



CAWP

Election Watch

For immediate release
September 20, 2010*

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* Updated 9/27 to reflect post-primary withdrawal of Lt. Gov. candidate in RI.

Year of the Republican Woman? Yes and No Women Candidates in the 2010 General Elections

Pundits in mid-2010 speculated about a potential “Year of the Republican Woman,” with many political newcomers seeking elective office. After the final primary in Hawaii on September 18, the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) reports that the story is more complicated: A record number of women filed to run for the House and Senate, boosting the total number of women primary candidates to an all-time high, but many were defeated in primaries. This year’s increase in primary candidates was due to Republican women, since fewer Democratic women ran for the House this year than in 2006 or 2008. Still, Democratic women continue to outnumber their Republican counterparts among general election candidates for Congress.

Democratic women seeking House seats had a much higher rate of primary success than their Republican counterparts. Excluding incumbents, who are rarely defeated in primaries, 37 of 80 non-incumbent Democratic women, or 46 percent, won their primaries, as compared with 32 of 113 non-incumbent Republican women, or 28 percent.

CAWP director Debbie Walsh observed, “Several headline-grabbing races this year, particularly involving GOP women, mask the reality: While significantly more Republican women ran in House primaries this year, fewer won than in 2004.”

Walsh also pointed out that gubernatorial races are making news this year. “Two states will have their first women governors, and for the first time, we could see one or two women of color as governors.”

U.S. Senate

The **36 women (19D, 17R) who filed** for U.S. Senate seats exceeded the previous record of 29 (22D, 7R) set in 1992. **Fifteen (9D, 6R*) women are running in the general election for Senate in 14 states, an increase over the record of 12 (8D, 4R) set in 2006.** Excluding incumbents who always win at high rates, Democratic and Republican women won at about the same rates, 29 percent and 31 percent respectively.

Of the Senate candidates, **6 (5D, 1R*) are incumbents:**

- Blanche Lincoln (D-AR)
- Barbara Boxer (D-CA)
- Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)
- Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)
- Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)*
- Patty Murray (D-WA)

* Sen. Lisa Murkowski lost her primary, but is running as a write-in candidate in the general election.

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5 (2D, 3R) are candidates for open seats:

- Linda McMahon (R-CT)
- Christine O'Donnell (R-DE)
- Lisa Johnston (D-KS)
- Robin Carnahan (D-MO)
- Kelly Ayotte (R-NH).

4 (2D, 2R) are challengers:

- Carly Fiorina (R-CA)
- Roxanne Conlin (D-IA)
- Elaine Marshall (D-NC)
- Sharron Angle (R-NV).

Only one Senate race this year features two women running against each other. California incumbent Senator Barbara Boxer (D) will face off against former corporate executive Carly Fiorina (R).

Seventeen women (13D, 4R) currently serve in the Senate. Eleven were not up for re-election this year. Incumbent Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) lost her primary, but is running as a write-in candidate.

U.S. House of Representatives

A record-shattering **262 women (134D, 128R) filed** and ran in primaries for the U.S. House of Representatives, far surpassing the 1992 peak of 222 (140D, 82R). But many were defeated in primaries, leaving **138 women (91D, 47R) as general election candidates**. In addition to these candidates for House seats, three incumbents and one challenger are running for delegate to Congress from the District of Columbia, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

There are thirteen woman-versus-woman races for the U.S. House in 2010, along with the contest for delegate from the District of Columbia.

There are currently 73 women (56D, 17R) in the House, along with 3 (3D) delegates from the District of Columbia, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Governor

A total of **26 women (12D, 14R) filed** for governor, and a **record-tying 10 (5D, 5R) are general election candidates** in 8 states. In two states, New Mexico and Oklahoma, both major party gubernatorial candidates are women; each state will elect its first woman governor. The ten candidates running this year match the numbers in 2006 (5D, 5R) and 1994 (6D, 3R, 1 ACP[†]).

Of the gubernatorial candidates, 1 (1R) woman candidate is an incumbent: Jan Brewer (R-AZ).

Nine women (5D, 4R) are candidates for open seats:

- Meg Whitman (R-CA)
- Alex Sink (D-FL)
- Libby Mitchell (D-ME)
- Diane Denish (D-NM)
- Susana Martinez (R-NM)
- Jari Askins (D-OK)
- Mary Fallin (R-OK)
- Nikki Haley (R-SC)
- Leslie Petersen (D-WY).

No woman is challenging an incumbent governor.

No **woman of color** has ever served as governor of a state, but two are candidates this year: Martinez (the first Latina to run for governor) and Haley. The only other woman of color who has run for governor on a major party ticket, Mazie Hirono (D-HI), was defeated in 2002; she is now a Member of Congress.

Six women currently serve as governors. Two will continue to serve in 2011, a third is a candidate for re-election, two could not run again because of term limits, and one is retiring.

The **record number of women serving as governors** at one time was 9, set in 2004 and repeated in 2007. To break this record, eight of the ten 2010 candidates would have to win.

Other Statewide Elective Executive Offices

43 women (25D, 18R) filed for the office of **lieutenant governor**, and 23 (14D, 9R) are candidates in the general election, including 14(8D, 6R) who did not run in primaries but were selected for tickets by gubernatorial candidates. The record number of women candidates who filed for that office was set in 1994 when 46 (25D, 19R, 1ACP, 1Ind) filed. That same year a record 29 (14D, 13R, 1ACP, 1Ind) were general election candidates.

60 women (37D, 22R, 1NP) have won their primaries for **other statewide elective offices**, which vary considerably from state to state but may include elected positions such as attorney general, secretary of state, chief financial officer and chief education officer, among others.

†ACP is A Connecticut Party, a third party in that state that is included here because there was a governor from that party at the time.

Women Primary Candidates and Winners for U.S. Senate and House of Representatives

Record numbers shown in shaded cells.

Year	U.S. Senate		U.S. House	
	Total Filed	Won Primary	Total Filed	Won Primary
2010	36	14*	262	138
D	19	9	134	91
R	17	5**	128	47
2008	13	7	214	132
D	7	4	148	95
R	6	3	65	37
2006	24	12	211	136
D	16	8	140	94
R	8	4	71	42
2004	23	10	199	141
D	15	9	121	88
R	8	1	78	53
2002	20	11	186	124
D	12	8	113	79
R	8	3	73	45
1994				
1994	27	9	203	112
D	14	4	112	72
R	13	5**	91	40
1992	29	11	222	106
D	22	10	140	70
R	7	1	82	36

*Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) lost her primary, but is running as a write-in candidate in the general election, **bringing the total number of women running for the Senate in 2010 to 15.**

**Tied for record.

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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