

Women's Representation in South Carolina

Parity Ranking: 32nd of 50

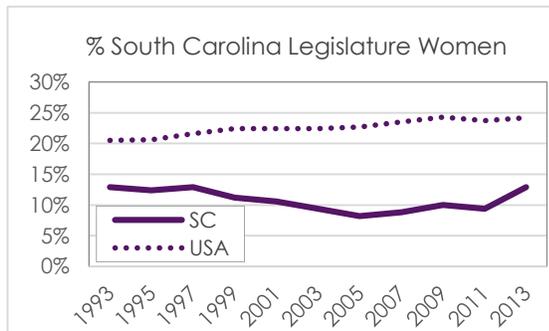
Score of 15: Ten points for the election of Governor Nikki Haley, 3 points for the percentage state legislative seats held by women, and 2 for the mayor of Mount Pleasant.

Quick Fact

In 2012, Katrina Shealy became the first woman elected to the South Carolina senate in five years. The 46-seat state senate had been the nation's only all-male state legislative chamber. South Carolina also has not elected a woman to Congress since 1990.

Trending

South Carolina experienced a drop in the percentage of its state legislative seats held by women in the early 2000s, but has now recovered to its 1993 level of 12.9% women. In 2013, South Carolina relinquished its place as the state with the lowest percentage of state legislative seats held by women to Louisiana.



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

Notable Recent Elections

In a 2013 special House election Elizabeth Colbert-Busch (D), sister of comedian Stephen Colbert, ran against Mark Sanford (R), the controversial former governor. Sanford won the general election with 54% of the vote.

Words of Wisdom

"When I first decided to run for the statehouse against a 30-year incumbent, I walked into a boardroom [full of his supporters] and said, 'I'm Nikki Haley, and I'm running for state senate.' A man said, 'We think you're a nice young lady. And if you get out of this race, we'll make sure you get a good appointment.'" And I said, "I'm running, and I'm going to win. So please tell your friend that if he decides to get out of the race, I'll be more than happy to consider him for a position" - *Nikki Haley, governor of South Carolina*

Levels of Government

Statewide Executives

Female governors: Nikki Haley (2010-present)

Current female statewide elected executives: 1 of 9 (governor)

Number of women to have held statewide elected executive office: 4

Congress

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

U.S. House: 0 of 7 seats are held by women

In its history, South Carolina has elected five women to Congress, four of whom were elected in special elections to fill vacancies caused by the deaths of their husbands.

State Legislature

Percentage women: 12.9%

Rankings: 49th of 50

Senate: 1 of 46 (2.2%) are women

House: 21 of 124 (16.9%) are women

Method of election: Single-member districts

Local

One of South Carolina's five largest cities with elected mayors has a woman mayor: Mount Pleasant.

Elections to Watch

Nikki Haley, South Carolina's first woman governor, is up for re-election in 2014. She will likely face male challengers in her primary and general elections. Both U.S. Senate seats are up as well. Sen. Lindsey Graham faces a highly competitive primary; challengers include Nancy Mace, the first woman to graduate from The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina. No U.S. House race is expected to be competitive in the general election.