

The Role of Women Legislative Staff in the Texas Legislature

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Applied Research Project
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Abstract

Purpose

There is a considerable amount of research on women legislative staff (Tabakman, 2009). However, most of this research was done at the federal level, focusing on congressional staff. This research project fills the gap of research completed, and examines women legislative staff in the Texas Legislature. Texas is one of largest states in the United States, and its unique approach to the recession in regard to the economy and policy has made it one of the most attractive states to live in (Johnson & McNichol, 2012). Texas has achieved a lot of success on the policy front through the tireless work of its legislative staff. The purpose of this research project is to describe the role of women legislative staff in the Texas Legislature.

Method

A web-based survey was used to collect data on the different types of roles held by female legislative staff in Texas. This survey was distributed to 218 female legislative staff members in the Texas Legislature.

Findings

There are four roles of legislative staff: (1) Political Strategist, (2) Researcher, (3) Public Relations, and (4) Administrative. Although each of the roles distinctly differs from one another, the respondents found that that many different roles were extremely important. Although the 58 respondent surveys had varying results, there were many reoccurring concepts. (1) The political strategist role is key, (2) Social media services are not a prevalent role for women legislative staff (3) All respondent staff engaged in administrative work (4) Most women legislative staff members are white, and (5) Most of the respondents had earned at least a bachelor's degree.

About the Author

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Women in politics has been a topic of discussion since the enactment of the 19th amendment, granting women the right to vote. In recent years significant milestones such as the election of the first female Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, the election campaign of the first practical female candidate for president, Hilary Clinton, and the first Republican vice-presidential candidate, Sarah Palin have brought women's role in politics to the forefront. Although there have been recent strides for women in politics, politics has remained a male dominated arena. While women account for half of the adult population in the United States, men account for 75% of the candidates that have run for elected office (Motel, 2014).

Scholars have studied the role of women in politics by examining: voting participation (Welch, 2001), political knowledge (Fridkin & Kenney, 2014), gender inequality (Wienclaw, 2001), women as elected officials (Carlos & Wilson, 2013), differences among ethnic groups (Brown, 2014), and traditional societal roles (Conway, 2001). Nonetheless, all research points to the lack of a significant number of women in politics. As the former Chief of Staff for a State Representative, I noticed a large increase in the number of women who are active in politics in non-elected positions as legislative staff to elected officials. Upper-level policy staff, such as the Chief of Staff, Legislative Director, and policy staff are essential in any elected official's office.

Upper-level policy staff are responsible for providing key information to the elected official, such as: political advice, policy briefs, voting recommendations, all legislative information, talking points, and speeches. Legislative staff is crucial to any elected official and the work that they do. Any decision that the elected official makes is a result of the information provided to him or her by their staff. In essence, staff "walk in the shadows" of representatives

and senators (Bisnow, 1990, 23). In order to accurately evaluate women's role in politics, an analysis of women as legislative staff is imperative.

There is extant research on women as legislative staff (Tabakman, 2009). However, this research was done at the federal level focusing on congressional staff. I plan to fill this research gap, and examine women legislative staff in the Texas Legislature. Texas is one of largest states in the United States, and its unique approach to the recession in regard to the economy and policy has made it one of the most attractive states to live in (Johnson & McNichol, 2012). Texas has achieved a lot of success on the policy front through the tireless work of its legislative staff. The purpose of this research project is to describe the role of women legislative staff in the Texas Legislature.

Chapter 2: History of Legislative Staff

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce some historical developments associated with the role of legislative staff. This chapter discusses how the role of legislative staff has evolved over five important phases in history. Specifically, Lattimer's (1985) discussion provides the foundation of this section.

First Stage

Lawmaking is the primary job of an elected official in the legislature. In order for elected officials to make laws, they hire staff to assist them in their work. Legislative staff is employees of the elected official who employs them and staff members who aid them in making laws. Legislative staff in American state legislatures has transformed roles over time. Although it is difficult to generalize all 50 state legislatures, there are certain pressures from historical developments that shape the political culture and legislative social mores of legislative staff. Lattimer (1985) examines the growth and change in the role of legislative staff from the early days of small legislatures to the present, modern legislatures, by describing the five stages of legislative staff. Because of the lack of research done on legislative staff, Lattimer (1985) ends the five stages in the 1990s.

The first stage of the history of legislative staff begins with the creation of legislative staff. In the mid-1930s, the Virginia House of Burgesses hired their first staff of the "central, nonpartisan, multipurpose service agency" (1985, 244). In the nineteenth century, legislative staff was hired solely on the basis of partisanship and the close relationship to the legislators for

whom they worked. Most of the staff worked only part-time and the *few developments* that occurred during this period would shed much light on the legislative relationships

Second Stage

The second stage is called the Age of the Executive (1934-1964). Lattimer (1985) characterizes this stage by the old saying that, “the Governor proposes and the legislature disposes” (244). During this time, the main focus was on the state executive organization and administration. This stage included the *progressives* and *muckrakers* reform movement. Progressives focused on issues to improve political and social problems. The Muckrakers were Progressives who sought to reveal political corruption in big businesses by being published in popular American magazines. Because of the Progressive culture, state legislatures were not engaged and refrained from making complex decisions. The legislature made gubernatorial requests *up* or *down*. Substitute legislation was rarely proposed and changes made during the committee process were far and few between.

Committee staff was weak and focused mainly on administrative and clerical work. Staff members were used to “provide administrative support to the process of legislating, to maintain the statutes and draft legislation, or to undertake spot research and interim committee staffing” (245). In this stage, the majority of state legislatures were providing professional and nonpartisan research services through state libraries. In several state legislatures, the governor provided the staff by utilizing the state budget agency staff and directing them to staff the appropriations committees. This is the stage in which *legislative council* research agencies were developed by classical public administration students who were taught to avoid making political choices or decisions as a staffer. The use of partisan staff was deemed an unethical use of public resources.

This stage “can be characterized by a near total lack of committee, leadership, or partisan staff” (245).

Third Stage

The third stage is called the Age of the Institution (1964-1974). This stage was shaped by two different monumental developments. The landmark case *Baker v. Carr* (1962) “decision coupled with the 1964 election, resulted in legislatures that are more closely representative of the electorate at large” (245). The younger and more educated newly elected legislators viewed the legislature and politics as a profession. The other pivotal development was the result of Lyndon Johnson's *Great Society* and Richard Nixon's *New Federalism*, which promoted this new era of state government expansion. During this time, state governments had to reorganize their administrative structures to handle the large federal grants given to states through federal grant programs. Throughout the country, state agencies were forced to expand, and increase their departments to administer various federal programs. “In 1964, state governments had total general expenditures amounting to \$37 billion and 1.8 million employees. With federal funds approaching 20 percent of state general revenues by 1974, state expenditures had risen 224 percent to \$120 billion, and with matching rates averaging 33 percent of the grants and the number of state employees had nearly doubled” (245). In 1978, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that state legislatures had complete authority to appropriate funding, and design policy to administer federal programs. Because of this, state legislatures and their staff had to change.

Prior to this, 19 state legislatures held annual sessions. By 1974, 40 state legislatures held annual sessions. In addition to this frequency, legislatures began to utilize technology, using computers for fiscal analysis, bill drafting, statutory retrieval, bill status, word processing, and

voting. Legislators were given increases in pay, pensions, and office space with secretarial support. Legislatures no longer relied on executive branch staff and hired more staff. For the first time, committees were assigned actual staff that analyzed for the committee, and for floor action. Committee staff was typically nonpartisan and did not participate in partisan solutions to policy issues. At this stage, staff was not closely connected to legislators. Their work was based on policy and research and stopped at the political realm. Staff began to develop a sense of pride in their work and considered working in the legislature an actual profession. This stage resulted in improved human resources for legislative staff: job descriptions, regular personnel reviews, and chains of command. This stage was the beginning of legislative bureaucracy.

Fourth Stage

The fourth stage is called the Super Legislature (1974-1980). This stage was shaped by two developments: the economic state of the country and Watergate. The 10-year period of an unstable economy required state legislatures to handle a “111 percent increase in inflation, two major recessions, and Reaganomics” (245). Although inflation provided the states with additional revenue, it also created political pressure from the public for more services. During this stage, legislative budget and appropriations staff matured and was more specialized. Staffers were developed into issue area staffers with vast knowledge of particular policy areas. They also began to develop and implement “capital budgeting and estimating revenues using sophisticated econometric models” (246). This specialization of staff caused legislatures to create legislative oversight, such as legislative auditors, agencies for program evaluation, and the review of administrative rules. “By 1980, the Council listed 282 principal legislative staff offices, not including 27 joint regulation review committees, 17 sunset agencies, and numerous separate

committee staff” (246). The trend of professional legislators continued and they began to pressure leadership for more work and greater influence in the legislature.

Due to legislators’ requests, staff spent more of their time investigating state programs and proposing increased amounts of legislation. Heavier workloads meant additional staff to assist legislators, agencies, and committees. Watergate created a new era in which the public and the media began to investigate legislators' personal and public lives. “Single-issue public policy interest groups followed every vote. The political implications of each vote in the legislature became of utmost importance to them” (246). Accordingly, legislators needed politically savvy staff that was able to judge the political effect of each policy initiative. For the first time in legislative staff history, legislators began to hire large number of partisan staff, which “created intra-institutional tensions that would change the face of many state legislatures” (246).

Fifth Stage

The final stage is called the Congressionalization of State Legislatures or the Age of Democracy (1980-1990). This stage joins with the previous stage, beginning with the election of Ronald Reagan. The Reagan administration was tasked with handling the political problems in the previous decade of economic downturn. The Reagan administration turned over several federal programs to the states through “direct block grants and cuts in other domestic programs” (246). Essentially, “that state legislatures became the focal point of the changing role in governments in the United States” (246). The greater shift to state legislatures created an era of costly elections and power struggles.

Legislators who wished to maintain their power in the legislature became super fundraisers who allocate campaign funds to those who have remained faithful to them. There was

an increase in leadership positions, chairs of committees, and staff. Money was now used to expand committee staff, personal staff, and leadership staff. Legislators' main focus became preparation for the next election. "Today's state legislature is characterized by the rise of the public information officer, of news releases, and of radio feeds. Legislators are constantly looking over their shoulders as single-interest groups have cropped up in staggering proportions and the new 'wolf pack' journalism, now in full swing, makes their public and private lives an open book" (246). The number of registered lobbyists tripled and the monitoring of legislative behavior increased. The political culture in the legislature became mean spirited and super competitive. The two chambers, the House and Senate, began to engage in full out wars. The need for partisan staff to monitor and provide guidance regarding the many different traps of politics was at an all-time high. Democracy was also an important component of this stage.

State legislatures became more representative than they had ever been. The openness of what the legislators do, public and private, forced legislators to be fully accountable to their constituencies. "The tough politics of state legislature have produced some of the best political leaders in the nation" (246). Legislators had more resources and quality staff who were educated and experienced enough to handle the complex issues. In several states, the increased competitive political culture required states to reach consensus and produce solutions to "some of the most divisive public policy issues of our time" (246). As legislative staff developed, members evolved into educated, specialized, politically savvy agents to legislators in guiding them through the legislative process. Within the scope of legislative staff and the services provided, there are four roles of legislative staff: (1) Political Strategist, (2) Researcher, (3) Public Relations, and (4) Administrative.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Chapter Purpose

The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss the role of legislative staff from a historical perspective and also present a review of the scholarly literature on legislative roles of women. Based on this review a conceptual framework emerged that is presented at the end of this chapter, which primarily presents four key roles of legislative staff. The roles relate to (1) Political Strategy, (2) Research (3) Public Relations, and (4) Administrative duties.

Political Strategist

The political strategist role of a legislative staffer is often characterized as the *major gatekeeper* for the elected official (Cohen, Dolan, and Rosati, 2002, 119). Chief of staff is the commonly used title in this role. Villalobos, Vaughn, and Cohen (2014, 744) emphasize the importance of this position in examining the history of chief of staff by stating that “every president since Richard Nixon has relied on a chief of staff”. The chief of staff is the individual responsible for the elected official and the entire office. The political strategist role of legislative staff is complex in nature, and consists of three essential sub-roles.

Direct Contact with the Elected Official

Before a staffer is considered for the position as the chief of staff, there is a level of trust that must be built between the elected official and the staffer. Building a level of trust depends solely on direct contact with the elected official. Once a legislative staff member has consistent direct contact with the elected official, they are characterized as the “boss of none, but overseer of everything” (Villalobos, Vaughn, and Cohen, 2014, 745-746). Once trust is built, staffers will

likely develop of sense of loyalty to the member. Salisbury and Shepsle (1981) describe the vital relationship between staff and the elected official as a continuous one after trust is built, “staff is closely tied to the fortunes of individual members, and their turnover will likewise follow the movements of members” (384). Rozmek and Utter (1996) also explain how important it is to employ “staffers who have the trust and confidence of the member of Congress to handle discreetly the most delicate or sensitive political issues” (420). Once trust is achieved, staff is able to make decisions about many other things. There are two components to the political strategist role of a legislative staffer: voting recommendations and strategic planning.

Voting Recommendations

The ability to provide voting recommendations to the elected official is essential. Chiefs of staff are often given the authority and opportunity to offer vote recommendations to the elected official. Rozmek and Utter (1996) suggest that the inner circle of senior legislative staffers must utilize the *sixth sense* in order to successfully provide voting recommendations. The sixth sense is described as “keen senses of the member's personality, policy positions, and political stay and can occasionally speak for the member” (420). Due to the fast paced environment in the legislature, a member often does not have the time to stay abreast of all details. Therefore, the member relies on their chief of staff to pay attention to all legislation in order to provide the member with appropriate voting recommendations. Trusted legislative staff is expected to read, comprehend, and research all bills that come before the entire legislative body prior to being addressed in front of all of the elected officials. From this analysis, staff is expected to take into account the elected official's platform, constituency, and personal views in order to make recommendations about how the elected official should vote. This is a precarious task because the way an elected official votes is indicative of what they do and do not support. In

many cases, when someone chooses to run against the elected official, they first research the elected officials voting record. Therefore, if the staff member responsible for providing voting recommendations provides a recommendation that ultimately puts the elected official in electoral jeopardy, the staff member's credibility and ability to be a legislative staff member is diminished. Voting recommendations is a tough component of the political strategist role. In addition to voting recommendations the chief of staff is also responsible for strategic planning.

Strategic Planning

The last component of the political strategist role of a legislative staffer is strategic planning. Rozmek and Utter (1996) describes strategic planning as the staff member's ability to "plan strategically to position the member of Congress for reelection and future initiatives" (418). As an elected official, one of the main goals is to be reelected. Therefore, everything that the elected official does during their tenure is being observed. Elected officials rely heavily on trusted staff to help position them into a positive image to ensure that they are reelected. Commonly, the chief of staff must tap into their sixth sense and react quickly to events as they occur, to adapt to circumstances as they unfold, to anticipate issues and concerns that are likely to engage in the short-and long-term (418). As a chief of staff, the main priority is ensuring the member reelected. Most importantly, the chief of staff is aware that if their elected official is not reelected they will no longer have a job. The chief must understand and be aware of everything happening in the capitol and district offices, the legislature, the member's personal life, and the constituency that member serves. With all of this information in hand, it is the chief's job to take all of those pieces and strategically plan for the future. "With this insight, senior staffers can make many judgments without having to check with the member" (420). The ability to strategically plan is the last component of the political strategist role of legislative staff.

Researcher

The researcher role of a legislative staffer is the *meat and potatoes* of the entire legislative process. As discussed in the History of Legislative Staff section, Lattimer (1985) explained the Age of the Executive in the 1930s, which was the beginning of policy and research legislative staff. This staff was essential to the legislative process, and provided legislators with the necessary information to make crucial decisions. Webber finds that legislators main source of decision-making is derived from policy information. This information is described as “scientific and technical information about the ways a policy actually works, or would work it if were to be adopted” (614). He found that staff is the nucleus of providing policy information. Whiteman (1985) also finds that staff plays a major role in the legislative process because they are the main sources of policy information. Staff is relied on to research, gather, and analyze information regarding policy and policy decisions. In another article, Whiteman (1985b) explains that there are two uses of information: concrete and conceptual. Concrete information is the type of information that is used to encourage a particular action or justify a particular decision. Conceptual information is the type of the information that is used to highlight existing policies or decisions. This research is extended to decision-making in legislative committees, legislative floor votes, and ultimately the filing of legislation. Sabatier and Whiteman (1985) examine the flow of information in the legislature. The authors find that information flows from the public to various research staff, to issue specialist legislators, and then to the entire legislature. Legislative staff must research what issues are present and what would be of interest to their legislator. From there, the staff will present their research to their legislator. In most cases, legislative staff in the researcher role is aware of what issues their legislator wishes to champion. Because of that, the information is given to an issue specialist legislator. Finally, once the legislator works on the

issue, it is presented to the entire legislature. The researcher role of the legislative staffer is a complex role. There are three components of the researcher role of a legislative staffer: policy analyst, legislative director, and legislative committee staff.

Policy Analyst

Policy analyst is the component of a legislative staffer researcher role that focuses on analyzing policy. In many instances, the policy analyst has a specific policy or issue area that he or she specializes in. This type of legislative staffer is responsible for gathering, researching and analyzing a specific policy area. For instance, a policy analyst may be responsible for all of the health related policies and issues that are relevant and current. Whiteman (1995) did an analysis of the chances of staff utilizing policy analysis, and found that more experienced staff are more familiar with policy analysis, and women are less familiar with policy analysis. Legislative staff that have been in the political career path and has experience working for a legislator, over time, develops a niche policy area in which they become experts. Some legislative staff is responsible for all policy areas.

Legislative Director

The second component of a legislative staffer researcher role is legislative director. The legislative director component is broader than the policy analyst component. The Society of General Internal Medicine (2015) posits that the legislative director's "primary responsibility is to guide the development of the lawmaker's legislative agenda and to monitor all of the legislative activities in the office" (2). The legislative director is the legislative staffer that is aware of all policy initiatives and is accountable for everything that the legislator works on in the

legislature. This position is typically held by a senior level staff member because of the substantial amount of work that the staff member works on.

Committee Staff

The third component of a legislative staffer researcher role is committee staff. The committee staff component is essential in offices in which the elected official is the chair of a committee. In other offices, elected officials have specific staff that focuses on the policy issues of the committee in which their elected official sits on. Committee staff is responsible for “reviewing proposed legislation, and determining which bills pass falls primarily to congressional committees” (Society of General Internal Medicine, 2015, 4). DeGregorio (1994) conducts an analysis of the power of committee staff in the legislative process. She finds that elected officials highly value and appreciate the perspective that committee staff provides by doing valuable research and protecting the elected official from any surprises or damaging consequences of the unknown.

Because the committee process is such a crucial part of the legislative process, committee staff is expected to remain neutral and stick to the factual parameters of committee’s policy realm. Hammond (1996) discusses this separation of facts and politics for committee staff, “even less frequently do staff engage in high risk activities, such as negotiating on major issues and developing explanations for constituents” (*the latter because committee staff are often less familiar with the district than are personal staff*) (545). Although committee staff is not involved with the high-level decisions and activities, Hall (1993) finds that committee staff’s work has a substantial role in the policy-making process. He found that “in both chambers, but especially in the Senate, the amount of staff time a member can allocate to an issue is a precondition for

effective legislative involvement” (173). Manley (1968) also concluded that committee staff has a great amount of power in the policy process. However, the specific quantity of power is difficult to determine. Weiss (1987, 1989) wrote articles on congressional staff. She found that there are structural factors, such as overlapping committee jurisdictions, elected officials’ committee assignments; tenure and the different roles of staff actually work against the use of policy analysis. Weiss concludes that staff uses policy analysis to help elected officials develop a legislative agenda. The interesting point made in Weiss’ articles is that she conducted these studies on Senate and House committees. This rejects the idea that committee staff is completely neutral and unbiased when it comes to high-level activities. Whiteman (1985) supports this idea as well. Whiteman found that committee staff was actually present and active in all steps of the legislative process. In a recent study, Crosson (2014) found that the accessibility to quality committee staff means a more effective legislative process in which legislation is passed. Elected officials are also aware of how important committee staff is. Salisbury and Shepsle (1981) conducted a study on congressional staff turnover rates and what causes them. They found that committee staff does not endure high turnover rates, “committee staffers tend, with some frequency, to survive chairperson changes so that their turnover rates are considerably more independent of member turnover than a strict reading of the ties-that-bind hypothesis would require” (389). Elected officials posit that committee staff is important and their role is essential to the legislative process.

Public Relations

The public relations role of a legislative staffer is the communications part of any elected officials office. Public relations are the preservation or upkeep of the favorable image of the elected official. This is such an important role of a legislative staffer because the positive public

image of their elected official is what keeps them employed. Gershon (2012) posits that “communication between representatives and constituents is vital for a healthy democracy; particularly when elections are imminent and voters must decide whether to keep their sitting representatives in office” (160). Voters rely on the information and news that media and staff provide them with in order to shape their views on the elected official. All voters do not have the time or the resources to extensively research what their elected officials have and have not done. The legislative process is sometimes compared to the nuance of *making sausage*. Very few people are interested or understand what it is that their elected official does. Public relations are the role that aims to help shape the perception that voters have for their elected officials. For this reason, the public relations role is vital. There are three components to the public relations role of a legislative staffer: press, social media, and community research.

Press

The first component of the public relations role of a legislative staffer is press. Many authors (Fenno 1978, Goldenberg and Traugott 1984, and Graber 2001) have conducted studies that show that news media are the primary source for voters to learn information about their elected officials. Therefore, the press component is such an important part. There are several different titles that are used for legislative staff that handle press. For example, the titles mostly used are communications director or press secretary. The Society of General Internal Medicine (2015) explains what a communications director does. “The communications director, sometimes known as the press secretary, composes press releases dealing with legislative issues as well as notable casework or grants efforts; writes newsletters; organizes press conference; and generally maintains a detailed accounting of the member’s stand on the issues” (3). Cook (1989) wrote about the hard work that press staff must do in order to stay ahead of current events and

strategically capture favorable media attention for their elected official and their messages. Press staff has to understand their elected official's constituencies in order to develop the right message to send to them. As discussed previously, the general public is not overtly engulfed in the legislative process and their lack of knowledge makes it difficult for press staff to generate the right message. Gershon (2012) recognized the complexity of media manipulation.

“Representatives (and their staff) use a variety of means to attract media attention, including press releases, interviews, political advertising, and cultivation of personal relationships, all of which are expected to influence the frequency and tone of member's messages” (162). Press staff is expected to cultivate close relationships with the press in order to receive a plentiful amount of media coverage. “It is likely that those representatives (and staff) that go after media coverage, working hard to foster relationships with the local press, will appear in print more frequently than those who do not seek out local media attention” (162). Press staff is required to stay abreast of everything going on in the elected official's district, in their office and in the world. “Press secretaries strive to consistently publicize the activities of their representatives by sending out press releases, and perhaps more informally, remaining accessible to journalists and maintaining positive relationships with the press” (176). Elected officials also keep in touch with their constituencies by having their press staff develop newsletters. Newsletters are publications put together by press staff outlining all of the work that the elected official has done to benefit their constituencies. In the wake of the technological age, social media are another outlet for elected officials to connect with their constituencies.

Social Media

The second component of the public relations role of a legislative staffer is social media. Social media has created a new form of communication between elected officials and their constituents. Elected officials have started creating social media pages to reach an audience that they did not reach before. In most cases, legislative staff is responsible for managing and posting on their elected officials' social media sites. Social media allows elected officials to reach their constituents and provide insightful information to them regarding the work that he or she has done. Although social media has given constituents a direct line of communication with their elected official, the management of social media sites is given to communications staff or high-level trusted staff. As discussed previously, elected officials have so many different projects and responsibilities that they must fulfill, so they rely on their staff to speak for them. However, staffs that are tasked with managing social media are typically experienced in communication and public relations. Hill (2013) wrote a book explaining the surge of legislative transparency that social media has created. "It's not unprecedented for members of Congress to be closely watched on social media. There's one tool, Politwoops from the Sunlight Foundation, which actually captures politicians' deleted tweets" (1). Staff that handle social media sites for their elected official must be careful, consistent, and easily understood.

Community Outreach

The third component of the public relations role of a legislative staffer is community outreach. Community outreach is done by constituent/legislative casework. Pontius (1996) defines constituent casework as "assistance provided by Members of Congress and their staffs at the request, and on the behalf of, constituents in their dealings with the federal agencies...and

typically includes a problem, grievance, question of eligibility, need or other tangible interest or benefit to these individuals” (1). Ortiz et al. (2004) “legislative casework, also known as constituent casework, has been an integral part of constituent services in state and federal elected offices for the better part of two centuries” (50). Constituent casework is an important part of an elected official’s office because it is the direct communication between the constituency and the elected official. Although the elected official is not directly handling the constituent work, their staff is the clear indication of the effectiveness of the elected official. McAdams and Johannes (1985) conducted a study on constituent casework and found that when there are threats to the elected official’s position, the elected official increases the amount of staff hired to work on constituent cases. Hammond (1996) found research that showed “an increase in the number of district staff members in response to electoral threats” (563). However, no matter if there is an electoral threat or not, constituent casework is an indispensable part of the office.

Shapiro (1998) conducted a study by the Congressional Management Foundation and found that congressional offices have “an endless stream of constituent casework” (89). Constituent casework is a function of most offices. Shapiro’s (1998) study showed that constituent casework loads has substantially increased since the 1980s. Constituent casework is mostly performed in the district offices. Most elected officials have a capitol office where the policy work is done. They also have a district office that is located in the same area in which the elected official represents. Because of the location, naturally, constituents contact the district offices to receive help on their respective issues. Many authors (Johannes, 1980; Johannes and McAdams; Johannes, 1996) found that poor and wealthy districts utilize constituent services more than middle-class districts. “In district offices in which casework is a high priority, that staffs usually perform under very heavy loads, often exceeding more than a 100 cases each; they

are encouraged to meet all needs of constituents while viewing each case situation as a high priority by exploring all avenues of recourse” (Ortiz, Rodriguez, Semion and Wirz, 2004, 51). Staffers who work on constituent casework have the most personal interactions with the elected official’s constituencies. Johannes (1984) found that most staffers who work on constituent casework show traits of “empathy and sympathy, patience and persistence, knowledge of the executive branch, and ability to listen and communicate” (71-72). Although the staff is there to help constituents, constituents do not always get the response that they were anticipating. Hamilton (1992) found that the majority of the constituent casework is received by letter or phone call. This study was conducted prior to the boom of the Internet and email. Email and social media sites now also receive constituent casework. Although constituents bring many concerns to district office, many of the constituent cases are about government agencies and *red tape* (Badwin, 1985). Hepworth, Larsen, and Rooney (1997) explain the three system linkage roles that are the foundation for constituent casework staff: broker, mediator, and advocate.

A broker in the system linkage role has the ability to develop and preserve relationships with the appropriate contacts in governmental agencies. Once a constituent case is received, the constituent casework must then identify who the appropriate person is to help assist in the case. There are many different government agencies that handle an array of issues. Because government agencies are responsible for many different issues, it may take a substantial amount of time to receive the proper assistance from them. Therefore, it would be most beneficial, as a constituent caseworker, to have an established relationship with the *right* people in a government agency so that constituents can receive assistance as soon as possible. The second role is mediator/arbitrator.

The mediator/arbitrator is the role in which the constituent caseworker tries to “eliminate obstacles to service delivery” (28). In this role, the constituent caseworker is expected assist the constituent in receiving a particular service that they were previously denied. In some instances, constituents are not able to receive a particular service because of a lack of communication, understanding, and follow-up. At this point, the constituent caseworker is expected to be the voice of reason, and assist the constituent with getting the services that he or she feels that they deserve.

The last role used by constituent caseworkers is constituent advocacy. In this role, the constituent caseworker is often asked to advocate for a constituent on behalf of the elected official. This role is a tricky one because there are ethical parameters in which staff cannot participate in legal matters. However, constituents will sometimes reach out to district offices to receive a letter of support from the elected official to support whichever cause the constituent is advocating for. These advocacy opportunities could be very beneficial for the elected official to show his or hers support for the people in their constituencies. However, the constituent caseworker must extensively research the issue and anticipate any negative backlashes that may come from advocating for that specific issue. These three roles of constituent caseworkers adequately depict what they do.

Administrative

The administrative role of a legislative staffer is the most visual part of a legislative office. Therefore, there is a void of literature about the administrative aspect of a legislative office. Administrative duties are a part of the legislative office that must be done. Phones must be answered, meetings must be scheduled and mail must be processed. These are basic duties

that do not stop or change. Entry-level/intern staffers hold many of the positions in the administrative role. The conundrum of administrative staff is that although many of the staff is entry level, others are high-level staffs that have gained the trust of the elected official. The Society of General Internal Medicine (2015) posits that “running a congressional office is very similar to running a small business. Constituents expect their elected official to be responsive to their needs in a timely and efficient manner. To do that, lawmakers rely on administrative specialists whose job it is to ensure that the work of the office is carried out effectively” (3). During legislative sessions, there are so many different events taking place and the administrative role must be able to keep up with the rest of the office. There are three components of the administrative role of a legislative staffer: scheduling and mail, personnel and staff management, and office budget management.

Scheduling and Mail

The scheduling and mail component of the administrative role of a staffer is an interesting one. Scheduling seems to be a simple and ordinary task. However, in a legislative office, there is a great amount of power involved for the staffer who handles scheduling. The Friends Committee on National Legislation (2011) provides insight to how important scheduling is in a legislative office. “Scheduling an office visit in Washington, DC is probably the most important action that you can take to get the attention of a congressional office on an issue” (3). The scheduler is the person that is completely responsible for inputting, managing, and controlling all events that the elected official will attend. Each person or group requesting the elected official’s presence or participation must go through the scheduler. Because of this, the scheduler holds a great amount of power in the office. Romzek and Utter (1996) understand the complexities of being a scheduler. “Executive assistants and schedulers often are individuals

who emphasize personal loyalties to individual members and also have a geographic focus. They need accurate knowledge of the member's key allies, relevant movers and shakers, and key constituents from the home base. Typically, the knowledge is acquired over time they develop rapport with the member and the member's family so that their judgments about access and schedules are trusted" (434). Mail is deemed a less powerful task. However, as discussed with the constituent casework staff section, the main source of constituent work comes from mail. Therefore, this work may be solely clerical, but the task comes with key policy implications. Staffs that are responsible for the mail hold one of the main sources for all information for all roles of the legislative staff. There may be constituent letters, bills, complaints, policy requests, etc. in the mail. It is the job of the staffer to sort through the mail and determine what is important and what is not. Their judgment is relied upon and mail may be the first step for the staffer to gain the trust of the elected official. "Trust is measured by how well one performs and exercises judgment that is in the best interests of the member" (Romzek and Utter, 1996, 428).

Personnel and Staff Management

The second component of the administrative role of a legislative staffer is personnel and staff management. High-level staffers are typically responsible for personnel and staff management. Salisbury and Shepsle (1981) conducted a study about congressional staff turnover. The authors found that "many staffers look upon their Hill service as a credentialing experience and hope to fulfill their main life ambitions elsewhere" (393). Because of the constant revolving door, it is difficult for legislative staffers to work on personnel and staff management issues. These high-level staffers are required to constantly train new employees and manage several different personalities. Baaklini (1992) wrote a book about legislative staff and the personnel policies and staff management that go along with working in a legislative office. He discussed

the staff patterns and strained relationships that go along with the division between permanent and nonpermanent staff. Personnel and staff management is a challenging thing to manage in an ever-changing climate.

Office Budget Management

The third component of the administrative role of a legislative staffer is office budget management. Each legislative office is given a budget that is used for staff salaries, supplies, travel, mail and postage, and reproductive needs of the office. There are strict guidelines when it comes to budgets in a legislative office; Fox and Hammond (1975) discuss this. “In both houses, committee investigative staffing budgets must be approved by the full chamber after consideration by the Committee on House Administration or the Senate Rules and Administration Committee” (113). Because there are strict ramifications of what office budgets can be used for, it is important for an elected official to have a trusted high-level staffer to manage the office budget.

Literature on legislative staff was heavily done in the late 1970s-1990s. However, there is a lack of literature available in this decade. The role of legislative staff in an elected official’s office is extensive. As previously discussed, legislative staff *serve as human extensions of the people who hired them* (Romzek and Utter, 1996, 418). A staffer made an honest statement of what it is to be a legislative staff, “You must be willing to accept the [member’s] priorities as your own, even if some [positions] are tough to defend” (418). That statement adequately sums up the most important part of being a legislative staffer.

Conceptual Framework

The preceding descriptive categories inform the conceptual framework provided below as Table 1. They are used to analyze the legislative roles of legislative staff. The conceptual framework used for this research is descriptive categories.

Table 3.1: Conceptual Framework

Title: The Role of Women Legislative Staff in the Texas Legislature	
Purpose: The purpose of this research project is to describe the role of women legislative staff in the Texas Legislature.	
Roles of Staff	Sources
1. Political Strategist 1.1. Vote Recommendations 1.2. Strategic Planning 1.3. Direct Contact with Elected Official	Romzek, Barbara S., and Jennifer A. Utter. (1996). Villalobos, J.D., Vaughn, J.S., & Cohen, D.B. (2014). Waller, Brett (2014). Robert H. Salisbury and Kenneth A. Shepsle (1981). Harrison W. Fox, Jr., Susan Webb Hammond (1977). DeGregorio (1996). DeGregorio and Snider (1995). Hammond, Susan Webb (1990).
2. Researcher 2.1. Policy Analyst 2.2. Legislative Director 2.3. Committee Staff	Lattimer, John N. (1985). Manley, John. F. (1968). Hammond, Susan Webb (1984, 1996). Crosson, Jesse M. (2014). Robert H. Salisbury and Kenneth A. Shepsle (1981). Harrison W. Fox, Jr., Susan Webb Hammond (1977) DeGregorio (1994, 1995, 1996). Hall (1993). DeGregorio and Snider (1995). Weiss (1987, 1989). Webber (1987). Whiteman (1985, 1985b, 1995). Sabatier and Whiteman (1985). Society of General Internal Medicine (2015).
3. Public Relations 3.1. Press 3.2. Social Media 3.3. Community Outreach (Constituent Caseworker)	Hammond, Susan Webb. (1996) Ortiz, Larry P., Cindy Wirz, and Kelli Semion. (2004). Society of General Internal Medicine (2015). Fenno (1978). Goldenberg and Traugott (1984). Graber (2001). Gershon (2012). Cook (1989). Hill (2013). McAdams and Johannes (1985). Shapiro (1998). Johannes (1980). Johannes and McAdams (1987). Johannes (1984, 1996). Pontius (1996). Hamilton (1992). Baldwin (1985). Hepworth, Larsen, and Rooney (1997).
4. Administrative 4.1. Scheduling & Mail 4.2. Personnel & Staff Management 4.3. Office Budget Management	Romzek, Barbara S., and Jennifer A. Utter. (1996). Harrison W. Fox, Jr., Susan Webb Hammond (1975, 1977). Society of General Internal Medicine (2015). Friends Committee on National Legislation (2011). Robert H. Salisbury and Kenneth A. Shepsle (1981). Baaklini (1992).

Chapter 4: Methods

Chapter Purpose

This chapter explains the methods used to collect data on the roles played by women legislative staff in the Texas Legislature. The descriptive categories that emerged from the literature guided the creation of a survey to describe the role of women legislative staff in the Texas Legislature. First this chapter explains the research setting and research participants. Then, the operationalization of the conceptual framework and how the survey methodology was developed is covered. This includes an explanation of the survey instrument, strengths and weaknesses of the survey technique, research procedure, IRB approval exemption, and human subject protection.

Research Setting and Research Participants

This research was a descriptive study of the role of women legislative staff in the Texas Legislature. Data for this research were collected during March of 2016. The participants in this study worked in the Texas Legislature for an elected official. Study respondents were from various legislative offices. Participation in the survey was purely voluntary. Each individual who chose to participate was not given any incentive for participating in the survey.

Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework

The operationalization of the conceptual framework is based on the methods of Shields and Rangarajan (2013). The conceptual framework helps to organize a research paper and provides simple survey development. The survey used in this study derives solely from the

conceptual framework table. The operationalization of the categories involved in describing the roles is presented in Table 2.

Table 4.1: Operationalization of Conceptual Framework

Title: The Role of Women Legislative Staff in the Texas Legislature	
Purpose: The purpose of this research project is to describe the role of women legislative staff in the Texas Legislature.	
Descriptive Category	Criteria to be Evaluated
1. Political Strategist	1. Do you engage in political strategy as a staff member in a legislative office? 2. How often do you engage in political strategy? 3. How important do you feel political strategy is?
-Vote Recommendations	4. Do you provide voting recommendations to your elected official? 5. How often do you provide voting recommendations to your elected official? 6. How important is the role of providing voting recommendations to elected officials?
-Strategic Planning	7. As a legislative staff member, do you engage in strategic planning? 8. As a legislative staff member, how often do you help your elected official with strategic planning? 9. As a legislative staff member, how important do you feel strategic planning is?
-Direct Contact with Elected Official	10. As a legislative staff member, are you in direct contact with the elected official? 11. How often do you have direct contact with your elected official? 12. How important is direct contact with your elected official?
-Other Roles Not Outlined	13. What other roles could legislative staff play in the area of political strategy?
2. Researcher	14. As a staff member in a legislative office, do you engage in research? 15. How often do you provide research to your elected official? 16. As a legislative staffer, how important do you feel research is?

-Policy Analyst	17. As a legislative staffer, do you engage in policy analysis? 18. How often do you provide policy analysis services to your elected official? 19. How important is policy analysis?
-Legislative Director	20. Do you engage in the legislative process (supervising bills, assembling bill packets, etc.)? 21. How often do you provide legislative director services to your elected official? 22. How important are legislative director duties?
-Committee Staff	23. As a legislative staffer, do you engage in committee work? 24. How often do you provide committee work to your elected official? 25. How important is committee work?
-Other Roles Not Outlined	26. What other roles could legislative staff play in the area of research?
3. Public Relations	27. Do you engage in public relations? 28. How often do you provide public relations services to your elected official? 29. How important is your public relations role?
-Press	30. Do you engage in press services? 31. How often do you provide press services to your elected official? 32. How important are press services?
-Social Media	33. Do you engage in social media as a staff member in a legislative office? 34. How often do you provide social media services to your elected official? 35. How important is social media service as a role for legislative staff?
-Community Outreach (Constituent Casework)	36. Do you engage in community outreach (constituent casework) as a staff member in a legislative office? 37. How often do you provide community outreach (constituent casework) services to your elected official? 38. How important is community outreach (constituent casework)?
-Other Roles Not Outlined	39. What other roles could legislative staff play in the area of public relations?

<p>4. Administrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Scheduling & Mail b. Personnel & Staff Management c. Office Budget Management 	<p>40. Do you engage in administrative work as a staff member in a legislative office?</p> <p>41. How often do you provide administrative services to your elected official?</p> <p>42. How important do you feel administrative work is?</p>
<p>- Scheduling & Mail</p>	<p>43. Do you engage in scheduling and mail work as a staff member in a legislative office?</p> <p>44. How often do you provide scheduling and mail services to your elected official?</p> <p>45. How important are scheduling and mail?</p>
<p>- Personnel & Staff Management</p>	<p>46. Do you engage in personnel & staff management as a staff member in a legislative office?</p> <p>47. How often do you provide personnel & staff management services to your elected official?</p> <p>48. How important do you feel personnel & staff management is?</p>
<p>- Office Budget Management</p>	<p>49. Do you engage in office budget management as a staff member in a legislative office?</p> <p>50. How often do you provide office budget management services to your elected official?</p> <p>51. How important is office budget management?</p>
<p>-Other Roles Not Outlined</p>	<p>52. What other roles could legislative staff play in the administrative area?</p>

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used to describe the role of women legislative staff in the Texas Legislature was created using the descriptive categories identified in the conceptual framework. Participants were identified through the House Research Organization’s 84th Legislative Staff Directory. The web based survey instrument was sent to participants via email and was open for responses for a two-week period in March 2016. As shown in the operationalization table above, three questions addressed each role. Participants were asked to respond about whether they engaged in a certain role, the frequency with which they engaged in that role and the importance

they gave to each of those main roles and sub-roles. Additional demographic questions relating to age, political affiliation and education level, tenure as a legislative staffer, history of their careers as a legislative staffer, salary range, ethnicity, marital status, children, political were included to better understand the nature of survey respondents.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Survey Technique

The choice of survey research presented certain distinct advantages and disadvantages. Surveys can be cost-effective because they can easily cover a large sample size while using little or no monetary resources. However, there is a response rate issue that comes with receiving an email from a stranger requesting information. Therefore, when creating the survey questions, I was acutely aware of issues or questions that could steer a staffer away from responding to the survey. Legislative staffers often refrain from providing information about the work that they do because of the political nature of their office and that even the slightest error on their part could negatively affect the elected official that they work for.

Response rate was also an issue in terms of the sample size that was actually present to participate in the survey. Elected officials keep a full staff during each legislative session and the 84th Legislative Session ended in June 2015. Therefore, elected officials keep a limited amount of staff during the interim between legislative sessions. Because of this, I was not able to get a large number of legislative staff to participate in the survey. However, the staff members that I did receive responses from are those that elected officials heavily rely on to run their offices and help them win their elections. Therefore, a substantial number of legislative staff surveyed is high-level staff who work on key issues.

Research Procedure

I reached out to all women legislative staff in the Texas legislature via email to explain the overarching purpose and importance of my research. The second email with the link to the web-based survey created on Qualtrics was sent to all women legislative staff on March 22nd and a reminder email was sent on March 31st.

IRB Approval Exemption & Human Subject Protection

This Applied Research project was submitted for review and declared exempt by the Institution Review Board at Texas State University (IRB Approval #EXP2016Y652707P, can be found in Appendix A). This research used survey procedures to describe the role of women legislative staff in the Texas Legislature. The legislative roles described are not exclusive and do not explain every legislative office. Disclosure of the human subjects' responses could not place the subjects at risk. To ensure strict confidentiality, participants were not asked to provide personal or self-identifiable information. Participants were informed that their participation was fully voluntary and they could refuse to take the survey.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the process to operationalize the conceptual framework constructed in Chapter 3. The operationalization of the conceptual framework resulted into the survey instrument used in this study. This chapter also discussed the methodology of the survey, including the explanation of the survey instrument, strengths and weaknesses of the survey technique, research procedure, IRB approval exemption, and human subject protection.

Chapter 5: Results

Chapter Purpose

This chapter presents the data obtained from the web-based survey that was administered to a total of 218 staffers. Seventy-two female staffers responded to the survey. However, 14 of those responses were missing data or were incomplete. The final tally of complete surveys was 58 resulting in an overall response rate of 27%. All findings discussed in this chapter are based only on complete responses. Missing data was removed.

Political Strategist Role

Political strategy was seen as an important role for women legislative staff. Whether they engaged in this role, the importance that staff attributed to political strategy and the frequency with which they engaged in political strategy was measured by three specific questions. Questions, 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 in the survey asked respondents if they engaged in political strategy, the frequency in which they engage in political strategy, and the importance of political strategy as a legislative staffer. As indicated in table 5.1a below, only a small percentage of all respondents—3%-- felt that they did not engage in political strategy.

Table 5.1a Engagement in Political Strategy

1.1 Do you engage in political strategy as a staff member in a legislative office?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	56	97%
No	2	3%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they engage in political strategy. As indicated in table 5.1b, 37% engaged in political strategy on a daily basis, 41% on a weekly basis, and 20% on a monthly basis.

Table 5.1b Frequency of Political Strategy

1.2 How often do you engage in political strategy?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	21	37%
Weekly	23	41%
Monthly	12	20%
Never	0	0%
No Response	2	2%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of the political strategist role as a legislative staffer. As indicated in table 5.1c, 50% rated the political strategist role extremely important, 41% very important, 5% moderately important and 3% slightly important.

Table 5.1c Importance of the Political Strategist Role

1.3 Rate the Importance of the Political Strategist Role as a Legislative Staffer		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	2	3%
Moderately important	3	5%
Very important	23	41%
Extremely important	30	51%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

The importance that staff attributed to providing voting recommendations and the frequency in which they provide voting recommendations was measured by three specific questions. Questions, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 in the survey asked respondents if they provided voting recommendations to their elected official, the frequency in which they provide voting recommendations to their elected official, and the importance of providing voting recommendations to their elected official as a legislative staffer. As indicated in table 5.2a below, 72% of the respondents provided voting recommendations to their elected official, while 28% did not.

Table 5.2a Engagement in Voting Recommendations

1.4 Do you provide voting recommendation to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	42	72%
No	16	28%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they provide voting recommendations to their elected official. As indicated in table 5.2b, 40% provided voting recommendations to their elected official on a daily basis and 33% on a weekly basis.

Table 5.2b Frequency of Voting Recommendations

1.5 How often do you provide voting recommendations to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	23	40%
Weekly	19	33%
Monthly	0	0%
Never	0	0%
No Response	16	27%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of providing voting recommendations to their elected official. As indicated in table 5.2c, 50% rated providing voting recommendations extremely important, 22% very important, 21% moderately important and 4% slightly important.

Table 5.2c Importance of Voting Recommendations

1.6 How important is the role of providing voting recommendations to elected officials?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	2	4%
Moderately important	12	21%
Very important	13	22%
Extremely important	31	53%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

The importance that staff attributed to engagement in strategic planning and the frequency in which they engage in strategic planning was measured by three specific questions. Questions, 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9 in the survey asked respondents if they engaged in strategic planning, the frequency in which they engage in strategic planning, and the importance of strategic planning as a legislative staffer. As indicated in table 5.3a below, 47% of the respondents engage in strategic planning, while 53% did not.

Table 5.3a Engagement of Strategic Planning

1.7 Do you engage in strategic planning?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	27	47%
No	31	53%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they engage in strategic planning. As indicated in table 5.3b, 2% engaged in strategic planning on a daily basis, 24% on a weekly basis and 21% on a monthly basis.

Table 5.3b Frequency of Strategic Planning

1.8 How often do you engage in strategic planning?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	1	2%
Weekly	14	24%
Monthly	12	21%
Never	0	0%
No Response	31	53%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of strategic planning. As indicated in table 5.3c, 33% rated strategic planning extremely important, 15.5% very important, 15.5% moderately important and 14% slightly important.

Table 5.3c Importance of Strategic Planning

1.9 How important is strategic planning?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	8	14%
Slightly important	13	22%
Moderately important	9	15.5%
Very important	9	15.5%
Extremely important	19	33%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

The importance that staff attributed to having direct contact with the elected official and the frequency in which they have direct contact with the elected official was measured by three specific questions. Questions 1.10, 1.11 and 1.11 in the survey asked respondents if they had direct contact with the elected official, the frequency in which they have direct contact with the elected official and the importance of having direct contact with the elected official as a legislative staffer. As indicated in table 5.4a below, all 58 of the respondents have direct contact with the elected official.

Table 5.4a Engagement of Direct Contact with the Elected Official

1.10 Are you in direct contact with your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	58	100%
No	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they have direct contact with the elected official. As indicated in table 5.4b, 81% had direct contact with their elected official on a daily basis and 19% on a monthly basis.

Table 5.4b Frequency of Direct Contact with the Elected Official

1.11 How often do you have direct contact with your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	47	81%
Weekly	11	19%
Monthly	0	0%
Never	0	0%
No Response	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of having direct contact with the elected official. As indicated in table 5.4c, 88% rated direct contact with the elected official extremely important and 12% very important.

Table 5.4c Importance of Direct Contact with the Elected Official

1.12 How important is direct contact with your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	0	0%
Moderately important	0	0%
Very important	7	12%
Extremely important	51	88%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

Researcher Role

The importance that staff attributed to research as a legislative staffer and the frequency with which they provide research to the elected official was measured by three specific questions. Questions 2.14, 2.15 and 2.16 in the survey asked respondents if they engage in research as a legislative staffer, the frequency in which they provide research to the elected official and the importance of research. As indicated in table 6.1a below, 81% of the respondents engage in research as a legislative staffer and 19% do not.

Table 6.1a Engagement in Research

2.14 As a staff member in a legislative office, do you engage in research?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	47	81%
No	11	19%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they provide research to the elected official. As indicated in table 6.1b, 48% engaged in strategic planning on a daily basis and 33% on a weekly basis.

Table 6.1b Frequency of Research

2.15 How often do you provide research to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	28	48%
Weekly	19	33%
Monthly	0	0%
Never	0	0%
No Response	11	19%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of strategic planning. As indicated in table 6.1c, 61% rated research extremely important, 36% very important and 3% moderately important.

Table 6.1c Importance of Research

2.16 How important do you feel research is?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	0	0%
Moderately important	2	3%
Very important	21	36%
Extremely important	35	61%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

The importance that staff attributed to policy analysis and the frequency in which they provide policy analysis services to the elected official was measured by three specific questions. Questions 2.17, 2.18 and 2.19 in the survey asked respondents if they engage in policy analysis as a legislative staffer, the frequency with which they provide policy analysis services to the elected official, and the importance of policy analysis. As indicated in table 6.2 a below, 72% of the respondents engage in policy analysis as a legislative staffer and 28% does not.

Table 6.2a Engagement of Policy Analysis

2.17 As a legislative staffer, do you engage in policy analysis?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	42	72%
No	16	28%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they provide policy analysis services to the elected official. As indicated in table 6.2b, 36% engaged in policy analysis on a daily basis, 29% on a weekly basis and 7% on a monthly basis.

Table 6.2b Frequency of Policy Analysis

2.18 How often do you provide policy analysis services to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	21	36%
Weekly	17	29%
Monthly	4	7%
Never	0	0%
No Response	16	28%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of policy analysis. As indicated in table 6.2c, 38% rated policy analysis extremely important, 31% very important, 26% moderately important and 5% slightly important.

Table 6.2c Importance of Policy Analysis

2.19 How important is policy analysis?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	3	5%
Moderately important	15	26%
Very important	18	31%
Extremely important	22	38%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

The importance that staff attributed to legislative director services and the frequency in which they provide legislative director services to the elected official was measured by three specific questions. Questions 2.20, 2.21 and 2.22 in the survey asked respondents if they engage in legislative director services as a legislative staffer, the frequency in which they provide legislative director services to the elected official and the importance of legislative director duties. As indicated in table 6.3a below, 88% of the respondents engage in providing legislative director services as a legislative staffer and 12% do not.

Table 6.3a Engagement of the Legislative Process

2.20 Do you engage in the legislative process (supervising bills, assembling bill packets, etc.)?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	51	88%
No	7	12%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they provide legislative director services to the elected official. As indicated in table 6.3b, 47% engaged in legislative director services on a daily basis, 28% on a weekly basis and 13% on a monthly basis.

Table 6.3b Frequency of Legislative Director Services

2.21 How often do you provide legislative director services to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	27	47%
Weekly	16	28%
Monthly	8	13%
Never	0	0%
No Response	7	12%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of legislative director duties. As indicated in table 6.3c, 48% rated legislative director duties as extremely important, 40% very important, 7% moderately important and 5% slightly important.

Table 6.3c Importance of Legislative Director Duties

2.22 How important are legislative director duties?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	3	5%
Moderately important	4	7%
Very important	23	40%
Extremely important	28	48%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

The importance that staff attributed to committee work and the frequency in which they provide committee work to the elected official was measured by three specific questions. Questions 2.23, 2.24 and 2.25 in the survey asked respondents if they engage in committee work as a legislative staffer, the frequency in which they provide committee work to the elected official and the importance of committee work. As indicated in table 6.4a below, 34% of the respondents engage in committee work as a legislative staffer and 66% does not.

Table 6.4a Engagement of Committee Work

2.23 Do you engage in committee work?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	20	34%
No	38	66%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they provide committee work to the elected official. As indicated in table 6.4b, 18% engaged in committee work on a daily basis and 16% on a weekly basis.

Table 6.4b Frequency of Committee Work

2.24 How often do you provide committee work to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	11	18%
Weekly	9	16%
Monthly	0	0%
Never	0	0%
No Response	38	66%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of committee work. As indicated in table 6.4c, 30% rated legislative committee extremely important, 34% very important, 31% moderately important and 5% slightly important.

Table 6.4c Importance of Committee Work

2.25 How important is committee work?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	3	5%
Moderately important	18	31%
Very important	20	34%
Extremely important	17	30%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

Public Relations Role

The importance that staff attributed to public relations and the frequency with which they provide public relations to the elected official was measured by three specific questions.

Questions 3.27, 3.28 and 3.29 in the survey asked respondents if they engage in public relations as a legislative staffer, the frequency in which they provide public relations to the elected official and the importance of public relations. As indicated in table 7.1a below, 90% of the respondents engage in public relations as a legislative staffer and 10% do not.

Table 7.1a Engagement of Public Relations

3.27 Do you engage in public relations?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	52	90%
No	6	10%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they provide public relations to the elected official. As indicated in table 7.1b, 64% engaged in public relations on a daily basis, 21% on a weekly basis and 5% on a monthly basis.

Table 7.1b Frequency of Public Relations

3.28 How often do you provide public relations to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	37	64%
Weekly	12	21%
Monthly	3	5%
Never	0	0%
No Response	6	10%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of public relations. As indicated in table 7.1c, 19% rated public relations extremely important, 50% very important and 31% moderately important.

Table 7.1c Importance of Public Relations

3.29 How important is your public relations role?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	0	0%
Moderately important	18	31%
Very important	29	50%
Extremely important	11	19%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

The importance that staff attributed to press services and the frequency with which they provide press services to the elected official was measured by three specific questions. Questions 3.30, 3.31 and 3.32 in the survey asked respondents if they provide press services as a legislative staffer, the frequency in which they provide press services to the elected official, and the importance of press services. As indicated in table 7.2a below, 47% of the respondents engage in press services as a legislative staffer and 53% do not.

Table 7.2a Engagement in Press Services

3.30 Do you engage in press services?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	27	47%
No	31	53%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they provide press services to the elected official. As indicated in table 7.2b, 5% engaged in press services on a daily basis, 31% on a weekly basis and 10% on a monthly basis.

Table 7.2b Frequency of Press Services

3.31 How often do you provide press services to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	3	5%
Weekly	18	31%
Monthly	6	10%
Never	0	0%
No Response	31	54%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of press services. As indicated in table 7.2c, 12% rated public relations extremely important, 57% very important, 17% moderately important and 14% slightly important.

Table 7.2c Importance of Press Services

3.32 How important are press services?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	8	14%
Moderately important	10	17%
Very important	33	57%
Extremely important	7	12%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

The importance that staff attributed to social media services and the frequency with which they provide social media services to the elected official was measured by three specific questions. Questions 3.33, 3.34 and 3.35 in the survey asked respondents if they provide social media services as a legislative staffer, the frequency in which they provide social media services to the elected official and the importance of social media services. As indicated in table 7.3a below, 83% of the respondents engage in social media services as a legislative staffer and 17% do not.

Table 7.3a Engagement in Social Media Services

3.33 Do you engage in social media as a staff member in a legislative office?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	10	17%
No	48	83%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they provide social media services to the elected official. As indicated in table 7.3b, 5% engaged in social media services on a daily basis, 3% on a weekly basis and 9% on a monthly basis.

Table 7.3b Frequency of Social Media Services

3.34 How often do you provide social media services to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	3	5%
Weekly	2	3%
Monthly	5	9%
Never	0	0%
No Response	48	83%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of social media services. As indicated in table 7.3c, 51% rated social media services extremely important, 41% very important, 5% moderately important and 3% slightly important.

Table 7.3c Importance of Social Media

3.35 How important are social media services as role for legislative staff?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	2	0%
Slightly important	5	3%
Moderately important	30	5%
Very important	18	41%
Extremely important	3	51%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

The importance that staff attributed to community outreach and the frequency in which they provide community outreach to the elected official was measured by three specific questions. Questions 3.36, 3.37 and 3.38 in the survey asked respondents if they provide community outreach services as a legislative staffer, the frequency with which they provide community outreach services to the elected official and the importance of community outreach services. As indicated in table 7.4a below, 53% of the respondents engage in community outreach services as a legislative staffer and 47% do not.

Table 7.4a Engagement in Community Outreach

3.36 Do you engage in community outreach (constituent casework) as a staff member in a legislative office?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	31	53%
No	27	47%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they provide community outreach services for the elected official. As indicated in table 7.4b, 29% engaged in social media services on a daily basis, 21% on a weekly basis and 3% on a monthly basis.

Table 7.4b Frequency of Community Outreach

3.37 How often do you provide community outreach services to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	17	29%
Weekly	12	21%
Monthly	2	3%
Never	0	0%
No Response	27	47%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of community outreach. As indicated in table 7.4c, 52% rated community outreach extremely important, 40% very important, 5% moderately important and 3% slightly important.

Table 7.4c Importance of Community Outreach

3.38 How important is community outreach (constituent casework)?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	2	3%
Moderately important	3	5%
Very important	23	40%
Extremely important	30	52%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

Administrative Role

The importance that staff attributed to the administrative role and the frequency in which they provide administrative services to the elected official was measured by three specific questions. Questions 4.40, 4.41 and 4.42 in the survey asked respondents if they engage in administrative work as a legislative staffer, the frequency with which they engage in administrative work and the importance of administrative work. As indicated in table 8.1a below, all of the respondents engage in administrative work.

Table 8.1a Engagement in the Administrative Role

4.40 Do you engage in administrative work?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	58	100%
No	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they engage in administrative work as a legislative staffer. As indicated in table 8.1b, 82% engaged in administrative work on a daily basis and 18% on a weekly basis.

Table 8.1b Frequency of Administrative Work

4.41 How often do you engage in administrative work?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	51	82%
Weekly	7	18%
Monthly	0	0%
Never	0	0%
No Response	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of administrative work. As indicated in table 8.1c, 46% rated administrative work extremely important, 33% very important and 21% moderately important.

Table 8.1c Importance of Administrative Work

4.42 How important do you feel administrative work is?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	0	0%
Moderately important	12	21%
Very important	19	33%
Extremely important	27	46%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

The importance that staff attributed to scheduling and mail work and the frequency with which they provide scheduling and mail services to the elected official was measured by three specific questions. Questions 4.43, 4.44 and 4.45 in the survey asked respondents if they engage in scheduling and mail services as a legislative staffer, the frequency in which they engage in scheduling and mail services and the importance of scheduling and mail work. As indicated in table 8.2a below, 90% of the respondents engaged in scheduling and mail work and 10% did not.

Table 8.2a Engagement in Scheduling and Mail Work

4.43 Do you engage in scheduling and mail work as a staff member in a legislative office?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	52	90%
No	6	10%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they engage in scheduling and mail work as a legislative staffer. As indicated in table 8.2b, 81% engaged in scheduling and mail work on a daily basis and 9% on a weekly basis.

Table 8.2b Frequency of Scheduling and Mail Work

4.44 How often do you provide scheduling and mail services to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	47	81%
Weekly	5	9%
Monthly	0	0%
Never	0	0%
No Response	6	10%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of scheduling and mail work. As indicated in table 8.2c, 51% rated scheduling and mail work extremely important, 41% very important, 5% moderately important and 3% slightly important.

Table 8.2c Importance of Scheduling and Mail

4.45 How important is scheduling and mail work?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	5	3%
Moderately important	8	5%
Very important	33	41%
Extremely important	12	51%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

The importance that staff attributed to personnel and staff management and the frequency in which they provide personnel and staff management services to the elected official was measured by three specific questions. Questions 4.46, 4.47 and 4.48 in the survey asked respondents if they engage in personnel and staff management services as a legislative staffer, the frequency in which they engage in personnel and staff management services and the importance of personnel and staff management work. As indicated in table 8.3a below, 81% of the respondents engaged in personnel and staff management and 19% did not.

Table 8.3a Engagement in Personnel and Staff Management

4.46 Do you engage in personnel & staff management as a staff member in a legislative office?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	47	81%
No	11	19%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they engage in personnel and staff management work as a legislative staffer. As indicated in table 8.3b, 57% engaged in personnel and staff management work on a daily basis, 17% on a weekly basis and 7% on a monthly basis.

Table 8.3b Frequency of Personnel & Staff Management

4.47 How often do you provide personnel & staff management services to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	33	57%
Weekly	10	17%
Monthly	4	7%
Never	0	0%
No Response	11	19%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of personnel and staff management. As indicated in table 8.3c, 38% rated personnel and staff management extremely important, 40% very important and 22% moderately important,

Table 8.3c Importance of Personnel & Staff Management

4.48 How important do you feel personnel & staff management is?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	0	0%
Moderately important	13	22%
Very important	23	40%
Extremely important	22	38%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

The importance that staff attributed to office budget management and the frequency in which they provide office budget management services to the elected official was measured by three specific questions. Questions 4.49, 4.50 and 4.51 in the survey asked respondents if they engage in office budget management services as a legislative staffer, the frequency with which they engage in office budget management services, and the importance of office budget management work. As indicated in table 8.4a below, 71% of the respondents engaged in office budget management and 29% did not.

Table 8.4a Engagement in Office Budget Management

4.49 Do you engage in office budget and management as a staff member in a legislative office?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	41	71%
No	17	29%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked how often they provide office budget management services as a legislative staffer. As indicated in table 8.4b, 7% engaged in office budget management services on a daily basis, 9% on a weekly basis and 55% on a monthly basis.

Table 8.4b Frequency of Office Budget Management

4.50 How often do you provide office budget management services to your elected official?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Daily	4	7%
Weekly	5	9%
Monthly	32	55%
Never	0	0%
No Response	17	29%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of office budget management. As indicated in table 8.4c, 17% office budget management extremely important, 81% very important and 2% moderately important.

Table 8.4c Importance of Office Budget Management

4.51 How important do you feel office budget management is?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not at all important	0	0%
Slightly important	0	0%
Moderately important	1	2%
Very important	47	81%
Extremely important	10	17%
No opinion	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

Demographics

Respondents were asked their age. As indicated in table 9.1, 12% were between the ages of 20-25, 24% between the ages of 26-30, 22% between the ages of 31-35, 9% between the ages of 36-40, 28% between the ages of 41-45, 3% between the ages 51-55 and 2% 55 and older.

Table 9.1 Ages

Please select your age range:		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Under 20	0	0%
20-25	7	12%
26-30	14	24%
31-35	13	22%
36-40	5	9%
41-45	16	28%
46-50	0	0%
51-55	2	3%
55+	1	2%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked if they have worked as a legislative staff member in states other than Texas. As indicated in table 9.2, 29% of respondents have worked in states other than Texas and 71% have not.

Table 9.2 Legislative Staffer Career Histories –Other States

Have you worked in other states as a legislative staff member?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	17	29%
No	41	71%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked their salary range. As indicated in table 9.3, 3% had salaries between \$30,000-\$39,999, 26% had salaries between \$40,000-\$49,999, 47% had salaries between \$50,000-\$59,999, 16% had salaries between \$60,000-\$69,999, 5% had salaries between \$70,000-\$79,999 and 3% had salaries between \$100,000-\$149,000.

Table 9.3 Salaries

What is your salary range?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Less than \$10,000	0	0%
\$10,000-\$19,999	0	0%
\$20,000-\$29,999	0	0%
\$30,000-\$39,999	2	3%
\$40,000-\$49,999	15	26%
\$50,000-\$59,999	27	47%
\$60,000-\$69,999	9	16%
\$70,000-\$79,999	3	5%
\$80,000-\$89,999	0	0%
\$90,000-\$99,999	0	0%
\$100,000-\$149,000	2	3%
More than \$150,000	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked if they worked part or full-time in the legislative office. As indicated in table 9.4, 3% of the respondents worked part-time and 97% worked full-time.

Table 9.4 Work Schedule

In the legislative office, do you work part-time or full-time?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Part-Time	2	3%
Full-Time	56	97%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked their ethnicity. As indicated in table 9.5, 71% of the respondents were White, 19% Hispanic, Latin or Spanish Origin, 5% Black or African American, 3% Asian and 2% some other race, ethnicity, or origin.

Table 9.5 Ethnicity

Which category describes you?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
White	41	71%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin	11	19%
Black or African American	3	5%
Asian	2	3%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0%
Middle Eastern or North African	0	0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0%
Some other race, ethnicity, or origin	1	2%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked about their marital status. As indicated in table 9.6, 67% of the respondents were single and 33% were married.

Table 9.6 Marital Statuses

What is your marital status?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Single	39	67%
Married	19	33%
Divorced	0	0%
Widowed	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked if they had children. As indicated in table 9.7, 36% of the respondents had children and 64% of the respondents did not.

Table 9.7 Children

Do you have children?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	21	36%
No	37	64%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked about their personal political affiliation. As indicated in table 9.8, 29% were Democrat, 64% Republican and 7% Independent.

Table 9.8 Personal Political Affiliations

1.3 What is your personal political affiliation?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Democrat	17	29%
Republican	37	64%
Independent	4	7%
None	0	0%
Total N	58	100%

Respondents were asked their education level. As indicated in table 9.9, 64% of the respondents held Bachelor's degrees, 14% Master's degrees, 19% Law degrees and 3% Doctorates.

Table 9.9 Educations

1.3 What is your education level?		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
High School	0	0%
Some college credit, no degree	0	0%
Trade/Technical/Vocational training	0	0%
Associate degree	0	0%
Bachelor's degree	37	64%
Master's degree	8	14%
Professional degree	0	0%
Law degree	11	19%
Professional degree	0	0%
Doctorate degree	2	3%
Total N	58	100%

Findings

There are four primary roles of legislative staff: (1) Political Strategist, (2) Researcher, (3) Public Relations and (4) Administrative. Although each of the roles distinctly differs from one another, responses from the survey showed some interesting patterns. (1) The political

strategist role is key, (2) Social media services are not a prevalent role for women legislative staff (3) All respondents engaged in administrative work as a staff member (4) Most women legislative staff is white and (5) Most of the respondents held at least a bachelor's degree.

The political strategist role was seen as an important role for women legislative staff based on the survey. The importance that women legislative staff attributed to the political strategist role was measured by five specific questions. Questions 1.3 and 1.2 asked respondents to rate the importance of the political strategist role and to indicate the frequency in which they engage in political strategy. As indicated in Table 5.1a, none of the respondents felt that it was not an important role of a legislative staffer. Almost 80% of the respondents felt that the political strategist role was very important or extremely important.

Respondents were also asked how often they engage in political strategy. As indicated in Table 5.1b, more than 30% of respondents engaged on a daily basis, 40% on a weekly basis, while 20% on a monthly basis. Respondents who did not engage in political strategy were not asked the frequency in which they engage in political strategy. The importance and frequency of political strategy that women legislative staff indicated in the survey shows that they play an integral part in policymaking and that they are an important asset to their offices.

Social media have taken the world by storm, and are an essential part of society. Most government state agencies and elected officials have social media and use it to participate with the communities that they serve. However, over 80% of women legislative staff does not provide social media services to their elected official. This shows that elected officials are either handling their own social media accounts, elected officials hires specialized staff to manage their social media outlets or elected officials utilize campaign staff to handle social media. It is interesting

that 97% of women legislative staff engage in political strategy while only 12% engage in social media. Is social media seen as a more specialized task than political strategy? The administrative role provided more clear results.

The administrative role as a legislative staffer was the only role that every respondent engaged in. The importance that women legislative staff attributed to the political strategist role was measured by five specific questions. Questions 4.40 and 4.41 asked respondents if they engage in administrative work as a staff member in legislative office and to indicate the frequency in which they engage in administrative work. As indicated in Table 6.1a, all of the respondents engaged in administrative work.

Respondents were asked their ethnicity. As indicated in table 9.5, 71% of the respondents were White, 19% Hispanic, Latin or Spanish Origin, 5% Black or African American, 2% Asian and 2% some other race, ethnicity, or origin. This shows that although women legislative staff provides diversity by being female, that is where it ends. However, these results are quite reflective of the racial makeup of the Texas State Legislature. Among elected officials in the Texas Legislature there are: 65% White, 23% Hispanic, 10% Black and 2% Asian.

I also asked the respondents various demographic questions to indicate their: age, tenure as a legislative staffer, history of their careers as a legislative staffer, salary range, ethnicity, marital status, children, political affiliation and education level. All of the respondents at least held a bachelor's degree.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results from the survey. Although there were many varying results, there were high levels of importance placed on particular legislative staff roles. In general, women legislative staffs in the Texas Legislature are well educated; women legislative staff hardly provides any social media services, and hold vast importance to the political strategist and administrative roles.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Chapter Purpose

The final chapter provides a summary of the findings from the data collected from women legislative staff regarding their role. The purpose of this research project is to describe the role of women legislative staff in the Texas Legislature and the survey results have shown common themes.

Research Summary

Five major conclusions were reached in this study. The first has to do with the role that was deemed most important by the respondents. The survey showed that respondents find the political strategist role as one of the most important roles. The political strategist role of legislative staff is complex in nature, and consists of three essential sub-roles: vote recommendations, strategic planning and direct contact with the elected official. Almost 80% of the respondents felt that the political strategist role was very important or extremely important. The Chief of Staff in a legislative office is the primary political strategist. Political strategy involves high-level participation in the elected official's decisions and the inner workings of the legislative office. The survey showed that 40% of the respondents engage in political strategy weekly. This indicates that women legislative staff is overwhelmingly engaged in political strategy and understand the vast importance of doing so.

The second major conclusion is the void of social media services being provided to elected officials. Over 80% of women legislative staff do not provide social media services to their elected official. This shows that elected officials are either handling their own social media accounts or elected officials hires specialized staff to manage their social media outlets. Either

way, elected officials understand the importance and value of social media, which indicates that it would be beneficial for the communities in which they serve to reach out to them via social media.

The third major conclusion is the importance of the administrative role of a legislative office. Every respondent indicated that they engaged in administrative work. The administrative role of a legislative staffer is the most visible part of a legislative office and consists of three essential sub-roles: scheduling and mail, personnel and staff management and office budget management. The administrative role is one that is closely linked to women legislative staff, to characterize them as the *secretary*. However, administrative work is an extremely important part of working in a legislative office and the survey results indicate that it is difficult to work in a legislative office without engaging in some sort of administrative work.

The fourth conclusion is the lack of racial diversity among women legislative staff. 71% of the respondents were White, 19% Hispanic, Latin or Spanish Origin, 5% Black or African American, 2% Asian and 2% some other race, ethnicity, or origin. However, the racial makeup mirrors the racial makeup of the Texas State Legislature. Among elected officials in the Texas Legislature there are: 65% White, 23% Hispanic, 10% Black and 2% Asian.

The fifth and final conclusion relates to the education level of the respondents. The demographic questions that I asked each of the respondents resulted in varying demographics. However, there was one demographic question that yielded vast results. All of the respondents held at least a bachelor's degree. The education levels of the respondents show that higher education is essential to work in a legislative office, meaning that the women legislative staff members hold roles that require higher education.

There has been research done on women as legislative staff (Tabakman, 2009). However, this research was done on the federal level focusing on congressional staff. Studies on legislative staff in state legislatures are important because policy making at the state level shapes our everyday lives. It is essential to understand the role of legislative staff because they are influential in the policy making process and are not elected by the constituencies they serve. Women legislative staff is an area that is understudied. Studies like this one are useful because in order to accurately evaluate women's role in politics, an analysis of women as legislative staff is imperative. The survey results show that women legislative play an important role in legislative offices and are in fact active in politics.

In the future, it would be beneficial to conduct another study similar to this one during the 85th Legislative Session to receive results from all legislative staff, male and female, that are needed during legislative sessions to run an efficient legislative office to research their role in the policymaking process and to compare the differences between male and female staffers.

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Appendix A



Institutional Review Board

Request For Exemption

Certificate of Approval

Applicant: Chasity Tillis

Request Number : EXP2016Y653707P

Date of Approval: 01/27/16

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Blunde".

Assistant Vice President for Research
and Federal Relations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Lane".

Chair, Institutional Review Board