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For Women in State Legislatures and Statewide Offices, Not Much Change

New Brunswick, NJ-- With all races now decided, the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) reports only minimal growth for women in state legislatures and statewide office. “It’s disappointing that women have failed to build their numbers significantly in legislatures and statewide executive office,” said CAWP director Debbie Walsh. “This is a trend that began in the 1990s and, sadly, continues today.”

State Legislatures

The proportion of women in state legislatures in 2017 will be 24.8 percent, according to CAWP, a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

A total of 1,532 women have been elected this year (915D, 600R, 3 independents, 1 Working Families Party members, 4 Progressives, 9 elected in non-partisan contests). An additional 301 women are holdovers who were not up for election this year (192D, 104R, 1 independent, 4NP). Thus, a total of 1,832 women will serve.

Party breakdowns among the women legislators will not shift substantially; the proportion of Democrats among all women lawmakers will remain near 60 percent, while Republicans will be almost 39 percent, with the remainder of seats held by independents, members of other parties, and the non-partisan senators in Nebraska’s unicameral legislature.

Party Breakdown Among All Women Legislators

	Democrats	Republicans	Non-Partisans	Other**	Total women
2017	1,107	704	13	9	1,833
	60.4%	38.6%	0.7%	0.5%	100%
2016	1,079	707	11	8	1,805
	59.8%	39.2%	0.6%	0.4%	100%

** Includes Working Families Party, Progressive Party, and independents

Republican women continue to lag behind Democratic women as a proportion of their party’s legislators. Democratic women will constitute approximately 35% percent of all Democratic legislators, while GOP women will be about 17% percent of all Republican state lawmakers.

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Statewide Elective Executive Office

In contests for statewide elective executive offices, the number of women who will serve in 2017 is 75 (32D, 42R, 1NP), compared with the 2016 figure of 75 (33D, 41R, 1NP), or 24 percent of the 312 positions. The total number of women governors as of 2017 will be 5 (2D, 3R). Two Democratic women were nominees for governor; incumbent Kate Brown (D-OR) won and Sue Minter (D-VT) lost. Brown rejoins Republican women holdovers in NM, OK, and SC and a Democratic holdover in RI.

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.

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