

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910791065403321
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Titolo	The politics of women's rights [[electronic resource] ] : parties, positions, and change / / Christina Wolbrecht
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Princeton, N.J., : Princeton University Press, c2000
ISBN	9786612569340 1-282-56934-1 1-4008-3124-5
Edizione	[Course Book]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (283 p.)
Disciplina	305.42/0973
Soggetti	Women's rights - United States Political parties - United States United States Politics and government 1945-1989 United States Politics and government 1989-1993
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [243]-257) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Tables -- Acronyms -- Acknowledgments -- Chapter One: Women's Rights and the American Parties -- Chapter Two: Of Presidents and Platforms -- Chapter Three: Women's Rights in the House and Senate -- Chapter Four: Explaining Party Issue Realignment -- Chapter Five: Equilibrium Disruption and Issue Redefinition -- Chapter Six: Shifting Coalitions and Changing Elites -- Chapter Seven: The Politics of Women's Rights -- Appendix -- References -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	Here Christina Wolbrecht boldly demonstrates how the Republican and Democratic parties have helped transform, and have been transformed by, American public debate and policy on women's rights. She begins by showing the evolution of the positions of both parties on women's rights over the past five decades. In the 1950's and early 1960's, Republicans were slightly more favorable than Democrats, but by the early 1980's, the parties had polarized sharply, with Democrats supporting, and Republicans opposing, such policies as the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion rights. Wolbrecht not only traces the development of this shift in the parties' relative positions--focusing on

party platforms, the words and actions of presidents and presidential candidates, and the behavior of the parties' delegations in Congress-- but also seeks to explain the realignment. The author considers the politically charged developments that have contributed to a redefinition and expansion of the women's rights agenda since the 1960's-- including legal changes, the emergence of the modern women's movement, and changes in patterns of employment, fertility, and marriage. Wolbrecht explores how party leaders reacted to these developments and adopted positions in ways that would help expand their party's coalition. Combined with changes in those coalitions-- particularly the rise of social conservatism within the GOP and the affiliation of social movement groups with the Democratic party--the result was the polarization characterizing the parties' stances on women's rights today.

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