



## **W Stands for Women: How the George W. Bush Presidency Shaped a New Politics of Gender**

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Taking seriously the “W Stands for Women” rhetoric of the 2004 Bush–Cheney campaign, the contributors to this collection investigate *how* “W” stands for women. They argue that George W. Bush has hijacked feminist language toward decidedly antifeminist ends; his use of feminist rhetoric is deeply and problematically connected to a conservative gender ideology. While it is not surprising that conservative views about gender motivate Bush’s stance on so-called “women’s issues” such as abortion, what is surprising—and what this collection demonstrates—is that a conservative gender ideology also underlies a range of policies that do not appear explicitly related to gender, most notably foreign and domestic policies associated with the post-9/11 security state. Any assessment of the lasting consequences of the Bush presidency requires an understanding of the gender conservatism at its core.

In *W Stands for Women* ten feminist scholars analyze various aspects of Bush’s persona, language, and policy to show how his administration has shaped a new politics of gender. One contributor points out the shortcomings of “compassionate conservatism,” a political philosophy that requires a weaker class to be the subject of compassion. Another examines Lynndie England’s participation in the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib in relation to the interrogation practices elaborated in the *Army Field Manual*, practices that often entail “feminizing” detainees by stripping them of their masculine gender identities. Whether investigating the ways that Bush himself performs masculinity or the problems with discourse that positions non-Western women as supplicants in need of saving, these essays highlight the far-reaching consequences of the Bush administration’s conflation of feminist rhetoric, conservative gender ideology, and neoconservative national security policy.

*Contributors.* Andrew Feffer, Michaele L. Ferguson, David S. Gutterman, Mary Hawkesworth, Timothy Kaufman-Osborn, Lori Jo Marso, Danielle Regan, R. Claire Snyder, Iris Marion Young, Karen Zivi

Michaela Ferguson and Karen Zivi appeared on KPFA’s *Against the Grain* on September 11, 2007. Listen to the audio.

Michaela Ferguson and Lori Jo Marso appeared on WUNC’s *The State of Things* on August 30, 2007. Listen to the audio.

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