

Women in State Government: Past, Present, Future

By Susan J. Carroll

In recent years, the movement of women into state-level offices has slowed following several decades of gains. Following the 2010 elections, the number of women in both state legislative and statewide elective office declined. Efforts to actively recruit women for elective and appointive positions will be critical in determining what the future holds for women in state government.

In the history of our nation, women are relative newcomers among state elected and appointed officials. Women first entered state-level offices in the 1920s following passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which granted women suffrage. Significant growth in the numbers of women in office, however, occurred only after the emergence of the contemporary women's movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Since the mid-1970s, as data collected by the Center for American Women and Politics show,¹ women have greatly increased their numbers among elected and appointed officials in state government. Nevertheless, in recent years progress has slowed and nationwide statistics show a leveling off in the number of women serving in state-level offices since the turn of the century.

Women suffered major setbacks in the 2010 elections. The number of women serving in state legislatures actually decreased following the elections for the first time in more than four decades, and the number of women serving in statewide office continued a downward slide that has been evident since 2000.

Governors

Since the founding of our country, only 34 women (19 Democrats, 15 Republicans) have served as state governors (Table A), and only one woman has served as governor of a U.S. territory (Puerto Rico).² Almost half the states, 23, have never had a female chief executive. Arizona is the only state to have had four women governors as well as the only state where a woman succeeded another as governor. Connecticut, Texas, Kansas, Washington and New Hampshire each have had two women governors, although one of the governors of New Hampshire, Vesta Roy, served for only seven days following the death of an incumbent.

The first woman governor, Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming, was selected in a special election to succeed her deceased husband in 1925. Fifteen days later, a second woman, Miriam "Ma" Ferguson, was inaugurated as governor of Texas. Having been elected as a surrogate for her husband, a former governor who had been impeached and consequently was barred constitutionally from running again, Ferguson's campaign slogan was "Two governors for the price of one."³ The third woman to serve as a governor, Lurleen Wallace of Alabama, campaigned on the slogan, "Let George do it," and was similarly elected to replace a husband who was prohibited by term limits from seeking an additional term in office.⁴

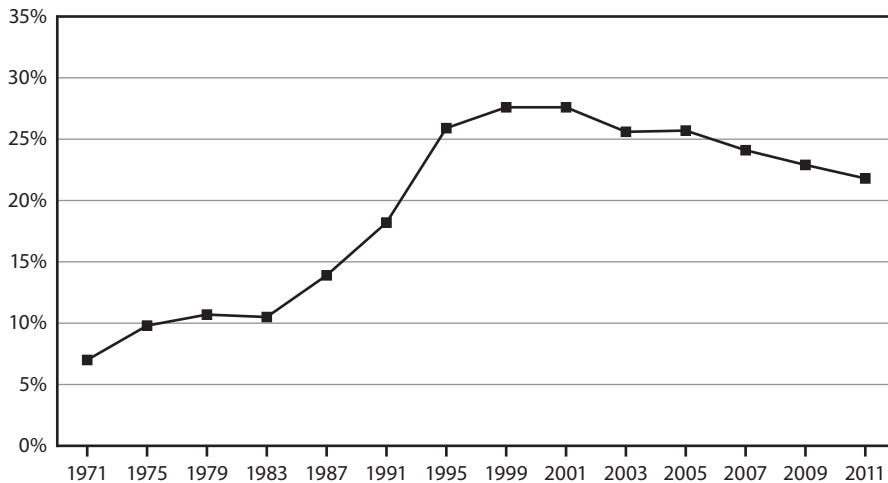
The first woman elected in her own right (i.e., without following her husband) into the governorship was Ella Grasso, who presided over the state of Connecticut from 1975 to 1980. Twenty-three of the women governors (including Grasso) who have served since the mid-1970s were elected in their own right. The other eight became governor through constitutional succession; only three of these eight were subsequently elected to full terms.

Six women (two Democrat, four Republican) serve as governors in 2011, falling short of the record nine women who served simultaneously in 2004 and again in 2007. With three women governors leaving office—two as a result of term limits and one by choice—the number of women governors did not change following the 2010 elections despite the election of three new women governors: Mary Fallin (R-Oklahoma), Nikki Haley (R-South Carolina), and Susana Martinez (R-New Mexico). These three join one woman—Jan Brewer (R-Arizona)—who sought and won re-election; and two women—Christine Gregoire (D-Washington) and Beverly Perdue (D-North Carolina)—whose seats were not up in 2010. Susana Martinez, a Latina, and

Table A: Women Governors Throughout History

<i>Name (Party-State)</i>	<i>Dates served</i>	<i>Special Circumstances</i>
Nellie Tayloe Ross (D-WY)	1925–1927	Won special election to replace deceased husband.
Miriam “Ma” Ferguson (D-TX)	1925–1927, 1933–1935	Inaugurated 15 days after Ross; elected as surrogate for husband who could not succeed himself.
Lurleen Wallace (D-AL)	1967–1968	Elected as surrogate for husband who could not succeed himself.
Ella Grasso (D-CT)	1975–1980	First woman elected governor in her own right; resigned for health reasons.
Dixy Lee Ray (D-WA)	1977–1981	
Vesta Roy (R-NH)	1982–1983	Elected to state senate and chosen as senate president; served as governor for seven days when incumbent died.
Martha Layne Collins (D-KY)	1984–1987	
Madeleine Kunin (D-VT)	1985–1991	First woman to serve three terms as governor.
Kay Orr (R-NE)	1987–1991	First Republican woman governor and first woman to defeat another woman in a gubernatorial race.
Rose Mofford (D-AZ)	1988–1991	Elected as secretary of state, succeeded governor who was impeached and convicted.
Joan Finney (D-KS)	1991–1995	First woman to defeat an incumbent governor.
Ann Richards (D-TX)	1991–1995	
Barbara Roberts (D-OR)	1991–1995	
Christine Todd Whitman (R-NJ)	1994–2001	Resigned to take presidential appointment as commissioner of the Environmental Protection Agency.
Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)	1997–2003	
Jane Dee Hull (R-AZ)	1997–2003	Elected as secretary of state, succeeded governor who resigned; later elected to a full term.
Nancy Hollister (R-OH)	1998–1999	Elected lieutenant governor; served as governor for 11 days when predecessor took U.S. Senate seat and successor had not yet been sworn in.
Jane Swift (R-MA)	2001–2003	Elected as lieutenant governor, succeeded governor who resigned for an ambassadorial appointment.
Judy Martz (R-MT)	2001–2005	
Olene Walker (R-UT)	2003–2005	Elected as lieutenant governor, succeeded governor who resigned to take a federal appointment.
Ruth Ann Minner (D-DE)	2001–2009	
Jennifer M. Granholm (D-MI)	2003–2011	
Linda Lingle (R-HI)	2003–2011	
Janet Napolitano (D-AZ)	2003–2009	First woman to succeed another woman as governor. Resigned to become U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security.
Kathleen Sebelius (D-KS)	2003–2009	Father was governor of Ohio. Resigned to become U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services.
Kathleen Blanco (D-LA)	2004–2008	
M. Jodi Rell (R-CT)	2004–2011	Elected as lieutenant governor, succeeded governor who resigned.
Christine Gregoire (D-WA)	2005–present	
Sarah Palin (R-AK)	2007–2009	Resigned.
Beverly Perdue (D-NC)	2009–present	
Jan Brewer (R-AZ)	2009–present	Elected as secretary of state, succeeded governor who resigned.
Mary Fallin (R-OK)	2011–present	
Nikki Haley (R-SC)	2011–present	First Asian (Indian) American woman to be elected governor.
Susana Martinez (R-NM)	2011–present	First Latina to be elected governor.

Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University.

Figure A: Proportion of Women Among Statewide Elective Officials

Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University.

Nikki Haley, an Indian-American, are the first two women of color ever to serve as governor of a state.

Other Statewide Elected and Appointed Officials in the Executive Branch

The states vary greatly in their numbers of statewide elected and appointed officials. For example, Maine and New Hampshire have only one statewide elected official, the governor, while North Dakota, at the other extreme, has 12.

The first woman to ever hold a major statewide office was Soledad C. Chacon (D-New Mexico) who was secretary of state in New Mexico from 1923 to 1926;⁵ Delaware, Kentucky, New York, South Dakota and Texas also had women secretaries of state in the 1920s. The first woman treasurer, Grace B. Urbahns (R-Indiana), also served during this time period, from 1926 to 1932.

Several more years passed before a woman became lieutenant governor. Matilda R. Wilson (R-Michigan) served briefly as lieutenant governor of Michigan in 1940 when she was appointed to fill an expiring term. However, the first woman elected as a lieutenant governor was Consuelo N. Bailey (R-Vermont) who served from 1955 to 1956. An additional three decades passed before a

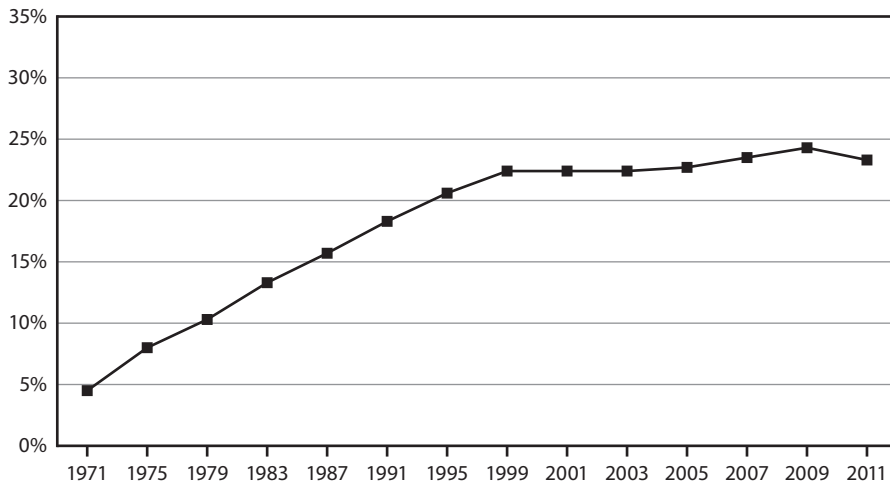
woman became attorney general of a state; the first was Arlene Violet (R-Rhode Island) who served from 1985 to 1987.

As evident from Figure A, the proportion of women among statewide elective officials has grown substantially since the early 1970s. From 1971 to 1983 the increases were small and incremental. Then, between 1983 and 2000, a period of significant growth, the number and proportion of women serving statewide almost tripled, reaching a record of 92 women, constituting 28.5 percent of all statewide elected officials, in 2000. Since 2000, the numbers and proportions have dropped notably.

The decline in women statewide elected officials continued following the 2010 elections. Despite the election of three new women governors, the number of women serving in statewide elective offices actually decreased by two, and fewer women, 69,⁶ hold statewide offices in 2011 than in 1995 when there were 84 women.

In early 2011, women hold 21.8 percent of the 317 statewide elective positions. In addition to the six women governors, 11 women (four Democrat, seven Republican) serve as lieutenant governors in the 44 states that elect lieutenant governors in statewide elections. This is considerably fewer than

Figure B: Proportion of Women Among State Legislators



Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University.

the record number of 19 women who served as lieutenant governors in 1995.

Other women statewide elected officials include: 11 secretaries of state (eight Democrats, three Republicans), seven state auditors (five Democrats, two Republicans), six state treasurers (five Democrats, one Republican), seven attorneys general (five Democrats, two Republicans), five chief education officials (two Democrats, two Republicans, one nonpartisan), four public service commissioners (three Democrats, one Republican), four state comptroller/controllers (one Democrat, three Republicans), two commissioners of insurance (one Democrat, one Republican), three corporation commissioners (one Democrat, two Republicans), one commissioner of labor (Republican), one railroad commissioner (Republican), and one public regulatory commissioner (Democrat). In addition to the two women of color who serve as governors, the women serving in statewide elective office include four African-Americans (the lieutenant governor of Florida, the attorney general of California, the state treasurer of Connecticut and the corporation commissioner of Arizona); three Latinas (the secretary of state of New Mexico, the attorney general of Nevada and the

superintendent of public instruction for Oregon); and one Native American (the public regulatory commissioner of New Mexico).

Women may be slightly better represented among top appointed officials in state government than among statewide elected officials, although it is not possible to know for certain since the most recent data available are from 2007. According to nationwide data collected by the Center on Women in Government and Civil Society at SUNY-Albany, in 2007 women constituted 32.2 percent of department heads with major policy-making responsibilities (including heads of departments, agencies, offices, boards, commissions and authorities) who were appointed by governors. This proportion represented a substantial increase over 1997, when women constituted just 23.2 percent of department heads. Women were even better represented in 2007 among top appointed advisers in governors' offices, with women holding 41.9 percent of these positions—a just slightly higher proportion than the 39.5 percent of these positions they held in 1997. Women of color are still a rarity among appointed officials, constituting just 6.3 percent of all department heads and top advisers in governors' offices in 2007.

Justices on Courts of Last Resort

The first woman to win election to a state court of last resort was Florence E. Allen, who was elected to the Ohio Supreme Court in 1922 and re-elected in 1928. Nevertheless, it was not until 1960 that a second woman, Lorna Lockwood of Arizona, was elected to a state supreme court. In 1965, Lockwood's colleagues on the Arizona Supreme Court selected her to be chief justice, thereby also making her the first woman in history to preside over a state court of last resort.⁷ She was followed by Susie Sharp of North Carolina, who in 1974 became the first woman to be elected by popular vote to be chief justice of a state court of last resort.⁸

In 2003, Petra Jimenez Maes of New Mexico, who currently serves as an associate justice, became the first Latina chief justice of a state supreme court. Similarly, in 2005, Leah Ward Sears of Georgia became the first African-American woman to preside over a state court of last resort.⁹

According to the National Center for State Courts, 111, or 32.6 percent, of the 341 justices on state courts of last resort in early 2011 are women.¹⁰ Of the 53 chief justices of these courts, 19, or 35.8 percent, are women. Women comprise a majority of justices on the courts of last resort in California, Michigan, Tennessee, Wisconsin and the District of Columbia. Women constitute at least 40 percent of the justices but less than a majority on an additional 17 courts of last resort.

Legislators

Even before 1920 when women won the right to vote across the country, a few women had been elected to legislatures in states that had granted the franchise to women. By 1971, the proportion of women serving in state legislatures across the country had grown to 4.5 percent, and over the years this proportion has increased more than fivefold. As Figure B illustrates, the proportion of women among legislators grew steadily throughout the 1970s and 1980s. However, the rate of growth slowed in the 1990s, and similar to the pattern for statewide elected officials, the numbers and proportions of women legislators nationally have leveled off since the late 1990s. Following the 2010 elections, the number of women legislators actually decreased quite dramatically from 1,811 in late 2010 to 1,718 in early 2011.

The proportion of women among legislators declined from 24.5 percent in 2010 to 23.3 percent in January 2011. Women now hold 415, or 21.1 percent, of all state senate seats and 1,303, or 24.1 percent,

of all state house seats across the country. The number of women who serve in state legislatures at the beginning of 2011 is only slightly greater than the number of women who served in 1999!

Great variation exists across the states in the proportion of legislators who are women. (See Table B) Colorado ranks first among the states with 40 percent women in its legislature, followed by Vermont (37.8 percent), Arizona (34.4 percent), Hawaii (32.9 percent), Minnesota (31.8 percent) and Washington (31.3 percent). With the exception of Minnesota and Illinois, all the states ranked in the top 10 in the proportion of women in their legislatures are located in the West or the Northeast. However, despite this geographic concentration, no easy explanation exists for why these states have risen to the top, and, indeed, scholars who have statistically examined the variation among the states in the representation of women in their legislatures have found no simple patterns.¹¹

At the other extreme, South Carolina with only 9.4 percent ranks last among the 50 states in the representation of women among its legislators. Accompanying South Carolina in the bottom five states are Oklahoma (12.8 percent), Alabama (13.6 percent), Mississippi (14.4 percent) and North Dakota (14.9 percent). Eight of the 10 states with the lowest proportions of women are Southern or border states. Only one Southern state—Florida ranked 20th with 24.4 percent women—is above the national average. As these rankings make clear, the South as a region lags the rest of the country in the representation of women within its legislatures.

Following gains in the 2010 elections, Republicans outnumber Democrats among state legislators nationwide, with 53.4 percent of all legislators Republican.¹² The opposite is true among women, however, where Democrats outnumber Republicans by a sizeable margin. Among women state senators nationwide, 62.5 percent are Democrats; among women state representatives, 60.9 percent are Democrats.

About one-fifth of women state legislators, 20.3 percent, are women of color. Of the 96 senators and 253 representatives serving in legislatures in early 2011, all but 18 are Democrats. African-American women hold 64 seats in state senates and 175 seats in state houses across 40 states. Latinas are concentrated in 21 states; they hold 21 senate and 47 house seats. Asian-American women count among their numbers eight senators and 27 representatives in 10 states, while Native American women hold three senate and four house seats in six states.

Table B: Women in State Legislatures

State	Senate			House			Legislature (both houses)	
	Democrats	Republicans	% Women	Democrats	Republicans	% Women	% Women	State rank (a)
Alabama.....	4	0	14.3(b)	9	5	13.3	13.6	48
Alaska.....	1	3	20.0	4	6	25.0	23.3	25
Arizona.....	5	6	36.7	7	13	33.3	34.4	3
Arkansas.....	5	3	22.9	11	10	21.0	21.5	31
California.....	9	2	27.5	16	5	26.3	26.7	16
Colorado.....	14	2	45.7	17	7	36.9	40.0	1
Connecticut.....	7	1	22.2	32	14	30.5	28.9	8
Delaware.....	4	3	33.3	7	2	22.0	25.8	18
Florida.....	6	7	32.5	11	15	21.7	24.4	20
Georgia.....	7	1	14.3	32	15	26.1	23.3	25
Hawaii.....	7	0	28.0	14	4	35.3	32.9	4
Idaho.....	3	6	25.7	8	11	27.1	26.7	16
Illinois.....	9	5	23.7	27	11	32.2	28.8	9
Indiana.....	4	6	20.0	11	10	21.0	20.7	36
Iowa.....	4	4	16.0	16	8	24.0	21.3	32
Kansas.....	5	9	35.0	14	18	25.6	27.9	13
Kentucky.....	3	3	15.8	11	8	19.0	18.1	41
Louisiana.....	6	2	20.5	11	4	14.3	16.0	43
Maine.....	4	3	20.0	27	18	29.8	28.0	12
Maryland.....	10	1	23.4	35	12	33.3	30.9	7
Massachusetts.....	11	0	27.5	31	5	22.5	23.5	22
Michigan.....	2	2	10.5	16	11	24.5	20.9	35
Minnesota.....	11	10	31.3	25	18	32.1	31.8	5
Mississippi.....	3	1	7.7	17	4	17.2	14.4	47
Missouri.....	3	2	14.1	23	18	25.2	23.4	24
Montana.....	6	1	14.0	19	9	28.0	23.3	25
Nebraska (c).....	...Nonpartisan...		22.4	.....Unicameral.....			22.4	29
Nevada.....	4	2	28.6	11	1	28.6	28.6	10
New Hampshire.....	3	3	25.0	38	56	23.5	23.6	21
New Jersey.....	7	3	25.0	16	8	30.0	28.3	11
New Mexico.....	8	2	23.8	12	9	30.0	27.7	15
New York.....	8	3	17.7	30	7	24.7	22.6	28
North Carolina.....	3	3	12.0	22	10	26.7	22.4	29
North Dakota.....	3	3	12.8	3	12	16.0	14.9	46
Ohio.....	5	3	24.2	12	8	20.2	21.2	33
Oklahoma.....	3	1	8.3	4	11	14.9	12.8	49
Oregon.....	7	2	30.0	11	5	26.7	27.8	14
Pennsylvania.....	4	6	20.0	13	19	15.8	16.6	42
Rhode Island.....	9	1	26.3	17	2	25.3	25.7	19
South Carolina.....	0	0	0.0	8	8	12.9	9.4	50
South Dakota.....	1	6	20.0	4	9	20.0(b)	20.0	37
Tennessee.....	4	3	21.2	11	6	17.2	18.2	40
Texas.....	3	3	19.4	14	18	21.3	21.0	34
Utah.....	4	1	17.2	9	5	18.7	18.3	39
Vermont.....	9	2	36.7	42	11	38.0(d)	37.8	2
Virginia.....	7	1	20.0	13	6	19.0	19.3	38
Washington.....	11	6	34.7	19	10	30.0	31.3	6
West Virginia.....	0	2	5.9	13	6	19.0	15.7	44
Wisconsin.....	3	5	24.2	16	7	23.2	23.5	22
Wyoming.....	0	1	3.3	3	10	21.7	15.6	45

Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University. Figures are as of January 2011.

Key:

(a) States share the same rank if their proportions of women

legislators are exactly equal or round off to be equal (CA, ID; MA, WI; AK, GA, MT; NE, NC).

(b) Includes one Independent.

(c) Nebraska has a unicameral legislature with nonpartisan elections.

(d) Includes two members of the Progressive Party.

Looking Toward the Future

Although women have made substantial progress over time in increasing their presence in state government, the leveling off in the decade of the 2000s and the decline following the 2010 elections in

women’s numbers among statewide elective officials and state legislators are troubling developments. At a minimum, these developments provide evidence that increases over time are not inevitable; there is no invisible hand at work to ensure that more

Table C: Women Statewide Elected Officials 2011

<i>State</i>	<i>Governor</i>	<i>Lieutenant Governor</i>	<i>Attorney General</i>	<i>Secretary of State</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
Alabama.....	★	W	★	W	★
Alaska.....	★	★	★	...	...
Arizona.....	W	...	★	★	★
Arkansas.....	★	★	★	★	W
California.....	★	★	W	W	★
Colorado.....	★	★	★	★	★
Connecticut.....	★	W	★	W	W
Delaware.....	★	★	★	...	★
Florida.....	★	W	W	...	★
Georgia.....	★	★	★	★	...
Hawaii.....	★	★	...	...	...
Idaho.....	★	★	★	★	★
Illinois.....	★	W	W	★	★
Indiana.....	★	W	★	★	★
Iowa.....	★	W	★	★	★
Kansas.....	★	★	★	★	★
Kentucky.....	★	★	★	W	★
Louisiana.....	★	★	★	★	★
Maine.....	★	...	...	...	...
Maryland.....	★	★	...	...	...
Massachusetts.....	★	★	W	★	★
Michigan.....	★	★	★	W	...
Minnesota.....	★	W	W	★	...
Mississippi.....	★	★	★	★	★
Missouri.....	★	★	★	W	★
Montana.....	★	★	★	W	...
Nebraska.....	★	★	★	★	...
Nevada.....	★	★	W	★	W
New Hampshire.....	★	...	...	...	...
New Jersey.....	★	W	...	...	...
New Mexico.....	W	★	★	W	★
New York.....	★	★	★	...	...
North Carolina.....	W	★	★	W	W
North Dakota.....	★	★	★	★	W
Ohio.....	★	W	★	★	★
Oklahoma.....	W	★	★	...	★
Oregon.....	★	...	★	W	★
Pennsylvania.....	★	★	W	...	★
Rhode Island.....	★	W	★	★	W
South Carolina.....	W	★	★	★	★
South Dakota.....	★	★	★	★	★
Tennessee.....	★	...	...	...	...
Texas.....	★	★	★	...	...
Utah.....	★	★	★	...	★
Vermont.....	★	★	★	★	★
Virginia.....	★	★	★	...	...
Washington.....	W	★	★	★	★
West Virginia.....	★	...	★	W	★
Wisconsin.....	★	W	★	★	★
Wyoming.....	★	...	...	★	★

Source: Data for elected officials are current as of January 2011 and have been provided by the Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University.

Key:

★ — Denotes that this position is filled through a statewide election.

W — Denotes that this position is filled through a statewide election and is held by a woman.

... — Denotes that this position is not filled through a statewide election.

women will seek and be elected to office with each subsequent election.

The leveling off and recent decline has implications for women’s representation not only among state legislators and nongubernatorial statewide

officeholders, but also among governors and members of Congress. Probably the most striking positive development for women in state government in recent years has been the increase in women governors. Of the 34 women governors across the entire

DEMOGRAPHICS

history of our country, a majority—20—have served all or part of their terms during the first few years of the 21st century. Of the six sitting governors, four held statewide elective office before running for governor; two were lieutenant governors, one served as an attorney general and one was a secretary of state. Four of the current women governors also served in their state legislatures. Similarly, many of the women who have run for Congress gained experience and visibility in state government before seeking federal office. Of the 71 women members of the U.S. House, 35 served in their state houses, 20 in their state senates, and six in statewide elective offices. Of the 17 women U.S. senators, seven served in their state legislatures, three in statewide elective offices, and two in an appointed state cabinet post.

Activists who are interested in increasing the numbers of women serving in office often refer to a political “pipeline” through which potential women candidates for higher level office come forward from among the pool of women who have gained experience at lower levels of office. Clearly, the pipeline has worked well in the case of the current women governors and members of Congress. But what if the pool of candidates in statewide and state legislative offices continues to stagnate or decline? Then, the number of politically experienced women with the visibility and contacts necessary to run for governor or a seat in the U.S. House or Senate is also likely to stagnate or decline.

While several different factors may be responsible for the recent leveling off in the numbers of women in statewide elective and state legislative office, a lack of effective recruitment certainly is one of the most important. Statistics on the number of women candidates over time seem clearly to point to a problem with recruitment. For example, even though a record 2,537 women were general election candidates for the 6,115 seats up for election in state legislatures in 2010, this was only 162 more women than in 1992.¹³ Clearly, then, a major factor contributing to the leveling off in the number of women officeholders is a lack of greater numbers of women candidates.

Research has found that women who run for office are less likely than their male counterparts to be “self-starters.” Women more often than men seek office only after receiving encouragement from others. In a 2008 nationwide study of state legislators, scholars at the Center for American Women and Politics found only 26 percent of women state

representatives, compared with 43 percent of their male counterparts, said it was entirely their own idea to run for their first elective office. In contrast, 53 percent of women state representatives, compared with 28 percent of men, said they had not thought seriously about running for office until someone else suggested it.¹⁴ Similarly, a study of major party candidates in state legislative races conducted a few years earlier found only 11 percent of women, compared with 37 percent of men, were self-starters who said it was entirely their own idea to run for the legislature; in contrast, 37 percent of women, compared with 18 percent of men, reported they had not seriously thought about running until someone else suggested it.¹⁵ Another recent study of people in the professions from which political candidates are most likely to emerge (i.e., law, business, education and politics) found notably fewer women (43 percent) than men (59 percent) had ever considered running for office.¹⁶

Findings such as these suggest the future for women in state government will depend, at least in part, upon the strength of efforts to actively recruit women for both elected and appointed positions. Legislative leaders, public officials, party leaders and advocacy organizations can help by renewing their commitment and augmenting their efforts to identify and support potential women candidates, especially in winnable races with open seats or vulnerable incumbents. Recruitment efforts may well be key to determining whether the numbers of women officials continue to stagnate or again begin to move steadily upward as they did in earlier decades.

Notes

¹ All statistical information in this essay, unless otherwise noted, has been provided by the Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University. Additional information is available at www.cawp.rutgers.edu. This essay would not be possible without the tireless efforts of Gilda Morales, who oversees the collection of data on women officeholders for the Center for American Women and Politics. In addition to Gilda, I would like to thank Linda Phillips from the Center for American Women and Politics and Joan Cochet from the National Center for State Courts for their assistance with the data for this essay.

² Sila Calderon (Popular Democratic Party) served as governor of Puerto Rico from 2001 to 2004.

³ Martin Gruber, *Women in American Politics* (Oshkosh, WI: Academia Press, 1968), 189.

⁴ Gruber, 190.

⁵ Women did serve as superintendents of public instruction in a few states earlier than this.

⁶These 68 women serving in statewide elective office include 38 Democrats, 29 Republicans, and one nonpartisan.

⁷Gruberg, 190, 192.

⁸Susie Sharp (1906–1996), North Carolina History Project. <http://www.northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/40/entry>.

⁹Information provided by the National Center for State Courts.

¹⁰Unlike all the other statistics in this essay, these numbers from the National Center for State Courts include the District of Columbia as well as the 50 states.

¹¹See, for example, Barbara Norrander and Clyde Wilcox, “The Geography of Gender Power: Women in State Legislatures,” in Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox, ed., *Women and Elective Office: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹²This proportion is calculated from data in a table entitled “State and Legislative Partisan Composition Following the 2010 Elections,” dated Dec. 23, 2010, on the website of the National Conference of State Legislatures. http://www.ncsl.org/documents/statevote/2010_Legis_and_State_post.pdf.

¹³There were 2,302 women candidates for state legislative seats in 1992; 2,222 in 1994; 2,215 in 1996; 2,213 in 1998; 2,228 in 2000; 2,348 in 2002; 2,220 in 2004; 2,429 in 2006; and 2,337 in 2008.

¹⁴Kira Sanbonmatsu, Susan J. Carroll and Debbie Walsh, *Poised to Run: Women’s Pathways to the State Legislatures* (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for American Women and Politics, 2009), 8. <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/research/reports/PoisedtoRun.pdf>.

¹⁵Gary Moncrief, Peverill Squire, and Malcolm Jewell, *Who Runs for the Legislature?* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 2001), Table 5.5, 102.

¹⁶Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard L. Fox, *It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don’t Run for Office* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 44.

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