In 1987, after being petitioned by the National Women's History Project, Congress officially designated the month of March as “Women’s History Month.” In honor of this month, here are a few stats about women in the United States.

Demographic Breakdown

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 161 million females in the U.S. in 2013 versus 156.1 million males, or about a ratio of 1-to-1. That ratio shifts dramatically when looking at older populations, however: at age 85 and older, women outnumber men by a ratio of 2-to-1 (4.0 million to 2.0 million).

Nationally, females make up 50.8 percent of the population, but that percentage varies across states.

The District of Columbia has the highest percentage of females at 52.8 percent followed by Rhode Island at 51.7 percent and Maryland at 51.6 percent. On the other hand, Alaska has the lowest percentage of females at 48.0 percent followed by Wyoming at 49.0 percent and North Dakota at 49.5 percent.

There are only nine states where males make up more than 50 percent of the population: Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Utah and Wyoming.

Women in the Workforce

According to the Census Bureau, 75.1 million females age 16 and older participated in the civilian labor force in 2013 – 47.4 percent of the labor force. 63 percent of social scientists were women, the heaviest representation of women among all STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields. In addition, 14 percent of engineers, 45 percent of mathematicians and statisticians and 47 percent of life scientists were women.

Since 1970, female representation in select occupations have changed dramatically. For example, in 1970, only 12.1 percent of pharmacists were female. In 2010, that percentage had jumped to 52.6 percent. In 1970, 24.6 percent of accountants were female – in 2010, the number had jumped to 60 percent. In 1970, 9.7 percent of physicians and surgeons were female, but 32.4 percent of those in the field were female in 2010. Lawyers and judges went from 4.9 percent female to 33.4 percent female over the same 40 year period.

Women in Government

Although women make up a slight majority of registered voters (53 percent), only one in four state legislators are women, according to Rutgers’s Center for American Women and Politics. That percentage has increased significantly since 1971, however, when only 344 or 4.5 percent of state
legislators were female, compared to 1,786 or 24.2 percent in 2015.

Colorado has the highest percentage of female legislators among all states at 42.0 percent followed by Vermont at 41.1 percent. In addition, thirteen women serve as presidents of senates or as presidents pro tempore in states where that is the top senate leadership post.

Women hold 24.5 percent of statewide elective executive offices, or 78 out of 318 available positions. Women serve as governors in six states—Kate Brown in Oregon, Mary Fallin in Oklahoma, Nikki Haley in South Carolina (state’s first female governor), Maggie Hassan in New Hampshire, Susan Martinez in New Mexico (state’s first female governor) and Gina Raimondo in Rhode Island (state’s first female governor).

By:
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