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For immediate release

Contact: Kathy Kleeman (848) 932-8717

Record Number of Women Freeholders Will Serve in 2018

When New Jersey counties swear in their boards of freeholders in January, a record 41 women will be included. The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, counts a total of 15 winners of 2017 elections who will join 26 holdovers. Women will be 30 percent of all freeholders serving in 2018.

CAWP has been tracking the number of women freeholders since 1985. The previous record number, set in 2006 and reached again in 2017, was 38 (28 percent).

A total of 14 women of color will serve as freeholders in 2018, also a record. They include six Black women, five Latinas, and three Asian-American women. The previous peak number of women of color was 12, set in 2017.

NJ Freeholders	Candidates			Winners		
	D	R	Total	D	R	Total
Incumbent	10	2	12	10	1	11
Challenger	4	7	11	1	0	1
Open Seat	7	4	11	2	1	3
Total	21	13	34	13	2	15
			<i>Holdovers</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>26</i>
			Serving in 2018	26	15	41

Newcomers to the Atlantic County

Board of Chosen Freeholders include two women who ran in response to a Facebook post by Freeholder John Carman making fun of the Women’s March in January. Ashley Bennett defeated Carman, and Caren Fitzpatrick also took the march itself, and Carman’s post, as motivation to run.

“Across the country, women distressed by the 2016 election and subsequent events stepped forward to run for office,” notes CAWP director Debbie Walsh. “New Jersey and Virginia were the first states to hold elections after 2016, and newcomer women were prominent among the winners.”

CAWP saw signs of the new interest in early 2017, when a record number of women attended Ready to Run® New Jersey, the Center’s bipartisan campaign training. Partners in CAWP’s Ready to Run® National Network reported similar surges, and the record number of women CAWP has counted as [potential candidates in 2018](#) suggest that the phenomenon is not abating.

Ready to Run® New Jersey will take place again on March 9-10, 2018 on the Rutgers-New Brunswick campus, offering Garden State women an opportunity to learn about running for office, working on campaigns, and getting appointed to office. The program includes pre-conference sessions designed for women of color. Information is available [here](#).

About CAWP

The [Center for American Women and Politics \(CAWP\)](#), a unit of the [Eagleton Institute of Politics](#) at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is nationally recognized as the leading source of scholarly research and current data about American women’s political participation. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women’s participation in politics and government and to enhance women’s influence and leadership in public life. CAWP’s education and outreach programs translate research findings into action, addressing women’s under-representation in political leadership with effective, imaginative programs serving a variety of audiences. As the world has watched Americans considering female candidates for the nation’s highest offices, CAWP’s over four decades of analyzing and interpreting women’s participation in American politics have provided a foundation and context for the discussion.

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