

Challenges faced by women in politics sociology essay



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Throughout history there have always been groups of people who do not feel that they are being adequately represented in modern governments, and women are one of them. Many women have experienced issues regarding whether or not their voices and opinions being heard and truly acted upon by people in political offices. As modern society continues to develop, things are beginning to become more apparent regarding the influence and ideas women have to offer in society and especially politics. Many women feel that there are not enough legislative powers adequately representing them and their voices. Men, because of their gender majority in politics, have the primary decision making when it comes to passing laws, which possibly affects more lives than they realize. There becomes a question if their views and decisions are based on their thoughts and opinions or those of whom they are supposed to be representing. When discussing such "sensitive" issues as abortion, which clearly relates to decisions that should also be made by women because of their immediate relation to the subject have minimal say if any because of the unequal representation. Even though America chooses to encourage other countries to build themselves around American values, America herself seems to be falling behind the times. Yet in this male controlled political system that America has chosen to adopt, there seems to be very little change in the ability to sufficiently represent women. This problem can be resolved through more women becoming involved in the political process.

Do women have a chance to overcome being head in charge. It has been said during the time when men were the bread maker and women were to be the homemakers. Women have been trying to wear the pants for

centuries, whether it is as successful, career or in politics. It has always been debate about whether or not women are capable of succeeding in doing jobs that men have been doing for quite some time. There are many women now in the work force doing jobs that at one time were considered “ male” only types of careers, jobs such as: police officers, fireman, and construction workers, even in politics. Hilary Clinton, who ran for the President of the United States, is a perfect example of modern women in the political arena. Even though she did not win the presidential race she still made her way to the White House; she is now the United States Secretary of State. Many people throughout the United States feel that she will do well with this position. My question is: What makes it hard for women to get the qualifying job that men hold and why is there a difference in the pay. Can a woman do the job better and get the job done equally? These are questions that many people in today’s society feel need to be answered.

Equality in the work place has been an issue for as long as men and women have worked together. Men and women work equally hard and get just as much accomplished as the other. Since the work is equal, the pay should be equal as well. It is seen by many that companies in the United States should be required to pay all employees equally and fairly. Obviously, pay should depend on position. If a woman works as a receptionist, she should not expect the same pay as a man in charge of system security. However, if a man and woman are in the same position, they should be paid the same. There are some jobs that women do better than men and vice versa.

Companies need to realize that men and women work equally hard for their money. Often times, women work harder just to prove their equality. Instead

of looking at gender, companies should look only at qualifications and how well the employee does the job. Women now are beginning to become corporate executives in businesses, and popular in the field of medicine and law. Women have tried hard to push themselves forward in society to create a balanced and harmonious economy and so far it has been successful. Barriers of all kinds have been broken, well, all except a few, mainly in politics.

Politics...when one stops and thinks of the word “ politics” what naturally comes to mind? Our founding fathers, Presidents George Washington, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson; the popular political figures of today, President Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Al Gore; and now we can think of Hilary Clinton. Is society to blame for this misconception that women do not hold important roles in government and participate in making important decisions for our country? Not really, people just don’t hear or read about women in politics as often as they do about men. As most people learn throughout elementary and junior high or middle school, our nation first formed government in 1776 when Thomas Jefferson first drafted our constitution. During this time women did not have a role in government, nor would they for the next one hundred and eight years, until a woman would try to run for office. “ In 1884, Belva Ann Lockwood – the first woman to try a case before the United States Supreme Court – ran for Presidency” (Arenofsky 14). Well, to no surprise she lost, but her groundbreaking campaign made it possible and easier for Jeannette Rankin, thirty-three years later, to run and become elected to Congress for the state of Montana. However, even with this groundbreaking experience, women were still looked down upon for their

lack of experience. It wasn't until 1920 when women's suffrage ended and the nineteenth amendment to the constitution, granting women the right to vote, and those women were formally introduced into politics. However, even with voting privileges, women were still looked at as weak feeble creatures. The lack of confidence and the inability to be seen as strong-minded females who were not afraid to voice their opinion hurt the female gender immensely. It wasn't until " Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, crisscrossed the country speaking about social problems and serving as the quintessential role model for the politically active female" that women began to witness how to present themselves with confidence (Arenofsky 14). Finally, with women's confidence on the rise and their new understanding and attitudes toward government, women were starting to attain a higher status in the political arena. The big break for women came from the decision by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who in 1933 appointed Frances Perkins to the cabinet as Secretary of labor (Gurirab, T., & Cayetano, P. (2010).

However, in some magical, mysterious way, women are managing themselves quite nicely. Let's face it, there are far more white-collared, wealthy men in the United States, and in the world for that matter, than there are women. Even with women having highly paid corporate executive jobs, women still make far less than that of their male counterparts. For women, this is one of the major issues as to why government is lacking female participation. The most valid explanation for this problem is that the government controls the financial gains of women to limit their power. Looking at the facts, women make up fifty-two percent of our nation's

population, strange how such a big percentage of population has little representation. The thought of a government developed by males and dominated by females just does not sit well with the vast majority of higher male authority. Therefore, in order to make sure that women do not dominate, without being boldly direct about it, income levels are tampered with. It may sound bizarre, but in Lyn Kathlene's *Studying the New Voice of Women in Politics*, she gives some very valid evidence that shows how women are paid in comparison to men in the same high white-collared jobs. The results are quite shocking. Kathlene shows that women are out-paid by men by nearly forty-percent for the same amount of work and jobs! The responsibilities of taking care of their home and loved ones and the lack of funds, the fight for women's dominance in government will never prevail. Does this mean American's should just sit back and forget about the women before them who fought hard for their right to vote, to be heard, and have equality in government?

Social class, status, and power are predetermined by one's gender. Within today's patriarchal society, men simply possess greater power than women, "and enjoy greater access to what is valued by the social group." (Gurirab, T., & Cayetano, P. (2010). Patriarchal thought produces male dominance, and authority within multiple areas, including politics. Throughout history, governments have designed laws to maintain such divisions of power, resulting in the oppression of women. "Patriarchal power relations construct sexual differences as political differences by giving legal form to the belief that women, because of their sex, are fit only to serve as wives and mothers." (Gurirab, T., & Cayetano, P. (2010). One must question how

women can achieve greater influence within the male political arena if they are not viewed as equal? How are determined women attempting to change their position within society, regarding politics? Multiple changes have been made throughout history regarding the place of women in society, but are they leading towards equality? The main goal of the women's movement was basic citizenship rights for women. For decades, many of the first women's groups strived for their civil and political rights as women. Their central focus was the right to vote, and the right to run for office. The purpose was to claim a role in democratic politics. Many believed that in order to attain political goals, the right to vote was vital. Women assumed that once the right to vote was granted, equality in the eyes of males was soon to follow, along with their new influence within politics.

Decades full of protests for women's rights created several political gains, as well as improvements in their status; however, inequality remained.

Women's beliefs that political rights would lead to equal opportunity, were overshadowed by the reality that their inequality resulted in their lack of influence within politics. Multiple policies and laws may have been created or changed in an attempt to improve women's role in society, but economic dependence, and physical reliance on men continued as issues. Women remained underrepresented within politics, holding fewer than twenty percent of federal, and provincial elected offices in the United States.

Eliminating women from political positions hindered their ability to become a valid influence within the political arena. Unequal pay, workplace harassment, and discrimination continued to plague women in the work force. Many believe that the variance between wages is due to the fact that

forty-one percent of women are employed in part-time or temporary positions; however, those employed in full-time positions only earn seventy-three percent of what male employees make. Women occupy only twenty-two percent of the country's highest paying jobs, but hold sixty-eight percent of the lowest paying jobs. With the lack of women in high profile positions, and the belief that women are not as valuable as men, they continue to provide no bearing on the political aspects of society.

Women continue to receive less in our patriarchal society. " Women have less political power, fewer economic resources, less security, and lower status than do men." (Gurirab, T., & Cayetano, P. (2010). This continues regardless of decades dedicated to movements for women's rights, and lobbying for policies designed to alter women's status in society. For those women who are poor, immigrant, Native, or disabled, they find themselves even more inferior than other women. Therefore, the question remains, are women equal? Simply stated, they are not equal. Women continue to fight for liberal democratic political power. Their gender continues to play a role in how society will view them, as well as their position. For centuries, power has been allotted to men, which continues to this day. Few women possess great political power due to the difficulties of obtaining customary equality within society.

In a world where men rule, how is a woman able to gain great authority, and step into the political spot light? In a society where women are viewed as insignificant, how are they to influence political decision makers? The law has granted women a voice within politics; however, it remains weak and inaudible. In order for women to increase their influence in politics, they <https://assignbuster.com/challenges-faced-by-women-in-politics-sociology-essay/>

must first become equal with men. Until then, they will be viewed as inferior; therefore, not requiring influence in politics. Gradually women are gaining more power, and prestige in society. Soon, the number in high-paying jobs will increase, creating a less economically dependent gender. As women strive for these changes, men, especially politicians, will be forced to take notice. As power for women intensifies, so will their influence in politics. As the voice for women's rights grows, so will their equality; therefore, leveling out the playing field in the political arena for both men, and women. Society needs to realize that this is 'the dawn of a new century' and the role of the female should indeed be reevaluated. Women are equal to men, and should have the same opportunities as men. Women follow rules and are fair too. Women can cooperate with the government. Women can make good choices, and effective speeches. Most people say, "Well what about their kids?" Think about it. Men are responsible for their kids just as much as women are. A woman won't run president if she has 3 year olds and needs to stay with them. She'll run when she gets older because her kids will be older. I hope people will change their minds and give them a chance, because they're there to do their jobs. I hope that one day I can live to see a woman president.