Where are the Women in Government?
Where are the Women in Government?
Current Statistics

16.8% of Congressional seats
24% of seats in State Legislatures
17% of our country’s mayors
5 female governors
Existing Research

- Self Selection
  - Men are 50% more likely to consider themselves qualified
- Family Commitments
- Sexism in the Media
  - Different topics covered
  - Different amounts of media time
- Necessary Skills
- Women's Issues
- Political Resources
  - Incumbency
  - Political networks
How do these statistics play out?

Sample Questions:

• What made you decide to run for elected office?
• How did you gender affect that decision, if at all?
• Describe the moments in which you have felt most "female" or "feminine" in politics.
• How do you think being a woman has affected your campaign experience?
• Have you ever encouraged or convinced a woman to run for office? Why was she initially hesitant?
• What were the arguments you used to convince her?
The "Mommy Track"

"I'm advocating the mommy track."

'Women are still considered the primary form of child care"

"It's the mommy guilt"

"In the end, we want our families"

"There is always an important event that you have to bump your family for."

"there are only 24 hours in a day, and you have to decide which way you want to go"

"You can't be superwoman, you just can't"

"I'm out campaigning with my children, so I am very much with them"

"Women feel overwhelmingly responsible for taking care of the family"

"There are not many women with kids at home in Springfield"

"I haven't had two days off in a long time"

"I had a root canal on the schedule, and I thought, 'yipee!'"
Self Selection

"What's your image of a leader? Is he wearing a suit?"
"we get messages about what our appropriate roles are"
"Little boys grow up to be presidents and astronauts,
while little girls grow up to be teachers and nurses" "It's hard to beat an incumbent"
"It transcends campaigning or legislating"
"If you're not a part of the old boy's network, they're not going to get on board with your campaign"
"Women need to be asked"
"men are much more likely to put themselves out there"
"Just no, I'm not qualified"
"how do we get women to have that kind of confidence?"
"Women don't believe in their own power"
"I would never get behind the wheel without my glasses"
"Unless I'm really qualified, I'm not going to take that step"
"no never means no forever"
Classic Sexism

"It's nothing overt, but it's still prevalent"

"Sexism is alive and well in this country"

"I feel like I have been able to transcend that"

"who actually gets the power to do the serious negotiations"

"Sometimes hard work just isn't enough"

"Around here, the white-haired men, they run it"

"their view of me as a girl"

"I felt like I wasn't wanted"

"You do run up against men who have fairly Neanderthal approaches to life"

"It's 'Representative' to you, sir."

"brainless broads burning their bras"

"brainless broads burning their bras"

"no one could argue about breast cancer, because they guys would snicker at the word 'breast"

"they put sugar in my gas tank"

"I want you to know, this is the most aggressive women I've ever met"

"Getting girled" "girl" "miss" "sweetie"
Conclusions

- These women's stories support the existing data
- The accounts mentioned here help us understand how the data works in real life
- These women chose to run for office
- Makes the statistics personal and understandable in our area