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Women in State Legislatures 2015: Numbers Still Stuck

As state legislatures convene in 2015, the number of women lawmakers has dropped slightly: **a total of 1,785 women will serve in the new year (24.2 percent of all legislators)**, compared with 1,791 at the end of 2014, according to the Center for American Women and Politics, a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Consistent with patterns for other levels of office in a Republican-trending year, Democratic women lost ground, while Republican women made slight gains. However, since this year’s candidates included many more Democratic than Republican women, the result was a net loss of women.

“Women remain perched on the same plateau where they’ve been stuck for several years,” observed CAWP director Debbie Walsh. “To climb higher, many more women candidates, and particularly more Republican women, need to run.”

A total of 2,527 women (1,623D, 893R, 7NP, 4I) were general election candidates for state legislatures across the country in 2014: 452 (293D, 151R, 7NP, 1I) for state senate seats and 2,075 (1,330D, 742R, 3I) for state houses/assemblies.

Combining the women who won state legislative elections in 2014 with holdovers who will continue to serve, **there will be 1,785 women serving** (1,073D, 698R, 10NP, 4I), including **435 senators** (261D, 163R, 10NP, 1I) and **1,350 house or assembly members** (812D, 535R, 3I) . Among all women legislators, Democrats remain a much larger proportion than Republicans (60% versus 39%) but the gap between women of the two parties will shrink from the 2014 figures (64% Democrats versus 36% Republicans).

Colorado will continue to lead all states with 42% women legislators, with Vermont next at 41%. Louisiana and Oklahoma will remain at the bottom of the heap, each with under 13% women.

Women Legislators 2015 – Top 10

Colorado	42.0%
Vermont	41.1%
Arizona	34.4%
Minnesota	33.3%
Washington	32.7%
Maryland	31.9%
Nevada	31.7%
Oregon	31.1%
Illinois	31.1%
Montana	30.7%

Women Legislators 2015 – Bottom 10

Mississippi	17.2%
Kentucky	16.7%
Virginia	16.4%
Utah	15.4%
Alabama	14.3%
West Virginia	14.2%
South Carolina	13.5%
Wyoming	13.3%
Oklahoma	12.8%
Louisiana	12.5%

(more)

Figures are accurate as of the date of this release, but changes are likely due to appointments, resignations and other unpredictable events.

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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