

Women's Representation in Delaware

Parity Ranking: 34th of 50

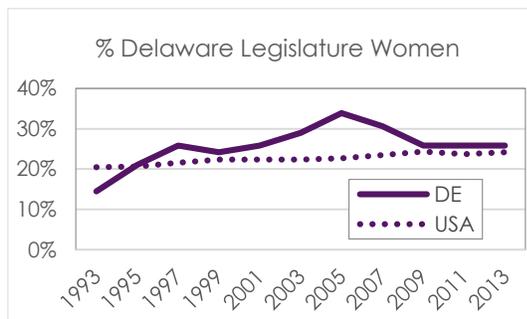
Score of 14: Five points for former Gov. Ruth Ann Minner's final term, half a point for the commissioner of insurance, 7.5 points for percentage of state legislators who are women, and one point for the senate president.

Quick Fact

Although Delaware women have held a larger portion of state legislative seats than the national average since 1995, the state has never elected a woman to the U.S. House or U.S. Senate.

Trending

The percentage Delaware's state legislators that are women peaked in 2005 at 33.9%, placing Delaware second nationwide for women in the state legislature. Today, Delaware's percentage has fallen to close to the national average.



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

Elections to Watch

Conservative activist Christine O'Donnell is considering a 2014 re-match against Senator Chris Coons, who defeated O'Donnell in 2010. If elected, she would be Delaware's first female member of Congress. John Carney is favored to keep his U.S. House seat. The next governor's race is not until 2016, but three statewide elected executive offices currently held by men are up for election in 2014.

Levels of Government

Statewide Executive

Female governors: Ruth Ann Minner (2001-2009)

Current female elected executives: 1 of 6 (commissioner of insurance)

Number of women to have held statewide elected executive office: 11, six of whom served as state treasurer

Congress

Delaware is one of four states that have never elected a woman to Congress.

State Legislature

Percentage women: 25.8%

Rankings: 21st of 50

Senate: 6 of 21 (28.6%) are women

House: 10 of 41 (24.4%) are women

Method of election: single-member districts

Local

None of the five largest jurisdictions with elected mayors or county executives has a woman mayor or county executive.

Notable Recent Election

In 2012, Sher Valenzuela (R) challenged incumbent Lieutenant Governor Matthew Denn (D). Denn won re-election with 61.6% of the vote, but Valenzuela made a splash as a newcomer to statewide politics and spoke at the Republican National Convention in Tampa.

Words of Wisdom

"I'm from the land of steel magnolias. [A steel magnolia is] somebody who has the ability – with grace and dignity – to hold the lines that she considers important." – *Ruth Ann Minner, former governor of Delaware*