

# Changes in the National Assembly's Gender Sensitivity Due to an Increase in the Number of Women Assembly Members: An Analysis Based on the IPU's Parliamentary Gender Sensitivity Survey<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Given that the share of female members rose from 5.9% in the 16th National Assembly to 13.0% in the 17th to 13.7% in the 18th (as of October 2011, 15.1%, including seats succeeded), this study was conducted to examine the changes occurring in decision-making and parliamentary activities as a result of this increase in the number of woman assembly members. The results detail the changes triggered by the increase in female National Assembly members. First, the increase resulted in greater participation of women in decision-making processes such as the National Assembly Standing Committees, as well as greater influence by women. In the 16th National Assembly, the number of the Standing Committees lacking a female member stood at five. This figure, however, declined to three in the 17th National Assembly and to zero in the 18th. This clearly demonstrates that an increase in female National Assembly members can serve as a critical factor in the decision-making processes. Furthermore, in terms of the number of Standing Committee chairwomen and female

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1 This article is a revised and supplemented version of "Changes in the National Assembly's Gender Sensitivity due to an Increase in the Number of Assemblywomen: An Analysis Based on the IPU's Parliamentary Gender Sensitivity Survey" published in 2011 by Korean Women's Development Institute (authors: Won-hong Kim, Bok-tae Kim, In-soon Cha, and Seon-young Jeon)

Standing Committee secretaries, the proportion of women chairs immediately after general elections has risen slightly from 5.9% (one) in each half of the 16th National Assembly, to 17.6% (three) in the first half and 11.8% (two) in the second half of the 17th, to 18.8% (three) in the first half of the 18th.

Second, along with their increase in number, female members' parliamentary activities have become more prominent in terms of both quantity and quality. First of all, the proportion of female sponsors of bills was higher than that of their male counterparts in all of the three National Assemblies. In particular, the proportion was the largest in the first half of the 17th National Assembly when the share of female members rose from 5.9% in the previous National Assembly to 13%. The proportion of female sponsors exceeded the rate of representation of women in the three National Assemblies. Specifically, the initial half of the 17th National Assembly showed the highest rate of female sponsors relative to women's representation. This suggests that through both cooperation and competition, an increased number of female representatives enthusiastically engaged in legislative activities at a rate three times greater than that of the 16th National Assembly, which included only a few woman assembly members. In terms of areas of interest, female members expressed a strong interest in welfare and education, and, notably, with the increase in the number of woman assembly members, their scope of bill sponsorship has been expanded to areas related to committees covering finance and economy, education, and land and maritime affairs. This seems to stem from the increase in the number of female legislators and a consequent expansion in the diversity of the woman assembly members' specialties.

Third, the increase in the number of woman assembly members has provided them a space not only to demonstrate consistent interest in women-related issues, but also to pay increased attention to a diversity of issues. Indeed, the share of women-related bills among the bills sponsored by female members was on the decline from 25.5% in the first half of the 16th National Assembly to 11.9% and 6.9% in the first halves of the 17th and 18th National Assemblies, respectively. At the same time, the average number of bills sponsored by a single female legislator grew from 3.2 in the first half of the 16th National Assembly to 17.1 and 24.5 in the same periods of the 17th and 18th National Assemblies, respectively, while the average number of women-related bills sponsored by a single assemblywoman stood at 0.8, 2.0, and 1.7 in the first halves of the 16th, 17th, and 18th National Assemblies, respectively. These figures indicate that an increase in the number of female legislators provided them greater fortitude for promoting not only women-related bills, but also more diverse bills across a range of areas. However, to support additional gender sensitive activities by lawmakers, there should be policy supports such as guidelines for women-related agendas, monitoring, and establishment of policy advisory groups to help develop women-related agendas.

Fourth, the increase in the number of female lawmakers demonstrated certain positive effects on the gender sensitive parliamentary activities of male representatives. On average, 0.8 (13

in total), 2.0 (79 in total), and 1.7 (69 in total) women-related bills were sponsored by a single female lawmaker in the first halves of the 16th, 17th, and 18th National Assemblies, respectively, while 0.04 (10 in total), 0.2 (53 in total), and 0.4 (111 in total) were sponsored by a single male legislator over the same periods, which illustrates a steady increase. Therefore, it can be concluded that the increase in female members has enhanced their male counterparts' awareness of gender equality and gender sensitivity. However, female legislators still showed a higher sensitivity to rights issues such as women's representation and job creation than did male legislators.

Keywords: Female members of the National Assembly, Gender sensitivity of the National Assembly, Gender-sensitive parliamentary activities, Women-related bills, Gender differences.

## I. Rationale and Objectives

As part of its efforts to promote gender mainstreaming in parliaments around the world, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has been recently conducting a survey on the mechanisms and measures in place in each country that are designed to promote more gender-sensitive parliaments, along with a gender equality survey targeting political parties and legislators. The former focuses on analyzing gender sensitive parliamentary activities and the measures taken to promote women's participation in parliamentary systems. In this context, given that the proportion of women lawmakers has risen from 5.9% in the 16th National Assembly to 13.0% and 13.7% (as of October 2011, 15.1% including seats succeeded) in the 17th and 18th National Assemblies, respectively, this study analyzed changes in organizations and parliamentary activities resulting from the increase in the number of woman assembly members over that period and sought ways to encourage gender sensitive activities in the coming 19th National Assembly.

The research foci and methods are as follows: First, an analysis was performed on the composition of female members of the 16th to 18th National Assemblies, as well as on gender gaps in parliamentary activities. In this regard, analyses were conducted on a) women's rate of inclusion in National Assembly Standing Committees; b) changes in women's participation rate in decision-making processes as chairwomen or secretaries of National Assembly Standing

Committees; and c) gender gaps in bill sponsorship and the passage of bills. In terms of the research method, the official website of the National Assembly was analyzed, as were bills. Second, an analysis was conducted on changes in gender sensitivity in developing and reviewing policy agendas over the aforementioned period. To this end, analyses were performed on a) differences between male and female legislators manifested in the review processes of women-related bills in the given period; b) gender differences in agenda preferences; and c) gender sensitivity in the National Assembly Standing Committees' review processes. For these analyses, the Standing Committees' women-related bills from the designated period were studied and analyzed. Based on these results, this study suggested a future path for enhancing gender sensitive parliamentary activities.

## II. An Analysis on Gender Differences in Parliamentary Activities from the 16th National Assembly to the First Half of the 18th National Assembly

### 1. Standing Committee Composition by Gender

As of the date of each election, woman assembly members held 16 (5.9%), 39 (13.0%), and 41 (13.7%) of 273, 299, and 299 seats in total in the 16th, 17th, and 18th National Assemblies, respectively. As such, while female representatives only made up a considerably minor proportion of the National Assembly, their numbers have been on a steady rise.

#### 1) Gender Composition of Standing Committees in the 16th National Assembly

The first half of the 16th National Assembly embodied 16 Standing Committees. The committee concerning women's policies was operated as a special committee without a voting right in the bill-review process. 16 woman assembly members engaged in legislative activities through the Finance and Economy Committee, the Education Committee, the Science, Technology, Information, and Telecommunication Committee, the Health and Welfare Committee, and the Environment and Labor Committee, while they had yet to participate in the House Steering Committee, the Legislation and Judiciary Committee, the Agriculture, Forestry, Maritime Affairs, and Fisheries Committee, the Construction and Transportation Committee, and the Intelligence Committee.

In the second half, the Gender Equality Committee was included as a standing committee, making 17 Standing Committees in total. 17 women legislators, including a proportion-

al representative who succeeded to a seat, participated in legislative activities in the Education Committee, the Science, Technology, Information, and Telecommunication Committee, the Commerce, Industry, and Energy Committee, and other committees as well. Some committees contained more than two female members. On the other hand, there were no female members on the Finance and Economy Committee, the Government Administration and Local Autonomy Committee, the Culture and Tourism Committee, the Agriculture, Forestry, Maritime Affairs, and Fisheries Committee, and the Intelligence Committee.

When the proportion of women in the 16th National Assembly is taken as a baseline, only five Standing Committees and the Special Committee on Women's Affairs had a proportion of women members exceeding the baseline of 5.9% in the first half, while eight committees showed a percentage of female members surpassing the second half baseline of 6.2%. In each committee, the proportion of women generally increased in the second half.

## 2) Gender Composition of National Assembly Standing Committees in the 17th National Assembly

In the first half, with 17 Standing Committees organized, the Agriculture, Forestry, Maritime Affairs, and Fisheries Committee, the Construction and Transportation Committee, and the Intelligence Committee did not include any female members, while the remainder of the Standing Committees witnessed female members engaging in legislative activities.

In the second half, the Unification, Foreign Affairs, and Trade Committee, the Agriculture, Forestry, Maritime Affairs, and Fisheries Committee, and the Intelligence Committee contained no women members, while woman assembly members participated in legislative activities on the rest of the National Assembly Standing Committees. Seven, six, and eight women served as members of the National Policy Committee, the Culture and Tourism Committee, and the Health and Welfare Committee, respectively. This shows that compared to the first half, women legislators were focused to a relatively greater extent on these three committees.

Compared to a baseline of the 17th National Assembly's proportions of women, nine and seven National Assembly Standing Committees recorded a percentage of women over 13.0% and 13.7% in the first and the second halves, respectively. This suggests that relative to the first half, female members in the second disproportionately joined particular committees. While throughout the 16th National Assembly, five committees included no female members, in each half of the 17th National Assembly only three committees had none. This indicates that the increase in the num-

ber of woman assembly members reduced the number of the Standing Committees lacking female members.

### 3) Gender Composition of Standing Committees in the First Half of the 18th National Assembly

In the first half of the 18th National Assembly, 16 Standing Committees were formed. In terms of the number of elected representatives, the tally of woman assembly members only increased by two over the previous National Assembly. However, women legislators even-ly joined every one of the Standing Committees to engage in active legislative tasks. Notably, while only one or two women had participated in the Unification, Foreign Affairs, and Trade Committee in the previous two National Assemblies, five women joined this committee. In addition, the Health and Welfare Committee boasted ten female members in this half. When compared to the baseline, the proportion of Woman assembly members in a given half, five committees surpassed a percentage of female members of 13.7%, illustrating that women's participation was less disproportionately concentrated than had been the case in the 16th and 17th National Assemblies.

## 2. Participation as Chairs or Secretaries

### 1) Chairs

As of the date of organization, two, five, and three women chaired National Assembly Standing Committees in the 16th and 17th National Assemblies and the first half of the 18th National Assembly, respectively.

### 2) Secretaries

As of the date of organization, six, seven, and five women served as secretaries on the National Assembly Standing Committees in the 16th and 17th National Assemblies and in the first half of the 18th National Assembly, respectively. Given that the 18th National Assembly contains one less Standing Committee than did the 16th and 17th National Assemblies, it can be said that women's participation as secretaries is on the rise.

Table 1. Chairs and Female Secretaries from the 16th National Assembly to the First Half of the 18th National Assembly

(Unit: No. of people)

	House Steering	Legislation and Judiciary	National Policy	Finance and Economy	Unification and Foreign Affairs	National Defense	Gov. Administration and Local Autonomy	Education	Science and Technology	Culture and Tourism	Agriculture and Maritime Affairs	Industry and Energy	Health and Welfare	Environment and Labor	Construction and Transportation	Intelligence	Gender Equality	Percentage (%)
1H/16th			- (1)														1 (2)	5.9 (8.8)
2H/16th													- (1)				1 (2)	5.9 (8.8)
1H/17th			1 -					- (1)		1 -			- (1)				1 (2)	17.6 (11.8)
2H/17th			- (1)							1 -							1 (2)	11.8 (8.8)
1H/18th			1 -		- (1)					- (1)				1 -		- (1)	1 (2)	18.8 (15.6)

Note: For the 18th National Assembly, many of the names of the National Assembly Standing Committees were changed. In this table, titles were assigned based on the Standing Committee's related areas. For the first half of the 16th National Assembly, the Special Committee on Women's Affairs was considered the Gender Equality Committee.

The figures in parentheses are the numbers of female secretaries.

### 3. Gender Differences in Bill Sponsorship

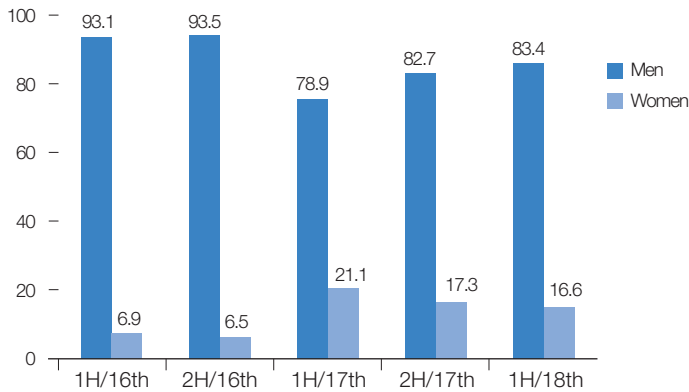


Figure 1. Bill Sponsorship in National Assembly Standing Committees from the 16th National Assembly to the First Half of the 18th National Assembly

## 1) 16th National Assembly

### (1) First half of the 16th National Assembly

When bill sponsorship within the Standing Committees over the first half of the 16th National Assembly is examined according to gender, among the 742 total bills introduced, 51 (6.9%) were sponsored by female legislators, which exceeds the 5.9% rate of women's representation in the National Assembly. In contrast, 691 (93.1%) of them were sponsored by male legislators, falling short of the 94.1% rate of Assemblymen in the National Assembly.

Topics with the highest level of female sponsorship were related to the policy agenda addressed by the Gender Equality Committee, marking a share of 66.7%. These were followed by those under the Environment and Labor Committee, the Education Committee, and the Commerce, Industry, and Energy Committee. In terms of the number of bills sponsored by women, the most frequently proposed topics were related to the Public Administration and Security Committee, the Environment and Labor Committee, and the Health and Welfare Committee. Contrastingly, no bills were sponsored by women on six Standing Committees—the House Steering Committee, the National Policy Committee, the Unification, Foreign Affairs, and Trade Committee, the Agriculture, Forestry, Maritime Affairs, and Fisheries Committee, the Construction and Transportation Committee, and the Intelligence Committee.

### (2) Second half of the 16th National Assembly

Over the second half of the 16th National Assembly, 852 bills were introduced in total. Among them, 55 (6.5%) were sponsored by women, a 0.4% decline from the first half. In terms of the percentage of female sponsorship, the Gender Equality Committee recorded the highest number as both of the two bills issuing from this committee were sponsored by women. This committee was followed by the Science, Technology, Information, and Telecommunication Committee, the Education Committee, and the Environment and Labor Committee. In terms of the number of bills sponsored by women, the Education Committee, the Environment and Labor Committee, and the Government Administration and Local Autonomy Committee presented 12, 11, and 9, respectively. However, no bills were sponsored by women in eight other committees—the House Steering Committee, the National Defense Committee, the Culture and Tourism Committee, the Agriculture, Forestry, Maritime Affairs, and Fisheries Committee, the Commerce, Industry, and Energy Committee, the Construction and Transportation Committee, the Unification, Foreign Affairs, and Trade Committee, and the Intelligence Committee.

## 2) 17th National Assembly

### (1) First half of the 17th National Assembly

Among the 3,150 bills presented in total, 666 or 21.1% were sponsored by women, exceed-



ing the 13.0% rate of women's representation as of the date of election. This suggests that women legislators actively engaged in parliamentary activities. 2,484 or 78.9% of the bills were sponsored by men, lower than 87%, the proportion of male representatives in the National Assembly.

Topics with the highest level of female sponsorship were related to the policy agenda pertaining to the Gender Equality Committee, followed by the Health and Welfare Committee with 43.6%, the Education Committee with 35.2%, and the Culture and Tourism Committee with 25.1%. In terms of the number of bills sponsored by women, the agenda with the most frequently proposed bills was related to of the Health and Welfare Committee, followed by the Finance and Economy Committee and the Government Administration and Local Autonomy Committee. One of the most significant changes noted in this half is that all of the Standing Committees except the Intelligence Committee witnessed female members sponsoring relevant bills, unlike in the 16th National Assembly.

## (2) Second half of the 17th National Assembly

Among the 2,568 bills introduced in total, 443 or 17.3% were sponsored by women, a 3.8% drop from the first half. Topics with the highest level of female sponsorship were related to the policy agenda of the Gender Equality Committee, followed by the Health and Welfare Committee with 36.9%, the National Defense Committee with 29.4%, and the National Policy Committee with 28.2%. In terms of the number of bills sponsored by women, the Health and Welfare Committee topped the list, followed by the Finance and Economy Committee, the Government Administration and Local Autonomy Committee, and the Education Committee. In this period, once again, all of the Standing Committees with the exception of the Intelligence Committee saw bills sponsored by female members.

## 3) First Half of the 18th National Assembly

Among the 6,055 total bills proposed, 1,005 or 16.6% were sponsored by women, higher than the 13.7% rate of women's representation as of the date of election. Their male counterparts sponsored 5,050 bills, a proportion lower than that of men assembly members in the National Assembly, 86.3%.

The Gender Equality and Family Committee's policy agenda showed the highest percentage of female sponsorship, followed by that of the Intelligence Committee with 44.4%, the Health and Welfare Committee with 29.3%, and the Environment and Labor Committee with 24.0%. In terms of the number of bills sponsored by women, the Health and Welfare Committee ranked first, followed by the Public Administration and Security Committee and the Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs Committee. In this period, all committees saw bills sponsored by women. What is noteworthy is that male representatives overtook their female counterparts in sponsorship of the bills from the Gender Equality and Family Committee in this period.

## 4. Gender Differences in the Passage of Bills

### 1) 16th National Assembly

#### (1) First half of the 16th National Assembly

In this period, 691 bills were sponsored by men, while 51 bills were sponsored by women. The number of bills passed stood at 346 for male sponsors and 30 for female sponsors. The gender proportions of the bills approved were 92% and 8%. In terms of the Standing Committees, when the Gender Equality Committee is excluded, the passage rate of bills sponsored by women was highest in the Environment and Labor Committee, followed by the Education Committee and the National Defense Committee.

#### (2) Second half of the 16th National Assembly

In the second half, with the Gender Equality Committee excluded, the passage rate of bills sponsored by women was the highest in the Education Committee, followed by the Environment and Labor Committee and the Science, Technology, Information, and Telecommunication Committee. The Education Committee recorded a relatively high percentage of female sponsorship of bills passed, with 31.3% of bills passed sponsored by women. However, in the respective cases of the Government Administration and Local Autonomy Committee and the Health and Welfare Committee, only a single bill with a female sponsor was passed by the National Assembly. This accounted for a mere 2.8% and 1.9% of the approved bills from each of these committees, respectively, falling short of the 6.2% rate of women's representation for this period.

### 2) 17th National Assembly

#### (1) First half of the 17th National Assembly

When the Gender Equality and Family Committee is excluded, the Health and Welfare Committee ranked first in terms of the passage rate of bills sponsored by women, followed by the Science, Technology, Information, and Telecommunication Committee and the Education Committee. However, the percentages of bills passed with female sponsorship stood below the 13.0% rate of women's representation in this period in five National Assembly Standing Committees—the House Steering Committee, the Unification, Foreign Affairs, and Trade Committee, the Agriculture, Forestry, Maritime Affairs, and Fisheries Committee, the Commerce, Industry, and Energy Committee, and the Construction and Transportation Committee.

#### (2) Second half of the 17th National Assembly

With the Gender Equality and Family Committee excluded, the National Defense Committee

recorded the highest passage rate of bills sponsored by women, followed by the Health and Welfare Committee and the National Policy Committee. In the case of the National Defense Committee, which showed a relatively high percentage of bills passed with female sponsorship, 47.1% of approved bills were sponsored by women. Meanwhile, the percentages of bills passed with female sponsorship remained below the 13.7% rate of women's representation in this period for six Standing Committees—the House Steering Committee, the Finance and Economy Committee, the Agriculture, Forestry, Maritime Affairs, and Fisheries Committee, the Commerce, Industry, and Energy Committee, and the Construction and Transportation Committee.

### 3) First Half of the 18th National Assembly

In this period, when the Gender Equality Committee is excluded, the Intelligence Committee marked the highest passage rate of bills sponsored by women, followed by the Health and Welfare Committee and the Foreign Affairs, Trade and Unification Committee. The Health and Welfare Committee showed a relatively high percentage of bills passed with women sponsors with 47.2% of the bills approved being sponsored by female legislators. However, seven committees—the Strategy and Finance Committee, the National Defense Committee, the Education, Science and Technology Committee, the Culture and Tourism Committee, the Agriculture, Forestry, Maritime Affairs, and Fisheries Committee, the Knowledge Economy Committee, and the Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs Committee—all recorded percentages of bills approved with women sponsorship falling short of the 13.7% rate of women's representation for the period.

Table 2. Gender Gaps in the Passage Rate from the 16th National Assembly through the 18th National Assembly (up to 1H)

National Assembly	No. of Bills Sponsored (%)		No. of Bills Passed (%)		Gender Gap (%p)
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Women-Men
1H/16th (06/2000-05/2002)	691	51 (6.9)	346 (50.1)	30 (58.8)	+ 8.7
2H/16th (06/2002-05/2004)	797	55 (6.5)	325 (40.8)	21 (38.2)	- 2.6
1H/17th (06/2004-05/2006)	2,484	666 (21.1)	1,147 (46.2)	281 (42.2)	- 4.0
2H/17th (06-2006-05/2008)	2,125	443 (17.3)	712 (33.5)	133 (30.0)	- 3.0
1H/18th (06-2008-05/2010)	5,050	1,005 (16.6)	1,429 (28.3)	236 (23.5)	- 4.8

## 5. General Analyses

### 1) Results of Analysis of National Assembly Standing Committee Gender Composition

While five Standing Committees did not include any female members in the first half of the 16th National Assembly, for the first time in the history of the Korean National Assembly, every Standing Committee witnessed female members actively engaging in parliamentary activities upon the inauguration of the 18th National Assembly's first half, thanks to an increase in the number of female representatives. This shows that limitations inevitably remain on women as long as the number of women legislators does not increase. Woman assembly members' participation was relatively concentrated within certain committees. In the 16th National Assembly, it was focused disproportionately on the Education Committee and the Science, Technology, Information, and Telecommunication Committee, while in the 17th National Assembly and the first half of the 18th National Assembly, the participation tended to be relatively concentrated on the Health and Welfare Committee. The result indicates that such preference by female representatives on National Assembly Standing Committees can serve as an indicator of their inclination toward certain agendas.

### 2) Results of Analysis on Changes and Characteristics in Gender Differences over Bill Sponsorship

An increase in the number of woman assembly members results in them sponsoring bills on more diverse Standing Committees agendas. In the 16th National Assembly, when women's representation stood at only 5.9%, no bills were sponsored by women in the first and the second halves on six Standing Committees (including the House Steering Committee) and seven committees, respectively. In contrast, in the 18th National Assembly, all Standing Committees saw female members sponsoring bills. Throughout the entire period, the proportions of bill sponsorship by women were notably high on the Health and Welfare Committee and the Education Committee. The numbers of bills sponsored by women were relatively large in the Government Administration and Local Autonomy Committee (or later, the Public Administration and Security Committee) and the Health and Welfare Committee across the entire period. In terms of period, the percentage of female bill sponsorship in the first half of the 17th National Assembly was relatively high compared to other periods. The percentage decreased from the second half of the 17th National Assembly to the first half of the 18th National Assembly, while the number of woman assembly members rose slightly.

### 3) Results of Analysis on Gender Differences in Bill Passage

Overall, throughout the entire period bills sponsored by women from the Education

Committee and the Health and Welfare Committee made up relatively elevated shares of the bills passed. In terms of the highest share for each period, the first half of the 16th National Assembly marked 20% and the first half of the 18th National Assembly recorded 47.2%, showing that the share has risen overall. However, at the same time, the number of the National Assembly Standing Committees marking shares lower than women's overall representation has increased from one in each half of the 16th National Assembly to seven in the 18th National Assembly. The passage rate of bills was calculated as the proportion of bills passed among all bills introduced. By gender, the gender difference in the passage rate has been on a slight but steady rise, excepting in the first half of the 16th National Assembly. Overall, in cases where woman assembly members' passage rate was higher than that of assemblymen, no National Assembly Standing Committee had a disproportionately larger gender gap than other committees. Also, in the Government Administration and Local Autonomy Committee (later, the Public Administration and Security Committee) and the Commerce, Industry, and Energy Committee (later, the Knowledge Economy Committee), the rate for woman assembly members has never exceeded that for men. When considering an incumbent's number of parliamentary terms, there were no significant gender differences in the passage rate. In their first term, both men and women showed higher rates of passage than of bill sponsorship, while in the second term, they both recorded the passage rates lower than bill sponsorship rates. In the third and fourth terms, once again, the passage rates of both men and woman assembly members surpassed bill sponsorship rates by a small margin.

### III. Analysis on Gender Sensitivity in the National Assembly Standing Committee Agenda-setting and Review Process

This section examines whether the increase in the number of woman assembly members has resulted in changes in policy priorities within parliamentary activities, under the assumption that women's partial and subjective experience is reflected in bills and agendas which are the objective results of such experiences; the more women participate, the greater the gender differences become in the output, while at the same time, the number of generally women-friendly bills increases in parliaments.

#### 1. Analysis on Agenda-setting Preference: Gender Differences in Women-related Bills Sponsored

Based on Article 3.1 of the Women Policy Rules of the Framework Act on Women's Development, the 2010 Annual Women Policy Report issued by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, and the survey results from the IPU, women-related bills were grouped into the fol-

lowing six categories: a) improvement of women’s representation; b) female human resources development and support; c) support for the economic activities of women with interrupted careers; d) victim protection and the prevention of domestic violence, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and sex trafficking; e) promotion of gender sensitivity; and f) protection of the socially vulnerable.

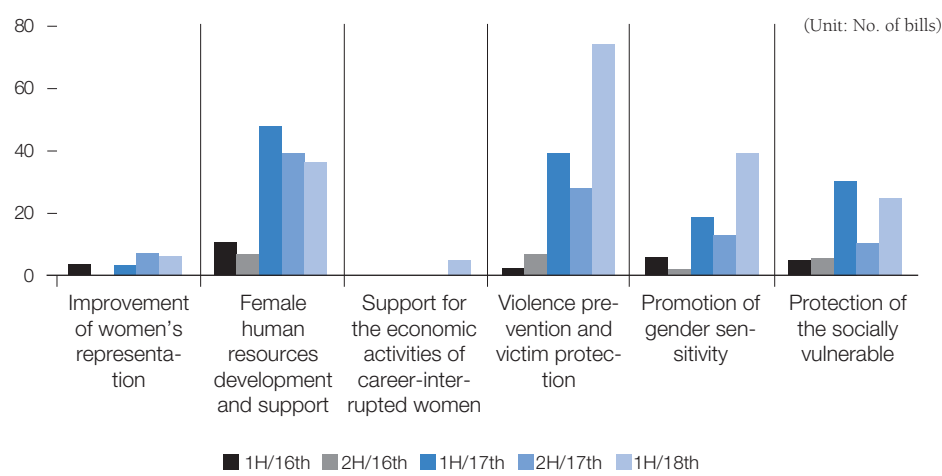


Figure 2. The Overall Status of Women-related Bills from the 16th National Assembly to the First Half of the 18th National Assembly

With the exception of the first half of the 18th National Assembly, the area of ‘female human resources development and support’ received the greatest amount of attention in each period. As women’s participation has grown more active both socially and economically, the legislature is considered to have accelerated its response to women’s growing demand for support measures and for institutional protection regarding child-rearing and childcare, such as the establishment of childcare facilities and guarantees of childcare leaves, a ban on employment discrimination based on women’s issues including pregnancy, guarantees of female workforce participation in education programs, and support to foster women entrepreneurs. Moreover, it is an encouraging sign that with the launch of the 18th National Assembly, the legislature began responding to the call for support for economic activities by career-interrupted women, although the number of related bills remained small.

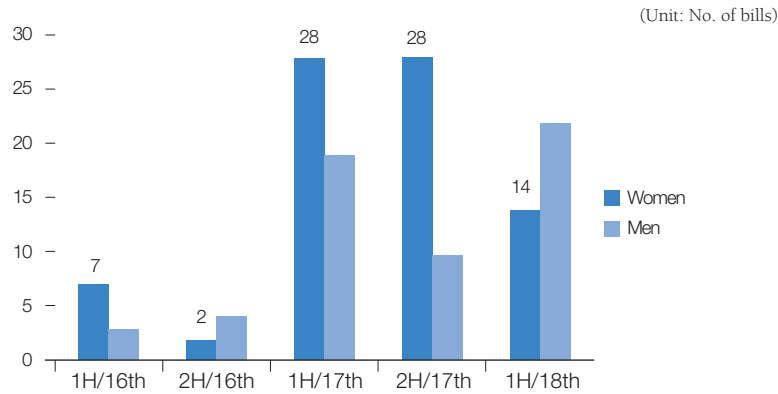


Figure 3. Gender Differences in the Female Human Resources Development and Support Area

The area of violence prevention and victim protection attracted the next-most attention. In particular, the number of proposed bills soared during the first half of the 18th National Assembly. This is considered a response to growing social issues related to sexual violence and a greater social call for countermeasures.

However, a more detailed examination was directed at minutes in order to analyze specific areas such as sexual harassment and domestic violence. It revealed that it is woman assembly members who express the most sensitive reactions to these sub-areas. In the distinct areas of violence which are related to social power structures, women, who are relatively vulnerable in this society, tend to retain more personal experiences and there still remain gender gaps in building empathy related to such experiences.

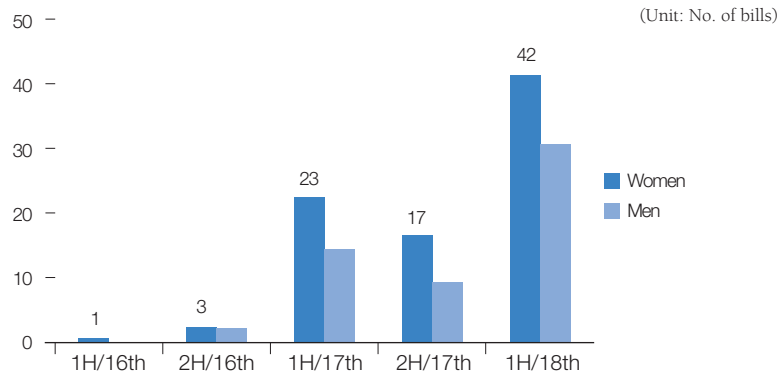


Figure 4. Gender Differences in the Violence Prevention and Victim Protection Area

In the area of improvement of women's representation, female legislators made prominent efforts in both the 16th and 17th National Assemblies. To the contrary, in the first half of the 18th National Assembly, women did not sponsor any related bills, while all the related bills were sponsored by male representatives. In general, those bills called for mandating a set level of women's participation in each expert committee and improve working conditions to enable women to rise to top positions within companies. Although limited by male legislators' tendency to set narrow agendas in this area, this situation appears to reflect woman assembly members' efforts in the 16th and the 17th National Assemblies, given that Assemblymen recognized that women's rights and voices must be reflected within certain governmental organizations or businesses.

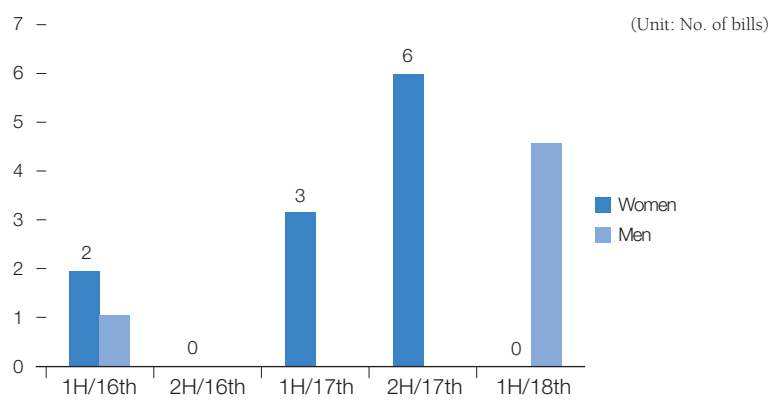


Figure 5. Gender Differences in the Improvement of Women’s Representation Area

In addition, an increase in legislative activities related to gender sensitivity was visible thanks to the influence of gender sensitive budget execution, efforts to develop measures for its effectiveness, and the revision of numerous laws due to the abolishment of the “Hoju” or family-head system. Particularly, in the 18th National Assembly, a significant number of bills sponsored by men were aimed at modifying laws or guaranteeing coherence. Such bills will not only spread the value of gender equality but also help create a gender sensitive social environment by removing the sexist nuances of certain terms.



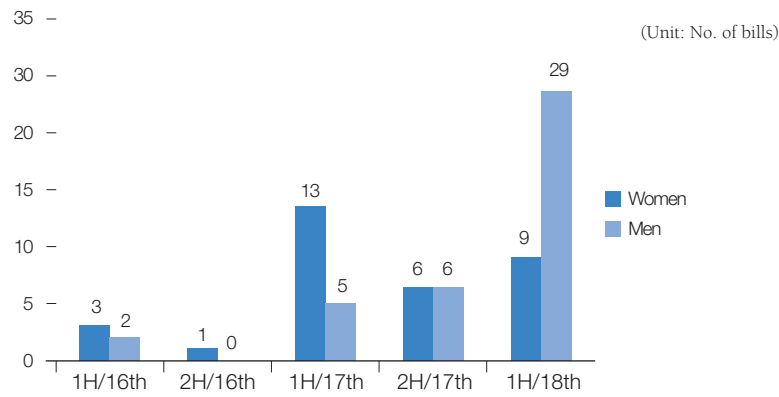


Figure 6. Gender Differences in the Gender Sensitivity Promotion Area

The number of women-related bills sponsored was on the rise from the 16th National Assembly to the first half of the 18th National Assembly. This dramatic increase in women-related bills was mainly triggered by an increase in women’s representation in the 17th National Assembly. In this National Assembly, the number of women-related bills sponsored by women stood at seven times that of the 16th National Assembly, while that of their male counterparts grew by four times. Given the 13.0% rate of women’s representation in the 17th National Assembly, it can be suggested that the increase in women-related bills sponsored by women was much greater than that of men. In addition, the number of the Standing Committees which presented more than one women-related bill soared in the 17th National Assembly.

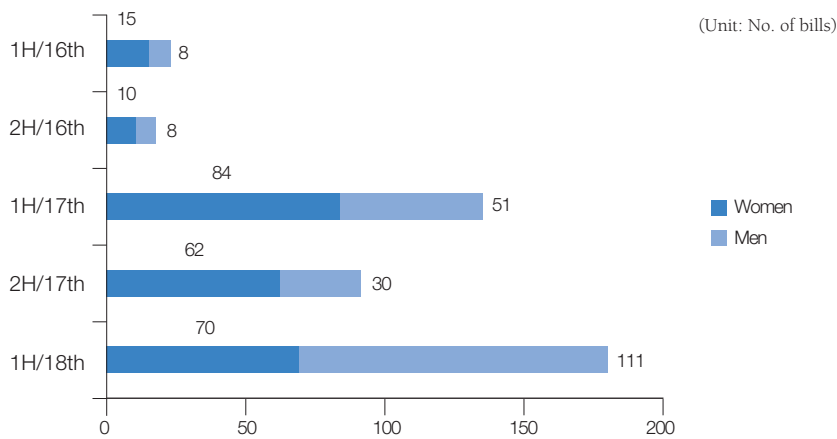


Figure 7. The Status of Women-related Bills by Period

This trend was, however, reversed in the first half of the 18th National Assembly. In this period, the share of women-related bills sponsored by women plunged to 6.9%. However, given that the average number of bills sponsored per person was 24.5, the highest of the five periods studied, there is cause to prefer a positive view over a negative one. In other words, while in the 17th National Assembly, the increased number of woman assembly members focused their strength on advocating for women's rights and developing policies to create a women-friendly environment, in the 18th National Assembly the increase in the number of women legislators and their accumulated experiences carried over from the 17th National Assembly provided them with the foundation to show interest in non-women-related bills, and in practice, they made full use of such power.

Table 3. Parliamentary Activities of Women

	Unit	1H/16th	1H/16th	1H/16th	1H/16th	1H/16th
Woman assembly members	No.	16		39		41
	%	5.9		13.0		13.7
Bills sponsored	No.	742	852	3,150	2,568	6,055
Bills sponsored by women (a)	No.	51	55	666	443	1,005
	%	6.9	6.5	21.1	17.3	16.6
	Average No. per person	3.2	3.4	17.1	11.4	24.5
Women-related bills sponsored (b)	No.	23	18	132	92	180
	%	3.1	2.1	4.2	3.6	3.0
Women-related bills sponsored by women (c)	No.	13	6	79	62	69
	%(c/a)	25.5	10.9	11.9	14.0	6.9
	%(c/b)	56.5	33.3	59.8	67.4	38.3
	Average No. per person	0.8	0.4	2.0	1.6	1.7

## 2. Analysis on Gender Sensitivity in the National Assembly Standing Committee Review Process

### 1) Improvement of Women's Representation

The controversy over improving women's representation is related to the gender quota system or an increase in such quotas, and it has unfolded mainly around the two following issues:

### (1) Voluntary provision vs. an imperative provision

Proponents of a voluntary provision base their argument on the difficulties of meeting a quota, the likelihood of such a bill's passage, and on feasibility. On the other hand, those who support an imperative provision raise questions over the effectiveness of a voluntary one and argue that an imperative provision is essential to actively realizing gender equality. Even though female representatives tend to call for an imperative provision more strongly than do male representatives, they are also somewhat divided.

### (2) The issue of extent

Generally, woman assembly members appear more sensitive to ratios and numbers than do their male colleagues. This is because they view numbers as tools for the improvement of awareness and upholding women's rights by means of an overall movement rather than focus on feasibility, as they aim to protect and enhance women's long-oppressed rights.

## 2) Female Human Resources Development and Support

The greatest amount of attention was mainly directed at maternity protection and solutions for childcare issues, with an aim to encourage women's social and economic participation. This study examined the review process of those bills intended to ease requirements on childcare leaves and expand such leaves to male workers. In the earlier portion of the study period, the bulk of legislators simply appeared to view the childcare leave system and maternity protection to be part of infant and child care efforts, not seeing it from a perspective of gender equality and balance between work and family. Therefore, they did not show enthusiasm toward this agenda. However, as time passed, even infant and child care issues have begun to be considered as one aspect of the broader issues of gender equality and the work/life balance. Particularly, growing concerns over the continuing low birth rate have widely encouraged legislators to more actively work to improve maternity protection-related measures, such as the childcare leave system. However, a time lag of approximately one-half of a National Assembly term was observed between men and women in terms of awareness. This shows that women's preemptive efforts to secure agendas in advance and build consensus have influence later.

### 3) Victim Protection and Prevention of Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Sex Trafficking: victim protection and prevention of sexual harassment

Over the past decade, sexual crimes have drawn increasing attention from society, while public interest and awareness of violent crimes in general has shifted from stricter punishment to prevention and victim protection measures. The legislature has also actively responded to this trend. This study looked into the gender differences in the National Assembly based on bills

related to sexual harassment prevention and victim protection. Among sexual violence, sex trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual harassment, sexual harassment was selected for its representation of the position of the weak in the workplace power structure. The results are as follows: With the passage of time, the bills focused more on reinforcing prevention education and support procedures, as well as expanding the definition of sexual harassment and the potential transgressors. However, in the review process, such an expansion faced strong opposition. In particular, the discussion of sexual harassment was lively among male assembly members, while women remained rather passive in the discussion. Women appeared to feel too burdened to strongly support the expansion due to ambiguity arising from the subjective conditions of sexual harassment. On the same grounds, male representatives appeared to express strong feelings of opposition.

#### 4) Promotion of Gender Sensitivity

During the study period, the National Assembly has progressively modified a range of provisions of existing laws. For example, *yeo-ja*, a Korean word for 'women,' has been replaced by a more gender-sensitive term, *yeo-seong*, and the word 'women' was deleted from the conditions for adultery, while 'father' was changed to 'father and mother' in the qualifications for beneficiaries. Given that in the first case, occurring in the year 2000, only one assembly member raised a question regarding the bill during the review process, there can be seen a growing consensus among both genders of assembly members on using gender-sensitive terms with social import in laws, rather than more biological terms. In addition, there has been a call to develop gender-based statistics to serve as fundamental data to show awareness of gender sensitive budgets and highlight gender sensitivity across various policies and institutions. Such a call was particularly strong in the 18th National Assembly.

#### 5) Protection of the Socially Vulnerable: protection of married immigrants

This area aims at protecting the vulnerable and weak members of society, including people with disabilities, pregnant women, and the elderly. As social issues related to married immigrants have recently gained significant attention, legislators are introducing related bills. Protection of married immigrants is being promoted largely across two categories: the first is easing requirements for expedited naturalization for those who cannot continue a marriage through no fault of their own, but as a result of other causes such as violence. The second is the provision to multicultural families of language support, medical services, and other social protection services. There is no data available sufficient to identify the National Assembly's gender differences regarding both categories.

## IV. Paths to Strengthen Gender Sensitive Parliamentary Activities

### 1. Enhancement of Women's Representation in the National Assembly

This study showed that the increased number of woman assembly members lead to more women-friendly policies as the share of female members rose from 5.9% in the 16th National Assembly to 13.0% and 13.7% (15.1% including seats succeeded) in the 17th and 18th National Assemblies. Therefore, in order to guarantee gender sensitive parliamentary activities in all National Assembly Standing Committees in the future, an increase in women's representation is essential. To this end, voluntary recommendation of women candidates at the rate of at least 30% of total candidates at local constituencies should become mandatory. At the same time, the pool of women politicians needs to be expanded.

### 2. Provision of Priority to Women in Appointment as Chairs and Secretaries in the Relatively More Important National Assembly Standing Committees on the Economy, Finance, Foreign Affairs and Trade, and others.

Assignment to the National Assembly Standing Committees is based on a variety of criteria such as expertise, region, and experience. As there have been few woman assembly members to date, they have tended to serve as chairs or secretaries of women-related Standing Committees, such as those on culture, the environment, and health and welfare. Going forward, women must expand their sphere into chair or secretary positions on relatively more important Standing Committees, such as those on the economy, finance, and foreign affairs and trade. Additionally, the number of Standing Committee chairwomen and female secretaries must increase. Assignment of women to Standing Committees and appointment of women to top positions are issues that can be addressed through an increase in women's representation. However, as more and more women are becoming available to serve as chairwomen or secretaries on relatively more important committees, for example in construction, the economy, and foreign affairs, parties are called upon to demonstrate advance efforts to give priority to women.

### 3. Provision of Guidelines on Gender Sensitive Parliamentary Activities

In terms of the proportion of bill sponsorship by gender, the proportion of women's bill sponsorship exceeded women's representation. By period, the first half of the 17th National Assembly showed the highest proportion relative to women's representation. Since then, it has been on the decline, but overall it has still remained high. This, in turn, indicates that the proportion of men's bill sponsorship fell short of the share of male representatives. However, it is noteworthy that in the 18th National Assembly, the share of woman assembly members

increased slightly from 13.0% in the 17th National Assembly to 13.7%, while the proportion of women's bill sponsorship dropped from the second half of the 17th National Assembly to the first half of the 18th National Assembly. Therefore, measures should be emplaced to guarantee gender sensitive parliamentary activities by both men and women. In this regard, it is necessary for Korean Women's Development Institute and the Gender Equality and Family Committee of the National Assembly to bulwark gender sensitivity by holding joint workshops on women's representation for representatives, members of local assemblies, and ministers. Furthermore, guidelines such as case and judicial reports on gender sensitivity should be developed and distributed by each committee in order to expand access to gender sensitive parliamentary activities.

#### 4. Support to Gender Sensitive Parliamentary Activities by Establishing Policy Advisory Groups on Women-related Agenda Development in Party Policy Committees

The share of woman assembly members rose slightly from the 17th National Assembly to the 18th National Assembly. However, the rate of development of women-related agendas sponsored by women decreased from the second half of the 17th National Assembly to the first half of the 18th National Assembly. One of the causes of this was insufficient women-related agenda development. To enhance gender sensitive parliamentary activities, parties should be required to establish policy advisory groups on women-related agenda development for their own policy committees and provide support measures for policymakers to develop women-related agendas.

#### 5. Encouragement of the Full Use of Female Aides

In order to promote gender sensitivity in the National Assembly, it is necessary to encourage the full use of female aides by its members. In terms of parliamentary tasks, gender mainstreaming can encompass the needs of both men and women and their interests, while at the same time it can contribute to effective policymaking. To this end, it is recommended that legislators hire a greater number of female aides and make full use of them. As a preliminary step toward increasing the number of woman assembly members, expanding the number and making full use of female aides does not simply help reflect women's experience into parliamentary activities, but it also creates positive effects in expanding women's political participation.

#### 6. A Stronger and More Active Gender Equality and Family Committee

The Gender Equality and Family Committee of the National Assembly can be effective in

implementing women-related policies. As a committee tasked with gender equality, it needs to be able to receive reports regarding relevant issues not only from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, but also from other pertinent ministries and agencies, such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Employment and Labor, and the Ministry of Finance and Strategy in order to provide guidance to these bodies.

In terms of gender sensitive budgeting, the primary goal is to mainstream gender in the national budgeting process and reflect gender sensitivity in the process of economic policymaking. Therefore, the National Assembly is required to analyze the overall national budget from a gender-sensitive perspective and reallocate resources in order to meet the needs of both men and women. In this regard, committees related to gender equality can raise gender equality issues during the discussion of budgets and by engaging in partnerships with the Strategy and Finance Committee and the Special Committee on Budget and Accounts.

## 7. Promotion of Women's Networks and the Public Discussion of Women-related Policies by Establishing a Woman Assembly Members' Council

In South Korea, it is necessary to launch a bipartisan woman assembly members' council in order to promote women's networks and the public discussion of women-related policies. Such a council would enhance woman assembly members' political position and promote participation in elections by serving as an arena to a) foster women candidates, support network-building, and encourage candidacy; b) link local women with local organizations, provide consultation services to women, implement promotional efforts, and conduct joint projects; c) encourage women's membership in political parties; d) help promote women's status within parties; and e) pursue joint projects with experts from civil society and other fields. For example, Austria began operating a mentoring program when Maria Rauch-Kallat took office as Minister of Health and Women in 2007. This program did not limit mentorship purely to women and allowed men to become mentors of women. Based on this program, Austria established networks not only between women, but also with both men and women (IPU, 2008: 63). Such activities laid a foundation for the equal participation of men and women in committees and for the free expression of opinions by women from the initial stages of parties' decision-making processes.

## 9. Transition towards Pragmatic Legislative Activities, SNS-based Policy Development, and Intensified Promotion

In spreading gender sensitivity within the National Assembly and developing and supporting female human resources, women-related agendas should be promoted. To promptly disseminate issues and craft consensus, promotional tools are necessary. In this sense, the National Assembly must direct attention to the use as a tool of SNS (social networking services), since

in today's modern society many people prefer online socialization and use SNS. Social networking, which is changing our lives and taking root as part of our daily routines, is becoming a tool to predict rapid social changes. Therefore, in order to accelerate the development and acceptance of women-related agendas, the National Assembly is required to focus on expanding access to these tools and pursuing the evolution of the National Assembly toward increased gender sensitivity.

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