REPRESENTATION 2020

A Century from Suffrage to Parity

The State of Women's Representation 2013-2014

American Women in Elected Office & Prospects for Change

About Representation 2020

Representation 2020 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. Representation 2020 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 Representation 2020.

About *The State of Women's Representation 2013-2014*

The State of Women's Representation 2013 is the first in a series of annual reports leading to the year 2020, the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment. Each report will be released on August 26th, designated by Congress as Women's Equality Day. They will build on the work of many scholars and organizations to summarize and analyze women's representation in all fifty states. They will also monitor indicators of change for each area of our 2020 Pledge and, starting in 2014, highlight goals for concrete achievements in the coming year.
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A note on data presented on women in politics: Data involving the representation of women in state legislatures, past and present, is courtesy of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, as is all data on past women in elected office at all levels of government. Data on current members of Congress, elected statewide executive officials, and elected local officials was collected in 2013 by Representation 2020 from each official's government website.

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Notable Facts from *The State of Women's Representation 2013-2014*

Representation 2020's Parity Index shows need for change: Representation 2020 supports efforts to achieve gender parity in elected office, which we define as an equal likelihood for men and women to hold any elected office and a majority of seats in any legislature. Our Parity Index measures the representation of women in the elected offices of governor and other statewide executives, U.S. senator, U.S. representative, state legislator, and chief executive of local jurisdictions (mayors and county executives). A state with gender parity in representation would receive a score of 50 out of 100 points in our analysis. By this measure, every state falls short of gender parity in elected office. Following the November 2013 elections, only six states received more than 30 points in the Index: New Hampshire, Washington, Hawaii, California, Arizona, and Minnesota. Learn more about our Parity Index on page 28.

In 2013, only six states received more than 30 points (out of 100) in our Gender Parity Index.

New Hampshire leads the nation: New Hampshire ranks highest in our 2013 Parity Index with a score of 47.5, very close to parity. New Hampshire is the first state in the nation to send an all-female delegation to Congress. Additionally, its current governor is a woman, one third 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).

Virginia ranks last: Virginia received the lowest Parity Index score in the nation: 4.5. Virginia has never elected a woman governor or U.S. senator and has ranked among the bottom 15 for its percentage of state legislative seats held by women for the last 35 years.

High to low in state legislatures: According to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, the state that ranked highest for its percentage of state legislators who are women at the end of 2013 was Vermont, at 41.1%. Ranked lowest was Louisiana, at 11.8%. In 1993, the range was from 39.5% (Washington) to 5.1% (Kentucky) – showing advances for the lowest-ranking states, but little improvement for states at the top.

Six of the ten states with the highest portions of state legislative seats held by women use multi-member legislative districts.

Electoral structure matters: In state legislative chambers that elect at least some members from multi-member districts, women held an average of 31.0% of seats after the November 2013 elections.[1] In state legislative chambers that used only single-member districts, women held 22.8% of seats. Six of the 10 states that rank highest for their percentage of state legislative seats held by women use multi-member districts. As detailed in our report, this finding is consistent with the longstanding hypothesis that the use of multi-member districts increases women's representation.

Partisan differences in women's representation at the state level: According to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, 55.8% of female state legislators were Democratic and 44.2% were Republican in 1981. Today, 63.6% of female state legislators are Democratic and 35.6% are Republican.[2] To combat this difference, in June 2013 the Republican State Leadership Committee announced its new program "Right Women, Right Now," which aims to recruit 300 new Republican women to run for state-level office.

Partisan differences in women's representation at the federal level: In 2013, only four of the 20 women in the U.S. Senate and 19 of the 79 women in the U.S. House were Republican. To address this deficit, the National Republican Congressional Committee has launched a new initiative called Project GROW, which aims to recruit and support more Republican women candidates for Congress.

> Only four of the 20 women in the U.S. Senate and 19 of the 79 women in the House at the end of 2013 were Republicans.

Women reach record high in U.S. Senate: In 2012, women won a third of all U.S. Senate elections – eleven total – bringing the number of women in the Senate to 20 in 2013. In 1991, only two women served in the Senate, meaning women now hold ten times as many Senate seats as they did during Clarence Thomas' Supreme Court confirmation, which helped trigger the "Year of the Woman."[3]

Number of elected female executive officials stalled: Only five of our states' 50 governors are women, and 24 states have never had a female governor.[4] The percentage of elected state executive positions held by women has barely increased since 1993, from 22% to just 23% today.[5] Locally, only twelve of our nation's 100 largest cities have women mayors.

Elected officials combine service and motherhood: Congresswomen Cathy McMorris Rodgers and Jaime Herrera Beutler are rising Republican stars from Washington State. Rep. McMorris Rodgers, who delivered the official Republican Party response to President Obama's 2014 State of the Union address, was elected Chair of the House Republican Conference in 2012, while Rep. Herrera Beutler is the only woman Vice-Chair of the National Republican Congressional Committee. This year they demonstrated that high-achieving legislators need not choose between politics and family. McMorris Rodgers, already the first member of Congress to give birth to two children while in office, gave birth to her third child in November 2013. Rep. Herrera Beutler's first child, born in July 2013, was diagnosed with a serious condition known as Potter's Syndrome. Both women have received widespread public support, showing that constituents and fellow legislators are now more accepting of the idea that mothers can balance political office and family commitments.

Leader in training female candidates closes doors: While many organizations continue to train, fund, and recruit women candidates, one of the most influential training organizations of the past decade, the White House Project, closed its doors in January 2013.

The United States' relative ranking drops: According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as of December 1, 2013, the United States ranks 98th in the world for the percentage of its national legislature (both chambers) that is female, down from 59th in 1998.[6]

Foreword

By Senator Jamie Raskin

One of the first political aphorisms I learned in the Maryland Senate came from a colleague who sat on the Budget and Tax Committee: "If you don't have a seat at the table, you're going to end up on the menu." This gem of folk wisdom crystallizes the logic of more than two centuries of American political development. People afraid of the consequences of being excluded from official politics have demanded an equal place at the table. Citizens without wealth or property, African-Americans, women, and young people have all demanded and won the right to vote and to participate in the election of their political representatives. Outsiders have also made important progress in achieving the right to run for office and to be seated upon election.

A visceral rejection of having to rely on other people to vote for you and to speak for you goes to the heart of American politics. The very idea of our republic was conceived when the American revolutionaries attacked the maddening claim of "virtual representation," the idea that the colonists had no need for their own representatives in government because they were already "virtually" represented by existing British Members of Parliament, who allegedly resembled the colonists in all essential ways. The cry of "no taxation without representation" meant that people directly taxed should be directly represented. We all have the right to be a "constituent" part of the political leadership that governs us.

As a central voice in rebellious American democratic politics in the last century, the suffragettes argued passionately against the affront of virtual representation by the other sex. To win passage of the Nineteenth Amendment (1920), they had to protest the glaring injustices of the vicarious representation they putatively enjoyed by virtue of their husbands, fathers, and brothers exercising the right to vote for the whole family. It took decades after the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, but women demanded and won the right to vote and, ultimately, to run and serve in government themselves.

Yet, like every other newly enfranchised constituency, women have never gained a proportional share of legislative seats in Congress or any of the states. Nor has any demographic or political group ever won an entitlement to be represented in our political institutions on a basis proportionate to its share of the population. The slender exception to this rule has been that, for decades, our major political parties have required a 50-50 allocation between men and women in the election of delegates and alternates to the quadrennial national presidential nominating conventions. But in the election of senators and representatives at the federal and state level, there have been no group quotas – and certainly nothing like a proportional allocation of seats.

Even after the strengthening amendments added in 1982, the Voting Rights Act, the nation's major voting rights statute, contained this clear statement: "The fact that members of a minority group have not been elected in numbers equal to the group's proportion of the population shall not, in and of itself, constitute a violation . . ." The only "set-asides" of legislative seats we have institutionalized is the pervasive allocation of seats based on political geography, the most striking example being the Constitutional design of the U.S. Senate, which not only guarantees representation to all states, big and small, but guarantees the smaller ones *disproportionate* representation.

The absence of political set-aside seats for women and minority groups follows from a powerful democratic impulse: that the people should be able to choose whomever we want to represent us

as political leaders. When it comes down to the choice of this or that senator or congressperson, it would be thwarting the popular will, and an act of untenable governmental discrimination, to compel election of a person because of his or her gender, race, or ethnicity. The democratizing movements that have torn down barriers to participation have rejected the idea that people's political values and possibilities must be governed by their racial, gender, or ethnic identities.

At the same time, the vast majority of Americans would like to see legislatures and presidential cabinets that "look like America," in President Bill Clinton's formulation. Anyone with a democratic bone in his or her body would recoil at the sight of an all-white male state legislature debating birth control policies, health care, immigration, war, education, or anything else in the 21st Century. Anyone who has served in public office knows that it makes a huge difference who is seated at the table when the benefits and burdens of public policy are being distributed. And women, all too often, are still only "virtually represented" in the sanctums of power.

The question for American politics today is how to reconcile our commitment to the wide-open freedom of the people to choose our own leaders, and the corresponding right of every citizen to run for every office of which he or she is a constituent, with our sense that our legislative bodies should also be broadly and richly representative of the gender, racial, ethnic, economic, political, and intellectual diversity of America.

Our best hope for answering this question is FairVote, our leading election reform group, which has been innovating for two decades a series of excellent proposals to make American democracy more accountable, responsive, representative, positive, and effective. FairVote has focused public attention on the subtle political dynamics built into particular electoral system designs. In this fine report produced by its promising new spinoff project, Representation 2020, it demonstrates, for example, that the use of multi-member districts tends to produce greater numbers of women being elected to office than the use of single-member districts.

This correlation stands to reason in a diverse democratic electorate: if you are voting for a group of four representatives to the legislature rather than a single representative, you are far more likely to insist on being able to vote for women as well as for men. The politicians will, in turn, form mixed-gender slates that appeal to people's preferences for diversity. Thus, without ever placing any constraint on for whom people can actually vote, a state using multi-member districts will advance the goal of more women in the legislature. Their ability to participate at that level will lead to more women running for Governor, Attorney General, and so on. This is just one example of the robust package of ideas and proposals contained in this report that will nudge America towards 50-50 parity in the year 2020.

My mother wore a shirt during the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment that read "women hold up half of the sky." But, women still hold less than one-fifth of the seats in the U.S. Congress. It will take nimble and thoughtful action for us to close the gap.

Jamie Raskin is a professor of constitutional law at American University's Washington College of Law and author of Overruling Democracy *and* We the Students: Supreme Court Cases for and About Students*. Elected in 2006, Senator Raskin represents District 20 in the Maryland state senate, where he is Majority Whip. He is a former Board Member of FairVote and a winner of its Champion of Democracy award.*

Introduction

Nearly 100 years ago, American women gained the right to vote with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. This victory came after a decades-long struggle to amend the U.S. Constitution so that women could never be barred from the polls on the basis of their gender. Today, the right of women to participate in the political process that their forbearers fought so bravely to secure has largely been obtained. For more than two decades, more women have registered to vote than men, and women's voter turnout has exceeded men's in every presidential and midterm election.[7] Most recently, 7.8 million more women than men voted in the 2012 presidential election.[8]

Despite women's robust participation in the electoral process, women's representation at all levels of American government remains startlingly low, and what was once a slow but steady advance at the state and national level has almost completely stalled. As the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University reports, there are only five female governors in office, and only 12 of our nation's 100 largest cities have female mayors. Additionally, in 2013 women comprised only 18.3% of Congress and 24.3% of state legislatures. And as the Inter-Parliamentary Union reports, the United States lags behind 96 other nations for the percentage of the lower house of its national legislature that is female – a steep decline from its 58th place rank in 1998.[9] We must do better.

Representation 2020, an all-partisan project of the voting rights and electoral reform group FairVote, is working to raise awareness of the underrepresentation of women in elected office and to highlight the often-overlooked structural barriers to the representation of women. While there have been impressive efforts to increase the number of women running for elected office, many of which we highlight in the full edition of this report, we hope to broaden the discussion by including new and innovative strategies to address the underrepresentation of women in government.

We base our research and advocacy on our 2020 Pledge, which individuals and organizations can sign to demonstrate their support for reforms that would increase women's representation in American politics. The measures we most support to achieve gender parity in elected office are those to:

1. *Combat gender stereotypes and sexism in politics and in the media, which can both affect voters' views of women candidates and discourage women from running for office;*
2. *Support organizations that recruit, train, and fund women candidates;*
3. *Challenge political actors to encourage more women to run for high-profile offices, especially executive offices like president, governor, and mayor;*
4. *Encourage political parties to enact rules that promote the active recruitment of female candidates, especially at the local and state level;*
5. *Establish election systems that will increase the number of women running for and being elected to public office, such as multi-seat legislative districts with fair representation voting;*
6. *Ensure that legislative rules, procedures, and culture are not biased against women serving in office.*

The first three points in our pledge are frequently mentioned in discussions on how to increase women's representation. We support these measures and believe they should be continued. Therefore, the full edition of this report highlights efforts by groups and individuals to combat gender stereotypes and increase the recruitment of female candidates.

The second three points of our pledge set Representation 2020 apart from other groups that work to increase women's representation. We seek to raise awareness of how political actors can implement changes in rules and structures in order to increase the number of women running for office and being elected. We show how political parties can enact measures to increase the active recruitment of female candidates, as is often done in other nations. We propose the adoption of fair representation voting systems (candidate-based, American forms of proportional representation), which would both increase the number of women running for and being elected to public office. We also show why legislatures should alter their practices that might negatively affect the ability of female elected officials to stay in office and rise to positions of leadership.

When we call for gender parity in representation, we do not mean to suggest that men and women should be rigidly confined to holding half of the elected offices in each state and in Congress. Rather, gender parity will be achieved when a woman is as likely as a man to hold any elected office. We believe that gender parity is possible, and that it will come decades or even centuries sooner if the country embraces the goal of gender parity and supports the steps outlined in our 2020 Pledge.

The State of Women's Representation 2013-2014 is the first in a series of annual reports leading to the year 2020, the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment. Our reports will summarize and analyze women's representation in all fifty states and monitor indicators of change in the six areas of our 2020 Pledge. We also introduce our Parity Index, which allows us to quantify the status of women's representation in all 50 states and to measure progress in the years ahead. With true parity, the average Parity Index score among states would be 50. In 2013, no state had a score above 50, and half of states had scores below 16.

This report will be updated every year and released on Women's Equality Day (August 26) in order to highlight changes in women's representation across the nation and to report on developments relating to the six points of our 2020 Pledge. We encourage anyone with suggestions or information on efforts to increase women's representation to contact us at *info@representation2020.com* or (301) 270-4616.

Get Involved!

Representation 2020 hopes that our annual reports trigger both dialogue and change. We encourage you to use this report to spark a discussion in your community about ways to increase the number of women in elected office. We hope that you will take concrete actions to ensure that women receive fair representation in government. Spread the word about family-friendly legislative practices, pro-parity party rules, and the effects of multimember districts with fair representation voting, and inform us of your progress. Speak with female elected officials about changes they would like to see in their legislatures. Encourage women in your community to run for office. To get involved with Representation 2020's movement for gender parity in elected office, sign our 2020 Pledge at *www.representation2020.com/2020-pledge.html*.

Acknowledgments

We want to thank the many people who have helped make this report possible. We first want to thank all the researchers, past and present, whose work has contributed to our understanding and analysis. They include: Pippa Norris and Mona Lena Krook, whose report *Gender Equality in Elected Office: A Six-Step Plan* is a masterwork and model for all those working in this field; the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, the undisputed leader in data collection and research on the representation of women in politics in the United States; FairVote's former board member Wilma Rule, whose passion for the representation of women led to her bold thinking about why the United States should reform its electoral structure; and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which reports on representation of women around the world. We would also like to give a special thanks to the many scholars who generously shared their time and insights with us: Jennifer Lawless, Richard Matland, Bob Darcy, Sarah Fulton, and Barbara Burrell.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to organizations like the League of Women Voters, Feminist Majority Foundation, National Organization for Women, Barbara Lee Family Foundation, EMILY's List, The WISH List, National Women's Political Caucus, and countless other state and national groups that have done critically important work to increase the number of women in government.

Those who contributed directly to the researching for and writing of this report include the following past and present staff members, fellows, and interns at FairVote: Cynthia Terrell, our program chair, who first envisioned Representation 2020; Andrea Levien, the report's supervisor, editor, and lead author; Patricia Hart, who launched Representation 2020; Rob Richie, FairVote's executive director, who contributed insights, analysis, and editorial assistance; Elizabeth Hudler, Devin McCarthy, Mollie Haley, Drew Spencer, Dania Korkor, and Andrew Douglas, who provided editorial assistance and analysis; and interns Amel Yagoub, Savanna Richie, Sara Helmi, and Danielle Moise, who took on substantive roles in research and writing.

We wanted to give a special thanks to eight members of Representation 2020's Leadership Circle, listed in the report's appendix. Marie Wilson, a long-time champion of women's representation at the Ms. Foundation and the White House Project, has been a stalwart supporter of this project. She narrates our video, which is posted at Representation2020.com and is being released in conjunction with this report. Wilson joined pollster Celinda Lake and fellow Leadership Circle member Laura Liswood for an insightful forum on a preliminary edition of this report at one of FairVote's Democracy Next forums organized with NYUDialogues. Law professor and Maryland State Senator Jamie Raskin brought his usual energy and passion to writing the report's foreword. The Mary Wohlford Foundation played an essential role in funding a FairVote fellow to devote most of her time to Representation 2020 for the past two years.

Finally, we want to thank the many people, past and present, who have done so much to advance equality in American politics, first in suffrage and now in representation. We stand on their legacy and current achievement, and it is to them we dedicate this first *State of Women's Representation* report.

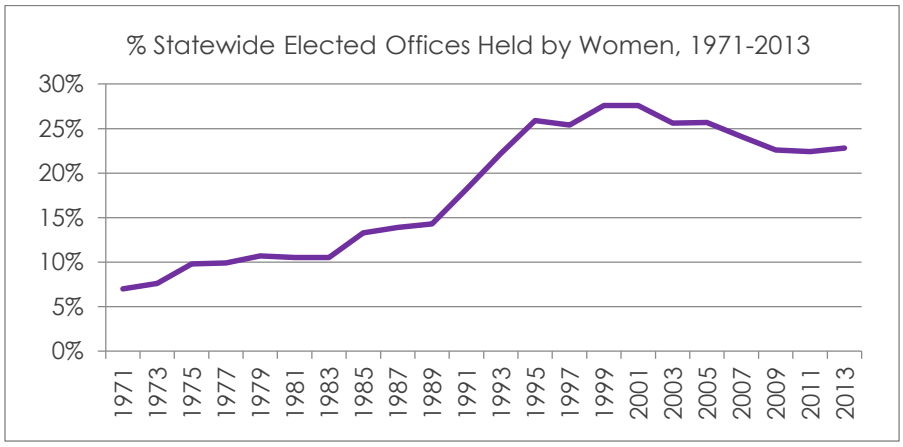
Featured Analysis

Stalled Progress in State Elections since the "Year of the Woman"

In the 1992 election, dubbed the "Year of the Woman," a record number of women turned out to the polls and helped elect four new female U.S. senators and 24 new female members of the U.S. House of Representatives, the largest ever increase in the number of female federal legislators in our nation's history. Women also made big gains at the state level, increasing their presence in state legislatures by 2.2 percentage points.[10]

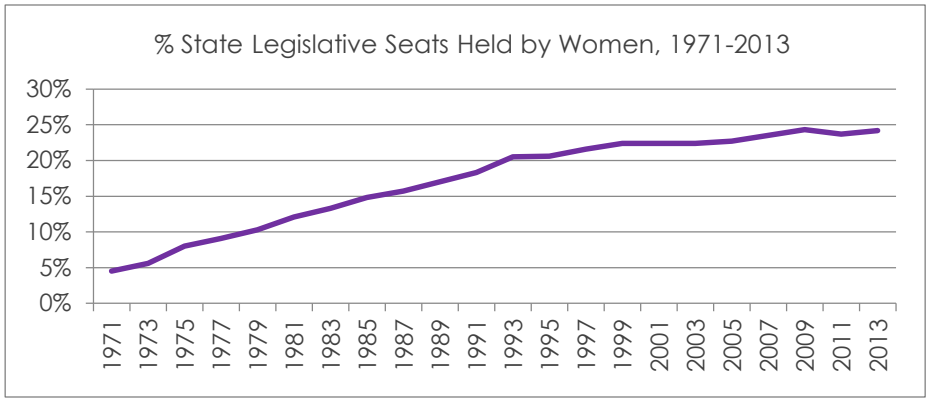
This dramatic increase in the representation of women was brought on in part by the controversy surrounding the 1991 testimony of University of Oklahoma law professor Anita Hill, who accused Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment before a Senate Judiciary Committee that was conspicuously devoid of women. At the time, women held only two of 100 U.S. Senate seats. Many expected the 1992 election to be a turning point for women's representation in the United States, believing that this new class of congresswomen and state legislators would inspire other women to follow in their footsteps.

While progress has indeed continued in the intervening decades – we now have 20 women serving in the Senate and 79 serving as voting members in the House – the advancement toward gender parity in elected office has been slower than expected, especially at the state level. As the following charts illustrate, the Year of the Woman did not mark the beginning of a revolution in women's representation at the state level, but rather the start of a period in which the growth in number of female officeholders slowed appreciably. For example, women have made negligible gains in statewide executive positions in the last two decades, rising only from 22.2% in 1993 to 22.8% in 2013.[11]



Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University

Women's representation in state legislatures has also advanced at a disappointing pace. In the twenty years before the Year of the Woman, the percentage of state legislative seats held by women grew steadily, from 5.6% in 1973 to 20.5% in 1993. In the twenty years since, this figure has risen only slightly, to 24.3% following the 2013 elections.[12]

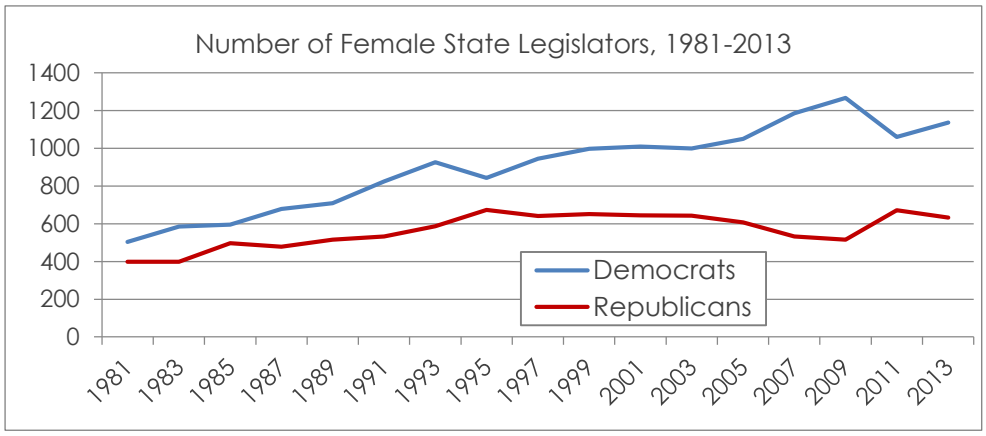


Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University

The slow growth in the number of women serving as state legislators is especially significant because of the effect it can have on women's representation at the federal level and in statewide office. State legislatures have been an important stepping stone in the political careers of nearly half of all members of Congress.[13] Increasing the number of women with state legislative experience will enlarge the pool of potential female candidates for congressional seats and other higher offices. In order for women to be more involved in national politics, they need to be more involved in state and local politics first.

The Relative Progress of Women in the Two Major Parties

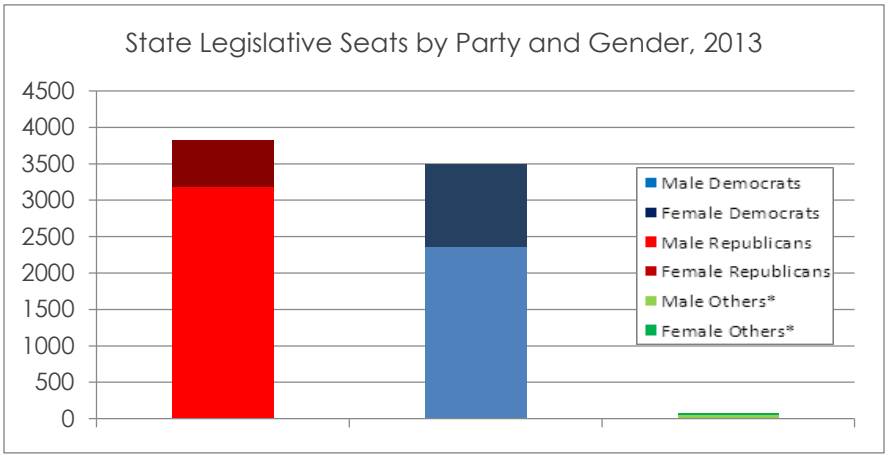
The slow pace of advancement for women in state legislatures is due in part to the diverging fortunes women have faced in the two major political parties. The chart below shows the number of Democratic and Republican women in state legislatures since 1981. As we can see, the number of female state legislators from both parties rose steadily from 1981 to the Year of the Woman in 1992.



Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University

However, with the "Republican Revolution" midterm elections in 1994, in which Republicans picked up 472 additional legislative seats and won control of 20 new state legislatures, the two parties began to diverge. Democratic women were able to recover from their party's broader losses in 1994 and continue to consistently increase their numbers, from 843 in 1995, to 1,267 in 2009. The number of Republican female state legislators actually declined over the same period, falling from 673 in 1995 to just 516 in 2009, and then increasing back up to 636 in 2013.

This pattern of gains for Democratic women and stagnation or losses for Republican women has held steady for most of the last twenty years, despite numerous swings between the two parties in elections nationally. Even now, after the Republicans' sweeping victories in 2010, Democratic women outnumber Republican women in state legislatures by a margin of 1,140 to 636, despite Republicans' overall advantage in state legislative seats (3,185 to 2,356).[14]



* "Other" category includes Nebraska's non-partisan legislature

Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University

Today, Democratic state legislators are nearly twice as likely as Republican state legislators to be female (32.5% to 16.6%). Therefore, while it is crucial to increase women's representation in state legislatures overall, it is especially important to increase the number of Republican women in these bodies.

In statewide elected executive positions the parties are balanced: 37 Democratic women and 36 Republican women currently hold such offices. In fact, Republican female governors now outnumber Democratic female governors four to one. However, since a majority of statewide elected executive positions are held by Republicans, women are better represented among Democratic elected statewide executives than Republican elected statewide executives overall.

State-by-State: The Effects of Partisanship and Electoral Structure

States vary widely in their percentage of state legislative seats held by women, from 41.1% in Vermont to 11.8% in Louisiana. As the table on page 9 illustrates, most of the legislatures with the lowest levels of women's representation are heavily Republican, while many of those with the highest levels are heavily Democratic. Among the five states with the lowest levels of women's representation and the five states with the highest levels, only Republican Arizona, with the third highest percentage of women legislators in the country – 35.6% – is inconsistent with this trend. Arizona's high level of women's representation is likely bolstered by its use of multi-member districts in its House of Representatives. And even in Arizona, 11 of the 19 women in the House are Democrats (meaning that almost half of the 24 Democrats in the House are women), and 7 of the 13 women in the Senate are Democrats (meaning that more than half of the 13 Democrats in the Senate are women).[15]

Rank	State	Female State House Members	Female State Senators	% Women Following 2013 Elections	% Women 1993
1	*Vermont*	64 (of 150)	9 (of 30)	41.1%	33.9%
2	Colorado	28 (of 65)	13 (of 35)	41.0%	35.0%
3	*Arizona*	19 (of 60)	13 (of 30)	35.6%	33.3%
4	Minnesota	45 (of 134)	23 (of 67)	33.8%	27.4%
5	*New Hamp.*	133 (of 400)	9 (of 24)	33.5%	33.5%
6	Illinois	42 (of 118)	15 (of 59)	32.2%	23.2%
7	Hawaii	16 (of 51)	8 (of 25)	31.6%	23.7%
8	*Washington*	28 of (98)	17 (of 49)	30.6%	39.5%
9	*Maryland*	46 (of 141)	11 (of 47)	30.3%	24.5%
10	*New Jersey*	26 (of 80)	10 (of 40)	30.0%	12.5%
11	Maine	47 (of 151)	8 (of 35)	29.6%	31.7%
12	Connecticut	46 (of 151)	9 (of 36)	29.4%	25.1%
13	Oregon	18 (of 60)	8 (of 30)	28.9%	27.8%
14	Nevada	14 (of 42)	4 (of 21)	28.6%	27.0%
15	Alaska	13 (of 40)	4 (of 20)	28.3%	21.7%
16	Montana	32 (of 100)	10 (of 50)	28.0%	20.0%
17	New Mexico	25 (of 70)	6 (of 42)	27.7%	19.6%
18	Rhode Island	22 (of 75)	9 (of 38)	27.4%	24.7%
19	California	21 (of 80)	11 (of 40)	26.7%	22.5%
20	Massachusetts	39 (160)	13 (of 40)	26.0%	23.0%
21	Delaware	10 (of 41)	6 (of 21)	25.8%	14.5%
22	*Idaho*	22 (of 70)	5 (of 35)	25.7%	30.5%
23	Florida	28 (of 120)	12 (of 40)	25.0%	17.4%
24	Wisconsin	24 (of 99)	9 (of 33)	25.0%	27.3%
25	Kansas	27 (of 125)	12 (of 40)	23.6%	29.1%
26	Ohio	23 (of 99)	8 (of 33)	23.5%	21.2%
27	Iowa	25 (of 100)	10 (of 50)	23.3%	14.7%
28	Georgia	46 (of 180)	8 (of 56)	22.9%	17.4%
29	New York	37 (of 150)	10 (of 63)	22.1%	16.6%
30	*South Dakota*	17 (of 70)	6 (of 35)	21.9%	20.0%
31	Missouri	38 (of 163)	5 (of 34)	21.8%	18.8%
32	North Carolina	29 (of 120)	8 (of 50)	21.8%	18.2%
33	Texas	31 (of 150)	7 (of 31)	21.0%	16.0%
34	Indiana	23 (of 100)	8 (of 50)	20.7%	19.3%
35	Nebraska	-	10 (of 49)	20.4%	20.4%
36	Michigan	24 (of 110)	4 (of 38)	18.9%	20.3%
37	Kentucky	18 (of 100)	7 (of 38)	18.1%	5.1%
38	Mississippi	23 (of 122)	8 (of 52)	17.8%	10.9%
39	Pennsylvania	37 (of 203)	8 (of 50)	17.8%	9.9%
40	Arkansas	17 (of 100)	6 (of 35)	17.0%	10.4%
41	*North Dakota*	16 (of 94)	8 (of 47)	17.0%	16.3%
42 (tie)	Tennessee	15 (of 99)	7 (of 33)	16.7%	12.1%
42 (tie)	Wyoming	13 (of 60)	2 (of 30)	16.7%	24.4%
44	Virginia	17 (of 100)	6 (of 40)	16.4%	12.1%
45	*West Virginia*	21 (of 100)	1 (of 34)	16.4%	16.4%
46	Utah	12 (of 75)	5 (of 29)	16.4%	13.5%

Rank	State	Female State House Members	Female State Senators	% Women Following 2013 Elections	% Women 1993
47	Alabama	14 (of 105)	5 (of 35)	13.6%	5.7%
48	Oklahoma	16 (of 101)	4 (of 48)	13.4%	8.7%
49	South Carolina	21 (of 124)	1 (of 46)	12.9%	12.9%
50	Louisiana	13 (of 105)	4 (of 39)	11.8%	7.6%

*Red cells indicate a body controlled by Republicans, blue cells indicate a body controlled by Democrats, and yellow cells indicate Nebraska's non-partisan, unicameral legislature.
Italics indicate that a state uses multi-member districts to elect at least one of its state legislative chambers.

Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University (Dec. 2013)

Other indications of how partisan differences contribute to the slow advancement of women's representation in state legislatures can be found in the states where the percentage of seats held by women has declined since the middle of the 1990s, when overall progress began to slow. Seven states fit this description – Kansas, Washington, Wyoming, Idaho, Maine, Wisconsin, and Michigan – but the decline has been significant (4% or greater) in only four of them. Of these, three (Kansas, Wyoming, and Idaho) are western states with legislatures that have become increasingly dominated by Republicans over the last two decades.

State	1993 Percentage	2013 Percentage	Difference
Washington	39.5%	30.6%	-8.9%
Wyoming	24.4%	16.7%	-7.7%
Kansas	20.1%	23.6%	-5.5%
Idaho	30.5%	25.7%	-4.8%
Wisconsin	27.3%	25.0%	-2.3%
Maine	31.7%	29.6%	-2.1%
Michigan	20.3%	18.9%	-1.4%

Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University (Dec. 2013)

Although women's representation in Idaho's state legislature has declined significantly, it is still well above that in states that have trended similarly Republican. This is likely due in part to Idaho's use of multi-member districts to elect its House of Representatives. Meanwhile, the repeal of a multi-member district system in 1990 in Wyoming has likely contributed to the significant decline in women's representation there. Wyoming's legislature now ranks among the lowest in the nation for the percentage of its seats held by women, when in the 1980s it ranked among the highest.

Many southern states have also experienced a sharp rise in the number of Republicans in their state legislatures, but without a significant drop in the representation of women. In most cases, this can be explained by the scarcity of women in these legislatures to begin with. Most Southern states have made modest gains in women's representation but remain near the bottom of the list nationally.

Washington State's inclusion on the list of states with the greatest declines in women's representation is mostly due to the high bar it set at the beginning of the examined period: in 1993, 39.5% of its legislators were women, the highest percentage in the country at the time. Despite its decline, Washington's legislature still ranked 8th nationwide in December 2013. As in Arizona and Idaho, women's representation in Washington's legislature is likely bolstered by its use of multi-member districts.

Parity Perspective

Combating Gender Stereotypes: How Sexism Hinders the Ascent of Women Candidates

While women have made great strides in entering public life in the last several decades, progress has been hard-fought and set against the backdrop of patriarchal social and cultural norms. Today, women are still underrepresented in all public offices, and they face mounting barriers as they seek to assert their authority, partly because the ascent of women into political leadership conflicts with traditional gender roles. For example, gender stereotypes that suggest women should be passive are at odds with the perception that effective women leaders should be strong and assertive.

Meanwhile, the role of gender stereotypes in electoral politics is a topic mired in controversy, as scholars and activists disagree to what extent gender stereotyping affects women candidates, if at all. One school of thought maintains that gender stereotypes held by the electorate and perpetuated by the media are insignificant to the success of female candidates.[16] Another finds stereotypes and their reflection in the media to be detrimental to the success of women candidates, as gender stereotyping may bias the electorate against women and undermine their perceived professionalism.[17]

Those who believe the electorate is not biased against women tend to stress the importance of changing women's perceptions about the electoral environment and encouraging them to run, while those who believe the electorate remains biased against women hope to change the environment itself. We support efforts to increase women's confidence in running, while also actively combating stereotypes that may influence voters' perceptions of women candidates.

Gender Bias in the Electorate

In 1937, Gallup completed its first poll asking the American public whether it would support a female candidate for president. The question read, "Would you vote for a woman for president if she were qualified in every other respect." Seventeen years after passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, only 33% of the population said it was ready to vote for a woman president. As the years passed, Gallup periodically reexamined this question. It began asking the public, "If your party nominated a woman for president, would you vote for her if she were qualified for the job?" The number rose fairly consistently. By 2005, 93% of the population expressed a willingness to vote for a female presidential candidate.[18] Although no major party has nominated a woman for president, the fact that Hillary Clinton garnered almost 18 million votes in the 2008 Democratic primaries and the fact that both major parties have put women on their presidential tickets (Geraldine Ferraro in 1984 and Sarah Palin in 2008) show that many Americans are indeed ready for a woman Commander-in-Chief.

However, whether a full 93% of Americans are truly ready for a woman president remains uncertain. Researchers hypothesized a hidden bias against female presidential candidacies in a study titled "Social Desirability Effects and Support for a Female American President."[19] This study is premised on the idea that respondents are less likely to answer questions truthfully if they were on controversial topics, such as race and gender, for fear of seeming racist or sexist, even if the survey is anonymous.

In order to weed out false responses, researchers conducted a list experiment asking participants how many items on a list provoked positive or negative emotions. Using a control group on whose list "a woman serving as president" did not appear as an item, researchers are able to gauge how many participants felt negatively about the idea of a woman president. While most nationwide polls found approximately 5-15% of respondents would not vote for a female candidate, this study suggested that the number is much higher. Approximately 26% of respondents experienced a negative emotional response to the idea of a woman president, implying that 10-20% of respondents in traditional polling gave false answers about their willingness to support a female presidential candidate. While many studies have identified a specific demographic of the population that will not vote for a female president, this study was unique in the fact that its findings were consistent across demographic groups.[20]

This trend holds true for congressional offices as well. A study called "When Gender Matters" analyzed data from recent congressional general elections and identified a gender bias in voting that favors male candidacies using the concept of "valence," or non-policy characteristics that voters are naturally drawn to in their elected officials, such as competence, integrity, collaboration, etc. On average, women candidates hold a higher level of valence than male candidates, but men are just as likely to win elected office. This points to an imbalance: when women hold valence equal to or less than their male opponents, they are penalized, and when the valence levels of male and female candidates are the same, women candidates suffer a 3% vote disadvantage.[21] According to the study, much of this imbalance can be attributed to male independent voters, who often swing elections. These voters are significantly less likely (24.7%) to endorse a female candidate if she does not have a valence advantage.[22] Interestingly, independent female voters do not discriminate in the same way.

Gender Stereotypes and Partisanship

Composing a mere 4% of Congress and 8% of state legislatures, Republican women are particularly underrepresented in government.[23] While several variables have contributed to this dynamic, gender stereotypes may have exacerbated the disparity. Women are often perceived as more liberal than men, a perception that may stem in part from the gender voting gap and in part from the fact that female politicians, both Democrats and Republicans, are more likely than their male colleagues to focus on so-called "women's issues" like healthcare, education, and welfare policy, which are often seen as liberal causes.[24] The belief that women are more liberal can be especially harmful to Republican women, who can suffer at the polls from the perception that they are not conservative enough, regardless of their campaign platforms. This has had a particularly stark effect on Republican women in primary elections for open Congressional seats, who tend to be less electorally successful than Democratic women in such elections.[25]

Women's Perceptions of Gender Bias: A Self-fulfilling Prophesy

Mounting evidence suggests that the perception of gender bias in electoral politics remains a barrier to achieving gender parity in elected office. Research has shown an inverse correlation between political ambition among women and the perception of an electoral environment that is highly competitive and biased against female candidates. Scholars have argued that women are less likely to seek and therefore ascend to elected office because they believe voters are sexist, regardless of whether this is actually true or significant enough to affect the results of an election.

The high profile presidential and vice-presidential campaigns of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin exposed many to the gendered realities women face on the campaign trail. Both women were often characterized by their relation to their families and the media sometimes focused on the "historic" quality of their campaigns rather than their accomplishments and views on policy. In a study conducted by Lawless and Fox in 2011, two-thirds of potential female candidates (identified by their level of professional experience and involvement within their respective communities) believed that Clinton and Palin were subjected to sexist media coverage. Furthermore, these women felt that Clinton and Palin faced gender bias from voters at the polls.[26] If potential women candidates believe that they will face a severe disadvantage on account of their gender, it is little surprise that they are less likely than men to seriously consider running for office. (This topic is also addressed in *Political Ambition: Training, Recruiting and Funding Women Candidacies.*)

Gender Stereotypes on the Campaign Trail

The potential women candidates who perceived media and voter sexism towards Sarah Palin and Hillary Clinton may have simply noticed a very real bias against these women candidates. Coverage of women candidates on the campaign trail centers disproportionately on their appearance and personalities compared to coverage of men. One study found that the election coverage was almost twice as likely to focus on candidates' character traits in races with at least one female candidate as it was in races with only male candidates.[27] While many individuals and organizations work to combat sexism in the media, female politicians themselves are wary of speaking out for fear of seeming "whiny" or playing the "gender card," even though studies have shown that when women do speak out about the sexism they have faced, they actually experience an approval bump.[28]

Gender expectations often force women candidates to navigate between traits that are traditionally considered masculine and those that are traditionally considered feminine. A woman's campaign is often helped if she makes explicit references to stereotypical male-associated leadership qualities and is harmed if she emphasizes her "feminine qualities" of compassion and warmth. Conversely, a man can be seen as a strong candidate whether he chooses to emphasize stereotypically male or female qualities, since he is already considered to possess male-associated leadership qualities by default because of his gender.[29]

Current Efforts to Combat Sexism

In order to move forward, we must actively work to decrease the number of stereotypical representations of women in the media, especially of female politicians. We must foster a political environment that allows qualified candidates of all genders to feel that they can succeed, and that can allow voters to evaluate candidates based on their merits rather than their gender. Fortunately, several organizations are taking on this challenge.

One campaign looking to change the way the media reports on female politicians is Women's Media Center's "Name It. Change It." Launched in 2010, Name It. Change It. has dedicated itself to identifying and calling out sexist media coverage and providing the media with guidelines on how to make their political coverage more gender-neutral. Key to the campaign's approach is

the reversibility test, as outlined by feminist icon Gloria Steinem, co-founder of the Women's Media Center:

"Don't mention her young children unless you would also mention his, or describe her clothes unless you would describe his, or say she's shrill or attractive unless the same adjectives would be applied to a man. Don't say she's had facial surgery unless you say he dyes his hair or has hair plugs. Don't say she's just out of graduate school but he's a rising star. Don't say she has no professional training but he worked his way up. Don't ask her if she's running as a women's candidate unless you ask him if he's running as a men's candidate."[30]

It is important for the media to understand the effects their coverage can have on female candidates. In the same Lawless and Fox study mentioned above, potential female candidates were 50% more likely to mention dealing with members of the press as a deterrent to running for office than their male counterparts.[31] The sentiment is understandable, especially when considering how the press has treated women and their campaigns in the past. For example, in the only debate between Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and her Republican challenger Wendy Long in 2012, the women were asked whether or not they had read the popular erotic novel *50 Shades of Grey*.[32] It is hard to imagine an instance where a debate between men would have included such an off-color and irrelevant question amidst discussions of the economy and social issues.

Another effort that has been instrumental in outlining the stereotypes faced by women in power is Jennifer Siebel Newsom's documentary "Miss Representation."[33] The documentary portrays the way the media consistently undermines women in politics in both the type and amount of coverage dedicated to them. By shedding light on the additional scrutiny that women in leadership positions face, Miss Representation questions the media's focus on issues that are irrelevant to a political campaign, such as women's fashion choices and family, in a way that simply doesn't occur with their male counterparts.

The effort has been expanded to include The Representation Project, a social action group associated with the documentary and based in California, which seeks to raise widespread awareness of these harmful stereotypes.[34] The film and a corresponding curriculum have been made available to public school systems and for purchase. By introducing the concept of sexist media coverage in schools, students can be made conscious of the issues associated with gender stereotyping from a young age and be given the tools to correct it.

Campaigns like Name It. Change It. and The Representation Project are essential to spotlighting often ignored instances of gendered media coverage. By offering remedies and suggesting new standards, these types of efforts will eventually lead to a media environment more receptive to female candidates and politicians and that covers them in a manner focused more on their work than their gender.

Introduction to Parity Perspectives on Promoting Women Candidacies
Closing the Political Ambition Gap

Central to any conversation about increasing the percentage of women officeholders is the gender gap in political ambition and how political actors can close this gap by implementing systematic methods of increasing the recruitment and support of women candidates.

A study by Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox quantified the gender gap in political ambition, or the gender gap in willingness to run for elected office. In their "Citizen Political Ambition Panel Study," which they performed in both 2001 and 2011 with a national sample of 1,969 men and 1,796 women in occupations that most commonly lead to political candidacy – business, law, education, and political activism – Lawless and Fox found that women are less likely than men to think they are qualified to run for office, to consider running, or to seek higher-level state and national positions if they do decide to run.[35]

While early research hypothesized that gender equality in the pool of eligible candidates (those with requisite professional experience) would lead to gender parity in elected office, Lawless and Fox's 2001 and 2011 studies explain why this has not happened. According to their research, which controlled for eligibility, prospective women candidates were 16 percentage points less likely than their male counterparts to even consider running (59%-43% in 2001 and 62%-46% in 2011).

Women are less likely than men to think they are qualified to run for office, to consider running, or to seek high-level state and national positions if they do decide to run.

Also disconcerting is the fact that while the gender gap between men and women who have at one point considered running for office has remained steady over the last decade, the gender gap among those who are still interested in running for office in the future has grown from five percentage points to eight (23% of men and 18% of women in 2001 to 22% of men and 14% of women in 2011). While men are still just as likely to want to run for office in the future, women are now less likely than they were a decade ago.

Luckily, there is a way to combat this gender gap in political ambition: increasing the recruitment of women candidates by political actors (elected officials, political organizations, and political parties). These actors already play a crucial role in the recruitment of qualified, politically-viable candidates. If they were to focus their efforts on recruiting a larger number of politically-viable women candidates, there could be a dramatic increase in the number of women candidacies, and therefore the number of women serving in elected office.

Currently, however, there is a not just a gender gap in political ambition, but also a gender gap in political recruitment. In Lawless and Fox's study, women were 10 percentage points less likely than men to be encouraged to run for office by a political actor (39%-49%). But when encouraged, Lawless and Fox found, women were just as likely as men to respond favorably.[36]

Even though encouragement increases the chances that both men and women will run for office, it has been shown to be more central to a woman's decision to run than to a man's. Scholars at

the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University (CAWP) found that while men are more likely than women to be encouraged to seek elected office, men are also more likely to run for office without such encouragement.[37] In CAWP's 2008 survey of 1,268 state legislators, 43% of male respondents stated that it was entirely their own idea to run for office, whereas only 26% of female respondents said the same. On the other hand, 53% of women admitted that they had not considered running before someone else suggested it. Just 28% of male respondents had not already considered running. For this reason, it is particularly important that women are recruited, as they may be half as likely as men to seek elected office without encouragement.

There are currently many efforts underway to increase the recruitment and support of women candidates, and without these efforts, the number of women officeholders today would be even lower. Women's organizations and PACs like EMILY's List, the National Women's Political Caucus, and the WISH List have continued to recruit, train, and fund women candidates with great success. Additionally, political icons such as Sarah Palin have utilized their celebrity to support women candidates in primary elections. And most recently, the National Republican Congressional Committee launched a new effort called Project GROW to increase the recruitment of Republican women candidates. These efforts are crucial to increasing the number of women in elected office, and should be encouraged and strengthened.

Parity Perspective

Recruiting, Training and Funding: How Political and Women's Organizations Help Women Candidates

In the last decade, political groups and political action committees (PACs) focused on ensuring that more women are elected have become major players in American politics. While their missions and core constituencies may vary, with some organizations focusing on women candidates who support a particular issue, who belong to a particular political party, or who come from a particular region, collectively, these organizations do the same general work: they recruit, train, and/or fund women candidates, and their work is essential to leveling the playing field for women.

The Role of Political and Women's Groups in Recruiting Women Candidates

While the most common sources of encouragement to run for office for both men and women are officeholders and political party officials, political and women's organizations also play an important role in increasing gender parity in elected office. For one, women legislators, more so than male legislators, report that political and women's organizations play a large role in their decisions to run. In 2008, a survey of state representatives by the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University found that 12% of female state representatives reported an organization playing a significant role in their decision to run for office for the first time, compared to only 8% of men.[38]

Two factors could contribute to this disparate result. The first is that men are more likely than women to claim internal motivation for running for office, as opposed to external encouragement. The second factor is that organizations may be more likely to recruit female candidates than male candidates. This follows directly from the fact that female state representatives are 20% more likely to belong to an organization or association than male state representatives. [39]

Studies show that certain types of organizations are more likely to recruit women. According to a study on candidate emergence by Brian Fredericks and Barbara Burrell,[40] women are more likely to receive encouragement from interest groups than men are. Unsurprisingly, of the state representatives who noted organizational encouragement as an important factor in their decision to run for office, 29% of women compared to 4% of men reported encouragement from a women's group. Likewise, 22% of female respondents in the Citizen Political Ambition Panel Study reported being contacted by a women's group with the mission of advancing women candidacies.[41]

Training Programs Give Women the Confidence They Need to Succeed in Politics

Although office-holders and parties tend to be the most effective at recruiting women to run for office, women's organizations provide unique opportunities for potential female candidates through their programming. Groups like Running Start, Emerge America, and Ready to Run sponsor and organize training programs for women across the county. Alumnae of Ready to Run, which is sponsored by the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University,

have demonstrated a particularly impressive record. Of the 1,700 women who have participated in its programming, over a quarter eventually ran for office, and of those who ran, 70% won their races.[42]

It is especially important for women to participate in training programs when they are young. According to Dayna Stock, manager at the Sue Shear Institute in St. Louis, "the most effective role that organizations seeking to involve more women in running for elected office can play is in providing mentoring, training services, advice and models for young women to follow."[43] In her study of four "NEW Leadership" training institutes for college women, she concluded that these resources stimulate political interest and efficacy, which are precursors to political ambition.

Enhanced political efficacy is particularly important for potential female candidates because women are less likely than men to think they are qualified to run for office, leading to a lack of political ambition. Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox describe self-perception as the "biggest barrier keeping women from emerging as candidates." Their study found that men are 60% more likely than women to consider themselves "very qualified" to run for office, while women are twice as likely to describe themselves as "not at all qualified."[44]

Unfortunately, not all women's leadership organizations have been having as good a year as Ready to Run. Citing fundraising issues, The White House Project, a prominent voice for women's leadership, closed its doors this January. The organization was founded in 1998, and aimed to advance women's leadership in all sectors and communities – up to The White House. Primarily focused on leadership and campaign training for women, The White House Project trained thousands of women to run for office through its Vote, Run, Lead initiative. On the cultural front, the program worked to enhance the portrayal of female leadership in the media. While The White House Project's closing was a significant blow to the women's leadership movement, other organizations are working to fill the vacuum, including those focused on funding women candidates.

Funding: How Women's PACs Level the Playing Field

There is a longstanding debate as to whether women have a more difficult time raising campaign funds than men. Those who believe women face a larger hurdle point to the fact that women tend to have fewer personal resources than men, and that their personal and professional networks include fewer people likely to give to a campaign.[45] Those who believe women and men are on equal footing when it comes to fundraising point to studies like one conducted by Barbara Burrell, who found that women from the major parties have had campaign receipts on par with their male counterparts when controlling for incumbency. Further, she found that male and female candidates were able to garner the same amount of money from PACs.

There is little doubt that women's PACs have been a great boon to many women candidates. The list of national PACs that have helped hundreds of women mount successful campaigns includes the Women's Campaign Fund (founded in 1974 with a mission to achieve gender parity in elected office by increasing the number of pro-choice women of all parties serving), EMILY's List (founded in 1985 with a

mission to increase the representation of pro-choice Democratic women in elected office), and SHE-PAC (founded in 2012 with a mission to recruit and fund conservative women candidates). There are also numerous examples of state PACs, the great majority of which are progressive rather than conservative.[46]

Particularly helpful is the emphasis these PACs place on early financial support, which is key to running a viable campaign. However, most women's donor networks provide funds exclusively to Democratic candidates, placing Republican women at a unique disadvantage. This disparity in donor networks may contribute to the disproportionate number of Democratic to Republican women in Congress and in state legislatures.[47]

While women's PACs first emerged in the late 1980's and early 1990's, their rise to prominence began after 1992's "Year of the Woman". Another surge of women's PACs occurred after Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign and Sarah Palin's vice presidential campaign in 2008, which brought an increase in PACs supporting conservative women.

In 2012, the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University reported the existence of 58 women's PACs and donor networks.[48] Of these organizations, 17 are national and 41 are state and locally based.[49] Several states have more than one such organization. California, for example, has 9 women's PACs and donor networks.[50] The growth of these groups is particularly important because women as a group are disadvantaged by incumbency. Incumbents have an intrinsic advantage over challengers due to factors like greater name-recognition, better fundraising, and constituent services. As most incumbents are men, women begin with a competitive disadvantage.

Another factor that makes these PACs so important is perception. Women believe they have a more difficult time raising campaign funds. A majority of female state representatives (56%) compared to a minority of male state representatives (9%) believe that it is harder for women to raise campaign funds.[51] Female state legislators identify the three primary reasons for why it may be more difficult for women to raise money as: 1) women have different networks than men; 2) women feel less comfortable asking for money; and 3) women raise money from smaller donations.[52] Women of color are more likely than white women to cite different networks as the main reason women have more difficulty raising funds.[53] Women's groups and PACs play a huge role in changing these perceptions. For some women, the prospect of early support is instrumental in their decision to run.[54]

While organizations are doing excellent work training, recruiting, and funding women candidates, they can only do so much. Other major players in electoral politics must also step forward to lead the movement for gender parity in elected office.

Parity Perspective

Encouragement and Endorsements: How High-Profile Political Actors Can Support Women Candidates for High-Level Office, Especially in Primary Elections

Political heavyweights make a big splash when they endorse their favorite candidates. High-profile endorsements have been known to lead to increased publicity, funding, and an influx of campaign talent, which are all crucial to winning a competitive political campaign.

Endorsements in primaries can be particularly important. In 2008, for example, Senator Ted Kennedy's endorsement of Barack Obama was a pivotal moment for the future president, who was still trailing Hillary Clinton in Super Tuesday states.[55] Indeed, the seal of approval from a well-known figure can make a big difference for a political hopeful, especially in a primary election. For women, perhaps the best example of a big-name endorser is former Alaska governor and 2008 Republican vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin, who has endorsed several women candidates in hotly contested Republican primaries, many of whom went on to win their general elections.

The importance of endorsing women candidates in contested primaries has grown as the number of women running for and winning elected office has stagnated. This type of encouragement is especially important for high-profile offices, to which women are less likely to aspire than men. In their 2011 Citizen Political Ambition Study, Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox found that men were twice as likely as women to consider running for the offices of governor, senator, and president, and over 50% more likely to consider running for mayor. The only two offices that women were more likely to consider were school board member and district attorney.[56]

With this difference in political ambition, it is little wonder that only five of our states' 50 governors are women, that only 20 of our 100 Senators are women, and that only 12 of our nation's 100 most populous cities have women mayors.

While many considerations go into a public figure's decision to back a candidate (party identification, personal political ambition, etc.), we believe that, with all else equal, those who have the ability to make a difference should use their influence to further female candidacies. Therefore, it is encouraging to see Bill and Hillary Clinton provide an early endorsement this year to Kentucky senatorial candidate Alison Lundergan Grimes and to see Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) give an early endorsement this year to New Jersey gubernatorial candidate Barbara Buono. At the same time, few Democrats seem ready to step into already-contested primaries for high-level elected office and support women in the way that Sarah Palin has. We need popular politicians of both parties to show more leadership in supporting women in the coming years in order to achieve parity.

Spotlight: Sarah Palin Boosts Several Women for Governor and Senator

Although aggressive recruitment and promotion of women candidates is often associated with Democratic groups like EMILY's List, Republican Sarah Palin, both personally and through her

political action committee, SarahPAC, has also done considerable work in supporting women candidates in nominating contests. The former Alaska governor and vice-presidential nominee put her political celebrity to work in the 2010 midterm elections by endorsing 61 candidates for House, Senate, and Governor, 24 of whom were women – a remarkable gender balance given the Republican Party's overall low percentage of women in elected office.[57] One of Palin's crowning achievements during this time was the success of her "Mama Grizzly" conservative female gubernatorial candidates during the 2010 election.

In 2010, Palin backed three future women governors in hotly contested primary races: Nikki Haley of South Carolina, Susana Martinez of New Mexico, and Mary Fallin of Oklahoma. Not only did these "Mama Grizzlies" win their primary and general election races, but they also made history as the first female governors of their respective states. Haley and Martinez made history further as the first women of color to be elected governor of an American state. Palin also endorsed two successful women candidates for U.S. Senate in competitive elections – Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire in 2010, and Deb Fischer of Nebraska in 2012 – and publicly supported, but did not officially endorse, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer when it appeared that she could face a strong primary challenge.

Of all of her 2010 endorsements, Palin's backing of Nikki Haley was particularly instructive for the impact an endorsement can have in a nomination contest.[58] Initially considered the underdog in a race against three well-known male candidates in the Republican primary, Haley was able to align herself with the Tea Party movement and Sarah Palin, ultimately garnering 48.9% of the vote in a four-way race.

Although Haley had been gaining momentum prior to Palin's endorsement, Palin's decision to include Haley among "Palin's Picks" certainly aided the aspiring governor in her race, especially after Palin staged a rally with Haley on the stairs of the State Capitol, which drew a big crowd and large headlines.[59] In front of an audience of more than 1,000 people, Palin said she found a kindred spirit in Haley, and therefore urged voters to support her for governor. Calling Haley a "Mama Grizzly," Palin said they had shared a desire to clean up "good ol' boy" government.[60] The former first lady of South Carolina, Jenny Sanford, also joined Palin at the rally to support Haley. The results were staggering. Three days after the rally, polls showed that Haley had jumped 11 points up to first place.


Nikki Haley and Sarah Palin

Because Haley did not win the majority of votes, she had to compete in a runoff election against Representative Gresham Barrett, who had only received 22% of the vote in the initial primary. She won the runoff with 65% of the vote and went on to win the general election by a margin of 51.4% to 47%.[61] As a result, South Carolina, a state in which women held only 10% of state legislative seats in 2010, had elected its first woman governor.[62]

Not all of "Palin's Picks" for Republican women in 2010 were successful, however. While her endorsement did boost California's Carly Fiorina, former CEO of Hewlett-Packer, in the Republican primary for U.S. Senate, Fiorina ultimately lost to incumbent Senator Barbara Boxer in the general election by ten points.[63] With Palin's primary backing, Christine O'Donnell of Delaware shocked the Republican establishment with her U.S. Senate primary defeat of

Congressman Mike Castle (she eventually lost the general election to Democrat Chris Coons). Sharron Angle of Nevada, whom Palin did not endorse until two months after her Republican primary victory, lost by six points to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. Palin narrowly missed another gubernatorial success when her primary endorsement failed to help elect Georgia Secretary of State Karen Handel, who initially led in the first-round Republican primary for governor by 11 points, but lost to Nathan Deal by 2,500 votes in the primary runoff. Even though these Palin endorsees lost their elections, Palin sent a powerful message that political players should stand up in favor of women candidacies when those women's ideologies match their own.

By 2012, Gov. Palin's influence seemed to recede. There were few comparable success stories, but the impact of her 2010 primary endorsements on female leaders in the Republican Party will be felt for years to come, as women like New Hampshire's Ayotte, New Mexico's Martinez, and Oklahoma's Fallin are already being mentioned as prospective presidential and vice-presidential candidates in 2016.

Parity Perspective

Changing Priorities by Changing Party Rules: How Political Parties Can Increase the Recruitment of Women Candidates

While women's groups and political figures play important roles in recruiting qualified women to run for office, the power of political parties to increase the recruitment of women candidates has largely been untapped. Both major parties already have gender equity requirements for the selection of their national committee members.[64] Now it is time for them to take a more proactive role in ensuring that they have viable women candidates in position to win elections at all levels of government.

In many parts of the country, political parties are instrumental in the recruitment and funding of both men and women candidates. One study by the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University (CAWP) found that not only are women state legislators twice as likely as men state legislators to have never considered running for office before being encouraged, but that the primary sources of encouragement for those women were party officials or legislative leaders.[65] Because most legislative elections are effectively decided by who wins the nominating contest of a district's majority party, parties have the potential to play an even more influential role if they strategically recruit women to run for winnable open seats.

According to a study by CAWP, male state legislators were 16% more likely than women legislators to have been encouraged to run by a member of their political party.

There is currently great room for improvement in this area. The CAWP study found that male legislators were 16% more likely than women legislators to have been encouraged to run by a member of their political party. Because women are much more likely than men to require encouragement in order to consider running, this gap in recruitment by parties must be addressed.

Additionally, the study found that female state representatives were 28% more likely to have been discouraged from running for office than male state representatives. Since men and women who had been discouraged were equally likely to receive that discouragement from a party official, party officials must have been disproportionately discouraging women from running.

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In order to increase the number of women running for elected office, political parties need to consciously recruit and support more women candidates. Both major parties have already embraced gender parity in the selection of internal leaders – for instance, every state and territory picks one man and one woman to serve in the Republican National Committee. But when it comes to selecting candidates for public office, American political parties have not taken the steps that many political parties abroad have taken to increase gender parity.

There are many types of gender-conscious electoral laws and party rules that can help to increase women's representation. Several of the most aggressive measures, such as reserving a number of legislative seats for women or mandating through legislation that political parties run a certain number of women each election, could be vulnerable to a constitutional challenge in the United States, and could also be difficult to implement in jurisdictions that select party nominees by popular primaries rather than conventions. But other measures, on a voluntary party-by-party basis, could prove both legal and effective.

Political parties should implement internal rules and procedures that would encourage and incentivize the increased recruitment and support of female candidates, thereby proving to their female constituents that they take seriously the need to increase women's representation in American government. Parties have a myriad of options that can help to increase women's representation. We have divided them into two categories: rules that are meant to increase awareness of women's underrepresentation in government among party leadership and allow for brainstorming on ways to recruit more female candidates, and rules that would incentivize the increased recruitment of female candidates by creating benchmarks of success directly tied to the number of women in the party running for political office.

Rules to Raise Awareness of the Underrepresentation of Women

Dialogue with Training Groups: The simplest of the reform proposals is for state political parties to commit to organizing meetings between party leaders and statewide organizations that train and recruit women to run for elected office. Parties could host these dialogues at least twice a year, and preferably more in the year leading up to a major election.to increase the number of women running for elected office. It will also allow for recruiting and training groups to alert party leadership to promising women that they have come across during their programs.

Gender Parity Task Forces: In conjunction with their meetings with statewide organizations that train and recruit women candidates, state parties could establish Gender Parity Task Forces to develop and execute plans for the party to recruit and train women candidates. These task forces could do their own recruiting and training, or contract with existing groups that already provide this service, including those with whom they have their bi-annual dialogues.

Internal Accountability: Statewide party leadership could prepare a report prior to each election cycle on the state of gender parity in the party's own leadership, among its elected representatives, and in political appointments made by those elected representatives; the number of women primary candidates, nominees, and general election winners in the most recent election; and its plans to recruit women for upcoming elections. If the numbers are lower than was projected before the previous election cycle, the party should propose new ways to increase the number of women it recruits to run for political office.

Rules to Incentivize the Increased Recruitment of Women

The fastest way for political parties to increase women's representation is to adopt measures that would incentivize the recruitment of more women candidates. State and local parties would set goals, based on the current state of women's representation in their area, for how many women they would hope to recruit each election cycle, and national political parties would award "Gender Parity Grants," financed by donations from party members who care about

increasing the number of women in elected office, to the state and local parties that met their goals.

Over 100 political parties in 50 countries have instituted party gender quotas.

This reform is inspired by the widespread use of gender quotas in party nominations abroad. Currently about 110 countries use some form of gender quota, be they constitutional, legislated, or voluntarily implemented by political parties.[66] More specifically, over 100 political parties in 50 countries have instituted party gender quotas, which set goals for how many women the party aims to nominate for each election. Although the success of these party quotas have varied by country, and can vary based on how strictly the party enforces them, in some countries, such as those in Northern and Central Europe, they have been wildly successful.[67]

A significant roadblock to implementing this particular type of party gender quota in the United States, apart from potential constitutional challenges, is the use of popular primaries. In most jurisdictions in the United States, the Democratic and Republican parties hold popular primaries in which voters themselves determine their party's nominees. This means that political parties in America have much less control over who will represent them in a general election than political parties do in countries in which party officials select who will be on the general election ballot. Therefore, without a change in nominating procedures, American political parties will be unable to establish strict goals for how many women the party will nominate. However, this does not mean that parties are not able to encourage more women to run in their primaries.

Under the system we propose, local and state parties would set goals for how many women they would recruit to run in their primary elections, and especially in primary elections for positions in which a nominee from the party would have a good chance of winning in the general election. That way, women who are recruited and win their parties' nominations will also be likely to enter office.

An important benefit of this system is that unlike strict gender quotas, it does not preclude any qualified men from running in a particular district if they are so inclined: as long as they are able to defeat the recruited woman candidate, they will be on their way to political office. Additionally, national and local parties will be able to negotiate expectations for how many women will be recruited to run, and especially how many will be recruited to run in winnable districts based on the current electoral realities the local parties are facing. Therefore, the Democratic Party in a Republican-leaning state like South Carolina will not be held to the same standard as the Democratic Party in a Democratic-leaning state like Massachusetts. Instead, as long as the South Carolina Democratic Party recruited the agreed-upon number of women to run for winnable seats, the National Democratic Party would award them the "Gender Parity Grant," thereby rewarding them for their effort to increase the representation of women in their state government.

Profile of a Party's Effort

The Republican Party knows that it has a woman problem. In 2012, women, who made up 53% of the American electorate, voted for Democratic President Barack Obama at a rate of 55%. Additionally, only a third of women state legislators are Republican, only a fifth of in the U.S.

Senate are Republican, and only a quarter of women in the U.S. House of Representatives are Republican. In order to address the dearth of Republican women serving in elected office, the Republican National Committee, along with the National Republican Congressional Committee, Republican Governors Association, National Republican Senatorial Committee, Republican State Leadership Conference, and College Republican National Committee, recently launched "Women on the Right UNITE," which will oversee two new initiatives to increase the recruitment of Republican women candidates at the state and national level.

The Republican State Leadership Committee's "Right Women, Right Now" aims to recruit 300 new women to run for office at the state level, while The National Republican Congressional Committee's "Project GROW" (Growing Republican Opportunities for Women) will focus on recruiting women to run for Congress and assisting them with their campaigns.[68] Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus explained, "For the first time ever all six committees are coming together to show you that we recognize America needs more women involved in political leadership and to show our commitment as a party to developing better relationships with women voters. We recognize that getting more women into politics means offering support and training for women of all ages, from staff to those seeking elected office, and simply asking more women to run."[69]

> "We recognize that getting more women into politics means offering support and training for women of all ages…and simply asking more women to run." – *Reince Priebus, chair of RNC*

Republicans hope that by adding more female faces to their party, they will be able to attract more women voters. As Missouri U.S. Rep. Ann Wagner, one of just three female Republican representatives first elected in 2012 (compared to 17 Democratic women), explained, "We have a message I think that reaches women and we need to make sure that we're actively and aggressively telling that story. And there's no better way to do it than being a woman who talks about it."[70]

Since its June launch, Project GROW has already recruited four women to challenge male Democratic incumbents and is working with 14 female candidates for Congress across the country. "They are the women that we want to be a part of our team. So we're actively going and talking to them about why it's important for them to step up and run for Congress,"[71] said Wagner of the women she and other Republican congresswoman are encouraging to run.

If these initiatives prove successful, they could serve as models for the Democratic Party, which, though it already has far more women running for and being elected to public office than Republicans, has yet to achieve gender parity in its recruitment and nominations either.

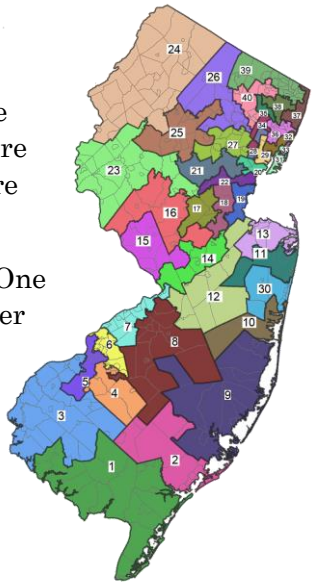
In order to address the gender gap in political ambition, we must do everything we can to ensure that more qualified women decide to run for office. Otherwise, we will continue to suffer from a dearth of women's voices in lawmaking and leadership. It is time for the political parties to embrace the goal of electing more women. International comparisons suggest that no other reform, absent government-imposed quotas, has greater potential to increase the representation of women in elected office than gender-conscious party rules.

Parity Perspective

Fair Elections: How Single-Member Districts Hold Women Back

Although it is widely discussed in reviews of the representation of women in other nations and in past analysis of women in state legislatures in the United States, too little attention is paid to the role of single-member districts in limiting the representation of women in the United States. Currently, the U.S. House of Representatives and the great majority of state legislatures use single-member districts, a type of winner-take-all electoral system. In single-member district systems, candidates run to become the single legislator representing a district, and whichever candidate receives the most votes in a district wins the election. The current system elevates geography as the highest priority for representation, above other factors, such as political ideology, that are also important to voters.

The U.S. Constitution does not establish the use of single-member districts. In fact, until 1842, when Congress mandated the use of single-member districts for U.S House elections, more than a quarter of all House members were elected in multi-member districts, or districts that elect more than one legislator to represent them. More than half of state legislators were once elected from multi-member districts, and many state legislators still are today.



New Jersey's state legislative districts, 2011-2020. Each district elects two members of the General Assembly and one senator.

Single-member district elections can have highly unrepresentative results. One type of unrepresentative result is political. For example, when single-member districts are used, the party whose candidates received the most votes combined may not win the most seats in the legislature. We saw this in the 2012 elections for the U.S. House of Representatives, when one party won a comfortable majority of seats but received only 47% of the vote – a million and a half fewer votes than the other major party.[72]

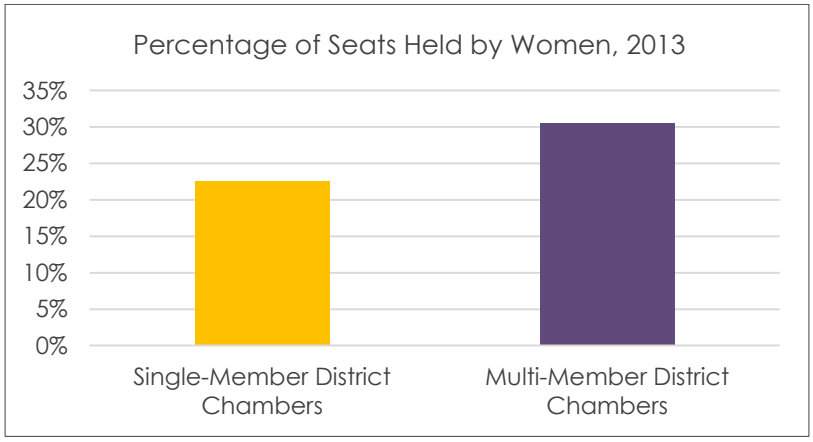
A second example of the unrepresentative consequences of single-member districts is demographic. In the case of women, single-member districts can prove to be a significant barrier to receiving fair and descriptive representation in legislatures. For over forty years, academics have noted that women tend to be better represented in multi-member districts than in single-member districts, both in the United States and abroad.

Representation 2020 advocates for the use of multi-member districts to elect legislative bodies. More specifically, however, we advocate for the use of multi-member districts with fair representation voting systems – American forms of proportional representation in which voters select candidates, not parties. Fair representations systems are already used at the local level in nearly 100 jurisdictions in the United States.[73] While multi-member districts can boost women's representation, winner-take-all elections in multi-seat districts can exacerbate distortions in representation by party and race. By combining multi-member districts with fair representation voting and robust efforts by political parties, women's groups, and PACs to increase the recruitment of women candidates, this electoral reform has the potential to greatly increase the number of women serving in elected offices in the United States.

Currently, ten states use multi-member districts to elect at least one house in their state legislature.[74] These ten states tend to rank among the highest for their percentage of legislators who are women. As of January 2014, six of the ten states with the highest percentages of women in their state legislatures used multi-member districts in at least one of their state legislative chambers. Overall, state legislative chambers – both House and Senate – that use multi-member districts are currently 31.0% women, compared to chambers that use only single-member districts, which are 22.8% women.[75]

Ranking	State	% Seats Held by Women	Uses Multi-Member Districts
1	Vermont	41.1%	Yes
2	Colorado	41.0%	
3	Arizona	35.6%	Yes
4	Minnesota	33.8%	
5	New Hampshire	33.5%	Yes
6	Illinois	32.2%	
7	Hawaii	31.6%	
8	Washington	30.6%	Yes
9	Maryland	30.3%	Yes
10	New Jersey	30.0%	Yes

Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University (Dec. 2013)



Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University

Multi-member districts can provide voters with the opportunity to vote for women candidates, even if their preferred political party fails to nominate them. In New Hampshire's 2012 state House elections, nine districts elected at least five legislators. All but one of these are Republican-majority districts, and Republicans swept 55 of 61 seats in the Republican districts. Remarkably, Democratic women won all six seats not won by Republicans in these districts. [76] When confronted with a list of nine Republican men and one Republican woman in Rockingham-6, for instance, New Hampshire's Republican voters opted to elect two Democratic women instead of two of those Republican men. Clearly, these districts' voters were interested in electing more women, and were therefore willing to forego their partisan preferences in order to ensure that more women were being elected from their districts.

Multi-member districts also greatly increase the percentage of a state's voters who are represented by a woman. In all but two states that use multi-member districts, more than half of the population has a state representative who is a woman. In other words, in states with

multi-member districts, more people experience having a woman represent them, which can challenge stereotypes about women's abilities to succeed in politics. Additionally, more constituents can approach female representatives on issues that are often classified as "women's issues," such as health care and education. Studies have shown that both Democratic and Republican women legislators are more likely to be attentive to such issues than male representatives of the same party.[77]

State and Chamber	% of Seats Held by Women	% State's Population with a Woman Rep.	District Magnitude (legislators per district)	% Legislature Elected with Multi-Member Districts
Arizona House	31.7%	56.6%	2	100%
Idaho House	31.4%	51.4%	2	100%
Maryland House	33.8%	60.3%	From 1 to 3	50.6%
New Hampshire House	32.8%	63.7%	From 1 to 11	73.6%
New Jersey House	30.0%	57.5%	2	100%
North Dakota House	19.1%	36.2%	2	100%
South Dakota House	27.1%	54.3%	2	100%
Vermont House	43.0%	59.1%	From 1 to 2	60.4%
Vermont Senate	30.0%	70.0%	From 1 to 6	90%
Washington House	27.6%	55.1%	2	100%
West Virginia House	19.0%	39.0%	From 1 to 5	64%

Sources: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University (as of Oct. 2013) and state legislative websites

Scholarship on Multi-Member Districts in the United States

The use of multi-member districts in state legislatures decreased over the second half of the 20th century, from a high of 40 states in the 1950s to a low of 10 in 2013.[78] Therefore, examining older studies on the effects of multi-member districts on women's representation can prove particularly illuminating:

"Women Candidates in Single- and Multi-Member Districts: American State Legislative Races," a 1985 paper by Susan Welch, Janet Clark, and Robert Darcy, compared election results in 37 states and found several strains of evidence that multi-member districts bolstered n women's representation in state legislative chambers.[79]

- In all 14 states that used a combination of single and multi-member districts in the two decades leading up to the study, a greater portion of the candidates in multi-member districts were women than in single-member districts. In 12 of the 14 states, women comprised a larger percentage of the winners in multi-member districts than they did in single-member districts. In five of the 14 states, no women were elected in single-member districts, but they were elected in multi-member districts.
- In each of the seven states that switched from using some or all multi-member districts to using only single member districts during the 1960's, the percentage of female state legislators decreased more than the national decline in women's representation during the same period.
- Between 1970 and 1982, Idaho and Montana switched from using both single and multi-member districts to using only multi-member districts, and both states saw a greater increase in the number of women elected than the average national increase.

"Single-Member Districts and the Representation of Women in American State Legislatures: The Effects of Electoral System Change," a 2002 paper by James King, compared election results in four states that switched from using multi-member districts to using single-member districts during the 1990's with eight states of similar geography, economy, and culture that did not alter their electoral system (four of which used multi-member districts and four of which used single-member districts).[80]

- Prior to the switch, 88% of Wyoming's House of Representatives was elected in multi-member districts, as was 69% of Alaska's, 39% of Indiana's, and 21% of Georgia's. King found a significant decrease in women's representation in Wyoming, Alaska, and Indiana, the three states that originally had the largest portion of members elected with multi-member districts, once they switched to single-member districts.
- In Wyoming, which had been ranked 11th for its share of women in its legislature in 1992, the drop in women's representation was estimated to be about 30.9% greater than it would have been had the state maintained multi-member districts. In 2013, Wyoming ranked 44th for the percentage of its state legislature that is female.

Additionally, *"District Magnitude's Effect on Female Representation in U.S. State Legislatures,"* a 1992 study by Richard Matland and Deborah Brown, found a relationship between district magnitude (the number of legislators representing a district) and women's representation in North Carolina and New Hampshire, even when controlling for the urban or rural nature of a district. These findings led the authors to hypothesize that "[f]rom a policy perspective, maintaining multi-member districts at the state legislative level should help achieve the goal of more equitable representation."[81]

These conclusions are consistent with international studies showing that women do better with multi-seat districts. Consider that, as of November 2013, all of the 20 nations with the highest percentages of women in their national legislative bodies use at least some multi-member districts to elect their legislators.

How Multi-Member Districts Help Women

There are several hypotheses as to why multi-member districts might have a positive effect on women's representation in legislatures. One is that political parties may be more likely to try to balance a slate of political candidates when multiple candidates can run and win at the same time, in order to make their party seem more inclusive and representative of the voting population.[82] This is especially pertinent in states like New Hampshire, where voters are willing to vote for women candidates of the opposing party if their own party fails to nominate enough women.[83] Additionally, voters might be more willing to vote for a female legislator when they know that they will also have a man representing them.

Multi-member districts with fair representation voting systems will increase competition and allow for the voting out of unpopular incumbents, thereby creating more spaces for women to enter politics.

Another likely reason is that multi-member districts can dilute incumbency advantage, one of the greatest obstacles to increasing women's representation.[84] Incumbents wield a great electoral advantage, and since most incumbents are men, more men than women are currently receiving this advantage, which impedes the increase in women's representation. Multi-member districts, especially with fair representation voting systems, will increase competition and allow for the voting out of unpopular incumbents, thereby creating more spaces for women to enter politics.

Additionally, because multi-member districts allow for multiple winners, the system may cause candidates to opt for more positive campaigning, which highlights candidates' own qualifications and successes, over negative campaigning, which focuses on the negative qualities of their opponent.[85] This is significant for women's representation, as studies have shown that potential female candidates are more wary of negative campaigning than their male counterparts.[86] Indeed, Lawless and Fox found in their 2011 study that women are as much as 75% more likely to be wary of negative campaigning than men.

As Matland and Brown explained, "An increase in district magnitude can lower…barriers by changing elections from a zero-sum game to a positive-sum game. Contests in single-member 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."[87]

The transformation of elections from a zero-sum game to a positive-sum game means that multi-member districts may allow for more teamwork among candidates – especially candidates of the same political party. Candidates want to get elected and would understand that the best way to do so is to highlight why they would be right for the job, and not why all of their opponents would be wrong for it.

"From a policy perspective, maintaining multi-member districts at the state legislative level should help achieve the goal of more equitable representation" – *Richard Matland and Deborah Brown*

Lawless and Fox's 2011 study helps explain why women in particular may be more preferably disposed to the political environment fostered by multi-member districts. Lawless and Fox interviewed almost 4,000 business leaders, lawyers, and activists – the people who might be considered most likely to run for political office – and found that women were more likely to see their local electoral environment as highly competitive and biased against female candidates. It also found that women were generally more risk-averse, meaning that they were less likely to engage in an activity which could lead to great personal loss but also great personal gain.

While Lawless and Fox do not address electoral structure in their paper, if it is true that multi-member districts ameliorate some of prospective female candidates' greatest trepidations about running for office, then it is reasonable to conclude that the use of multi-member districts would lead to an increase in women running for and being elected to office, especially when used in conjunction with better recruitment practices.

Combining Multi-Member Districts with Fair Representation Voting

Readers may wonder why the use of multi-member districts is currently limited to only ten states when they have been shown to increase women's representation in legislative bodies. Indeed, multi-member districts were considerably more common in the 1950s, when a total of 40 states used them to elect members of at least one of their legislative chambers.[88] However, elections for these legislatures were usually conducted with bloc voting, a winner-take-all voting system, in which voters would have as many votes as there were seats up for election, and whichever candidates received the most votes won those seats.

Both politically and racially, winner-take-all elections with multi-seat districts can lead to highly unrepresentative results. For example, consider a district with five seats where 60% of voters support Party A and 40% of voters support Party B. In a winner-take-all system, the supporters of Party A would be able to elect all five legislators, as each candidate from Party A would likely receive about 60% of the vote. Even though supporters of Party B comprised 40% of voters, they 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 in winner-take-all elections, racial minorities would find themselves unrepresented in their legislature.

For the last 50 years, the remedy of choice for the negative effects of winner-take-all multi-member district elections on racial minority voters has been the use of single-member districts instead. Since racial minorities often live in geographically distinct areas, it has been possible to draw majority minority districts that turn racial minorities into district majorities.

Unfortunately, single-member district also often lead to politically unrepresentative results. Indeed, the best way to combat the negative effects of winner-take-all elections in multi-member district elections is fair representation voting. Fair representation voting systems ("fair voting") are American forms of proportional representation in multi-member districts. With fair voting, like-minded voters are able to elect candidates in proportion to their share of their district's electorate. In our previous example with the five-seat district, in which Party A garners 60% support and Party B garners 40% support, with a fair voting plan, the supporters of Party B would be able to elect two legislators to represent them, while supporters of Party A would be able to elect three.

> Fair representation voting systems would lead to the better representation of both racial and political minorities, as well as women.

Fair representation voting can be used for any legislative election, from city council to state legislature to the U.S. House of Representatives, and it does not require an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to be implemented at any level of government. On the federal level, fair representation voting can be enacted legislatively, first by repealing a 1967 law mandating the use of single-member districts for Congress, and then by 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.

The best fair representation voting system is called ranked choice voting, which is sometimes referred to as "choice voting" or "single transferable vote". Ranked choice voting is used by all

voters in at least one major election in Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and Scotland, as well as in a number of American cities. Voters rank their candidates in order of preference, and those rankings help ensure that like-minded voters of varying political preferences can win a fair share of seats without concerns of "vote-splitting" among candidates with common perspectives.

Fair voting systems lead to better representation of both racial and political minorities than our current, winner-take-all system. They allow both major parties to contest and win seats in almost every state, and, because they can lead to the election of more independent-minded legislators, they encourage more cooperation across party lines in policymaking.

As fair voting relies on the use of multi-seat districts, it is nearly certain to increase the number of women seeking and being elected to public office. That impact will be all the greater with proactive party rules to ensure that enough women are being encouraged to run for office. The combination of fair representation voting and party rules to promote the recruitment of women candidates has the potential to greatly increase women's representation in elected office – and improve elections and representation for all.

Parity Perspective

Action inside Capitols and City Halls: How Legislatures and Women's Caucuses Can Increase Women's Representation

In order to increase the number of women in elected office, we need to make elected office a more feasible career option for women of all ages. Legislative bodies can vary widely in their expectations of those in office. For example, some legislatures and city councils do most official business during the workday, while others expect members to work in the evening. Some provide enough compensation to avoid the need for two jobs, while others do not.

Establishing norms and services that make it easier for parents to serve is particularly important for women, who often find themselves taking on the bulk of childcare and housework responsibilities, even if they are employed. 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, and 60% of women performed the majority of childcare, compared to 6% of men.[89] This disparity helps to explain a common refrain expressed by young women who are approached to run for office: what will this career change mean for my family?

Indeed, women in elected office are less likely to have children than men in elected office. While 36% of the male legislators surveyed in 2001 had children under 18 years old, only 17% of the women legislators did. Even more startlingly, 13% of male legislators had children under six years old at home, compared to just 2% of women legislators.[90] While there are likely many factors that contribute to this difference among men and women, one could be that legislative culture and practices do not accommodate the familial obligations of legislators.

Women state legislators also tend to be older than their male counterparts. A study by the Center for American Women and Politics in 2001 found that only 24% of the female state legislators were under 50 years old, compared to 39% of male state legislators.[91] Entering politics at a later age can undercut the ability of women to rise to positions of leadership in legislatures that in turn make it more likely for them to stay in the legislature. Additionally, if women enter state legislatures at a more advanced age than men, they will also be less likely than men to continue their political careers in a higher office. We need to ensure that women are encouraged to enter office at a younger age so they can reach their full political potential during their careers.

Concrete Ideas for Action

Although the ideal solution to this gender imbalance would be for men to embrace their fair share of household responsibilities so that women would feel more comfortable aspiring to political office while they still had children at home, in the interim, there are steps legislatures can take to ensure that parents, both men and women, are better able to balance their family and professional responsibilities.

For example, legislatures (school boards, city councils, state legislatures, and Congress) can form task forces to examine a range of factors that can affect women in office. It should review whether the scheduling and procedures of committee meetings and floor votes make it harder for parents with young children to serve. Are the majority of votes scheduled for times when children are at school, or are they scheduled for the evenings? Are votes scheduled early Monday morning or late Friday evening, making it more difficult for parents to travel back to their districts and their families on the weekends? Can legislators, especially those who live in far-away districts, telecommute for committee meetings, or even assign a proxy to vote for them in committees and on the floor if they are unable to be at the Capitol on a certain day? And if legislators are expected to work late nights, are there affordable childcare services available to them?

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (NY) is sworn into office by Vice President Biden as her family looks on.

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, just like the rest of the Swedish workforce. After a 2004 survey of women parliamentarians found that they felt they were discriminated against both by other members and institutionally, a gender equality plan called "15 proposals for gender equality in Parliament" was enacted, overseen by the Secretary General of Parliament.[92] While this plan will not do away with gender discrimination in the Swedish Parliament entirely, it is a positive step in institutionalizing ways to make the Parliament more family-friendly and hospitable for all.

Women's Caucuses and Gender Equality in State Legislatures

Legislative women's caucuses are in a prime position to advance reforms like those seen in the Swedish Parliament. After all, many members of women's caucuses – i.e., women legislators – have a history of promoting family-friendly and pro-women legislation.[93] The next logical step is for them to promote policies that further gender equality within legislatures. The New York State Legislative Women's Caucus did just that in 2012, when it successfully advocated for the installation of state-of-the-art nursing and baby-changing facilities throughout the Legislative Office Building. The Caucus argued that these facilities would be beneficial both to those who work in the legislature and those who come to visit.[94]

In addition, women's caucuses can also be a valuable resource to increase the recruitment of women candidates, and to ensure that women rise to positions of leadership within legislatures. While there are many organizations dedicated to increasing the number of women in elected office, a supplementary way to effect lasting change in political culture is to consult the women who have already been elected. After all, legislators who have joined women's caucuses have already shown that they value their identities as female officeholders, and that they hope to harness the political capital of women by participating in such caucuses.

Women's legislative caucuses operate at both the state and national level. Congress first formed its bipartisan Congresswoman's Caucus (now called the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues) in 1977,[95] and according to the Women's Legislative Network of the National Conference of State Legislatures, 34 states currently have women's caucuses, commissions, or committees.[96] Women's commissions, although often separate from the legislature, perform similar functions by conducting research on the status of women in their states and by advising the legislature on issues pertaining to women. Some women's commissions also include members of the state legislature and report to the state legislature, which is why we also extend our recommendations to these commissions and committees. However, we would prefer that every state legislature institutionalize a women's caucus as a step toward identifying changes that could help more women serve in elected office.

Traditionally, women's caucuses have served as "safe spaces" for women to integrate themselves within male-dominated legislative institutions.[97] Although the focuses of women's caucuses vary widely, a majority of them include members from both legislative chambers and from all parties.[98]

Wyoming Women's Legislative Caucus

As explained in previous sections of this report, encouraging more women to run for office is the most essential step to increasing the number of women in office, and female legislators are in an optimal position to provide this encouragement. For example, one of the main goals of the Wyoming Women's Legislative Caucus is encouraging women to run for office. Working with the Wyoming Women's Foundation, the caucus sponsors annual "Leap into Leadership" workshops, which teach potential female candidates about the nuts and bolts of campaigning while also encouraging these women to launch campaigns of their own. According to the caucus' website, six of the program's alumnae were elected to state or local office in the 2012 election.[99] In addition to the workshop, the caucus maintains a speakers bureau of their own members to speak at events about the importance of female leadership.

Women's caucuses and committees in a dozen other states also include women's leadership among their top goals. By having members of the legislature conduct talks, workshops, and scholarship programs to encourage women who have already displayed leadership qualities, women's caucuses can play an important role in cultivating a class of politically motivated young women who have both the resources and the mentorship to continue their involvement in politics.

In transforming the way women are represented in government through the work of both outside organizations and those within the legislatures themselves, a political culture can develop that encourages more women to run for office and shows them that they can succeed once elected.

Women's Representation around the World: The United States Falls Farther Behind

The U.S. ranks 98th worldwide for its percentages of national legislative seats held by women, and ranks 97th worldwide for its percentage of lower house seats held by women, down from 58th in 1998 and 92nd just this summer. Although a record number of women are serving in the U.S. House and Senate, women's involvement in American politics lags behind the international average of 21.7%, and far behind the average of established and robust democracies.[100] We must do better.

A key reason that more than half the world's nations are outpacing the U.S. in women's representation is that many of those countries use multi-member district election systems, 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 adapting the best practices from abroad to American politics.

Rank	Country	Lower House % of Women	Electoral System
1	Rwanda	56.3%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation (PR)
2	Andorra	50.0%	Mix of Single-Member and Multi-Member Districts (with PR)
3	Cuba	48.9%	Multi-Member Districts/Winner-Take-All (one-party system)
4	Sweden	44.7%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
5	Seychelles	43.8%	Mix of Single-Member and Multi-Member Districts (with PR)
6	Senegal	42.7%	Mix of Single-Member and Multi-Member Districts (with PR)
7	Finland	42.5%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
8	South Africa	42.3%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
9	Nicaragua	40.2%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
10	Iceland	39.7%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
11	Norway	39.6%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
12	Mozambique	39.2%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
13	Denmark	39.1%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
14 (tie)	Ecuador	38.7%	Mix of Single-Member and Multi-Member Districts (with PR)
14 (tie)	Netherlands	38.7%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
16	Costa Rica	38.6%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
17	Timor-Leste	38.5%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
18	Belgium	38.0%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
19	Argentina	37.4%	Multi-Member Districts/Proportional Representation
20	Mexico	36.8%	Mix of Single-Member and Multi-Member Districts (with PR)
…			
97	**United States**	**17.8%**	**Single-Member Districts/Winner-Take-All**

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (November 1, 2013)

Parity Index: Measuring Women's Representation 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 to look at the composition of its state legislature. By that measure, Colorado, with its 41% female legislature, ranks highest, and Louisiana, with its 11.8% female legislature, ranks lowest. However, we wanted to examine 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 see how each state compared to each other.

In our Parity Index, states earned a given number of points based on whether men or women hold various elected offices. We developed our score based on the following: each state's three most recent gubernatorial elections; their other current statewide elected executives; the winners of their four most recent U.S. Senate elections; the percentage of their U.S. House delegation that is female; the proportion of state legislative seats held by women and the gender of their speakers of the house and senate presidents; and the number of women mayors or county executives in the five largest local jurisdictions (counties or cities) in the state with elections for those offices.

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. No state achieved a score above 50 in 2013, and the average 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.

Calculating Components of the Parity Index

Statewide Elected Executives (30 points total)

We base 30% of a state's 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 Parity Index score. 30 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. 5 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 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 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 2012, and then a quarter each for the 2010 and 2008 elections. For example, a state like Wyoming – where a woman won the single House seat in 2008, 2010, and 2012 – would receive a total of 10 points for those elections (5 points for 2012 and 2.5 points each for 2008 and 2010), 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 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 Executives (10 points total)

We believe local elections matter for women as well. Therefore, we award two points for each woman mayor or county executive in the five largest local jurisdictions with elected executives in the state.

Example

North Carolina ranks 7th in the nation with a score of 29.

Office	Points Received	Explanation
Governor	5 (of 20)	NC received no points for its current governor, but it did receive five points for the single term of Gov. Bev Perdue (2009-2013).
Other Elected Statewide Executives	5 (of 10)	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 point are awarded for the lt. governor, and one point each for the treasurer and auditor.
U.S. Senate	7.5 (of 15)	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 twice as many points for current Senator Kay Hagan as for former Senator Elizabeth Dole, for a total of 7.5 points (5 for Hagan and 2.5 for Dole).
U.S. House of Representatives	2.3 (of 15)	NC received 2.3 points out of 15, as only 2 of its 13 U.S. representatives are women.
State Legislature	5.6 (of 30)	2.2 points for the women in the State Senate and 3.4 for the women in the House. No points awarded for speaker of the house or senate president.
Local Executives	4 (of 10)	2 points each for the mayors of Raleigh (Nancy McFarlane) and Greensboro (Nancy Vaughan).
Total	**29 (of 100)**	**Rounded from 29.4**

The Parity Index over Time: 1993 – 2013

Calculating Parity Index scores using data from 1993, 2003, and 2013 provides insights into the evolution of women's representation in each state. The results of these calculations are presented in the table on page 31. Overall, the scores mirror the evolution of women's representation in state legislatures and in Congress, showing only gradual progress. The median parity ranking rose from 9.5 in 1993 to 12.1 in 2003, to 15.8 in 2013, far short of the 50 point mark.

Eighteen states made double-digit improvements to their parity scores between 1993 and 2013. The greatest improvement occurred in New Hampshire, where an absence of women in Congress or the Governor's mansion in the years leading up to 1993 led to a score of 13.3 and a ranking of 16th. As of 2013, all four of the state's congressional offices and the governorship are held by women, pushing the state's score up to a total of 47.4, the highest total in the country, and five points ahead of second place Washington.

While many states have made strong advances towards gender parity in government in the last two decades, this progress has been offset by declines elsewhere. Between 1993 and 2013, gender parity scores declined in 10 of the 50 states. Since 2003, parity scores have declined in 15 states. One such state is Kansas, which in 1993 had both a woman governor and a woman U.S. senator, contributing to its parity score of 36.9, the highest in the nation. By 2013, Kansas' score had declined 14.9 points to 22. Though this score is still high enough to secure Kansas' 14th place rank in the 2013 Parity Index, it represents the largest decline in women's representation in any state over the last 20 years.

	1993		2003		2013	
	State Ranking	Gender Parity Score	State Ranking	Gender Parity Score	State Ranking	Gender Parity Score
Alabama	*50*	2.0	*49*	3.6	*36*	12.0
Alaska	*18*	11.1	*40*	7.5	*12*	23.6
Arizona	*12*	15.3	*3*	29.1	*5*	33.8
Arkansas	*37*	5.9	*32*	10.1	*43*	9.6
California	*3*	23.6	*1*	36.1	*4*	34.1
Colorado	*9*	16.2	*15*	17.6	*29*	15.8
Connecticut	*20*	10.7	*17*	17.0	*9*	26.6
Delaware	*34*	6.4	*7*	23.8	*34*	13.9
Florida	*32*	8.1	*25*	12.2	*17*	18.8
Georgia	*39*	5.7	*33*	9.8	*44*	9.6
Hawaii	*29*	8.9	*6*	26.3	*3*	39.6
Idaho	*11*	15.7	*31*	10.3	*42*	10.4
Illinois	*17*	11.4	*14*	18.1	*19*	18.1
Indiana	*27*	9.0	*34*	9.6	*33*	14.0
Iowa	*42*	5.3	*41*	7.3	*40*	10.9
Kansas	*1*	36.9	*8*	22.4	*14*	22.0
Kentucky	*26*	9.1	*42*	7.2	*47*	7.5
Louisiana	*41*	5.3	*21*	14.4	*28*	15.7
Maine	*15*	13.4	*2*	35.3	*10*	25.7
Maryland	*5*	20.0	*9*	21.7	*15*	21.2
Massachusetts	*30*	8.6	*30*	10.3	*16*	20.6
Michigan	*33*	7.0	*5*	27.6	*8*	27.4
Minnesota	*21*	10.5	*23*	13.3	*6*	30.9
Mississippi	*38*	5.8	*48*	4.3	*48*	6.4
Missouri	*40*	5.3	*26*	12.1	*23*	16.6
Montana	*28*	9.0	*10*	20.9	*38*	11.9
Nebraska	*4*	20.2	*43*	6.9	*27*	15.7
Nevada	*25*	9.8	*18*	16.2	*18*	18.6
New Hampshire	*16*	13.3	*11*	20.9	*1*	47.4
New Jersey	*48*	3.8	*13*	18.4	*24*	16.1
New Mexico	*19*	10.8	*19*	16.0	*11*	24.4
New York	*24*	9.9	*20*	14.8	*20*	17.1
North Carolina	*22*	10.4	*27*	11.6	*7*	29.4
North Dakota	*35*	6.1	*46*	5.4	*35*	12.9
Ohio	*13*	14.7	*35*	9.2	*37*	12.0
Oklahoma	*47*	3.8	*47*	4.8	*25*	15.9
Oregon	*2*	27.8	*22*	14.1	*13*	23.3
Pennsylvania	*49*	3.4	*44*	6.5	*46*	9.0
Rhode Island	*10*	15.9	*37*	7.9	*31*	14.7
South Carolina	*46*	4.1	*50*	2.9	*32*	14.7
South Dakota	*14*	14.4	*45*	5.6	*26*	15.8
Tennessee	*45*	4.2	*36*	8.3	*45*	9.4
Texas	*6*	19.8	*16*	17.4	*30*	15.1
Utah	*44*	4.3	*39*	7.7	*49*	5.7
Vermont	*7*	19.4	*29*	11.5	*39*	11.4
Virginia	*43*	4.3	*38*	7.8	*50*	4.5
Washington	*8*	17.7	*4*	28.9	*2*	42.5
West Virginia	*36*	5.9	*28*	11.5	*41*	10.5
Wisconsin	*23*	10.2	*24*	12.6	*22*	16.8
Wyoming	*31*	8.4	*12*	19.1	*21*	16.8

Introduction to the 2013-2014 State-by-State Review

This report provides an in-depth look at the state of women's representation in elected office in each of the 50 states and the territories. Along with each state's Parity Index ranking and score, we also include additional information pertaining to the representation of women in the state, including trends in state legislatures, facts about women elected officials in the state, and examples of states that exemplify one of the six prongs of our 2020 Pledge. You can explore our state profiles at Representation2020.com/our-report.html

Quick Facts

We include unique facts about women's representation in each state ranging from current trends to important firsts.

Trending

Trends relating to the status of women in state legislatures, an important stepping stone to higher office, are discussed.

Levels of Government

Statewide Executive

We take account of whether or not a state has ever appointed or elected a female governor. We also include current numbers of women serving in statewide elected executive positions as well as the total number of women to have held a statewide elected executive office in each state.

Congress

We take account of current female members of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives as well as how many women the state has elected to Congress in its history.

State Legislature

In addition to the current proportion and overall ranking of the number of women in state legislatures, we look at the number of women in each chamber of the state legislature and the method of election used.

Local

We highlight the number of women mayors and county executives in each state's five largest jurisdictions with elected executives.

Representation 2020 Policy Recommendations in Action

In certain states' profiles, we highlight efforts and policies that we believe will increase the representation of women in elected office. Each policy relates to one of the six prongs of our 2020 Pledge. Even if a state's profile does not include a highlighted program or policy, that state may have a great effort underway to increase the representation of women in government. If you have any information about an effort or policy in your state, email us at info@representation2020.com.

Elections to Watch / Notable Elections

We highlight races with women candidates in the most recent election cycle as well as important upcoming elections to follow in 2013 and 2014.

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"There has never been a 'Year of the Woman.' There has never even been a minute of the woman. Our vision is simple: we will not settle for anything less than parity."
– Marie Wilson, *founder of the White House Project*

"Women are now the majority in the population, in voter registration, and in turnout. It's past time for women to reach parity in political leadership. We must take action – it will not happen naturally."
– Martha Burk, *former chair of the National Council of Women's Organizations*

"There is just no way we can make the kind of progress we need to make, frankly, without structural changes."
– Celinda Lake, *pollster and political strategist*

"It's time to think outside the box. All the work being done is incredibly important, but if we are to reach parity, we also need to look at voting systems and party rules."
– Kim Gandy, *former president of the National Organization for Women*

"For democracy to work best, the voices of all must be heard with equal weight. Women are entitled to lead just as men are entitled to lead."
– Laura Liswood, *secretary general of the Council of Women World Leaders*

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