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**Measures to expand women's political participation in 2018  
local elections with a focus on large city/provincial councils**

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There has been little research on the activities of the governing councils of large cities and provinces in South Korea. This study contributes to the understanding of the activities of the members of metropolitan/provincial councils. Promoting the participation of citizens from all walks of life, including women, while still addressing gender equality issues in welfare, health, employment, and work-family balance is an important political issue closely connected to people's daily lives. Understanding the degree to which this agenda is being addressed and by which council members is important for examining representative democracy and women's political representation.

This study selected seven metropolitan/provincial councils with a proportion of female council members reaching at least 10% and considering regional

distribution with an aim to compare the activities of their council members on eight issues related to gender equality among major legislative and monitoring activities.

According to the findings of our research, expanding women's representation in terms of quantity was closely related to the expansion of women's representation in real terms. In areas related to gender equality policies, the activities of female members were two to three times greater than those of their male counterparts. Second, metropolitan/provincial councils with a larger number of female members also saw greater participation in gender equality issues among the male members. This indicates that the activity of female members toward gender equality issues affected their male counterparts. Third, there was a difference in major areas of concern between male and female council members. While male members tended to make more ordinance proposals and/or comments in audits regarding the issues of safety/violence, family policy, and welfare/health (in that order), female members were more interested in the issues of (in order) safety/violence, gender equality/representation, and work-home balance. This is interpreted to mean that for female members, their experience as a woman naturally guides them to a greater interest in the issues of gender equality/representation and work-home balance.

These findings indicate the need for the provision of greater support for the qualitative and quantitative expansion of female representation. They also support the argument that more female members are needed in order to further promote gender equality policies on local councils.