

WOMEN IN STATE LEGISLATURES 2003

In 2003, 1,654, or 22.4% of the 7,382 state legislators in the United States are women. Women currently hold 405, or 20.5%, of the 1,971 state senate seats and 1,249, or 23.1%, of the 5,411 state house or assembly seats. Since 1971, the number of women serving in state legislatures has increased more than four-fold.

Year	Women Legislators	% of Total Legislators	Year	Women Legislators	% of Total Legislators	Year	Women Legislators	% of Total Legislators
1971	344	4.5	1985	1,103	14.8	1997	1,605	21.6
1973	424	5.6	1987	1,170	15.7	1998	1,617	21.8
1975	604	8.0	1989	1,270	17.0	1999	1,664	22.4
1977	688	9.1	1991	1,368	18.3	2000	1,670	22.5
1979	770	10.3	1993	1,524	20.5	2001	1,666	22.4
1981	908	12.1	1995	1,532	20.6	2002	1,682	22.7
1983	991	13.3	1996	1,539	20.7	2003	1,654	22.4

The party breakdown for women serving in state legislatures in 2003 is:

	Total Legislators		State Senators		State Reps.	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Democrats	999	60.4	257	63.5	742	59.4
Republicans	643	38.9	138	34.1	505	40.4
Nonpartisans*	9	0.5	9	2.2	---	---
Progressives	1	0.1	---	---	1	0.1
Independents	2	0.1	1	0.2	1	0.1
Total	1,654	100.0	405	100.0	1,249	100.0

The ten states with the highest percentages of women state legislators are:

State	% Women	State	% Women
Washington	36.7	Oregon	30.0
Colorado	34.0	New Mexico	29.5
Maryland	33.5	Connecticut	29.4
Vermont	31.1	Delaware	29.0
California	30.0	Nevada	28.6

The ten states with the lowest percentages of women state legislators are:

State	% Women	State	% Women
South Carolina	9.4	Pennsylvania	13.8
Alabama	10.0	North Dakota	15.6
Kentucky	10.9	Virginia	15.7
Mississippi	12.1	Louisiana	16.0
Oklahoma	12.1	South Dakota	16.2

Women in State Legislative Leadership

Three women serve as presidents of state senates: Mary Kramer (R-IA), Beverly Daggett (D-ME) and April Brimmer Kunz (R-WY). Four women are speakers of state houses: Lola Spradley (R-CO), Moira K. Lyons (D-CT), Catherine Hanaway (R-MO), and Karen Minnis (R-OR).

Women of Color in State Legislatures

Of the 1,654 women legislators serving nationwide, 300 or 18.1% are women of color. They include 83 senators and 217 representatives; all but 18 are Democrats. Women of color constitute 4.1% of the total 7,382 state legislators.

The First Women Legislators

In 1894, the first women state legislators were elected to serve in the United States. Three Republican women were elected to the Colorado House of Representatives: Clara Cressingham; Carrie C. Holly; Frances Klock. The first woman state senator, Democrat Martha Hughes Cannon, was elected to the Utah State Senate in 1896.*

* In Nebraska, where the legislature is unicameral, legislators are elected on a nonpartisan basis.

* Source: Utah Governor's Commission for Women.

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WOMEN IN STATE LEGISLATURES 2003

STATE	STATE	SENATE		TOTAL WOMEN/ TOTAL SENATE	HOUSE		TOTAL WOMEN/ TOTAL HOUSE	TOTAL WOMEN/ TOTAL LEGIS.	% WOMEN OVERALL
	RANK	D	R		D	R			
AL	49	2	1	3/35	9	2	11/105	14/140	10.0
AK	31	3	1	4/20	3	5	8/40	12/60	20.0
AZ	12	3	5	8/30	8	9	17/60	25/90	27.8
AR	40	5	2	7/35	9	6	15/100	22/135	16.3
CA*	5	11	0	11/40	20	5	25/80	36/120	30.0
CO	2	9	1	10/35	14	10	24/65	34/100	34.0
CT	8	6	2	8/36	29	18	47/151	55/187	29.4
DE	9	4	3	7/21	4	7	11/41	18/62	29.0
FL	22	5	5	10/40	15	14	29/120	39/160	24.4
GA	26	11	2	13/56	29	9	38/180	51/236	21.6
HI	13	7	0	7/25	8	6	14/51	21/76	27.6
ID	19	1	3	4/35	9	15	24/70	28/105	26.7
IL	11	8	4	12/59	25	13	38/118	50/177	28.2
IN	36	7	6	13/50	7	7	14/100	27/150	18.0
IA*	27	1	6	7/50	16	9	25/100	32/150	21.3
KS*	16	3	7	10/40	16	19	35/125	45/165	27.3
KY	48	0	4	4/38	9	2	11/100	15/138	10.9
LA	42	3	0	3/39	13	7	20/105	23/144	16.0
ME**	18	9	4	13/35	26	11	37/151	50/186	26.9
MD	3	12	3	15/47	37	11	48/141	63/188	33.5
MA	20	11	1	12/40	34	6	40/160	52/200	26.0
MI	23	5	6	11/38	15	9	24/110	35/148	23.6
MN*	14	11	11 (1 IP)	23/67	16	16	32/134	55/201	27.4
MS*	47	5	0	5/52	12	4	16/122	21/174	12.1
MO*	28	4	3	7/34	24	11	35/163	42/197	21.3
MT	21	7	1	8/50	19	10	29/100	37/150	24.7
NE	35	NONPARTISAN		9/49	UNICAMERAL		9/49	18.4	
NV	10	4	3	7/21	8	3	11/42	18/63	28.6
NH*	15	2	2	4/24	60	52	112/400	116/424	27.4
NJ	39	3	2	5/40	9	6	15/80	20/120	16.7
NM	7	7	5	12/42	11	10	21/70	33/112	29.5
NY	24	6	5	11/62	28	8	36/150	47/212	22.2
NC	29	5	2	7/50	17	11	28/120	35/170	20.6
ND	44	3	2	5/47	6	11	17/94	22/141	15.6
OH	32	3	0	3/33	12	11	23/99	26/132	19.7
OK*	46	5	2	7/48	6	5	11/101	18/149	12.1
OR*	5	6	1	7/30	11	9	20/60	27/90	30.0
PA	45	5	3	8/50	10	17	27/203	35/253	13.8
RI	30	7	2	9/38	11	3	14/75	23/113	20.4
SC	50	2	0	2/46	7	7	14/124	16/170	9.4
SD	41	0	4	4/35	4	9	13/70	17/105	16.2
TN	38	4	1	5/33	12	6	18/99	23/132	17.4
TX	33	2	2	4/31	11	20	31/150	35/181	19.3
UT	25	3	2	5/29	7	11	18/75	23/104	22.1
VT	4	8	1	9/30	26	19 (1 Prg, 1 I)	47/150	56/180	31.1
VA	43	7	0	7/40	7	8	15/100	22/140	15.7
WA	1	15	6	21/49	21	12	33/98	54/147	36.7
WV	34	1	4	5/34	14	6	20/100	25/134	18.7
WI*	16	3	6	9/33	12	15	27/99	36/132	27.3
WY	37	3	2	5/30	6	5	11/60	16/90	17.8
		257	138	405/1,97	742	505	1,249/5,411	1,654/7,382	22.4
		(9 nonpartisans)			(1 Progressive)				
		(1 Independence Party)			(1 Independent)				

* States where percentages of women are exactly the same (CA & OR; KS & WI) are ranked the same; states where percentages round out to the same (IA & MO; MN & NH; MS & OK), but are not exactly the same, are ranked differently.

** In addition, one woman in Maine was elected in November 1997 as a non-voting member representing the Penobscot Nation.