

# Women's Representation in Arkansas

Parity Ranking: 43<sup>rd</sup> of 50

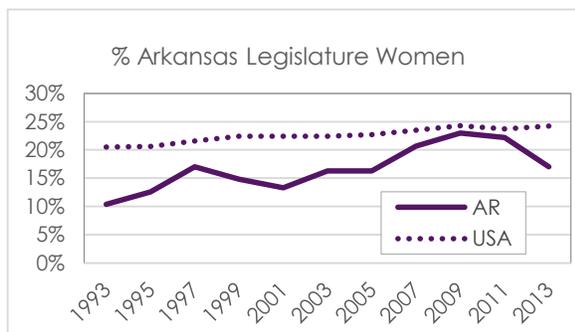
*Score of 10:* Three points for former U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln's final term, 5 points for women's percentage of state legislative seats, and 2 for the county executive (called a "judge" in Arkansas) of Washington County.

## Quick Fact

Hattie Caraway became the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate in January 1932, when she won a special election after first being appointed to fill a vacancy caused by the death of her husband in 1931. She won a full term in November 1932 and was re-elected in 1938. She lost in the Democratic primary in her bid for re-election in 1944.

## Trending

The proportion of women in Arkansas' state legislature peaked in 2009, and it is now the same as it was 16 years ago.



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

## Elections to Watch

Arkansas will have an open seat election for governor in which Republicans are favored; state representative Debra Hobbs is running in the Republican primary. Male candidates are also heavily favored in the U.S. Senate race. All four U.S. House seats are held by Republican men in GOP-leaning districts, but Rep. Tom Cotton is leaving a seat open to run for U.S. Senate.

## Words of Wisdom

"Sometimes I'm really afraid that tourists are going to poke me with their umbrellas! And yet there's no sound reason why women, if they have the time and ability, shouldn't sit with men on city councils, in state legislatures, or in the House and Senate... Women are essentially practical because they've always had to be." – Hattie Wyatt Caraway, former U.S. senator from Arkansas

## Levels of Government

### Statewide Executives

Female governors: None

Current female statewide elected executives: 0 of 7 positions.

Number of women to have held statewide elected executive office: Five, one of whom was appointed to fill a vacancy and was then elected to another executive position. An additional woman was appointed to fill the position of attorney general for less than a year.

### Congress

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

U.S. House: 0 of 4 seats are held by women

In its history, Arkansas has elected two women to the Senate and four to the House. Blanche Lincoln, who served in both chambers, was the first woman to not be initially elected in a special election caused by the death of her husband.

### State Legislature

Percentage women: 17%

Rankings: 40<sup>th</sup> of 50

Senate: 6 of 35 (17.1%)

House: 17 of 100 (17%)

Method of election: single-member districts

### Local

One of the five largest cities and counties with elected executive leaders has a woman county judge (the Arkansan terms for a county executive): Washington County.