

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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We would also like to thank Laurel Singleton for her work in drafting this teacher's guide.



FOR MORE INFORMATION about Strong Sisters, go to [www.strongsisters.org](http://www.strongsisters.org).

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# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose and Overview of the Film

Why does Colorado have an extraordinary history of electing women to public office? What differences have elected women made in our state? And why hasn't Colorado elected a female Governor, U.S. Senator, or Mayor of Denver? *Strong Sisters: Elected Women in Colorado* examines these questions, with the goal of educating Coloradans of all ages about this remarkable history. *Strong Sisters* uses the words of past and current female elected officials as the foundation for this documentary film.

With a running time of 74 minutes, the film is organized into 13 segments or chapters, from which teachers can choose if they are unable to show the entire film. If you are using the DVD version of the film, the menu provides links to the sections; that menu is not available on the digital download, so we provide time stamps in the table below, which also describes the segments very briefly. The first four segments provide insight into 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century history; the later segments deal with more recent history and contemporary topics. The segments the filmmakers regard as most critical for civics/government/political science courses are identified with blue shading (using these scenes would result in a running time of about 44 minutes). Of course, we recommend that teachers view the entire film before showing it to their classes, as they may find some segments more appropriate for their classes than others. Teachers may want to reference the timeline (page 30) before or while viewing the film.

Time Stamp	Title of Scene	Content
0:16	Introduction	History of women voting in Colorado
2:50	Western Women	Early women settlers in Colorado and what made them different
6:05	Suffrage and First Elected Women	Suffrage referendum that gave Colorado women the right to vote in 1893 and the influence of the economic crisis on the referendum
11:20	Housewives Cleaning Up Politics	Expectations regarding women's role in cleaning up politics and the changing connotations of the term <i>housewife</i>
14:41	Getting Involved	How women decide to run for public office
21:58	Why Colorado?	Ideas about why Colorado has elected a higher percentage of women to the state legislature

Time Stamp	Title of Scene	Content
26:06	Patriarchy and Sexism	historically and currently than other states Obstacles political women have faced, past and present
32:13	Family	Effects of serving on elected women's families, as well as how family affects political women's career paths and decisions
37:53	Glass Ceiling	Possible reasons we haven't seen more women in legislative leadership and have yet to see a woman elected Governor, U.S. Senator, or Mayor of Denver
46:47	Why Does It Matter?	How women make a difference in elected office
51:53	Issues	Women's impact on a variety of issues that have come before the state legislature
1:00:16	Decline of Republican Women	Reasons that the number of Republican women in the legislature has dropped since the 1990s ( <i>Note:</i> This section deals with abortion and the role of extreme views in both parties and therefore may be controversial or sensitive.)
1:04:34	Sisterhood	Collaboration among elected women across party lines

## Using This Guide

This guide is intended to help teachers who want to use *Strong Sisters* in middle school or high school classrooms—in U.S. history/American studies, civics and government, or psychology classes. It would also be useful in the college classroom. The major goals of using the film in the classroom are to help students understand (1) Colorado's unique history with regard to women's suffrage and election of women to public office, particularly the state legislature, (2) how women in elected office make a difference to policy making, and (3) the obstacles political women have faced, in the past and at present.

The guide includes the following tools to help teachers use the film productively:



- Two pre-viewing activities, one to help students hypothesize about the content of the film and one to introduce students to vocabulary in the film.
- Tools for use as students view the film, including alternative viewing guides that students can use to take notes as they watch the film and discussion questions, keyed to specific courses and segments of the film.
- Brief extension activities to deepen and expand students' understanding of the film's themes.

The film and activities in this guide support the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, as well as the Colorado Social Studies Academic Standards and the AP Psychology Course Description. The table below shows standards from those documents that will be addressed through use of the film and guide.

## Correlation to Standards

Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts	Colorado Social Studies Academic Standards	AP Psychology Course Description
<p><b>Language</b>  <i>Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:</i>  6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.</p> <p><b>Reading</b>  <i>Key Ideas and Details:</i>  2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.  <i>Craft and Structure:</i>  6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.  <i>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:</i></p>	<p><b>Civics</b>  <b>Grade 8</b>  1a: Describe instances in which major political, social, economic, or cultural changes occurred and the reasons for the changes.  1b: Analyze the changing definition of citizenship and give examples of the expansion of rights.  1c: Describe examples of citizens and groups who have influenced change in United States government and politics.</p> <p><b>High School</b>  1b: Evaluate how individuals and groups can effectively use the structure and functions of various levels of government to shape policy.  1c: Describe the roles and influence of individuals, groups, and the press as checks on governmental practices.  2b: Identify the structure, function, and roles of</p>	<p><b>Motivation and Emotion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and apply basic motivational concepts to understand the behavior of humans and other animals.</li> <li>• Describe how cultural influences shape emotional expression.</li> </ul> <p><b>Social Psychology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the structure and function of different kinds of group behavior.</li> <li>• Explain how individuals respond to expectations of others.</li> <li>• Articulate the impact of social and cultural categories on self-concept and relations with others.</li> <li>• Describe the variables that contribute to altruism, aggression, and attraction.</li> <li>• Discuss attitude formation and change, including persuasion strategies and cognitive dissonance.</li> </ul>

Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts	Colorado Social Studies Academic Standards	AP Psychology Course Description
<p>7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</p> <p>8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.</p> <p><b>Writing</b>  <i>Production and Distribution of Writing:</i></p> <p>4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p><b>Research to Build and Present Knowledge:</b></p> <p>7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.</p> <p><b>Speaking and Listening</b>  <i>Comprehension and Collaboration:</i></p> <p>1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p> <p>2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.</p>	<p>members of government and their relationship to democratic values.</p> <p>2f: Analyze how court decisions, legislative debates, and various and diverse groups have helped to preserve, develop, and interpret the rights and ideals of the American system of government.</p> <p><b>History</b>  <b>Grade 8</b></p> <p>2b: Evaluate continuity and change over the course of United States history by examining various eras and determining major sources of conflict and compromise.</p> <p><b>High School</b></p> <p>1b: Gather and analyze historical information, including contradictory data, from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including sources located on the Internet, to support or reject hypotheses.</p> <p>2e: Analyze continuity and change in eras over the course of United States history.</p> <p>2g: Analyze the complexity of events in United States history.</p> <p>2h: Examine and evaluate issues of unity and diversity from Reconstruction to present.</p>	

# PART I: PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES

## *Strong Sisters*: What Is This Film About?

### Overview

Most students are probably unaware of the number of women in the Colorado legislature or even the fact that women were given the vote in Colorado in 1893. This previewing activity uses quotes from the film *Strong Sisters* to get students thinking about women, women's suffrage, and women in government.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to:

- Interpret a quotation.
- Generate questions about the subject of the film *Strong Sisters* based on the quotations analyzed.

**Materials and Preparation:** Make copies of the **Film Quotes Worksheet** for all students.

**Estimated Time:** 20 minutes

### Procedure:

1. Tell students they are going to be watching a documentary film titled *Strong Sisters: Elected Women in Colorado*. Ask:
  - From the title, what can you infer about the subject matter of the film? (*It's about women holding elective office in Colorado.*)
  - What can you infer about the filmmakers' perspective on the subject matter? (*Because they called the film Strong Sisters, the filmmakers may admire these women [use of strong] and may have a feminist perspective [use of sisters].* Note: The title is actually derived from the quote from the late State Sen. Ruth Stockton that begins the film: "The other ninety legislators don't see my way all the time but I'm ready to sit down and work it out. When the going gets rough, they know I'm not the weak sister.")
2. Pass out the **Film Quotes Worksheet**. Ask students to work in pairs to read the quotes and choose one that they find especially interesting or thought-provoking. Students should complete the worksheet for the quote they selected.
3. Allow a few minutes for students to share the issues and questions they have identified based on their quote. Encourage students to look for answers to their questions—and additional issues—in the film.



# Film Quotes Worksheet

With a partner, read the quotes from the film *Strong Sisters*. Choose one quote that you find especially interesting or thought-provoking. Then answer the analysis questions on the next page for the quote you chose.

“There are some issues where it is uniquely painful or really problematic to not have women on the floor.” Former State Rep. and State Senator Rep. Morgan Carroll

“You can’t have fear if you want to succeed. And you have to be able to work.” Former State Rep. and State Senator Norma Anderson

“With one hand these women would be handing out a cup of soup and with the other a flyer, a propaganda flyer saying if women can vote we will clean up politics, we will make things better for everyone.” Historian Marcia Goldstein

“Some women get very involved in what’s going on in the community and they become activists for the betterment of children or other issues in the community and I think that engenders a lot of trust.” Former State Senator Evie Hudak

“Women in Colorado just feel the need to step up and make the state a better place.” Former State Rep. and State Senator Nancy Spence

“Fame is very fleeting so you shouldn’t run for fame or fortune. You should run because you want to make a difference. You have to be there for a cause.” Former State Rep. and State Senator Polly Baca

“I found my voice really through allowing my pain and suffering to come through. I’m not quite sure I would be in office if it wasn’t for me wanting to advocate for the pain I experienced for losing my child.” State Senator and former State Rep. Rhonda Fields

“I remember one guy saying, ‘A woman can’t be attorney general unless she looks like a linebacker’.” Former Colorado Attorney General Gale Norton

“Women sit around and wait to be asked and that’s not the way politics works.” U.S. Congressmember Diana DeGette

“I think money is a huge thing because I hear women get insecure . . . I needed people to help me. Would you call this person? Would you open a door for me? . . . That’s not easy to do.” Former State Rep. Amy Stephens

## Film Quotes Worksheet, page 2

“It’s an interesting paradox that we have the highest number of women percentage wise in the legislature but we don’t have historically a woman governor or a woman senator or even a woman mayor (of Denver).” Former State Senator Kiki Traylor

“It seems whoever preceded you wants to reach back and help you come along with them and learn what they learned.” Former State Rep. Su Ryden

“We really did have a sisterhood. It wasn’t a covert organization. It was just that feeling we had that we were in this together. And that she (Senator Ruth Stockton) would lead the way by example as to how the very few of us—there were three of us women in the Senate when I was elected—could be effective.” Former State Senator Martha Ezzard

## Analysis Questions

1. Who is the author of your quote?
2. What problem or issue is the author talking about?
3. What questions do you have about this problem/issue?

# Building Vocabulary

## Overview

This lesson introduces key vocabulary from *Strong Sisters*, with adaptations depending on the course being taught—history, civics/government, or psychology.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to:

- Define key discipline-specific vocabulary terms from the film.
- Use a glossary.

**Materials and Preparation:** Choose terms that you want students to think about before watching the film; the **Glossary** (p. 24) indicates in which sections of the film each term is used, so you can select terms that students will encounter in the sections of the film you plan to show. If no section of the film is noted, the term is used in multiple sections or is a foundational term useful no matter which sections of the film you use. Enter the selected terms in the **Strong Sisters Vocabulary** handout and make copies for all students. You may also want to make enough copies of the **Glossary** for each group of four or five students to have one.

**Estimated Time:** 20 minutes

## Procedure:

1. Pass out the **Strong Sisters Vocabulary** handout, explaining how it works. Students indicate their level of familiarity with a word by checking the appropriate box. They then will work with a group to develop a tentative definition for the word. After viewing the film, they will refine their definitions based on how the word was used in the film. Read each word or phrase aloud, giving students a few seconds to put a check in the appropriate box.
2. When all the words have been read, organize students into small groups and have them discuss the terms in their small groups, focusing first on the words members of the group know and can define. If and when the students agree upon a definition, they should write it in the Draft Definition box. The students should then discuss the words they've heard but aren't sure about to see if they can come up with a definition. If a group has no idea what a particular term means, they can leave that column blank.
3. Spend a few minutes letting groups share and discuss definitions as a class.
4. Direct students to listen and watch for the words in the film. They may want to divide the words among group members so that each student focuses on just one or two terms. When they hear the words in the film, they should take notes on the context in which they heard it.
5. After viewing the film, allow time for groups to refine their definitions, using notes from the film and the **Glossary**. Spend a few minutes discussing the revised definitions.
6. Ask students if there were any words in the film not on their handouts that they did not understand. Post these terms on the board and assign each group a few words to define (they can use the **Glossary** or dictionaries) and write the definitions on the board.

## ***Strong Sisters Vocabulary***

For each term listed in the chart below, put a check mark in the box that best describes how well you understand that term. Then pool ideas with your group to develop a definition for each term.

As you watch the film, listen (and watch—some terms are on screen) for the terms and make notes on the contexts in which you hear the words used. You will improve your definitions after the film.

Term	Are You Familiar with This Term?	Draft Definition	Notes from Watching Film	Revised Definition
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unfamiliar: I Have No Idea What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Familiar: I'm Not Sure What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar: I Could Define It Confidently			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unfamiliar: I Have No Idea What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Familiar: I'm Not Sure What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar: I Could Define It Confidently			

***Strong Sisters* Vocabulary, page 2**

Term	Are You Familiar with This Term?	Draft Definition	Notes from Watching Film	Revised Definition
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unfamiliar: I Have No Idea What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Familiar: I'm Not Sure What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar: I Could Define It Confidently			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unfamiliar: I Have No Idea What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Familiar: I'm Not Sure What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar: I Could Define It Confidently			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unfamiliar: I Have No Idea What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Familiar: I'm Not Sure What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar: I Could Define It Confidently			

***Strong Sisters Vocabulary, page 3***

Term	Are You Familiar with This Term?	Draft Definition	Notes from Watching Film	Revised Definition
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unfamiliar: I Have No Idea What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Familiar: I'm Not Sure What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar: I Could Define It Confidently			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unfamiliar: I Have No Idea What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Familiar: I'm Not Sure What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar: I Could Define It Confidently			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unfamiliar: I Have No Idea What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Familiar: I'm Not Sure What It Means <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar: I Could Define It Confidently			



## PART II: VIEWING THE FILM

### Overview

This section presents tools for use in viewing and discussing the film, including two alternative viewing guides that students can use to take notes as they watch the film, and discussion questions keyed to specific courses and segments of the film. Showing and discussing the entire film will require at least two class periods (or one block), with a more thorough discussion expanding the time required; however, teachers can choose to use selected segments of the film to match the time available or the particular content you want to emphasize.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to:

- Gain information about Colorado women serving in elected office from a film.
- Identify and discuss themes of a film.

**Materials and Preparation:** You will need copies of either the *Strong Sisters Viewing Guide* or *Strong Sisters Graphic Organizer*; choose the guide you think will be most useful to your students. You will also need the film *Strong Sisters* and equipment for showing it. Finally, you will need to decide whether you will show the entire film or selected segments; if you opt for the latter, you will need to choose the segments you plan to use. The table below is designed to help with that process. We strongly recommend that you watch the entire film and put together the combination of scenes best suited for your students and your goals in using the film.

Title of Scene	Sequence Recommended by Filmmakers	Strong Civics/ Government Content	Strong History Content	Strong Psychology Content
Introduction (3 min.)				
Western Women (3 min.)			X	
Suffrage and First Elected Women (5 min.)		X	X	
Housewives Cleaning Up Politics (3 min.)			X	
Getting Involved (7 min.)	X	X		X
Why Colorado? (4 min.)	X	X	X	

Title of Scene	Sequence Recommended by Filmmakers	Strong Civics/ Government Content	Strong History Content	Strong Psychology Content
Patriarchy and Sexism (6 min.)	X	X		X
Family (5½ min.)				X
Glass Ceiling (9 min.)	X	X	X	X
Why Does It Matter? (6 min.)	X	X		X
Issues (5½ min.)	X	X		
Decline of Republican Women (7 min.)	X	X	X	
Sisterhood (1 min.)	X			X

**Estimated Time:** 2-3 class periods

**Procedure:**

1. Distribute the viewing guide that you have selected and explain that students should use the handout to take notes as they are watching the film. Be sure students understand how to use the guide.
2. Show the film. You may want to stop periodically throughout the film to ask questions; this will help ensure that students stay attentive during the viewing. You may ask students to report on what they have noted on their viewing guides or use the discussion questions from the list at the end of this lesson. You might also allow a minute or two for students to make notes during these breaks.
3. After the film, allow students to make some additional notes on their viewing guides/graphic organizers. Then conduct a class discussion of both the information in the film and the themes that emerge. A number of possible questions are provided on the following pages for your use.
4. Conclude the lesson by asking students to suggest a “theme” for the movie—what for them is the most important “lesson learned” from the film? For example, one theme identified by the filmmakers is: Women’s voices make a difference in the development of legislation/policy. Encourage students to look for other sources that will help them confirm or disprove their “lesson learned.”

# Discussion Questions

The following questions are organized by segment of the film, so you can select questions that match the segments that you showed in class. We think many of the questions are useful no matter in what class you are showing the film, but a few are keyed to particular courses (C=civics/government, H=history, P=psychology).

## Introduction

- Why do you think the filmmakers chose the Ruth Stockton quote to open the film? (“The other 90 legislators don’t see my way all the time, but I’m ready to sit down and work it out. When the going gets rough, they know I’m not the weak sister.”) What quote would you use if you were making the film?
- What do the images the filmmakers use in the Introduction tell you about the film? Would you choose other images to represent the content of the film? What would they be?
- Did you know that Colorado was the second state where women could vote? The first state where men voted for women to have the vote? Based on what you learned, how would you explain that achievement?
- According to the women interviewed, what does a woman “have to have” to serve in elected office? Would you agree with those statements?

## Western Women

- In the film, Dottie Lamm said that people who have come to Colorado have “an independent nature” and Joan Fitz-Gerald said that “women have been tougher out here.” Do you agree with these comments? Think about Colorado in the past and today. What evidence can you give to support your position? Use evidence from the film and from your own experience. (H)

## Suffrage and First Elected Women

- How did women in Colorado gain the right to vote? (H, C)
- What role did populist politics play in the campaign for women’s suffrage? What role did organizations such as the Equal Suffrage Association and WCTU play? (H, C)
- When the economy collapsed in 1893, some people said it wasn’t a good time for women to seek the vote. How did women prove this to be wrong? What strategies did they use to capitalize on the state’s economic problems? Do you think their experience is relevant to other periods of history or today? (H, C)

## Housewives Cleaning Up Politics

- What changes occurred in the legislature when the first three women were elected? What significance do you think such changes have? (H)
- Why was the broom a symbol for women's role in politics? Would that be an appropriate symbol today? Why or why not? (H)
- How did use of the term *housewife* with respect to elected women change over time? What does this change show about larger changes in society? (H, P)

## Getting Involved

- According to the women interviewed in the film, what motivated them and other women to run for public office? List as many different motivations as you can. Whose motivation is most meaningful to you? Why? (C, P)
- What is the importance of trust in political life? Some of the women interviewed seemed to suggest women have an advantage when it comes to gaining trust. Do you agree? Why or why not? (C, P)
- Why did people tell Pat Schroeder she shouldn't run for the U.S. House of Representatives? Do you think those people were right? (H, C)
- Why do you think several women interviewed initially said they didn't want to run or weren't qualified? Do you think men have similar feelings about running? Why or why not? (P)
- Peggy Kerns talked about a sense of service and ambition as being in opposition. Do you think that these two motivations can exist together? Why or why not? (P, C)
- Norma Anderson reported that her family talked about politics throughout her childhood. Research shows that young people who talk about politics at home are more likely to be politically active as adults. Why do you think that might be the case? How can we be sure that young people whose families don't talk about politics still become politically active? (P, C)
- One interviewee called herself a "recovering politician" while another said politics was like alcoholism—addictive. Why do you think politics is compared to an addiction? (P, C)

## Why Colorado?

- How is Colorado different from other states in terms of elected women?
- What are some of the explanations given for Colorado's record in this area? Which seems like the best explanation to you? Why?

## Patriarchy and Sexism

- What evidence of sexism did elected women report?
- Peggy Kerns stated that "gender did matter" with regard to leadership in the legislature in the 1990s when she was in office. Do you think a representative elected to the Colorado House today would say the same thing? Give reasons for your hypothesis.

- A newspaper headline characterized a race between a man and a woman as “high heels versus manhood”? What does that phrase mean to you? How do you think a race between a man and a woman ought to be described?
- Amy Stephens described a number of things women did that “got the job done” in terms of electing people to the legislature. What were these actions? Why do you think they were important?

## **Family**

- Describe the impact of political life on the families of elected women. Given these effects, would you want your mother—or your father—to run for office? (P)
- Many women waited until their children graduated from high school before they ran for office. What attitudes or values might have prompted that decision? What effect might this have had on women’s political careers? Do you see a generational difference in terms of this decision? (C, P)
- Speaker Hullinghorst stated that more male legislators are now dealing with family issues as they serve. Do you think this change will affect the roles of men and women in politics? Why or why not? (P)

## **Glass Ceiling**

- The glass ceiling is a metaphor for the upper limits on women’s careers. What metaphor does Pat Schroeder use? Which of these metaphors do you think better captures these limits?
- People interviewed in the film mention that women need to be asked to run, that they don’t feel comfortable promoting themselves, and that they don’t like to ask for money. What might account for these psychological differences with male candidates? Dottie Lamm talks of training programs for women candidates. How might a training program address these issues? (P)
- What role does money play in limiting women’s political careers? (C)
- What role does a caucus system play in determining who runs for office? How does a primary system make it easier for women to be nominated for office? (C)

## **Why Does It Matter?**

- Does it matter if “all kinds of people” are elected to public office? Use quotes from the film to support your answer? (C)
- According to the people interviewed in the film, what strengths do women bring to the table? Why are these skills or traits important in law-making? Are these skills or traits also important for executive office? (C, P)
- According to the people interviewed in the film, how do women lead or work differently than men? How might these differences make contributions to law-making? (C, P)
- Wilma Webb says “We’ve educated men to the issues of women.” What do you think she means by this? Do you think working with women has changed men in the legislature? (C, P)

- Irene Aguilar says that women “overcompensate” in their work lives. What do you think she means by this? What experiences might cause women to overcompensate? (P)
- Elected women in the film share different opinions about showing emotions (specifically crying) in their work. What are some of the reasons a person might cry while doing political or governmental work? If you were an elected woman, which approach to showing emotions would you take? Why? (P)

## Issues

- What does the term *women’s issues* mean to you? Compare your definition with the examples of issues important to elected women mentioned in the film. How does the film change your thinking about the idea of women’s issues? (C, P)
- Several of the women interviewed in the film mentioned instances in which women in both parties stood together on difficult issues. What, in your view, is the importance of these examples? (C, P)
- Dottie Wham spoke of a “critical mass”—having enough women working together to stop legislation they regarded as harmful. What is the importance of a “critical mass” of elected women—or of any other group of legislators? How might this change your thinking about who should be elected? (C)
- Think about the case study of civil unions presented in the film. How does this case study inform your thinking about the role of elected women? (C)

## Decline of Republican Women

- Describe how the number of Republican women in the Colorado legislature has changed since 1985. What are the reasons for this change? (H, C)
- What is a RINO? What do you think about the strategy of labeling people in this way? (P)
- Describe Kiki Traylor’s experience. What does her story suggest about politics today? (C)
- Recently, many people have commented on how polarized our society has become. How does the decline of Republican women reflect this polarization? Is there a place for moderates in today’s politics? (C)

## Sisterhood

- Is there a sisterhood of elected women? What is the importance of “women supporting women”? Use evidence from the film to support your answer.
- In what ways is a sisterhood different from or similar to an “old boys’ network”? Is this comparison important? Why or why not?



## ***Strong Sisters* Viewing Guide**

*Strong Sisters* presents information and perspectives related to elected women in Colorado. As you watch the film, make note of what you see and hear and how you react to it. Try to take some notes at least once every five minutes during the film. Your notes will be useful in the class discussion following the movie.

<b>What Do You See/Hear that Is Interesting? Include information or opinions. Be sure to note the specific topic</b>	<b>Your Response—Do you agree or disagree? Do you feel happy, angry, confused by what you see and hear?</b>

## ***Strong Sisters* Viewing Guide, page 2**

What words from the film were unfamiliar to you?

What was your favorite quote or moment from the film?

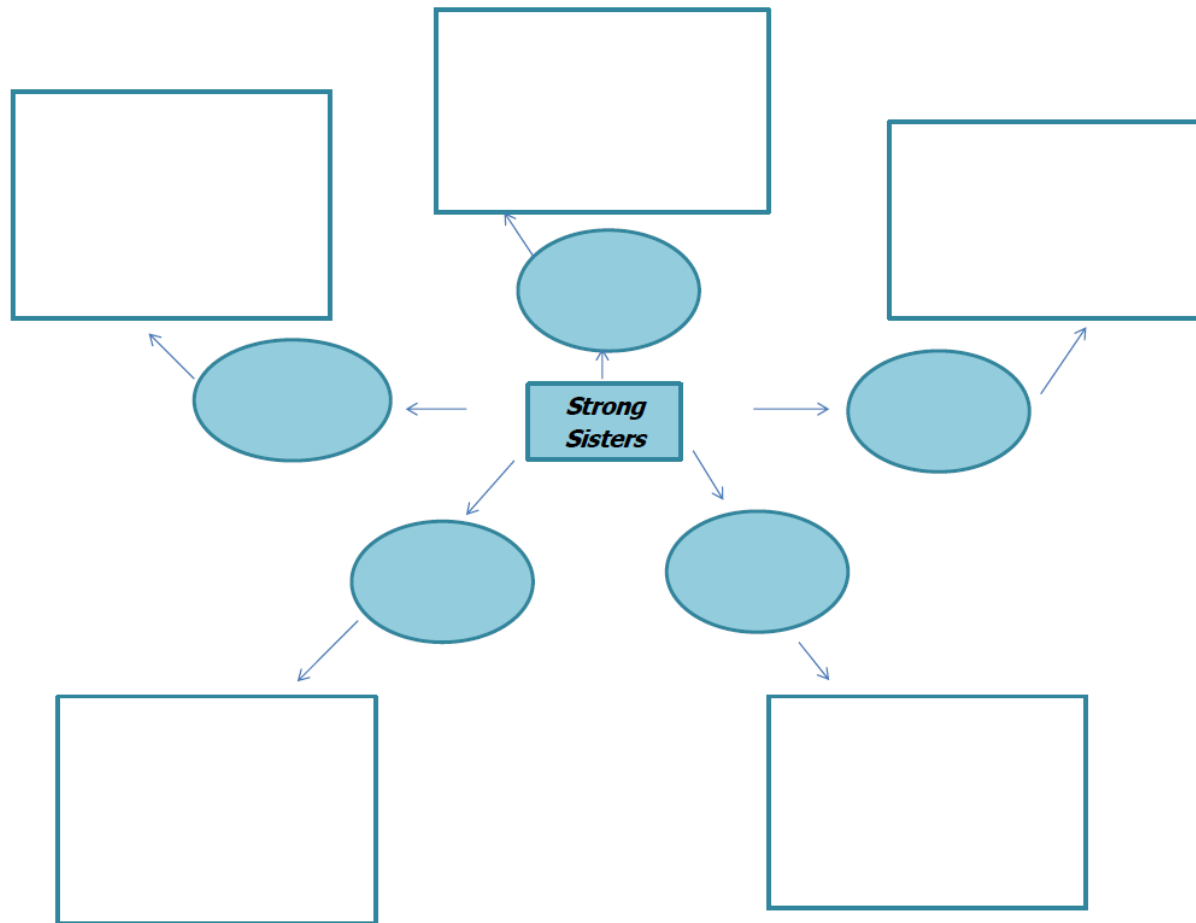
Who was your favorite person in the film? Why?

What questions that you had were answered by the film?

What questions do you still have about elected women in Colorado?

## ***Strong Sisters* Graphic Organizer**

Use the graphic organizer to take notes on the film *Strong Sisters*. In the ovals, write topics covered in the movie that you think are important. Write details about the topic in the rectangles. The details can include information and perspectives from the film, as well as your responses.



***Strong Sisters* Graphic Organizer, page 2**

What words from the film were unfamiliar to you?

What was your favorite quote or moment from the film?

Who was your favorite person in the film? Why?

What questions that you had were answered by the film?

What questions do you still have about elected women in Colorado?

## PART III: EXTENSIONS

**Updating *Strong Sisters*:** Direct students to find out how the gender breakdown in the state legislature has changed since the film was made in 2016. Is Colorado still among the leaders in terms of percentage of women? What might account for any changes in the gender breakdown in the legislature? Has Colorado elected any more women to Congress? In 2018 there will be elections for statewide office, giving Colorado another opportunity to elect a female governor or place a woman in another statewide office. What are those offices? Who is running for those offices? (These candidates will likely announce in 2017 and early 2018.)

Encourage interested students to identify and track one or two bills on issues that might be considered “women’s issues,” such as education or women’s health, as well as one or two more general bills. Who are their sponsors? Does gender seem to affect positions on these bills?

**Strong Sisters in Student Government:** Assign students to research the gender breakdown of their student government and compare it with the breakdown in the state legislature. Encourage them to dig deeper: Do the members of student government see the gender breakdown as significant? How do their views compare with the views of people interviewed in the film? Have students talk with young people who have been involved with student government for several years (or a teacher who has worked with student government). What specific issues is the student government looking at this year? Have the issues changed with time? Do members of student government think gender breakdown affects the issues stressed? How do the student government and state legislature get input on issues, make decisions about policy, elect leaders? If students are interested, this activity could be extended to include comparisons with the local city council or county commissioners.

**Making Connections with Women in Elected Office:** Help students identify women who have been elected to office in your local community or communities. This might include county officials, city council members, mayors, school board members, and state legislators. Assign students to find contact information for the women they identify (the office-holders may have their own websites; additionally, emails are likely available on the website of the government body in which they serve) and to send emails inviting the office-holders to interact with students via a class visit or a Skype or Facetime conversation. Each email should be brief, polite, and explain in a few words why students hope to talk with the office-holder. Once an interview is set up, students should carefully plan the questions they will ask; they might use some of the section titles from the film (family, getting involved, issues, why it matters, etc.) to organize their questions. Following the interview, students could write an article for the school newspaper or compose social media posts sharing what they learned. If students are able to interview more than one office-holder, they could write an article synthesizing what they

learned or create a booklet of their own “oral histories” on women in elected office. Of course, students should write thank you notes to the public officials interviewed.

**Researching Women in Elected Office:** Challenge students to research and create biographies of some of the notable elected women in Colorado history. They could present the results of their work through posters to be placed in a Strong Sisters Hall of Fame, oral presentations in a talking timeline, or museum, library or city hall displays. A list of elected women about whom additional information will be relatively easy to find is provided in the **Resources** section, along with links to useful sources.



## Glossary

The following are terms used in *Strong Sisters* or necessary to understand the film's content. Each entry includes the term, the part of speech in parentheses (n=noun, v=verb, etc.), a definition and the section of the film where the term is used. Terms may have multiple definitions. The definitions presented here are relevant to the content of this film. Similarly, a word may function as both a noun and a verb or a noun and an adjective. Again, we include the part of speech most relevant to the film. The terms are listed in alphabetical order.

Access to capital (n.): The ability to tap into large supplies of money to fund a political campaign [Glass Ceiling]

Activist (n.): Person working for a cause [Getting Involved]

Bill (n.): A proposed new law or change to an existing law [Family, Why Does It Matter?, Issues]

Campaign finance limits (n.): Regulation on how much someone can donate to a particular candidate [Getting Involved, Republican Women]

Carry (or run) legislation (v.): Sponsor a bill and lead the effort to get it passed in the legislature [Why Does It Matter?, Issues, Republican Women]

Caucus (n.): 1. A group of like-minded people, such as the Republican or Democratic caucus in the State House, Women's Political Caucus, or the Black Caucus in the U.S. Congress; 2. A meeting of members of a political party to select candidates for office [Getting Involved, Glass Ceiling, Why Does It Matter?, Issues]

Cause-oriented (adj.): Motivated by a commitment to a particular issue or topic [Getting Involved]

Chauvinist (n.): Person who believes in their own superiority; often used to describe men who believe women are inferior and act accordingly [Patriarchy and Sexism]

Civil rights (n.): Rights that belong to a person because they are a member of a society; often used to refer to the effort to gain or protect rights of African Americans [Getting Involved]

Civil union (n.): A legal arrangement similar to marriage [Issues]

Class representation (n.): Election of people who are at the same economic level as their constituents [Why Does It Matter?]

Clout (n.): Power or influence [Why Colorado?]

Collaborate (v.): Work with others to reach a common goal [Family, Why Does It Matter?, Issues]

Compromise (v.): Settle a dispute by each side giving up something they wanted [Why Does It Matter?]

Congress (n.): The legislative or law-making body of the U.S. government; includes the U.S. House and Senate

Conservative (adj.): Holding political views that support traditional values and small government; conservatives are often described as being on the right [Republican Women]

Constituents (n.): The people an elected official represents [Why Does It Matter?, Issues]

Constitutional convention (n.): Meeting at which a new framework for a government is written [Suffrage]

Contributions (n.): Money donated to a candidate [Glass Ceiling]

Demonetized (adj.): No longer used as a standard for coins and paper money; used to describe silver and gold [Suffrage]

Depression (n.): Time when the economy is in decline [Suffrage]

Desegregate (v.): End the practice of separating people by race [Getting Involved]

Endorsement (n.): Act of publically giving one's approval to a candidate or idea [Glass Ceiling]

Environmentalism (n.): Person concerned about protecting nature and the natural environment [Getting Involved]

Ethnic representation (n.): Election of people who have the same ethnic background as their constituents [Why Does It Matter?]

Executive (n.): The person who is in charge of the branch of government that administers and enforces the law; the President and Governor are both executives

Extreme (adj.): Farthest out in any direction [Glass Ceiling, Republican Women]

Federal government (n.): The national government of the United States

Feminist (n.): Person who believes men and women should have equal rights [Housewives]

Floor (n.): The part of the House or Senate chamber where business is conducted [Why Does It Matter?]

Gender-neutral (adj.): Not favoring any gender; often used to describe language (i.e., using he/she or they rather than he) [Patriarchy and Sexism]

General Assembly: Colorado's legislative or law-making body; includes the Colorado House and Senate

Glass ceiling (n.): A metaphor for the limit put on women's ability to rise in their careers [Glass Ceiling, Sisterhood]

Governor (n.): The head of a state's executive branch

Hierarchy (n.): A way of organizing a group based on status or power [Glass Ceiling]

Leadership (n.): Within a legislative body, each party elects people to guide their party's activities; these people constitute the leadership. The leadership of the party with the most members in the House or Senate (called the majority party) makes important decisions about the running of the entire body. This includes the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate. Leadership also includes the Majority Leader, Minority Leader, Caucus Chair, and Whip, and others. These roles are held in both parties and in both chambers and these leaders set the legislative agenda of their caucus. [Why Colorado?, Patriarchy and Sexism, Family, Glass Ceiling]

Legislative (adj.): Law-making

Legislator (n.): Person serving in a law-making body

Legislature (n.): Governmental body that makes laws

Liberal (adj.): Holding political views that support civil liberties and a larger role for government; liberals are often described as being on the left or progressive [Western Women]

Litmus test (n.): A single factor used to make a judgment about a person [Republican Women]

Moderate (n.): Holding views that are neither conservative or liberal but in the middle [Republican women]

Norm (n.): Accepted standard of behavior [Family]

Old boys club (n.): Negative term for the informal system that allows men to control institutions [Family]

Panic of 1893 (n.): Economic depression that was especially severe in Colorado, lasting several years [Suffrage]

Polarized (adj.): Marked by division into extreme positions [Republican Women]

Policy (n.): Plan or course of action pursued by a government, political party, or business; law is an important part of public policy, those plans of action developed by the government [Why Does It Matter?]

Politics (n.): The practice of governing or of winning and maintaining power [Housewives, Getting Involved, Sisterhood]

Populist (n. or adj.): A person who advocates for the common people; the Populist Party, which advocated for farmers and workers, was influential in the 1890s [Suffrage]

Primary (n.): An election through which a political party chooses candidates [Glass Ceiling]

Recall (n.): A citizen-initiated election to remove an official from office [Family]

Referendum (n.): A vote by the people on a specific policy question [Suffrage]

Sexism (n.): Prejudice based on gender; most often applied to unfair treatment of women [Patriarchy and Sexism]

State House (n.): House of Representatives for the state of Colorado

State Senate (n.): Senate for the state of Colorado

Suffrage (n.): The right to vote [Suffrage]

Suffragist (n.): Person working to gain the right to vote for a group; usually used to describe women seeking the vote for their gender. [Suffrage]

Term limits (n.): Regulation of how many terms in office a person can serve [Why Colorado?]

True believers (n.): People who are so deeply committed to an issue that they will not compromise [Glass Ceiling]

U.S. Senator or Representative or Congressman (n.): person serving in the U.S. Senate or U.S. House of Representatives

WCTU: Women's Christian Temperance Union, a group that tried to outlaw alcohol and also worked for women's suffrage [Suffrage]

Welfare reform (n.): Change in government policy to improve the way in which the government helps people in need [Issues]

# Historic Women

This is a list of women recommended for possible reports or other biographical research project.

The following lists include some of the women interviewed in the film, as well as women referenced in the film or historically important in Colorado. The lists are followed by resources useful in researching the biographies of the women included here.

### Women Interviewed in Film

1. Sen. Norma Anderson
2. Sen. Polly Baca
3. Senate President Joan Fitz-Gerald
4. County Commissioner Josie Heath
5. Speaker Dickey Lee Hullinghorst
6. Denver Deputy Mayor Cary Kennedy
7. Attorney General Gale Norton
8. Lt. Gov. Barbara O'Brien
9. Sen. Paula Sandoval
10. Lt. Gov. Gail Schoettler
11. Congressmember Pat Schroeder
12. Speaker Lola Spradley
13. Rep. Amy Stephens
14. Sen. Gloria Travis Tanner
15. Sen. Jennifer Veiga
16. Rep. Wilma Webb

17. Sen. Dottie Wham
18. Rep. Ruth Wright

### Others Mentioned in Film or Important Leaders

1. Rep. Elizabeth Pellet
2. Sen. Ruth Stockton
3. Rep. Eudochia Bell Smith
4. Rep. Anne Burford Gorsuch
5. Sen. Helen Ring Robinson
6. Rep. Arie Taylor
7. Rep. Betty Benavidez
8. Sen. Agnes Riddle
9. Rep. Clara Cressingham
10. Rep. Carrie Holly
11. Rep. Frances Klock

### Sources

Colorado Legislative Women's Caucus,

<https://sites.google.com/site/coloradowomenscaucus/home/history-of-women-in-colorado-s-legislature>

Colorado Women's Hall of Fame, <http://www.cogreatwomen.org/>

Wikipedia, [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

Capitol Words, [www.capitolwords.org](http://www.capitolwords.org) (Sen. Dottie Wham)

Colorado Law, <http://www.colorado.edu/law/content/ruth-wright-72> (Rep. Ruth Wright)



## Timeline

This timeline includes some highlights in the history of elected women in Colorado. A large copy of the timeline could be posted in the classroom so that students can add additional events—other women who served, events that were happening at the same time, significant legislation sponsored by women on the timeline, etc.

- 1893: Colorado became the first state to give women the right to vote through a popular election.
- 1894: Women voted in a statewide election in Colorado for the first time. Three women were elected to the Colorado House of Representatives.
- 1895: Colorado swore in the first women to serve in any state legislature: Clara Cressingham, Carrie Holly and Frances Klock.
- 1910: Dr. Elizabeth Cassidy became a Denver County Commissioner. Some sources say she was the nation's first female county commissioner.
- 1912: Helen Ring Robinson became the first woman elected to the state Senate.
- 1955: Elizabeth Eyre Pellet became the first woman to serve in a major leadership position in the state legislature (minority leader).
- 1967: Virginia Blue became the first woman to serve as Colorado State Treasurer
- 1971: Betty Benavidez became first Latina to serve in the state legislature.
- 1972: Pat Schroeder was the first Colorado woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.  
Mary Estill Buchanan became the first women to serve as Colorado's Secretary of State.
- 1973: Arie Taylor became the first African American woman to serve in the state legislature.
- 1979: Ruth Stockton became the first female Senate President pro tem.  
Nancy Dick was the first woman to serve as Lieutenant Governor.
- 1985: Polly Baca became the first Latina to serve in leadership in the state Senate.
- 1990: Gail Norton elected the first woman to serve as Attorney General.
- 1997: Norma Anderson became the first woman to serve as Majority Leader in the House.
- 2003: Lola Spradley became the first woman to serve as Speaker of the House.  
Norma Anderson became the first woman to serve as Majority Leader in the Senate.
- 2005: Joan Fitz-Gerald became the first woman to serve as the President of the Senate.

## Other Resources

The following are resources that may be useful to students or teachers interested in finding more information about elected women in Colorado. The websites are current as of November 2016. Some of the books are out of print but may be available at your local library.

### Websites

Barbara Lee Family Foundation, <http://www.barbaraleefoundation.org/our-programs-partnerships/women-in-politics/>  
 Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University, <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/>  
 Colorado Legislative Women's Caucus, <https://sites.google.com/site/coloradowomenscaucus/home/history-of-women-in-colorado-s-legislature>  
 Colorado Women's Hall of Fame, <http://www.cogreatwomen.org/>  
 Institute for Women's Policy Research, Status of Women in the States, Political Participation, <http://statusofwomendata.org/explore-the-data/political-participation/>  
 National Conference of State Legislatures, <http://www.ncsl.org/legislators-staff/legislators/womens-legislative-network.aspx>  
 State of Colorado Legislator Biographies, <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cga-legislativecouncil/legislator-biographies>  
 Strong Sisters: Elected Women in Colorado, <http://www.strongsisters.org/>  
 Women in Government, <http://www.womeningovernment.org/>  
 The World Bank, Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS>

### Books

*Caught Between the Bettys*, autobiography by Alice Borodkin (former state representative). Portland, ME: Nemo Publishing, 2016.  
*Colorado: A History of the Centennial State*, by Carl Abbot, Stephen Leonard, and Thomas J. Noel. Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2013 (5<sup>th</sup> edition). Written for students.  
*Colorado Women: A History*, by Gail Marjorie Beaton. Boulder, CO: Timberline Books, 2012.  
*Helen Ring Robinson: Colorado Senator and Suffragist*, by Pat Pascoe (former state senator). Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2011.  
*Meet Me at the Ballot Box*, by Marcia Goldstein. Dissertation, University of Colorado, 2007.

*Preparing Women for Citizenship*, by Helen Ring Robinson (former state senator). New York: Macmillan, 1918. <https://archive.org/details/cu31924014107399>

*That Pellet Woman!*, autobiography by Elizabeth Eyre Pellet (former state representative) with Alexander Klein, Stein and Day, 1965.

*The R.G. S. Story, Vol. 6: Rico to Dolores*, by Dell A. McCoy. Marlborough, MA: Sundance Publishing, 1997. Chapter about Betty Pellet.

*The Rabbi and Senator Sleep Together*, autobiography by Rabbi Steven and Senator Joyce Foster with Cindy Brovsky. Denver: Triple D Press, 2016.