

Overcoming Historical Biases? Dynamics of Acceptance for Transgender Constituents Among California State Legislators

This project explores substantive representation for transgender, intersex and nonbinary (trans) constituencies by cisgender elected officials in the California State Legislature. California was the first state to chapter gender all-inclusive legislation and is the nation's leader in passing measures that seek to enhance the political rights of trans Americans. Although legislation passed to serve Californians of diverse genders is the most comprehensive across the United States, there has been a historical reluctance and opposition by movements seeking to enhance gender and sexual rights to be inclusive of trans members and issues. A similar resistance and wariness are perhaps reflected by the small number of legislators who seek to substantively represent trans constituents through bill authorship and the in the scant number of bills that singularly position trans constituents as the sole beneficiaries of legislation. However, there are signals of growing support for trans Californians by blocs of elected officials who are supportive of trans rights, the frequency of bills passed and the increased comprehensiveness of legislation. By looking at legislative successes over time, this work identifies a burgeoning solidarity between and across groups of diverse genders, which is a hopeful indicator that the rights of trans Californians are becoming substantively enhanced.

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In an era where the disenfranchisement sexual and gender minorities is reaching a fever-pitch, there appears to be a desire for cisgender, straight identified people to stand as and/or identify as allies their LGBT¹ compatriots. There is a desire among some people with normative gender identities (i.e., cisgender women and men of all sexual orientations) to stand as allies in support of transgender or trans² people and communities, and in “ the past two and a half decades the transgender movement has gained increasing access to policy makers” (p. 5 Taylor et al. 2018). Although allyship is a critical component of collective action, there is a valid contention within movements for racial, sexual and gender rights and justice that allies often treat allyship as a descriptive identity rather than an active one (Ostrove and Brown 2018; Grzanka 2015). Although identifying as an ally without engaging in activities other than symbolic support may be benign, it is certainly not helpful. Therefore, this paper explores who cisgender allies to trans people and communities are, and if these people are aiding in the collective action necessary to expand trans rights, or if cisgender allies are performative bystanders. To help put these puzzle pieces together, this paper analyzes the degree to which

¹ For the practical purposes of this paper I will use the acronym LGBT. I however honor and recognize the identities left out of this acronym, such as identities represented in the more expansive LGBTQ and LGBTAI+ acronyms.

² In scholarship and activism for, by and about transgender, transsexual and queer people, there have been contentious debates over terminology. Transgender refers to those who are presenting and identifying with a gender that they were not assigned at birth. The term transsexual (or more specifically transexual) was originally coined by psychiatrists who used the term support the hypothesis that transgender people were trapped or born into the wrong body (Benjamin 1966; Bettcher 2014). Transsexual refers to a person who has used hormone replacement therapy or surgical technologies to affirm their gender-identity. Transgender and transsexual refer to people who live along the male female gender binary. This however excludes genderqueer, fluid and intersexed people who may reside on multiple places on the binary or outside the binary completely. Although the widespread use of transgender may be well-intentioned, it is exclusionary. Transgender may be best imagined as an umbrella that encompasses a myriad of gender identities. Leslie Feinberg (1992), who is widely credited with giving the most comprehensive description of transgender as “gender outlaws: transvestites, transsexuals, drag queens and drag kings, cross-dressers, bull-daggers, stone butches, androgynes, diesel dykes or berdache” (p. 206). Therefore, in an attempt to be as politically inclusive as lexical strategies will allow me, I have chosen to use “trans” as a descriptor for all the aforementioned groups. I understand the problems of collapsing distinct identities into one category, and I believe will need to be addressed in the future.

legislators within the California State Legislature are engaging in substantive versus symbolic allied behavior through bill authorship. To paint a picture which shows us who these allies are, this paper analyzes the identity characteristics of California State legislators who have worked to pass legislation that seeks to enhance the positive civil rights of trans constituencies.

Literature Review

There has been a considerable amount of attention paid to the role of white allyship in movements for racial and ethnic equality (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Schickler et al. 2010; Ostrove and Brown 2018; Pittinsky and Montoya 2009). However, there has been far less interrogation to the role of straight and/or cisgender allies in movements for LGBT and trans equality, rights, and justice. According to Washington and Evans (2000) , an ally “a person who is a member of the ‘dominant’ or ‘majority’ group who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate for, the oppressed population” (p. 195). An LGBT ally may is defined as a “cisgender heterosexual person who recognizes the impact of discrimination on LGBT groups, aligns themselves with political social groups that challenge systematic oppression, and serves the needs of sexual and gender diverse populations through social action and activism” (Jones and Brewster, 2017, p. 680). Grzanka et al. (2015) argue that just as the collective identities within the LGBT movement were produced within the movement itself, and “from this perspective, straight allies...are likewise created by the social movements in which they participate” (p. 166).

Glenda Russell (2011) finds that allies tend to fall into to two dichotomized categories and either are motivated by “fundamental principles (justice, civil rights, patriotism, religious beliefs, moral principles, and using privilege to positive ends)” or through “personal experiences

or roles (professional roles, family relationships, valuing marriage, achieving closure on personal experiences, transforming guilt, and anger)” (p. 376). In line with Russell’s motivations for LGBT ally formation, Gzanka et al. find that “broad, general principles about social justice and civil rights were often motivational factors for allies” (p. 173). In Adam Fingerhut’s (2011) critical study on the predictors of heterosexual alliance to LGBT people and communities, Fingerhut finds that “women, educated individuals, and those with gay and lesbian friends are more likely to be allies” (p. 2230). Consistent with this finding, Goldstein and Davis (2010) find that allies tend to be “white, female, politically liberal, and religiously inactive” (p. 488). Jones and Brewster also find that being a cisgender woman is “correlated with engagement in LGBT activism” (p. 685).

Consistent with findings in the fields of Psychology and Education, many Political Scientists posit that “contact theory” or “contact hypothesis” is a predictor for LGBT political support. For example, Herrick (2010) finds that interpersonal contact among LGBT and straight legislators increases the likelihood that straight legislators will support LGBT rights. Additionally, Herrick finds that “legislators representing well-educated, urban districts with a larger portion of their district gay or lesbian were significantly more likely to support including sexual orientation in anti-job discrimination policies” (p. 937). Bramlett (2012) finds that highly religious Christians will come to support same-sex marriage if they have a close relationship with an LGBT person. Haider-Markel (2007) notes the importance of descriptive LGBT representation, and if there is an increase in LGBT legislators, substantive representation is enhanced by way of bill introduction. In line with findings on the importance of descriptive representation, Reynolds (2013) shows us that cross-nationally, that even the small presence of LGBT legislators significantly increases the likelihood that a state will pass legislation that

enhances the rights and status of LGBT constituencies. Finally, in his analysis of the Congressional LGBTQ Equality Caucus, Snell (2017) provides support that the straight allied members within the caucus (who are the majority of members) “provide votes on pivotal LGBTQ bills, and are the dominant force for ensuring that issues relevant to the LGBTQ community receive congressional—and national—attention through their consistent (co)sponsorship activity independent of which party controls the chamber” (p. 324).

Interpersonal contact is an indicator for acceptance and allyship to LGB populations, and Tadlock et al. (2017) show there is a “secondary transfers effect on contact with gay men and lesbians has for transgender people and their rights” (p. 966). Perhaps unsurprisingly then, Tadlock et al. also find that contact with trans people increases positive attitudes towards trans rights and “Democrats, liberals, females, and the less religious support transgender people and their rights” (p. 965). Support for trans people may, however, be somewhat superficial. Moreover, in a quest to understand hypothetical support for trans candidates, Haider-Markel et al. (2017) found that while voters would very likely support an LGB candidate who they shared partisanship with, voters are less likely to support a hypothetical trans candidate who fits the voter’s candidate criteria. Of those that would support a trans candidate, and consistent with findings on support for LGB people, those with higher levels of education and cisgender women are likely to support a hypothetical trans candidate. In their seminal text Taylor et al. (2018), present data from multiple surveys, which show that cisgender women are more likely to support trans rights than men. However, as Taylor et al. consistently show that differences in support of trans rights among cisgender women and men is marginal. The authors show that although the majority of Americans report being comfortable around trans people “a significant portion of the public finds the concept of transgender identity as morally wrong” and “not supportive of many

issues related to transgender rights” (p. 85). However, when survey respondents were given a “neutral” choice (in addition to support or opposition), a significant number of survey participants chose to remain neutral, which may be an indicator that support and acceptance of trans people are increasing.

It is clear that public support for trans people and issues among their cisgender compatriots is fledgling at best. In the absence of widespread public support, it is apropos to assess if legislators are acting on behalf of and in allyship to trans constituencies. The first step in trans allyship is recognition, which “is the basic indicator of membership; the specific rights and obligations of citizens may vary from state to state, but recognition of members is a prerequisite claim to any configuration of rights and duties” (p. 14 Phelan 2001). In the United States, the statutes that provide recognition to trans Americans are meager and weak, which leaves this sector of the body politic devoid of full citizenship status. Although President Barack Obama issued two executive orders³⁴ protecting trans federal employees against discrimination based on gender identity, this only protects a small number of the populace in a specific location⁵. Of the scant nationwide protections that do exist, only 17 states, as well as the District of Columbia, ban employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender expression (Transgender Law Center 2017). These laws, however, are uneven across states. Of all state laws passed between 1981-2008⁶ that make sexual orientation and gender-based discrimination illegal, there

³ Executive Order 13,672: Prohibits anti-LGBT federal discrimination by federal contractors. If one works for a company that is contracted by the federal government, they may not be discriminated against.

⁴ Executive Order 13,087: This prohibits discrimination in federal employment bases on sexual orientation or gender identity.

⁵ Although President Obama’s Executive Order still stands, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has removed guidelines which describe “Gender Identity Guidance,” which “formally outlined respectful treatment of transgender employees of the federal government, including actions around restrooms, name changes, respectful language, and dress codes” (National Center for Transgender Equality 2018).

⁶ In 1981, Wisconsin was the first state to pass a comprehensive non-discrimination bill that included “sexual preference” (Haider-Markel and Meier 2003). In 1975, Minneapolis MN passed the first non-discrimination law that included the phrase “having or projecting a self-image not associated with one’s biological maleness or biological

is hardly legislation that seeks to enhance the positive rights of trans people and communities, and that treat trans as a distinct category (Taylor et al. 2012; Taylor and Lewis 2014). Due to the lack of policy and attention independent of sexual orientation, trans Americans suffer from a democratic deficit, which is relative political powerlessness within formal institutional realms (Flores et al. 2015). Despite the scarcity of legal protections for trans people, there has been a dramatic influx in bills seeking to represent trans constituencies that have been introduced since 2001 (Taylor et al. 2018). The question remains: who is introducing trans supportive legislation? What types of legislation is being passed? How robust are statutes? In the next section, I will provide a case study that seeks to answer these questions.

Methods

To understand who cisgender legislative allies are and how robust legislation is, I analyzed of 124 bills that seek to enhance and recognize the rights of trans people passed by the California State Legislature between 2001-2018. These bills were obtained from LexisNexis State Capital and the California State Legislature's official website. All bills were chaptered (i.e., signed into law by the Governor and filed with the Secretary of State). Each bill was individually authored (i.e. not authored by a standing committee). Using content analysis, I coded each bill to assess if the bill provided symbolic or substantive protections for trans people and communities. I also analyzed the normative identity characteristics of the bills' authors. Utilizing content analysis, I coded the bill authors' official websites, the official California State Website, and official caucus websites and recorded each authors' gender, sexual orientation, race, and party.

femaleness.” In 1993, Minnesota became the first state to pass a gender non-discrimination law that included transgender persons (Currah and Minter 2000).

In terms of the authors, this analysis disaggregates which types of bill authorship each respective legislative member engaged in. In the State of California, bills are authored by lead authors, principle coauthors, or coauthors. All bills have a lead author, but not all bills have principle coauthors or coauthors, and there may also be multiple authors in each category. Lead authors are legislative members who are the primary or sole author of a bill and who introduces a bill for consideration. A principle coauthor is an author who is singled out by the lead author for special recognition as a primary supporter of the bill. Principle coauthors share credit with the lead author(s) and may be a member of the house of origin or the second house. A coauthor may be a member of either house who symbolically indicates support to the bill by pledging their name as coauthor.

To understand what types of legislation have been passed, I separated the bills into two categories “symbolic” and “substantive” legislation. Symbolic legislation includes joint and concurrent resolutions (regardless of which chamber they were introduced). Symbolic bills generally seek to commemorate or provide recognition for an event, individual or group. An example of a bill that fits the symbolic criteria is Assembly Joint Resolution (AJR) 22 (Chaptered September 25th, 2017). AJR 22 which states “that the Legislature respectfully disagrees with statements posted on Twitter by the President of the United States proposing to ban transgender Americans from military service, and would call upon the Governor of California to direct the Armed Forces of the state to take no action that discriminates against transgender service members on the basis of their gender identity or expression, unless superseded by federal law.” While I do not discount the importance and significance of legislative members officially standing in opposition to transphobic rhetoric by the Executive Branch, symbolic measures such as AJR 22 do not do anything to improve the everyday lives or

enhance the rights of trans constituencies. Conversely, substantive legislation enhances rights or expands legislation to be inclusive of trans constituencies. For example, Senate Bill (SB) 179 (Chaptered October 15th, 2017) allows for trans, nonbinary, and intersex people within the state of California to change the gender markers on state identification without having to go through gatekeeping medical barriers. Not only does SB 179 simplify obtaining identification, which is a necessary prerequisite for obtaining housing, employment, and economic resources, SB 179 allows for identity self-determination. Furthermore, SB 179 recognizes nonbinary and intersex people, who lack visibility in in state rhetoric and therefore live in legal obscurity and thus are further marginalized. In addition to disaggregating the types of bills that were passed, I coded for which category of the body politic would be impacted by the bill. The categories that bills fell into are defined as “youth/minor protections”; “incarceration”; “housing”; “sexual assault and abuse”; marriage and domestic partnerships”; security and military”; “senior and aging”; “health and healthcare”; “education”; “business and economy”; “data collection”; and “non-discrimination.” The 124 bills were sorted into two additional categories. First, bills seek to serve all groups part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) umbrella were sorted together. The second category is bills that treat trans populations independent from the larger LGB community. The tools I used to analyze the bills were YohiKoder and SPSS 25.

Analysis

LGBT as a group

Of the 124 bills analyzed, 96% (n=119) treat LGBT populations as a mutually constitutive group. There were a total of 137 lead authors, and 38% of authors are LGB identified, and 62% were straight identified. Of the 137 lead authors, 69% were men, and 31% were women. The

racial breakdown of lead authors is 57% white, 10% Black, 15% Latino/a and 18% Asian American. 95% of lead authors are members of the Democratic party. There were a total of 83 principle coauthors. 67% of principle coauthors are LGB, and 33% are straight-identified. 54% of principle coauthors were men, and 46% were women. The racial breakdown of principle coauthors is as follows: 58% white; 0.04% Black; 23% Latino/a; and 16% Asian American. 98.7% of principle coauthors were members of the Democratic party. There were 1,303 coauthors, of which 12% were LGB identified, and 92% were straight identified. 75% of coauthors were men, and 25% were women. The racial breakdown for coauthors is as follows: 53% white; 0.095% Black; 22% Latino/a; and 14% Asian American. 82% of coauthors were members of the Democratic Party, and 18% were identified as members of the Republican Party.

78% of the 119 total bills were symbolic, and 22% contained substantive measures. In regards to bill category, 24.6% sought to enhance the rights or recognized youth and minors; .9% were categorized as enhancing rights for/recognizing the LGBT people who are incarcerated; 7.2% of bills sought to enhance access to housing; 21.8% of bills sought to enhance the rights for LGBT survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence; .9% pertained to marriage and domestic partnerships; 16.6% of bills sought to enhance the rights and recognition of LGBT service members; 2.8% of bills sought to enhance the rights and status of LGBT seniors; 27.1% of bills seek to enhance access to medical care for LGBT constituencies; 12.8% of bills sought to enhance access to or conditions within education for LGBT constituencies; 5.4% of bills sought to reduce LGBT discrimination and enhance the economic rights; 1% of bills pertained to data collection on LGBT populations; and 21.7% recognize and seek to remedy discrimination endured by LGBT populations.

Trans as a distinct group

12 bills solely serve or treat trans as a distinct constituency. These bills had 214 total authors, who either served as lead authors, principle coauthors or coauthors. There are 17 lead authors. 76% are LGB identified, and 23% lead authors were straight identified. It is, however, important to note that this 23% of straight lead authorship was on one bill and was penned with alongside two LGB legislators. 10 of the 17 legislators who served as coauthors were men and were seven women. This ratio is somewhat unsurprising since the ratio of total LGB legislators is eight men to nine women. The racial breakdown of lead authors is 64% white; 12% Latino/a; and 24% Asian American. There were no Black legislators who served as lead authors in bills that treated trans as a distinct population. All lead authors are members of the Democratic Party. There were a total of 32 principle coauthors. 69% were LGB identified and 31% were straight identified. The breakdown of gender among principle coauthors is equally split (there were 16 men and 16 women who served as principle coauthors). The racial breakdown of principle coauthors is 44% white; 0.062% Black; 28% Latino/a; and 22% Asian American. All principle coauthors were members of the Democratic Party. 165 legislators served as coauthors. 97% of the coauthors were straight identified. 75% were men, and 25% of coauthors were women. The racial breakdown of coauthors is 43% white; 11% Black; 30% Latino/a; and 14% Asian American. 0.072% of coauthors were Republican. Of the tiny percentage of Republicans that served as coauthors, 92% were men, and 8% were women.

83.2% of legislation that treats trans as a distinct population is symbolic, and 16.4% is substantive. 70% of authors of symbolic legislation were men while women authored 30% of symbolic legislation. Of the substantive measures passed, 69% of authors were men, and 29% were women. 1.9% percent of legislation seeks to enhance the rights trans youth and minors;

3.3% of legislation enhances and recognizes the rights of trans people who are incarcerated; 0.9% enhances access to housing; 57% recognizes trans military members; 0.9% seeks to enhance healthcare or recognizes the healthcare needs of trans people; 0.5% seek to enhance access to education or recognize the educational needs of trans people; 1.9% seek to enhance and/or recognize the needs of trans workers and trans owned businesses; and 36.9% of legislation seeks to reduce discrimination against trans people and communities and/or recognize the discrimination endured by trans people and communities. Unlike when LGBT is treated as a mutually constitutive group, there are no bills that enhance or recognize trans survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, trans seniors, or seek to collect data on trans people independent of the LGB population. Of the 12 bills that treat trans as a distinct category, 36.4% include language that recognizes explicitly nonbinary and intersex people and communities.

Discussion

Previous findings of people who are likely to be allied or to support LGBT populations tend to be educated, liberal women. Without controlling for education, what this analysis shows us is that women within the California Legislature are far less likely than their male counterparts to author legislation that seeks to enhance and/or recognize the rights of LGB and trans people. Given previous research that indicated that cisgender, heterosexual women tend to be allied to LGB and trans issues, these findings are somewhat surprising and unexpected. Several reasons for why women in the legislature are not using their position to act as allies by way of authorship could be that there are still not very many women in the legislature. The California Legislature is comprised of 120 members (80 Assembly members and 40 State Senators). In the 2015-2016 legislative session, only 17 women were serving in the Assembly and nine women serving as

State Senators. While in 2017-2018, the number of women did increase, it only increased by one woman. Therefore, women may just be less likely to author legislation, and perhaps because of sexism within the legislature, bills introduced by women may be less likely to pass or even make it out of committee. There is robust scholarship indicating that contact increases heterosexual support for LGBT issues and Tadlock et al. find that there is a “secondary transfers effect on contact with gay men and lesbians” (p. 966) increases the likelihood that they will be accepting of trans people. Although the ratio of gay men and lesbian women within the legislature is relatively equal, there are just more men than women, of all sexual orientations, in the legislature. Therefore, because of simple numbers alone, it is more likely that gay and straight men will interact with one another, which increases the likelihood that cisgender, straight men will substantively represent LGBT constituents and also to stand in solidarity with their gay legislative brothers.

Whether or not cisgender heterosexual women are supportive of trans and LGB people, communities, rights, and justice has been an enduringly complex subject. Although quantitatively-slanted data provides evidence that straight-identified cisgender women are likely to be supportive of LGBT rights, the relationship between straight-identified cisgender women and the LGBT community, with particular regards to lesbian women and trans people of all gender identities remains fraught. Despite the common political threats that are experienced across and between gender and sexual identity cleavages, there has been a reluctance by cisgender heterosexual women to form coalitions with their lesbian sisters and trans siblings. The erasure of transgender Americans evidences this strained relationship in cisgender feminist narratives surrounding gender equality. The exclusion of trans people and issues to movement and activity on behalf of cisgender women for equal gender and sexual rights may follow a

historical pattern wherein white cisgender, straight women have actively engaged in exclusionary practices when it comes to incorporating multiple disadvantaged communities. Moreover, there is ample evidence of Black women being shunned from the women's suffrage movement (Davis 1982), lesbian women being purged from the women's liberation movement (Jay 1999) and women of color being shut out from movements surrounding reproductive rights and justice (Nelson 2003; Luna and Luker 2013). As Taylor et al. aptly point out that although "these social movements (women, gay, lesbian and transgender) sometimes overlap, are sometimes allies, and are sometimes hostile to each other" (p. 47). Although the respective instances of exclusion of women of color, lesbians, and trans people from "women's movements" are distinct, groups were excluded due to the logic that they would further compromise the political standing of white, heterosexual women. Such exclusions may follow a more pernicious pattern where white women have aligned themselves with heterosexist patriarchy in order to maintain their position in the status quo (Junn 2017; Strolovitch et al. 2017).

Whether exclusionary attitudes are at play in the lack of widespread support for LGB and trans issues among cisgender women in the California State Legislature is debatable, and there may be competing explanations for why more women in legislative positions are not authoring bills that seek to enhance the rights and recognition of their LGB and trans compatriots. In his foundational study of heterosexual ally formation, Fingerhut (2011) argues that political activism taken in solidarity with LGBT people and communities can carry "potential social sanctions" (p. 2243), which is limiting for some allies. Gzanka et al. (2015) echo Fingerhut and found that there was a significant stigma among allies by their straight family and friends when allies "come out" and therefore some allies reside in the "straight closet" (p. 174). Due to social stigma, many of the LGBT allied cisgender straight women tended to be clandestine about their

activism and tended to engage passive versus active allyship. The model of passive versus active allyship may be at play among women legislators, and rather than engaging in active allyship vis-à-vis authoring a bill, may passively support LGBT constituents by vote share, which needs to be interrogated in the ongoing analysis of these bills. Additionally, engaging in political work in solidarity with LGB and trans people and communities does not currently carry to same positive social rewards that engaging in anti-racist activism does. And while ally development among white anti-racists, which has received a substantial amount of scholarly attention, the same cannot be said for heterosexual ally development (Goldstein and Davis 2010; Ostrove and Brown 2018). The lack of attention to heterosexual ally development is unfortunate, because sexuality and gender transcend the rigidity of racial categorization, but also encompasses race. Therefore we should be striving to understand how allies are standing with people and communities who are racial *and* sexual *and* gender minorities, for work that interrogates these facets of ally formation may help to allies to understand better how to stand in solidarity with people who experience multiple oppressions.

In Paul Snell's (2017) work on the allyship in the federal legislature, he points out that even if LGBT people were to be descriptively represented in Congress, given the relatively small number of LGBT people in each respective congressional district, that there would only be 15 LGB and one trans member of Congress. The population of this hypothetical caucus is "too low to exert significant electoral pressure through geographic forms of representation alone" (p. 314). Therefore and given institutional legislative constraints, is a requisite for LGBT people and communities to have allied representation in legislative realms. However, it is crucial that allies in and beyond the legislature, recognize their positionality and privilege. Glenda Russell (2011) astutely iterates this by stating that if allies do not honor the position of LGBT activists within

the movement, “it could decentralize LGBT people within the movement for equal rights. Although this decentralization can be useful in facilitating collective action, it has the potential pitfall of reinstating unequal statuses based on sexual orientation and gender identity” and “both LGBT and heterosexual members of the partnership need to work against a hierarchical drift toward the reinstatement of dominant and subordinate statuses” (p. 390). Given that legislation passed with the intent of enhancing the rights and recognition of LGB and trans people in California has been authored almost solely by members of the Democratic Party, representatives should heed Russell’s advice to avoid LGBT vote and issue capture (Frymer 1999; Snell 2017) and seek to collaborate with LGBT constituencies in order to provide robust substantive representation.

I stand in agreement with Taylor et al.’s (2018) assessment of the fusion of LGB and trans movements, and during the professionalization of trans movements in the 1980-90s, “women’s rights organizations had already achieved statutory inclusion in most nondiscrimination laws” and therefore trans issues “was not an organizing issue for feminist organizations” (p. 47). I also recognize the collective trauma of enduring the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a galvanizing force for LGBT people and communities across the rainbow. However, it would be remiss of me not express my disappointment in my findings that so few straight women in the California legislature are standing with and for LGB and trans constituents. Women of all sexual orientations and all people who have experienced gender and sexual marginalization should share a common goal: dismantling gender-based oppression to secure political rights. Members of these respective movements also experience political marginalization and the denial of full citizenship rights due to the belief that gender and sexuality are biologically determined, that their bodies are subordinate, and thus should be controlled by the state. Therefore, a next step in

the research is to identify locations of coalition building solidarity among and for people who are seeking to advance the rights and recognition of those whose rights are at risk simply because of who we are.

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