The Impact of Women Legislators on Trade Policy

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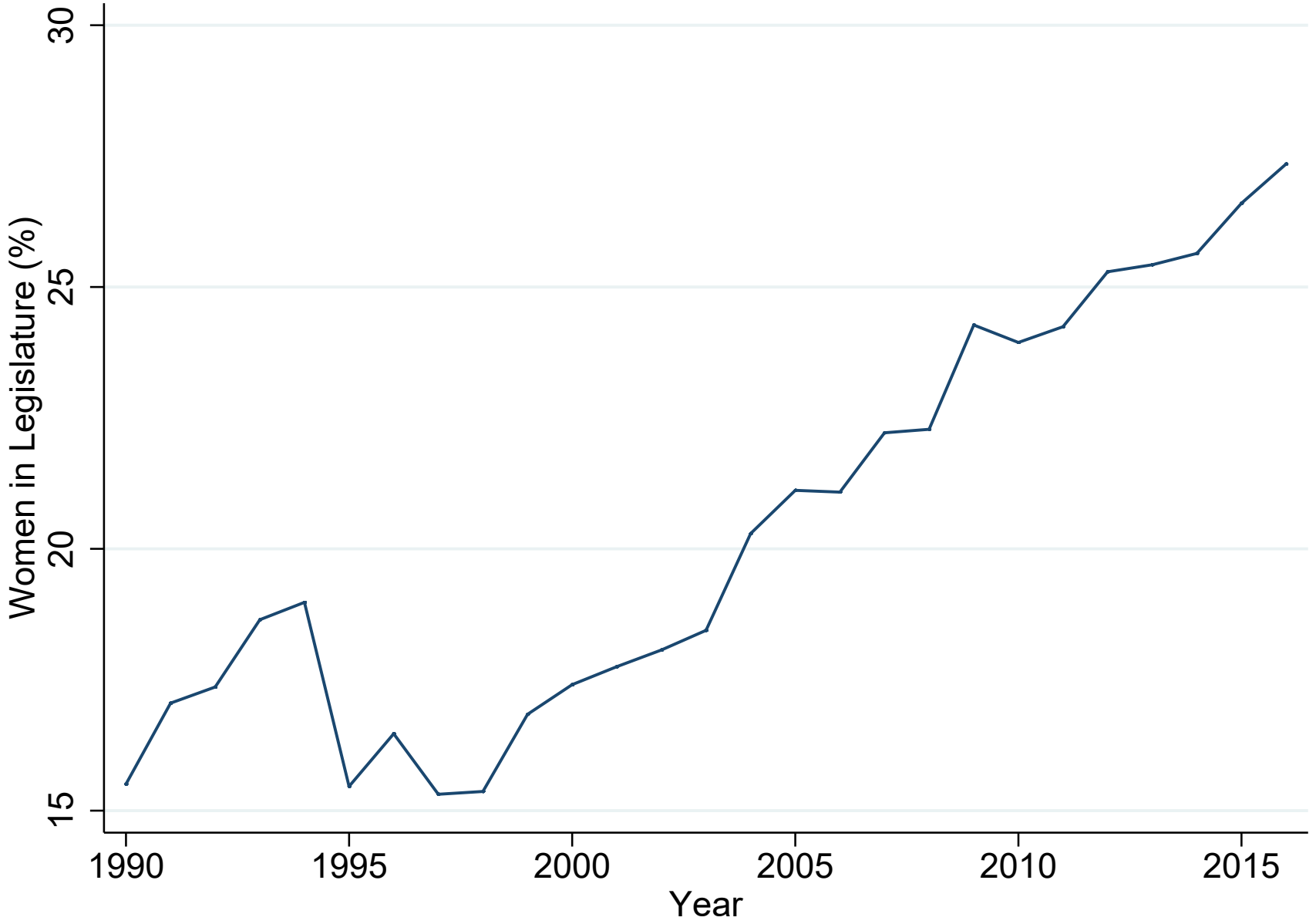
Women Legislators, OECD 1990–2015



Motivation

- The number of female legislators is increasing
- Impact in legislatures is reflected in content of legislative activity (Swers 2002, 2013):
  - Legislate on women's issues (Pearson and Dancey 2011)
  - Increased development assistance supporting females in other countries (Breuning 2001)
  - Support humanitarian intervention abroad (Shea and Christian 2016)
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Tariffs Rates and Women in Legislatures

Gender and Trade Literature

Trade is a Gendered Issue

- Survey based analyses suggest that women are less supportive of free trade than men

  (O'Rourke and Sinnott 2001, Scheve and Slaugher 2001, Burgoon and Hiscox 2008, Mayda and Rodrik 2005, Mansfield and Mutz 2009, Ardanaz, Murillio and Pinto 2013, Mansfield et al 2014, Guisinger 2016)
- Gender gap in protectionism attributed to:
  - Skill, education and economic knowledge (Burgoon and Hiscox 2008);
  - Mobility constraints (Cooke and Bailey 1996, Mckinnish 2008);
  - Preference for lower involvement in foreign affairs (Mansfield and Mutz 2009, Mansfield et al 2014).

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ARGUMENT

- Trade policy is multidimensional:
  - Affects production and consumption at home and abroad
- Trade openness as means to improve living conditions and promote development abroad
  - Promotes exporting activities from the developing world, which reduce gender wage gap (Weinberg 2000, Black 2004, Juhn et al 2013)
  - Empowers women and affects developmental outcomes (Aguayo-Telles et al 2010, Duflo 2012)
  - Development spillover likely stronger when developed countries open their markets

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Our contribution

Argument:

- Female legislators are more likely to value trade openness as an effective means to improve the living conditions of women abroad

Testable hypothesis:

- As women gain legislative seats tariff levels will go down
  - Counter to survey-based evidence suggesting that women are more protectionist than males

Findings:

- More female legislators associated with lower tariffs

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- Time Series Cross Section ADL models
- Instrumental Variable models
- Roll Call Analysis of US trade bills

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ADL

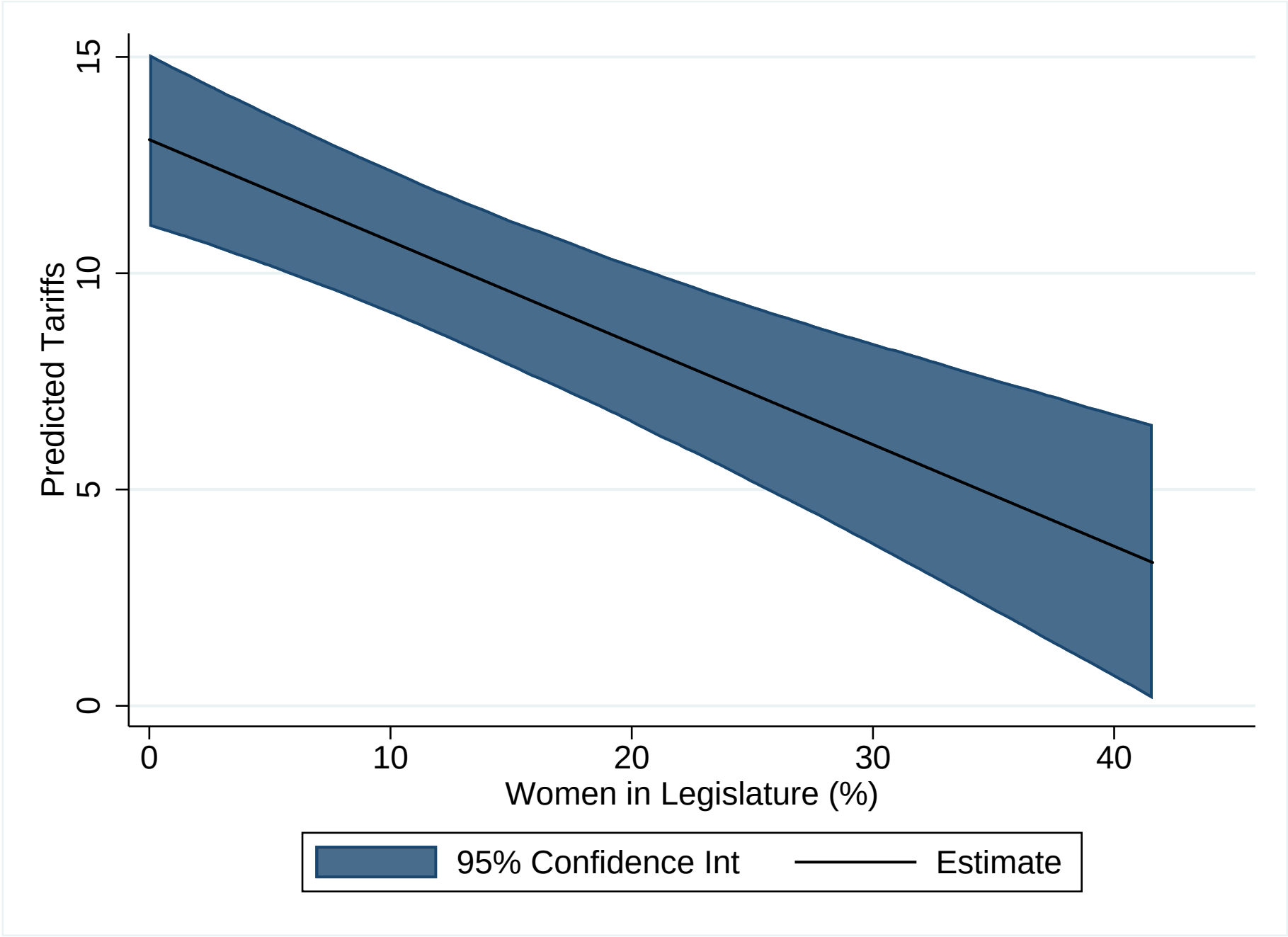
- Dependent variable (WDI):
  - i) weighted average of all applied tariffs rates as a percent
  - ii) weighted average of MFN tariffs rates
- Independent variable: Women in legislatures (Paxton et al 2008 and WDI)
- Controls: GDP, GDP/cap, growth and unemployment; electoral institutions and partisanship; women's political, economic and social rights
- Sample: OECD countries 1990–2015
- Models: ADL model

$$Y_t = a_1 Y_{t-1} + \beta_2 X_{t-1} + \upsilon_i + \varepsilon_t$$

Table: OLS of Women Legislators and Tariffs Rates, 1990 - 2015

	Weighted Mean All Tariff Rates		*Weighted Mean MFN Tariff Rates*	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Women (%) in Legislature	**-0.214*** **(0.040)**	**-0.434*** **(0.085)**	**-0.118*** **(0.023)**	**-0.140*** **(0.037)**
Economic Controls	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*
Institutional Controls	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*
Societal Controls	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*
Country Dummies	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*
Year Dummies	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*
N	258	128	258	128
Countries	19	17	19	17

Predicted Tariff Rates (Table 1, Model 1)



Instrumental Variable Estimation

- Unobserved confounders may bias OLS estimates
- Identify exogenous source of variation in female participation in legislatures to address endogeneity
  1. Number of years since first woman legislator (Paxton et al 2008)
  2. Ratio of female-to-male enrollment in secondary schools, lagged by a generation (WDI)

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Women (%)	-0.307*	-0.256*	-0.539*	-0.307*
in Legislature	(0.150)	(0.107)	(0.208)	(0.109)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	258	258	177	177

Roll call analysis of US Trade Bills

- Analysis of free trade bills in US Congress 1990 - 2015
- Dependent variable: vote in favor (1) or not (0) for trade bills
- Independent Variable: Gender of US Legislator
- Control for partisanship, ideology, and district characteristics.

Roll call results

Table: US Congressional Roll Call Votes on Free Trade Bills, 1990 - 2015

	(1)	(2)
Female Legislator	0.162*	0.184*
	(0.045)	(0.055)
Partisan Controls	✓	✓
District Controls		✓
N	9791	3668

Conclusions

- Access to foreign markets is an effective tool for improving the living conditions and empowerment of women
- Despite gender gap in protectionist attitudes, women legislators are more likely to support trade openness
- We provide strong and robust evidence that as the proportion of female legislators increases countries are more likely to lower import tariffs
- Findings have implications on future of trade policy strategies

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Thank you!

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	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Women in Legislature (%)	-0.214*	-0.214*	-0.434*	-0.118*	-0.100*	-0.140*
	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.085)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.037)
Tariffs$_{t-1}$ (All)	0.305*	0.274*	-0.115			
	(0.047)	(0.052)	(0.099)			
Tariffs$_{t-1}$ (MFN)				0.630*	0.633*	0.487*
				(0.031)	(0.034)	(0.071)
Unemployment	0.105*	0.139*	0.207	0.052*	0.084*	0.086
	(0.044)	(0.053)	(0.123)	(0.024)	(0.028)	(0.053)
GDP	-2.853	-2.563	5.695	-2.135*	-1.618	0.278
	(1.648)	(1.851)	(4.916)	(0.921)	(0.976)	(2.131)
Growth	-0.043	-0.034	-0.120	-0.020	-0.014	-0.040
	(0.036)	(0.044)	(0.095)	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.042)
GDP per cap	0.096	0.172*	0.061	0.099*	0.141*	-0.007
	(0.057)	(0.069)	(0.134)	(0.033)	(0.036)	(0.059)
Left Executive			-0.485			-0.087
			(0.485)			(0.210)
PR system			-0.146			0.984
			(2.151)			(0.949)
Women's Econ. Rights			0.368			0.094
			(0.467)			(0.204)
Women's Polit. Rights			0.023			0.110
			(0.671)			(0.291)
Women's Social Rights			-0.894			-0.381
			(0.507)			(0.217)
Country Dummies	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*
Year Dummies	*No*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*	*Yes*
R-Squared	0.53	0.58	0.55	0.84	0.87	0.84
AIC	849	865	473	549	534	258
N	258	258	128	258	258	128
Countries	19	19	17	19	19	17

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Women in Legislature	(0.063)	(0.067)
Women in Legislature$_{t-1}$	-0.234*	-0.120*
	(0.047)	(0.030)
Δ Women in Legislature (%)	0.014	-0.022
	(0.055)	(0.031)
Unemployment$_{t-1}$	0.095	0.076*
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Δ Unemployment	-0.198	-0.150*
	(0.134)	(0.074)
GDP$_{t-1}$	-2.202	-1.227
	(1.861)	(1.111)
Δ GDP	37.834	-111.298
	(153.490)	(85.682)
GDP per cap$_{t-1}$	0.056	0.131*
	(0.065)	(0.042)
Δ GDP per cap	-0.122	0.051
	(0.195)	(0.115)
Growth$_{t-1}$	-0.490	1.017
	(1.512)	(0.845)
Δ Growth	-0.432	1.048
	(1.508)	(0.844)
Tariffs$_{t-1}$ (All)	-0.720*	
	(0.049)	
Tariffs$_{t-1}$ (MFN)		-0.387*
		(0.038)
R-Squared	0.52	0.57
AIC	829	525
N	248	248
Countries	19	19

$*p < 0.05$; ; MFN = Most Favored Nation, All = All states. Sample analyzed includes only OECD, non-EU states. Unit and year fixed effects included. F-Test of Δ coefficients fails to reject the null hypothesis that these are jointly zero.

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Tariffs$_{t-1}$ (All)	0.277*		0.176*	
	(0.063)		(0.080)	
Tariffs$_{t-1}$ (MFN)		0.559*		0.707*
		(0.062)		(0.071)
Unemployment	0.151	0.114*	0.302*	0.196*
	(0.083)	(0.053)	(0.143)	(0.067)
GDP	-0.984	0.547	4.950	3.583
	(3.327)	(2.221)	(5.209)	(2.330)
Growth	-0.068	-0.061	-0.136	-0.065
	(0.052)	(0.037)	(0.071)	(0.037)
GDP per cap	0.077	0.065	-0.003	0.014
	(0.062)	(0.042)	(0.107)	(0.049)
Constant	31.308	-14.983	-141.535	-104.661
	(96.642)	(64.121)	(151.101)	(67.182)
R-Squared	0.76	0.94	0.67	0.95
AIC	891	621	686	410
N	258	258	177	177

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		(0.062)		(0.071)
Unemployment	0.151	0.114*	0.302*	0.196*
	(0.083)	(0.053)	(0.143)	(0.067)
GDP	-0.984	0.547	4.950	3.583
	(3.327)	(2.221)	(5.209)	(2.330)
Growth	-0.068	-0.061	-0.136	-0.065
	(0.052)	(0.037)	(0.071)	(0.037)
GDP per cap	0.077	0.065	-0.003	0.014
	(0.062)	(0.042)	(0.107)	(0.049)
Constant	31.308	-14.983	-141.535	-104.661
	(96.642)	(64.121)	(151.101)	(67.182)
R-Squared	0.76	0.94	0.67	0.95

Table 3: US Congressional Roll Call Votes on Free Trade Bills, 1990 - 2015

	(1)	(2)
Female Legislator	0.162*	0.184*
	(0.045)	(0.055)
Democrat	-0.863	-0.921*
	(0.512)	(0.330)
DW Nominate	0.717	0.971*
	(1.032)	(0.412)
High Skill		1.128
		(2.274)
Unemployment		1.634
		(5.393)
Log Likelihood	-4861	-1620
AIC	9733	3248
N	9791	3668

$*p < 0.05$; Roll call fixed effects. Standard errors clustered on Congressional session.