**Abstract for Phil Jones**

Does the descriptive representation of gender affect how constituents respond to their legislators’ substantive policy records? Previous work offers two distinctly opposing theories: the first, that descriptive representation may *weaken* accountability for substantive representation, if it leads female constituents to misperceive the incumbent’s positions or give them a “free pass” on policy congruence; the second, that it may *strengthen* accountability, if it leads female constituents to pay greater attention to the incumbent and his or her record. Using survey data from three electoral cycles, I show that women are more likely to correctly identify their U.S. senators’ policy records and weigh that record more heavily in their evaluations when they are represented by women. The descriptive representation of gender thus strengthens the links between the policy positions legislators take in office and how they are evaluated by their constituents.