THE STATE OF WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION
2015-2016

A BLUEPRINT FOR REACHING GENDER PARITY
Representation2020 works to raise awareness of the underrepresentation of women in elected office, to strengthen coalitions that are supportive of measures to increase women’s representation, and to highlight the often-overlooked structural barriers to achieving gender parity in American elections. To honor the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted suffrage to women, we promote our 2020 Pledge for those willing to commit to changes in rules and practices that will improve women’s representation in elected office at all levels of government. Representation2020 is a project of FairVote, a non-profit, non-partisan electoral reform organization. All donations to FairVote are tax-deductible, including gifts earmarked to support Representation2020.

The State of Women’s Representation 2015-2016

The State of Women’s Representation 2015-2016 is the second in a series of reports leading to the year 2020, the centennial of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Each report will build on the work of scholars and organizations to summarize and analyze women’s representation in all fifty states. This report establishes the case for structural changes that are necessary to achieve parity in our lifetime.

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A note on data presented on women in politics: data on the representation of women in state legislatures, past and present, is courtesy of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University. Similarly, much of the data on past women in elected office at all levels of government comes from the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University. Data on current members of Congress, elected statewide executive officials, and elected local officials was collected by Representation2020 from each official’s government website.

For the most up-to-date data on the representation of women in elected office in the United States, visit the Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University at www.cawp.rutgers.edu.
Making Votes Count with Ranked Choice Voting

The City Perspective: Mayor Betsy Hodges on the Advantages of Ranked Choice Voting

Maximizing the Benefits: Combining Multi-Winner Districts with Ranked Choice Voting

3 — Legislative Practices to Encourage Women’s Representation

Taking Action with Concrete Ideas

Women’s Caucuses and Gender Equality in State Legislatures

PARITY IN ELECTED OFFICE: HOW TO GET THERE

REPRESENTATION 2020’S GENDER PARITY PLEDGE

HOW CAN WE GET MORE WOMEN IN ELECTED OFFICE? LOOK TO NEW HAMPSHIRE

PARTNERS FOR GENDER PARITY

GENDER PARITY INDEX: MEASURING PROGRESS IN THE STATES

Calculating Components of the Gender Parity Index

Statewide Elected Executives (30 points total)

U.S. Congress (30 points total)

State Legislature (30 points total)

Local Office (10 points total)

A Closer Look at how the Gender Parity Score is Calculated

STATE PAGES

Alabama

Alaska

Arizona

Arkansas

California

Colorado

Connecticut

Delaware

Florida

Georgia

Hawaii

Idaho

Illinois

Indiana

Iowa

Kansas

Kentucky

Louisiana

Maine
FOREWORD

Americans have witnessed many examples of what women bring to our democracy but in this hyper-partisan era one of the most dramatic was female Senators coming together to end the deadlock over the debt ceiling in 2013. Republican Susan Collins led the charge, joined by Republicans Lisa Murkowski and Kelly Ayotte, and Democrats Barbara Mikulski and Patty Murray. “Politics Be Damned,” Murkowski famously exclaimed, “there is a government that is shut down. There are people who are really hurting.”

This was a highly visible triumph for women in the Senate who, for years, have gathered for monthly dinners, and often join across party lines to resolve issues of importance not only to women but the nation as a whole. It was a powerful demonstration of why we need women to constitute more than 19% of Congress and 24% of state legislative seats.

We founded the White House Project in 1998 because we believe firmly that democracy works best when everyone has a seat at the table. Within a few years, the White House Project began training scores of diverse women to run for office across the U.S. — and trained more than 11,000 women. There were very few training programs then. Now there are programs on both sides of the aisle, at which women can learn the basics of how to pursue various levels of public office.

I celebrate this work, but training alone will not get women to parity in elected office. Training may be necessary, but it is not sufficient. Our women's political movement has yet to fully address the structural and systemic ways that women are locked out of what we like to think of as the open door of democracy.

Throughout my life, I've learned that structure matters.

I was part of the civil rights movement in the 1960s. The leadership wisely kept a sharp focus on structural remedies, like the passage of the Voting Rights Act, to effect change at the polls.

In the early 1980s, as a result of affirmative action legislation, I was part of a university team brought in to large companies to help move women and people of color into management positions. Our programs were great at building individual women's skills, but it wasn't until we looked at structural interventions to ensure women make up at least a third of any decision-making body that things really changed for the better for women and people of color in management. After that experience, I vowed always to look at systems and structures to effect lasting change.

If we are to reach parity in our lifetimes we must pursue the structural strategies that have led to the electoral success of women in the 94 countries that rank above the United States in the percentage of women elected to national legislatures.

I am convinced that we must: reform our candidate recruitment practices so that more women run, adopt multi-winner systems with ranked choice voting so that more women win, and advocate for gender conscious rules and measures in legislative chambers so that women can serve and lead effectively.

I applaud Representation2020 for its efforts to put structural reform on the agenda and to bring together groups passionate about advancing women’s representation using every possible tool available.

Diversifying our legislative bodies at this crucial time is not just the right thing to do; it’s the best hope we have of making ours the truly representative democracy to which we aspire.

Marie C. Wilson
August 2015
INTRODUCTION

Nearly a century after gaining national suffrage rights, American women make up the majority of voters, yet represent less than a quarter of state legislators, a fifth of members of Congress, and an eighth of governors.

Women in the “pipeline” of local offices are also underrepresented. According to the Center for American Women in Politics at Rutgers University, women make up just 17% of mayors of our nation’s 100 largest cities. The Women Donors Network’s Reflective Democracy Campaign surveyed all elected officials in 2014 and found that of those 42,000 only 29% were women.

Is Gender Parity in Our Lifetime Possible?

There have been various predictions of how long it will take for women to achieve parity in elected office — the point at which a woman is just as likely to be elected as a man. When Representation2020 first analyzed trends in increasing women’s representation we predicted that parity in Congress was a generation away, while parity in state legislatures and statewide executive office was even more elusive. The Institute for Women’s Policy Research suggests that women will reach political parity in 2121.

While daunting, those numbers in fact are too optimistic.

A careful examination of the trends at the local and state level reveals that unequal representation is even worse than it initially appears. It’s too simplistic to map out trends from the past 20 years in anticipation of steady growth to parity.

In the real world, representation of women typically stalls or regresses once it surpasses about a third of seats in a state. Women are markedly underrepresented in the Deep South and Great Plains states and within the Republican Party. Unless those numbers drastically change, the Democratic Party and coastal states would need to become consistently dominated by women — but there’s no indication of such a trend, even locally. More importantly, sustainable and meaningful parity requires that women are represented not only across the country but also across party lines. Only one state has ever elected two consecutive female governors, and it was so unusual for Austin (TX) to elect a majority women city council last year that its city staff was given instructions on how to communicate with women.

The bottom line is stark. Absent intervention by our political parties and lawmakers to reform electoral rules and political institutions, we simply won’t achieve gender parity nationally or in most states — not in our lifetime, not in 100 years, not ever.

The Representation2020 team is not alone in believing that’s unacceptable. Achieving gender parity in our lifetime must be our goal. We are very grateful for our growing list of Leadership Circle members and Partners for Parity who are working to improve women’s representation in various ways.

In response to the slow pace of progress, a number of organizations from EMILY’s List to The WISH List have formed to recruit, train and fund women candidates, while others such as Miss Representation and the Women’s Media Center highlight disparities in how women candidates are portrayed by the media. Other groups, such as Political Parity, work to strengthen the alliances among women across partisan lines. And groups like Latinas Represent and Higher Heights work to nurture women candidates of color. This work is essential. The first three points of our Gender Parity Pledge reflect our commitment to these strategies.
Representation2020 complements the work of these allied groups by targeting the deeply engrained, sometimes-subtle structural factors that make even the most dedicated women candidates less likely to succeed than men. These structural obstacles go beyond personal attributes of women candidates and cut deeper than overt gender bias on the part of party leaders, voters, and the media. They focus on the rules that govern the core mechanisms of our democratic process: how parties choose candidates, how interest groups make decisions to support and fund candidates, how voters choose winners, and how legislatures choose to function.

The State of Women's Representation 2015-2016 report makes the case for:

- Intentional recruitment practices (voluntary party quotas, funding targets set by PACs, and party parity grants) that help more women run;
- Fair voting systems (multi-winner districts paired with ranked choice voting) that help more women win; and
- Gender-conscious legislative rules (such as timing of sessions and leadership selection) that help more women serve and lead.

These structural solutions have contributed to the electoral success of women in the 94 countries that rank above the United States in the percentage of women elected at the national level and to the success of women in the United States as well.

Measuring Women’s Representation at the Local, State, and National Level

The State of Women's Representation 2015 report contains an updated listing of how states fare on Representation2020's Gender Parity Index which was first introduced in 2014. This unique tool scores women’s representation at the local, state, and national level — both current and historical — to track which states are making progress toward parity and which are not. Last year, New Hampshire became the first-ever state to reach parity for women in elected office earning a score of 57 points. The median Gender Parity Score increased slightly from 16 in 2013 to 18 after the 2014 elections. Yet, only seven states received a Gender Parity Score of more than 30 points. At the low end of the Gender Parity Index, Mississippi replaced Virginia as the worst state in the nation for women’s representation with a startling score of just 7 points on a 100 point scale. (For a detailed explanation of how the scores were derived please refer to page 41.)

Additional features of this year’s report include: a review of women’s representation highlights, essays on why we should elect women, more detailed analysis of the difficulty with trying to measure the years to parity, the important role of women’s caucuses in state legislatures, the significantly greater representation of women in at-large city council elections in our 100 largest cities, and an in-depth examination of parity in New Hampshire.

Our GPS for the Journey to Parity

Of course no call for reform would be complete without concrete steps that can be taken to advance parity. We hope that after reading this report you will feel inspired to sign the Gender Parity Pledge, form a Parity Task Force, push for Gender Parity Resolutions, and join the growing chorus of women and men calling for gender parity in elected office in our lifetime.
Respond to Today’s Challenges

One consequence of living in one of the world’s oldest democracies is that rules and norms that were accepted in 1776 are now understood to be antiquated at best. Every generation has struggled to redesign the American model of democracy — and democratic institutions from town councils to the U.S. Congress, to the U.S. Supreme Court have responded by expanding suffrage, amending the Constitution to elect Senators, lowering the voting age, establishing Title IX, adopting the Voting Rights Act, and requiring equity for those who serve in the armed forces.

With the centennial of suffrage fast approaching, the time is ripe for our generation’s call for gender parity to be answered with bold, innovative, structural solutions.

Alice Paul once said of the women’s equality movement that “[e]ach of us puts in one little stone, and then you get a great mosaic at the end.” This is our stone. We add it to the stones of the many, many women we admire — past and present — who have worked to lay the foundation for women’s equality.

Cynthia Terrell

Representation2020, Founder and Chair
WHY ELECT WOMEN?

Why should we care about the state of women’s representation? What are the benefits of gender parity in elected office? Here are several of the most common answers.

An Exact Portrait of the People

Democratic representatives should reflect the citizenry. In describing his vision for Congress, John Adams said that it “should be in miniature an exact portrait of the people.” 1 Such an “exact portrait” must include women, who make up more than half the population and voters in most elections. Descriptive representation, as it is often called, ensures that all members of a diverse society have a voice in government. Research suggests that female constituents respond well to women representatives — they become more informed about, engaged with, and active in, politics. 2

What Women Want

Gender parity in elected office is important because women are uniquely prepared to advocate for women’s interests. Some studies suggest that women legislators tend to be more supportive of so-called “women’s issues,” or policy matters that especially affect women constituents. 3 A recent example that appears to bolster these findings comes from January 2015, when Republican congresswomen broke from their party to block a bill that would have reduced access to abortion to an unprecedented degree. 4 There is, of course, great diversity of opinion among women, and other studies suggest little difference in the actual votes of male and female legislators on women’s issues in most situations — and even less difference in roll call voting patterns overall. 5

The End to “Politics as Usual”

Political affiliations aside, women tend to act differently in elected office. Numerous anecdotes and some preliminary research suggest that women have been more effective legislators in recent years. 6 While women in legislative leadership roles are still so rare as to prevent serious study, studies of corporate leadership have shown that women are perceived to be more effective leaders than men. 7 The reasons women currently act differently in elected office are unclear. Perhaps women are more effective because they have faced a higher bar in order to get into office. 8 At a national level, women legislators sponsor and co-sponsor more of their colleagues’ bills and are more effective at advancing their own — especially when they are members of the minority party. 9 Women seem to be better at finding common ground and making extensive use of cross-partisan women’s caucuses at the state and national level. 10

The Best and the Brightest

We need more women in elected office because without them, we are missing out on many of the best and the brightest. Women are just as qualified as men to serve in elected office.

The fact that women’s representation in elected office is so low is indicative of a larger problem. Women face structural barriers to elected office. 11 This report outlines exactly what those structural barriers are, how they affect women’s representation, and how we can reach gender parity in our lifetimes. Until we provide women and men equal opportunities to run, win, and lead, we will miss out on immense talent, passion, and experience.
WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION IN 2014: A REVIEW

Hailed by some as a second “Year of the Woman,” the 2014 election was a positive — but by no means watershed — election for the advancement of women’s representation. For the first time, over 100 of the 535 members of the U.S. Congress were women. Additionally, New Hampshire became the first and only state to reach gender parity in elected office according to Representation2020’s Gender Parity Index. Yet, only five female governors were elected in the 36 gubernatorial races held in 2014 and Americans elected fewer female state legislators than in 2012.

Let’s cast a critical eye on developments in women’s representation in the year since the release of Representation2020’s inaugural report on the state of women’s representation.

Measuring women’s representation: Representation2020’s Gender Parity Index

In order to quantify progress toward gender parity in elected office, Representation2020 developed the Gender Parity Index. Each year, a Gender Parity Score is calculated for the U.S. and each of the 50 states. The Gender Parity Score measures women’s recent electoral success at the local, state and national level on a scale of 0 (if no women were elected to any offices) to 100 (if women held all such offices). A state with gender parity in elected office would receive a Gender Parity Score of 50 out of 100.

The key advantage of the Gender Parity Score is that it enables comparisons over time and between states. More information on the Gender Parity Index is listed on page 39.

Only seven states were more than three-fifths the way to parity after the 2014 election

Overall, progress toward parity was made in 2014. The median Gender Parity Score in the 50 states increased from 15.8 at the end of 2013 to 18.1 after the 2014 election. However, only seven states received a Gender Parity Score of more than 30 points: New Hampshire, Washington, California, Minnesota, Arizona, New Mexico, and Hawaii. An additional seven states are one fifth or less of the way to gender parity in elected office: Kentucky, Utah, Pennsylvania, Idaho, Virginia, Georgia, and Mississippi.

The Gender Parity Index shows that we are less than halfway to gender parity

Both the first “Year of the Woman” election in 1992 and the 2014 election advanced women’s representation. It is important, however, to keep those advances in perspective. Current strategies to advance women’s representation have gotten us less than two-fifths of the way there — 95 years after the ratification of the 19th Amendment guaranteeing suffrage to women. We can’t wait another 95 years (or longer) to reach gender parity in elective office. Representation2020 understands that it is important to train and fund more women candidates. In addition, however, we need structural reforms — of candidate recruitment practices, electoral systems, and legislative rules — that level the playing field to hasten our progress toward gender parity in elected office.
New Hampshire leads the nation

New Hampshire ranks highest in our 2014 Parity Index with a score of 57.0, seven points above gender parity in elected office. The state scored 13.2 points higher than the second-placed state (Washington). In 2012, New Hampshire was the first state in the nation to elect an all-female delegation to Congress — and currently 3 of its four-member congressional delegation are women. Additionally, its current governor is female (Maggie Hassan), 29% of its state legislators are women, and the mayor of the state’s second largest city, Nashua, is a woman. New Hampshire was also the first state in the nation to have a majority-female state legislative chamber (state senate from 2009 to 2010).

Mississippi ranks last

Mississippi received the lowest Gender Parity Score in the nation with just 7.0 points. After the 2014 election, Mississippi is the only state that has never elected a woman to the governor’s mansion or to the U.S. Congress. Only four women have ever served in statewide elective office in Mississippi, 2 of whom are in office today. Additionally, according to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, Mississippi has ranked among the bottom 15 states for its percentage of state legislative seats held by women over the last 35 years. None of Mississippi’s 10 cities with populations greater than 30,000 people currently have female mayors.

Regional Trends: The Northeast and West excel, while the South lags behind

The West and the Northeast outperform the Midwest and the South in gender parity in elected office. Nine of the 10 states with the highest Gender Parity Scores in January 2015 were in the Northeast or West (New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Washington, California, Hawaii, Arizona, and New Mexico). By contrast, six of the 10 states with the lowest Gender Parity Score are in the South (Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia).
The disparity between the South and other regions has widened in the past few decades. In 1993, two southern states (Maryland and Texas) ranked in the top 10 states for gender parity, while six (Alabama, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia) ranked in the bottom 10.

No state legislative chambers are at parity

After the 2014 election, not a single state has gender parity in its state legislature. The legislative chamber closest to parity in the nation is the Colorado House of Representatives, with 46% female legislators. In November 2014, 50 female candidates ran for the 65 seats in the Colorado House of Representatives, according to the Center for American Women and Politics, and 30 were elected. Not surprisingly, Colorado ranked first for the proportion of women in its state legislature, with 42.0% female state legislators in January 2015. Ranked lowest was Louisiana, at 12.5%. In 1993, the range was from 39.5% (Washington) to 5.1% (Kentucky) — showing advances for the lowest-ranking states, but less improvement for states at the top.

Fewer women in state legislatures

The proportion of women state legislators actually declined slightly as a result of the 2014 election. Before the election, 1,791 (24.3%) state legislators were women. After Election 2014, 1,786 (24.2%) state legislators were women. If we take a broader view, we can see that the progress toward gender parity in state legislatures is slowing down from the 1970s, which is worrying. Without new initiatives, progress may stall completely.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Female State House Members</th>
<th>Female State Senators</th>
<th>% Women Following 2014 Elections</th>
<th>% Women 1993</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>12 of 35</td>
<td>42.00%</td>
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<td>Connecticut</td>
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<td>New York</td>
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<td>22.94%</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
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<td>16.00%</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<td>18.37%</td>
<td>20.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>36 of 203</td>
<td>9 of 50</td>
<td>17.79%</td>
<td>9.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>17 of 99</td>
<td>6 of 33</td>
<td>17.42%</td>
<td>12.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>22 of 122</td>
<td>8 of 52</td>
<td>17.24%</td>
<td>10.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>16 of 100</td>
<td>8 of 40</td>
<td>17.14%</td>
<td>12.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>19 of 100</td>
<td>4 of 38</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>10 of 75</td>
<td>6 of 29</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
<td>13.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>19 of 100</td>
<td>1 of 34</td>
<td>14.93%</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>16 of 105</td>
<td>4 of 35</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>5.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>22 of 124</td>
<td>1 of 46</td>
<td>13.53%</td>
<td>12.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>11 of 60</td>
<td>1 of 30</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
<td>24.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>13 of 101</td>
<td>6 of 48</td>
<td>12.75%</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>14 of 105</td>
<td>4 of 39</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>7.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Orange cells indicate a body controlled by Republicans, purple cells indicate a body controlled by Democrats, Nebraska has a non-partisan, unicameral legislature. Italics indicate that a state uses multi-winner districts to elect at least one of its state legislative chambers. Source: Center for American Women and Politics (January 2015)
Electoral structure matters

The median state legislative chamber that elected at least some members from multi-winner districts was 31.0% female after the November 2014 elections.17 In the median state legislative chamber that used only single-winner districts, women held 22.6% of seats. Although only 10 states use multi-winner districts in their state legislatures, 3 of the 5 states with the highest proportion of women in their state legislatures use multi-winner districts. This finding is consistent with the longstanding hypothesis that the use of multi-winner districts increases women’s representation.

Partisan differences in the representation of women persist, but may be changing

Since the 1990s, the Democratic Party has led the way in women’s representation. Somewhere between a majority and two-thirds of women elected to public office since 1992’s “Year of the Woman” have represented the Democratic Party.18 Since the November 1992 election, 20 of the 32 women elected to the U.S. Senate have been Democrats.

In the 113th Congress, elected in 2012, only 19 of the 79 women in the U.S. House were Republicans. Indeed, as Derek Willis observed in the New York Times, the number of Republican women in Congress had stagnated for about a decade.19 The Republican Party responded to its poor record of electing female candidates with Project GROW, which aims to recruit and support more Republican women candidates for Congress. At least three freshman congresswomen supported by the project were elected in November 2014. Additionally, three of the four women newly elected to the U.S. Senate were Republicans. Now, in the 114th Congress, six of the 20 women in the U.S. Senate and 22 of the 84 women in the U.S. House are Republican. Still, the Republican Party remains a long way behind the Democratic Party for representation of women in Congress.

A similar disparity in the Republican Party response exists at the state level. In 2013, 63.6% of female state legislators were Democrats and 35.7% were Republican.20 To combat this difference, in June 2013 the Republican State Leadership Committee announced its “Right Women, Right Now” program, which recruited over 550 Republican women candidates to run for state legislatures in the 2013-2014 cycle.

Data from the National Conference of State Legislatures and the New York Times indicate that the Republican Party’s efforts have met some success.21 After the 2014 election, there were 195 more Republican state legislators than before the election and 59 more Republican female state legislators. In 2015, 39% of female legislators are Republican and 60% are Democrats.22 Time will tell whether the 2014 election was an anomaly or the start of more representative Republican delegations in state legislatures.
Breaking the mold: The increasing diversity of female Republican officeholders

The 2014 election cycle was unusual for the number and diversity of Republican women elected to office. Thirty-year-old Republican Elise Stefanik became the youngest woman ever elected to Congress when she won New York’s 21st U.S. House district. Mia Love became the first black congresswoman from Utah, as well as the first black Republican woman and the first Haitian-American elected to Congress. Similarly, 18-year-old Republican Saira Blair and African-American Republican Jill Upson won election to the West Virginia House of Delegates. Victoria Seaman, a Latina Republican, was elected to the Nevada Assembly. Young Kim, a Korean-American Republican woman, was elected to the California Assembly. Whether this shift toward a more inclusive party continues remains to be seen.

Despite gains, fewer women win in Republican year

The slight decline in the number of women in state legislatures and the small increase in Congress can be explained, in part, by the different electorates that turn out to midterm and presidential elections. In the 2012 presidential election, people under the age of 44 made up nearly a half of voters. In the 2014 midterm, less than a third of the electorate was from this age group. While young voters tend toward the Democratic Party, older voters lean toward the Republican Party. Because, despite gains in the Republican Party, the Democratic Party fields more female candidates, the biggest gains for women’s representation have tended to occur in presidential years.

This trend can be seen in the chart (right), which shows the number of Congresswomen elected in each election since 1992.

No progress electing women to the U.S. Senate or in governors’ mansions

In the 2014 U.S. Senate election, only 4 women won in the 33 open seats. With the loss of incumbent Mary Landrieu in a December runoff, 20 women remain in the U.S. Senate. By contrast, in 2012, women won a third of all U.S. Senate elections — eleven seats in total. While only 5 women won in the 36 races for governor in 2014 (including four incumbents and Gina Raimondo of Rhode Island), the appointment of Kate Brown to replace governor-elect John Kitzhaber in Oregon, means 6 governors are women. This is an increase from 2014, when women were governors of 5 states. Yet, from 2003 to 2010, 8 states were led by female governors. Furthermore, twenty-three states have never had a female governor. The percentage of statewide elected executive positions, like governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state and attorney general, held by women has barely increased since 1993, from 22.2% to 24.5% after the 2014 election.
Women’s underrepresentation begins at the local level

Locally, 18% of the more than 1,350 U.S. cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. New York, Los Angeles, and Boston are among America’s largest cities that still have never elected a female mayor.

The United States’ relative ranking rises...slightly

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as of April 1, 2015, the United States ranks 95th in the world for the percentage of women in its national legislature. This is an improvement from before the 2014 election, when the United States ranked 98th in the world. However, the U.S. ranks above only half of all nations and has fallen from 59th in 1998. Some of the nations that are closer to parity than the United States include: South Africa, Ecuador, Spain, and Mexico. Both Rwanda and Bolivia have legislatures that have a majority of women.28

Although a record number of women are serving in the U.S. Congress, women’s involvement in American politics lags behind the international average of 22.1%, and far behind the average of established and robust democracies.29 We must do better.

A key reason that half the world’s nations are outpacing the U.S. in women’s representation is that many of those countries use multi-winner districts, which have been proven to increase the percentage of women running for and being elected to public office. This effect is especially prevalent when the electoral system is supplemented by party, legal, or constitutional gender quotas. The U.S. can take steps to increase women’s representation at home by adapting the best practices from abroad to American politics.

### The Top Twenty Countries for Women’s Representation in National Legislatures, April 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Lower House % of Women</th>
<th>Electoral System</th>
<th>Methods Used to Promote Women’s Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation (PR)</td>
<td>Constitutional reserved seats for women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>Mix of Single-Winner and Multi-Winner Districts (with PR)</td>
<td>Legislated candidate quotas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Andorra</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>Mix of Single-Winner and Multi-Winner Districts (with PR)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Winner-Take-All (one-party system)</td>
<td>Unofficial party quotas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>Mix of Single-Winner and Multi-Winner Districts (with PR)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation</td>
<td>Voluntary party rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>Mix of Single-Winner and Multi-Winner Districts (with PR)</td>
<td>Legislated candidate quotas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>Mix of Single-Winner and Multi-Winner Districts (with PR)</td>
<td>Legislated candidate quotas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation</td>
<td>Voluntary party rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 (tied)</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation</td>
<td>Voluntary party rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 (tied)</td>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation</td>
<td>Voluntary party rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation</td>
<td>Legislated candidate quotas and voluntary party rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 (tied)</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation</td>
<td>Voluntary party rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 (tied)</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation</td>
<td>Voluntary party rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation</td>
<td>Legislated candidate quotas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation</td>
<td>Legislated candidate quotas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation</td>
<td>Legislated candidate quotas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 (tied)</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts/Proportional Representation</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 (tied)</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td>Mix of Single-Winner and Multi-Winner Districts (with PR)</td>
<td>Legislated candidate quotas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>Single-Winner Districts/Winner-Take-All</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union; Quota Project; IDEA International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (April 2015)
Current Women’s Representation: A Snapshot

INTERNATIONALLY

The U.S. ranks 95th out of 189 countries for the percentage of women in its national lower house.

NATIONALLY

Only 20% of U.S. Senators and 19% of U.S. Representatives are women.

IN THE STATES

Women in office:
12% of governors
25% of statewide elected executive officials
24% of state legislators

18% of mayors of cities with populations more than 30,000 are women.

Sources: Inter-Parliamentary Union and Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University
How far away is gender parity in elected office?

While the United States has made considerable progress in women’s representation in Congress over the last several decades (see the chart below), we should not be too congratulatory.

If we assume that progress will continue into the future at the same rate it has since 1993, it will take almost a full lifetime (70 years) to reach gender parity, even at the congressional level. The Institute for Women’s Policy Research projects that it will be 2121 before we reach parity in Congress, assuming that progress will continue at the same rate it has since 1960.31 In any case, one thing is clear: none of us are likely to see gender parity in Congress in our lifetimes at the current rate.

More shockingly, using the same crude assumptions about the rate of change, it will take almost three centuries to reach gender parity in state legislatures and nearly as long to reach parity in statewide executive offices. If progress continues at the same rate that it has since 1993, we will not reach gender parity in elected office within our great-great-great-grandchildren’s lifetimes.

Those states that looked to be trailblazers in 1993 have regressed since, at least in terms of the percentage of women in their state legislatures. In 1993, seven states — Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Washington — all had state legislatures that were over 30% women (see the following table).
Since 1993, four states have regressed, while only two (Colorado and Vermont) have continued to progress toward gender parity in elected office. Indeed, when combined, the seven trailblazing state legislatures in 1993 actually have fewer women in them today than they did then.

There are clear regional dynamics to this too. The table below shows the percentage of women elected to state legislatures in 1993 and January 2015. It shows that, while the percent of women in state legislatures increased in each of the four regions, the South still lags well behind the West and East coasts.

The South showed the largest percent increase in woman's representation, where there are over 40% more female state legislators today than in 1993. Despite seemingly substantial gains, women still only comprise 19% of Southern state legislators, compared to thirteen percent in 1993.

Conversely, the three other regions were much better for female representation in 1993, but have improved only slightly since. While the Northeast and West have substantially higher proportions of female state legislators than the South (with a little under 30% female state legislators each), they too still have a long way to go until they reach gender parity.

While the numbers of women state legislators in each of the four regions is increasing, the slight gains in representation in the Northeast, Midwest, and West over the last 20 years and the low number of women legislators in the South foretell the long slow road we will tread unless we adopt new and innovative strategies to speed up our progress toward gender parity.
Not only are the early leaders in women’s representation regressing or improving at a snail’s pace, but also one of the two major political parties performs particularly poorly, making it unlikely that we can reach parity in state legislatures. Republican women tend to be outnumbered by Democratic women in elected offices. In state legislatures, the current ratio of Democratic to Republican women ratio is almost two to one. The current ratio in Congress is even higher, at three to one.

Furthermore, between 1981 and 2010, the numbers of Democratic women in state legislatures across the country increased reasonably steadily over time. By contrast, the number of Republican women in state legislatures has stagnated since the mid-1990s (until, perhaps, the most recent election). In the New York Times, Derek Willis observed the same pattern in the U.S. Congress.

The disparity between Republicans and Democrats and the lack of progress within the Republican Party become clear when we control for the relative successes of the parties. Fewer than 19% of Republican state legislators are currently women, compared to 34% of Democratic state legislators. This means that if the Republican Party gains popularity, women’s representation will likely suffer. It also means that it will be difficult to reach gender parity in elected office without serious changes within the Republican Party.

If the current patterns persist, we will not reach gender parity. Not in 50 years, 100 years, not ever. Progress is slowing in state legislatures, which act as a pipeline for talented and qualified candidates for the U.S. Congress and statewide executive offices. If the growth of women’s representation stalls in state legislatures, it will have a ripple effect on progress in Congress and statewide executive offices.

To achieve gender parity in our lifetimes, we need strategies that target the specific needs of women in state legislatures. These strategies must include both the Democratic and Republican parties in all regions. Carefully-designed solutions, including structural reforms, are critical to achieve gender parity. Gender conscious party recruitment rules, ranked choice voting in multi-winner seats and fairer chamber rules are central to a speedier path to gender parity in elected office.

We live in challenging, terrifying, exciting times — we need systems of government and representatives who reflect the people.

Cynthia Terrell, Representation2020
In the last decade, political groups and political action committees (PACs) that focus on ensuring the election of more women such as VoteRunLead, Ignite, the WISH List, Rachel’s Network, and EMILY’s List have become major players in American politics. Their missions and core constituencies vary, with some organizations focusing on the election of women who support a particular issue, belong to a particular political party, or come from a particular region. Collectively, these organizations do crucial work in recruiting, training, and/or funding women candidates. Their work is essential to leveling the playing field for women.

Representation2020 applauds efforts to recruit, train and fund more women candidates. However, these efforts alone are not enough to reach gender parity in elected office in our lifetime. The gender gap in representation is a complicated problem and candidate recruitment, training and funding are only partial solutions. In addition to the dearth of women who are recruited, trained and funded, American social and political culture, and political structures and institutions, contribute to a lack of gender parity in elective office. Efforts to overcome or change deeply ingrained social and cultural attitudes are difficult. Fortunately, there is a third path — one that is often overlooked — which promises to hasten progress to gender parity: structural change of our political structures and institutions. We cannot achieve parity without cultural change; however, we can get significantly closer if we remove the structural barriers inherent in our existing system.

Representation2020 raises awareness of three key structural changes that would help remove current bias against women in our democratic architecture. This is achieved by:

1. Political parties, PACs, and gatekeepers enacting measures, often used in other nations, to increase the active recruitment of female candidates,

2. Adopting fair representation voting systems (American forms of candidate-based proportional representation) to increase the number of women running for and being elected to public office; and

3. Altering legislative practices that negatively affect the ability of female elected officials to stay in office and rise to positions of leadership.

Women must realize they make up over 52% of the vote. They need to understand the urgency of not waiting to be asked to run. More discussions need to be held by women for women.

Anonymous female legislator
onenstruc9n Change to Increase Women’s Representation

1 Intentional Action to Recruit Women Candidates

Despite the strides made towards gender nondiscrimination in many critical areas including education, the military, and in the workplace, women’s representation in elected office remains mediocre at best in the United States. In April 2015, the U.S. ranked 95th out of 189 countries for the percentage of women in its national legislature — women hold only 19 percent of the seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and 20 percent of those in the Senate. The U.S. lags behind half of the world’s countries, including Rwanda, Mozambique, Canada, New Zealand and Mexico for women’s representation — and, because other nations are making progress more quickly than we are, the U.S. is falling further and further behind other nations.

Gender Gap Expectations and Origins

Unfortunately, there are a few underlying causes of the gender gap that structural reforms cannot directly change. Many of the obstacles that women face while pursuing elected leadership positions are cultural and stem from outdated gender expectations that can discourage women and girls from becoming leaders in their community or in politics. Innovative ongoing research by Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox in their “Citizen Political Ambition Panel Study” shows that women are less likely than men to believe themselves qualified to run for office, to consider running, or to seek higher office once they are in an elected position. Even more unfortunate is the evidence that this gender gap has either held steady or even gotten worse over the past decade; according to Lawless and Fox, the percentage of women interested in running for office has dropped from 18% in 2001 to 14% in 2011. All of the women polled in these surveys came from occupations conducive to future runs at public office like law, business, education, and political activism.

Pragmatic and achievable reforms to our political structure that reduce the barriers for female candidates may, in the long term, hasten cultural change and mitigate the current differences between the genders’ aspirations for political office. More women may be encouraged to pursue a career in politics as they see more role models: other women, with similar qualifications and backgrounds as themselves, in elected office. In this way, structural reform may act in concert with efforts to recruit and train women to run for office, amplifying the effect of each individual woman recruited and trained and making the system fairer for future women candidates.

When I ran for City Council, various political figures supported me. However, when I ran for the State Senate, there were many in my party who worked feverishly against me.

Sherry Dorsey Walker
6th District Council Member, Wilmington, DE


Current Party Recruitment Practices Prevent More Women from Running

Gender parity in political candidacy, in which approximately equal proportions of male and female candidates run for office, is a natural precondition to gender parity in elected office. The U.S. is far from that, as a large gender recruitment gap exists. The Pew Center found that only one in four people who have run for political office in the U.S. are women. One of the main obstacles to gender parity in political candidacy are the attitudes and behavior of “gatekeepers” — leaders in the major political parties, party caucuses, and the state, local, and national political class who hold sway in candidate recruitment and endorsement processes.

Political parties, in particular, focus a great deal of time, money, and energy on candidate recruitment and excel at finding viable candidates for winnable seats. However, it is clear that informal recruitment practices in political parties are affected by the gendered nature of the social networks of party elites and their negative perceptions about the electability of women. These negative perceptions ensure that party leaders often overlook or discourage qualified female candidates from running. Lawless and Fox found that men were 25% more likely to be encouraged to run for office by a party official, elected official, or political activist than were women of similar professional backgrounds. Indeed, David Niven’s 1998 study found that 64% of female candidates surveyed in four states reported that their own party dissuaded them from running. Even in the 21st century, negative perceptions within the party elite are so pervasive that a 2006 study by Kira Sanbonmatsu found that jurisdictions where political parties have a larger role in recruitment also have fewer female legislators.

In response to the dearth of female candidates supported by the organizations of both major parties — and the evident role of party elites in contributing to that dearth — political parties need to make a more equitable candidate recruitment process a top priority.

What Should Political Parties Do Differently?

Like political parties everywhere, American political parties have a large role in determining who runs for office. Unlike those in the rest of the world, however, American political parties have not seriously considered gender recruitment targets as a mechanism for increasing female representation in local, state, or national government. Ironically, both major parties led the world in adopting gender equity requirements for the selection of their national committee members. These requirements date back to the 1920s and require one man and one woman to serve from each state in the parties’ national committees. The Democratic Party additionally uses a gender quota for selecting delegates to party conventions and has required equal representation on all national party bodies since 1980. Furthermore, some state party organizations — both Democratic and Republican — have rules mandating equal representation on state party committees, many of which were adopted in the middle of the twentieth century.
uncontroversial party-initiated rules and targets to address the gender gap in candidate recruitment. But they should. This is especially critical because legally mandated gender quotas would face an uphill political battle that existing quotas in much of the world did not. Indeed, some may argue that quotas are unconstitutional or too strong a reaction to the problem of female underrepresentation.

Popular primaries — a unique American device for nominating party candidates — also pose a significant hurdle for any kind of mandated quota system, as party votes have the final say in candidate nomination, which means goals set by party organizations about the nomination of women are not directly within the authority of party organization. However, party organizations in some states have the power to formally endorse and fund a candidate during the primary, and in those states where party organization does not have this formal power, they can support a candidate through informal means, such as PACs. In this light, party organizations do have a powerful means to affect the recruitment of women in accordance with deliberate rules and targets.

**Voluntary Party Quotas**

Voluntary party quotas would mandate that women make up a certain proportion of the party leadership that controls candidate recruitment. Voluntary party quotas are not legally enforceable and are adopted individually and voluntarily by party organizations. Voluntary party quotas apply only to those party organizations that choose to adopt them and would represent a proactive form of leadership by requiring that women have a positive voice in recruitment practices. In states and counties where it is appropriate, voluntary party quotas could require that women make up a certain proportion of candidates receiving party support in the primary election. In essence, this extends entrenched gender rules and targets already used in committee selection to candidate recruitment.

**Parity Grants**

Parity grants from higher levels of the party organization that incentivize the recruitment of women candidates in lower levels of the party organization modernize the conventional idea of a voluntary quota regime. These grants, provided by state or national party organizations, would go to local party organizations that meet or exceed predetermined goals for female candidate recruitment each election cycle. Goals would be negotiated and discussed among party leaders, women’s organizations, and electoral reform advocates to ensure that targets are bold, yet feasible. Parity grants are an excellent example of the sort of voluntary, locally-tailored programs that American political parties ought to adopt to close the recruitment gap. Unlike legal party quotas, parity grants would not preclude qualified men from running for certain seats nor would they mandate identical quotas for state and local parties with different histories of gender discrimination. Instead, they would present plausible yet meaningful goals that move in the direction of full gender parity. This achievement would not be realized immediately; instead, it would help build political cultures and fairer, more efficient recruitment processes in which qualified candidates from both genders are equally sought after and valued.
Political Action Committees Setting Rules to Advance Parity

Political Action Committees (PACs) and other organizations that endorse candidates fulfill the role often carried out by political parties in other nations — that is, they play decisive roles in recruiting, endorsing and funding candidates. With the power such groups have to mobilize support for candidates, it’s time to demand more from them in the push to secure parity for women in elected office.

Members of PACs and endorsing groups, especially those with member-driven priorities, from the Sierra Club to organized labor, the faith community and the Chamber of Commerce, can start a movement to establish rules that set targets for intentional action in endorsements and political giving. While women-oriented PACs like EMILY’s List, the Women’s Campaign Fund, and The WISH List already are committed to supporting female candidates only, other PACs should intentionally and deliberately commit to contributing a certain share of their funds to female candidates. These targets, like voluntary party quotas, would not be mandated by the government, but instead adopted on a PAC-by-PAC basis. We would suggest donation quotas of at least half, but any minimum would be an improvement from what we have today. Some PACs might in fact set an even higher target for donations to women candidates in order to correct the gender imbalance in giving and in elected office.

PACs should be encouraged to discuss and propose targets for their giving for all levels of elected office. With public attention, parity funding of male and female candidates may develop into a comparative advantage for PACs, which operate in a competitive environment and are always on the lookout for new ways to appeal to donors.

Emerging Party Initiatives

Recent developments within the major political parties provide a measure of hope for future efforts to recruit women to run for state and national offices. Each of America’s two main parties has recently launched initiatives, or revamped old ones, that aim to reach parity. On the Republican side, Project GROW (Growing Republican Opportunities for Women) was launched in 2013 to advance female candidate recruitment and voter participation among Republican women in congressional races. As part of the program, 10 female House candidates received additional fundraising help and candidate training, including winning 2014 U.S. House candidates Mia Love (UT-4), Elise Stefanik (NY-21) and Martha McSally (AZ-2). 41

Project GROW has been launched alongside the existing Republican State Leadership Committee’s “Right Women, Right Now” effort, which recruited 558 new female candidates in the 2013-2014 cycle, up from 185 in 2012. 42 The GOP is hoping to hone its message, both to women voters and to potential candidates. With the election in 2014 of high-profile Republican female candidates like Rep. Mia Love and Sen. Joni Ernst, these efforts are truly a step in the right direction for the GOP.

For Democrats, the Women’s Leadership Forum (WLF) has long been an advocate for giving women a greater voice within the party, recruiting more female Democrats at the national level, and bringing out Democratic women to the polls. The WLF was launched in 1993 with the backing of Tipper Gore and a core of women leaders in the Democratic Party. The current Chair of the Democratic National Committee Debbie Wasserman Schultz announced a new initiative called the Democratic Women’s Alliance (DWA), which debuted in 2014 with the dual goal of encouraging women to run for office and conducting outreach to women voters. The DWA, described by Wasserman Schultz as a “permanent and institutionalized program at the DNC to engage, mobilize and train women,” 43 held its annual National Issues Conference. During
the conference, there were trainings on online organizing, fundraising and working in politics, and attendees heard from expert panels, and conducted an experience exchange where women shared their experience in politics, both positive and negative. It will take time to assess how effective these types of programs are at achieving more equitable gender representation in all levels of government. If successful, these new efforts could offer a pathway to more robust incentive-based programs that set more concrete and ambitious goals for female candidate recruitment.

I understand people, and I think that my life and my history and what I represent can relate to a lot of women, the independents, the moderate voters.

Mia Love, Utah State Representative

Advancing women’s political representation is critically important. For our democracy to thrive, we must reflect a broad spectrum of America’s voices and values. The mounting issues facing our country are complex. If we’re going to solve these problems, we can no longer afford to leave the talent of half our nation out of the conversation. Republican women bring distinct experiences and perspectives to governing. They have skills, sense, and savvy; we need more of them in high-level office.

Kerry Healey, Co-Chair, Political Parity
Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts, 2003-2006
Fixing a Broken Electoral System with Fair Representation Voting

Among the least discussed obstacles to gender parity in the United States is the voting system used in many American legislatures: single-winner districts and plurality “winner-take-all” vote counting rules. The combination of single-winner districts with plurality vote counting rules institutionalizes a bias towards traditional candidates by encouraging adversarial zero-sum campaigning from candidates and encouraging voters to think about each electoral choice in isolation.

Single- and Multi-Winner Districts

In single-winner district systems, candidates run to become the lone legislator representing that geographic district. The single-winner district system has only in recent decades come to be the norm when electing Congress and state legislators. Today, single-winner districts are used in most state legislative chambers and, most notably, in the U.S. House of Representatives, where they have been required since the 1967.44

Single-winner districts have a number of unintended — and often overlooked — consequences for female candidates. Demographic discrepancies are an unfortunate hallmark of single-winner districts.

Single-winner districts create a strong bias towards incumbents. They also encourage party gatekeepers and voters to view electoral decisions in isolation, rather than considering the legislators as a team. Indeed, single-winner districts create significant barriers for women that academics have noted for decades.45

As the name implies, multi-winner districts elect more than one winner, and thus take into account the preferences of more than the single largest group of voters. Multi-winner districts would open up the electoral process and boost women’s representation.

The Effect of Multi-Winner Districts

As observed by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), “the impact of electoral systems” on women’s representation in legislatures “is dramatic,” especially the distinction between single-winner and multi-winner districts. A 2005 report by IDEA shows that countries using multi-winner districts elected up to 35% more women to their national legislatures between 1950 and 2004 than did the countries using single-winner districts.46 In the United States, ten states use multi-winner districts to elect at least one house in their state legislature. These ten states tend to rank among the highest for their percentage of legislators who are women. As of January 2015, three of the five states that are closest to gender parity in their state legislatures used multi-winner districts in at least one of their state legislative chambers. Overall, state legislative chambers that use multi-winner districts are currently 30.7% women, compared to chambers that use only single-winner districts, which are 23.6% women.

At the local level, in America’s largest 100 cities, councilors elected to multi-winner seats (called “at-large” at the local level) were 37.2% women, while councilors elected in single-winner districts were 30.7% women as of October 2014.48 Whether at the international, state, or local level, it is clear that multi-winner districts are wholly more conducive to women’s representation than single-winner districts.
When considering women’s representation, a crucial factor is whether the electoral system has [single-member districts] where only one legislator is elected in the district, or a multi-member district (MMD) system where several MPs are elected from each electoral district.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>% Legislature Women</th>
<th>Electoral System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>42.00%</td>
<td>Single-Winner Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>41.11%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>35.56%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>Single-Winner Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>32.65%</td>
<td>Multi-Winner Districts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Center for American Women and Politics

How Multi-Winner Districts Help Women

There are many likely reasons why multi-winner (also known as multi-member) districts may have a positive effect on women’s representation in legislatures. For example, when multiple candidates can win, parties may want to be represented on the ballot by a more diverse slate of candidates. Making their parties more inclusive and representative of the voting population is easier when more candidates can win. Indeed, internationally, parties “balancing their ticket” can illustrate why multi-winner districts are better for women. IDEA explains:

> In nominating decisions in single-winner districts, female candidates must compete directly against all men; and often when nominating a woman a party must explicitly deny the aspirations of the most powerful male politician in the same district. When district magnitude increases, the chance that a party will win several seats in the district increases. When a party expects to win several seats, it will be much more conscious of trying to balance its ticket. Gatekeepers will divide winning slots on the party list among various internal party interests, including, possibly, women’s interests.49

Similarly, voters face a different process of making decisions about each candidate when voting for multiple candidates. In psychology, the presence of a “diversification bias” in decision-making is well documented.50 When individuals choose multiple options at a time at staggered intervals, they tend to choose a more diverse and differentiated combination of options than they do when they repeatedly select only one.51 Essentially, individuals make more diverse selections when choosing a portfolio of selections and less diverse selections when making each individual decision in isolation.52

Applying what we know about decision-making to the electoral context, it is likely that the same group of voters will choose a more diverse slate of candidates in multi-winner elections than they would in single-winner elections.

Another barrier that multi-winner districts can help mitigate is the power of incumbency. Current representatives in legislative bodies, especially those who have been in their seats for decades, have an abundance of what is called “incumbency advantage.”53 The advantage stems

from the ability of those in office to acquire funding and benefits for their district, to easily access a public forum and general attention for publicity, and to have the name recognition that comes with running for and being in office at least once before. This is a critical barrier to overcome since incumbents are more likely to be white and male, and also have less incentive to change the system. Multi-winner districts, especially with fair representation voting systems, will increase competition and allow for the unpopular incumbents to be voted out of office, thereby creating more spaces for women to enter politics.54

In short, multi-winner districts mean more winners in each district, which in turn means more candidates, more competition, and more diversity in each district. That is, in itself, a good thing.

The presence of more candidates may also help to reduce the negative tone that American elections have recently taken. This could help women candidates who are less comfortable running negative campaigns. In multi-winner districts, the costs and risks of “going negative” increase. Additionally, as observed by Richard Brown and Deborah Matland in their seminal work on district magnitude and female representation:

An increase in district magnitude can lower barriers by changing elections from a zero-sum game to a positive-sum game. Contests in single-winner districts are by definition a zero-sum game. The change from a zero-sum to a positive-sum game can affect candidates, party officials, and voters.55

Candidates competing in multi-winner districts, therefore, have more incentive to opt for positive campaigns that highlight their own accomplishments rather than to tear down their opponents.56 This hallmark of multi-winner voting systems may have particular salience for women. According to a study by Lawless and Fox, women fear running a negative campaign much more than do men.57 Fewer negative campaigns would help women to run for office and to win elections.

Making Votes Count with Ranked Choice Voting

Another promising voting system reform that would have positive implications for women’s representation is ranked choice voting (RCV), which allows voters to rank their favorite candidates in order of preference. Those rankings are then used to elect the most popular candidate. In the first round of voting, all the first-choice votes are tallied. To win in the first round,
a candidate needs to receive a majority of the votes cast. In a competitive, multi-candidate race, it is unlikely that any one candidate will receive at least 50% of votes in the first round. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated. Then, any voter who ranked the eliminated candidate first has his or her second-choice vote tallied. This process continues until one candidate receives a majority of the vote. Because of the high threshold required to win, victorious candidates often combine strong first choice support with strong second and third choice support.

Under RCV, voters can vote for their favorite candidate without fear of contributing to the dreaded “spoiler effect.” Additionally, supporters of a third party candidate are not forced to choose either to vote their conscience and thereby “waste” their vote or to vote strategically for the major party candidate.

RCV is used in at least 10 American cities, including San Francisco and Oakland, California, Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, and Portland, Maine. Cities that use RCV tend to have more diverse city governments in which a greater proportion of women and people of color serve in local elected office.

Three of the four mayors of the Bay Area cities using ranked choice voting in their elections are female. As shown in the chart (right), women currently hold half or more of the offices elected by RCV in the Bay Area in three cities: Oakland, Berkeley and San Leandro. Women also hold a significantly higher proportion of those offices now that they are elected by RCV than they did back when plurality, winner-take-all rules were used.

In the four California Bay Area cities (San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley and San Leandro) that have implemented RCV within the last decade, the share of offices held by women and people of color has dramatically increased to 47 out of 52 elected offices. In Oakland, for example, women and people of color hold 16 of 18 seats in the city’s municipal government, which is elected by RCV. In 2014, Oakland came in second among the nation’s 100 most populous cities for women’s representation.58

Both Minneapolis and St. Paul use RCV for some of their local offices and have had similar experiences with improved women’s representation. The election of Betsy Hodges to the office of mayor in 2013 showcases how RCV changes how voters and candidates participate in elections.
The City Perspective: Mayor Betsy Hodges on the Advantages of Ranked Choice Voting

When Betsy Hodges took office as the 47th Mayor of Minneapolis, Minnesota, she did so in historic fashion. After three four-year terms from former Mayor R.T. Rybeck, Hodges, a former City Council member, rose to prominence in a crowded field of 35 candidates to become the second female mayor of the city.

Mayor Hodges’s election was historic in another way: ranked choice voting (RCV) was incorporated to address a number of fairness and representation issues that were holding back the true potential of both candidates and voters. Mayor Hodges is a strong proponent of RCV for various reasons. One reason is because of the potential benefits for leveling the playing field for female candidates.

RCV, Hodges says, is a “friend to people who are running grassroots campaigns.” As a beneficiary of grassroots campaigning, Hodges has pointed out that RCV gives candidates who are normally relegated to the background a chance to earn second- and third-choice votes that could propel them into the top tier of candidates.

“It offers a wider array of options,” Hodges says. “You get to have the conversations that you otherwise would really not be having because they wouldn’t be worth your time as a candidate, and it wouldn’t be worth the time of the voter to have that conversation because their mind would’ve been made up.” Mayor Hodges ran her campaign by reaching out to voters of all stripes and focusing her attention on issues that do not normally get the limelight, such as the education gap, minority housing, and employment.

Mayor Hodges also cited being able to run a positive, issue-oriented campaign as a benefit of RCV. Positive campaigns are possible, she says, “because you need the second-choice votes of the supporters of your opponents, which means you need to be able to work with your opponents and not against them.” So, in addition to opening up new doors with new voters, RCV also encourages the creation of connections between candidates and encourages an open and more democratic process leading up to the election.

Representation is a key element of ranked choice voting, which Mayor Hodges credits with giving her a better sense of where all of her constituents are on the issues, even those who did not select her as their first choice. “I may not have been their first choice,” she says, “but I knew what they were voting for and what their values were, and I had a sense of why I was their second choice… that’s been really useful information to have as I govern.”

The 2014 Minneapolis mayoral race demonstrated another effect of RCV. In her race, Mayor Hodges spent about half as much money as her biggest competitor did, but she still won. Mayor Hodges is not alone in this new pattern of spending. The winner of the 2010 mayoral race in Oakland,
California was outspent by an even bigger margin than Hodges. Ranked choice voting could slow the upward trajectory of campaign spending and reduce the impact of money in elections.

All of these elements make RCV a “friend to women,” as Mayor Hodges describes it. “[Men and women] have different backgrounds and different histories,” which makes it critical that both genders are a part of the electoral process. RCV helps to elect more women, which, in turn, creates a more evenly-balanced, representative, and judicious political system. At a time when women continue to have difficulty breaking through as candidates due to a history stacked against them, RCV can help women like Mayor Hodges. Hodges has already shown a great deal of leadership and community-oriented poise in her first year in office.

Maximizing the Benefits: Combining Multi-Winner Districts with Ranked Choice Voting

Multi-winner districts and ranked choice voting independently benefit women’s representation. In combination, their impacts are amplified. Indeed, multi-winner districts with ranked choice voting are the best prescription to increase women’s representation and speed up our progress toward gender parity in elected office.

When adopted in isolation, multi-winner districts used in winner-take-all elections can be manipulated to have negative repercussions, particularly for the representation of racial and ethnic minorities. Consider an example. In a district with five seats, where 60% of voters support Party A and 40% of voters support Party B, the supporters of Party A would be able to elect all five legislators under winner-take-all rules (especially if the block vote is used). In a situation without ticket splitting or voter fatigue, each candidate from Party A would likely receive about 60% of the vote. Even though supporters of Party B comprised 40% of voters, they would receive no representation. The same can apply to areas with racially polarized voting. If white voters tend to support Party A and racial minority voters tend to support Party B, then racial minorities would find themselves under- or unrepresented in their legislature in winner-take-all elections.

This is why Representation2020 proposes combining multi-winner district systems with ranked choice voting: to make a robust American form of proportional representation. In combination with efforts to recruit more non-traditional candidates, the suggested system has great potential to increase the number of women and racial and ethnic minority candidates serving in elected office in the United States.

Currently Cambridge, Massachusetts, uses RCV in multi-winner districts. They have used the system continuously since 1940 and it has usually delivered high levels of representation for female and minority constituents.

RCV prevents a small majority from unfairly electing 100% of the representation in a multi-winner district by giving every voter one equal vote and listening to the preference order voters provide on the ballot. This means that, if a voter’s first choice is not elected, their vote moves to their second choice, thus ensuring that their vote counts for a candidate and is not wasted. In this way, RCV in multi-winner districts allows different coalitions of voters to each elect a preferred candidate.

Together, RCV in multi-winner districts can help turn the tide in favor of gender parity by creating more opportunities for women to succeed. On the federal level, fair representation voting (RCV in multi-winner districts) can be enacted legislatively by repealing a 1967 law mandating the use of single-winner districts for Congress and then developing a fair representation voting system by federal or state statute. On the state level, it could be enacted either through state statute or by an amendment to the state’s constitution. Many cities already use multi-winner districts (also called “at-large” districts), which could be easily improved by adopting RCV at the local level through a referendum, initiative, or by charter amendment.
3 Legislative Practices to Encourage Women’s Representation

Laws, parties, and political norms have obvious impacts on female representation at all levels of government. The career structure in place for those who seek office serves as a more hidden barrier to increasing the number of women in elected office. Legislative practices — that is, the inner-workings and work structures of legislative bodies — have an enormous effect on the types of candidates and members these bodies can have. State and local legislative bodies in particular vary widely in when and how they conduct business, which in many cases can have adverse effects on women attempting to attain leadership positions or run for higher office.

Work hours, for example, are fairly erratic from state legislature to state legislature and city council to city council. Some conduct most official business during the workday, while others expect or require members to work in the evening. Some legislatures are part-time, while others are full-time. Compensation varies according to these structures, which has implications for whether a member needs a second job. This variation can greatly impede the ability for many members who have spouses, children, or care for other family members to fulfill all their legislative and family responsibilities. Establishing norms and services for members with family responsibilities would ensure that elected office is open to all of the top candidates, regardless of their family responsibilities.

These norms and services would especially benefit women, who continue to bear a large portion of household and childcare tasks. In their study of potential male and female candidates in 2011, Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox found that 43% of the professional women surveyed performed the majority of household tasks, compared to 7% of professional men; meanwhile, 60% of women performed the majority of childcare, compared to 6% of men.60 This could make it more challenging for women with children to balance work and family life. Most male legislators are put under no such burden. A study from the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University shows that male legislators are much more likely to have children than female legislators. The same study found that female state legislators tend to be older than their male counterparts — evidence that women defer running for office until their children are older, skirting the choice between career and family.61

Furthermore, this pattern leaves few peers of young women and women with young families in legislatures to ensure that their needs are addressed. Those in office have less incentive to work on issues such as family leave and student debt, as they are not as deeply affected by family- and young-adult-oriented policies.

The discrepancies in family responsibilities also make it far more difficult for women, especially women with young children, to rise to positions of leadership in state legislatures. Many of these positions are attained based on seniority and years of experience, so women may be less likely to have the option of pursuing them if they enter state legislatures later than men. Local and state legislatures need a more effective approach that allows all parents, and especially women, to serve and lead in elected office, and seek higher office.

WHAT WORKS

Smarter scheduling of policy meetings and caucuses and telecommuting are just two legislative practices that could make meaningful change for women.
Taking Action with Concrete Ideas

While a widespread acceptance of an equal share of family and household responsibilities between men and women is critical, legislatures (school boards, city councils, state legislatures, and Congress) can take additional steps to ensure that parents, both men and women, are better able to balance family and professional responsibilities.

Scheduling is one critically important area that, with reforms, could help parents to better serve and lead in elected office. Policy meetings, party caucuses, floor debates, and committee and floor votes should occur when children are in school so that parents can take greater part in the legislative process. Telecommuting, a recent phenomenon made possible by advanced technology, should also be available for members who live in far-away districts. These members might even assign a proxy to vote for them in committees and on the floor if they are unable to be there in person.

Affordable and accessible childcare is another critical issue. As an international leader in women’s representation, Sweden sets a good example for how legislatures might review their procedures and practices to ensure that they are not biased against parents. In 1999, the Swedish parliament opened a subsidized daycare facility for the children of parliamentarians. Parliamentarians of both sexes are also entitled to take parental leave and to take time off to care for sick children, as is the rest of the Swedish workforce. After a 2004 survey of women parliamentarians found that they felt discriminated against both institutionally and by other members, a gender equality plan called “15 proposals for gender equality in Parliament” was enacted and overseen by the Secretary General of Parliament.62 International examples like these show us how we can begin to institutionalize ways to make our legislatures more family-friendly and hospitable for all elected officials.

Women’s Caucuses and Gender Equality in State Legislatures

The “Women’s Caucus” is a great example of how legislatures can discuss and advance both internal and external reforms to promote policies that foster gender equality within legislatures. In 2012, for example, the New York State Legislative Women’s Caucus successfully advocated for the installation of state-of-the-art nursing and baby-changing facilities throughout the Legislative Office Building.63

These caucuses also increase networking opportunities for women, especially in the political realm. This can be especially valuable both for increasing the recruitment of female candidates and for pushing for greater representation of women in party and legislative leadership positions. Caucuses provide a positive avenue for women to express and value their identities as female officeholders and to harness women’s political capital by participating in such caucuses.

Congress first formed its bipartisan Congresswoman’s Caucus (now called the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues) in 1977,64 and, according to the Women’s Legislative Network of the National Conference of State Legislatures, 38 states currently have women’s caucuses, commissions, or committees.65 While commissions and committees on women’s issues or women’s advancement are valuable institutions, it would be preferable for every state legislature to fully institutionalize a women’s caucus to help identify changes that could allow more women to serve and advance in elected office. These caucuses have served as critical spaces for women to network, collectively bargain, and find a voice within traditionally male-dominated legislative institutions.66

Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland has taken it upon herself to create a bipartisan women’s caucus in the Senate, earning her the unofficial title of the “Dean of Senate Women.” Just as male Senators of the past gathered to smoke cigars and talk about policy, Senator Mikulski has organized all of the women in the chamber, regardless of party, to meet once every few months since she has been in office. Between meetings, these women attend each
other’s lifetime events including marriages and baby showers, all with a strict policy preventing press and cameras from joining the group. The camaraderie that Senator Mikulski’s meetings has fostered continues in the Senate where the women have proved more adept at working across the aisle on bipartisan legislation.67

**Female Leadership in state legislatures**

One of the most important ways to remedy the gender imbalance is by ensuring that women pursue and achieve leadership positions in local, state, and national legislative bodies. Female legislators can serve as role models for young women who are contemplating serving in political office. Similarly, women’s caucuses are also prime institutions for encouraging more women to run for office. Increasing women’s leadership advancement is among women’s caucuses’ most consistent goals, and for good reason. A political culture that showcases women in leadership positions can encourage women to embrace political ambition and run for office. Current trends of women in leadership positions have improved, but are still well below parity. In 2014, women made up:

- 17.9% of state legislative leadership positions68
- 21.1% of state committee chairs69

Making changes in various legislative practices can help put us on the road to gender parity in leadership positions and in legislative bodies generally. Establishing women’s caucuses in every state, improving scheduling and procedural norms in legislatures, and modernizing childcare options for all parent legislators are just a few of the ways we can promote gender parity in elected office.

_Electing a female President Pro-Tem of the Senate has helped. Before that, we were treated like the Ladies’ Auxiliary of the Senate._

Karen Peterson, Delaware State Senator
Parity in Elected Office: How to Get There

By Dania Korkor, Representation2020 Program Manager

Representation2020 has worked to achieve gender parity over the past three years and will continue to advocate for reforms that would positively impact female representation in the United States in all levels of government. We recognize the lack of parity in elected office, and our goal is to raise awareness about how structural changes are necessary to reach parity. This piece lists steps you can take towards parity and why these steps are important.

1. Reach out to your state’s women’s caucus—or encourage them to create one.

Over the past year, we have shared our research and plans for reform with all female representatives in the twenty-one states that have a women’s caucus, with other female representatives in the remaining states, and with various city-wide elected officials. Women’s caucuses are great places to start discussing ways to implement our ideas involving legislative practices, recruitment rules, and electoral structures. However, the conversation is not just limited to women. In June, 2015, four male freshmen lawmakers joined the oldest women’s caucus, the Women Legislators of Maryland.70 No other state women’s caucus appears to have male members.

Ideally, all states would have active women’s caucuses. As a program manager of Representation2020, I spoke at the annual Leap into Leadership conference in late January 2015 in Wyoming. The conference is hosted by the Wyoming Women’s Legislative Caucus in partnership with the Wyoming Women’s Foundation. I conducted workshops on the lack of women’s representation both in Wyoming and around the country and then discussed Representation2020’s suggested reforms. The women at the conference were disappointed in the current status of women’s representation and enthusiastic about changing it. Wyoming’s women’s caucus is a great example of an active women’s caucus. In January, 2015, the Wyoming Women’s Legislative Caucus sponsored a bill for the first time. The bill was designed to ensure that all future legislation in Wyoming would be drafted using gender neutral terms. The bill passed and became effective in July 2015.

2. Have your organization join Representation2020 as a Partner for Parity

If you are a part of an organization that also recognizes the lack of parity in elected office, and wants to do something about it, contact your organization and Representation2020. We have a strong group of organizations that support our mission — Partners for Parity — and are always looking to expand the list.

Representation2020 has also established a Gender Parity Listserv that is used to facilitate communication and foster more action among the partner groups. Thus far, the Listserv consists of nearly one hundred individuals from about twenty-five organizations from all over the country. The Listserv allows us to have a dynamic platform in which we announce events, release reports, and begin discussions on various, related topics.
3. Visit Representation2020.com and explore our Gender Parity Steps

Representation2020.com has “Gender Parity Steps: Our GPS for the Journey to Parity” that can help guide you through ways to support our mission. First, there is a video that summarizes the solutions Representation2020 recommends to increase women’s representation in elected offices. Second, there is an informational infographic that can be shared on social media in order to spread the message. Third, you can commit to being a part of our journey by signing our Parity Pledge. This will allow you to receive more information on Representation2020 and to learn about the action you can continue to take. Fourth, there is information on how to complete a community assessment. This is a useful tool in measuring how far away your community is from parity. It is important to get a sense of the landscape before determining what specific steps to take. Fifth, there is information on how to create a Gender Parity Task Force in your community. These task forces can be created in organizations, political parties, church groups, legislative bodies, or on college campuses. Either you or a group of individuals can encourage an organization or legislative body to pass a resolution to promote women’s representation.

Finally, reach out to the Representation2020 Team. Our staff members are great speakers, advocates, and organizers around women’s representation and electoral reform. We have presented at conferences, regularly host and attend events, and continue to seek out opportunities to spread awareness of the problem of women’s underrepresentation and our solutions of electoral reform to create gender parity. These structural solutions have the power to break down barriers women candidates and elected officials face. Join us at Representation2020.com to learn more and do more.

**Representation2020’s Gender Parity Pledge**

Representation2020 works to increase gender parity in American politics. We will achieve gender parity when women are just as likely as men to be elected to office. To advance this goal we pledge to:

- Demand gender-neutral news coverage of women candidates
- Train, support, and fund women candidates at all levels of government
- Identify, support, and finance women candidates for executive offices
- Promote intentional actions to recruit more women candidates
- Enact fair representation voting systems that help elect more women
- Reform legislative rules so women are more able to serve and lead
How Can We Get More Women In Elected Office?
Look to New Hampshire

Rebecca Hellmich, original version published in In These Times, 4 November 2014.

The people of New Hampshire take great pride in holding the nation’s first presidential primary every four years. But the Granite State has a new claim to fame: its number of women in elected office.

As reported after the 2012 elections in Bloomberg Businessweek, New Hampshire became the first state in the U.S. “to put female politicians in control of the governor’s office and the entire congressional delegation.” Over the course of American history, men have usually been in that position — women first won a congressional or gubernatorial election less than a century ago, and even today, Iowa and Mississippi have never elected a single woman to those offices.

But after the 2012 election, in which Maggie Hassan won an open seat election for governor and two women swept the U.S. House races to join two previously elected female U.S. senators, New Hampshire became the first state to reverse that historic norm. Today, New Hampshire women hold those seats as well as the office of mayor in two of the state’s five largest cities. Moreover, just over a third of state legislators are women, placing New Hampshire fifth in the country for state legislative representation.

And New Hampshire may gain another historic distinction on Wednesday: the first-ever state to achieve gender parity in elected office.

Earlier this year, Representation2020 released the first of its annual State of Women’s Representation reports, featuring the organization’s Gender Parity Index (GPI). Defining parity as “the point at which women and men are just as likely to hold elected office,” the GPI establishes parity scores on a scale from zero to 100 for how well women are represented in elections for governor, Congress and other major city and statewide offices. A gender parity score (GPS) of 50 indicates that a state has reached gender parity.

After the 1992 elections, the national median GPS was 9.8. That median has crept up to 15.9, with eight states still lagging in single digits, trailed by Virginia with a GPS of only 4.5.

“The Gender Parity Index,” explains Representation2020 project director Cynthia Terrell, “allows us to measure trends within and among states over time. It shows us just how far we have to go, especially when we look at elections for executive offices like governor and mayor, where growth of women’s representation is particularly stagnant.”

Due to its outstanding performance in 2012, New Hampshire achieved the highest-ever Gender Parity Score of 47.5. This week, New Hampshire is poised to make gender parity history again.

New Hampshire has a history of women candidates doing better in the state legislature than in most states. As long ago as the mid-1980s, women held more than a third of seats, and it’s never dipped below 25 percent since — even as women have yet to reach that percentage of state legislative seats nationally. In 2008, the state’s senate became the nation’s first to have majority women, with 13 of 24 seats held by women. (That share of seats has now dropped to nine of 24.)

In the following years, women took New Hampshire state and federal elections by storm, including wins for both U.S. Senate seats: Democrat Jeanne Shaheen (who also served as the state’s second female governor from 1997 to 2003) in 2008 and Republican Kelly Ayotte (who had been appointed as the state’s Attorney General in 2004) in 2010. In 2012, Maggie Hassan became New Hampshire’s third female
governor, Ann McLane Kuster regained the second U.S. House seat, and the first ever all-female congressional delegation in U.S. history was created. When it comes to understanding the history of female representation in the state, it starts with the House. New Hampshire’s lower house has one distinct characteristic, often referenced when the issue of gender parity comes up: its size. The House of Representatives has 400 members, making it the largest individual chamber in the nation despite the state’s relatively small size.

The house also uses a system in which districts can vary greatly in population, ranging from single-winner districts where only one member is elected, to multi-winner districts where up to 11 members are elected (thus more than one candidate “wins” the election).

Many researchers suggest that multi-winner districts increase the chances of women being recruited to run and to win. Voters also seem to factor in voting for women differently when given the chance to vote for more than one seat. In the 2012 election, for example, every one of the six Democrats able to win in multi-winner districts electing more than five representatives was a woman, edging out Republican men in each case.

These unique parts of New Hampshire’s electoral structure present more opportunities for women to run and get elected in the first place, creating a pipeline for higher office. They also provide a state government with more local engagement.

“You have a high level of engagement and a high level of communication with your legislature because of the size, because of multi-winner districts, because there’s 400 others in the lower house,” Erin Vilardi, Director of the national non-partisan organization VoteRunLead, says. “You’ve got people that you’re really accessible to. That creates a really healthy democracy inside New Hampshire.”

Raymond Buckley, the Chairman of the New Hampshire Democratic Party, suggests that New Hampshire’s political parties contribute to the state’s legacy as a gender parity leader. “State parties can, and in the case of the NHDP do, play a role in encouraging women to hold positions of leadership and responsibility at every level. Women hold four of the six positions on the Democratic National Committee from New Hampshire.”

There seems to be a “strong tradition of women supporting other women” in New Hampshire, says Clare Bresnahan, program director of the She Should Run, a sister organization of the Women’s Campaign’s Fund. The experiences of the current trailblazing female delegation are certainly reflective of this: Former New Hampshire Senator Susan McLane mentored and encouraged her daughter, Ann “Annie” McLane Kuster (who now serves as Congresswoman) and Jeanne Shaheen when she was the state’s second female Governor (now serving as Senator). Shaheen now mentors Governor Hassan.

Vilardi suggests that this kind of mentorship complemented with the existence of recruitment groups like Emerge Vermont has led to a generational, almost cyclical, development and cultivation of women politicians in the state.

[Senator Kelly Ayotte] does what my dad used to do growing up. It’s a reverse — her husband stays at home in New Hampshire, while she goes to the Senate and works... This is real — this is feminism.

Meghan McCain, daughter of Senator John McCain (R-AZ)
Partners for Gender Parity

Representation2020’s work is supported and complemented by many others that are partners in the mission to attain gender parity in elected office. Numerous organizations are leading efforts to combat gender stereotypes, to encourage women and train them to run for office, to provide funding for women candidates, and to research women’s representation and reform. Here is just a small sampling.

The American University Women & Politics Institute strives to close the gender gap in political leadership by providing academic and practical training, and conducting research about gender, campaigns, and elections.

The Barbara Lee Family Foundation advances women’s equality and representation in American politics through unique non-partisan research focused on executive office, strategic partnerships, and grantmaking.

The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) promotes greater knowledge and understanding about women’s participation in politics and government and to enhance women’s influence and leadership in public life.

Close the Gap CA is a campaign to increase the number of women in the California Legislature by recruiting talented progressive women to run for targeted winnable seats in 2016.

The Council of Women World Leaders aims to promote gender equality and good governance by increasing the number, effectiveness, and visibility of women who lead their countries.

EDGE (Economic Dividends for Gender Equality) is the leading global assessment methodology and business certification standard for gender equality. EDGE’s metrics-based approach offers organizations insight for measuring gender parity.

EMILY's List was founded in 1985 with a mission to increase the representation of pro-choice Democratic women in elected office.

Higher Heights is building a national infrastructure to expand and support a Black women’s leadership pipeline at all levels and strengthen their civic participation beyond just Election Day.

IGNITE builds political ambition in young women. They provide political and civic education, connections to women political leaders, and hands-on training opportunities to young women nationwide.
Institute for Women's Policy Research produces rigorous research to inform programs and initiatives aimed at helping women reach political parity in representation and leadership at all levels of government.

LatinasRepresent, a joint initiative of Political Parity and the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, calls out the lack of Latina leaders in public office and ensures the political landscape reflects all Americans.

Moxie Media is a leader in advancing national research projects to inform political communication strategies that persuade and mobilize voters to support women candidates.

Political Parity is a non-partisan platform devoted to overcoming barriers and building opportunities to advance women's political progress through strategic collaborations, identifying innovative tactics, and cultivating knowledge of effective practices.

Republican Majority for Choice highlights elected leaders through WISH List (Women in the Senate and House) and works with Republican women across the ideological spectrum.

Running Start gives young women the skills and confidence to run for political office so that they are ready to bring their unique experiences and ideas to the table.

She Should Run starts with asking women to run and continues by demystifying the experience and empowering women to embrace their leadership potential. They ask, encourage, connect and share.

VoteRunLead strengthens democracy by unleashing the power of women leaders through training, technology, and community.

Raising Ms. President inspires young women to be our nation’s political leaders. They believe that with more women in office, there will be better outcomes for us all.

The Reflective Democracy Campaign spotlights the demographics of political power, tackles barriers keeping women and people of color from elected office and promotes a political system reflecting the American people.
Current strategies to advance women's representation have gotten us less than two-fifths of the way to gender parity in elected office – 95 years after the ratification of the 19th Amendment guaranteeing suffrage to women. We don't want to wait another 95 years (or longer) to reach gender parity in elective office.
Gender Parity Index: Measuring Progress in the States

There are many possible methodologies for ranking women’s representation in elected office. A simple way to measure women’s representation in a state is by the composition of its state legislature. By that measure, Colorado, with its 42.0% female legislature, ranks highest, and Louisiana, with its 12.5% female legislature, ranks lowest. However, this paints an incomplete picture. Colorado has never elected a female U.S. Senator; while Mary Landrieu served Louisiana in the U.S. Senate between 1997 and 2015.

Representation2020 developed the Gender Parity Index to give a more complete snapshot of the representation of women in all levels of government, giving particular weight to the offices that matter the most to voters, such as governor, member of Congress, and mayor, and to enable meaningful comparisons between states.

In our Gender Parity Index, states earned points based on whether men or women hold various elected offices. We developed our score based on the winners of the following elections in each state:

- the three most recent gubernatorial elections;
- the most recent election for all other statewide elected executive offices;
- the four most recent U.S. Senate elections;
- the most recent U.S. House elections;
- the most recent state legislative elections;
- the gender of their speakers of the state house and state senate presidents;
- the number of women mayors in all cities with populations over 30,000 people;
- the county executives in the five largest counties.

We scored states on a scale of 0 to 100. If a state has a score lower than 50, women are underrepresented in elected office in that state, and if it has a score above 50, men are underrepresented. A state with a score of 50, which means that men have earned 50% of the points and women have earned the other 50%, has achieved parity, especially if the state can maintain a score near 50 for several election cycles. Only one state achieved a score above 50 in 2015 (New Hampshire), and the median state had a score of only 18.

Visit www.Representation2020.com/parity-index.html to download our spreadsheet calculating each state’s Parity Score and Ranking.
# Gender Parity Scores, by State, 1993, 2014 and 2015

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<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Representation2020
Calculating Components of the Gender Parity Index

Statewide Elected Executives (30 points total)

We base 30% of a state’s Gender Parity Index score on its statewide elected executive officials, including governor. Offices are weighted comparatively based on their importance.

For the single-seat office of governor, we count the last three elections to give ourselves a clearer picture of whether a woman is likely to become governor in the state. If a state’s only statewide elected executive is governor (as is the case in Maine, New Hampshire, and Tennessee), then the last gubernatorial election is worth 15 points and the preceding two are worth 7.5 points each. If a state’s only elected executive other than the governor is the lieutenant governor (as is the case in Alaska, Hawaii, and New Jersey), then a woman winning the most recent gubernatorial election would be worth 12.5 points and the winners from the two preceding gubernatorial elections would be worth 6.25 points each. The remaining five points are divided between the three most recent elections for lieutenant governor — 2.5 points for the most recent election, and 1.25 each for the two preceding elections.

In states with three or more statewide elected executives, 10 points are awarded for electing a woman in the last gubernatorial election, and 5 points are awarded each for electing a woman in the two previous gubernatorial elections. The remaining 10 points are awarded based on the number of women holding non-gubernatorial elected executive positions (even if the person currently holding that office was appointed). Half a point is awarded for each elected superintendent of public instruction and commissioner if the office is single-seat, or for the popularly elected president of a commission if the commission includes multiple commissioners. Commissions with an appointed rather than elected president or chair are excluded from the tally.

The remaining points are allocated for the offices of lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, treasurer, and auditor/comptroller. Points are weighted so that the first three offices are always worth twice as many points as the last two. For example, if a state had each of the five positions listed above, but no elected commissioners, then a state would receive 2.5 points for a woman lieutenant governor and 1.25 points for a woman state treasurer.

U.S. Congress (30 points total)

Congressional representation is also worth 30% of the Gender Parity Index score. Thirty points are divided between the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate.

A state with six or more representatives in the House could receive as many as 15 points based on the percentage of its House delegation that is female. For example, if a state’s House delegation were half female, then the state would receive 7.5 points (half of 15). The remaining points would be allocated based on how many times women have won in the state’s last four Senate elections. Five points are awarded if a woman won one of the last two elections, and 2.5 are awarded if a woman won one of the two before that. A state like California, where women won all of the last four U.S. Senate elections, would receive the full 15 points, whereas a state like Massachusetts, where a woman won only the most recent election, would receive 5 points.
In order to account for potentially large fluctuations in the percentage of women in U.S. House delegations with fewer than six members, we adjusted how many points these House delegations would be worth in the Gender Parity Index. States with five representatives could earn a total of 14 points for its House delegation and 16 points for its senators, while a state with four representatives could earn a total of 13 points for its House delegation and 17 points for its senators, etc. Then, in states with one or two House members, we included a point allocation similar to the one used for gubernatorial elections. States receive half the available points for the number of women elected to the House from the state in 2014, and then a quarter each for the 2010 and 2012 elections. For example, a state like Wyoming — where a woman won the single House seat in 2010, 2012, and 2014 — would receive a total of 10 points for those elections (5 points for 2014 and 2.5 points each for 2010 and 2012), and would then have 20 points available for its last four senate elections.

State Legislature (30 points total)

As state legislatures often serve as a launching pad for men and women who are elected to higher office, they are also worth 30% of the Gender Parity Score. Fourteen points each are allocated based on the percentages of seats held by women in the state house and senate. For example, if a state’s house is comprised of 25% women, then it would receive 3.5 points. A state also earns an additional point each for having a woman as house speaker or senate president (or senate president pro tempore, if the senate president is the lieutenant governor).

Local Office (10 points total)

Local offices are an important starting point for many aspiring politicians. In order to get a representative snapshot of the state of women’s representation at the local level, we allocated 10 points to local offices in the Gender Parity Score. Six and two thirds points are allocated based on the percentage of women mayors in all of the state’s cities with populations greater than 30,000 people. Another 3.33 points are allocated according to the proportion of female county commission chairs or executives in the state’s five most populous counties.

For example, North Carolina ranks 13th in the nation with a score of 23.9. Its Gender Parity Score is composed as follows on the next page.
# A Closer Look at how the Gender Parity Score is Calculated

## Calculating North Carolina’s Gender Parity Score

North Carolina ranks 13th in the nation with a score of 23.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Points Received</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Calculation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide Elected Executives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>5 (of 20)</td>
<td>NC received no points for its current governor, but it did receive five points for the single term of Gov. Bev Perdue (2009-2013).</td>
<td>0 of 10 points for current governor&lt;br&gt;5 of 5 points for governor one term prior&lt;br&gt;0 of 5 points for governor two terms prior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Elected Statewide Executives</td>
<td>5 (of 10)</td>
<td>Five of NC’s nine non-gubernatorial statewide elected executive positions are held by women. Half a point each is awarded for the superintendent of public instruction and the commissioner of labor. Two points are awarded for the Lt. governor, and one point each for the treasury and auditor.</td>
<td>0 of 2 points for lieutenant governor&lt;br&gt;2 of 2 points for secretary of state&lt;br&gt;0 of 2 points for attorney general&lt;br&gt;1 of 1 point for state treasurer&lt;br&gt;1 of 1 point for auditor&lt;br&gt;0 of 0.5 points for agriculture commissioner&lt;br&gt;0.5 of 0.5 points for insurance commissioner&lt;br&gt;0 of 0.5 points for state superintendent of public schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Congress</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Senate</td>
<td>2.5 (of 15)</td>
<td>Because NC has more than five representatives in the U.S. House, it can receive a total of 15 points for U.S. senators. NC received 2.5 points for former Sen. Kay Hagan (D), who was voted out of office in the 2014 elections.</td>
<td>0 of 5 points for most recent U.S. Senate election (2014)&lt;br&gt;0 of 5 points for U.S. Senate election one prior (2010)&lt;br&gt;2.5 of 2.5 points for U.S. Senate election two prior (2008)&lt;br&gt;0 of 2.5 points for U.S. Senate election three prior (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. House of Representatives</td>
<td>3.5 (of 15)</td>
<td>NC received 3.5 points out of 15, as only 3 of its 13 U.S. representatives are women.</td>
<td>3.5 (3/13 x 15) points of 15 for proportion of female U.S. Representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>State Legislature</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.7 (of 30)</td>
<td>3.6 points for the women in the State Senate and 3.0 for the women in the House. No points awarded for speaker of the house or senate president.</td>
<td>6 (13/50 x 14) of 14 points for proportion of women in state senate&lt;br&gt;3.0 (26/120 x 14) of 14 points for proportion of women in house&lt;br&gt;0 of 1 points for president of the state senate&lt;br&gt;0 of 1 points for speaker of state house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Office</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 (of 10)</td>
<td>1.3 points for 6 female mayors in 31 cities with populations greater than 30,000 people. Zero points for female county executives.</td>
<td>1.3 (6/31 x 6.67) of 6.67 points for female mayors in cities with populations greater than 30,000 people&lt;br&gt;0 (0/5 x 3.33) of 3.33 points for female county commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23.9 (of 100)</strong></td>
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</table>
Although there are many institutions that promote women’s civic engagement and political participation, obstacles to women’s political participation and leadership persist. Women’s lesser economic compared with men’s, their greater caregiving responsibilities, their more limited access to important supports that would help them to run for office, and succeed as office holders, and the greater scrutiny that women candidates seem to face from the public and the media all restrict women’s political participation and leadership in states across the nation. Progress in advancing women’s political status continues to move at a glacial pace.

ALABAMA

STATE RANKING
40
40
out of 50
GENDER PARITY SCORE 12.5
12.5
out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

4.3 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
2.8 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
3.7 of 30 points (State Legislature)
1.8 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

12.5 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Women in Congress
Alabama has never elected a woman to the U.S. Senate. Maryon Pittman Allen (1978) was appointed to the Senate after the death of her husband and Dixie Bibb Graves (1937-1938) was appointed to fill a Senate vacancy caused by a resignation.

Representative Terri Sewell (D) was re-elected in 2014 to the U.S. House of Representatives for her state.

Women Statewide Executives
Lurleen Wallace (1967-1968) served as governor after her husband, George Wallace, was term-limited out of office. She died a year after her election.

Today, Alabama frequently elects women to the lower levels of statewide office. Two of the last three lieutenant governors and two of the last four secretaries of state and presidents of the public service commission have been female. Three of the last four state auditors have been female.

Women State Legislators
From 1994 to 2002, Alabama ranked last in the nation for its percentage of state legislators who were women. Today it ranks 46th, above South Carolina, Wyoming, Oklahoma, and Louisiana.

Cities and Counties
One of Alabama’s 16 cities with a population greater than 30,000 currently has a female mayor: Alabaster. In 2014, the commission presidents of two of Alabama’s five largest counties were female: Mobile and Shelby.

Analysis

In 1993, Alabama ranked 50th for gender parity in elected office. Alabama’s Gender Parity Score has increased six-fold since 1993: from 2.0 to 12.5. If this speedy pace continues, Alabama will reach gender parity in elected office before the 22nd century.

Did you know?
Representatives Terri Sewell (D) and Martha Roby (R) were the first women elected to Congress from Alabama through regular elections. Rep. Sewell successfully lobbied Paramount Pictures to bring the opening of “Selma” to her district, which contains the titular city. Rep. Sewell’s mother, Nancy Sewell, was the first African-American woman elected to Selma’s city council in 1993.
ALASKA

STATE RANKING 12 out of 50
GENDER PARITY SCORE 25.3 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

10.0 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
6.3 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
7.7 of 30 points (State Legislature)
1.3 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

Analysis

In 1993, Alaska ranked 18th in the nation with a Gender Parity Score of 11.1. Since that time, Alaska’s score has more than doubled and Alaska has elected its first female governor and U.S. Senator.

Did you know?
After becoming Metlakatla’s first female mayor a year earlier, Audrey Hudson emerged as a strong female voice in Alaskan politics, and gave the keynote address at Alaska’s 2014 Ketchikan’s Women’s Summit.

Women in Congress
Lisa Murkowski (2002-present) was appointed by her father to fill a vacancy created by his election as governor in 2002, and has since been elected and re-elected.

Murkowski is the only woman Alaska has elected to the U.S. Congress — it is one of only 6 states that have never elected a woman to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Women Statewide Executives
Sarah Palin (R) was elected Alaska’s first female governor in 2006. Only one other woman has served in statewide elected executive office in Alaska: Fran Ulmer, who was lieutenant governor between 1994 and 2003.

Women State Legislators
The proportion of women in Alaska’s state legislature has increased by 10 percentage points since 2006.

Cities and Counties
Sitka, Alaska’s fourth largest city, has elected a woman to the mayor’s office. It is the only city in the five largest cities with a female mayor.
ARIZONA

STATE RANKING
5 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 30.8 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

5.0 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
14.1 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
10.5 of 30 points (State Legislature)
1.2 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)
30.8 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Women in Congress
Arizona has never elected a woman to the U.S. Senate. Between 1937 and 1992, Arizona did not send a woman to Congress. Since 1993, Arizona has elected 6 women to the U.S. House. Lisa Martha McSally (R) was elected to represent Arizona's 2nd Congressional district against Rep. Ron Barber (D) in 2014 after a recount showing McSally ahead by fewer than 200 votes.

Women Statewide Executives

Women State Legislators
Apart from a two-year decrease in 2003 and 2004, the percentage of women in Arizona's legislature has been 30% or more since 1989.

Cities and Counties
Five of Arizona's cities with a population greater than 30,000 currently have women mayors. In 2014, none of the chairs of the boards of supervisors in Arizona's five largest counties were female.

Analysis

In 1993, Arizona ranked 12th in the nation with a Gender Parity Score of 15.3. Since then, Arizona’s score has doubled and Arizona has elected three female governors.

Did you know?
Four of Arizona’s last five governors have been women. Rose Mofford, Arizona’s first female governor (1988-1991), was appointed to the position as a result of the impeachment of the elected governor, Evan Mecham.

Women in Congress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>114th Congress</th>
<th>State History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>0 of 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of Representatives</td>
<td>3 of 9</td>
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</table>

Number of statewide executive offices held by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015</th>
<th>State History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide executive offices</td>
<td>2 of 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of state legislative seats held by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>13 of 30 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>19 of 60 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 3rd.
Method of election: Two-member districts in the house, single-winner districts in the senate
Arkansas

State Ranking 36 out of 50

Gender Parity Score 14.2 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

2.8 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
3.6 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
5.6 of 30 points (State Legislature)
2.2 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)
14.2 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Analysis

In 1993, Arkansas ranked 37th in the nation for gender parity in elected office, with a Gender Parity Score of 5.9. Arkansas’ score has more than doubled over the last 21 years.

Did you know?
Newly-elected State Auditor Andrea Lea boasts a diverse record of elected positions, including Justice of the Peace, Russellville City Councilwoman, and State Representative.

Women in Congress
In its history, Arkansas has elected two women to the U.S. Senate and four to the House. No women have won election to Congress since Blanche Lincoln’s Senate win in 2004. Lincoln served in both chambers and is the youngest woman to have been elected to the U.S. Senate. She was 38 on the day of her election in 1998.

Women Statewide Executives
In the 2014 election, 2 women were elected to statewide executive office: Leslie Rutledge to attorney general and Andrea Lea to state auditor. Arkansas has never elected a female governor or lieutenant governor.

Women State Legislators
The proportion of women in Arkansas’s state legislature increased by 3 percentage points after the 2014 Election.

Cities and Counties
Three of Arkansas’ cities with a population greater than 30,000 currently have women mayors. A female county judge presides over one of the state’s five largest counties (Washington County).

Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>114th Congress</th>
<th>State History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of Representatives</td>
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<td>4</td>
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Number of statewide executive offices held by women

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>State History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide executive offices</td>
<td>2 of 7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of state legislative seats held by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>7 of 35 (20%)</td>
<td>1 of 35 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>20 of 100 (20%)</td>
<td>12 of 100 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 35th
Method of election: Single-winner districts

State legislative data and historical information at all levels from the Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University (January 2015)
CALIFORNIA

STATE RANKING 3 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 35.0 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

20.4 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
3.4 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
8.4 of 30 points (State Legislature)
2.9 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

35.0 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Analysis

California also ranked third for gender parity in elected office in 1993, when the state’s Gender Parity Score was 23.6.

Did you know?
In 1974, California was the first state to elect an Asian-American woman (March Fong Eu) to statewide elective office. Eu served as secretary of state from 1975 to 1993.

Women in Congress
Norma Torres (D) won a seat in the U.S. House, representing California’s 35th Congressional District. Mimi Walters (R) became one of five new Republican women in Congress when she was elected to the U.S. House to represent its 45th Congressional District, defeating Drew Leavens (D).

Women Statewide Executives
California has a relatively poor record on women’s representation in executive office. No women have ever served as governor or lieutenant governor. Indeed, only 9 women have ever been elected (or appointed) to the 8 elective positions in the California executive, two of whom serve today.

Women State Legislators
California was an early leader in electing women to the state legislature, electing 3 women to the Assembly in 1918. However, in 2015, one in four (25.8%) state legislators are women, a modest increase from 1993 (23.3%).

Cities and Counties
In 2014, of California’s 239 cities with a population over 30,000, 57 (23.8%) had female mayors. Los Angeles, the nation’s second largest city, has never had a female mayor — and only one of the 15 current members on the L.A. city council is a woman. Two of California’s five largest county board of supervisors (San Diego and San Bernardino) had female chairs in 2014. The cities that use ranked choice voting in California elect women at a higher rate — in the 24 seats elected by ranked choice voting in the 2014 election in the Bay Area, 16 women won.
COLORADO

STATE RANKING

GENDER PARITY SCORE 20.3
out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

2.1 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
2.9 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
12.3 of 30 points (State Legislature)
3.0 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

20.3 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Analysis

In 1993, Colorado ranked 9th in the nation for gender parity in elected office, with a Gender Parity Score of 16.2.

Did you know?
Cynthia Coffman, the newly-elected attorney general in Colorado, served as a lawyer for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. Following the terrorist bombing at Olympic Park during the Games, Coffman served as legal liaison to the families of the attack victims.

Women in Congress
Although Colorado did not elect a woman to Congress until 1972, it has sent at least one woman to the House of Representatives every election since then.

Women Statewide Executives
Although three women have served as lieutenant governor, which is elected on a joint ticket with governor, none have served as governor.

Women State Legislators
The percentage of Colorado’s state legislative seats held by women has been higher than the national average for 20 years. In 2014, Colorado became the second state ever (after New Hampshire in the 2008 election) to elect a majority of women to a legislative chamber. While Colorado excels at women’s representation in its state legislature, it has yet to elect a woman governor or U.S. senator, which contributes to its relatively low ranking overall.

Cities and Counties
Six (25%) of Colorado’s 24 cities with populations greater than 30,000 have female mayors. Two of Colorado’s five largest counties had female commission chairs in 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women</th>
<th>114th Congress</th>
<th>State History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>0 of 2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of Representatives</td>
<td>1 of 7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of statewide executive offices held by women</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>State History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide executive offices</td>
<td>1 of 5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of state legislative seats held by women</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>12 of 35 (34%)</td>
<td>8 of 35 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>30 of 65 (46%)</td>
<td>27 of 65 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 1st
Method of election: Single-winner districts
**CONNECTICUT**

**STATE RANKING**

**Gender Parity Score 26.5 out of 100 points**

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

- 5.6 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
- 11.3 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
- 7.7 of 30 points (State Legislature)
- 2.0 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

**26.5 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)**

Analysis

Connecticut’s Gender Parity Score was virtually unchanged from 2014. However, due to the advances made by other states, Connecticut fell from the 9th to 10th best state for gender parity in elected office.

**Did you know?**
The Honorable Denise Lynn Nappier was the first woman elected to be state treasurer in Connecticut in 1998, the first African-American woman to be elected to the post, and the first African-American to be elected to any statewide office in Connecticut.

**Women in Congress**

Connecticut has sent at least one woman to the U.S. House for 32 consecutive years. Also, it has not elected a woman U.S. Senator, though the Republican Party nominated Linda McMahon in both the 2010 and 2012 U.S. Senate races.

**Women Statewide Executives**

Ella T. Grasso (1975-1980), Connecticut’s first woman governor, was the first woman elected governor of a U.S. state who was not married to a previous governor.

Of the 19 women elected to statewide executive office, 14 served as secretaries of state.

**Women State Legislators**

Connecticut women have held a higher percentage of state legislative seats than the national average for the last four decades. The 2014 election brought no change in the number of women in either legislative house. However, the Republican Party chose its first woman state house leader, Themis Klarides, in 2014.

**Cities and Counties**

Six (20%) of Connecticut’s 30 cities with populations greater than 30,000 have women mayors. New Haven, Connecticut’s second largest city, elected a woman mayor (Toni Harp) for the first time in 2013.

Three-quarters of Connecticut’s towns and cities use a form of fair representation voting called “Limited Voting” to elect town and city councils and boards.
Analysis

In 1993, Delaware also ranked 34th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 6.4.

Did you know?
Delaware is one of the only three states that has never elected a woman to the U.S. House or U.S. Senate.

Women in Congress
Delaware is one of three states (along with Mississippi and Vermont) that have never elected a woman to Congress.

Women Statewide Executives
Ruth Ann Minner served as governor between 2001 and 2009. Six of the 11 women elected to statewide executive office served as state treasurer. No woman has served as secretary of state since Fannie Harrington’s term ended in 1927. With Matt Denn running successfully for attorney general, the lieutenant governor’s seat is currently vacant, making Patricia Blevins, a 24-year veteran of the state senate, the acting Senate President.

Women State Legislators
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 the national average.

Cities and Counties
Newark, one of Delaware’s five largest cities, has a female mayor.
**FLORIDA**

**STATE RANKING** 28 out of 50

**Gender Parity Score 17.7 out of 100 points**

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

- 3.9 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
- 3.6 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
- 7.4 of 30 points (State Legislature)
- 2.9 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

**17.7 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)**

**Analysis**

In 1993, Florida ranked 32nd in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 8.1. Since then, their score has more than doubled.

**Did you know?**
As reported in the Miami Herald, the 13 women in Florida’s state senate, joined by several of their male colleagues, formed a bipartisan coalition in the 2012 legislative session to defeat bills they believed were too extreme, including an expansion of private prisons, an omnibus anti-abortion bill, and changes to state-sponsored homeowners insurance.

**Women in Congress**
Florida did not elect any women to the U.S. House between 1932 and 1988. Since 1993, no fewer than four women have been elected to the U.S. House from Florida in each election.

In the 2014 elections, Gwen Graham (D) defeated two term Congressman Steve Southerland (R) for a seat in the U.S. House in a district that is Republican leaning. Southerland drew negative attention after sending an invitation to a men's only fundraiser that read, “Tell the Mrs. not to wait up,” referring to Gwen Graham.

**Women Statewide Executives**
Two women have served as lieutenant governor and two women have served as secretary of state. Pam Bondi, who was re-elected last November, is the first woman to serve as attorney general in Florida.

**Women State Legislators**
The percentage of state legislative seats held by women in Florida has mirrored the national average for 20 years.

**Cities and Counties**
Twenty (23.3%) of Florida’s 86 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. Two of the county commissions of the state’s five largest counties (Palm Beach and Orange) are led by female mayors.
GEORGIA

STATE RANKING

GENDER PARITY SCORE 7.8 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

0.0 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
0.0 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
5.8 of 30 points (State Legislature)
2.0 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)
7.8 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Analysis

In 1993, Georgia ranked 39 in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 5.7. In more than twenty years, the state has only advanced about 2 points, mostly because of the low number of women in the state legislature.

Did you know?
Rebecca Latimer Felton served as the first female U.S. Senator in the nation and the only female Senator from Georgia when she was sworn in for 24 hours in 1922 to fill a vacancy as a placeholder before a special election.

Women in Congress
Georgia was the first state to be served by a female U.S. Senator (Rebecca Latimer Felton). The state had elected three women to the U.S. House by 1955. However, Georgia has not elected a woman to Congress since the 2004 election.

Despite a record of volunteer service and a prominent Georgia family name, Michelle Nunn was unsuccessful in the 2014 race for U.S. Senate in Georgia, one of the highest-profile races of the 2014 cycle.

Women Statewide Executives
Georgia did not elect a woman to statewide executive office until 1995. Since then two women have served as superintendent of public schools, two as secretary of state, and one as public service commissioner.

Women State Legislators
In 1989 Georgia ranked 40th for its percentage of state legislators who were women. Today it ranks 30th, slightly below the national average.

Cities and Counties
Six (20%) of Georgia’s 30 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. In 2014, one of the chairs (Charlotte Nash in Gwinnet County) of the county boards of commissioners in Georgia’s five largest counties.

Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>114th Congress</th>
<th>State History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>House of Reps.</td>
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Number of statewide executive offices held by women

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>State History</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide exec</td>
<td>0 of 13</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

Number of state legislative seats held by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>9 of 56 (16%)</td>
<td>6 of 56 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>45 of 180 (25%)</td>
<td>36 of 180 (19%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 30th
Method of election: Single-winner districts
HAWAII

State Pages

Analysis

In 1993, Hawaii ranked 29th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 8.9.

Did you know?
Hawaii elects female U.S. Representatives at the highest rate in the nation. Of the 54 House elections held in Hawaii since it gained statehood in 1959, 39%, or 22 of 56, were won by women. In 2012, Hawaii elected its first woman Senator, Mazie Hirono.

Women in Congress
Representative Tulsi Gabbard was elected to her second term in the U.S. House of Representatives from Hawaii. With her extensive military experience, Gabbard is widely considered a rising star in the Democratic Party. She is also the first Hindu and first American-Samoan member of Congress.

Mazie Hirono (2013-present) is Hawaii’s first female Senator. Hawaii has elected five women to the U.S. House. An additional woman served as Hawaii’s pre-statehood delegate to Congress.

Women Statewide Executives
Governor and the lieutenant governor are the only elected statewide executive positions in Hawaii. Two women (including Mazie Hirono, current U.S. Senator) have served as lieutenant governor. Linda Lingle (2003-2011) was Hawaii’s first and only female governor.

Women State Legislators
From 1997 to 2011, the percentage of women in Hawaii’s state legislature consistently increased to a peak of 35.5% in 2012. It dropped 6 percentage points in 2014.

Cities and Counties
None of the four consolidated city-counties in the state with elected mayors has a woman mayor.
Women in Congress
Idaho has not elected a woman to Congress since the 1998 election. In its history, Idaho has elected two women to the U.S. House and none to the Senate.

Women Statewide Executives
Idaho has never elected a female governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state or attorney general. Twelve of the 19 women elected to statewide executive office served as superintendent of public instruction. Sherri Ybarra (R) was elected in 2014 to be the only female statewide representative for Idaho, serving as current superintendent for public instruction.

Women State Legislators
In 1993, Idaho’s state legislature was 30.5% women and ranked 7th nationwide. After the November 2014 election, women held only 26.7% of seats, putting Idaho in 15th place. In November 2014, three new Republican women were elected to the state senate, which increased the number of women in the 35 member body by 50% (to a total of nine).

Cities and Counties
Two (22.2%) of Idaho’s 9 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors: Meridian and Idaho Falls. None of the commission chairs in Idaho’s five largest counties were female in 2014.

Analysis
Idaho has moved farther away from gender parity since 1993, when Idaho ranked 11th in the nation with a Gender Parity Score of 15.7. In 2003, Idaho had dropped to 31st in the nation. After the November 2014 Election, Idaho ranks 47th.

Did you know?
Idaho has elected two women to the U.S. House but has never elected a woman to the U.S. Senate. The percentage of seats held by women in the house is twice that of the senate, which is perhaps due to the house’s use of multi-winner district.
Women in Congress
In its history, Illinois has elected one female U.S. Senator, Carol Moseley-Braun (1993-1999), the only African American woman to ever be elected to the Senate. Illinois has elected 16 women to the U.S. House, three through special election.

Women Statewide Executives
In January 2015, Evelyn Sanguinetti (R) succeeded Sheila Simon in the lieutenant governor’s office. Sanguinetti is the first Latina lieutenant governor in any state and the only new woman of color in a state's number two post.

Although three of the last four lieutenant governors elected in Illinois have been women, a female governor has yet to be elected in the state.

Women State Legislators
Always above the national average, the percentage of Illinois’ state legislators who are women rose steadily between 1993 and 2013. In the 2014 Election, this progress was reversed somewhat as the proportion of women in the state legislature declined from 31.6% to 29.9%.

Cities and Counties
Twelve (17.1%) of Illinois’s 70 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. Cook County, Illinois’ largest county, elected a woman to county board president (for a six-year term) in 2010.

Analysis
In 1993, Illinois ranked 17th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 11.4.

Did you know?
In 1922, just two years after women were given the right to vote, Lottie Holman O’Neill was elected to the Illinois State legislature. She continued to serve in the Illinois House and Senate for 40 years.
INDIANA

STATE RANKING 23 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 18.7 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

- 3.3 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
- 7.6 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
- 5.7 of 30 points (State Legislature)
- 2.0 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

18.7 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Women in Congress
In its history, Indiana has never elected a woman to the U.S. Senate, but has elected seven women to the U.S. House. All nine U.S. House incumbents, including two female Representatives, were easily re-elected in 2014.

Women Statewide Executives
After the 2014 Election, a majority of Indiana’s statewide elected executive offices are held by women. The 2014 cycle saw the election of Kelly Mitchell to the state treasurer’s office. Mitchell was formerly County Commissioner in Cass County, Indiana, where she was the youngest commissioner in the state. However, the highest offices remain elusive and the Hoosier State has never elected a female governor or U.S. Senator.

Women State Legislators
The percentage of women in Indiana’s state legislature has lagged behind the national average for two decades.

Cities and Counties
Four (13%) of Indiana’s 31 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors.

Analysis
In 1993, Indiana ranked 27th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 9.0.

Did you know?
Just one in five Indiana state legislators (20.0%) are female, less than 1% point higher than in 1993.

Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>114th Congress</th>
<th>State History</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>House of Reps</td>
<td>2 of 9</td>
<td>7</td>
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Number of statewide executive offices held by women

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<tr>
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<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statewide offices</td>
<td>5 of 7</td>
<td>18</td>
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Number of state legislative seats held by women

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>1993</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>10 of 50 (20%)</td>
<td>13 of 50 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>21 of 100 (21%)</td>
<td>16 of 100 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 34th
Method of election: Single-winner districts

State legislative data and historical information at all levels from the Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University (January 2015)
IOWA

STATE RANKING

31 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 16.4 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

5.7 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
3.6 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
6.7 of 30 points (State Legislature)
0.4 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

16.4 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Analysis

In 1993, Iowa ranked 42nd in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 5.3.

Did you know?

In accordance with a gender balance law that passed in 2009 and took effect in 2012, local governments are being pressured to increase gender parity on local boards and commissions. A recent study completed by the Carrie Chapman Catt Center on Women and Politics at Iowa State University and the Friends of Iowa Commission on the Status of Women shows that nearly half of the selected boards and commissions have achieved gender balance.

Women in Congress

Joni Ernst (R) won an open seat in the Senate against U.S. Representative Brad Braley (D) in a toss up election during the midterm 2014 election, becoming the first woman elected to Congress from Iowa. Prior to being elected, Senator Ernst served as the lieutenant colonel in the Army National Guard, making her the first woman veteran to serve in the U.S. Senate. Yet, Iowa is one of 6 states that have never elected a woman to the U.S. House.

Women Statewide Executives

Iowa has elected five female lieutenant governors. Indeed, since 1991 the office of lieutenant governor has been occupied by women.

Women State Legislators

The percentage of women in Iowa’s state legislature peaked at 23.3% in 2009, and has generally mirrored the national average over the last two decades.

Cities and Counties

One (6.7%) of Iowa’s 15 cities with populations over 30,000 has a female mayor. None of the state’s five largest counties had a female chair of the board of supervisors in 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>114th Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>House of Representatives</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of statewide executive offices held by women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide executive offices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of state legislative seats held by women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 31st
Method of election: Single-winner districts
KANSAS

STATE RANKING 24 out of 50
GENDER PARITY SCORE 18.6 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

- 3.3 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
- 5.0 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
- 8.7 of 30 points (State Legislature)
- 1.7 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

18.6 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Analysis

In 1993, the Sunflower State ranked first in the nation for gender parity in elected office, with a Gender Parity Score of 36.9. However, the state’s record on gender parity in elected office took a turn for the worse in the late 1990s and has not yet recovered.

Did you know?
Kansas was an early leader in women’s representation, granting women the right to vote in 1912, electing its first woman (Susanna M. Salter) in 1887 to the office of mayor of Argonia, electing a woman (Kathryn O’Loughlin McCarthy) to the U.S. House in 1933, and repeatedly electing a female U.S. Senator (Nancy Kassebaum) from 1978 to her retirement in 1997.

Women in Congress
In its history, Kansas has elected 5 women to the U.S. House, and 1 to the U.S. Senate. Another woman was appointed to the Senate for five months in 1996.

Women Statewide Executives
Sandy Praeger (R), the only female statewide executive officeholder in Kansas, chose not to run for re-election for her State Commissioner position. Instead, she did what is rarely done in American politics today, she jumped party lines and endorsed a Democratic candidate, Dennis Anderson.

Women State Legislators
The percentage of women in the state legislature has declined over the last twenty years, falling from a high of nearly 35% to below the national average in 2013.

Cities and Counties
Two (15.4%) of Kansas’s 13 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors: Hutchinson and Leawood. The chair of Douglas County’s commission was female in 2014.
Women in Congress
In its history, Kentucky has elected 2 women to the U.S. House: Katherine Gudger Langley (1927-1931) and Anne Northup (1997-2007). Current Kentucky Secretary of State, Alison Lundergan Grimes, ran for U.S. Senate in 2014, but was defeated by Republican leader Mitch McConnell 56% to 40%.

Women Statewide Executives
In 1983, Kentucky was the 3rd state to elect a female governor who had not been married to the previous governor. On November 6, 2014, former state auditor Crit Luallen (2004-2012) was appointed lieutenant governor. She is the third female lieutenant governor in Kentucky’s history.

Women State Legislators
In 1993, only 5% of Kentucky’s state legislative seats were held by women, but the state has trended upward for the last 20 years. There are four times as many women in the legislature today, but the state still lags behind the national average.

Cities and Counties
Two (20.0%) of Kentucky’s 10 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. None of the five largest counties had a female county judge (executive) in 2014.

Analysis
The Bluegrass State has not always lagged so far behind the nation on gender parity. In 1993, Kentucky’s Gender Parity Score was 9.1, only slightly below average.

Did you know?
Kentuckians elected Katherine G. Langley to the U.S. House in 1926, making her one of the first 10 women to serve in Congress. Three years later, in 1929, Kentucky elected women to the offices of secretary of state (Ella Lewis) and state treasurer (Emma Guy Cromwell). In 1896, Cromwell had been the first woman to hold statewide executive office in Kentucky (appointed to state librarian by the state senate) and was elected secretary of state in 1925.
LOUISIANA

STATE RANKING

GENDER PARITY SCORE 12.9 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>2.5 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.0 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3 of 30 points (State Legislature)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.9 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women in Congress
Incumbent Senator Mary Landrieu lost her seat in the U.S. Senate in 2014 after a hard-fought battle with Bill Cassidy. Landrieu’s Senate race was the last to be called in the 2014 cycle after a failure by both candidates to get 50% resulted in a runoff, which Landrieu lost in January.

Women Statewide Executives
In 1932, Lucille May Grace was the first woman to be elected to statewide executive office in Louisiana. She held the (now defunct) position of register of state lands until 1952, when she unsuccessfully ran for governor.

Women State Legislators
Louisiana ranks lowest in the nation for its percentage of state legislative seats held by women. It sits at half the nation average.

Cities and Counties
Three (21.4%) of Louisiana’s 14 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. One of its five largest parishes (counties) has a female president: Patricia B. Brister in St. Tammany Parish.

Analysis
In 1993, Louisiana ranked 41st in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 5.3.

Did you know?
Rose McConnell Long, the wife of Huey Long, became the third female U.S. Senator in 1936 when she was appointed four months after her husband was assassinated. She won a special election in 1936, but chose not to run for a full term that fall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>114th Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>House of Representatives</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of statewide executive offices held by women</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statewide executive offices</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of state legislative seats held by women</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 50th
Method of election: Single-winner districts
MAINE

**STATE RANKING** 8 out of 50

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

**Gender Parity Score 28.3 out of 100 points**

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

18.2 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
0.0 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
7.5 of 30 points (State Legislature)
2.7 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

28.3 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

---

**Women in Congress**
The 2014 U.S. Senate race in Maine was one of the few featuring female candidates from both parties. In this race, incumbent Senator Susan Collins (R) defeated the Democratic nominee Shenna Bellows.

Between 1997 and 2013, both Maine U.S. Senators — Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins — were Republican women.

**Women Statewide Executives**
Maine’s only statewide elected executive office is governor. Since a woman has never been elected to the governorship, Maine is the only state to have never elected a woman to a statewide executive office.

**Women State Legislators**
The percentage of Maine’s state legislative seats held by women routinely exceeds the national average, but the share today is lower than it was in 1993.

**Cities and Counties**
One (20%) of Maine’s five largest cities (South Portland) has a female mayor. Two of its five largest counties (York and Kennebec) had female commission chairs in 2014.

---

**Analysis**

In 1993, Maine ranked 15th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 13.4.

**Did you know?**
Moderate Republican and Mainer Margaret Madeline Chase Smith was the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress. She served as a U.S. Representative (1940-1949) and a U.S. Senator (1949-1973).

**Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>114th Congress</th>
<th>State History</th>
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<td>Senate</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>House of Representatives</td>
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**Number of statewide executive offices held by women**

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<th>State History</th>
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<td>Governor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statewide executive offices</td>
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**Number of state legislative seats held by women**

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<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>1993</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>8 of 35 (23%)</td>
<td>11 of 35 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>46 of 151 (30%)</td>
<td>48 of 151 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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</table>

**State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 12th**
Method of election: Single-winner districts
MARYLAND

State Pages

Analysis

Maryland, once ahead of the nation on gender parity in elected office, is falling behind. In 1993, Maryland ranked 15 places higher — 5th in the nation — with a Gender Parity Score of 20.0.

Did you know?
Maryland uses both single-winner and multi-winner districts to elect state legislators. In 2013, the percentage seats held by women in two- and three-member districts (37%) was more than double the percentage of seats held by women in single-winner districts (15%).

Women in Congress
Senator Barbara Mikulski (D) of Maryland announced she will not seek a sixth term, and will retire as the longest-serving woman senator.

From 1979 to 1992 Maryland had at least three female Representatives in Congress. But since 1995, no more than one member of the state’s U.S. House delegation has been a woman. That’s 20 years of underrepresentation.

Women Statewide Executives
Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the only woman elected to statewide executive office in Maryland, served as lieutenant governor from 1995 to 2003. Kennedy Townsend ran on Parris Glendening’s gubernatorial ticket, which narrowly defeated Ellen Sauerbrey, Maryland’s second female major party gubernatorial candidate.

Women State Legislators
The percentage of women in Maryland’s state legislature peaked in 2005 at just under 36%. It has declined gradually since then, though it remains higher than the national average.

Cities and Counties
Two (20.0%) of Maryland’s 10 largest cities have female mayors: Baltimore and Rockville. None of Maryland’s five largest counties have women executives.

Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>114th Congress</th>
<th>State History</th>
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<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
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<td>House of Representatives</td>
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Number of statewide executive offices held by women

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Number of state legislative seats held by women

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<tr>
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<th>2015</th>
<th>1993</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>13 of 47 (28%)</td>
<td>10 of 47 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>46 of 141 (33%)</td>
<td>35 of 141 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 7th

Method of election: Each single-winner senate district elects three seats in the House of Delegates. Most delegates are elected at-large, while the rest are elected in one-seat and two-seat districts.

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

9.4 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
0.0 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
8.4 of 30 points (State Legislature)
1.3 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

19.1 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

State legislative data and historical information at all levels from the Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University (January 2015)
MASSACHUSETTS

State Legislative Data and Historical Information at all Levels from the Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University (January 2015)

**State Ranking**

**Gender Parity Score**

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

- **8.3** of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
- **7.5** of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
- **8.5** of 30 points (State Legislature)
- **2.5** of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

**Gender Parity Score 26.8 out of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)**

**Analysis**

In 1993, Massachusetts ranked 30th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 8.6.

**Did you know?**

Boston has never elected a female mayor. By contrast, in nearby Cambridge, two of the last four people to occupy the Mayor’s Office were female. It is no accident that Cambridge uses a fair representation voting system — in which voters rank candidates and candidates seek broad support — rather than the plurality systems used in most other cities, which tend to encourage polarized and negative campaigning.

**Women in Congress**

In its history, Massachusetts has elected six women to Congress. Three of those six women serve today.

**Women Statewide Executives**

Maura Healey became the Democratic Attorney General of Massachusetts in 2014, becoming the first LGBT woman elected to that office in the U.S.

Massachusetts has elected at least one woman to every office in the statewide executive except secretary of state (called “secretary of the commonwealth”). Outgoing attorney general Martha Coakley narrowly lost her gubernatorial bid in 2014.

**Women State Legislators**

The percentage of women in the state legislature has not significantly changed in the last 20 years, mirroring the slow pace of advancement for women’s representation nationally.

**Cities and Counties**

Nine (17.0%) of Massachusetts’ 53 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. Bristol and Plymouth counties both had a female commission chair in 2014.

### Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>114th Congress</th>
<th>State History</th>
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<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of Representatives</td>
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### Number of statewide executive offices held by women

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Statewide executive offices</td>
<td>4 of 6</td>
<td>9</td>
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### Number of state legislative seats held by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>12 of 40 (30%)</td>
<td>9 of 40 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>38 of 160 (24%)</td>
<td>37 of 160 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 21st

Method of election: Single-winner districts

State legislative data and historical information at all levels from the Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University (January 2015)
MICHIGAN

STATE RANKING 11 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 25.8 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

10.7 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
8.3 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
5.9 of 30 points (State Legislature)
0.9 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

25.8 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Women in Congress
Debbie Dingell (D) was elected to take a seat in the House of Representatives. She is replacing her husband, Rep. John Dingell, who is retiring after having served in the very same 12th district seat since 1955. John Dingell's father, Rep. John Dingell Sr, also served in the House for 22 years.

Representative-elect Brenda Lawrence (D) joins Rep. Debbie Dingell in the House of Representatives, representing Michigan's 14th district. She previously served as the first black Mayor of Southfield for 13 years.

Women Statewide Executives
Michigan did not elect a woman to statewide executive office until 1982. Since 1982, Michigan has elected at least one woman every quadrennial statewide executive election.

Women State Legislators
In recent years, the Michigan state legislature has experienced large fluctuations in the percentage of seats held by women. Between 2008 and 2009, it increased 5.4 points, but decreased by 6.1 points to 18.9% in 2012. In November 2014, it jumped 2 points to 20.9%.

Cities and Counties
Five (12.8%) of Michigan's 39 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. None of the state’s five largest counties have female county executives or commission chairs.

Analysis

In 1993, Michigan ranked 33rd in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 7.

Did you know?
In 2002, Michigan elected its third foreign-born governor and its first woman governor, Jennifer Granholm (D). Originally from Canada, Granholm became a naturalized American citizen at the age of 21. She served two terms.
MINNESOTA

STATE RANKING 4 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 31.1 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

- 9.4 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
- 7.1 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
- 10.4 of 30 points (State Legislature)
- 4.2 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

31.1 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Analysis

In 1993, Minnesota ranked 21st in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 10.5.

Did you know?

In August 2011, Rep. Michele Bachmann of Minnesota became the first woman to win the Ames Straw Poll, the most prominent early poll for the Republican presidential nomination in Iowa, since the poll’s inception in 1979. Bachmann retired from her house district at the end of the 113th Congress (2013-2015).

Women in Congress
Amy Klobuchar became the first elected female U.S. Senator from Minnesota when she won election in 2006. In addition, Muriel Humphrey Brown was appointed to the Senate in 1978 after a vacancy caused by the death of her husband.

Women Statewide Executives
Lori Swanson was re-elected to a third four-year term as Minnesota's attorney general in 2014 and also received the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Distinguished Service Award.

Although Minnesotans have never elected a female governor, the last six lieutenant governors have been women. In 2014, Minnesota elected its seventh consecutive female lieutenant governor, Tina Smith.

Women State Legislators
Minnesota has consistently outpaced the national average for its proportion of state legislators who are women. Women are similarly represented in the House and in the Senate.

Cities and Counties
Ten (33.3%) of Minnesota’s 30 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. Anoka, Dakota, and Washington County all had female commission chairs in 2014. Betsy Hodges, mayor of Minneapolis, attributes a part of her win to the use of ranked choice voting for mayoral elections.
MISSISSIPPI

STATE RANKING

50
out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE

7.0
out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

Women in Congress
Mississippi did not have any female party nominees for any U.S. Senate or House of Representatives seats up for re-election in 2014.

Mississippi is among three states that have never elected a woman to Congress.

Women Statewide Executives
Evelyn Gandy, the only woman to serve in Mississippian statewide executive office in the 20th century, was elected state treasurer, commissioner of insurance, and lieutenant governor.

Women State Legislators
Mississippi has consistently ranked near the bottom for its share of state legislative seats held by women, although three special election victories for women in 2013 have moved the state a little closer to the national average.

Cities and Counties
None of Mississippi’s 10 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. The president of Hinds County Board of Supervisors is a woman.

Analysis

In 1993, Mississippi ranked 38th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 5.8.

Did you know?
Mississippi is the only state that has never elected a woman to Congress or a female governor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
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<th>Number of statewide executive offices held by women</th>
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<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 41st
Method of election: Single-winner districts

State legislative data and historical information at all levels from the Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University (January 2015)
Analysis

In 1993, Missouri ranked 40th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 5.3.

Did you know?
Annie White Baxter was the first woman elected to political office in Missouri. Baxter won the office of Jasper County Clerk in 1890 as a Democrat.

Women in Congress
Rep. Vicky Hartzler was elected to her third term in the U.S. House of Representatives. She was the second Republican woman elected to Congress from Missouri in 2010 and was the first Republican to hold her district’s seat since 1955.

Since the appointment of Jean Carnahan as the state’s first female U.S. Senator in 2000 (after her husband was elected posthumously), a woman has run as a major party nominee in every U.S. Senate race in Missouri. In its history, Missouri has elected eight women to the U.S. Congress, one through a special election.

Women Statewide Executives
Missourians rarely elect women to executive office. Missouri has never had a female governor, and only one woman has served as lieutenant governor (between 1985 and 1989). Currently none of the six statewide elected executive offices are occupied by a woman.

Women State Legislators
The percentage of women in Missouri’s legislature has closely mirrored the national average over the last 20 years.

Cities and Counties
Three (15.0%) of Missouri’s 20 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. None of Missouri’s five largest counties has a female executive.
MONTANA

STATE RANKING 28 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 17.7 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

0.0 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
7.3 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
9.1 of 30 points (State Legislature)
1.3 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)
17.7 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Women in Congress
Montana has only ever elected one woman to Congress: Jeannette Rankin. Rankin, first elected in 1916, was the first ever woman elected to Congress. She served two terms, one from 1917-1919 and one from 1941-1943.

Women Statewide Executives
Nine of the eighteen women to have been elected to statewide executive office were elected to the position of superintendent of public instruction. Other than between 1980 to 1989, the superintendent spot has been occupied by a woman since 1917.

Angela McLean was appointed lieutenant governor in February 2014, becoming Montana’s second female lieutenant governor.

Women State Legislators
Six new female state legislators were elected in 2012, the biggest increase in 20 years. The legislature now ranks above the national average.

Cities and Counties
None of Montana’s 6 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. Missoula and Flathead counties had female commission chairs in 2014.

Analysis
In 1993, Montana ranked 28th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 9.

Did you know?
Current Secretary of State Linda McCulloch was the first woman to be elected secretary of state in Montana in 2008.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>114th Congress</td>
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<th>Number of statewide executive offices held by women</th>
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<td>2015</td>
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<td>Statewide executive offices</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 8th
Method of election: Single-winner districts
Nebraska has a Gender Parity Score of 15.0 out of 100 points. This score is calculated by considering various aspects of gender representation in elected office, with specific points allocated for U.S. Congress, Statewide Executive Offices, State Legislature, and Cities and Counties. Here is a breakdown of the points:

- **6.0 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)**
- **0.5 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)**
- **5.1 of 30 points (State Legislature)**
- **3.3 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)**

**Total Gender Parity Score**: 15.0 out of 100 points

### Women in Congress
Nebraska has elected only three women to the Congress: two senators (Hazel Abel in a special election in 1954 and Deb Fischer in 2012) and one representative (Virginia D. Smith, who served between 1975 and 1991). An additional woman was briefly appointed to the Senate (Eva Bowring in 1954).

Despite Deb Fischer’s election to the U.S. Senate in Nebraska in 2012, 2014 marked an entire decade since a woman has held state elective office.

### Women Statewide Executives
Kay A. Orr was the first woman to be elected to statewide executive office (state treasurer in 1982). Orr served as governor between 1987 and 1991. Since 1991 five women have been elected to the statewide executive.

### Women State Legislators
In the last 20 years, Nebraska has had between 9 and 13 women in its state legislature out of 49 available seats. Women are currently represented in the state legislature at the same rate as they were in 1993.

### Cities and Counties
Two (40.0%) of Nebraska’s 5 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. Nebraska’s most populous county, Douglas County, had a female commission chair in 2014.

### Analysis
Nebraska has fallen 29 places since 1993, when the state’s Gender Parity Score was 20.2 and Nebraska ranked fourth in the nation.

**Did you know?**
In Nebraska, the offices of governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, state treasurer and state auditor — all elected — have all been occupied by men since early 2004.
NEVADA

**STATE RANKING**

**GENDER PARITY SCORE** 17.3 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

- 3.3 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
- 2.5 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
- 9.3 of 30 points (State Legislature)
- 2.2 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

**17.3 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)**

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**Women in Congress**

In its history, Nevada has elected 3 women to the U.S. House and none to the Senate. Nevada did not send a woman to Congress until the 1982 election. Yet, since 1983, Nevada has been represented by at least one woman in every session Congress (with the exception of the 105th Congress in 1997-1999).

**Women Statewide Executives**

While there have been no female governors in Nevada, three women have served as lieutenant governor, including one appointment in 1962.

**Women State Legislators**

Most state legislatures lost female members in the 2014 election. Nevada’s state legislature gained two new female legislators.

**Cities and Counties**

Two (33.3%) of Nevada’s 6 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors, including Las Vegas, the largest city in the state.

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**Analysis**

In 1993, Nevada ranked 25th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 9.8.

**Did you know?**

Frankie Sue Del Papa was the first woman elected secretary of state (1986) and the first woman elected attorney general (1990) in Nevada. Del Papa served as attorney general until 2003, at which point she was term limited from running for statewide executive offices.

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State legislative data and historical information at all levels from the Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University (January 2015)
NEW HAMPSHIRE

STATE RANKING 1 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 57.0 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

21.3 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
22.5 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
9.7 of 30 points (State Legislature)
3.6 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

57.0 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Women in Congress
Although New Hampshire did not send a woman to Congress until 2007, since 2009 at least half of the state’s congressional delegation has been female. Jeanne Shaheen (D) won reelection to the Senate against Scott Brown (R) in the 2014 midterms. Ann McLane Kuster (D) won a House seat to join the majority female delegation. New Hampshire also re-elected its female governor, Maggie Hassan (D). Carol Shea-Porter (D) was the only woman incumbent that lost a seat this past election. This made New Hampshire lose its two-year streak of having an all female delegation.

Women Statewide Executives

Women State Legislators
November 2014 saw the election of 25 fewer women to the New Hampshire state legislature than in 2012. Today there are 18% fewer women in the state legislature than in 1993.

Cities and Counties
Two (33.3%) of New Hampshire’s 6 largest cities have female mayors, including Nashua, the state’s second largest city. Hillsborough and Rockingham counties had female commission chairs in 2014.

Analysis
In 1993, New Hampshire ranked 16th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 13.3. In 2014, New Hampshire became the first state to reach parity in our Gender Parity Index.

Did you know?
New Hampshire is the first and only state to send an all-female delegation to Congress in 2012. New Hampshire was the first state in the nation to have a majority female state legislative chamber (in the state Senate in 2009-2010).
State legislative data and historical information at all levels from the Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University (January 2015)

NEW JERSEY

STATE RANKING

GENDER PARITY SCORE 16.3 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

1.3 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
5.0 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
8.1 of 30 points (State Legislature)
2.0 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

16.3 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Analysis

In 1993, New Jersey ranked 48th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 3.8.

Did you know?
In the November 2013 legislative elections in New Jersey, 67 women were on the ballot, the most in the state’s history.

Women in Congress
Bonnie Watson Coleman (D) became the first African American representative in Congress for New Jersey in the 2014 midterm election. She represents New Jersey’s 12th Congressional district in the U.S. House, beating two women — State Senator Linda Greenstein in the Democratic primary and Republican Alieta Eck in the general election — to gain a seat in Congress.

Women Statewide Executives
There are only two elected statewide executive offices in New Jersey: governor and lieutenant governor. Christine Todd Whitman was elected governor in 1993 and she served until 2001.

Women State Legislators
For years New Jersey lagged behind the national average in the percentage of its state legislative seats held by women. After elections in 2007 and 2009, however, the number of female legislators nearly doubled, from 19 in 2005 to 36 in 2009.

Cities and Counties
Eight (10.5%) of New Jersey’s 76 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. Bergen and Monmouth counties had female county executives/freeholder directors in 2014.

Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women

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Number of statewide executive offices held by women

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Number of state legislative seats held by women

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<th>1993</th>
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<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>11 of 40 (28%)</td>
<td>1 of 40 (3%)</td>
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<td>House</td>
<td>24 of 80 (30%)</td>
<td>14 of 80 (18%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 11th
Method of election: Each district elects one state senator and two assembly members
NEW MEXICO

STATE RANKING 6 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 30.4 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

- 4.0 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
- 17.4 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
- 7.6 of 30 points (State Legislature)
- 1.4 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

30.4 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Analysis

In 1993, New Mexico ranked 19th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 10.8.

Did you know?
Susana Martinez (R) became New Mexico’s first female governor in 2010 when she won the third woman v. woman gubernatorial race in U.S. history. She is the first elected Latina governor of any state.

Women in Congress
New Mexico has never sent more than one woman to Congress at a time. Between 1949 and 1998, the state did not elect a woman to Congress.

Women Statewide Executives
Susana Martinez (R) was re-elected to her governor’s seat, keeping her spot as one of two female governors of color.

Twenty-six women have served in statewide executive office, plus four women elected to the five member public regulation commission. All 19 secretaries of state since 1923 have been female. However, New Mexico has only ever elected one woman to the governor’s mansion (Susana Martinez in 2010 and 2014), one woman to the office of lieutenant governor and one woman to the office of attorney general.

Women State Legislators
The proportion of women in New Mexico’s state legislature rose steadily between 1993 and 2001, but has declined since. In 2014, one in four (25.9%) New Mexico state legislators are female, a significant drop from before the 2014 election (when 28.6% of state legislators were women).

Cities and Counties
One (11.1%) of New Mexico’s 9 cities with populations over 30,000 has a female mayor. Bernailillo County had a female commission chair in 2014.

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<th>State History</th>
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<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 of 42 (14%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 of 42 (19%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>House</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 of 70 (33%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 of 70 (20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>26%</td>
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<td>20%</td>
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State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 19th
Method of election: Single-winner districts
**NEW YORK**

**STATE RANKING 14 out of 50**

**GENDER PARITY SCORE 23.8 out of 100 points**

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

- 11.9 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
- 4.0 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
- 6.2 of 30 points (State Legislature)
- 1.7 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

**23.8 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)**

**Women in Congress**
Elise Stefanik (R) became the youngest woman elected to Congress in history at 30 years old. She was able to beat out Aaron Wolf (D) by more than 20 points for New York's 21st district in the House, despite the fact that President Obama (D) carried the same district. Kathleen Rice (D) now represents New York’s 4th District in Congress after beating out Bruce Blakeman (R) in the 2014 midterms.

**Women Statewide Executives**
Kathy Hochul became the fourth woman elected lieutenant governor of New York in November 2014. The lieutenant governor is elected on a joint ticket with governor. No women have ever been elected governor of New York.

**Women State Legislators**
The representation of women in the state legislature has largely tracked the national average for the last two decades, increasing slowly until the 2010 election. Since 2010, New York has fallen below the national average for the percentage of women in its legislature.

**Cities and Counties**
Eight (15.4%) of New York’s 52 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. A woman has held the position of county executive in Monroe County since 2004.

**Analysis**

In 1993, New York ranked 24th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 9.9.

**Did you know?**
When Nydia M. Velazquez (D) was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives for New York in 1993, she made history by being the first Puerto Rican woman elected to Congress.
NORTH CAROLINA

Analysis

In 1993, North Carolina ranked 22nd in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 10.4.

Did you know?
In 1920, Lillian Exum Clement was the first woman elected to the North Carolina legislature, and the first woman to serve in any state legislature in the American South. Before the 19th Amendment had been ratified, Clement won the Democratic Party primary, defeating two male candidates. In the era of the White primary and Democratic Party domination of the South, she won (at age 26) the 1920 election with 10,368 votes to 41 votes.

Women in Congress
Alma Adams (D) was victorious in her special election bid for the 12th Congressional district seat, making her the 100th female member of Congress. She was able to win a seven-way primary in which she was the only woman candidate. Incumbent Senator Kay Hagan (D) was defeated by North Carolina State House Speaker Thom Tillis (R) in the 2014 midterms. In its history, North Carolina has elected two women to the U.S. Senate, each for a single term. Elizabeth Dole (2003-2009) and Kay Hagan (2009-2015).

Women Statewide Executives
North Carolina did not elect a woman to statewide executive office until 1996. Since 2000, North Carolinians have elected at least three women to statewide executive office every quadrennial election, including Governor Beverly Purdue in 2008.

Women State Legislators
North Carolina’s state legislature peaked in 2008 at 26.5% women after years of steady increase. The percentage sharply declined in the 2010 election, but made a slight rebound in 2014 when a record number of women were elected to the state senate.

Cities and Counties
Six (19.4%) of North Carolina’s 31 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors, including Raleigh and Greensboro.
NORTH DAKOTA

STATE RANKING 37 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 13.6 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

6.7 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
1.4 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
5.2 of 30 points (State Legislature)
0.3 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

13.6 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Women in Congress
In its history, North Dakota has elected one woman to Congress, Heidi Heitkamp in 2012. Jocelyn Burdick was appointed to the Senate for a few months in 1992, after the death of her husband. North Dakota is one of only six states that have never elected a woman to the U.S. House.

Women Statewide Executives
Kiara Kraus-Parr and April Fairfield ran against incumbents in both major statewide offices on the ballot in 2014, attorney general and secretary of state, but both were unsuccessful.

Women State Legislators
The percentage of women in the state legislature has increased by less than two percentage points since 1993.

Cities and Counties
None of North Dakota’s 5 largest cities have female mayors.

Analysis

In 1993, North Dakota ranked 35th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 6.1.

Did you know?
Laura Eisenhuth, superintendent of public instructions from 1893-1894, was the first woman to be elected to a statewide office in the nation. Of the 16 women elected to statewide executive office, none have served as governor and two have served as lieutenant governor.
Women in Congress
Ohio has elected 11 women to the U.S. House and none to the U.S. Senate. Between 2007 and 2011, Ohio’s congressional delegation included five women.

In 2014, Representative Marcy Kaptur (D) won a 17th term in Congress, and has maintained wide margins of victory throughout her long career.

Women Statewide Executives
Four of Ohio’s last six lieutenant governors have been women. Ohio has never elected a female governor. Nancy Hollister served as governor for 11 days from 1998-1999 when the governor’s office was left vacant by Gov. George Voinovich’s ascension to the U.S. Senate.

Women State Legislators
The percentage of women in Ohio’s state legislature declined sharply in 2002 but rebounded in 2014.

Cities and Counties
Ten (19.2%) of Ohio’s 52 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. Two of Ohio’s five most populous counties (Franklin and Summit) have female county executives.

Analysis

In 1993, Ohio ranked 13th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 14.7. Progress on gender parity in elected office in Ohio has been slow.

Did you know?
In 1922, Ohio voters were the first in the nation to elect a woman (Florence Ellinwood Allen) to their state Supreme Court.
OKLAHOMA

STATE RANKING

GENDER PARITY SCORE 20.2 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

0.0 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
15.5 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
3.6 of 30 points (State Legislature)
1.2 of 30 points (Cities and Counties)
20.2 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Women in Congress
The second woman to ever serve in the U.S. Congress and the first ever to defeat an incumbent came from Oklahoma: Alice Mary Robertson, who was elected in 1920. Oklahoma was not represented by another woman in Congress until the election of Mary Fallin (R) in 2006.

Women Statewide Executives
Oklahoma has elected 14 women to statewide executive office, including four women to the three-member corporation commission.

Women State Legislators
The percentage of women state legislators has increased by only 3 percentage points in the past 20 years and remains far below the national average.

Cities and Counties
Two (14.3%) of Oklahoma’s 14 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors.

Analysis
In 1993, Oklahoma ranked 47th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 3.8.

Did you know?
Oklahoma’s increased Gender Parity Score since 1993 is almost entirely the consequence of Mary Fallin. Fallin, re-elected in 2014, is Oklahoma’s first female governor. Fallin has also served in the U.S. House of Representatives, as lieutenant governor, and in the Oklahoma state house. Other than Fallin, Oklahoma has never elected a female governor or lieutenant governor and has only ever elected one other women to Congress (Alice Mary Robertson, back in 1920).

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<td>House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 49th
Method of election: Single-winner districts
Women in Congress
Oregon was an early leader in electing women, but the state has not elected a woman to the U.S. Senate since Maurine Brown Neuberger (D) served one term after her 1960 election. No major party has nominated a woman to run for Senate for more than two decades.

Women Statewide Executives
In February 2015, after the finalization of our Gender Parity Index, Secretary of State Kate Brown rose to the governorship after the resignation of incumbent John Kitzhaber. Jeanne Paquette Atkins was sworn in as secretary of state in March 2015.

Women State Legislators
The proportion of women in the state legislature declined after the 2008 election. In 2014, Oregonians once again elected a legislature that is almost a third women.

Cities and Counties
Six (42.9%) of Oregon’s 14 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. Oregon’s largest county, Multnomah County, has a female county chair.

Analysis
In 1993, Oregon’s Gender Parity Score was 27.8 and Oregon ranked second in the nation for gender parity in elected office. Since then, the state has fallen an unlucky 13 places and its Gender Parity Score has shrunk.

Did you know?
Barbara Roberts was the first woman elected governor in Oregon in 1990 and served only one term.
PENNSYLVANIA

STATE RANKING 46 out of 50
GENDER PARITY SCORE 9.6 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

0.0 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
3.3 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
5.0 of 30 points (State Legislature)
1.3 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)
9.6 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Women in Congress
Men continue to hold all 20 of Pennsylvania’s seats in the U.S. House and Senate. In its history, Pennsylvania has never elected a woman to the U.S. Senate and has elected only seven women to the House. In 2014, Pennsylvanians did not elect any women to Congress for the first time in the 21st century.

Women Statewide Executives
No woman has served as governor in Pennsylvania, but four have been elected state treasurer.

Women State Legislators
The percentage of state legislative seats held by women has increased 8.3 percentage points in the last 20 years, a greater increase than the national increase of 3.2 percentage points. However, the state has consistently trailed behind the national percentage by more than six points.

Cities and Counties
Seven (19.4%) of Pennsylvania’s 36 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors.

Analysis

In 1993, Pennsylvania ranked 49th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 3.4.

Did you know?
Three of the seven seats that have been held by Pennsylvania women in Congress were won in special elections by the wives of Congressmen who passed away.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114th Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State History</td>
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<tr>
<td>0 of 2</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 of 18</td>
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<table>
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<th>Number of statewide executive offices held by women</th>
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<td>Governor</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>State History</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 of 50 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of 50 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 of 203 (18%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 of 203 (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 39th
Method of election: Single-winner districts.
Women in Congress
Claudine Schneider, the only woman to represent Rhode Island in Congress, served in the U.S. House between 1981 and 1991. She retired to run for the U.S. Senate but was unsuccessful.

Women Statewide Executives
Governor-elect Gina Raimondo (D) won an open seat, becoming Rhode Island’s first woman governor and joining four other incumbent female governors. Nellie Gorbea (D) was elected as the new secretary of state, making her the first Latina elected statewide and the first Latina elected to a statewide executive office in New England.

Women State Legislators
After a decade’s long dip in its percentage of state legislative seats held by women, women made up 27.4% of the state’s legislature in 2013, the highest percentage in Rhode Island’s history. After the 2014 election, that number declined slightly to 26.5%.

Cities and Counties
Two (18.2%) of Rhode Island’s 11 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors.

Analysis
In 1993, Rhode Island ranked 10th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 15.9.

Did you know?
In the 2010 gubernatorial election, the Women’s Fund of Rhode Island challenged the major gubernatorial candidates to sign a pledge to double the percentage of women appointed to commissions and boards. Having signed before his election, former Governor Lincoln Chafee increased the percentage of appointed women from 15% in 2010 to 33% in 2012.
**SOUTH CAROLINA**

**STATE RANKING 22 out of 50**

**GENDER PARITY SCORE 18.8 out of 100 points**

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

- 0.0 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
- 15.5 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
- 2.8 of 30 points (State Legislature)
- 0.5 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)
- **18.8 out of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)**

**Analysis**

In 1993, South Carolina ranked 46th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 4.1.

**Did you know?**

In 2012, Katrina Shealy became the first woman elected to the South Carolina state senate in five years. The 46-seat state senate had been the nation’s only all-male state legislative chamber.

**Women in Congress**

South Carolina has not elected a woman to Congress since 1990. The first four women to represent South Carolina in Congress were elected in special elections following the deaths of their husbands.

**Women Statewide Executives**

Governor-elect Nikki Haley (R) easily swept her re-election in the 2014 midterm against Vincent Sheheen (D), her same opponent in the previous election. She was first elected in 2010, making her the first Indian-American woman to become governor of South Carolina and the second Indian-American governor in the U.S.

**Women State Legislators**

In 2013, South Carolina relinquished its place as the state with the lowest percentage of state legislative seats held by women to Louisiana. After the 2014 election, Wyoming and Oklahoma have also fallen below South Carolina.

**Cities and Counties**

One (7.7%) of South Carolina’s 13 cities with populations over 30,000 has a female mayor: Mount Pleasant with Mayor Linda Page.
Women in Congress
Rep. Kristy Noem was re-elected in 2014 as South Dakota’s only member of the House of Representatives. She is famous in part for having finished her college degree from South Dakota State during her first term in office.

Although two women served South Dakota in the U.S. Senate before 1950 (one by appointment and the other through a special election), South Dakota did not send any women to Congress between 1948 and 2004.

Women Statewide Executives
In 2014, Secretary of State-elect, Shantel Krebs, became the first woman elected to statewide executive office in South Dakota since 2000. Krebs is the 16th woman to serve as secretary of state. Every secretary of state between 1926 and 2003 was female.

In addition to the 20 women elected to statewide executive office, five women have served on the three-member public utilities commissioners.

Women State Legislators
After reaching a nadir of just 13.3% in 1999, the proportion of women in South Dakota’s state legislature is slowly on the rise again.

Cities and Counties
None of South Dakota’s 5 five largest cities have female mayors. Minnehaha County had a female commission chair in 2014.

Analysis
In 1993, South Dakota ranked 14th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 14.4.

Did you know?
Since 2004, a woman has won South Dakota’s single at-large U.S. House seat in each election (Stephanie Herseth Sandlin in 2004, 2006, and 2008 and Republican Kristi Noem in 2010, 2012, and 2014). In 2014, both major party candidates for South Dakota’s House seat were women (Noem and Democrat challenger Corinna Robinson).
Analysis

In 1993, Tennessee ranked 45th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 4.2.

Did you know?
It was not until 2002 that the Volunteer State elected a woman to the U.S. Congress without first electing her husband.

Women in Congress
Tennessee continues to lag in election of women to state legislature, but both of the state’s females members of Congress, Marsha Blackburn and Diana Black, were both reelected in 2014.

In its history, Tennessee has never elected a woman to the U.S. Senate, but has elected six women to the House, three of whom were elected in special elections following the deaths of their husbands.

Women Statewide Executives
Tennessee’s only currently elected executive position is governor. Two women have served as public service commissioner, a position that no longer exists.

Women State Legislators
The percentage of Tennessee’s legislature that is female has consistently lagged behind the national average for the last 20 years, and has never been higher than 19%.

Cities and Counties
Five (21.7%) of Tennessee’s 23 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors.
Women in Congress
Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson became the first black woman from Dallas to be elected to public office in 1972, when she won a seat in the Texas House of Representatives. She was re-elected in 2014 to the U.S. House of Representatives for a twelfth term.

In its history, Texas has elected six women to the House and one to the Senate. Between November 2006 and January 3, 2007, after Shelley Sekula-Gibbs won a special election but lost the general election, Texas was represented by a record 5 women in Congress.

Women Statewide Executives
Texas was the second state to elect a female governor. Miriam “Ma” Ferguson was elected twice (in 1924 and 1932) as a surrogate for her husband who had been impeached and was ineligible to run for re-election. Ann Richards, Texas’ second female governor, was defeated in her run for a second term by George W. Bush in 1994. In addition to the six women to serve in statewide executive office, three women have served on the three member railroad commission, including the current chair (Christi Craddick).

Women State Legislators
After reaching a peak of 23.8% in 2009-2010, the proportion of women in the state legislature has steadily declined.

Cities and Counties
13 (13.3%) of Texas’ 98 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. One of Texas’ most populous counties elected a female county judge in 2014 (Travis County).

Analysis
In 1993, Texas ranked 6th in the nation for parity, with a Gender Parity Score of 19.8. Since then, Texas has fallen 36 places to 42nd — and its Gender Parity Score is down to almost half of its 1993 peak.

Did you know?
The two largest cities in the nation with women mayors are both in Texas: Houston and Fort Worth. In fact, Houston is the only city with a population above a million with a woman mayor.
Women in Congress
Mia Love became the first African American Republican woman (and first Haitian-American) in the House of Representatives when she defeated Doug Owens (Democrat), by 4,000 votes.

Women Statewide Executives
Olene S. Walker was elected lieutenant governor in 1992, 1996 and 2000. Walker served as governor in 2003 to 2005 after the elected governor, Mike Leavitt, resigned. Only one other woman has served in statewide executive office: Jan Graham, who was elected attorney general in 1992 and 1996.

Women State Legislators
The percentage of Utah’s state legislative seats held by women was almost 8 percentage points higher in 2002 than it is today.

Cities and Counties
Two (7.7%) of Utah’s 26 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. One of Utah’s five most populous counties (Davis) had a female county commission chair in 2014.

Analysis
In 1993, Utah ranked 44th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 4.3.

Did you know?
Utah territory granted women the right to vote in 1870. In the Edmunds–Tucker Act of 1887, Congress disenfranchised women as part of a broader effort to eliminate polygamy and reduce the power of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The right of women to vote was won again — this time for good — in 1895 in the new state constitution.
VERMONT

STATE RANKING 41 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 11.5 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

- 0.0 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
- 1.3 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
- 10.3 of 30 points (State Legislature)
- 0.0 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

11.5 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Women in Congress
Vermont is one of three states (along with Delaware and Mississippi) that have never elected a woman to Congress.

Women Statewide Executives
Vermont continues its downward slip in the gender parity index with losses in the state legislature; however, Beth Pearce was elected to state treasurer after having been appointed in 2011 by Governor Shumlin.

Three women have served as lieutenant governor, including Madeleine M. Kunin (1979-1982). In 1984, Kunin was elected governor. In 1986, she was re-elected. In 1988, Kunin became the only woman in U.S. history to have been elected to serve three terms as governor.

Women State Legislators
Vermont has consistently outperformed the nation in women’s representation in its state legislature, and the trend since 2001 has been positive.

Cities and Counties
None of Vermont’s 5 largest cities have female mayors.

Analysis
Since 1993, Vermont has fallen 36 places in Representation2020’s Gender Parity Index. In 1993, Vermont had a Gender Parity Score of 19.4 and the state ranked 7th in the U.S.

Did you know?
Consuelo N. Bailey became the first woman to hold the lieutenant governor’s office anywhere in the United States when she was elected in Vermont in 1954. Among many other firsts, Bailey was the first Vermont woman admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court (in 1933).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women</th>
<th>114th Congress</th>
<th>State History</th>
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<td>Senate</td>
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<td>House of Representatives</td>
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<th>Number of statewide executive offices held by women</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>State History</th>
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<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statewide executive offices</td>
<td>1 of 6</td>
<td>9</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number of state legislative seats held by women</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>9 of 30 (30%)</td>
<td>11 of 30 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>65 of 150 (43%)</td>
<td>50 of 150 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 2nd
Method of election: The State House of Representatives has some single-winner districts and some two-member districts. The Senate has districts varying in magnitude from one to six members.
Virginia

**State Ranking**

**Gender Parity Score 8.5 out of 100 points**

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>14 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)</th>
<th>0.0 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)</th>
<th>5.0 of 30 points (State Legislature)</th>
<th>2.1 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)</th>
<th>8.5 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Women in Congress**

Virginia did not elect a woman to Congress until 1992, when Leslie L. Byrne won Virginia’s 11th House District. After sending an all-male Congressional delegation to the Capitol for three Congresses, Virginia’s 10th District elected Barbara Comstock (R) to the 114th Congress in 2014.

**Women Statewide Executives**

Mary Sue Terry is the only woman Virginians have elected to statewide executive office. Terry was elected to attorney general in 1985 and re-elected in 1989.

**Women State Legislators**

The percentage of Virginia state legislative seats held by a woman has consistently trailed the national average, although it has been trending upward over the past two decades.

**Cities and Counties**

Two (11.1%) of Virginia’s 18 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. Two of Virginia’s five most populous counties (Fairfax and Henrico) had a female county commission chair in 2014.

**Analysis**

Virginia ranked 50th in Representation2020’s 2014 analysis. Virginia’s slow progress toward parity can be attributed to the use of single-winner districts in its General Assembly. In 2013, those state legislative chambers that used multi-winner districts were 31.0% female, while those that did not were made up of only 22.8% women. Currently, 24 (17.1%) women serve in Virginia’s 140 member General Assembly. State legislative offices are an important stepping stone to higher office.

**Did you know?**

Congresswoman Barbara Comstock’s opponent John Foust (D) was quoted saying that Comstock, a former Congressional aide, lobbyist, and mom never had a “real job.”

### Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>114th Congress</th>
<th>State History</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Senate</td>
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### Number of statewide executive offices held by women

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<th>State History</th>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statewide executive offices</td>
<td>0 of 3</td>
<td>2</td>
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### Number of state legislative seats held by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>8 of 40 (20%)</td>
<td>4 of 40 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>16 of 100 (16%)</td>
<td>13 of 100 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 42nd.**

Method of election: Single-winner districts.
WASHINGTON

STATE RANKING
2 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 43.8 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

19.5 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
12.1 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
9.4 of 30 points (State Legislature)
2.8 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)
43.8 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Women in Congress

Since 1998, Washington has sent at least one woman to Congress. Since 2013, Washington’s Congressional delegation of 12 has included a record 5 (41.7%) women.

Women Statewide Executives

Women State Legislators
Washington has consistently ranked high on the gender parity index in its state legislature. Although Washington has experienced a slight decrease in the percentage of women in the state legislature since 1993, the amount of women in the state senate has held steadily over time and both houses remain well above the national average.

Cities and Counties
Twelve (31.6%) of Washington’s 38 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. Pierce County, Washington’s second largest county, has a female county executive.

Analysis
In 1993, Washington ranked 8th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 17.7.

Did you know?
In 2005, Washington became the first state to have two women U.S. senators and a woman governor simultaneously.
WEST VIRGINIA

STATE RANKING 38 out of 50

GENDER PARITY SCORE 12.9 out of 100 points

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.0 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)</th>
<th>3.2 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)</th>
<th>3.1 of 30 points (State Legislature)</th>
<th>0.7 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>12.9 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis

In 1993, West Virginia ranked 36th in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 5.9.

Did you know?

Since 2013, only one woman (Donna J. Boley) has served in the 34-member West Virginia State Senate.

Women in Congress

Two women have represented West Virginia in Congress: Elizabeth Key and Shelley Moore Capito. Key was elected to the 5th House District in 1951, after the death of the incumbent, her husband, John Key. She was succeeded by her son, James Key, in 1964. Capito won election to the U.S. House in 2000 and served in 2nd district until her taking her seat in the U.S. Senate on January 3, 2015.

Women Statewide Executives

Until 2004, West Virginia had never elected a woman to statewide executive office. Since then, West Virginia has elected two women to the office of secretary of state.

Women State Legislators

While nationally the percentage of women serving in state legislatures has increased by 3.7 percentage points over the last two decades, the percentage of women in the West Virginia legislature is lower today than it was in 1993.

Cities and Counties

None of West Virginia’s five largest cities with elected mayors has a woman mayor. In 2014, Cabell County had a female county commission president.
WISCONSIN

STATE RANKING 27 out of 50

A Gender Parity Score of 50 indicates a state has reached gender parity in elected office. Gender parity is defined as the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold elected office in the state.

6.9 of 30 points (U.S. Congress)
2.7 of 30 points (Statewide Executive Offices)
7.8 of 30 points (State Legislature)
0.5 of 10 points (Cities and Counties)

17.9 of 100 points (Gender Parity being 50)

Women in Congress
Wisconsin did not undergo any major gender parity changes in 2014, but did re-elect Rep. Gwen Moore to the 4th District seat in the House of Representatives.


Women Statewide Executives
All three 21st century lieutenant governors in Wisconsin have been women.

Women State Legislators
Twenty years ago, the percentage of Wisconsin state legislators who were women was 6.8 percentage points higher than the national average. Today, it is less than 1 percent higher.

Cities and Counties
Two (7.4%) of Wisconsin’s 27 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors.

Analysis

In 1993, Wisconsin ranked 23rd in the nation, with a Gender Parity Score of 10.2.

Did you know?
In 2012, Wisconsin elected its first female U.S. senator, Tammy Baldwin. She is also the first openly gay senator in U.S. history.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>114th Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 of 2</td>
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<td>State History</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>House of Representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 of 8</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<th>Number of statewide executive offices held by women</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>State History</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide executive offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 of 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of state legislative seats held by women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 of 33 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 of 33 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 of 99 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 of 99 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
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</table>

State Legislature’s Gender Parity Ranking: 21st
Method of election: Single-winner districts
Wyoming’s Gender Parity Score increased 1.1 points from 2014.

**Did you know?**
Wyoming remains almost a full lifetime away from gender parity despite having a head start on every other state. Wyoming gave women the right to vote 50 years before most states and was the first state to ever elect a woman governor (Nellie Tayloe Ross, who took office in 1925).

### Women in Congress
Wyoming did not send any women to Congress until 1994. Since then, Wyoming has elected a woman to its at-large U.S. House seat every election. Cynthia M. Lummis (R) has served since 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of U.S. Congress seats held by women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>114th Congress</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Women Statewide Executives
Twelve (60%) of the 20 women to serve Wyoming in statewide executive office have been superintendents of public instruction. Jillian Balow was elected to that office in 2014, replacing Cindy Hill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of statewide executive offices held by women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2015</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide executive offices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Women State Legislators
After Wyoming switched from multi-winner state legislative districts to single-winner legislative districts in the early 1990s, the percentage of state legislative seats held by women fell and remains below the national average. Just one woman (Bernadine L. Craft) currently serves in the Wyoming state senate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of state legislative seats held by women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2015</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cities and Counties
In 2014, Gillette elected its first woman mayor, Louise Carter-King. It is the only one of Wyoming’s 5 largest cities to have a woman mayor. The 2014 chair of the board of commissioners in Laramie County, the state’s most populous county, was woman (Amber Ash).
Glossary of Important Terms

**Democracy**: a government in which political power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically-held free elections.

**District**: the geographical subdivision into which a city, state, or country is divided for elections.

**Electoral system**: a set of laws and procedures that govern the election of public officials by specifying what percentage of the vote a candidate needs to be elected and how votes are tallied.

**Fair representation voting systems**: used in many democracies to ensure that parties and political groups are allotted seats in legislative bodies in proportion to their share of the vote.

**Intentional actions**: decisions that PACs, parties, donors, and gatekeepers can make to set targets for the recruitment and funding of women candidates.

**Legislative practices and rules**: the procedures, customs, and rules within legislatures that govern when votes are taken, whether childcare is provided, and how committees operate.

**Multi-winner district**: a legislative district represented by more than one legislator

**Parity**: the state or condition of being equal in power, value, rank, etc. Gender parity is the point at which women and men are equally likely to hold an elected office.

**Party rules**: internally-set guidelines and procedures that govern the operations of political parties, including procedures for recruiting and supporting candidates.

**Ranked choice voting**: a system that allows voters to rank candidates for office in order of preference, leading to a majority outcome in single-seat elections and a proportional outcome in multi-winner elections.

**Recruitment practices**: the practices and procedures of political parties, PACs and ‘gatekeepers’ that regulate and influence how candidates are recruited for public office.

**Representation**: the accurate reflection of voters’ diverse identities and opinions by those in political office.

**Single-winner district**: a legislative district represented by a single legislator.

**Structural barriers (in elections)**: characteristics of a system of elections that prevent certain groups from achieving equal opportunity for representation.

**Voluntary quotas**: targets that political parties or PACs set for the recruitment or support of women candidates.

**Winner-take-all**: a term used to describe single or multi-winner district systems in which winning a plurality or majority of the vote guarantees 100% of the representation, leaving many citizens in the jurisdiction unrepresented.
Endnotes


4. It should be noted, of course, that the majority of Republican women still support most restrictions to abortion, but this bill was the most restrictive ever to hit the House. See: Ed O’Keefe, “Abortion bill dropped amid concerns of female GOP lawmakers,” Washington Post, January 21, 2015, Online.


7. See chapter on legislative practices in this edition of the State of Women’s Representation for more information on women’s caucuses. See also: Jill Lawrence, “Do Women Make Better Senators Than Men?” National Journal, July 11 2013. Online.


13. “State Fact Sheet – Mississippi.”


16. The data provided here is for the median legislative chamber in each case. The mean legislative chamber in which at least some members were elected in multi-winner districts was 28.2% women. The mean legislative chamber in which all members were elected in single-winner districts was 23.1% women. Figures calculated using data from the Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University. Retrieved Nov. 2014 from www.cawp.rutgers.edu


21. Calculated using CAWP data.


39. For the Democratic Party, see The Charter and Bylaws of the Democratic Party of the United States (2012, Sept. 7) / Section 2. The Democratic National Committee shall be composed of:
(a) the Chairperson and the highest ranking officer of the opposite sex of each recognized state Democratic Party and of the Democratic Parties of Guam, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands;

ARTICLE THREE, Sections 1e and 2a; For the Republican Party, see The Rules of the Republican Party (2012, Sept.) RULE NO. 1.

40. Jo Freeman, We will be heard: women's struggles for political power in the United States (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), Chapter 10.


42. Republican State Leadership Committee, “Future Majority Project,” Right Women, Right Now, 2015, Online.


44. Congress previously legislated against at-large districts in 1842, but this law was routinely ignored by many states. The 1967 law, however, mandated single-winner districts, and has been followed by the states. There is no constitutional entrenchment of single-winner districts; Congress could repeal the mandate by ordinary law.


51. Read & Loewenstein.

52. Cox, Ratner and Lieb.


54. According to Gary Cox and Scott Morgenstern, multi-winner districts can lower the number of unopposed races. As multiple seats are available per district, more candidates have the opportunity to split votes and spoil a closer election between popular candidates. This opens the door for women and minorities. Once in office, the diverse new set of representatives will ultimately gain the same incumbency advantage that once only applied to their overwhelmingly white and male predecessors, albeit at a much slower pace than they would in a single-winner district.


71. “Gender Parity Steps: Our GPS for the Journey to Parity,” Representation2020, Online.