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For immediate release

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Number of Women Seeking State Legislative Seats in 2016 Edges to New High

(New Brunswick, NJ) In 2016, 2,602 (1702D, 891R, 5 NP, 4 I) women are state legislative nominees in the 44 states holding such elections in 2016, surpassing the previous record by 65, 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.

This year, 482 (297D, 180R, 5NP) women are nominees for state senate seats and 2120 (1,405D, 711R, 4I) are nominees for state house seats. The count includes only major party nominees (1,702D, 891R), non-partisan nominees for Nebraska's unicameral non-partisan legislature (5), and third-party nominees who are incumbents (4 independents).

Four hundred and ninety-nine (308D, 183R, 7NP, 1I) additional women are holdovers who are guaranteed seats in 2017. The highest number of women nominees for state legislative seats since CAWP began tracking these numbers was 2,537, set in 2010 – a year in which 46 states held legislative elections. Thus, even in a year where fewer state legislative seats are being contested, more women will be on the ballot.

“The number of women in state legislatures has been stuck within a narrow range just under 25 percent for almost two decades,” said CAWP director Debbie Walsh. “Perhaps this year’s step upward will mean resumed progress toward better representation for women in statehouses around the country. Women are more than half the population, so we would certainly expect women to be more than a quarter of state legislators.”

The number of Democratic women state legislative nominees in 2016 (1702) is the greatest recorded, up from the previous high of 1625 in election 2014. The number of Republican women nominated this year (891) is up only one from the number on the ballot in 2014 (890). This does not mark a record high for Republican women state legislative nominees since CAWP began tracking these numbers in 1992.

Currently, state legislatures include 1,805 women, or 24.4 percent of the 7,393 total legislators. There are 443 women in state senates (22.5 percent) and 1,362 women in state houses or assemblies (25.2 percent).

A full analysis of the state legislative outlook is available [here](#).

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.