



# PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation  
and the 2022 elections

DECEMBER 2022

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*The 2022 election cycle reminds us that progress towards gender parity in politics is neither linear nor guaranteed, but we need to keep working to remove systemic barriers in order to move forward.*

Over the last two decades, women have been making steady gains towards gender parity at a rate of one to two points per cycle at most levels of office. There were bright spots in the 2022 election. A record 12 women were elected governor, bringing women's representation in this statewide office closer to the current rates of other offices. Colorado became the second state with a majority-women legislature, joining Nevada as the only two states to achieve gender parity. However, in many areas, women's gains stagnated. The number of women serving in Congress remains virtually flat, while the number of women elected to state legislatures increased only slightly overall and declined in some states.

**As a whole, the results from the 2022 election cycle remind us that progress is not always linear or guaranteed.**

At The Ascend Fund, we're committed to accelerating the pace of change toward gender parity in U.S. politics. To achieve our goal of women holding 50% of elected offices in all 50 states, by 2050, we must continue to normalize women's leadership and establish pathways for more women to see themselves as candidates. To that end, Ascend supports organizations that bridge existing gaps by providing training, support, and financial resources to ensure that when women step up and run, they are successful. To truly transform the system, we're working to dismantle the systemic barriers women face so elected officials reflect the diversity of our communities.

### Current state of representation

24%

Women Governors

28%

Women in Congress

32%

Women in State Legislatures

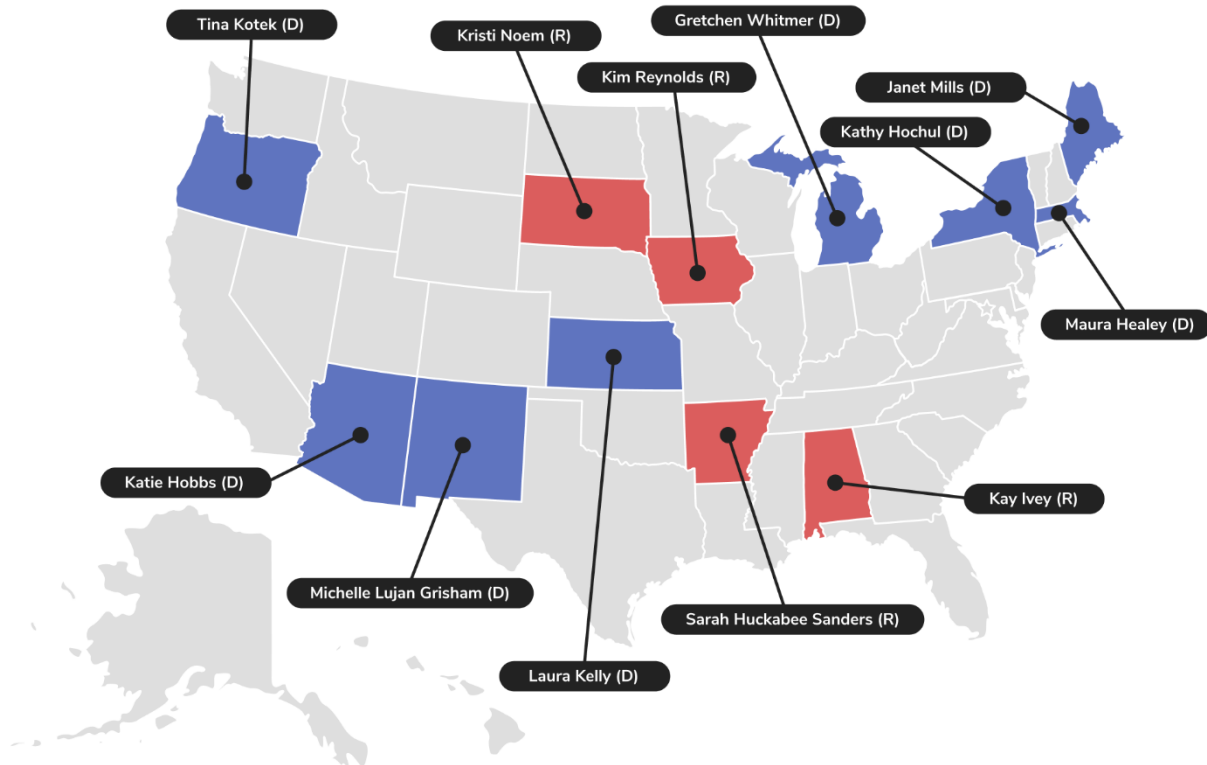
**Acknowledgement:** This analysis is possible thanks to data provided by the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP). CAWP is the leading source of scholarly research and current data about women's political participation in the United States. We encourage you to explore their [website](#), [Database of Women Elected Officials](#), and [2022 Election Watch Tracker](#).

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### Longstanding record for women governors shattered

A record 12 women governors were elected in 2022, shattering the longstanding high of nine first set in 2004. Voters have long been hesitant to elect women to executive level positions, so this makes a major victory in our quest for gender parity.



#### Other Notable Firsts:

- **Arkansas, Massachusetts, and New York** elected their first woman governors.
- **Massachusetts and Oregon** elected the first openly lesbian governors in the nation – Healey (MA) and Kotek (OR).
- **Arkansas and Massachusetts** elected women for both governor and lieutenant governor for the first time in any state.

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### Halfway There

Women have broken through a longstanding ceiling with these gains, but we're still only halfway to parity – women now comprise 24% of the nation's governors. While there is partisan diversity that is often lacking at other levels of office, there is very little racial diversity among the new class of governors. Of the 12 women governors, 11 are white. Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico is the only Latina and there are no Black women that have been elected governor in any state.

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## WOMEN HAVE BROKEN THROUGH A LONGSTANDING CEILING WITH THESE GAINS, BUT WE'RE STILL ONLY HALFWAY TO PARITY.

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### Women's representation in Congress stalls

Women will continue to account for just 28% of members in Congress, including 25% in the Senate and 29% in the House. While a record number of women ran for the Senate, the number elected does not exceed the record of 26 set in 2020. Likewise, women were a record number of major party nominees for the House in the general election. The number elected exceeds the record of 123 set in 2021 by one.

#### WOMEN ELECTED TO 118<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

Senate		House	
Democrats	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans
16 (0)	9 (+1)	91 (0)	33 (+1)

In recent years, both political parties have begun to prioritize recruiting more women to run for office. This oftentimes sets up woman vs. woman races, resulting in no net gains. Women are also often slotted to run in highly competitive districts, meaning they are more likely to lose in subsequent election cycles, hindering long-term progress.



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### Highlights from the U.S. Senate

- Women will gain one seat in the Senate with the election of Katie Britt (R-AL). Britt replaces Sen. Richard Shelby, for whom she worked as chief of staff.
- All five incumbent women senators up for reelection in 2022 ran and won.
- Rep. Val Demings (D-FL) and Chief Justice Cheri Beasley (D-NC) ran for the Senate, but both lost their races, leaving the Senate with no Black women.



Senator-elect Katie Britt

### Highlights from the U.S. House

- Women gained one seat in the U.S. House.
- Notably, two Republican women lost their primaries: Rep. Liz Cheney (WY) and Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA). Both voted in favor of impeaching President Trump, and both were replaced by women.
- Democrats lost three women due to redistricting: Rep. Marie Newman (IL), Rep. Carolyn Bourdeaux (GA), and Rep. Carolyn Maloney (NY).
- A record seven new Latinas were elected to the House, including four Democrats and three Republicans.



Andrea Salinas (D-OR)



Anna Paulina Luna (R-FL)



Delia Ramirez (D-IL)



Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-OR)



Marie Gluesenkamp-Perez (D-WA)



Monica De La Cruz (R-TX)



Yadira Caraveo (D-CO)

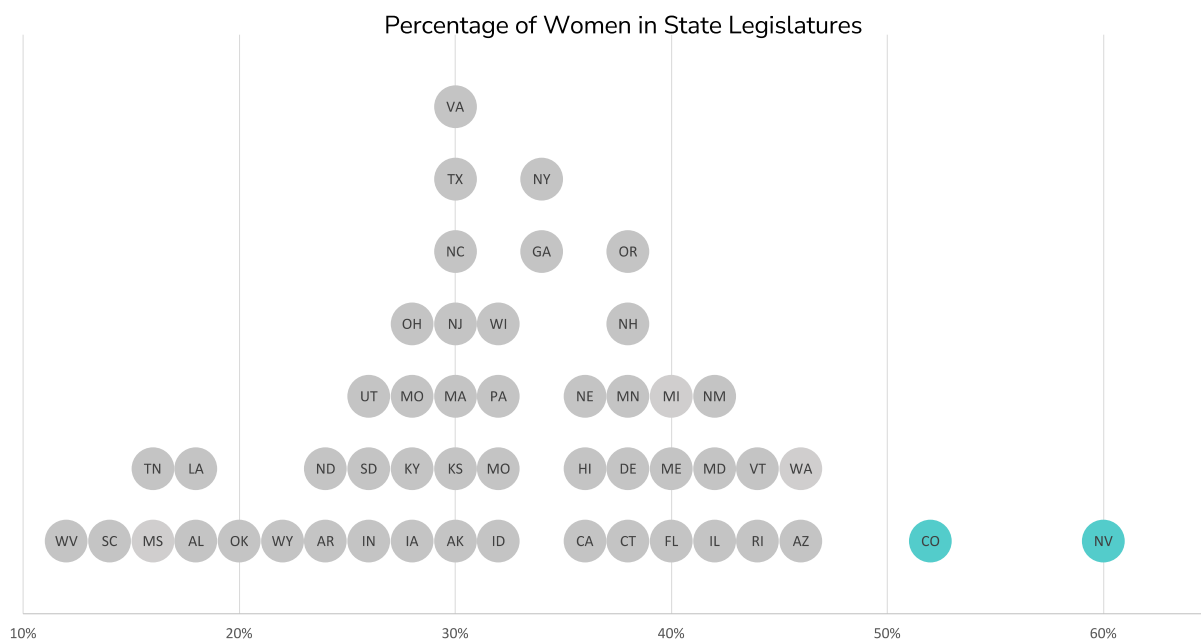
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# Women's representation in state legislatures holds steady

The number of women serving in state legislatures across the country increased slightly following the 2022 election. Women will now account for 32.3% of state legislators, up from 31.1%.<sup>1</sup>

Women gained seats in 31 states, including Minnesota, Florida, and Wyoming. Whereas women lost seats in 11 states, including New York, Oregon, and West Virginia – which was already ranked last in the nation for women's representation. Women's representation was flat in four states. This illustrates the need to focus on sustaining gains once achieved.



<sup>1</sup> We expect this number to increase slightly as a handful of races with women candidates remain too close to call.

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### Colorado Becomes Second State with Women in Majority in Legislature

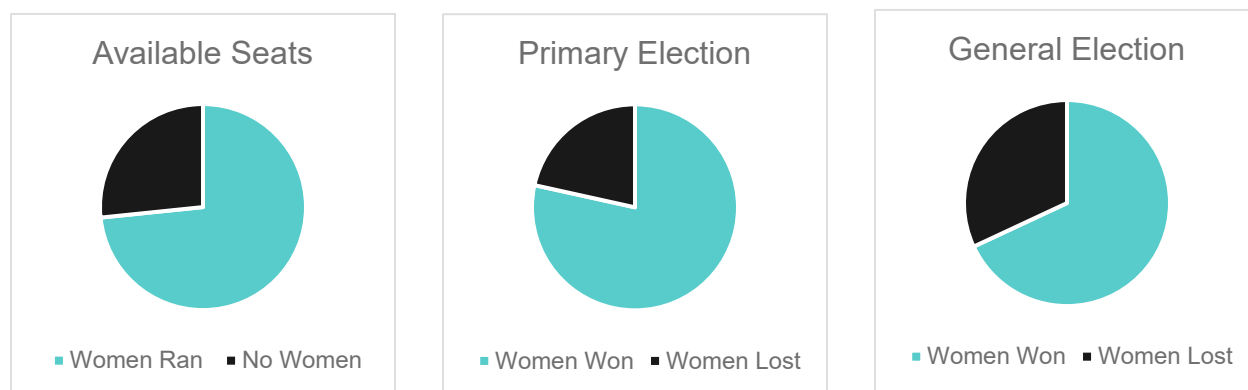
Following the 2022 election, women will hold 51 of 100 seats in the Colorado Legislature. It is only the second state to achieve a women majority; Nevada became the first in 2016. However, women will only be a majority in the Colorado's House of Representatives. In Colorado's Senate, women picked up five seats but will still only account for 34% of members.

#### GENDER COMPOSITION OF COLORADO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Senate		House	
Men	Women	Men	Women
23 (-5)	12 (+5)	26 (-6)	39 (+6)

### Majority of Women Won Their Races, But More Need to Run

Only 4,606 women filed to run for 6,278 state legislative seats on the ballot in 2022. However, nearly 80% of these women won their primaries, and more than 60% of those went on to win their general elections.



As the data continues to show year after year, election after election – when women run, women win. **The simplest and most effective way to achieve gender parity faster is to support and encourage more women to run for office.**



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### Positive results from pilot states

Our goal is to elect women majorities in all 50 states legislatures, something that had only been achieved in Nevada to date. Michigan and Washington, two of our three pilot states, made significant progress towards that goal this cycle. Our third pilot state, Mississippi, holds off-year elections.

#### Approaching Parity in Washington State

Women will account for 47% of state legislators next year, a new record for the state.

Additionally, Washington's congressional delegation will remain majority women with the re-election of Patty Murray to the Senate and a win for Democrat Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, who narrowly beat Republican Joe Kent who defeated incumbent Jaime Herrera Beutler in the primary.

#### Progress Towards Parity in Michigan

Women also set new records in Michigan, where women will hold 40% of the seats in the statehouse.

Michigan reelected women to three of the four statewide positions—governor, attorney general, and secretary of state—and pickups by women in the legislature were key to flipping the House and Senate blue for the first time in 40 years.

### Issues affecting women's representation

No election exists in a vacuum and the 2022 midterm was no different. The political environment and the issues at play affected who voters cast their ballot for and directly affected the number of women elected.

#### Party in Power

Typically, the President's party has averaged a loss of 28 House seats and four Senate seats.<sup>2</sup> Given that Democratic women outnumber Republican women by more than two to one, it could have spelled disaster for women's representation. However, for the first time in history the party in the White House did not lose a single state legislative chamber.

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<sup>2</sup> The American Presidency Project – [The 2022 Midterm Elections: What the Historical Data Suggests](#)

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### Democracy On the Ballot

More than 370 candidates running for office in 2022 denied or cast doubt on the outcome of the 2020 presidential election.<sup>3</sup> This included high profile women like Kari Lake, gubernatorial candidate in Arizona, and Kristina Karamo, Secretary of State candidate in Michigan. Both Lake and Karamo lost their campaigns, proving that voters will reject extremists and candidate quality really does matter.

### The Abortion Election

Women have reliably turned out to vote in higher numbers since the 1980s and this year was no different, as they were highly motivated by the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Abortion was literally on the ballot in five states and was supported in all five: In California, Vermont, and Michigan, voters codified abortion access in the state's constitution. In Kentucky, voters rejected an amendment denying constitutional protections for abortions, and in Montana, voters rejected a pro-life referendum.<sup>4</sup>

### Inflation Fears

Women are not a monolith and proved to not be single issue voters when it came to reproductive rights. The economy and inflation were also salient issues for women voters, particularly white suburban women who favored Democrats by 12-points in August and Republicans by 15-points in November.<sup>5</sup>

## Where we go from here

With the 2022 midterm election nearly in our rearview mirror, it is never too early to look ahead to 2024. At The Ascend Fund, we're working to achieve gender parity in politics because we understand that when women lead, our nation is transformed. There's power in political representation and our elected officials should reflect the diversity of our communities.

In other words, it's past time to elect a woman president!

To do so, we must expand our collective imagination of what a leader looks like. We must fight to reduce the electability bias against women in executive positions and women of color, and we must commit to doing the hard work to sustain gains once achieved. Here are our key takeaways from this election to take forward as we prepare for 2024:

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<sup>3</sup> New York Times – [See Which Election Deniers and Skeptics Won and Lost in the Midterm Elections](#)

<sup>4</sup> New York Times – [Abortion on the Ballot](#)

<sup>5</sup> Wall Street Journal – [White Suburban Women Swing Back Towards Republicans for Congress](#)

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### 1. Encourage Women to Run

Until women are 50% of candidates, it's unlikely they will be 50% of elected officials. Reach out to women you know and encourage them to run. It's also helpful to connect them to a training program or support network like those offered by [our partners](#).

### 2. Elevate Diverse Women

In very few places are Indigenous women, women of color, and LGBTQ women [adequately represented](#). Support organizations that serve as political homes for underrepresented communities.

### 3. Build the Bench

We need women at all levels of office. Political gatekeepers should look to women already in the pipeline and slate them into winnable seats, and incumbent women should create succession plans and mentor up and coming women.

### 4. Invest in Women Candidates

The 2022 election is projected to cost over \$15 billion, yet women are underrepresented as donors and women candidates must [work harder to raise more](#). Financially supporting women, particularly women of color, early in a campaign can make all the difference.

### 5. Dismantle Systemic Barriers

From [low legislative pay](#) to [childcare responsibilities](#), there are numerous challenges women must overcome to run for and serve in elected office. Transformational change is going to require transformational leaders.

### 6. Tone Down the Rhetoric

Increasing threats and political violence discourage women from running for office, and from those already in office from seeking reelection.

### 7. Support Women in Office

Getting more women in office, starts with keeping those who are already elected. We must also ensure women are in key leadership positions, including powerful committee chairs, where they can influence what bills move forward.

You can learn more about **The Ascend Fund** and the work of our partners at [TheAscendFund.org](https://TheAscendFund.org)

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# OUR PARTNERS

## National partners

As a collaborative fund, The Ascend Fund pools philanthropic capital and make mission-driven investments in nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations working to break down barriers ensuring more diverse women can run for office and win. Since launching in 2020, we've built a robust portfolio of 12 national and 13 state partners, and awarded more than \$6.5 million in grants, including \$1.95 million in 2022. We also provide more than just money; we act as a catalyst, convener, and connector for partners, helping to raise the collective impact of the entire field through strategy coordination and fostering collaboration amongst our partners.



*ANPL aims to increase the representation of Indigenous people, especially Indigenous women, in elected office at all levels and create pathways to leadership for emerging Native candidates across the country.*

69% of Native women who ran for office in 2022 won their elections.



*APAICS is dedicated to promoting Asian Pacific American participation and representation at all levels of the political process, from community service to elected office.*

In 2023, only 114 AA & NH/PI women will hold office at the federal and state levels.



*Higher Heights Leadership Fund is investing in a long-term strategy to expand and support Black women's leadership pipeline at all levels and strengthen their civic participation beyond just Election Day.*

Black women will serve as mayors in two of the four the largest cities in the U.S.



*Ignite is a national movement of women who are ready and eager to become the next generation of political leaders.*

96% of IGNITE women who were eligible to vote did so in the 2022 midterm.



*Latinas Represent aims to increase the number and diversity of Latinas in public service to transform communities and our democracy.*

A record number of Latinas will serve in Congress next year, but they are still vastly underrepresented at all levels of elected office.



*Running Start gives young women and girls the confidence, capabilities, and connections they need to run for public office.*

In 2022, we saw the first woman from Generation Z run for Congress.

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*New American Leaders empowers first- and second-generation Americans to run, win, and lead.*

Following the 2022 election, 37 NAL alums will serve in state legislatures.



*She Should Run motivates women from all walks of life to explore the possibility of public office by identifying and tackling the barriers to elected leadership.*

76% of women in the She Should Run Community report that they are now more likely to consider running for office.



*Victory Institute works to increase the number of LGBTQ people in public office and to provide programming, services, and other support to help ensure their success.*

LGBTQ candidates ran in all 50 states this cycle.



*The Vote Mama Foundation enables mothers to find their political voice, making it easier for them to run and win.*

Only 5.3% of state legislators are mothers of minor children.



*Vote Run Lead trains barrier-breaking women to unleash their political power, run for office, and transform American democracy.*

In 2022, 251 women from the Vote Run Lead community were on the ballot.



*WPLN provides center- and right-leaning women with the knowledge and resources to make seeking public office and engaging in the political process more accessible.*

A record number of Republican women ran for the U.S. House this cycle.

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# Candidate highlights from our partners

Of the more than 800 women who trained with Ascend partners and ran for office in 2022, 70% won their primaries and 66% won their general elections—nearly double the national win rate.

### Advance Native Political Leadership



**Mercedes Krause**

U.S. House of Representatives (NV)

A dual citizen of the Oglala and Lakota Nations, Krause is an educator and advocate. She sought to fund the state's education system, raising its rank from 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation.

### APAICS



**Julie Yang**

Montgomery County Board of Education (MD)

In China, where Yang grew up, many girls did not attend school beyond elementary. As a member of the board of education, she is focused on college and career prep as well as improving students' mental health.

### Higher Heights



**A'Dorian Murray-Thomas**

Newark Board of Education (NJ)

Murray-Thomas is the founder and CEO of SHE Wins, a leadership and social action organization for middle and high school girls effected by gun violence. She made history in 2019 when at the age of 23, she was first elected to the school board.

### IGNITE



**Nikki Pérez**

Burbank City Council (CA)

A social worker, Pérez developed a pilot program to increase academic success for unhoused students. She is the first Indigenous and openly LGBTQ woman to serve on the council.

### Latinas Represent



**Veronica "Ronnie" Miramontes**

Monterey Peninsula School District (CA)

Miramontes is the first Latina on the school board in a district where the student population is over 59% Latinx. She is committed to supporting next-generation infrastructure and leadership.

### LGBTQ Victory Institute



**Janelle Perez**

Florida State Senate

Perez's experience battling cancer led her to advocate for every person to have access to affordable, high-quality health care. Perez would have been the first out-LGBTQ woman in the Florida Senate.



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### New American Leaders



**Anupam Chugh Sidhu**

Plymouth-Canton Community School Board (MI)

With over 25 years' experience in education, Chugh Sidhu's top priority is to promote and create safe, inclusive environments for students and staff.

### Running Start



**Avery Bourne**

Lieutenant Governor of Illinois

In 2014, Bourne was 22 and elected to the Illinois General Assembly, where she was the youngest woman ever elected to the General Assembly. She was later elected as Assistant Minority Leader.

### She Should Run



**Carol Kazeem**

Pennsylvania House

A trauma outreach specialist and violence interrupter, Kazeem will work to reduce gun violence, drug use, and mass incarceration.

### Vote Mama Foundation



**Jessica Altagracia Woolford**

New York State Assembly

Altagracia Woolford describes herself as a "queer, Bronx-born Dominican mama." She ran for office to change how society views moms and so others could see people like themselves in office.

### Vote Run Lead



**Yadira Caraveo**

U.S. House of Representatives (CO)

A Mexican American pediatrician, Caraveo served for four years in the Colorado House where she worked to pass historic legislation to force drug companies to lower the cost of prescriptions.

### Women's Public Leadership Network



**Heidi Ganal**

Governor of Colorado

Ganal, an entrepreneur, ran as a "mom on a mission" with a focus on the cost of living and righting the economy. Colorado remains one of just 18 states that has never elected a woman governor.

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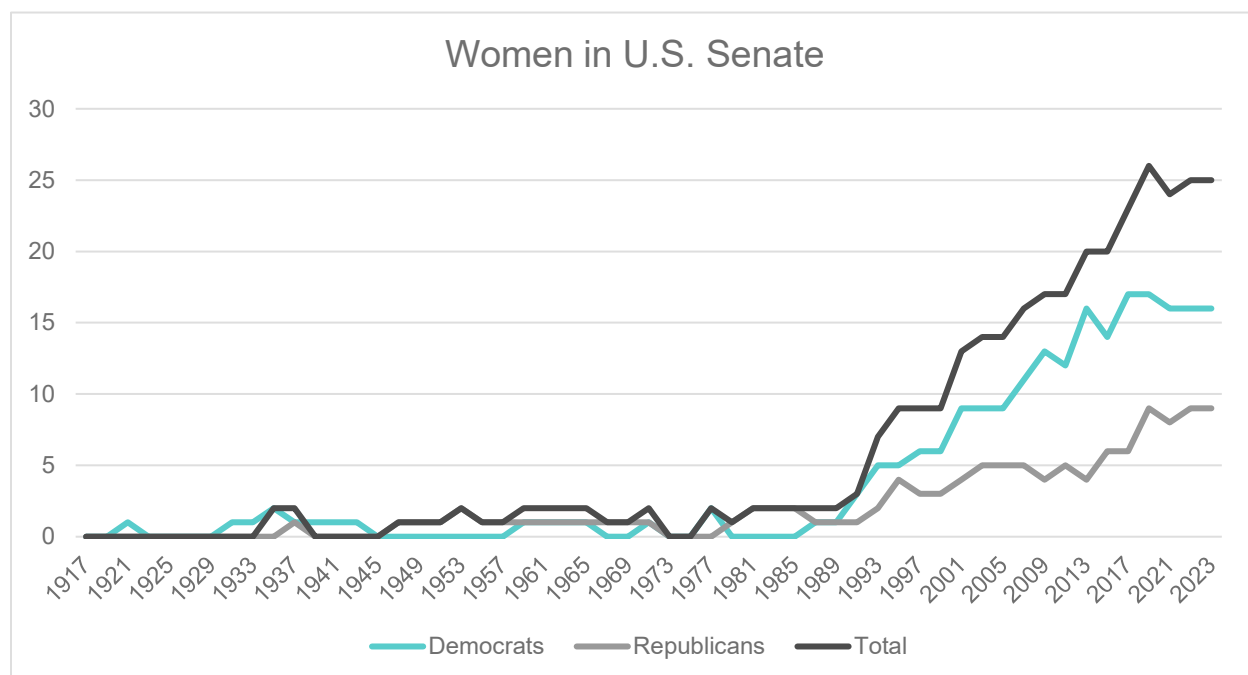
# CONGRESS

Following the 2022 general election, the number of women serving in Congress will increase by only two. This contrasts with the last two election cycles when women made substantial gains. Termed the “Year of the Woman,” the increases in 2018 were driven by the election of Democratic women following the election of President Trump. Women made historic gains again in 2020, in what became known as the “Year of the Republican Woman.”

## Senate

### Number of Women in the Senate Increases by One

Senate races were held in 34 states this year. Six women, including four Democrats and two Republicans, won in the general election. Combined with the 19 women incumbents who were not up for reelection, 25 women (16D, 9R) will serve in the U.S. Senate in 2023, accounting for 25% of members of the body. This is an increase from the 24 women (16D, 8R) who currently serve. The record was set at 26 in 2020.



Data: Center for American Women and Politics

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### Republican Women Gain Seat in Senate

With the election of Katie Britt (R-AL), Republican women match the previous high of nine set in 2020. The number of Democratic women will remain flat at 16; one shy of the record 17 set in 2017.

### Incumbents All Sought Reelection

Of the five incumbents up for office in 2022 — Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Catherine Cortez-Masto (D-NV), and Patty Murray (D-WA) — all sought reelection and won. It's not unusual for incumbents to win reelection. In 2022, all 30 incumbents senators who sought reelection retained their seats. In the last 20 years, U.S. senators have won more than 75% of their reelection campaigns, regardless of gender or party.<sup>6</sup>

### Black Women Shut Out of Senate

Four Black women ran for the U.S. Senate this year, double the number who have served in the office. All four women, Cheri Beasley (D-NC), Val Demings (D-FL), Natalie James (D-AR), and Krystle Matthews (D-SC) were defeated in the general election. No Black woman have served in the Senate since Kamala Harris was elected vice president in 2020. Carol Moseley Braun is the only other Black women to have served in the Senate.

#### BLACK WOMEN WHO SERVED IN THE U.S. SENATE



Carol Moseley Braun (IL)



Kamala Harris (CA)

#### BLACK WOMEN WHO RAN FOR U.S. SENATE IN 2022



Cheri Beasley (NC)



Val Demings (FL)



Natalie James (AR)



Krystle Matthews (SC)

<sup>6</sup> Open Secrets – [U.S. Senate Reelection Rates, 1964-2002](#)

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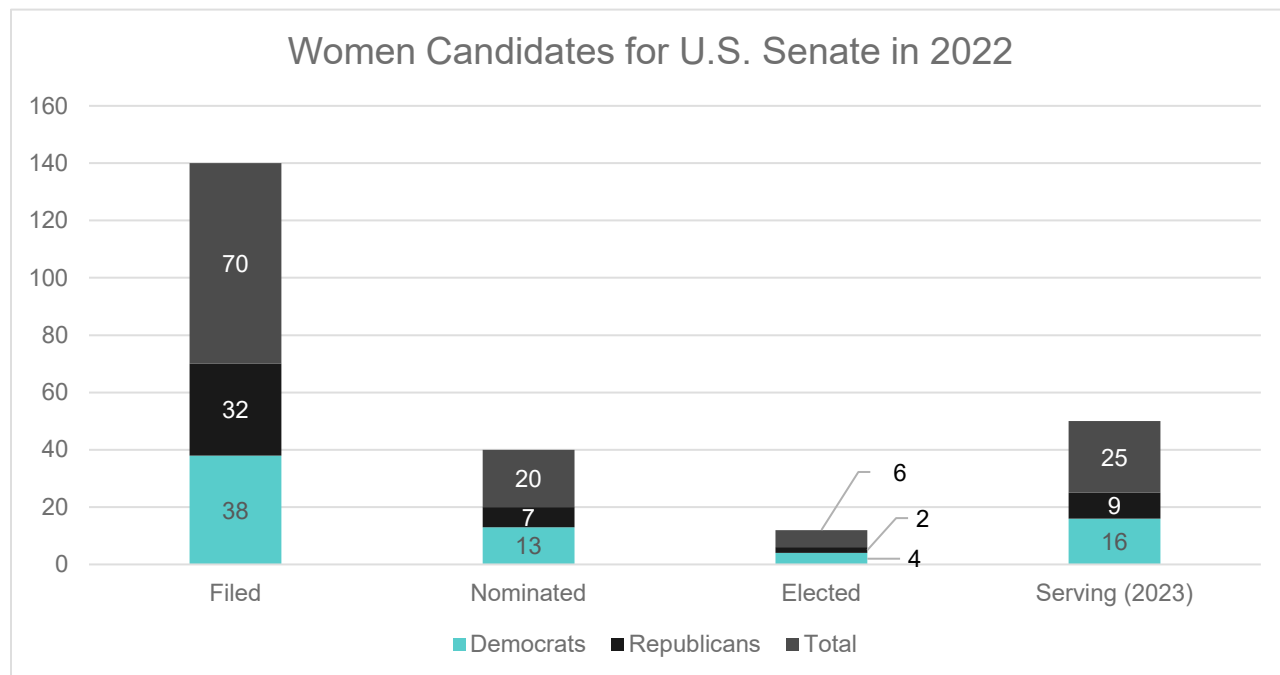
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### Majority of Women Who Ran for Senate Lost in Primary

A record number of 70 women (32D, 38R) filed to run for the U.S. Senate. The previous record of 60 women was set in 2020. However, over 70% of the women candidates lost in the primary. The number of women who advanced to the general election—20 (13D, 7R)—was fewer than the high of 23 set in 2018.

### More Republican Women Ran for Senate

The number of Republican women who filed to run for office outnumbered Democratic women, 38 to 32. However, Democratic women were more likely to win their primaries and ultimately outnumbered Republican women candidates 13 to seven in the general election. Democratic women have outnumbered Republican women two to one or even three to one over the last two decades.



Data: Center for American Women and Politics

### Women Did Not Run for All Open Seats

Of the 21 women who advanced from primaries to run for the U.S. Senate in the general election, more than 50% were challenging incumbents. While there were seven open Senate

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seats in 2022, women were general election candidates in only four, limiting the potential gains for women overall.

### WOMEN RUNNING FOR U.S. SENATE

Incumbents		Challengers		Open Seats		Total	
5 (24%)		12 (57%)		4 (19%)		21 (100%)	
Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep
4	1	7	5	3	1	14	7

**Three Races Featured Women on Both Sides of Aisle:** Additionally, in three states—Alaska, Illinois, and Washington—Senate races featured Democratic women facing off against Republican women in the general election. Democratic women won two of the three contests, and a Republican the third. Notably, all incumbents prevailed this cycle.

### WOMEN V. WOMAN RACES FOR U.S. SENATE

State	Won	Lost
Alaska	*Lisa Murkowski (R)	Pat Chesbro (D) Kelly Tshibaka (R)
Illinois	*Tammy Duckworth (D)	Kathy Salvi (R)
Washington	*Patty Murray (D)	Tiffany Smiley (R)

\*Denotes incumbents

### First Woman Elected to Senate from Alabama

Republican Katie Britt became the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate from Alabama. Two women were previously appointed to the position. In 1937, First Lady Dixie Bibbs Graves was appointed by her husband, the governor, to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of the incumbent, Hugo Black, who had been appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court.<sup>7</sup> Maryon Pittman Allen served for five months in 1978 after the death of her husband from a heart attack. Allen stood for election but lost in a runoff.

<sup>7</sup> Center for American Women and Politics, [Alabama](#)

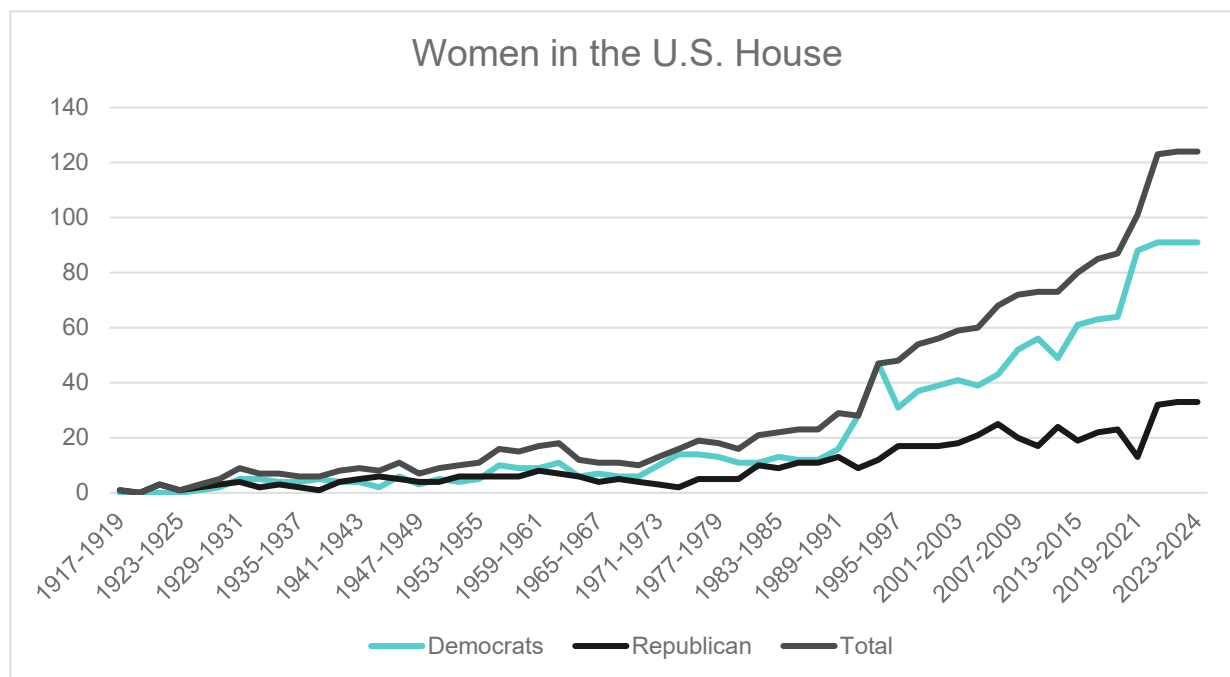
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# House

## Number of Women in the House Increases by One

In 2023, women will account for 29% of the members in the House of Representatives. All 435 House seats were up for election in 2022, and 124 women, including 91 Democrats and 33 Republicans, won in the general election. This is an increase of one from the 123 women (91D, 32R) who currently serve, and exceeds the previous record of 123 set in 2022.



Data: Center for American Women and Politics

## More than 500 Women Ran in Primaries

A total of 583 women (322D, 261R) ran for U.S. House seats in 2022. This matched the previous record set in 2020. However, a majority of women candidates – 316 (141D, 175R) – lost in the primary.

## Women Ran in 46 States

The 263 women (181D, 82R) who advanced from the primaries, ran for 224 seats across 46 states. Only in Kentucky, North Dakota, Rhode Island, and South Dakota did women not run for the U.S. House. Ensuring women run in every district will increase the likelihood of achieving gender parity.



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### Record Number of Republican Women Ran, But More Democrats Won

A record 261 Republican women run for office in 2022, in comparison to the previous record of 227 set in 2020. The number of Democratic women declined to 322 from a high of 356 set in 2020. However, 55% (178 of 322) of Democratic women won their primaries, while only 31% (81 of 261) of Republicans did.

### Majority of Races Still Dominated by Men

Of the 435 seats up for office, women faced off against other women in 37 districts. A majority of races—203—featured men running against other men, whereas women ran against men in 185 races.

### High Retirement Rate Among Women Incumbents

Of the 123 women incumbents in the U.S. House, 106 women (78D, 28R) ran for reelection. Eighteen incumbent women chose not to run for reelection, the majority retired, although some were seeking another office, like Val Demings (D-FL) and Vicky Hatzler (R-MO) who ran for the U.S. Senate.

### Five Incumbents Defeated in Primaries

Additionally, five women incumbents in the House were defeated in primaries, including high profile candidates like Liz Cheney (R-WY) and Jamie Herrera Beutler (R-WA). Both Cheney and Beutler voted to impeach President Donald Trump.

### Four Incumbents Defeated in General

Finally, four women incumbents (2D, 1R) were defeated in the general election, including one incumbent, Mayra Flores (R-TX), who was defeated by Congressman Vicente Gonzalez due to redistricting. Three of the four incumbents who lost, Cindy Axne (D-IA), Mayra Flores (R-TX), Yvette Herrell (R-NM), lost their seats to men, setting back the progress that was made over the last two cycles. Only Elaine Luria (D-VA) lost to a woman, Congresswoman-elect Jen Kiggans. Women are often slotted to run in highly competitive districts, meaning they are more likely to lose in subsequent election cycles, hindering long-term progress.

### Effects of Redistricting

Eight candidates faced off against other incumbents in the primary, while one incumbent woman faced a sitting Congressman in the general due to redistricting. In the primary, longtime Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) was defeated by incumbent Congressman Jerry Nadler. Whereas redistricting forced two popular Democratic incumbents, Carolyn Bourdeaux

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and Lucy McBath, to run against each other in the newly redrawn 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District in Georgia. Two-term Congresswoman McBath defeated Bordeaux, who was first elected in 2020.

### Candidates for Congress More Diverse

A record 37 Latina women (20D, 17R) ran for the House of Representatives in 2022, and 18 (13D, 5R) women their elections, surpassing the record of 14 set in 2022. Anna Paulina Luna (R-FL), an Air Force veteran, became the Florida's first Mexican-American woman in Congress and Delia Ramirez (D-IL), a state representative, became the first Latina woman elected to Congress from Illinois.

A record number of Black women race for the House as well, and 27 (27D, 0R) won their elections, narrowly surpassing the record of 26 set in 2022. Summer Lee (D-PA) became the first Black woman to be elected to Congress from Pennsylvania. There are no Black Republican women serving in the House, though six Black Republican women ran, including Jennifer-Ruth Green (IN-1), an Air Force veteran.<sup>8</sup>

Twelve gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or gender-nonconforming candidates who identify as women (12D, 0R) ran. Becca Balint, the president of the Vermont State Senate, became the first woman and openly gay person to represent the state in Congress. In addition, with Balint's election, Vermont is no longer the last state holding out on sending a woman to Congress.

### Democratic Women Were Key in Protecting Vulnerable Seats

While two incumbent Democratic women lost their seats, Democratic women in swing suburban districts were key to the Democrats warding off a "red wave." Congresswomen Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), Elissa Slotkin (D-MI), and Katie Porter (D-CA) held their seats despite well-funded Republican opponents who were projected to win. Additionally, Democratic women were key in holding Democratic seats following Congressional

**SHARICE DAVIDS (D-KS)**  
U.S. HOUSE



Congresswoman Sharice Davids was re-elected to her third term in the U.S. House. Rep. Davids, a lesbian and member of the Ho-Chunk Nation, was one of the first two Indigenous women elected to Congress, along with Deb Haaland.

Rep. Davids works with Ascend partners, [Advance Native Political Leadership](#) and [Victory Institute](#), to increase the number of women running for office. In 2022, 80% of Native candidates—nearly half of whom were women—won their elections. And incumbents like Rep. Davids won 88% of their races despite challenging seats due to redistricting.

<sup>8</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> News – [Could Jennifer-Ruth Green be the second Black Republican woman in Congress?](#)

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

retirements. State Representative Emilia Sykes defeated her Trump endorsed opponent in Congressman Tim Ryan's former seat, OH-13.

## Nancy Pelosi Resigns as Leader

Following the 2022 midterms, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi announced that she would step down as Speaker of the House next term. The first woman to serve in this role, Speaker Pelosi was a trailblazer for women. While she indicated that she is making way for the next generation in leadership, she also cited political violence and her husband's recent attack as a reason—an issue that women candidates and their families have been facing across the country.

## STATEWIDE

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While women have made progress toward parity in Congress and state legislatures in recent years, prior to the 2022 election, women remained severely underrepresented in statewide executive offices, including governor (18%), secretary of state (23%), and attorney general (18%).<sup>9</sup> The exception was lieutenant governor, of which women held 19 of 45 seats (42%), as detailed in our Perspectives on Parity column, *“Always the Lieutenant, Never the Governor.”*

Following the 2022 election, women made gains in statewide offices, although parity remains out of reach in most states. In 2023, women will serve as 24% of governors, 46% of lieutenant governors, 21% of secretary of states, and 19% of attorney generals. This progress, especially in governor's offices, is an encouraging improvement on the path to parity. Although, work must be done to protect the progress that has been made to reach gender parity.

### Governor

#### Twelve Women Elected Governor, New Record

An unprecedented number of women—12 (8D, 4R)—were elected governor this year. This exceeds the previous record of nine, which was first set in 2004 and matched again in 2007, 2019, and 2021. In 2022, governorships in 36 states were up for election, including eight of nine incumbent women, all of whom were reelected. Gov. Kate Brown of Oregon was term limited and could not run for reelection; however, she was replaced by another woman, Tina Kotek.

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<sup>9</sup> Center for American Women and Politics – Women in Statewide Elected Office

**PARITY POSTPONED**

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

**WOMEN WHO WILL SERVE AS GOVERNOR IN 2023**



Michelle Lujan Gresham  
New Mexico



Maura Healey  
Massachusetts



Kathy Hochul  
New York



Kay Ivey  
Alabama



Katie Hobbs  
Arizona



Laura Kelly  
Kansas



Tina Kotek  
Oregon



Janet Mills  
Maine



Kristi Noem  
South Dakota



Kim Reynolds  
Iowa



Sarah Huckabee Sanders  
Arkansas



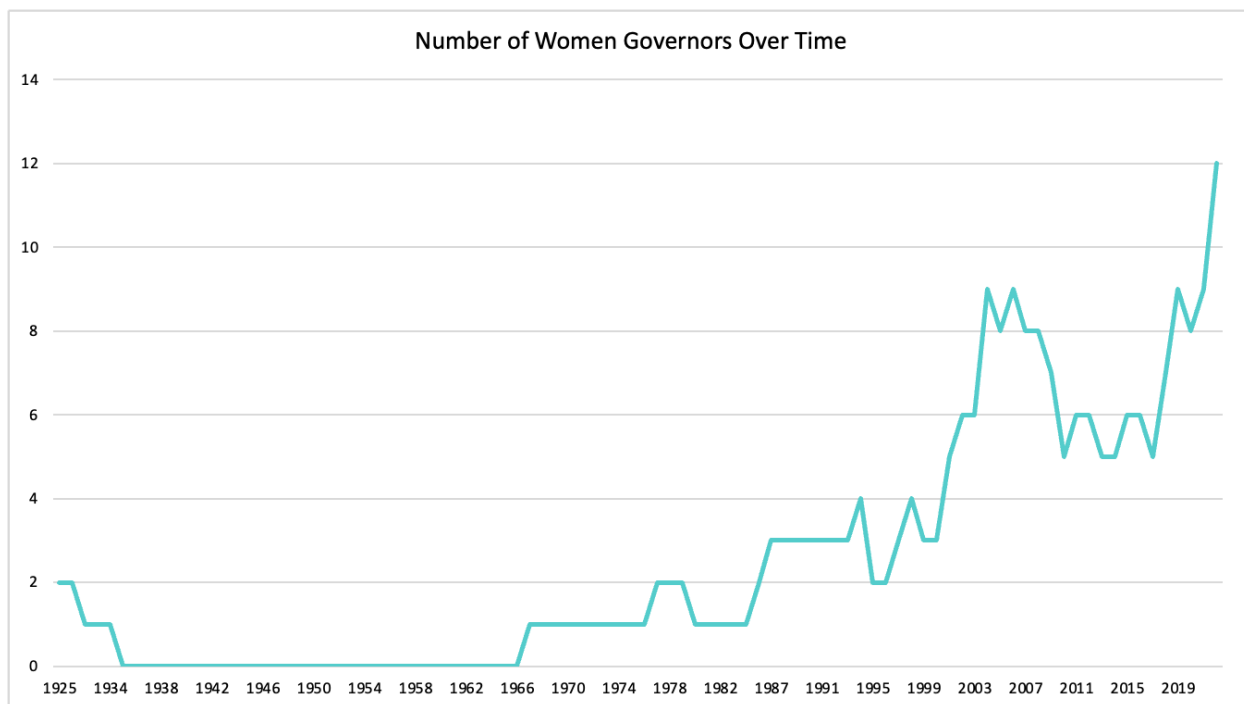
Gretchen Whitmer  
Michigan

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Historic Number of Women Sought Office

The record number of women elected to governor's offices, follows an increase in the number of women running. Of the 69 women who ran in primaries, 25 women, including 16 Democrats and nine Republicans, were nominated by a major party and advanced to the general election. This is more than double the historical average of women who traditionally run in midterm election years.<sup>10</sup> In 2018, the last comparable year, only 16 women (12D, 4R) were nominated by the two major political parties.



Data: Center for American Women and Politics

To increase the number of women governors, we need to increase the number of women running for the office. While men often self-select for the role, women often perceive a need to have served in office previously. Additionally, research from the Barbara Lee Family Foundation found that voters are more hesitant to elect women to executive roles than they are other positions like the state legislature or city council, and women must prove to voters they are qualified whereas voters assume men are qualified.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> New York Times, [How Diverse Are the Candidates in the Midterm Elections?](#)

<sup>11</sup> Barbara Lee Family Foundation – [Keys to Elected Office; Substance](#)



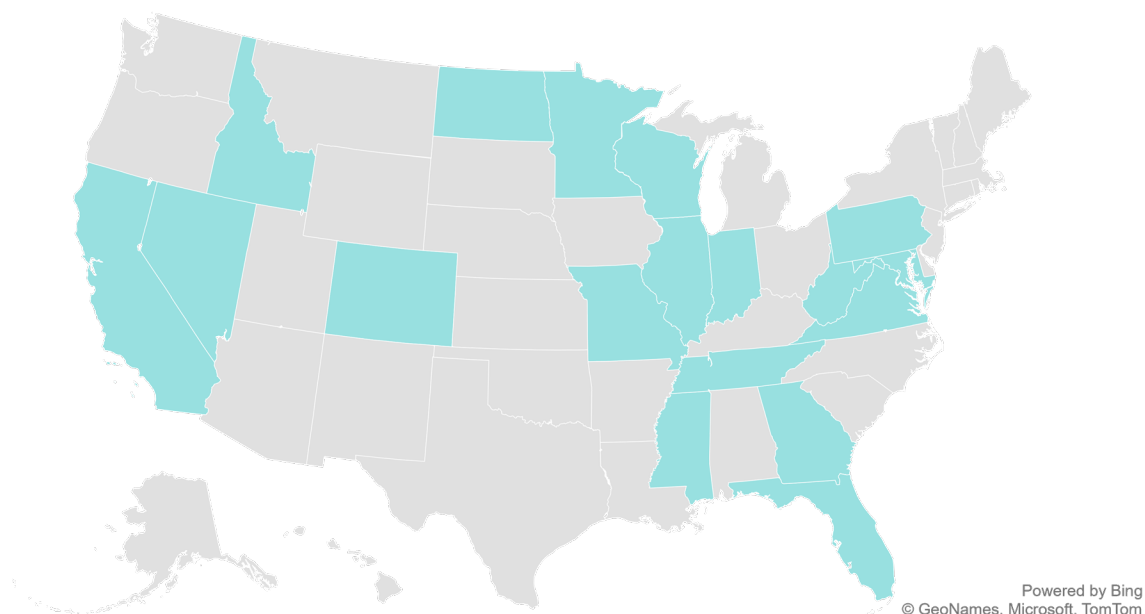
## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### First Woman Governor Elected in Three States

Three states made history by electing the first woman governor, including, Arkansas, Sarah Huckabee Sanders; Massachusetts, Maura Healy; and New York, [Kathy Hochul](#), who became governor in August when Andrew Cuomo resigned amid allegations of sexual harassment. Despite record gains, only 49 women have held the office and 18 states have still never elected a woman governor.

States that Have Never Elected a Woman Governor



### First Openly Lesbian Governors Elected in Two States

Maura Healey of Massachusetts and Tina Kotek of Oregon will become the first openly lesbian governors in the United States. Prior to this election, only one LGBTQ+ woman, Governor Tina Brown of Oregon (who identifies as bisexual) had been elected. Ascend partner, [LGBTQ Victory Institute](#), works to achieve and sustain global equality through leadership development, training, and convening to increase the number, expand the diversity, and ensure the success of openly LGBTQ elected and appointed officials at all levels of government.

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Five Races Featured Women on Both Sides of Aisle

In five states—Alabama, Arizona, Iowa, Michigan and Oregon—gubernatorial races featured Democratic women facing off against Republican women in the general election. Democratic women won three of the five contests, while Republican women won two. Prior to this year, there had been only four races for governor featuring women as candidates representing both major parties cumulative.

#### WOMAN V. WOMAN RACES FOR GOVERNOR

State	Won	Lost
Alabama	*Kay Ivey (R)	Yolanda Flowers (D)
Arizona	Katie Hobbs (D)	Kari Lake (R)
Iowa	*Kim Reynolds (R)	Deidre DeJear (D)
Michigan	*Gretchen Whitmer (D)	Tudor Dixon (R)
Oregon	Tina Kotek (D)	Christina Drazan (R)

\*Denotes incumbents

### No Black Women Elected Governor

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, a Latina, will remain the only woman of color serving as governor. Susana Martinez was the first Latina to serve as governor of the state. Notably, no Black women have ever been elected governor, [although a record ran in 2022](#). To ensure more Black women run for governor and win, our partner, [Higher Heights Leadership Fund](#), is committed to strengthening the leadership of Black women and investing in a long-term strategy to propel Black women to political leadership.



From left to right: Deidre DeJear ran for governor in Iowa, Stacey Abrams ran for governor in Georgia, Mia McLeod ran for governor in South Carolina, and Danielle Allen ran for governor in Massachusetts.

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

# Lieutenant Governor

## Record 21 Women to Serve as Lt. Governor

Women won 14 of the available 22 seats for lieutenant governor this year, including 10 Democrats and four Republicans. Women will now hold 21 of the 45 offices (46%), making it the office closest to achieving gender parity in the U.S. Five states, Arizona, Maine, New Hampshire, Oregon, and Wyoming, do not have lieutenant governors. Prior to the 2022 election, a record 19 women (11D, 8R) were serving as lieutenant governors.

## Increase in Women Serving Due to Increase in Women Running

Seventy women, including 43 Democrats and 27 Republicans, filed to run for lieutenant governor. Of those, 38 lost their primaries while 32 (19D, 13R) advanced to the general election. The increase in women serving as lieutenant governor is due to the large number of incumbents who were not up for reelection (70%), as well as a high percentage of incumbent women who chose to run for reelection (75%). A majority of the women who sought the office ran for open seats (41%), however a significant percentage of women also challenged incumbents (31%).

### WOMEN RUNNING FOR LT. GOVERNOR

Incumbents		Challengers		Open Seats		Total	
9 (28%)		10 (31%)		13 (41%)		32 (100%)	
Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep
7	2	5	5	7	6	19	13

## Historic First—Women Serving in Governor and Lt. Governor Office Simultaneously

For the first time ever there are two states with both a woman governor and lieutenant governor: Arkansas and Massachusetts.

### STATES WITH WOMEN SERVING AS GOVERNOR AND LT. GOVERNOR IN 2023

Arkansas



Sarah Huckabee Sanders  
Governor



Leslie Rutledge  
Lt. Governor

Massachusetts



Maura Healey  
Governor



Kim Driscoll  
Lt. Governor

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Majority of Incumbents Not Up for Reelection

Of the 19 women in office, seven were not up for elections this year and nine sought reelection. Only one, Karyn Polito (R-MA), retired and two ran for other offices: Janice McGeachin (R-ID) for governor and Molly Gray (D-VT) for Congress.

### First Woman of Color Elected in Maryland

A record number of Latina and Asian American women ran for lieutenant governor in 2022. In Maryland, former state Delegate Aruna Miller is the first woman of color to serve as lieutenant governor in Maryland. Born in India, she is also the first South Asian woman elected as lieutenant governor in the U.S. She'll serve alongside Governor-elect Wes Moore, Maryland's first Black governor and the third to be elected to the office in U.S. history. Ascend partner, [New American Leaders](#), is working to improve the diversity of elected officials in the U.S. by empowering first and second-generation immigrants like Miller to run for office.

PEGGY FLANAGAN

MINNESOTA  
LT. GOVERNOR



Lt. Governor Flanagan was elected to the Minneapolis Board of Education and the Minnesota State Legislature prior to being elected lieutenant governor in 2018.

A member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, Flanagan is co-founder of [Advance Native Political Leadership](#), an Ascend Partner.

Advance Native Political Leadership recognizes the importance of increasing the number of Native leaders at all levels across the country.

Re-elected in 2022, Flanagan is committed to making progress for children, working families, communities of color and Indigenous communities, and Minnesotans who have historically been underserved and underrepresented.

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

## Other Statewide Executives

Following the 2022 election, 60 women (31 D, 28 R) will hold elected statewide positions (not governor or lieutenant governor), including 27 incumbents who were not up for reelection. A total of 76 statewide seats were on the ballot in 2022, and 144 women (78D, 63R, 3U) ran in primaries. A majority of the women, including 57 Democrats, 30 Republicans, and two unaffiliated, won their primaries and advanced to the general election.

### States Narrowly Miss Electing All-Women

Two states, Massachusetts and Michigan, came close to electing women to all statewide positions. In Massachusetts, Democrat William Galvin defeated Republican Rayla Campbell, a Black woman, for Secretary of State. Attorney General – elect Andrea Campbell is the first Black woman elected to statewide office in Massachusetts and succeeds Maura Healey who was elected governor. In Michigan, Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II, who ran on the ticket with Gretchen Whitmer, is a Black man.

## MASSACHUSETTS



Maura Healey  
Governor



Kim Driscoll  
Lt. Governor



Andrea Campbell  
Attorney General



Diana DiZoglio  
Auditor



Deborah Goldberg  
Treasurer

## MICHIGAN



Gretchen Whitmer  
Governor



Dana Nessel  
Attorney General



Jocelyn Benson  
Secretary of State



## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Secretary of State

Long an office that operated out of the public spotlight, races for secretary of state took on a new sense of urgency as conspiracy theories and lies led to an increase in election deniers following the 2020 election. Forty-seven states have secretaries of state, who oversee the administration of elections at the state level. In the three states without a secretary of state, Alaska, Hawaii, and Utah, the responsibilities fall to the lieutenant governor.

Thirty-six women (19D, 17 R) filed to run for secretary of state and 16 lost in the primary. Of the 20 women (13D, 7R) who advanced to the general, 10 won (8D, 2R).

In Arizona, Democratic Secretary of State Katie Hobbs faced off in an open seat for governor against Republican Kari Lake, a former news anchor who embraced Trump's false claim of voter fraud in the 2020 election. Lake called on Hobbs to recuse herself from overseeing the election, even though the secretary of state does not administer elections. That role falls to local officials. As noted above, Hobbs won the race.

#### BEE NGUYEN (D-GA)

CANDIDATE FOR SECRETARY  
OF STATE (GA)



Nguyen, an alum of Ascend partner [Vote Run Lead](#), challenged incumbent Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger.

Raffensperger, who oversaw the challenges to the 2020 presidential election in Georgia, defeated Nguyen in the general election.

Prior to running for Secretary of State, Nguyen served in the Georgia General Assembly where she defended voting rights.

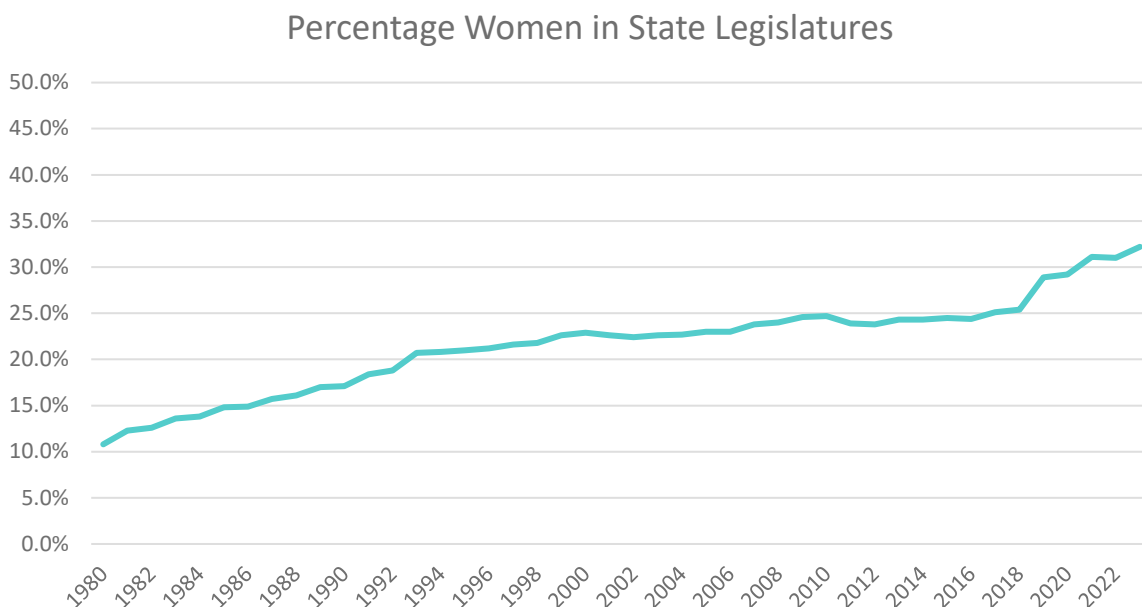
# STATE LEGISLATURES

Over the last 20 years, women’s representation in state legislatures has climbed 10%, however representation still varies widely by state. For example, in Nevada, women will now account for 60% of lawmakers, in contrast to West Virginia, where women will hold less than 12% seats. Our goal at The Ascend Fund is to ensure women are 50% of elected officials in all 50 states by 2050.

Last year, we launched [Start with the States](#), a three-state pilot to close the gender gap in state legislatures. Often called the laboratories of democracy, incredibly important policy decisions are made at the state level, and it’s essential women are included at the decision making table. Read on to learn how Ascend and our state and national partners are changing the face of democracy in state capitols.<sup>12</sup>

## Women’s Representation in State Legislatures Remains Steady

The number of women serving in state legislatures across the country increased slightly following the 2022 election. Women will now account for 32.3% of state legislators, up from 31.1%.<sup>13</sup>



Data: Center for American Women and Politics

<sup>12</sup> Our third pilot state, Mississippi, has off year elections.

<sup>13</sup> We expect this number to increase slightly as ~50 races remain too close to call.



## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

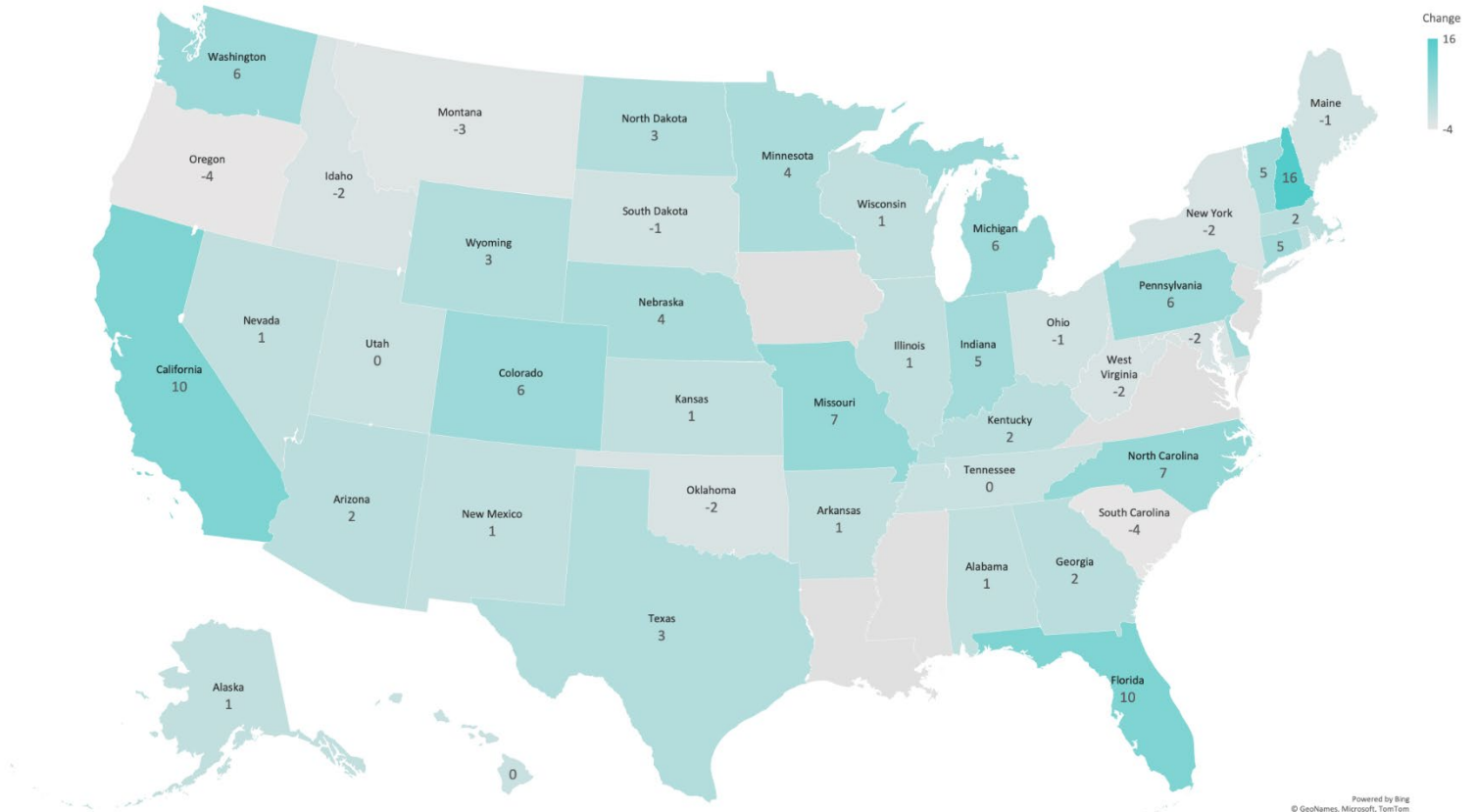
### Most State Legislative Seats Up for Election in 2022

Of the nation's 7,383 state legislative seats, 6,278 (85%) were up for election in 2022. This included 88 of the country's 99 chambers across 46 states. Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, and Virginia hold "off-year" elections, and thus did not hold legislative elections in 2022.

### Mixed Results for Women's Representation Across States

Overall, gains and losses were nominal. Following the 2022 election, 2,386 women (1,568 D, 797 R, 18NP, 2Ind, 1Prg) will serve in state legislatures, up from the 2,293 (1,513 D, 759 R) currently in office. The record of 2,307 was set earlier in 2022.<sup>14</sup> While women's representation remained flat in four states, women gained seats in 30 states, and lost seats in 11 states.<sup>15</sup> The declines illustrate the need to focus on sustaining gains once achieved.

Women's Representation in State Legislatures Following 2022 Election



<sup>14</sup> A handful of races remain too close to call.

<sup>15</sup> Four states have "off-year" elections and did not hold legislative elections in 2022 (LA, MS, NJ, VA).

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### States Where Representation Increased Significantly

Women's representation increased by more than 20% in two states—Nebraska, 29% and Delaware, 26%. Other states with double digit increases include Wyoming, North Carolina, Colorado, Florida, Missouri, Indiana, Michigan, and North Dakota.

#### *Women Majority Reelected in Nevada*

At 60%, Nevada has the highest percentage of women serving in the state legislature. In 2018, Nevada became the first state to elect a woman majority.

Voters in Nevada also passed a constitutional amendment adding language that people cannot be discriminated against based on “race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, ancestry, or national origin.” This is the most inclusive Equal Rights Amendment to be passed at the state level.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Colorado Becomes Second State with Women in Majority in Legislature*

Following the 2022 election, women will hold 51 of 100 seats in the Colorado Legislature. It is only the second state to achieve a women majority, with Nevada becoming the first in 2016. However, women will only be a majority in Colorado's House of Representatives. In Colorado's Senate, where women picked up five seats, they will still only account for 34% of members.

### GENDER COMPOSITION OF COLORADO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Senate		House	
Men	Women	Men	Women
23 (-5)	12 (+5)	26 (-1)	39 (+5)

Additionally, for the first time in history, the top three leadership positions, Speaker of the House, Majority Leader, and Assistant Majority Leader, will be occupied by women, with Julie McCluskie serving as the House speaker, Monica Duran as the majority leader and Jennifer Bacon as the assistant majority leader.

### LEADERSHIP IN COLORADO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Julie McCluskie



Jennifer Bacon



Monica Duran

<sup>16</sup> Nevada Current, [With Question 1, Nevada Passes Most Inclusive States Equal Rights Amendment in the Country](#)

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### States Where Representation Fell Substantially

Women's representation declined significantly in three states—Oregon, -15%, South Carolina, -14%, and West Virginia, -11%—after the 2022 election.

#### *West Virginia Remains State with Lowest Number of Women in Office*

Prior to the 2022 election, West Virginia already had the lowest level of women's representation at 13.4%. After losing three seats, women now account for just 11.9% of state legislators.

### Women Record Number of Candidates and Nominees

A record 4,606 women (2,769D, 1819R) sought seats in state legislatures in 2022. The previous high was 4,216, which was set in 2020. Nearly 80% of the women who ran in the primary won and advanced to the general election. This new record of major party nominees—3,614 women (2,306D, 1,289R)—also exceeds the previous record of 3,446 set in 2020.

### Republican Women Running Break Records

While a record number of Republican women ran for office in 2022, the number of Democrats running declined. However, there were still more Democrats running than Republicans. This is in alignment with the number of women currently in office: Democratic women outnumber Republican women two to one in state legislatures.

In 2022, 1,810 Republican women filed to run for the state legislature and 1,289 became the party's nominees, far outpacing the previous high of 1,407 candidates filed and 1,105 nominees set in 2020. Of the Republican women who filed to run this year, only 797 were ultimately elected (61.8%).

In contrast, Democratic women failed to break previous records set in 2018 and 2020. Only 2,769 Democratic women filed to run in 2022, below the record 2,778 who filed in 2020. The record for Democratic women as party nominees was set in 2018, with 2,402 women running. In comparison, only 2,306 women became nominees in 2022, narrowly below the 2,315 women nominees in 2020. Of the Democratic women who filed to run this year, only 1,568 were ultimately elected (68.0%).

#### KAYLA YOUNG

WEST VIRGINIA STATE  
DELEGATE

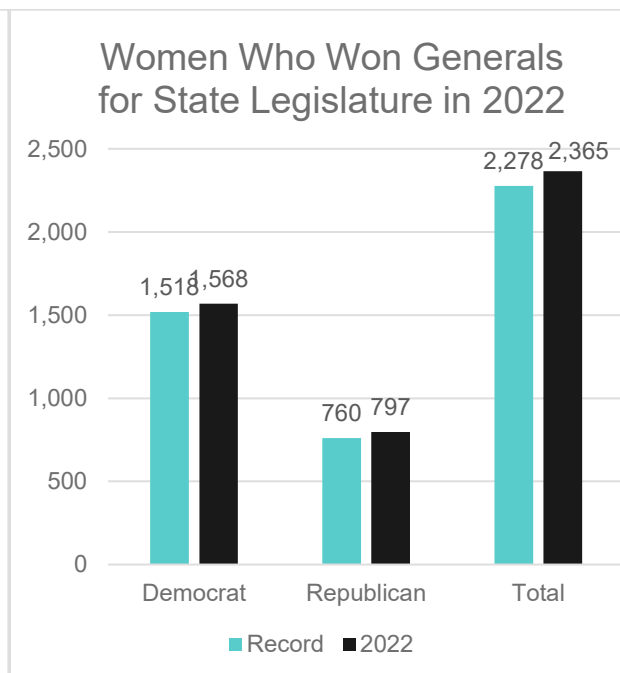
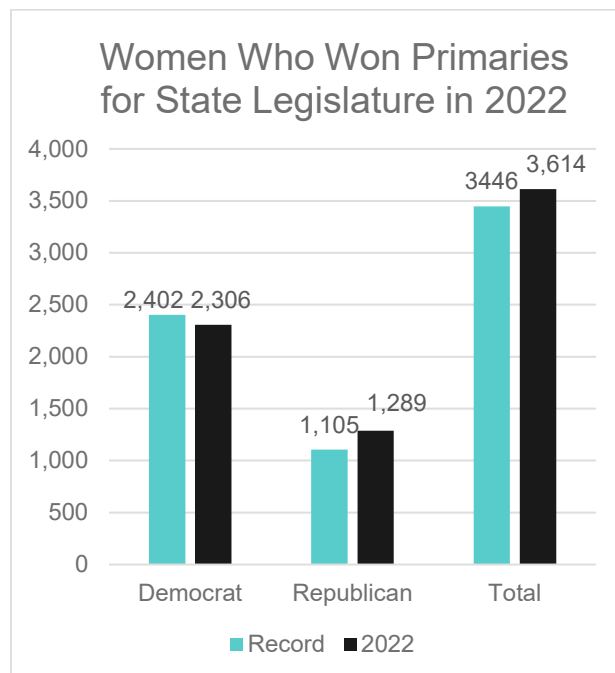
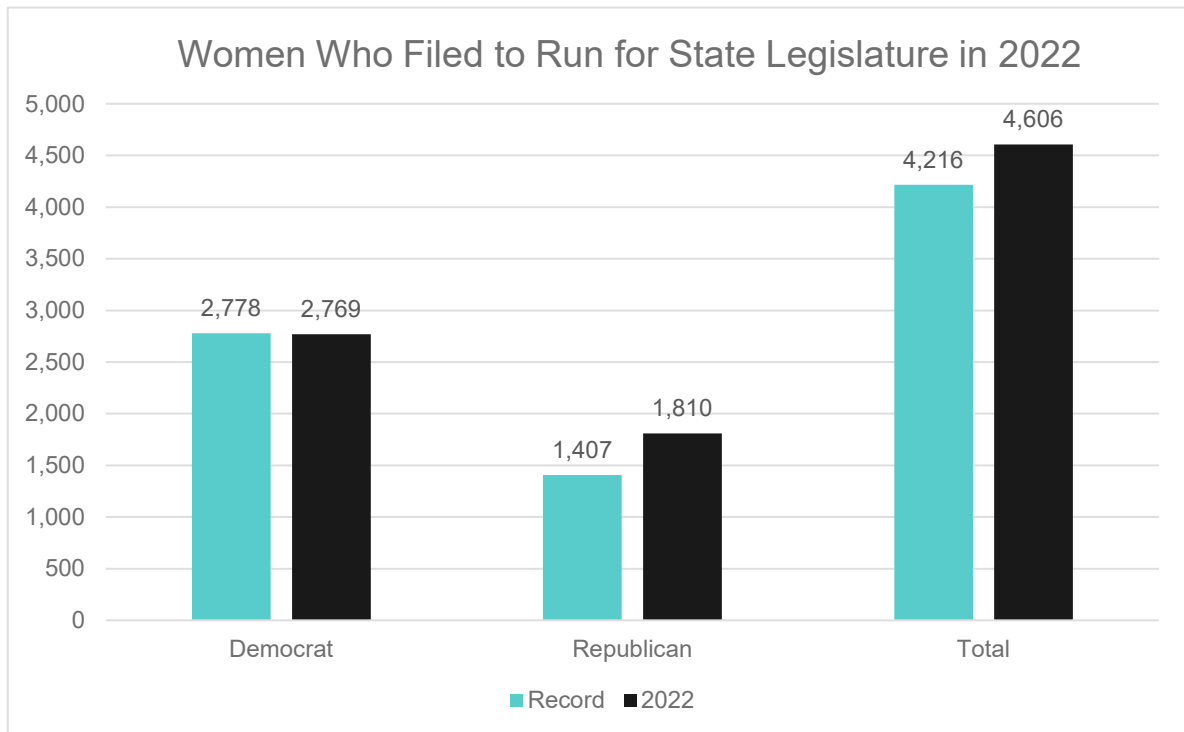


While only 16 women will serve in the West Virginia Legislature in 2023, one will be Kayla Young, who won her reelection by just 54 votes. Young, who was first elected to the House of Delegates in 2020 at age 32, has introduced more pieces of legislation that passed than any other delegate.

Young is one of 105 women across 23 statehouses that trained with Ascend partner [Vote Run Lead](#). Vote Run Lead's Run/51 program is working to achieve women majorities in all 50 states.

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections



Data: Center for American Women and Politics

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Black Women Make History in Minnesota

In 2022, three Black women—Zaynab Mohomed, Erin Maye Quade, and Clare Oumou Verbeten—were elected to the Minnesota State Senate for the first time in the state's 164-year history. Maye Quade and Oumou Verbeten are also the first out-LGBTQ women elected to the office.

### BLACK WOMEN ELECTED TO MINNESOTA STATE SENATE



Zaynab Mohomed



Erin Maye Quade



Clare Oumou Verbeten

### Women Incumbents Dominate General Election Ballot

Women incumbents accounted for more than 40% of candidates in the general election, whereas women who ran for open seats accounted for only 33% of candidates, and challengers just 25%. Incumbency is the most influential factor in determining the outcome of an election, making open seats more appealing to women than running as a challenger. Of the 1,517 incumbent women who sought reelection, more than 95% won in the general.

### WOMEN MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATES FOR STATE LEGISLATURE

Incumbents		Challengers		Open Seats		Total	
1,517 (42%)		915 (25%)		1,182 (33%)		3,614 (100%)	
Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep
1,050	461	502	408	754	420	2,306	1,289

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Democrats More Likely to Win Election

The overall win rate for Democratic women in the 2022 election was 57%, in comparison to 44% for Republicans. Of the 2,306 Democratic women, 83% won their primaries and 68.0% won in the general election. However, only 71% of Republican women won their primaries and 61.8% their general.

Republican nominees accounted for 36% of women candidates in the general election, whereas they currently hold 33% of seats. In contrast, Democrats account for 66% of women in state legislatures, but were only 63% of general election candidates.

**MUNIRA ABDULLAHI**  
OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Munira Abdullahi is the first Somali American and Muslim woman elected to the Ohio Legislature. She lives in Columbus, which has the second largest Somali population in the U.S.

Rep.-elect Abdullahi trained with Ascend partner, [New American Leaders](#) (NAL). NAL empowers first- and second-generation Americans to run, win, and lead.

Abdullahi, who is only 26, served as an [IGNITE](#) fellow. IGNITE, an Ascend partner, helps young women discover and flex their political power.

# MICHIGAN

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Michigan, one of our three pilot states, made progress towards achieving our goal of gender parity in the state legislature. Women will now represent 40% of members in the Michigan House and the Senate, a new record. Democratic women were key to the party's ability to retake the majority in both the House and the Senate. Term limits meant 10 of the 14 Republican women in the House were unable to run for reelection, creating more competitive open seats.

All three of the incumbent women running for reelection to statewide office won, including Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. Michigan is one of only two states in which women hold a majority of statewide elected offices.

Additionally, women running for Congress performed well, with six of the seven candidates winning their general election races. And a new woman from Michigan, Democrat Hillary Scholten (MI-3), is headed to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Voters also passed a ballot measure by a wide margin (57% to 43%), enshrining abortion rights in the state's constitution. It also invalidated a 1931 law criminalizing abortion. Abortion also drove turnout for Democratic women on the ballot. An exit poll conducted by the National Election Pool showed abortion as the top priority for 45% of voters, easily outpacing inflation at 28%. Voters who said abortion was the number one issue, cast ballots for Gov. Whitmer by a 55-point margin.<sup>17</sup>

## Federal - Senate

### Michigan Represented in Senate by One Woman

Neither of the state's two U.S. Senate seats were up for reelection in 2022. One of the two seats is held by a woman, Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D), who will be up for reelection in 2024.

## Federal - House

### Percentage of Women in the Michigan Congressional Delegation Increases

Six of the seven women running to represent Michigan in Congress won their races. One race, Michigan Congressional District 6, featured two women: incumbent Democrat Debbie Dingell

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<sup>17</sup> Axios, Sneak Peak (11.13.22)



## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

and Republican challenger Whitney Williams. While there are currently six women serving in the state's delegation, women as a percentage of the delegation will increase because Michigan lost one seat during the redistricting process and will only send 13 representatives to the U.S. House next year.

### WOMEN IN THE MICHIGAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION



Debbie Dingell\* (D)  
MI -06



Lisa McClain\* (R)  
MI-09



Hillary Scholten (D)  
MI-03



Elissa Slotkin\* (D)  
MI-07



Haley Stevens\* (D)  
MI-11



Rashida Tlaib\* (D)  
MI-12

\*Denotes incumbent

### Incumbents Prevailed in General Election

Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence was the only incumbent woman who did not seek reelection in 2022. All of the other five incumbent women ran for reelection and won their races.

### Scholten Won Key Seat for Democrats in Congress

Democrat Hillary Scholten defeated Republican John Gibbs in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District. Gibbs ousted incumbent Rep. Peter Meijer in the Republican Primary. Meijer was one of only 10 Republicans who voted to impeach President Trump following the January 6<sup>th</sup> attack on the U.S. Capitol. This was one of 16 races which flipped from Republican to Democrat in 2022.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> NPR – Why Republicans would up with a smaller than expected House majority Election results, 2020: Incumbent win rates by state

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Women Outperformed Men in General Election

Women were 40% of the primary candidates for U.S. House seats in Michigan this cycle, but made up just 28% of the general election candidates. Of the 21 women who ran for Congress in the primary election, seven women won: five Democrats and two Republicans (33% win-rate). However, of those seven, six won in the general election (86% win-rate). In comparison, only 39% of men who advanced from the primary won in the general election. This is likely attributable to the incumbent advantage.

#### CANDIDATES FOR U.S. HOUSE IN MICHIGAN

Primary		General		Elected	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
21	31	7	18	6	7
40%	60%	28%	72%	46%	54%

## Statewide

### Three of Four Statewide Offices Led by Women

In Michigan, three of the four statewide offices are held by women. Only the Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II is a man. Michigan is one of two states in which women hold a majority of statewide elected offices, the other being Massachusetts.

#### WOMEN STATEWIDE OFFICEHOLDERS IN MICHIGAN



Gretchen Whitmer  
Governor



Dana Nessel  
Attorney General



Jocelyn Benson  
Secretary of State

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Whitmer Retains Governor's Office

In 2022, incumbent Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer was challenged by Republican Tudor Dixon. Whitmer resoundingly defeated Dixon by more than 10 points. For the first time in Michigan history, two women were the major party nominees for governor. Dixon defeated four male opponents to face Whitmer in the general. The governor's race in Michigan was one of five nationwide that featured two women.

### Incumbent Woman Reelected Secretary of State

Incumbent Democrat Jocelyn Benson defeated Republican challenger Kristina Karamo by 14% to retain the Secretary of State's office.

### Woman Re-Elected Attorney General

In the general election, incumbent Attorney General Dana Nessel, a Democrat, defeated three other candidates, including Republican Matthew DePerno to retain her seat. Nessel is the only out-LGBTQ attorney general in the nation.

### Democratic Trifecta

Democrats flipped control of both the House and Senate in 2022. Michigan will be one of just 18 states in which the Democrats hold the governor's office and both branches of the legislature.<sup>19</sup> Women were key. Not only did Gretchen Whitmer retain the governor's office, but women won critical races in both chambers. In the Senate, two women faced off in SD 35, where Democrat Kristen McDonald Rivet defeated Republican Annette Glenn, a state representative. In the House, key wins included HD 103 in which Democratic challenger Betsey Coffia unseated incumbent Republican Jack O'Malley.<sup>20</sup>

## State Legislature

### Number of Women Serving in Legislature to Rise to Record High

Following the 2022 election, a record 59 women will serve in the Michigan Legislature. This includes 12 Democratic women in the Senate and 32 in the House as well as three Republican women in the Senate and 12 in the House. This is a new high: The record was set in 2020 when 54 women were elected. Only 53 women are currently serving in the Michigan Legislature.

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<sup>19</sup> Inside Climate News - [Four States Just Got a 'Trifecta' of Democratic Control, Paving the Way for Climate and Clean Energy Legislation](#)

<sup>20</sup> Bridge Michigan - [Huge wins for Democrats. They're poised to retake Michigan Legislature](#)

## Partner Feature: Equality Michigan

In response to rising attacks and anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric in the state, Ascend partner Equality Michigan launched a #HateWontWin campaign. The #HateWontWin statewide coalition was the first of its kind in the U.S. and their efforts included:

- 110,000 knocks
- 115,000 phone calls
- 58,000 people texted
- 46,000 pledges to vote

Hatred against the LGBTQ+ community was used as a divisive political tactic throughout the election cycle, but thanks to the effort of Equality Michigan and #HateWontWin, hate did not carry its proponents to victory. Not only was Attorney General Dana Nessel reelected, but a record setting seven LGBTQ+ candidates won seats in the Michigan Legislature, the largest LGBTQ+ caucus in the state to date.

**"THE AGGRESSIVE EFFORTS TO TARGET LGBTQ+ PEOPLE THROUGH A WAVE OF HOSTILE RHETORIC AND POLICY PROPOSALS FAILED ACROSS MICHIGAN. MICHIGANDERS HAVE REJECTED THE ANTI-LGBTQ+ BOMBAST SPEWED TO THEM FROM EXTREMISTS, AND STOOD UP AGAINST HATE AND VOTED FOR PROGRESS AND EQUALITY."**

**- ERIN KNOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EQUALITY MICHIGAN**

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Republican Men Outnumber Democratic Women

While Democrats retook control of the House and the Senate, Republican men continue to be the largest demographic group in both bodies. Democratic women now outnumber Democratic men in both the House and the Senate, while Republican women remain a super minority in both chambers.

#### MICHIGAN LEGISLATURE - 2023

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Senate	8	12	15	3
House	24	32	42	12
Total	32	44	57	15

## Senate

### Record Number of Women Elected to Senate

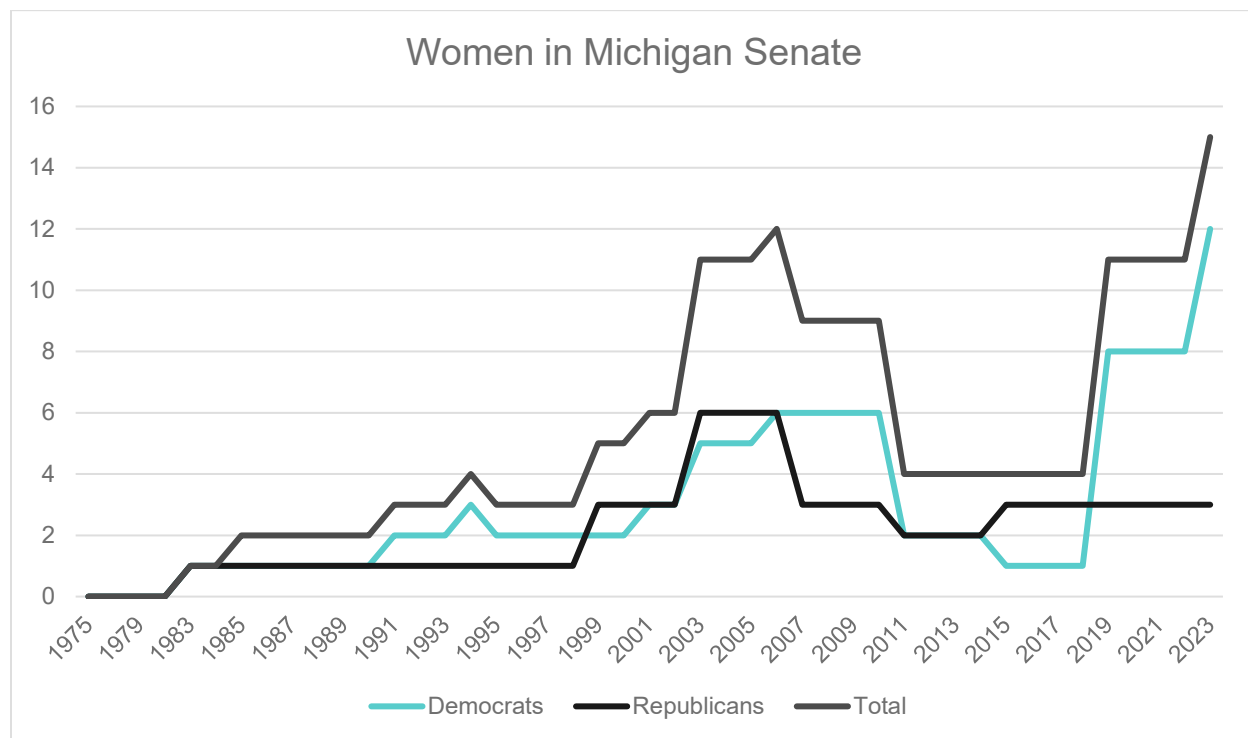
A record 15 women will serve in the Michigan Senate following the 2022 election. Women picked up four seats; prior to the election only 11 women were serving in the Senate. The Michigan Senate is comprised of 38 members. Women will now account for 39% of members of the Senate, up from the previous high of 29% set in 2019.

#### MICHIGAN SENATE

	Democrats		Republicans		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Current	8	8	19	3	27	11
Elected	8	12	15	3	23	15

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections



Data: Center for American Women and Politics

## Woman to Leadership Position

Sen. Winnie Brinks (D) will serve as Senate Majority Leader, the first woman to hold the role. Brinks served six years in the House before being elected to the Senate in 2018. In 2018, women became a majority of the Democratic Caucus for the first time in Michigan history.

## Fifty Percent of Women Won in General

Of the 28 women who ran in the general election, 15 won. Women and men performed similarly in the general election. Women won 52% of their races while men won 50%.

### CANDIDATES FOR STATE SENATE

Primary		General		Elected	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
45	82	29	46	15	23
35%	65%	39%	61%	39%	61%

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Democratic Women Outperformed Republican Women

Of the 15 women elected to the Michigan Senate in 2022, 12 are Democrats and only three are Republicans. In 2022, gains were made exclusively by Democratic women. Democrats women gained four seats, while Republicans held steady. More Democratic women ran for the Michigan Senate than Republican women. Additionally, Democratic women performed better, winning 71% of their primaries and 60% of their general elections. In contrast, Republican women won only 53% of their primaries and 33% of their general elections. Republican women have long been outnumbered by Democratic women, in part because more women identify as Democrats than Republican, but also because Republican women often lack the support of their local political parties and lag behind their male counterparts in fundraising.

#### POLITICAL PARTY OF WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR STATE SENATE

Primary		General		Elected	
Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep
28	17	20	9	12	3
62%	38%	69%	31%	80%	20%

### Incumbent Women Fended Off Opponents

Nine of the 10 incumbent women running for reelection to the Michigan Senate won their races. One incumbent, Kim LaSata, lost in the primary. All nine incumbent women (7D, 2R) who advanced to the general election won. There is an "incumbent advantage." Last cycle, for example, state legislative incumbent candidates in Michigan won reelection in 98% of races.<sup>21</sup>

#### STEPHANIE CHANG

MICHIGAN SENATE



Stephanie Chang was reelected for a second term in the Senate. Before being elected to Senate, Chang served two terms in the House. When she was first elected in 2014, she was the first Asian American woman to serve in the legislature. Chang's parents moved from Taiwan to Detroit, so her father could pursue a career in the auto industry.

Chang helped organize Ascend partner, [New American Leaders](#), first training in Michigan for first- and second-generation Americans. And last year, she sponsored a bill to allow the use of campaign funds to pay for childcare and dependent care expenses, in conjunction with Ascend partner [Vote Mama](#).



## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Women Sought Open Seats

In 2022, women ran for only 10 of the 14 open Senate seats, in which there was no incumbent. Two open races featured women on both sides of the aisle and no women ran for four seats. Women won five of the 14 open seats. To achieve gender parity in the state legislature, women must make up 50% of the candidates and run in every district.

### Few Challengers Won Races

Only one woman challenger, Democrat Veronica Klinefelt, was elected to the Michigan Senate. Klinefelt defeated Republican Michael McDonald in House District 11. This race was key to Democrats taking control of the Senate.

#### INCUMBENCY STATUS OF WOMEN STATE SENATE GENERAL WINNERS

Party	Incumbents	Challengers	Open Seats
Democrat	7	1	4
Republican	2	0	1
<i>Total</i>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>

### Multiple Woman v. Woman Races

Three general election races featured two women running against each other. One race, State Senate District 5, featured a Republican challenger to the Democratic incumbent. The other two races, State Senate Districts 21 and 35, were for open seats. In all three races the Democrats prevailed.

#### WOMAN V. WOMAN RACES

District	Won	Lost
SD 5	*Dayna Polehanki (D)	Emily Bauman (R)
SD 21	Sarah Anthony (D)	Nkenge Ayanna Robertson (R)
SD 35	*Kristen McDonald Rivet (D)	Annette Glenn (R)

\*Denotes incumbents

**PARITY POSTPONED**

An analysis of women’s representation and the 2022 elections

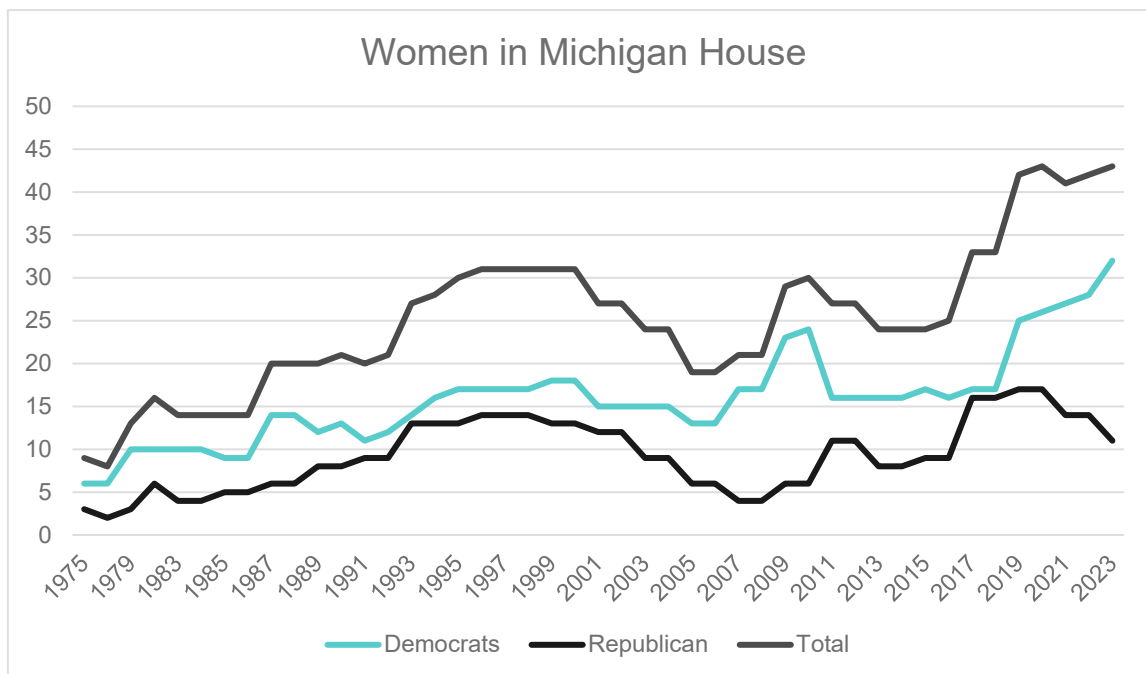
# House

## Record Number of Women Elected to Michigan House

In 2022, 44 women were elected to the Michigan House. This is an increase of two over the current record of 42 which was set in 2020. There are 110 seats in the Michigan House. Women will now account for 40% of all state representatives, up from 38%.

### MICHIGAN HOUSE

	Democrats		Republicans		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Current</b>	25	28	42	14	67	42
<b>Elected</b>	24	32	42	12	66	44



Data: Center for American Women and Politics

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Fifty Percent of Women Won in General

Of the 84 women who ran in the general election, 44 won their races. Women and men performed similarly in the general election. Women won 52% of their races while men won 49%.

#### GENDER OF CANDIDATES FOR MICHIGAN HOUSE

Primary		General		Elected	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
139	281	84	134	44	66
33%	67%	39%	61%	40%	60%

### Few Republican Women in Michigan House

Following the 2022 election, Democratic women will outnumber Republican women three to one in the Michigan House. Of the 44 women elected to the Michigan House in 2022, 32 are Democrats and only 12 are Republicans. This means Republican women will account for only 11% of all representatives. Meanwhile, women are a majority of the Democratic House Caucus, holding 55% of seats.

#### POLITICAL PARTY OF WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR MICHIGAN HOUSE

Current		Elected	
Democrats	Republican	Democrats	Republican
28	14	32	12
67%	33%	73%	27%

### Democratic Women Outperformed Republican Women

More Democratic women ran for the Michigan House than Republican women. Democratic women picked up four seats and Republican women lost two. Additionally, Democratic women performed better, winning 67% of their primaries and 57% of their general elections. In contrast, Republican women won only 50% of their primaries and 43% of their general elections.

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### POLITICAL PARTY OF WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR MICHIGAN HOUSE

Primary		General		Elected	
Democrats	Republican	Democrats	Republican	Democrats	Republican
83	56	56	28	32	12
60%	40%	67%	33%	73%	27%

### Dozen Woman v. Woman Races in House

Twelve general election races featured two women running against each other for the Michigan House. The incumbent prevailed in all seven of their races; including six Democrats and one Republican. There were five races between women for open seats; Democrats won two and Republicans won three.

### WOMAN V. WOMAN RACES

District	Won	Lost
HD 4	*Karen Whitsett (D)	Tonya Wells (R)
HD 12	*Kimberly Edwards (D)	Diane Saber (R)
HD 17	*Laurie Pohutsky (D)	Penny Crider (R)
HD 40	*Christine Morse (D)	Kelly Sackett (R)
HD 47	Carrie Rheingans (D)	Tina Bednarski-Lynch (R)
HD 49	*Ann Bollin (R)	Christina Kafkakis (D)
HD 54	Donni Steele (R)	Shadia Martini (D)
HD 74	*Kara Hope (D)	Jennifer Sokol (R)
HD 78	Gina Johnsen (R)	Leah Groves (D)
HD 79	Angela Rigas (R)	Kimberly Kennedy-Barrington (D)
HD 81	*Rachel Hood (D)	Lynn Afendoulis (R)
HD 109	Jenn Hill (D)	Melody Wagner (R)

\*Denotes incumbents

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### All Incumbents Won Reelection

Of the 21 incumbent women from both parties who ran for reelection, none lost in the primary or the general election. However, many of the Republican incumbent women – ten of the 14 currently serving – were not able to run for reelection due to term limits. Prior to the 2022 election, each representative is limited to serving three two-year terms (cumulative six years) in the House. However, a ballot measure passed in 2022 changes legislative term limits to an overall total of 12 years.

### Democratic Women Won More Open Seats

In 2022, 21 women won open seats in the Michigan House, including 12 Democrats and nine Republicans.

### Two Women Defeated Incumbents

Two Democratic women defeated incumbents; Kimberly Edwards (HD-12) defeated Democratic Rep. Richard Steenland in the primary and Betsy Coffia (HD-103) narrowly defeated Republican Rep. Jack O'Malley. As previously noted, Coffia's victory over O'Malley was critical to Democrats retaking the majority in the House.

#### INCUMBENCY STATUS OF WOMEN STATE HOUSE GENERAL WINNERS

Party	Incumbents	Challengers	Open Seats
Democrat	18	2	12
Republican	3	0	9
Total	21	2	21

#### BRENDA CARTER

MICHIGAN HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES



A former school board member, Brenda Carter was first elected to the legislature in 2018. Following her reelection, Carter was elected Vice-Chair of the Democratic Caucus under the state's first Black Speaker of the House Joe Tate.

Carter is an alum of [Vote Run Lead](#), an Ascend anchor partner. Vote Run Lead projects it will take Michigan 23 years before women are a majority in the Michigan Legislature, however through their Run/51 program they have a plan to reach parity in just 10 years.

Since 2018, the number of women serving in the Michigan State House has increased from 33 to 44, an increase of 33%. Should this trajectory continue, women will reach a majority within Vote Run Lead's goal of 10 years, though progress has slowed since the 2018 Year of the Woman.

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### MICHIGAN STATE PARTNERS

In Michigan, we invested in four state-based organizations to increase the number of women running for office and achieve gender parity in the state legislatures. Our partners work to recruit, train, and support women in their pursuit of their public leadership goals.



*Equality Michigan is a statewide lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer political advocacy organization.*



*Mothering Justice empowers mothers of color to influence policy on behalf of themselves and others.*



*Rising Voices Fund supports and funds the infrastructure to organize Asian American women and young people for power in the state of Michigan.*



*She Holds the Key works to remove barriers and provide support for center and center-right leaning women seeking elected office and appointments in Michigan.*

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

# WASHINGTON

Washington, one of our three pilot states, made progress towards achieving our goal of gender parity in the state legislature. Women will now represent 47% of members in the Washington House and the Senate, a new record. The state now needs to elect only four more women to reach parity, including five in the Senate and one in the House.

Additionally, women running for Congress performed well with seven candidates winning their general election races. And a new woman from Washington, Democrat Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (WA-3), will be heading to the U.S. House of Representatives.

## Federal

### Women to Remain Majority of Washington Congressional Delegation

Seven of the 10 women running for Congress won their races, including Democratic incumbent Patty Murray who defended her Senate seat from Republican challenger Tiffany Smiley and Republican incumbent Cathy McMorris Rodgers who faced a challenge from Democrat Natasha Hill.

#### WOMEN IN WASHINGTON CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION



Maria Cantwell\*  
US Senate



Patty Murray\*  
US Senate



Suazam DelBene\*  
WA-01



Marie Gluesenkamp Perez  
WA-03



Cathy McMorris Rodgers\*  
WA-05



Pramila Jayapal\*  
WA-07



Kim Schrier\*  
WA-08



Marilyn Strickland\*  
WA-10

\*Denotes incumbent



## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

Women will make up 67% of the Washington State Congressional delegation, holding eight of 12 seats, including both U.S. Senate seats. Washington is one of only four states that is currently represented by an all-woman delegation in the U.S. Senate.<sup>22</sup>

### Incumbents Prevailed in General Election

While Republican Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler was defeated in the primary, all six of the other incumbent women who ran for reelection won their races.

### Gluesenkamp Perez Won Key Seat for Democrats in Congress

Democrat Marie Gluesenkamp Perez defeated Republican Joe Kent in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District. Kent ousted Republican incumbent Rep. Jamie Herrera Beutler in the primary. Herrera Beutler was one of only 10 Republicans who voted to impeach President Trump following the January 6<sup>th</sup> attack on the U.S. Capitol. This was one of 14 races which flipped from Republican to Democrat in 2022.

## U.S. Senate

### Two Women Faced Off in U.S. Senate Race

Incumbent Democrat Patty Murray defeated Republican challenger Tiffany Smiley. Murray was first elected in 1992, the first “Year of the Woman,” and described herself as a mom in “tennis shoes.” This was one of three Senate races in the nation that featured women from both major political parties. Washington is one of only four states that is currently represented by an all-woman delegation in the U.S. Senate.

## U.S. House

### Number of Women in House Flat

In Washington, six of the eight women running for the U.S. House of Representatives won their races, including six Democrats and one Republican. One race, Washington Congressional District 5, featured two women; incumbent Republican Cathy McMorris Rodgers defeated Democratic challenger Natasha Hill. Women will account for six of the 10 (60%) Washington representatives.

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<sup>22</sup> Center for American Women and Politics, [Women in the U.S. Senate 2022](#)

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Democratic Woman Replaces Republican Woman Defeated in Primary

Because Rep. Jamie Herrera Beutler lost her primary, Democrat Marie Gluesenkamp Perez faced Republican Joe Kent, a Trump-backed candidate. Gluesenkamp Perez won the seat originally rated as "Solid Republican" by Cook Political Report.<sup>23</sup>

### Women Outperformed Men in General Election

While women were only 27% of the primary candidates for U.S. House seats in Washington this cycle, they made up 40% of the general election candidates. Of the 15 women who ran for Congress in the primary election, eight women won: six Democrats and two Republicans (53% win-rate). However, of the eight, six won in the general election (75% win rate). In comparison, only 33% of men who advanced from the primary won in the general election. This is likely a result of the "incumbent advantage."

#### CANDIDATES FOR CONGRESS

Primary		General		Elected	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
15	40	8	12	6	4
27%	73%	40%	60%	60%	40%

## Statewide

### Man Wins Special Election for Secretary of State

A special election was held to replace Secretary of State Kim Wyman, who resigned midterm to join the Biden administration. Democrat Steve Hobbs, who was appointed in November 2021 to replace Wyman, defeated Independent Julie Anderson. Currently, only two women are serving in statewide executive office in Washington: Land Commissioner Hilary Franz and Auditor Patrice McCarthy. All other offices will be on the ballot in 2024.

<sup>23</sup> The Hill, [Cook Report shifts Herrera Beutler's seat toward Democrats after primary loss](#)

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

# State Legislature

## Number of Women Serving in Legislature to Rise to Record High

Following the 2022 election, a record 68 women will serve in the Washington Legislature. This includes: 16 Democratic women in the Senate and 35 in the House as well as five Republican women in the Senate and 13 in the House. Women will now makeup for 46% of legislators. The previous record of 62 women (42%) was set in 2021.

### WASHINGTON LEGISLATURE 2023

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
<i>Senate</i>	13	16	15	5
<i>House</i>	21	35	26	13
<i>Total</i>	34	51	41	18

## Democratic Women Dominate Legislative Bodies

Democratic women are the largest demographic group in both the House and the Senate, outnumbering both Democratic and Republican men. In contrast, Republican women are a super minority in both chambers.

### CLAUDIA KAUFFMAN

WASHINGTON SENATE



to Senate District 47. When Kauffman was first elected in 2006, she was the first Native woman to serve in the state senate. Prior to running for office, Kauffman served as the Intergovernmental Affairs Liaison for the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe.

Kauffman also co-founded [Native Action Network](#) (NAN), an Ascend partner that promotes Native women's full representation, participation, and leadership in local, state, tribal, and national affairs. This year, NAN hosted a bootcamp that was attended by 20 women from 17 tribes designed to help Native women to run for office at all levels.

**PARITY POSTPONED**

An analysis of women’s representation and the 2022 elections

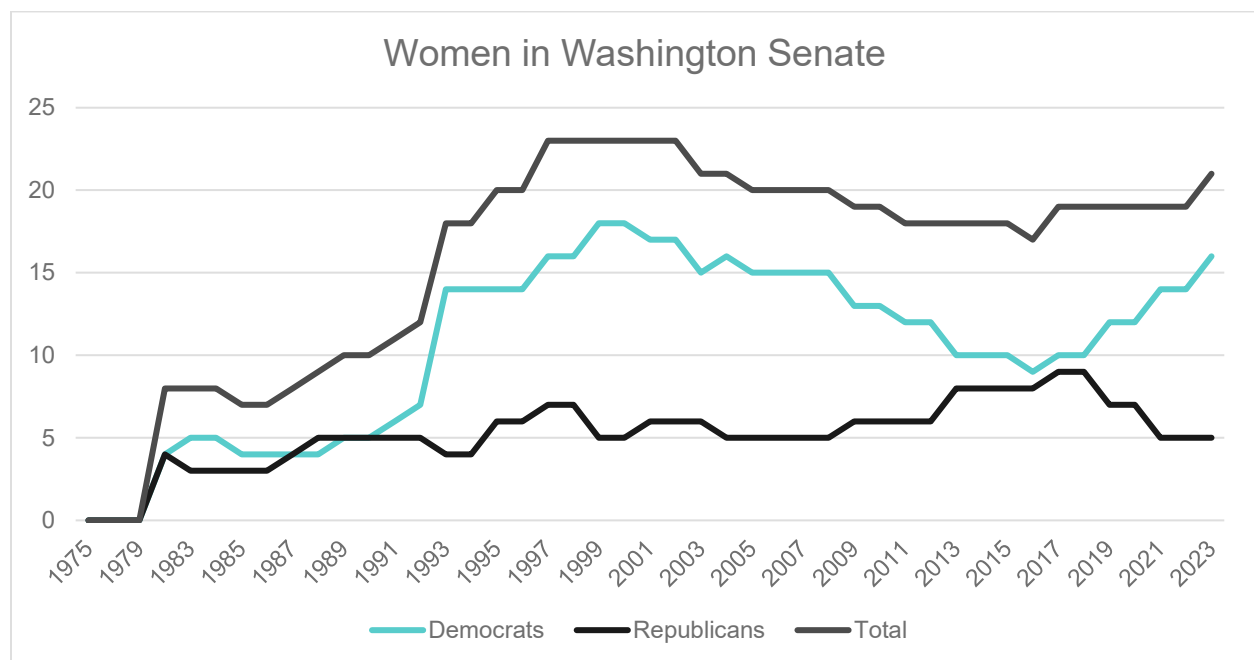
## State Senate

### Record Number of Women Elected to Senate

Following the 2022 election, 21 women (16D, 5R) will serve in the Washington Senate. Women picked up two seats; prior to the election only 19 women (14D, 5R) were serving in the Senate. The Washington Senate is comprised of 49 members, of which only 24 seats were up for reelection. Women will now account for 43% of members of the Senate, down from the previous high of 47% set in 1997.

#### WASHINGTON SENATE

	Democrats		Republicans		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<i>Current</i>	15	14	15	5	29	19
<i>Elected</i>	13	16	15	5	28	21



Data: Center for American Women and Politics

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Over 50% of Women Won in General

Of the 25 women who ran in the general election, 14 won. Women and men performed similarly in the general election. Women won 56% of their races while men won 55%. While more women than men were elected in 2022, men still make up a majority of the Senate—only 24 of 49 seats were up for election. This included 11 Republican men and six Democratic men, in comparison to only two Republican women and five Democratic men.

#### GENDER OF CANDIDATES FOR WASHINGTON STATE SENATE

Primary		General		Elected	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
27	29	25	20	14	11
48%	52%	56%	44%	56%	44%

### Democratic Women Outperformed Republican Women

Of the 14 women elected to the Washington Senate in 2022, 11 are Democrats and only three are Republicans. Democratic women picked up two seats, while Republican women held steady. More Democratic women ran for the Washington Senate than Republican women. Eighty-five percent of women won their primary elections, however Democratic women outperformed Republican women in the general election winning 73% of races in comparison to 33%.

#### POLITICAL PARTY OF WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR STATE SENATE

Primary			General			Elected		
Dem	Rep	Ind	Dem	Rep	Ind	Dem	Rep	Ind
15	9	3	15	9	1	11	3	0
55%	33%	11%	60%	36%	4%	79%	21%	0%

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Multiple Woman v. Woman Races

Seven of the 24 general election races featured two women running against each other. While two of the races were for open seats, the other five featured Democratic incumbents challenged by Republican opponents. Democrats prevailed in all but one race.

#### WASHINGTON WOMEN V. WOMEN RACES

District	Winner	Loser
SD 15	Nikki Torres (R)	Lindsey Kessler (D)
SD 27	*Yasmin Trudeau (D)	Ashley Ray (R)
SD 30	*Claire Wilson (D)	Linda Kochmar (R)
SD 33	*Karen Keiser (D)	Marlia Melzer (R)
SD 36	Noel Frame (D)	Kate Martin (D)
SD 45	*Manka Dhingra (D)	Ryika Hooshangi (R)
SD 48	*Patty Kuderer (D)	Michelle Darnell (R)

### Incumbent Women Fended Off Opponents

All 10 incumbents (8D, 2R) running for reelection to the Washington Senate won their races. Two incumbent women, Democratic Senator Mona Das (SD 47) and Republican Senator Sharon Brown (SD 8), did not seek reelection. There is an “incumbent advantage.” Last cycle, for example, State legislative incumbent candidates in Washington won reelection in 95% of races, a significant advantage for incumbents.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ballotpedia, [Election results, 2020: Incumbent win rates by state](#)

**PARITY POSTPONED**

An analysis of women’s representation and the 2022 elections

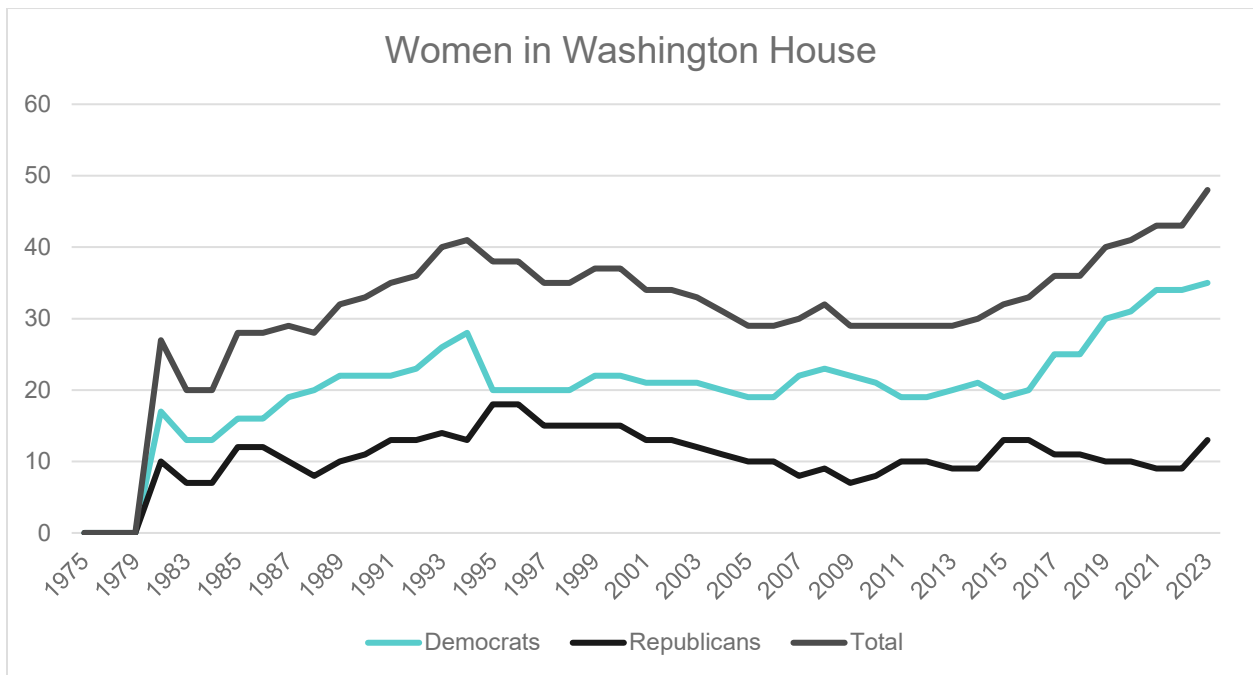
# State House

## Record Number of Women Elected to Washington House

In 2022, 48 women were elected to the Washington House. This is an increase of five over the current record of 43 which was set in 2020. There are 98 seats in the Washington House. Women will now account for 49% of all state representatives, up from 44%.

### WASHINGTON HOUSE

	Democrats		Republicans		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<i>Current</i>	23	34	32	9	55	43
<i>Elected</i>	21	35	26	13	47	48



Data: Center for American Women and Politics



## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Sixty Percent of Women Won in General

Women accounted for 42% of primary candidates and 47% of general election candidates. Of the 83 women who ran in the general election, 48 won their races. Women and men performed similarly in the general election. Women won 58% of their races while men won 54%. In the primary, women won 79% of races in comparison to men's win rate of 67%.

#### GENDER OF CANDIDATES FOR WASHINGTON HOUSE

Primary		General		Elected	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
101	138	83	92	48	50
42%	58%	47%	53%	49%	51%

### Democratic Women Dominate the House

Following the 2022 election, Democratic women will continue to outnumber Republican women nearly three to one in the Washington House. Of the 48 women elected to the Washington House in 2022, 35 are Democrats and only 13 are Republicans, meaning Republican women will account for less than 15% of all representatives. Meanwhile, women are a majority of the Democratic House Caucus, holding 63% of seats.

#### POLITICAL PARTY OF WOMEN IN WASHINGTON HOUSE


Current		Elected	
Democrats	Republican	Democrats	Republican
34	9	35	13
79%	21%	73%	27%

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

**JULIA REED**

WASHINGTON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Julia Reed was elected to House District 36.1. Prior to running for office, Reed worked for the Obama Administration and as a senior policy advisor to the Mayor of Seattle, where she focused on workforce development issues.

Reed attended a training for BIPOC women hosted by Ascend partner, [Sage Leaders](#). Sage provides peer support cohorts and training resources for progressive civic leaders interested in running for office. They also offer individual coaching sessions with potential candidates.

### Republican Women Gained Seats in Washington House

Notably, Republican women picked up four seats in the House this cycle, while Democratic women only picked up one. All eight Republican women incumbents who ran for reelection won, as did five Republican women running in open seats. No Republican women who challenged incumbents won in the general.

### Democratic Women Outperformed Republican Women

More Democratic women ran for the Washington House than Republican women. Democratic women picked up one seat and Republican women picked up three. Additionally, Democratic women performed better, winning 84% of their primaries and 71% of their general elections. In contrast, Republican women won only 84% of their primaries and 42% of their general elections.

#### POLITICAL PARTY OF WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR STATE HOUSE

Primary			General			Elected		
Dem	Rep	Ind	Dem	Rep	Ind	Dem	Rep	Ind
58	37	6	49	31	3	35	13	0
57%	37%	6%	59%	37%	4%	72%	27%	0

## PARITY POSTPONED

An analysis of women's representation and the 2022 elections

### Woman v. Woman Races in House

Sixteen general election races featured two women running against each other for the Washington House. The incumbent prevailed in all 11 of their races; including seven Democrats and four Republicans. There were five races between women for open seats; Democrats won four and Republicans won one.

### All Incumbents Won Reelection

All 98 seats in the Washington House were up for reelection in 2022. Of the 43 incumbent women, only 36 ran for reelection, including 28 Democrats and 8 Republicans. Of the 36 incumbent women, none were unseated in the primary or general election.

#### WOMEN WHO WON GENERAL ELECTION: WASHINGTON HOUSE

Party	Incumbents	Challengers	Open Seats
Democrat	28	0	7
Republican	8	0	5
3 <sup>rd</sup> Party	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>

**PARITY POSTPONED**

An analysis of women’s representation and the 2022 elections

**WASHINGTON STATE PARTNERS**

In Washington, we invested in five state-based organizations to increase the number of women running for office and to achieve gender parity in the state legislatures. Our partners work to increase the number of women running for the state legislature through targeted, coordinated, community-based recruitment.



*Comunidad Latina de Vashon was founded by Latina women to cultivate youth and adult community leaders to use their strengths to change systemic injustices on Vashon Island.*



*Fix Democracy First Education Fund focuses on voter education, voter registration, outreach, and expanding civic participation across Washington state and beyond.*



*Native Action Network is a Native-led nonprofit organized to promote Native women’s full representation, participation, and leadership in local, state, tribal, and national affairs.*



*OneAmerica is the largest immigrant and refugee advocacy organization in Washington State, organizing with and advocating for diverse communities including Latinx, African, and Asian.*



*Puget Sound Sage charts a path to a living economy in the South Salish Sea and Duwamish River Valley regions by developing community power to influence, lead and govern.*

## LOCAL

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For a long time, it was assumed that women's lack of representation at the state and federal level was because women served in higher numbers in local office. However, more recent research on the gender composition of local offices, like mayor, city council, and school board, demonstrate that women are still less than one in three elected officials, like other levels of office. Women are more likely than men to launch their political careers at the local level, making it an important pipeline of candidates for higher office.

### Mayors

#### Women Lead in More Than One-Third of Most Populous Cities

Following the 2022 election, women will serve as mayor in 34 of America's 100 largest cities. Of the 100 most populous cities in the U.S., 25 held elections for mayor in 2022. In recent years, the number of women serving has climbed. In cities with populations greater than 30,000, women hold only 26% of mayoral offices, whereas in cities with populations greater than 10,000, women currently hold 31.5 % of mayoral offices.

#### Black Woman Elected Mayor of LA

Congresswoman Karen Bass was elected mayor of LA, the second-largest city in the U.S. Prior to her election, Bass served in the U.S. House of Representatives for 10 years.

Black women now lead two of the four largest cities in America; Lori Lightfoot is mayor of Chicago. The two other largest cities, New York and Houston, are led by Black men.

#### Big City Mayors More Diverse Than Other Offices

Of the 34 women who will serve as mayor in the 100 most populous cities, 17 are white, nine are Black, three are Latina, and five are Asian-American. Mayors tend to be more diverse than other elected offices, reflecting the compositions of their communities.



Karen Bass  
Los Angeles, Mayor-Elect

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### Women Mayors Disproportionately Targeted by Political Violence

A report from the Women's Mayor Network showed that women, particularly women of color, are more likely to experience political violence, including psychological violence and physical or sexual threats. These high rates influence women's desire to leave office or even run in the first place.<sup>25</sup>

### School Board

Debates around issues like COVID restrictions and critical race theory spurred an increase in candidates running for school board on both sides of the aisle. Women in particular bore the brunt of the pandemic, leaving the workforce in record numbers to care for children. Historically, approximately 49% of school board members have been women.<sup>26</sup> We'll know more about the gender composition of school boards following the 2022 election in the coming weeks.

<sup>25</sup> Women Mayors Network, [An Assault on Local Democracy](#)

<sup>26</sup> National School Board Association, [Women on Board](#)

#### TARA SREEKRISHNAN

SANTA CLARA  
BOARD OF EDUCATION (CA)



Tara Sreekrishnan was inspired to run for office by her immigrant parents who taught her the value of education, specifically her mother who was a school librarian. In addition to supporting high-quality learning for students, Tara Sreekrishnan supports child and family well-being through efforts like destigmatizing mental health.

Prior to running for office, Sreekrishnan participated in program offered by Ascend partner, [Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies](#) (APAICS). APAICS Women's Collective programming aims to build a community that inspires and supports Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AA & NH/PI) women to become politically engaged.

## PARITY POSTPONED

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### Other Local Offices

There are more than 500,000 local elected offices across the U.S., many of which were on the ballot in 2022. Prior to the election, approximately 30% of local officeholders were women. Because it takes longer to collect data on the outcome of local races, we don't yet know how women fared overall.

Local elected officials are key to the functioning of our communities and health of our democracy. City council members establish tax rates and set budgets for local services, like water and sanitation. County Clerks are responsible for administering elections; more than 80% of election administrators are women.<sup>27</sup>

#### VIVIAN NGUYEN

EVERETT CITY COUNCIL (MA)



Having grown up in low-income, immigrant household, Vivian Nguyen ran for city council because she did not feel represented in the political world. As an Asian-American women whose family experienced political intimidation in their home country, it is important for her to help give unheard voices a platform.

To prepare for bid for Everett City Council, Nguyen became a member of the [She Should Run](#) Community. She Should Run makes public leadership accessible and approachable for women early in the political pipeline. Their online Community and Incubator give women the opportunity to see themselves in office, helping them see that they are qualified and provide pathways for them to take their first step.

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<sup>27</sup> Democracy Fund, [Pursuing Diversity and Representation Among Elected Officials](#)



WHEN  
SHE  
ASCENDS  
WE  
ALL  
RISE



PANORAMA

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