

Women's Representation in Texas

Parity Ranking: 30th of 50

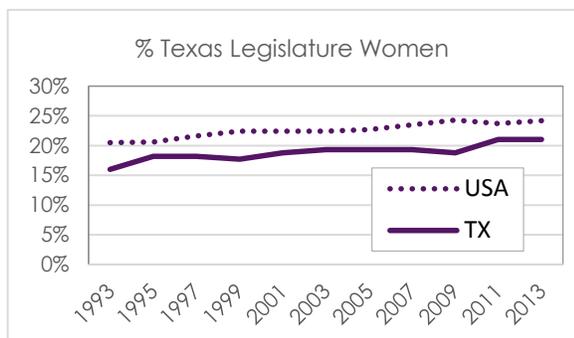
Score of 15: One point for comptroller, 2.5 points for former U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison's most recent term, 1.5 point for the percentage of U.S. House members who are women, 6 for the percentage of state legislators who are women, 4 points for Mayors Annise Parker of Houston and Betsy Price of Fort Worth.

Quick Facts

The two largest cities in the nation with women mayors are both in Texas: Houston and Fort Worth. In fact, Houston is the only city with a population above a million with a woman mayor.

Trending

The percentage of women in Texas' legislature has remained unchanged for the last three year and rests below the national average.



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

Notable Recent Elections

In 2012, Representatives Sheila Jackson Lee, Kay Granger, and Eddie Bernice Johnson each won re-election in the 18th, 12th, and 30th congressional districts respectively. Each has been serving in the U.S. House since the mid-1990s.

In November 2013, Annise Parker was re-elected mayor of Houston. She is Houston's second female mayor and the first openly gay mayor of a major American city.

Levels of Government

Statewide Executives

Female governors: Miriam Ferguson (1925-1927; 1933-1935) and Ann Richards (1991-1995) (Miriam Ferguson was elected twice as a surrogate for her husband who could not run for re-election.)

Current female statewide elected executives: 1 of 7 (comptroller). In addition, one of the three railroad commissioners, though not the chair, is a woman.

Number of women to have held statewide elected executive office: 6, two of whom were appointed to fill vacancies. An additional three served as railroad commissioners, one of whom was appointed.

Congress

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

U.S. House: 3 of 36 seats are held by women

In its history, Texas has elected six women to the House and one to the Senate.

State Legislature

Percentage women: 21%

Rankings: 33rd of 50

Senate: 7 of 31 (22.6%) are women

House: 31 of 150 (20.7%) are women

Method of election: Single-member districts

Local

Two of Texas' five largest cities with elected mayors have women mayors: Houston and Fort Worth.

Words of Wisdom

"I did not want my tombstone to read, 'She kept a really clean house.' I think I'd like them to remember me by saying, 'She opened government to everyone.'" – Ann Richards, former governor of Texas

Encouraging Women to Run for Executive Office in Texas

Annie's List, an organization dedicated to electing Democratic women in Texas, is tackling an uphill battle to put a woman in the governor's mansion in 2014.



The group created its Statewide Opportunity Fund two years ago to support a Democratic women's campaigns for statewide elective office.

When asked about possible candidates, Annie's List's Communications Director Mitra Salasel said, "We have our eye on a long list of women that would be fantastic contenders."

Women are often less likely to run for statewide elective offices, choosing to run for local school or city boards instead. The combination of a woman's hesitance to run for a high-profile office and the perception of a lack of resources or ability deters women from running in executive elections. Efforts such as this one are key to providing women with the funding and backing necessary to launch campaigns for executive positions.

Elections to Watch

Following a high-profile filibuster in the Texas state legislature, state Senator Wendy Davis (D) announced her candidacy for governor in early October. She will face an uphill battle, as Democrats have not won a statewide election in Texas for nearly two decades; Republican Attorney General Greg Abbott is heavily favored.

Absent any changes in congressional district lines, which are being contested in court, all three Texas congresswomen should easily win re-election in 2014 - as should all but one male incumbent (Democrat Pete Gallego's seat is the only seat expected to be competitive). So far, all potential candidates for John Cornyn's U.S. Senate seat are men. The only female statewide executive up for re-election in 2014, State Comptroller Susan Combs, is retiring.