

# Women's Representation in New Hampshire

Parity Ranking: 1<sup>st</sup> of 50

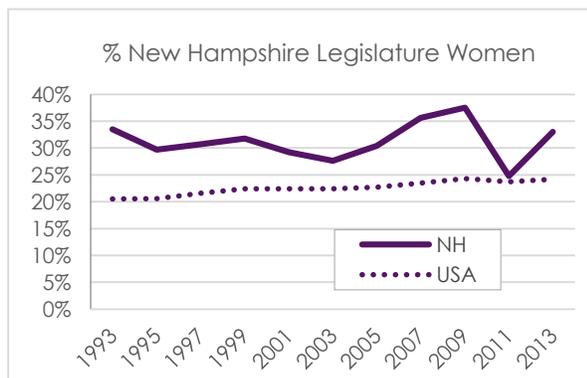
*Score of 47.* Fifteen points for Gov. Maggie Hassan's first term, 12 for first terms of Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D) and Kelly Ayotte (R), 7 for the percent of recent House elections won by women, 10 for the percentage of state legislators who are women, 1 for speaker of the house, and 2 for Mayor Donnalee Lozeau of Nashua.

## Quick Facts

New Hampshire is the first and only state to send an all-female delegation to Congress. New Hampshire also was the first state in the nation to have a majority female state legislative chamber (in the state Senate in 2009-2010).

## Trending

New Hampshire experienced a drop in the percentage of legislative seats held by women after the 2010 election, when Republicans took control of both the state House and Senate. The number of women dropped from 13 to 6 in the Senate and 143 to 99 in the House. In 2012, women made a substantial rebound; there are now 140 women serving in the state legislature.



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

## Levels of Government

### Statewide Executives

Female governors: Vesta Roy (1982-83, appointed), Jeanne Shaheen (1997-2003), Maggie Hassan (2013-present)

The position of governor is New Hampshire's only statewide elected executive office.

### Congress

U.S. Senate: 2 of 2 seats are held by women, Kelly Ayotte (2011-present), Jeanne Shaheen (2009-present)

U.S. House: 2 of 2 seats are held by women

In its history, New Hampshire has elected four women to Congress, all of whom are currently in office.

### State Legislature

Percentage women: 33.5%

Rankings: 5<sup>th</sup> of 50

Senate: 9 of 24 (37.5%) are women

House: 133 of 400 (33.25%) are women

Method of election: State senators are elected from single-member districts and state representatives are elected from districts ranging from 1 to 11 seats.

### Local

One of New Hampshire's five largest cities with elected mayors has a woman mayor: Nashua, the state's second largest cities.

## Words of Wisdom

"We have a history of electing women, and that's partly because we have such a wonderful tradition and culture of citizen participation in all aspects of life." – Maggie Hassan, governor of New Hampshire

## The Use of Multi-Member Districts in New Hampshire

New Hampshire currently ranks fifth for its percentage of state legislators who are women (33.25%). It also is one of ten states that uses multi-member districts, an electoral structure that has been shown to improve women's chances of running for and winning elected office. In multi-member districts, constituents elect multiple legislators from a single district to represent them, whereas in single-member districts, which are more commonly used in the United States, constituents elect only one.

New Hampshire elects its 400 House members from 204 districts, which range in size from one to eleven representatives. It uses winner-take-all voting rules; voters have as many votes as there are seats in their district, are limited to one vote per candidate, and the candidates with the most votes are elected.

Of the 400 members of the state House of Representatives, 132 are women. Research suggests that the use of multi-member districts encourages more women to be recruited and run and provides constituents with the option to vote for both male and female candidates instead of having to choose one. FairVote found that in 2012 in New Hampshire's larger multi-member districts, voters in several instances elected women candidates from their districts' minority party. For example, Republicans won 30 of 35 seats in the five districts with at least 7 seats; the only Democrats to win were women, and the only Republicans to lose were men.

The New Hampshire House of Representatives has more seats than any other state legislative chamber in the country, and the average house member represents only 3,300 people, allowing for more localized campaigns. Members are also paid only \$200 a term, likely contributing to more turnover. Greater access for female candidates in the House has given more women a chance to climb the rungs of the political ladder.

## Elections to Watch

In 2014, Reps. Carol Shea-Porter and Ann McLane Kuster will run for re-election in the highly competitive 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> congressional districts. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen will face a competitive re-election as well. Gov. Maggie Hassan is favored in her bid for re-election. Republicans seem likely to nominate men in all of these races.

## Notable Recent Elections

In 2012, New Hampshire became the first state in the nation to have an all-female congressional delegation. This delegation includes Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Kelly Ayotte, and Representatives Ann McLane Kuster and Carol Shea-Porter. Pictured below is New Hampshire's congressional delegation and New Hampshire's current governor, Maggie Hassan.



New Hampshire's all-female congressional delegation and Gov. Maggie Hassan