

WOMEN IN STATE LEGISLATURES 2010

In 2010, 1,809, or 24.5% of the 7,382 state legislators in the United States are women. Women currently hold 438, or 22.2%, of the 1,971 state senate seats and 1,371, or 25.3%, 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

The party breakdown for women serving in state legislatures in 2010 is:

	Total Legislators		State Senators		State Reps.	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Democrats	1,270	70.1	308	70.3	960	70.0
Republicans	527	29.1	119	27.2	407	29.7
Nonpartisans*	10	0.6	10	2.3	---	---
Progressives	4	0.2	---	---	4	0.3
Independent	---	---	1	0.2	---	---
Total	1,809	100.0	438	100.0	1,371	100.0

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

State	% Women	State	% Women
Colorado	38.0	Washington	32.7
Vermont	37.2	Arizona	32.2
New Hampshire	36.8	Connecticut	32.1
Minnesota	34.8	Nevada	31.7
Hawaii	32.9	Maryland	30.9

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

State	% Women	State	% Women
South Carolina	10.0	Kentucky	15.9
Oklahoma	11.4	Louisiana	16.0
Alabama	12.9	North Dakota	16.3
Mississippi	14.4	West Virginia	16.4
Pennsylvania	15.4	Wyoming	16.7

Women in State Legislative Leadership

Five women serve as presidents of senates: Colleen Hanabusa (D-HI), Sylvia Larsen (D-NH), Elizabeth H. Mitchell (D-ME), Therese Murray (D-MA), and M. Teresa Paiva-Weed (D-RI). Five women serve as speakers of state houses: Barbara Buckley (D-NV), Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-MN), Terie Norelli (D-NH), Sheila Y. Oliver (D-NJ), and Hannah Pingree (D-ME).

Women of Color in State Legislatures

Of the 1,809 women legislators serving nationwide, 358 or 19.8% are women of color. They include 102 senators and 256 representatives; 337 are Democrats, 19 are Republicans and two are non-partisan. Women of color constitute 4.8% 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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STATE	STATE RANK	SENATE		TOTAL WOMEN/ TOTAL SENATE	HOUSE		TOTAL WOMEN/ TOTAL HOUSE	TOTAL WOM./ TOTAL LEGIS.	% WOMEN OVERALL
		D	R		D	R			
AL	48	4	0 (1Ind)	5/35	10	3	13/105	18/140	12.9
AK	34	1	2	3/20	4	6	10/40	13/60	21.7
AZ	7	7	4	11/30	9	9	18/60	29/90	32.2
AR	28	4	2	6/35	16	9	25/100	31/135	23.0
CA	17	11	1	12/40	16	4	20/80	32/120	26.7
CO	1	12	1	13/35	19	6	25/65	38/100	38.0
CT	8	7	1	8/36	40	12	52/151	60/187	32.1
DE	20	5	3	8/21	5	3	8/41	16/62	25.8
FL	25	5	4	9/40	15	14	29/120	38/160	23.8
GA	38	7	1	8/56	27	11	38/180	46/236	19.5
HI	5	7	0	7/25	13	5	18/51	25/76	32.9
ID	21	4	5	9/35	11	7	18/70	27/105	25.7
IL	16	10	3	13/59	25	12	37/118	50/177	28.2
IN	35	6	6	12/50	13	7	20/100	32/150	21.3
IA	27	6	3	9/50	20	6	26/100	35/150	23.3
KS	12	5	9	14/40	21	15	36/125	50/165	30.3
KY	45	3	4	7/38	11	4	15/100	22/138	15.9
LA	44	6	2	8/39	11	4	15/105	23/144	16.0
ME	13	6	2	8/35	36	10	46/151	54/186	29.0
MD	10	9	1	10/47	38	11	49/141	59/188	31.4
MA	22	12	0	12/40	36	3	39/160	51/200	25.5
MI	23	6	3	9/38	22	6	28/110	37/148	25.0
MN	4	19	8	27/67	33	10	43/134	70/201	34.8
MS	47	3	1	4/52	17	4	21/122	25/174	14.4
MO	29	5	3	8/34	26	10	36/163	44/197	22.3
MT	18	8	2	10/50	23	6	29/100	39/150	26.0
NE	36	NONPARTISAN		10/49	UNICAMERAL		10/49	10/49	20.4
NV	9	6	1	7/21	11	2	13/42	20/63	31.7
NH	3	11	2	13/24	101	42	143/400	156/424	36.8
NJ	15	7	3	10/40	16	8	24/80	34/120	28.3
NM	11	8	3	11/42	13	10	23/70	34/112	30.4
NY	24	8	2	10/62	35	6	41/150	51/212	24.1
NC	19	4	2	6/50	26	12	38/120	44/170	25.9
ND	43	4	2	6/47	7	10	17/94	23/141	16.3
OH*	32	5	2	7/33	17	5	22/99	29/132	22.0
OK	49	5	0	5/48	3	9	12/101	17/149	11.4
OR	14	8	2	10/30	13	3	16/60	26/90	28.9
PA	46	4	6	10/50	11	18	29/203	39/253	15.4
RI*	30	8	0	8/38	17	0	17/75	25/113	22.1
SC	50	0	0	0/46	8	9	17/124	17/170	10.0
SD	37	6	1	7/35	5	9	14/70	21/105	20.0
TN	40	4	4	8/33	12	5	17/99	25/132	18.9
TX	25	3	3	6/31	24	13	37/150	43/181	23.8
UT*	30	4	1	5/29	11	7	18/75	23/104	22.1
VT	2	9	2	11/30	42	10 (4 Prg)	56/150	67/180	37.2
VA	39	7	1	8/40	13	6	19/100	27/140	19.3
WA	6	13	6	19/49	21	8	29/98	48/147	32.7
WV	42	0	2	2/34	15	5	20/100	22/134	16.4
WI*	32	4	3	7/33	16	6	22/99	29/132	22.0
WY	41	2	0	2/30	6	7	13/60	15/90	16.7
		308	119	438/1,971	960	407	1,371/5,411	1,809/7,382	24.5
		(10 nonpartisans)		(1 Independent)	(4 Progressives)				

* States share the same rank if their proportions of women legislators are exactly equal or round off to be equal (OH, WI; RI, UT).