

Women's Representation in West Virginia

Parity Ranking: 41st of 50

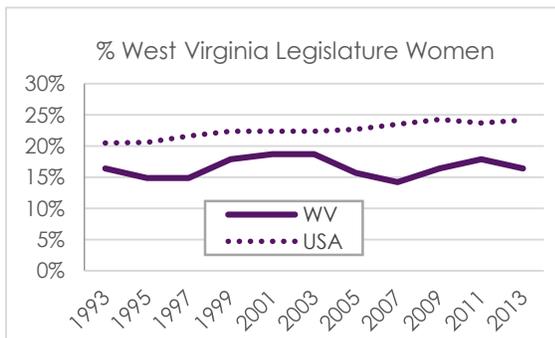
Score of 11: Three points for the secretary of state, 4 points for the percentage of its U.S. representatives who are women, and 4 points for its percentage of state legislators who are women.

Quick Fact

Only one woman is serving in West Virginia's state senate, the lowest number of women serving there since 1979.

Trending

While nationally the percentage of women serving in state legislatures has increased by 3.7 percentage points over the last two decades, the percentage of women in the West Virginia legislature is the same today as it was in 1993: 16.4%.



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

Elections to Watch

The race for the state's open U.S. Senate seat is shaping up to be a woman vs. woman race between Secretary of State Natalie Tennant (D) and Rep. Shelley Moore Capito (R). The winner would be the state's first female U.S. Senator. Rep. Capito leaves a seat open in the House that may also draw women candidates in both the Republican and Democratic primaries. West Virginia's next gubernatorial election is in 2016.

Notable Recent Election

In 2012, Shelley Moore Capito (R) was reelected to the U.S. House. She is only the second woman to have represented West Virginia in the House. Her father is former three-term governor Arch Moore.

Levels of Government

Statewide Executives

Female governors: None

Current female statewide elected executives: 1 of 6 (secretary of state)

Number of women to have held statewide elected executive office: Three, one of whom was appointed to fill a vacancy

Congress

U.S. Senate: 0 of 2 seats are held by women

U.S. House: 1 of 3 seats is held by a woman

In its history, West Virginia has election two women to the U.S House and none to the Senate.

State Legislature

Percentage women: 16.4%

Rankings: 45th of 50

Senate: 1 of 34 (2.9%) are women

House: 21 of 100 (21%) are women

Method of election: 1 to 5 seat districts

Local

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

Words of Wisdom

"What I find with my female members of Congress is that we tend to work very hard. While we're very focused, we can also multitask better...it would be an interesting experiment, and also probably very successful if we took over the reins of leadership at all levels and moved it forward. Because we have a tendency to cut through the B.S. a lot better than guys do."
- Shelley Moore Capito, U.S. representative from West Virginia