

# CAPITOL RESEARCH

● ● ● GOVERNMENT

## WOMEN IN STATE GOVERNMENT 2016

With Hillary Clinton poised to make history as the first female presidential nominee from a major party, it is noteworthy that women are still underrepresented in state government leadership positions. In 2016, women make up less than one-quarter of state legislators and statewide elected executive officers, and less than one-third of all state court judges. The percentage of female state legislators has largely stalled over the last 20 years, while the number of women elected to statewide executive offices has fallen. Only the number of female state judges has seen significant increases in recent years.

### Executive Branch

Women currently hold 76 statewide elected executive offices, representing 24.4 percent of the 312 available positions—a significant increase from 1971 when women held only 7 percent of such positions. It also represents a slight increase from 2013 and 2014 when women represented 23 percent of state elected offices. It is a decrease, however, from the high point of 1999–2001 when women held 27.6 percent of such offices.<sup>1</sup>

- In four states, women currently hold the majority of statewide elected offices: Indiana (four out of seven), Massachusetts (four out of six), Minnesota (three out of five) and Oklahoma (three out of five). Women hold half of the statewide elected offices in Connecticut (three out of six), Illinois (three out of six) and North Carolina (five out of 10).
- In 2016, women hold none of the available statewide elected offices in 11 states.
- Women currently serve as governor in six states, down from the record of nine women serving as chief executive simultaneously, which was the case from December 2006–January 2008 and again in January 2009.
- Women also serve in other high-level state offices: 12 lieutenant governors, nine attorneys general, 13 secretaries of state, eight treasurers, two comptrollers, nine state auditors, nine chief education officials, one commissioner of insurance, one commissioner of labor, and one commissioner of agriculture and commerce.



- Since Wyoming voters elected the first female governor in 1925, 37 women have served in that role in 27 states.
- Twenty-three states have never had a female governor. In four states—New Mexico, Oklahoma, Rhode Island and South Carolina—the current governor is the first woman to serve in that office in state history.
- Arizona has had the most female governors with four, and it is the only state to have three women in a row serve as governor.

### Legislative Branch

Women currently hold 1,815—or 24.6 percent—of the 7,383 state legislative seats. This includes 446 (22.6 percent) of the 1,972 senate seats and 1,369 (25.3 percent) of the 5,411 house seats across the states. This percentage represents a small increase from 2015 and slightly exceeds the historical high of 24.3 percent reached in 2009 and 2015. The percentage of state legislative seats held by women has never surpassed 25 percent nationally.<sup>2</sup>



- Colorado (42 percent) and Vermont (41.1 percent) currently have the highest percentage of women in their legislatures. They are followed by Arizona (35.6 percent), Washington (34 percent), Minnesota (33.3 percent), and Illinois (32.8 percent). Wyoming has the lowest percentage of female legislators with 13.3 percent. In six other states—Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina and West Virginia—women represent less than 15 percent of total state legislators.
- Women currently serve as the president of the senate or president pro tempore in 17 states and speaker of the house in three—Colorado, Oregon and Tennessee.
- Women of color represent 21.9 percent of female legislators and 5.4 percent of total legislators.
- There is significant variation in the percentage of female legislators across the country. On average, the 13 states that make up the CSG West region have the highest percentage at 29.4 percent, followed closely by the 11 states that make up the East region with an average of 28.3 percent. The 11 states of the Midwest region average 24.4 percent, while the 15 states of the South region average 18 percent.
- The number of female state court judges is approaching parity in four states where women make up more than 40 percent of all judges—New Mexico and Oregon at 43 percent, and Maryland and Montana at 41 percent.<sup>4</sup>
- Currently, 122 women serve on a state final appellate jurisdiction court (supreme court or its equivalent). This represents 35.8 percent of the 340 total state supreme court justice seats.
- Women hold the majority of seats on the state supreme court or its equivalent in 10 states: Arkansas, California, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Washington and Wisconsin.
- Only Idaho and Iowa do not have any women serving on the court of last resort.
- Twenty-one women currently hold the office of chief justice of a state supreme court or its equivalent.

## Judicial Branch

- A 2016 survey found that 5,596 women were serving as state court judges, representing 31 percent of the total 18,006 positions. Since 2010, the number of female state court judges increased by 24 percent, while the number of total judgeships increased by only 5 percent. The percentage of state court judges who are women increased from 26 percent in 2010 to 31 percent in 2016.<sup>3</sup>

### REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Center for American Women and Politics. "Women in Statewide Elective Executive Office 2016." <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-statewide-elective-executive-office-2016>.

Note: Does not include appointed positions, officials elected to executive posts by the legislature, or elected members of university boards of trustees or boards of education.

<sup>2</sup> Center for American Women and Politics. "Women in State Legislatures 2016." <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-state-legislature-2016>.

<sup>3</sup> National Association of Women Judges. "2016 Representation of United States State Court Women Judges." <https://www.nawj.org/statistics/2016-us-state-court-women-judges>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



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### TABLE REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Center for American Women and Politics. "Women in Statewide Elective Executive Office 2016." <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-statewide-elective-executive-office-2016>.

Note: Does not include appointed positions, officials elected to executive posts by the legislature, or elected members of university Boards of Trustees or Boards of Education.

<sup>2</sup> Center for American Women in Politics. "Women in State Legislatures 2016." <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-state-legislature-2016>.

<sup>3</sup> National Association of Women Judges. "2016 Representation of United States State Court Women Judges." <https://www.nawj.org/statistics/2016-us-state-court-women-judges>.

### TABLE KEY

★ Female chief justice.

\* States share the same rank if their percentage of female legislators is equal or rounds off to be equal.

\*\* In Maine, the legislature elects the constitutional officers (attorney general, secretary of state, treasurer,) and one statutory officer (auditor). Three of the four officers are women.

\*\*\* Oklahoma and Texas have two courts of last resort: The Supreme Court has jurisdiction of all civil matters, while the Court of Criminal Appeals has final jurisdiction of all criminal matters.

In Oklahoma, the Supreme Court currently has two female members, and the Court of Criminal Appeals has two, including the chief justice.

In Texas, the Supreme Court currently has two female members, while the Court of Criminal Appeals has four, including the chief justice.

# WOMEN IN STATE GOVERNMENT, JULY 2016

State	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch			Judicial Branch		
	Governor	All Statewide Elected Officials <sup>1</sup>	Women in the Senate <sup>2</sup>	Women in the House <sup>2</sup>	Percentage of Total Legislators (Rank) <sup>2</sup>	Total Female State Court Judges <sup>3</sup>	Percentage of All Judges <sup>3</sup>	Female Supreme Court Justices
Alabama		2 of 7	4 of 35	16 of 105	14.3% (46)	75 of 335	22%	2 of 9 ★
Alaska		0 of 2	5 of 20	13 of 40	30.0% (11)*	17 of 72	24%	1 of 5
Arizona		3 of 10	13 of 30	19 of 60	35.6% (3)	67 of 219	31%	1 of 5
Arkansas		2 of 7	7 of 35	20 of 100	20.0% (36)	32 of 215	15%	4 of 7
California		2 of 12	12 of 40	19 of 80	25.8% (21)*	567 of 1,745	32%	4 of 7 ★
Colorado		2 of 5	12 of 35	30 of 65	42.0% (1)	119 of 349	34%	3 of 7 ★
Connecticut		3 of 6	9 of 36	44 of 151	28.3% (16)	81 of 260	31%	3 of 7 ★
Delaware		1 of 6	6 of 21	9 of 41	24.20% (28)*	16 of 57	28%	1 of 5
Florida		1 of 5	12 of 40	28 of 120	25.0% (24)*	388 of 1,037	37%	2 of 7
Georgia		0 of 8	10 of 56	48 of 180	24.6% (27)	219 of 666	33%	1 of 7
Hawaii		0 of 2	8 of 25	14 of 51	28.9% (14)	27 of 79	34%	2 of 5
Idaho		1 of 7	10 of 35	19 of 70	27.6% (17)	25 of 144	17%	0 of 5
Illinois		3 of 6	16 of 59	42 of 118	32.8% (6)	293 of 937	31%	3 of 7 ★
Indiana		4 of 7	9 of 50	22 of 100	20.7% (35)	123 of 442	28%	1 of 5 ★
Iowa		2 of 7	7 of 50	27 of 100	22.7% (31)	105 of 392	27%	0 of 7
Kansas		0 of 6	13 of 40	27 of 125	24.2% (28)*	56 of 258	22%	2 of 7 ★
Kentucky		3 of 7	4 of 38	18 of 100	15.9% (42)	100 of 283	35%	3 of 7 ★
Louisiana		0 of 7	5 of 39	16 of 105	14.6% (45)	92 of 298	31%	2 of 7 ★
Maine		0 of 1 **	9 of 35	46 of 151	29.6% (13)	19 of 85	22%	2 of 7 ★
Maryland		0 of 4	12 of 47	48 of 141	31.9% (7)	152 of 375	41%	4 of 7 ★
Massachusetts		4 of 6	12 of 40	38 of 160	25.0% (24)*	142 of 364	39%	4 of 7
Michigan		1 of 5	4 of 38	27 of 110	20.9% (34)	217 of 706	31%	2 of 7
Minnesota		3 of 5	23 of 67	44 of 134	33.3% (5)	134 of 342	39%	3 of 7 ★
Mississippi		2 of 8	9 of 52	15 of 122	13.8% (49)	37 of 153	24%	2 of 9
Missouri		1 of 6	6 of 34	43 of 163	24.9% (26)	94 of 372	25%	3 of 7 ★
Montana		2 of 6	18 of 50	29 of 100	31.3% (9)	88 of 214	41%	3 of 7
Nebraska		0 of 6	11 of 49	N/A	22.4% (32)	34 of 141	24%	2 of 7
Nevada		1 of 6	4 of 21	16 of 42	31.7% (8)	61 of 156	39%	2 of 7
New Hampshire	Maggie Hassan	1 of 1	8 of 24	114 of 400	28.8% (15)	17 of 82	21%	2 of 5 ★
New Jersey		1 of 2	11 of 40	25 of 80	30.0% (11)*	147 of 457	32%	2 of 7
New Mexico	Susana Martinez	1 of 7	7 of 42	23 of 70	26.8% (19)	60 of 140	43%	3 of 5
New York		1 of 4	12 of 63	44 of 150	26.3% (20)	471 of 1,401	34%	4 of 7 ★
North Carolina		5 of 10	13 of 50	26 of 120	22.9% (30)	127 of 396	32%	3 of 7
North Dakota		3 of 13	8 of 47	19 of 94	19.1% (39)	17 of 67	25%	2 of 5
Ohio		1 of 6	7 of 33	27 of 99	25.8% (21)*	152 of 506	30%	4 of 7 ★
Oklahoma	Mary Fallin	3 of 11	6 of 48	15 of 101	14.1% (47)*	67 of 271	25%	4 of 14 *** ★
Oregon	Kate Brown	3 of 5	8 of 30	20 of 60	31.1% (10)	84 of 196	43%	2 of 7
Pennsylvania		1 of 5	9 of 50	38 of 203	18.6% (40)	152 of 578	26%	2 of 7 (1 vacancy)
Rhode Island	Gina Raimondo	2 of 5	10 of 38	21 of 75	27.4% (18)	38 of 117	32%	1 of 5
South Carolina	Nikki Haley	2 of 9	2 of 46	22 of 124	14.1% (47)*	74 of 198	37%	1 of 5
South Dakota		2 of 10	7 of 35	15 of 170	21.0% (33)	17 of 60	28%	2 of 5
Tennessee		0 of 1	6 of 33	16 of 99	16.7% (41)	40 of 183	22%	3 of 5 ★
Texas		1 of 9	7 of 31	29 of 150	19.9% (37)	322 of 1,127	29%	6 of 18 *** ★
Utah		0 of 5	6 of 29	10 of 75	15.4% (43)	27 of 109	25%	1 of 5
Vermont		1 of 6	9 of 30	65 of 150	41.1% (2)	30 of 79	38%	2 of 5
Virginia		0 of 3	9 of 40	18 of 100	19.3% (38)	102 of 417	24%	2 of 7
Washington		1 of 9	18 of 49	32 of 98	34.0% (4)	120 of 344	35%	6 of 9 ★
West Virginia		1 of 6	2 of 34	18 of 100	14.9% (44)	29 of 124	23%	2 of 5
Wisconsin		1 of 5	11 of 33	23 of 99	25.8% (21)*	54 of 271	20%	5 of 7 ★
Wyoming		2 of 5	1 of 30	11 of 60	13.3% (50)	11 of 58	19%	1 of 5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>446 of 1,972</b>	<b>1,369 of 5,411</b>	<b>Average: 24.6%</b>	<b>5,596 of 18,006</b>	<b>Average: 31%</b>	<b>120 of 333 (36%)</b>