

The image features a stylized illustration of the U.S. Capitol building in black and white, set against a bright blue sky with white clouds. The building is reflected in a green field. In the foreground, a blue sign with a black border and a wooden post contains the text 'SHE SHOULD RUN' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The words are stacked vertically, with red horizontal lines separating 'SHE' from 'SHOULD' and 'SHOULD' from 'RUN'.

SHE
SHOULD
RUN

COMPANION NOTEBOOK:

Making the Decision to Serve

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Why do we need more women in public service?

We are wives; we are mothers; we are business owners; we are professionals. Being an elected official allows us to use our everyday experiences, education and common sense as a foundation to serve those throughout the communities we live in.

Mary Herrera

Former New Mexico Secretary of State

Throughout our history, extraordinary women have distinguished themselves by leading in the public arena. One such woman was Jeannette Rankin of Montana – the first woman elected to Congress. She served from 1917 to 1919 and again from 1941 to 1942. A noted pacifist, Rankin was the only lawmaker to vote against U.S. entry into both World Wars. She represented a previously unheard point of view. The efforts of Rankin and others paved the way for those women who now serve.

While these women were pioneers who helped pave our path, the time for lone, incremental leadership has long passed. Today's call is for a generation of women to step forward and take charge. Numbers matter. As of 2013, the United States ranks 95th among nations for the percentage of women in the federal legislature.³ What is it that women in other countries know that we don't? And what is it that we are missing?

Operating any public institution without women's full participation is akin to fielding half a soccer team or staging a play with half the actors. Essential talent is on the sideline or in the wings. Right now, the United States needs an infusion of talent and women are the answer. That's right, **you are the answer.**

When a core group of women serve in executive, legislative, appointed, or party office, they change the process, the culture, the agenda, and the content of the institutions in which they serve. In short, they add depth and a different dimension. They change the discussion.

Studies show that women are more inclusive in decision-making and seek consensus from the group. Having been shut out, they are inclined to open the doors and let in some fresh air. Women legislators are 50% more likely than their male counterparts to "pull people together," "get people involved," and "build issue coalitions." Indeed, 59% of women committee chairs (compared with 48% of men) are rated above average for inclusivity and power-sharing.⁴

PIONEERING PUBLIC SERVANTS¹

1866

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was the first woman to run for the U.S. House of Representatives, even though she was not eligible to vote. She ran as an Independent from New York State, receiving 24 of 12,000 votes that were cast.

1887

The first woman Mayor was Susanna Medora Salter, who was elected Mayor of Argonia, Kansas. The first female mayor of a major city (Oklahoma City, OK) was Patience Sewell Latting in 1971 – 84 years later.²

1894

Clara Cressingham, Carrie Holly, and Frances Klock were elected to the Colorado House of Representatives, making them the first women elected to any State Legislature. In 1896, Martha Hughes Cannon was elected to the Utah State Senate, becoming the first woman State Senator in history.

For instance, the former chair of Philadelphia's School Reform Commission, Sandra Dungee Glenn, created an innovative, call-in weekly radio program to involve the community in school policies, which led to the addition of an African American history course to the graduation requirements.⁵ Former Highland Park, New Jersey Mayor Meryl Frank established a task force to clean up city government and end corruption, allowing citizens to have oversight and creating a hotline for complaints. She was later appointed by President Obama to be Ambassador to the UN Commission on the Status of Women. And in the U.S. House, former Speaker Nancy Pelosi moved to include more voices by maintaining the six-year term limit on Committee Chairs and authorizing the first-ever external oversight committee to review ethics complaints against Members.

When women participate, the agenda and content also changes: women legislators are more likely to introduce legislation pertaining to rape, teen pregnancy, pay equality, day care, and domestic violence, traditionally viewed as "women's issues."⁶ They are also more likely to work on legislation concerning health care, child welfare, the elderly, housing, and education.⁷ Female judges have spearheaded responses to domestic violence, child support, and gender parity.⁸ Further, a majority of legislators believe that having more women in office treatments and medications. Only when a core group of women joined the Congress in 1992 was NIH required to use women in clinical trials in order to draw conclusions about women's health.¹¹ See Chapter Five for more examples of women's leadership.

We need to address the ongoing imbalance of political representation and power in America. This is the historic challenge for us as American women: to come into public service in unprecedented numbers and to impact public policies in a way that only we can.

1900

Frances Warren of Wyoming became the first woman delegate to a Republican National Convention. In the same year, Elizabeth Cohen of Utah was chosen as an alternate to the Democratic National Convention. When another delegate became ill, Cohen became the first woman delegate to a Democratic National Convention.

1916

Jeannette Rankin of Montana was the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

1920

After 72 years of struggle, the 19th Amendment was ratified, giving women the right to vote.

THE FACTS: Where we stand in 2013

- » School boards are **44%** female.¹²
- » In the U.S. there are currently **6** female governors and **12** female Lieutenant Governors.¹³
- » Women make up **31%** of state court judges.¹⁴
- » Women make up **25%** of city councils.¹⁵
- » In 2013, **18%** of U.S. cities with more than 100,000 residents had women mayors.¹⁶
- » In 2016, **19** of the nation's **100** largest cities had women mayors or city managers.¹⁷
- » **1,840** women serve as state legislators, making up **24%.9** of those bodies.¹⁸
- » U.S. women hold **4** federal cabinet-level appointed positions, out of 23 total.¹⁹
- » Women hold **24%** of the **312** available statewide elective executive offices in the U.S.²⁰
- » **6** women have served as National Chair for either the Democratic or Republican Parties.²¹
- » Women of color make up **7.1%** of the total 535 members of Congress. **4** woman of color serves in the U.S. Senate.²²
- » Women are **19.6%** of the U.S. Congress: there are **21** female Senators and **84** congresswomen.²³

1923

Soledad Chacon became New Mexico Secretary of State, the first Latina and first woman of color in statewide office.

1924

Nellie Tayloe Ross was elected Governor of Wyoming, following the death of her husband, who preceded her in office. The first woman elected governor without being the wife or widow of a past governor was Ella Grasso of Connecticut, who was elected 50 years later in 1974.

1933

Frances Perkins was the first woman to be appointed to a presidential cabinet. She served as President Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor for 12 years.



Books We Love & Resources We Rely On

Outstanding Women in Public Administration: Leaders, Mentors, and Pioneers. 2004.

By Claire Felbinger and Wendy Haynes

This book features case studies of women who have made outstanding contributions to the theory and practice of public service. Each chapter relates the life and work of one woman to the broad issues faced by today's public servants.

It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office. 2005.

By Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox

This book is the only systematic, nationwide empirical account of the manner in which gender affects political ambition. Fox and Lawless's work is a huge inspiration for the She Should Run program, and a must read for any woman thinking of running for office.

It Still Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office. 2010.

By Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox

This 2010 edition of Lawless and Fox's influential study of gender and political ambition gives suggestions for closing the gender gap as we move into a new decade.

Jeannette Rankin: Political Pioneer. 2007.

By Gretchen Woelfle

In this biography, photographs, newspaper clippings, campaign materials and even "hate mail" are compiled to tell the remarkable story of a woman who was Montana's Representative in Congress before women in other states even had the right to vote.

1939

Jane Matilda Bolin was the first African-American woman judge.

1965

Rep. Patsy Takemoto Mink of Hawaii was the first Asian-American woman and the first woman of color to serve in Congress. She served for 24 years.

1972

Shirley Chisholm was the first African-American to compete in a major party primary for President of the United States.

1974

Mary Louise Smith became the first female chair of the Republican National Committee. She served for three years.

Stepping Up to Power: The Political Journey of American Women. 2000.

By Harriett Woods

Part autobiography, part biography, this political history examines how women have gained power in America. The author also provides step-by-step advice on becoming a candidate.

Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP)

Leading research institution on women in politics, focusing on voting, officeholders, media coverage, and more.
www.cawp.rutgers.edu

We Will Be Heard: Women's Struggles for Political Power in the United States. 2008.

By Jo Freeman

Jo Freeman uses 15 case studies to explore women's role in politics. They are broken into three sections: how women have broken barriers, how they practice politics, and once in politics, how women promoted public policy.

Women in Politics: Outsiders or Insiders? 2010.

By Lois Duke Whitaker

This text is a collection of readings that explores women in the political system. It discusses how political women are portrayed by the media, women's successes and failures when competing for office, and how the political culture is changing with the growing generation of female politicians.

Women's Voices. Women Vote.

Non-partisan group focused on improving unmarried women's participation in the electorate and policy process.
www.wvov.org

For more resources, visit www.SheShouldRun.org.

1984

Geraldine Ferraro became the first female vice presidential nominee for a major political party.

2006

Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California was elected the first female Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.

2007

Former U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton was the first woman to compete at financial and political parity for the Democratic presidential nomination.

2009

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor became the third woman appointed to serve on the supreme court, and the first Latina to serve in this position.

2012

New Hampshire became the first state to have a female governor, two female Senators, and two Congresswomen simultaneously. 5 for 5!