

Women's Representation in Maine

Parity Ranking: 10th of 50

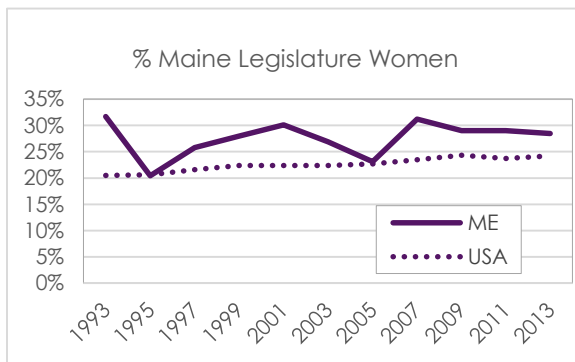
Score of 26: 12.5 points for the elections of Sen. Susan Collins and former Sen. Olympia Snowe and 5.5 points for its half-female House delegation. The remaining 7 points are for its state legislature, which is 29.6% women.

Quick Fact

Since the 2000 election, Maine has provided voluntary public funding for candidates for governor and state legislator. Women are more likely to use this funding than men, and the system may have allowed more women to run: 42% of women candidates for state office in 2002 said they would not have run without public funding, compared to 23% of men.

Trending

The percentage of Maine's state legislative seats held by women routinely exceeds the national average, but the share today is lower than it was in 1993.



Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University.

Levels of Government

Statewide Executives

Female governors: None

Maine's only statewide elected executive office is governor. Since a woman has never been elected to the governorship, Maine is the only state to have never elected a woman to a statewide executive office.

Congress

U.S. Senate: 1 of 2 seats is held by a woman, Susan Collins (1997-present)

U.S. House: 1 of 2 seats is held by a woman

In its history, Maine has elected four women to Congress, two of whom served in both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate.

State Legislature

Percentage women: 29.6%

Rankings: 11th of 50

Senate: 8 of 35 (22.9%) are women

House: 47 of 151 (31.1%) are women

Method of election: single-member districts.

Local

None of Maine's five largest cities with elected mayors has a woman mayor.

Words of Wisdom

There are times you might find yourself standing alone. But if you believe so strongly in what you are doing and what you're fighting for – that will surpass the loneliness of taking that position."– Olympia Snowe, former U.S. senator for Maine

Maine Elects Women Leaders to Congress

From 1997 until 2013, both of Maine's U.S. senators were Republican women: Susan Collins, elected in 1996, and Olympia Snowe, elected in 1994. Snowe declared her intent not to seek re-election in early 2012, citing the rise in political polarization as her principal motivation.



Former Senator Olympia Snowe

Senator Snowe started her legislative career early, running for the Maine House of Representatives to fill the vacancy caused by her husband's death in 1973. She won a U.S. House seat in 1978 and a U.S. Senate seat in 1994.

Throughout her three terms in the Senate, Snowe was known as a consensus builder with a strong sense of bipartisanship. She consistently won elections with over 60% of the vote; in 2006 she won with nearly 75%.

In the 2012 election, Maine's voters chose independent Angus King to take the seat Snowe vacated, ending the nearly decade-long streak of Maine being represented by two women in the U.S. Senate.

Susan Collins still represents Maine in the U.S. Senate. She is expected to seek reelection in 2014, as is Maine's female U.S. representative, Chellie Pingree.

Elections to Watch

Incumbent U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R) is favored to win a fourth term in 2014; in 2008 she won re-election with over 60% of the vote. Maine's one female U.S. House member, Chellie Pingree (D), will also seek re-election in 2014.

Gov. Paul LePage (R) is vulnerable in 2014, but his two most likely opponents are men: Congressman Mike Michaud (D) and independent Elliot Cutler, who narrowly lost to LePage in a three-way race in 2010, in which Democratic nominee Libby Mitchell finished third.

State senator Emily Cain has announced her intent to run for Michaud's open U.S. House seat. If both she and Rep. Pingree win, Maine's two U.S. House seats will be occupied by women for the first time.