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Contact: Kathy Kleeman (kleeman@eagleton.rutgers.edu)  
(732) 932-9384, ext. 231

## **NJ Congressional Delegation to Include At Least One Woman: Primaries Produce Six Women Candidates, One Woman-vs-Woman Race**

With women securing both major-party nominations in New Jersey's 12th congressional district, the Garden State congressional delegation will go co-ed for the first time since 2003, according to the Center for American Women and Politics. A total of six women (3D, 3R) will be on the November ballot in four NJ districts.

Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson Coleman (D) will face off against Dr. Alieta Eck (R) for the Central NJ seat being vacated by Representative Rush Holt (D). Other women seeking congressional seats include Aimee Belgard (D), running for the open 3rd district seat; Janice Kovach (D), who will face incumbent Rep. Leonard Lance in the 7th district; Yolanda Dentley (R), seeking to defeat incumbent Democrat Donald Payne Jr.; and Dierdre Paul (R), opposing incumbent Rep. Bill Pascrell in the 9th district.

The last woman in New Jersey's congressional delegation was Rep. Marge Roukema, who served her North Jersey district from 1981-2003. To date, a total of five women (3R, 2D) have represented New Jersey in the U.S. House: Roukema; Millicent Fenwick (R-1975-83); Helen Stevenson Meyner (D-1975-79); Florence Price Dwyer (R-1957-73); and Mary Teresa Norton (D-1925-51). The state has never sent a woman to the U.S. Senate.

The six women candidates this year ties the largest number of women ever nominated for congressional seats in New Jersey. The last time six women ran was in 2000 (3D, 3R). Of those candidates, only Roukema won.

### **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.