

# Constituency, Identity, and Surrogate Substantive Representation: Minority Women in U.S. State Legislatures

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SUB Cherry/Silver



Democracy stipulates that the people elect representatives who can adequately voice interests in the legislature to generate good policy. In this paper, Julia Hellwege focuses on minority women legislators' perception of their constituency and how they build their constituency by asking whom representatives seek to represent and how do they do it. She empirically examines how representatives define the concept of "constituency," how this conceptualization may differ from traditional definitions that tend to be restricted to the geographical boundaries of the district, and how they respond to their defined constituencies through their legislative behavior and activities. Taking Mansbridge's theory of surrogate representation to task, Hellwege asks under what circumstances will a representative behave as a surrogate representative by using semi-structured elite interviews with state legislators conducted at the 2014 NCSL Annual Meeting and an original survey of state legislators to empirically test the theoretical implications of surrogate representation and the conditions under which it is most likely to occur.



Julia Marin Hellwege is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Political Science. She is also Project Manager for Ready to Run NM, a training program for women interested in public office. She has published in *Social Science Quarterly* and *Politics, Groups and Identities*. Her dissertation asks how and why minority women state legislators act as surrogate representatives for constituents outside their districts. Her data collection includes personal interviews and an original survey.

