



CAWP

Election Watch

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Election Results Show Advances for Women Some Races Still Pending

Election 2006 resulted in several advances for women, according to the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Most significantly, Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) is poised to become the first woman Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. But there were also increases to new record numbers of women in the U.S. Senate and House, and the number of women governors edged up by one.

"This year's gains resulted from the success of Democratic women," noted CAWP director Debbie Walsh. "It's also an historic moment for women in politics, as we anticipate our first woman House Speaker. But it was a tough year for Republican women, as it was for their party in general, with several significant defeats. In particular, the loss of Nancy Johnson, the senior Republican woman in the House, is a major blow."

U.S. Senate

When the new Congress convenes, a record total of 16 women (11D, 5R) will serve in the Senate. Two new women, both Democrats, won Senate seats. They are Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), who won an open seat, and Claire McCaskill (D-MO), who defeated an incumbent. They join the six incumbents who won re-election: Maria Cantwell (D-WA); Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY); Dianne Feinstein (D-CA); Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX); Olympia Snowe (R-ME); and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI). Also remaining in the Senate are eight women who were not up for election this year.

U.S. House of Representatives

Ten new women (8D, 2R) have been elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. 57 women incumbents were re-elected. In addition, five races remained too close to call as of Wednesday afternoon; four of these races involve incumbent Republican women. Three of the undecided races are woman-versus-woman. An additional race will be decided in a December run-off.

Setting a new record, at least 70 women will serve in the U.S. House as of January, 2007. They include:

- 57 (42D, 15R) re-elected incumbents
- 10 (8D, 2R) newly-elected women
- 3 winners of still-undecided woman-versus-woman races.

A higher number could result if women win any of the remaining outstanding races. In addition, three non-voting delegates from Guam, the Virgin Islands, and Washington, DC were re-elected.

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The new women in the U.S. House are: Michele Bachmann (R-MN); Nancy Boyda (D-KS), Kathy Castor (D-FL); Yvette Clarke (D-NY); Mary Fallin (R-OK); Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY); Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ); Mazie Hirono (D-HI); Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH); and Betty Sutton (D-OH). Boyda, Gillibrand and Shea-Porter defeated incumbents; the other new women won open seats.

Races listed as still too close to call are in New Mexico, Ohio (two races), Washington and Wyoming. In addition, Karen Carter (D-LA) was one of the two top finishers in the November 7th Louisiana District 2 congressional primary; she faces off against incumbent William Jefferson in a December run-off.

Four incumbent Republican congresswomen lost their seats. They are: Nancy Johnson (R-CT); Anne Northup (R-KY); Sue Kelly (R-NY); and Melissa Hart (R-PA). Two incumbent women, Katherine Harris (R-FL) and Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), were not general election candidates for the House.

Note: In a special election in Texas to fill out the remainder of Rep. Tom DeLay's term, Shelley Sekula-Gibbs (R) was the winner. She will serve only until January, having lost the election for a full term.

Governor

One new woman was elected governor: Sarah Palin (R-AK). She joins five incumbents who were re-elected: Janet Napolitano (D-AZ); M. Jodi Rell (R-CT); Linda Lingle (R-HI); Kathleen Sebelius (D-KS); and Jennifer Granholm (D-MI), and three incumbents who were not up for re-election. The total number of women governors as of 2007 will be 9 (6 D, 3 R), tying the previous record set in 2004. Six is the largest number of women to win gubernatorial races in one election year.

About CAWP

The Center for American Women and Politics, a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is a university-based research, education and public service center. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women's changing relationship to politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life. CAWP is a leading authority in its field and a respected bridge between the academic and political worlds.

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