



Why 30% Critical Mass Theory, Representative Bureaucracy, and the 30x30 Initiative

The **30x30 Initiative** aims to see **women make up 30% of police recruits by 2030**—a goal grounded in research on **critical mass theory** and **representative bureaucracy**. Increasing women’s representation in law enforcement isn’t just about fairness; it’s about **enhancing public safety, strengthening agencies, and improving community trust**.

Why 30% Matters – Critical Mass

Research shows that when **underrepresented groups reach 30% representation**, they gain the ability to **influence institutional culture and decision-making**.¹ Below this threshold, women in male-dominated fields often experience **tokenism, isolation, and pressure to conform**. But at 30%, their presence is **normalized**, driving **structural and cultural shifts that benefit the entire workforce**.

Representative Bureaucracy in Policing

Representative bureaucracy extends this idea into public service, arguing that organizations should reflect the demographics of the populations they serve. In public service, **representation matters**. Studies show that when **law enforcement agencies reflect the demographics of their communities**, they **build greater public trust, enhance legitimacy, and improve public safety**.² Women officers, in particular, bring strengths in de-escalation, responding to gender-based violence, and reducing excessive force complaints.

30%: The Tipping Point for Change

This is why 30x30 is focused on reaching—not just increasing—30% women in policing. The evidence tells us that this is the tipping point where real change happens. When more women enter the profession, **policing improves for everyone**—officers, agencies, and communities.

A Commitment to Growth, Not Quotas

To be clear, **30% is an aspirational outcome—not a quota or preferential standard**. The goal is to:

- ✓ **Update policies and programs** to support women in law enforcement
- ✓ **Ensure fair and accurate assessments**
- ✓ **Improve agency culture**

By **modernizing policing to be more inclusive and equitable**, we believe **women’s representation will naturally increase**—reaching at least **30% and beyond** over time.

¹ Kanter, R. M. (1977). Men and Women of the Corporation. Basic Books.

² Meier, K. J., & Nicholson-Crotty, J. (2006). Gender, representative bureaucracy, and law enforcement: The case of sexual assault. Public Administration Review, 66(6), 850-860.