

Dr. Corina Schulze received her PhD in Political Science at the University of New Orleans and is an Associate Professor of Political Science & Criminal Justice at the University of South Alabama. Before joining the department, Dr. Schulze worked as a Special Agent for the U.S. Secret Service which later informed her research in women and policing. Her teaching and academic interests have emphasized the significance of including gender, race, and sexual orientation in understanding their systemic impact and effects on political outcomes. Dr. Schulze and her long-time research collaborator, Dr. Sarah Koon-Magnin, recently published *Gender identity, sexual orientation, and Sexual Assault: Challenging the Myths*. Her current work continues a long-time research interest in maternity leave policies and their impact on women's participation in the workforce.

Women's impact politics: Current trends and implications

At the most basic level, having representatives in government who are women is valuable because of their historical exclusion from politics. If one agrees that women are distinct from men in politically important ways, then a government dominated by men seems, *prima facie*, unfair. Thus, the importance of having a government that is descriptively representative is a worthwhile goal in itself. While the concept of descriptive representation is relatively straightforward in definition, it instigates some disagreement over its connotations. The other type of representation, substantive representation, which is tangible activity that affects constituents directly, is widely assumed to result from descriptive representation. However, women officeholders may fulfill the descriptive component of representation but not necessarily the substantive. Women's movements have worked tirelessly to promote descriptive representation because of a belief that women in political office will be sensitive to women's issues. In addition to an overview of women's current status as political representatives, the

discussion will focus on academic research examining women's impact U.S. politics today. In other words, this presentation attempts to answer the question: What difference do women make?