about the added effect of gender, we refer specifically to "gender coattails". Given that prior research defines party coattails as the effect of two within-party candidates on the same ballot, we use the term gender coattails to denote the effect of two within-party women on the same ballot. In prior research, party coattail effects have been positive, negative, or even reversed. Our use of the term "gender coattail" is similarly flexible and refers only to within-party candidates' gender.

candidate. Democratic women running for state legislature benefit from gender coattails but only in districts where partisan coattails are weak due to low levels of support for the Democratic gubernatorial candidate. We attribute these findings to the parties' differential records of running women candidates and related differences in gender-based decision-making on the part of voters. For both Democrats and Republicans, the effect of gender coattails is subsumed by other factors when district-level support for a gubernatorial candidate falls between 40 and 70 percent of the two-party vote total. We conclude that gender coattails matter, and affect women's candidacies differently by party, but do so only in non-competitive districts. In the following sections, we discuss the various literatures that we connect through this research, our data and methodology, results from multivariate analysis, and directions for future research.

Effects of Party Coattails

The first of the three main bodies of literature this project addresses is that related to the influence and impact of the "coattail effect." This effect, widely known as the tendency for a successful presidential candidate to sweep other members of their party into down-ballot congressional offices, has been affirmed by existing scholarship. For example, for every additional percentage point a presidential candidate receives in their vote share there is a corresponding one-third of a percentage point rise in the party's congressional vote share, a bump that adds between two and three more seats to the party's congressional total each election cycle (Campbell 1991). More recently, it has been demonstrated that presidential coattails contribute to same-party congressional successes to a degree capable of overshadowing the opposing force of anticipatory balancing against the executive's party (Erikson 2016). Coattails are magnified when there is higher voter turnout – e.g., during presidential election years – and dampened when there is lower turnout, such as during midterm elections (Godbout 2013).

Coattail effects are not limited to presidential and down-ballot congressional races, however, as coattails are also observed at the state level. Gubernatorial elections, particularly competitive races and those not featuring an incumbent, influence state legislative elections to a significant degree even when variables such as campaign expenditures, the party's past electoral performance, and localized conditions are accounted for (Hogan 2005). Beyond coattail effects between gubernatorial and state legislative candidates, existing research also finds that increases in a gubernatorial candidate's vote share lead to increases for that party's candidates for secretary of state and attorney general (Meredith 2013).

Additional literature explores the possibility of "reverse coattails," a case where down-ballot candidates might increase vote shares for a co-partisan candidate running for a higher office. Madariaga and Ozen (2015) claim that while presidential coattails had no effect on gubernatorial candidates, gubernatorial vote shares actually influenced the presidential candidate's vote share. This empirical finding comports with a theoretical experiment, arguing that reverse coattails should exist in much the same way as the conventional top-down theory (Zudenkova 2011). Brookman (2009), however, concludes that popular congressional candidates do not increase their party's presidential vote share. Meredith's (2013) study also finds that the results of secretary of state and attorney general elections do not affect the results of gubernatorial elections, providing another piece of evidence against the reverse coattail theory. Nearly all of the existing research on coattail effects focuses on the effect of party despite the fact that a rich literature demonstrates that candidates' descriptive identities, like gender, also influence voter support. Work on how gender influences election outcomes can be divided into two distinct stages of a candidacy: deciding to run for office and actually winning office.

When do women run for office?

Before voters can support a woman's candidacy, she must decide to run for office in the first place. Women are generally less likely than men to emerge as candidates (Fox and Lawless 2004; Lawless 2015) and much of the scholarship on the emergence of women candidates deals with gender-based stereotypes faced by women candidates. Fox and Oxley (2003) find that women are significantly less likely to run for offices that have stereotypically been labelled as masculine in nature, a finding that meaningfully narrows the available range of contests a woman may decide to enter. Both media and voters have been found to stereotype women candidates (Dolan 2010; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008; Lawless 2008) with mixed effects on women's electoral chances. Although the effect of stereotyping on women's electoral success has not been found to be uniformly negative (Dolan and Lynch 2016; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009) some research suggests that stereotypes can place women candidates at a disadvantage (Schneider and Bos 2014). Other research has shown that while voters stereotype women candidates in the abstract, they do not actually do so in races featuring real candidates (Dolan and Lynch 2014).

Institutional factors also impact the likelihood of women running for electoral office. Specifically, women face a geographic bias that is not experienced by men, meaning that women are less likely to run for office in districts that are perceived to be uncondusive to women in positions of power (Palmer and Simon 2008). Women also face more primary competition than do men (Lawless and Pearson 2008) and tend to enter races where their prospects for victory are more tenuous and where their entry serves to challenge an incumbent (Windett 2014). Moreover, other scholars argue that the reason women are less likely than men to run is that they are less likely to be recruited by political party organizations and/or leaders (Baker 2015; Fox and Lawless 2004; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Sanbonmatsu 2006). Looking specifically at what factors affect whether women run for statewide executive office, we see that women are more likely to

run in states where there is a larger pool of eligible women candidates and where the recruiting and gatekeeping processes favor women (Oxley and Fox 2004). Women are also more likely to enter (and succeed) in these contests in states with a history of gender equity, liberal views on the role of women, and history of women winning electoral office (Windett 2011). Overall, research shows that women run less frequently for electoral office, particularly at the executive level, than do men.

When do women win?

In addition to considering when women run for political office, we consider the circumstances under which women are successful in winning elections. Women are underrepresented in both the U.S. Congress, where nearly 24 percent of seats are currently held by women as well as in state legislatures where nearly 29 percent of seats are held by women (Center for American Women and Politics 2019). At the state level, states that ratified the Equal Rights Amendment (and did not rescind that ratification later) are more likely to have higher levels of women's representation in their state legislatures (Crowley 2006). With respect to district-level factors, scholars have found that districts with higher percentages of Democratic voters tend to elect women candidates more frequently (Nechemias 1987) as do districts with high levels of college-educated voters (Camobreco and Barnello 2003) and those where higher percentages of voters are professionally employed and have higher income levels (Esterchild 2010). Importantly, Hogan (2010) notes that while higher levels of education among voters are likely to produce higher vote shares for women legislative candidates, those increases are not enough to influence the chances of electoral victory.

Beyond the state legislative level, predictors of women's success as candidates include levels of urbanicity (Stiles and Schwab 2009), Democratic partisanship (Kellogg et al 2017;

Ondercin and Welch 2009), as well as moralistic state political culture and liberal ideology (Scola 2013), although some of these effects differ by the candidate's race and ethnicity. At the candidate level, while women typically try to avoid running on stereotypically feminine issues, previous scholarship demonstrates that focusing on these issues can benefit women candidates (Herrnson et al 2003; Windett 2014). Prior work provides an important understanding of the political landscape through the lens of party coattails or of gender. However, there is little scholarship that brings together these two factors despite the fact that they should, theoretically, be linked as voters make decisions through both partisan and gendered lenses.

Examining Gender Coattails

Of the limited work dedicated to the subject of how women affect each other's chances of electoral success, Broockman's 2014 study finds that women's voter turnout in a state legislative race had no statistical significance on the likelihood of electing additional women in other elections. Furthermore, a woman's success in one district does not meaningfully affect the chance of a woman winning in a nearby district in a later election (Broockman 2014). While both of these cases are akin to gender coattail effects, they are substantively different given that the study focuses on the election of women in different districts and subsequent elections.

Research at the city level has found a possible "delayed coattails effect" whereby the election of a woman can help future women replicate that success provided that the initial woman was in a politically powerful and highly visible office (MacManus 1981). Meanwhile, Ladam et al. (2018) find that electing a woman governor positively affects whether women candidates run for state legislative seats, an effect that holds for both parties although it is stronger for candidates of the governor's party. Again, this is similar to, but conceptually distinct from, measuring gender coattail effects. Our project seeks to expand on the previously-

mentioned literature by exploring the degree to which women executive candidates attract votes for women state legislative candidates *on the same ballot* and whether this effect differs by party. In doing so, we aim to fill gaps in current scholarship by combining the study of coattail effects with the study of women's electoral success at the gubernatorial and state legislative levels.

Using experimental data pertaining to a fictitious election, Ditonto and Andersen (2018) examine whether the number of women on a ballot affects the willingness of voters to support women candidates. They test this possibility in multiple analyses, finding that “women running for Congress, in particular, seem to be disadvantaged and subject to more negative evaluations when other women are simultaneously running for higher office” (Ditonto and Andersen 2018, 277). They argue that this finding should extend to other types of races, including state legislative races where multiple women appear on the same ballot. Indeed, the negative effect observed by Ditonto and Andersen (2018) could be stronger for women state legislative candidates as gender stereotypes can become more salient in low-information elections like those for state legislature (Ditonto 2017; Ditonto et al. 2014; McDermott 1997).

Our paper extends Ditonto and Andersen's (2018) research using observational data at the gubernatorial and state legislative district levels in 2010 and 2014.³ As Ditonto and Andersen (2018) find, it is reasonable to assume that a woman running for office will be affected by the presence of other women on the same ballot, particularly if those women share her party identification. Although party has a substantial effect on voters' decision-making, gender effects have been observed in a range of electoral scenarios and may matter alongside party when voters

³ We focus on gubernatorial and state legislative elections in these years for two reasons. First, in keeping with existing coattail literature we focus on the relationship between top-of-ticket executives and down-ballot legislators. Adding additional races down-ballot would complicate the analysis. Second, we excluded presidential election years because during those contests, the race at the top of the ticket is different than during midterm election years. In particular, we needed to exclude 2016 in this analysis because of Hillary Clinton's presence as the Democratic Party nominee in the presidential contest.

are presented with multiple within-party women candidates. Thus, we argue that gender and party function more as a “both/and” effect on voter decision-making rather than an “either/or”. Based on our reading of the theories of coattails and gender and politics literature, we hold several specific expectations for how candidate gender affects voter support in state legislative races.

Hypothesis 1: Based on Ditonto and Andersen’s (2018) findings using experimental data, as well as prior research demonstrating that gender stereotypes can affect support for women candidates, we expect gender coattails to negatively affect women of both parties running for state legislative office in 2010 and 2014. That is, we expect that the presence of a woman candidate for governor will decrease support for within-party women running for state legislative office down-ballot. Ditonto and Andersen (2018) attribute this finding in experimental settings to a ceiling effect where voters may support one woman for office but hesitate to support multiple women running on the same ballot.

Hypothesis 2: Although negative effects of gender coattails are expected for candidates of both parties, we anticipate that Republican women will be *more* negatively affected than will Democratic women. This expectation is based on research showing that although party congruity often diminishes or eliminates gender stereotyping (Dolan 2014; Hayes 2005, 2010) voters stereotype women as more liberal and as more competent on issues that are often important to Democratic voters such as education or women’s health (Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009). Thus, if gender coattails matter within party, we expect that Republican women will be more disadvantaged by the presence of other women on the ballot than will Democratic women. However, we expect these effects to emerge only under specific electoral conditions.

Hypothesis 3: Due to the highly-partisan nature of today’s political environment (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008) we believe that gender coattails will only matter in non-competitive districts – that is, where the gubernatorial candidate has either high or low levels of support. In competitive districts, which we define as districts where gubernatorial support falls roughly between 40-60 percent, we expect that party will rule the day. In other words, we expect that voters in these districts will have their own partisanship and the partisanship of candidates at the forefront of their minds and will largely use that heuristic when casting their ballots. In non-competitive districts, where one party is virtually guaranteed to win, there is more room for candidate identities other than party to be influential. It is in these contexts that we expect to see gender coattail effects.

We offer these hypotheses with the caveat that much of the research on gender stereotyping and voter support for women candidates is mixed, producing different results depending on whether the study is based on experimental, survey, or observed electoral data. While there is evidence to support our expectations that women state legislative candidates will not benefit from women running at the top of the ticket, null effects would also be in keeping with prior studies of women candidates (Brooks 2013; Dolan 2014; Dolan and Lynch 2016). However, as Ditonto and Andersen (2018) point out, research on how gender matters when multiple women appear on the ballot in concurrent, “real world” elections is extremely limited, making our research among the first to test how gender coattails affect voter support for women candidates using observed electoral data.

Data and Methodology

In order to assess the degree to which women gubernatorial candidates affect the electoral chances of women in down-ballot state legislative races, we created a dataset at the state-

legislative district level that includes both the two-party state legislative and gubernatorial vote totals within each district. In order for us to include states in our dataset, we needed to have access to gubernatorial vote totals at the state-legislative district level. Not all states provide these data so we were unable to include all states that held gubernatorial elections in the years of interest in our study,⁴ but we do include 28 out of 37 states that held gubernatorial elections in 2010 and 26 out of 36 states that held gubernatorial elections in 2014. Appendix Table 1 contains a list of all states included in the study, as well as the names, political parties, and genders of the gubernatorial candidates. It also includes a footnote indicating the states that are not included in our study.⁵ Despite the fact that our list of states is a sample, and not the population, of the states that held gubernatorial elections in 2010 and 2014, we are confident in its representativeness of the broader electoral context in those years. The states included in our analysis are from all regions of the country and contain states where women Democrats and Republicans were at the top of the ticket.

Within the 54 included states (across two years), state legislative districts were included in the dataset if and only if the district was contested during the general election by one Democratic and one Republican candidate.⁶ Overall, our dataset contains 3,433 state legislative districts – 1,955 in 2010 and 1,478 in 2014.⁷ We separate our analysis by party in order to assess the within-party effect of gender coattails. Our dependent variable is the percentage of the two-

⁴ Because U.S. elections are administered at the county level and many state legislative districts cross county boundaries, election results are not always tabulated at the state legislative level. Some states provide precinct-level data that can be aggregated to the state-legislative level, but many states do not indicate which state legislative district each precinct is in. In those states, gubernatorial vote totals are unable to be aggregated into state legislative districts, and therefore are excluded from our analysis.

⁵ To determine candidate gender, we looked at candidate websites, Facebook pages, Ballotpedia and media articles for references to gender pronouns. There were no cases of non-binary gender identity among candidates.

⁶ This means that multi-member districts are excluded from our analysis, as are those districts that were uncontested or contested by one major-party candidate and a minor-party candidate.

⁷ Even had we been able to include the two additional states discussed above (FL in 2010 and TX in 2014), we would have gained just 126 cases overall: 72 in 2010 and 54 in 2014.

party vote won by a Democratic (or Republican) state legislative candidate. Our key independent variable is an interaction between the two-party vote share of the Democratic (or Republican) gubernatorial candidate and a binary indicator of whether both the legislative and gubernatorial candidates of the same party were women.

Based on research on women's election to state electoral office and state-level coattails (Hogan 2005, 2010; Scola 2013) we control for the following state-level variables in our multivariate analysis using data from the prior year closest to the election year in consideration: legislative professionalism, percentage of women in the state legislature, ideology of state citizenry, and state political culture. We control for state legislative district-level factors such as whether the state legislative seat is in the upper or lower house, the percentage of each state legislative district comprised of urban residents, Hispanics, African Americans, residents with an education level of "some college or more", percent of women working in management positions, and residents with household incomes of \$50,000 or more.⁸ Finally, we control for candidate-level factors including whether the candidate is an incumbent and their campaign contributions. These covariates' ranges, means, and data sources are included in Table 1 below.

[Table 1 here]

⁸ Since demographics from the U.S. Census pertaining to education, income, and occupation were not tabulated at the state legislative district level, we relied on data at the census tract level and geographic linking files between census tracts and state legislative districts (https://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/sld_state.html). When census tracts were split between districts, we assumed an even distribution of individuals across districts and subdivided tracts accordingly. In other words, if the census tract contained 1000 households, 500 of which earned over \$50,000 per year and the tract was split between 2 state legislative districts, we assumed that there were 500 households, 250 of which earned over \$50,000 per year in each state legislative district. When demographic information was missing, we used state or, where available, county-wide averages of those demographic characteristics.

Descriptive Statistics: Candidacies by gender and party

There were clear differences between the Democratic and Republican parties in terms of the number of women running for state legislative seats. In both 2010 and 2014, the Democratic Party had more women candidates running. In 2010, there were 488 state legislative races where a Democratic woman faced off against a Republican man, while 251 Republican women competed against Democratic men for state legislative seats. Notably, there were only 138 state legislative contests (around seven percent of all 2010 races in our sample) where a woman Republican ran against a woman Democrat. In 2014, there were only 114 state legislative races (eight percent of the total) where women Democratic and Republican candidates faced off. As in 2010, in 2014 it was more common for women Democrats to face off against Republican men in races for state legislature than for women Republicans to challenge Democratic men. Table 2 displays these results for each of the two election cycles in our sample.

[Table 2 here]

In addition to men being more likely than women to compete in state legislative elections, men also comprised the majority of gubernatorial candidates in both 2010 and 2014. Unlike in state legislative elections, however, women Republican candidates for governor were nearly as common as women Democratic gubernatorial candidates. Of the 27 states included in the 2010 sample, five (AZ, CA, NM, OK and SC) had women Republicans running for governor compared to four states (ME, NM, OK, and WY) with women Democratic gubernatorial candidates. Notably, two states in 2010 - New Mexico and Oklahoma - had women gubernatorial candidates from both major parties competing against each other. In both of these races, the Republican gubernatorial candidate prevailed: in Oklahoma, Republican Mary Fallin was elected over Democrat Jari Askins, while in New Mexico, Republican Susana Martinez defeated

Democrat Diane Denish. In 2010, four of the five Republican women who ran were elected governor (AZ, NM, OK, SC) while no Democratic women candidates successfully captured the governorship.

Of the 26 states included in the sample from 2014, five (MA, NH, RI, SD, WI) had women Democratic gubernatorial candidates while only three (NM, OK, SC) had Republican women gubernatorial candidates. All three Republican women were incumbents in 2014 and won their re-election bids for governor while only two (NH, RI) out of the five states elected women Democratic governors. Although more Democratic women ran for governor in the combined years of 2010 and 2014, the Republican women who did mount gubernatorial bids were more successful, winning 88 percent of the races in which they ran compared to only a 20 percent win rate for Democratic women. In terms of governorships, Republican women in this sample seem to support the finding that when women run, women win (Lawless and Fox 2010) although the same cannot be said for Democrats.

Despite the fact that there were more women Democrats than women Republicans running for state legislative races in the two years of our data, women Republicans and Democrats running for the state legislature had approximately the same likelihood of being on the ballot with a woman gubernatorial candidate of their same political party. In the aggregate, women Democratic and Republican state legislative candidates had roughly equal chances of experiencing gender coattails. However, as we discuss later in the paper, Democratic women experienced gender coattails in a larger variety of electoral contexts than did Republican women.

Multivariate Analysis: Effect of gender coattails on vote share

To measure the effect of gender coattails on legislative candidate vote share, we interact our measure of party coattails (the proportion of the two-party vote for the gubernatorial

candidate of the same party as the legislative candidate) with a binary measure of whether both the legislative *and* gubernatorial candidates of the same party were women⁹. As mentioned previously, we also control for a number of other state-, district-, and candidate-level factors that have been shown to affect state legislative vote share, especially for woman candidates. We separate our analyses by party to isolate the within-party effects of gender coattails and because we have different expectations about the impact of coattails based on political party. Table 3 contains the coefficient estimates from an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression testing the effects of gender and party coattails on legislative candidates' two-party vote share.

[Table 3 here]

Because we include in our models the interaction term (Gov. Vote*Both Candidates Women), the coefficient for *Gubernatorial Vote Share* is the effect of support for the gubernatorial candidate on support for the legislative candidate when *Both Candidates Women* equals zero. These are districts where the state legislative candidate is a man and the gubernatorial candidate is a woman, the state legislative candidate is a woman and the gubernatorial candidate is a man, or both the gubernatorial and state legislative candidates are men. In our sample, gubernatorial vote share has a positive and significant effect for both Democrats and Republicans when both candidates *are not* women. Although the substantive change is small (about a half percentage point increase in vote share), Democratic and Republican candidates experience the same benefit from a party coattail in races where both candidates are not women. The direct effect of the interaction's second composite term, *Both Candidates Women*, is the effect of gender coattails on support for the legislative candidate when

⁹ As a robustness check, we ran our models with an ordinal measure for gender coattails where 0 = both candidates men, 1 = one candidate man and one candidate woman, 2 = both candidates women. We found the same results with the ordinal measure as with the binary measure of 1 = both candidates women, 0 otherwise and report the latter results for ease of interpretation.

support for the within-party gubernatorial candidate equals zero. As there were no cases in our dataset when support for a gubernatorial candidate equaled zero, we turn to how the interaction between party and gender coattails shapes support for state legislative candidates.

The aggregate interactive effect of party and gender coattails for Democrats is significant and negative suggesting a reductive effect of gender coattails for Democratic women. In contrast, for Republicans the positive and significant sign on the interaction term suggests that Republican women running down ballot enjoy an added benefit when their within-party gubernatorial candidate is also a woman. Although the interaction terms provide support for Hypothesis 2 that the effects of gender coattails will differ by party, to fully test Hypothesis 3 we must examine the effect of gender coattails at varying levels of party coattail strength. Plotting the effect of gender coattails over the party coattail measure's natural range provides a more accurate picture of an interactive relationship between two variables than does an interaction term coefficient (Brambor et al. 2006). Figures 1 and 2 graph the average marginal effect of gender coattails (*Both Candidates Women = 1*) across the range of the continuous interacted variable, *Gubernatorial Vote Share*.

We find support for Hypothesis 3 that levels of gubernatorial support shape the effect of gender coattails for women candidates. For both Democrats and Republicans, gender coattails have statistically significant effects in specific contexts, becoming statistically significant only in districts where gubernatorial vote share is low (at or below 45 percent) or high (at or above 75 percent). In districts with competitive gubernatorial races, gender coattails have no statistically significant effect for candidates of either party. In these competitive districts, party effects overwhelm gender coattails as voters make strategic, party-driven choices at the ballot box. When a voter's preferred party has a relatively equal chance of winning or losing, they value

party above other candidate identities in their decision making. When a voter's preferred party is virtually guaranteed a win or a loss (non-competitive districts) candidate identities beyond party (e.g., gender) begin to matter.

We find partial support for Hypothesis 1 that gender coattails will negatively affect women running down ballot and partial support for Hypothesis 2 that these negative effects will differ by party. For Democrats, the net effect of gender coattails is positive, meaning that legislative candidate vote shares are higher when gender coattails are present compared to when they are not, but only in districts where party coattails are weak. For example, in a district where support for a woman Democratic gubernatorial candidate is at 10 percent, a woman state legislative candidate would be predicted to get approximately 32 percent of the vote. Meanwhile, a male state legislative candidate in the same district would be predicted to get 19 percent of the two-party vote share. The positive effect of a gender coattail becomes smaller as support for the within-party gubernatorial candidate increases, implying an inverse relationship between gender and party coattails for Democratic candidates and providing further support for Hypothesis 3. As shown in Figure 1, when support for the gubernatorial candidate is around 10 percent, gender coattails increase the legislative candidate's vote share by almost nine percentage points. However, the benefit of gender coattails decreases by about one percentage point for every five-percentage point increase in gubernatorial vote share. By the time support for a gubernatorial candidate reaches 46 percent or more, gender coattails become and remain insignificant for Democrats.

[Figure 1 here]

Among Republicans, however, the story is somewhat reversed. Gender coattails appear to magnify the effects of party coattails in districts where support for the gubernatorial candidate is

both high and low. For example, when support for women Republican gubernatorial candidates is low (at or below 35 percent) and the state legislative candidate is also a woman, that candidate does worse than when the state legislative candidate is a man, providing partial support for the negative effects outlined in Hypotheses 1 and 2. For instance, when support for a woman Republican gubernatorial candidate is 25 percent, a woman state legislative candidate would be expected to get 24 percent of the vote while a man state legislative candidate would be expected to get 30 percent of the vote. Looking at Figure 2, when support for the Republican gubernatorial candidate is high (at or above 75 percent) gender coattails increase the vote share of Republican women running for state legislature between five and 10 percentage points. More specifically, when a woman Republican for governor has 90 percent support in a district, a woman state legislative candidate is predicted to get 89 percent of the vote, while a man state legislative candidate is predicted to get 80 percent of the two-party vote. Overall, we find partial support for both Hypotheses 1 and 2 as the effects of gender coattails do differ by party (H2) but the effect is not universally negative (H1) nor more negative for Republican women. Indeed, we find that Republican women running for state legislature gain votes when there is a popular Republican woman at the top of the ticket. However, the effect of gender coattails is heavily conditioned by the strength of party coattails, thus supporting Hypothesis 3 that candidate party will override candidate gender in competitive districts.

[Figure 2 here]

With respect to control variables, state-level variables have no effect on how state legislative candidates in our sample fare. Instead, district and candidate-level factors more strongly shape the two-party vote share for state legislative candidates but in different ways according to party. Democratic state legislative candidates benefit from larger proportions of

their districts being urban and African American whereas both of these factors decrease the two-party vote share for Republican candidates. Although Democrats have lower vote shares in wealthier districts, district wealth positively affects Republican state legislative candidates' two-party vote shares. Finally, increases in district education levels benefit Democratic state legislative candidates but do not affect the success of Republican candidates.

Not surprisingly, incumbency positively and significantly affects candidates of both parties; incumbents experience around an 11-percentage point bump in their two-party vote share relative to non-incumbents. Although campaign contributions are statistically significant for both Democratic and Republican candidates, their substantive effect is very small: every additional \$10,000 in campaign contributions elicits less than a tenth of a percentage point increase in two-party vote share for the Republican candidate and has virtually zero effect for Democratic candidates. A Republican candidate would not even experience a one-percentage point increase in their two-party vote share from an additional \$100,000 of campaign contributions. Thus, we conclude that campaign contributions do not shape the electoral outcomes for either Republican or Democratic state legislative candidates.

Discussion

Our finding that gender coattails only benefit Democratic candidates when party coattails are weak supports Ditonto and Andersen's (2018) finding that women candidates are disadvantaged when additional within-party women simultaneously run for office. The authors discuss this as a "ceiling effect" where voters are unwilling to support multiple women running for office on the same ballot (Ditonto and Andersen 2018, 277). In our case, voters seem to be making a tradeoff where they will support a Democratic woman for state legislature *or* a Democratic woman for governor, but not both. Meanwhile, our finding of support for multiple

Republican women on the same ballot is in contrast to Ditonto and Andersen's (2018) findings, which are universally negative, and do not support our expectation of more negative effects of gender coattails for Republican women. Both theory and data structure could explain these differing results by party.

The tandem movement of support for Republican women may be a story of "credentialing," meaning that if voters do not think a Republican woman is qualified to be governor, then that feeling extends to Republican women running down-ballot. However, if a popular (likely incumbent) Republican woman is at the top of the ticket, support for her candidacy can positively affect women running in down-ballot state legislative elections. Why would credentialing explain gender coattail effects for Republican women but not for Democrats? Ditonto (2017) finds that evaluations of women candidates are more dependent on information related to their competence than are evaluations of men. Demonstrating competency may be particularly important for Republican women who are running in a party that nominates comparatively fewer women for office, making them more of a novelty in the eyes of Republican voters. As novelty status can negatively affect women's electoral success (O'Regan and Stambough 2011), the relatively few Republican women candidates for state legislature may benefit to a greater degree from successful, incumbent women governors of the same party when compared to their Democratic counterparts.

Differences in the number of districts where Democratic and Republican women experienced statistically significant gender coattails could also explain our differential findings by party. Previous research shows that women typically run more often and more successfully as Democrats (Bucchianeri 2017; Herrnson et al. 2003; Hogan 2010; Ondercin and Welch 2009) and like previous studies, we also find that more women Democrats ran for state legislative

office in 2010 and 2014. However, because we find support for our conditional hypothesis (H3) that gender coattails will only matter in districts where party competition is low, we must consider only the cases where gender coattails are statistically significant for Republican and Democratic candidates. There are 101 cases of gender coattails in districts where support for the Democratic gubernatorial candidate is at or below 45 percent (i.e., the set of cases where the effect of gender coattails is statistically significant). Seventy-one of these districts are from 2010 and include the states of Maine, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Wyoming while the 30 districts in 2014 include the states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, South Dakota and Wisconsin. In contrast, there are only 16 districts where gender coattails are present and statistically significant for Republicans: 14 districts where gubernatorial support is low (nearly all in California in 2010) and only two districts (both in New Mexico in 2014) where gubernatorial support is high.

The small number of cases and accompanying lack of contextual variation for Republican gender coattails could explain why the performance of women running for state legislature maps so closely onto the performance of women running for governor. In the very limited number of observations where gender coattails matter for Republicans, vote totals for both candidates may move in the same direction due to the similarity of districts where we observe gender coattail effects rather than due to differential thinking on the part of Republican voters. If the districts where Republican gender coattails were statistically significant approached the number and diversity of that of Democrats, we expect that Ditonto and Andersen's (2018) findings of a negative ceiling effect would apply for women candidates of both parties.

However, if partisan differences in gender coattail effects persisted after more Republican women ran for state legislature, what might explain them? Prior research provides little theoretical support for Republican women universally benefitting from gender coattails.

Recently, Democrats have been more likely than Republicans to view women as viable leaders (Burden et al. 2016), to display a preference for women candidates (Schwarz et al. n.d.), and to believe that governance would improve if more women were elected to office (Caygle 2018). Further, Republicans' comparatively higher levels of modern sexism (Barnes and Cassese 2016) may make voters hesitant to support Republican women legislative candidates without a successful Republican woman at the top of the ticket. Thus, we expect that the most likely partisan differences would be that Democratic women are helped, and Republican women are harmed, by gender coattails.

Although this potential finding would fit with existing research, our findings demonstrate that Republican women *can* benefit from gender coattails. We theorize two potential explanations for persistent partisan differences where gender coattails benefit Republican women and have neutral or negative effects for Democratic women: relative candidate quality and support from moderate voters. Given the Republican party's rejection of identity politics and preference for, as Kristen Soltis Anderson notes, "...the most talented candidate, regardless of gender" (Bacon Jr. 2018), Republican women may feel the need to delay a run for office until they have cultivated a strong political background. Republicans' preference for "the best candidate for the job" may mean adequate credentials for men but exceptional credentials for women. Meanwhile, Democratic women who (erroneously or not) perceive a more receptive, identity-focused party atmosphere may run for office before building a lengthy political resume. Thus, if candidate experience varies by party *and* voters support more experienced women candidates (Gershon and Lavariega Monforti 2019), potential differences in candidate quality could explain how more Republican women running for state legislature could result in positive gender coattail effects for Republicans and negative or neutral effects for Democrats.

Alternatively, if Republican women ran for state legislature in a more diverse array of districts, the presence of gender coattails could attract the support of both Republican party loyalists as well as moderate Democrats. Given that women candidates are stereotyped as being more liberal than men (Koch 2000), Republican women who run for state legislature in a broader range of moderate to liberal districts could conceivably win support from moderate to slightly right of center Democrats as well as their Republican base (Dolan et al. 2020). This support from moderates could be strengthened further by two Republican women appearing on the same ballot which might suggest a more liberal Republican party than would more traditional pairings of two men or one man and one woman running for state legislature and governor. We cannot test either possibility without more cases of gender coattails for Republican women, meaning that we need to observe more Republican women running for state legislature as the number of Democratic and Republican women running for governor are similar in our dataset.

In the 2018 midterms, the first elections after the defeat of the first woman to have obtained a major-party's presidential nomination, the United States has experienced an onslaught of women running for office at all levels of government. According to the Center for American Women in Politics, at the federal level, 23 women ran in general elections for the U.S. Senate and 234 women ran in U.S. House general election contests (CAWP 2019). Both these numbers represent the highest number of women ever to compete for those offices in one year. At the state level, the numbers are just as impressive: 16 women ran in gubernatorial general elections when the previous high had been 10 and 3,418 women ran in state legislative general elections whereas the previous high had been 2,649 (CAWP 2019). Looking at these numbers, it certainly seems as though women have made progress in terms of descriptive representation as candidates.

However, as has been widely discussed in the media (Arrieta-Kenna 2019, Herman and Sloman 2019, Schallhorn 2018) the vast majority of women who competed in, and won, elections in 2018 were Democrats. While the CAWP does not have the partisan breakdown of women state legislative candidates, it does report that 12 of the 16 women who competed in gubernatorial general elections were Democrats, 15 of the 23 women Senate candidates were Democrats and 182 of the 234 House candidates were Democrats (CAWP 2019). While we are optimistic about the future of descriptive representation of women in the country overall, we recognize the bulk of that representation is coming only on the Democratic side of the aisle. Until more Republican women run for office, particularly at the state legislative level, it will be difficult for future scholars to study partisan differences in gender coattails in an observational, real-world electoral context.

Appendix

[Table A1 here]

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Table 1. Covariates included in Multivariate Analysis

Variable	Range	Mean	Source
State-level			
State legislative professionalism	0.09 - 0.63	0.30	Squire (2017)
State citizen ideology	-0.27 - 0.07	-0.10	State Correlates Project
State political culture (traditional)	0-1	0.17	Elazar (1994)
State political culture (moral)	0-1	0.51	Elazar (1994)
State political culture (individual) ¹⁰	0-1	0.32	Elazar (1994)
Percentage of women in state legislature	12.9 - 41.0	25.78	Rutgers University, Center for American Women in Politics
District-level			
% Urban	0.02 - 100	77.59	Public Mapping Project
% African American	0.1 - 98.1	8.57	Public Mapping Project
% Hispanic	0.17 - 85.6	10.18	Public Mapping Project
% Women in management	16.64 - 72.12	40.73	U.S Census, American Fact Finder
% Some college or more	27.38 - 92.33	60.20	U.S Census, American Fact Finder
% Income > \$50K	19.86 - 85.81	56.29	U.S Census, American Fact Finder
Candidate-level			
Upper house seat	0 - 1	0.22	Ballotpedia
Incumbent (Democratic)	0 - 1	0.43	FollowTheMoney.org
Incumbent (Republican)	0 - 1	0.33	FollowTheMoney.org
Campaign contributions (Democratic)	0 - 3,764,344	133,710	FollowTheMoney.org
Campaign contributions (Republican)	0 - 3,529,932	117,804	FollowTheMoney.org

¹⁰ Districts with individualistic political culture serve as our reference category in the multivariate analysis.

Table 2. Gender and Political Party of State Legislative Candidates, 2010 and 2014

	2010			2014		
	Republican Man	Republican Woman	Total	Republican Man	Republican Woman	Total
Democratic Man	1,078 (55%)	251 (13%)	1,329	797 (54%)	177 (12%)	974
Democratic Woman	488 (25%)	138 (7%)	626	390 (26%)	114 (8%)	504
Total	1,566	389	1,955	1,187	291	1,478

Percentages add to 100 across the four cells of the table in each year.

Table 3. Full Model of Legislative Candidate Vote Share

	Democrats		Republicans	
Coattail Effects				
Gubernatorial Vote Share	0.50***	(0.07)	0.48***	(0.07)
Both Candidates Women	11.17***	(4.06)	-10.38***	(2.99)
Gov. Vote*Both Candidates Women	-0.20**	(0.09)	0.20***	(0.06)
State-level				
State legislative professionalism	-2.92	(6.16)	5.43	(5.48)
State citizen ideology	11.60	(9.00)	-15.75	(8.24)
State political culture (traditional)	-3.05	(2.52)	3.37	(2.53)
State political culture (moral)	-0.75	(1.68)	0.90	(1.36)
Percentage of women in state legislature	-0.04	(0.18)	0.13	(0.18)
District-level				
% Urban	0.03**	(0.01)	-0.04***	(0.01)
% African American	0.21***	(0.04)	-0.18***	(0.04)
% Hispanic	0.02	(0.05)	-0.05	(0.03)
% Women in management	-0.03	(0.17)	-0.02	(0.18)
% Some college or more	0.10**	(0.05)	-0.08	(0.06)
% Income > \$50K	-0.19**	(0.08)	0.17**	(0.08)
Candidate-level				
Upper house seat	0.69	(0.5)	-0.75	(0.46)
Incumbent	11.18***	(0.85)	11.34***	(1.11)
Campaign contributions ¹¹	0.01	(0.01)	0.09***	(0.02)
	N=3,428		N= 3,428	
R-squared	0.75		0.75	
Dependent variable is the proportion of two-party vote share for the legislative candidate of the Democratic/Republican party. OLS coefficient estimates with clustered standard errors in parentheses. *** p <0.01; ** p <0.05; * p <0.10				

¹¹ Rescaled by 10,000

Appendix

Table A1: States and Gubernatorial Candidates

State	2010		2014	
	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican
Alabama	Ron Sparks (M)	Robert Bentley (M)*		
Alaska	Ethan Berkowitz (M)	Sean Parnell (M)*		
Arizona	Terry Goddard (M)	Jan Brewer (W)*	Fred DuVal (M)	Doug Ducey (M)*
Arkansas	Mike Beebe (M)*	Jim Keet (M)		
California	Jerry Brown (M)*	Meg Whitman (W)	Jerry Brown (M)*	Neel Kashkari (M)
Colorado	John Hickenlooper (M)*	Dan Maes (M)	John Hickenlooper (M)*	Bob Beauprez (M)
Florida			Charlie Christ (M)	Rick Scott (M)*
Hawaii	Neil Abercrombie (M)*	Duke Aiona (M)	David Ige (M)*	Duke Aiona (M)
Idaho	Keith Allred (M)	Butch Otter (M)*	A.J. Balukoff (M)	Butch Otter (M)*
Iowa	Chet Culver (M)	Terry Branstad (M)*	Jack Hatch (M)	Terry Branstad (M)*
Kansas	Tom Holland (M)	Sam Brownback (M)*		
Maine	Libby Mitchell (W)	Paul LePage (M)*		
Maryland	Martin O'Malley (M)*	Bob Ehrlich (M)	Anthony Brown (M)	Larry Hogan (M)*
Massachusetts	Deval Patrick (M)*	Charlie Baker (M)	Martha Coakley (W)	Charlie Baker (M)*
Michigan	Virg Bernero (M)	Rick Snyder (M)*	Mark Schauer (M)	Rick Snyder (M)*
Minnesota	Mark Dayton (M)*	Tom Emmer (M)	Mark Dayton (M)*	Jeff Johnson (M)
Nevada			Robert Goodman (M)	Brian Sandoval (M)*
New Hampshire	John Lynch (M)*	John Stephen (M)	Maggie Hassan (W)*	Walt Havenstein (M)
New Mexico	Diane Denish (W)	Susana Martinez (W)*	Gary King (M)	Susana Martinez (W)*

New York	Andrew Cuomo (M)*	Carl Paladino (M)	Andrew Cuomo (M)*	Rob Astorino (M)
Ohio	Ted Strickland (M)	John Kasich (M)*	Ed FitzGerald (M)	John Kasich (M)*
Oklahoma	Jari Askins (W)	Marry Fallin (W)*	Joe Dorman (M)	Mary Fallin (W)*
Oregon	John Kitzhaber (M)*	Chris Dudley (M)	John Kitzhaber (M)*	Dennis Richardson (M)
Pennsylvania	Dan Onorato (M)	Tom Corbett (M)*	Tom Wolf (M)*	Tom Corbett (M)
Rhode Island			Gina Raimondo (W)*	Allan Fung (M)
South Carolina	Vincent Sheheen (M)	Nikki Haley (W)*	Vincent Sheheen (M)	Nikki Haley (W)*
South Dakota	Scott Heidepriem (M)	Dennis Daugaard (M)*	Susan Wismer (W)	Dennis Daugaard (M)*
Tennessee	Mike McWherter (M)	Bill Halsam (M)*	Charlie Brown (M)	Bill Haslam (M)*
Vermont	Peter Shumlin (M)*	Brian Dubie (M)	Peter Shumlin (M)*	Scott Milne (M)
Wisconsin	Tom Barrett (M)	Scott Walker (M)*	Mary Burke (W)	Scott Walker (M)*
Wyoming	Leslie Petersen (W)	Matt Mead (M)*	Pete Gosar (M)	Matt Mead (M)*

This table contains information on states holding gubernatorial elections in 2010 and 2014 that are included in our data. M = man; W = woman; * name won the election

States that held gubernatorial elections that are not included in our data are:

2010 = Connecticut; Florida; Georgia; Illinois; Nebraska; Nevada; Rhode Island (election was won by an Independent); Texas; and Utah (special election to fill remainder of term)

2014 = Alabama; Alaska (election was won by an Independent); Arkansas; Connecticut; Georgia; Illinois; Kansas; Maine; Nebraska; and Texas

Figure 1. Interaction of Gender and Party Coattails- Democrats

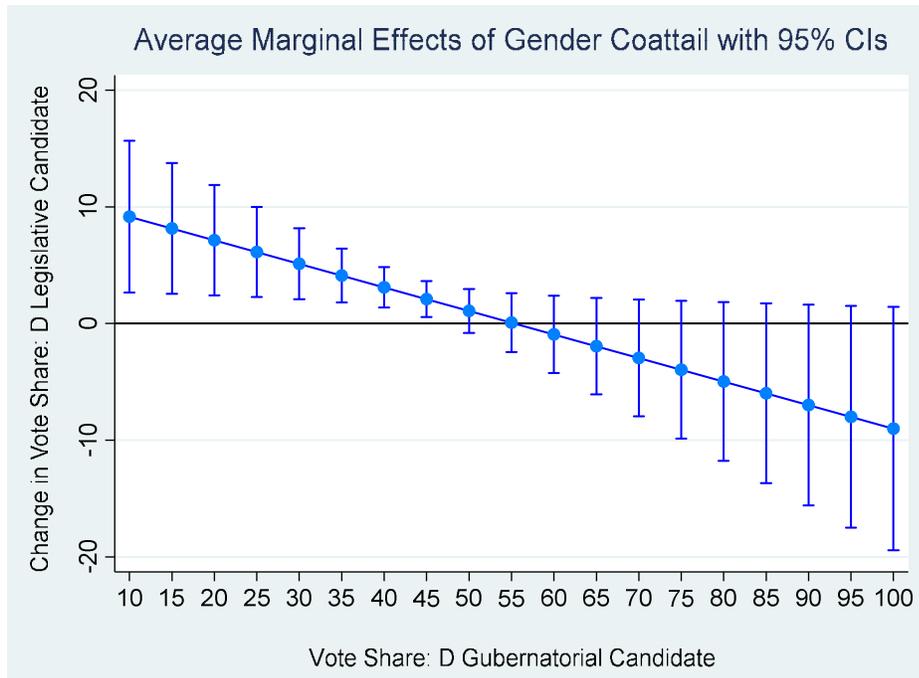


Figure 2. Interaction of Gender and Party Coattails – Republicans

