

WOMEN IN STATE LEGISLATURES 2011

In 2011, 1,750, or 23.7% of the 7,382 state legislators in the United States are women. Women currently hold 429, or 21.8%, of the 1,971 state senate seats and 1,321, or 24.4%, of the 5,411 state house or assembly seats. Since 1971, the number of women serving in state legislatures has more than quintupled.

Year	Women Legislators	% of Total Legislators	Year	Women Legislators	% of Total Legislators	Year	Women Legislators	% of Total Legislators
1971	344	4.5	1989	1,270	17.0	2002	1,682	22.7
1973	424	5.6	1991	1,368	18.3	2003	1,654	22.4
1975	604	8.0	1993	1,524	20.5	2004	1,659	22.5
1977	688	9.1	1995	1,532	20.6	2005	1,674	22.7
1979	770	10.3	1997	1,605	21.6	2006	1,681	22.8
1981	908	12.1	1998	1,617	21.8	2007	1,732	23.5
1983	991	13.3	1999	1,664	22.4	2008	1,751	23.7
1985	1,103	14.8	2000	1,670	22.5	2009	1,797	24.3
1987	1,170	15.7	2001	1,666	22.4	2010	1,809	24.5
						2011	1,750	23.7

The party breakdown for women serving in state legislatures in 2011 is:

	Total Legislators		State Senators		State Reps.	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Democrats	1,060	60.5	267	62.2	793	60.0
Republicans	672	38.4	150	35.0	522	39.5
Nonpartisans*	11	0.6	11	2.6	---	---
Progressives	4	0.2	---	---	4	0.3
Independent	3	0.2	1	0.2	2	0.2
Total	1,750	99.9	429	100.0	1,321	100.0

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

State	% Women	State	% Women
Colorado	41.0	Minnesota	31.3
Vermont	38.3	Illinois	31.1
Arizona	34.4	Maryland	30.9
Hawaii	34.2	Connecticut	29.9
Washington	32.0	Maine	29.0

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

State	% Women	State	% Women
South Carolina	9.4	North Dakota	14.9
Oklahoma	12.8	Louisiana	16.0
Alabama	13.6	Utah	17.3
Wyoming	14.4	Pennsylvania	17.4
Mississippi	14.9	West Virginia	17.9

Women in State Legislative Leadership

Three women serve as presidents of senates: Michelle L. Fischbach (R-MN), Therese Murray (D-MA), and M. Teresa Paiva-Weed (D-RI). Two women serve as speakers of state houses: Rebecca Lockhart (R-UT) and Sheila Y. Oliver (D-NJ).

Women of Color in State Legislatures

Of the 1,750 women legislators serving nationwide, 348 or 19.9% are women of color. They include 100 senators and 248 representatives; 330 are Democrats, 16 are Republicans, and two are non-partisan. Women of color constitute 4.7% 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 2011

STATE	STATE	SENATE		TOTAL WOMEN/ TOTAL SENATE	HOUSE		TOTAL WOMEN/ TOTAL HOUSE	TOTAL WOM./ TOTAL LEGIS.	% WOMEN OVERALL
	RANK	D	R		D	R			
AL	48	4	0 (11)	5/35	9	5	14/105	19/140	13.6
AK	27	1	3	4/20	4	6	10/40	14/60	23.3
AZ	3	5	6	11/30	7	13	20/60	31/90	34.4
AR	31	5	3	8/35	12	10	22/100	30/135	22.2
CA*	12	9	3	12/40	16	6	22/80	34/120	28.3
CO	1	14	3	17/35	15	9	24/65	41/100	41.0
CT	9	8	1	9/36	32	15	47/151	56/187	29.9
DE	18	4	3	7/21	7	2	9/41	16/62	25.8
FL	21	7	7	14/40	12	15	27/120	41/160	25.6
GA	26	8	1	9/56	30	17	47/180	56/236	23.7
HI	4	9	0	9/25	13	4	17/51	26/76	34.2
ID	15	3	6	9/35	8	12	20/70	29/105	27.6
IL	7	10	6	16/59	28	11	39/118	55/177	31.1
IN*	32	4	7	11/50	11	10	21/100	32/150	21.3
IA*	32	4	4	8/50	16	8	24/100	32/150	21.3
KS	16	4	8	12/40	14	19	33/125	45/165	27.3
KY	39	3	3	6/38	11	9	20/100	26/138	18.8
LA	44	6	2	8/39	11	4	15/105	23/144	16.0
ME	10	5	3	8/35	27	19	46/151	54/186	29.0
MD	8	10	1	11/47	35	12	47/141	58/188	30.9
MA	23	11	0	11/40	32	6	38/160	49/200	24.5
MI	36	2	2	4/38	16	11	27/110	31/148	20.9
MN	6	9	10	19/67	26	18	44/134	63/201	31.3
MS*	45	3	2	5/52	17	4	21/122	26/174	14.9
MO	25	4	2	6/34	22	18 (11)	41/163	47/197	23.9
MT	24	6	2	8/50	19	9	28/100	36/150	24.0
NE*	29	NONPARTISAN		11/49	UNICAMERAL			11/49	22.4
NV	11	4	2	6/21	11	1	12/42	18/63	28.6
NH	22	3	3	6/24	40	59	99/400	105/424	24.8
NJ*	12	7	3	10/40	15	9	24/80	34/120	28.3
NM	17	8	2	10/42	12	8	20/70	30/112	26.8
NY	34	8	3	11/62	27	7	34/150	45/212	21.2
NC*	29	3	3	6/50	22	10	32/120	38/170	22.4
ND*	45	3	3	6/47	3	12	15/94	21/141	14.9
OH	28	5	3	8/33	12	10	22/99	30/132	22.7
OK	49	3	1	4/48	4	11	15/101	19/149	12.8
OR	14	6	2	8/30	12	5	17/60	25/90	27.8
PA	42	5	6	11/50	14	19	33/203	44/253	17.4
RI	20	9	1	10/38	17	2	19/75	29/113	25.7
SC	50	0	0	0/46	8	8	16/124	16/170	9.4
SD	37	1	6	7/35	4	9 (11)	14/70	21/105	20.0
TN	40	4	3	7/33	11	6	17/99	24/132	18.2
TX	35	3	3	6/31	14	18	32/150	38/181	21.0
UT	43	4	1	5/29	8	5	13/75	18/104	17.3
VT	2	9	2	11/30	43	11 (4 Prg)	58/150	69/180	38.3
VA	38	7	1	8/40	13	6	19/100	27/140	19.3
WA	5	12	6	18/49	19	10	29/98	47/147	32.0
WV	41	0	2	2/34	15	7	22/100	24/134	17.9
WI	19	5	5	10/33	16	8	24/99	34/132	25.8
WY	47	0	1	1/30	3	9	12/60	13/90	14.4
		267	150	429/1,971	793	522	1,321/5,411	1,750/7,382	23.7
		(11 nonpartisans) (1 Independent)			(4 Progressives) (2 Independent)				

* States share the same rank if their proportions of women legislators are exactly equal or round off to be equal (CA, NJ; IN, IA; MS, ND; NE, NC).