



CAWP

Election Watch

PRESS RELEASE

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Women Post New Record Numbers in State Legislatures, But Lose Ground at Statewide Level

A record number of women will serve in state legislatures in 2007, according to the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. At the same time, the number of women holding statewide elected executive posts will drop, due in large measure to a decrease in the number of women lieutenant governors.

State Legislatures

Preliminary figures – subject to adjustment as states finalize their election returns – show that 1,731 women (1,178 Democrats, 540 Republicans, 10 elected non-partisan, 2 Progressives, and 1 independent) will serve in legislatures, making up 23.5 percent of all legislators. This surpasses the previous record of 1,686 (22.8 percent) set in 2006.

“While we’re always pleased to see the number of women officeholders climb, the advance this year isn’t especially large,” observed CAWP director Debbie Walsh. “What’s most notable for 2007 is the growing party disparity, with more than twice as many Democrats as Republicans among women lawmakers.”

Walsh noted that the party difference is far larger among women than it is among legislators overall. While legislators in general include 53 percent Democrats and 45 percent Republicans, the women legislators are 68 percent Democratic and 31 percent Republican. “The party breakdown among women in Congress is similarly tilted toward Democrats,” she commented. “We’re concerned that, with state legislatures providing a vital pipeline to higher offices, we’ll see fewer Republican women positioned to move up.”

The women serving in 2007 will include 1,492 (1,034D, 452R, 4NP, 2Prg) who won elections in 2006, as well as 239 holdovers (144D, 88R, 6NP, 1I) who were not up for election. The winners emerged from 2,429 candidates (1,560D, 860R, 7NP, 2Prg).

Statewide Elective Executive Offices

As of early 2007 when new officeholders are sworn in, 76 women (46D, 27R, 3NP) will hold statewide elective executive offices. This is a decrease from 2006, when the total was 78. While the number of women

(over)

governors will increase by one, women have lost ground at the lieutenant governor level, dropping from 15 to 11. The numbers of women in statewide office for 2007 will be:

Governor
9 (7D, 2R)

Chief Education Officer
9 (3D, 3R, 3NP)

Lieutenant Governor
11 (8D, 3R)

Commissioner of Labor
1R

Attorney General
4D

Commissioner of Insurance
2 (1D, 1R)

Secretary of State
12 (7D, 5R)

Corporation Commissioner
2R

State Treasurer
9 (7D, 2R)

Public Service Commissioner
5 (3D, 2R)

**Comptroller/Controller/Chief
Financial Officer**
5 (3D, 2R)

Railroad Commissioner
1R

State Auditor
6 (3D, 3R)

About CAWP

The Center for American Women and Politics, a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is a university-based research, education and public service center. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women's changing relationship to politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life. CAWP is a leading authority in its field and a respected bridge between the academic and political worlds.

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