


Hillary Rodham Clinton

Hillary Rodham Clinton served as the 67th Secretary of State of the United States from January 21, 2009 until February 1, 2013, after nearly four decades in public service as an advocate, attorney, First Lady, and Senator.

As First Lady, Hillary Clinton advocated for universal affordable, quality health care and led successful bipartisan efforts to improve the adoption and foster care systems, reduce teen pregnancy, and establish both the Children's Health Insurance Program and Early Head Start, which provides support for children in the crucial first three years of life.

She also traveled to more than 80 countries as a representative of our country, winning respect as a champion of human rights, democracy, civil society, and opportunities for women and girls around the world.

In 2000, Clinton made history as the first First Lady elected to the United States Senate. She worked across party lines to expand economic opportunity and access to quality, affordable health care, including for wounded service members, veterans and members of the National Guard and Reserves. After September 11, 2001, she helped secure more than \$20 billion for the rebuilding of New York and fought for the health needs of first responders who risked their lives at Ground Zero.

In 2007 and 2008, Clinton made her historic campaign

for President, winning 18 million votes, and more primaries and delegates than any woman had before.

In her four years as Secretary of State, Clinton played a central role in restoring America's standing in the world and strengthening its global leadership. Her "smart power" approach to foreign policy elevated American diplomacy and development and repositioned them for the 21st century -- with new tools, technologies, and partners, including the private sector and civil society around the world. As America's chief diplomat and the President's principal foreign policy adviser, Clinton spearheaded progress on many of our greatest national security challenges, from reasserting the United States as a Pacific power and imposing crippling sanctions on Iran and North Korea to responding to the challenges and opportunities of the Arab Awakening and negotiating a ceasefire in the Middle East. She pushed the frontiers of human rights and demonstrated that giving women the opportunity to participate fully is vital to the security, stability, and prosperity of all nations.

Today, Clinton continues to build on the nonprofit work she began nearly four decades ago through the Bill, Hillary, and Chelsea Clinton Foundation, which works to improve global health, strengthen economies, promote health and wellness, and protect the environment by fostering partnerships among businesses, governments, nongovernmental organizations, and private citizens.

Women in Politics

Clinton's political success is, unfortunately, a rare example of what women in government are capable of accomplishing. Worldwide, women represent only one-fifth of parliamentary seats. In 2014, according to a report by UN Women, only 15 out of 193 heads of state were female. That's 7.8 percent. The United States lands squarely in the middle of the rankings: 18.3 percent of the US congress is female. Bangladesh, Madagascar, and Saudi Arabia, to name a few countries, score better on female representation in government.

There is only one country in the world in which women outnumber men in the government legislature. In Rwanda, 63 percent of seats are held by women. Andorra, which has a 50-50 divide between male and female representation, is the only other country to equally represent women in parliament.

But why does it matter? Why is it better to have women equally represented in government? Women tend to focus on different issues than their male counterparts, for one, and that can correct imbalances. In India, for example, researches found that the number of clean drinking water projects increased by 62 percent when women led local government councils. Equal gender representation can

mean a more balanced political agenda. Female representation in government can also have a snowballing effect on women's rights overall—as more women are elected to office, they work on legislation to empower women, who then go on to run for office. In Rwanda, after female politicians won the majority of parliamentary seats, women were granted rights to property inheritance and land ownership.

So what's holding women back? In some countries, views that female politicians are less capable and suited for leadership can prevent women from winning elections. This phenomena can be challenged with quota systems, which require a certain number of government positions to be held by women. In the United States, however, studies show that female candidates are just as likely to win their races as their male counterparts—the problem is that women are less likely to run at all. Women may be discouraged from political ambition for a number of reasons. They may feel greater social pressure to focus on their families. They may find the aggressive political climate unappealing. And, unfortunately, many women underestimate their qualifications for political office.

At the current rate of growth, the world might see gender equality in lower houses of parliament in 20 years. The future of women in higher, executive positions, however, is uncertain.

1. Were you surprised to learn which countries had the highest female representation in government? Why? Did the ranking of the United States surprise you at all?
2. Hillary Clinton has been asked in interviews which clothing designers she prefers. Texas senator Wendy Davis's shoes have drawn media commentary. Do you think there is a difference in how the media portrays female politicians, as opposed to male politicians? Could this type of attention hurt a political candidate, or help them? How?



Above, left to right: German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Argentine President Cristina Fernandez, Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway, and President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia.

The Americas lead the way in number of female heads of state (6), but the United States has yet to elect a woman president. Africa comes in second for women in executive positions. The list below includes all the female heads of state (HS) and heads of government (HG) in the world in 2014.

- Argentina (HG/HS)
- Bangladesh (HG)
- Brazil (HG/HS)
- Chile (HG/HS)
- Costa Rica (HG/HS)
- Denmark (HG)
- Germany (HG)
- Jamaica (HG)
- Liberia (HG/HS)
- Lithuania (HS)
- Malawi (HG/HS)
- Norway (HG)
- Republic of Korea (HS)
- San Marino (HS)
- Senegal (HG)
- Slovenia (HG)
- Thailand (HG)

With thanks to the following organizations for resources used:

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Resource Guide

The New York Times ROOM for DEBATE

[Judging Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State](#)

In this Room for Debate topic, eight experts from varied backgrounds weigh in on former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's legacy. The short articles span critiques of her foreign policy from the Middle East to Asia, from Russia to global women's rights.

[Our Interview with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton](#) (transcript)

In this PBS interview, Hillary Clinton discusses the role of women in conflict zones. To create a sustainable, lasting peace, she says, you have to engage more than half the population—women have to be at the negotiating table. Here she outlines the problems and possible solutions for conflict areas like Afghanistan.



NewStatesman

Online comment site of the year

[“The art of smart power”](#)

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton discusses the rise of “smart power” in this piece for the *New Statesman*. An alternative to the historic standbys of hard power and soft power, this new trend in international relations relies on a wide range of tools to solve global problems. So what's moving up on the agenda? Women's rights, for one. Turns out it's not just the right thing to do—it's the smart thing, for everyone.

“let it be that human rights
are women’s rights and
women’s rights are human
rights once and for all”

[Hillary Rodham Clinton's Remarks:
1995 U.N. 4th World Conference
on Women](#)

Twenty years ago, 189 nations agreed to promote the “full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life.” Read Hillary Clinton’s speech from the conference above.

[No Ceilings: The Full Participation
Project](#)

Watch Hillary Clinton and Melinda Gates announce their new joint initiative to measure the progress of women’s global rights since the 1995 UN 4th World Conference in Beijing. Data, they say, is critical to real progress.



[TEDWomen](#)

Hillary Clinton discusses why women’s issues are integral to successful foreign policy. She explains why America’s national and economic security is threatened by the degradation of women worldwide. Finally, the former senator and Secretary of State lists ways to become involved in global women’s issues.



[Hillary Slams ‘Culture of Rape’](#)

In this short video from the 2013 Women in the World Summit, Hillary Clinton addresses India’s rape culture, which has sparked recent protests. Although the nation has had female heads of state, gender violence and sexism undercut the nation’s potential.

Women in Politics Resources

[Women in Politics: 2014](#)

This infographic from UN Women shows a map of the world and where women in government are located globally. It includes rankings and statistics on each country's political representation of women. Tables include data on which government departments women most commonly chair.



[“More Women, but Not Nearly Enough”](#)

In this blog post by Tali Mendelberg and Christopher Karpowitz in the *New York Times*, the authors discuss how gender diversity shapes the US political environment—from the issues legislation addresses, to how legislators work with each other.

[On Campaign Trail, Missteps on Gender](#)

Margaret Sullivan reviews recent cover stories on Hillary Clinton and Wendy Davis. She debates sexism in media treatment of women and how to discuss gender politics without perpetuating gender inequality.

“Reportorial due diligence is one thing; reinforcing a sexist standard is quite another.”