



# CAWP

## *Election Watch*

PRESS RELEASE

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**Real-time election results for women candidates will be posted  
on election night at [www.cawp.rutgers.edu](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu)**

### **Election 2008: Women Candidate Numbers Down from Recent Records**

While 2008 has been an historic year for women candidates at the highest levels, women are setting no records at other levels on ballots across the country. The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) reports that numbers of women candidates at the congressional, statewide and state legislative levels are below past peaks – in some cases, considerably below.

“2008 has seen women in politics making news, first with the presidential candidacy of Senator Hillary Clinton and then with the naming of Governor Sarah Palin as the Republican vice presidential candidate,” notes CAWP director Debbie Walsh. “But at other levels, the low numbers of women candidates are disappointing. Renewed efforts are needed across the country to recruit and encourage women to run at every level.”

#### **U.S. Senate - 7 Women Candidates (4D, 3R)**

In 2008, with Senate races in 33 states, seven women have won major-party nominations in six states. North Carolina hosts the only woman-versus-woman Senate race in the nation this year.

Three women candidates (1D, 2R) are incumbents: Susan Collins (R-ME); Elizabeth Dole (R-NC); and Mary Landrieu (D-LA). Four (3D, 1R) are challengers: Vivian Davis Figures (D-AL); Kay Hagan (D-NC); Christine O’Donnell (R-DE); and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH). No woman is a candidate for any of the five open Senate seats.

A record 16 (11D, 5R) women currently serve in the U. S. Senate. The largest number of women to win major-party nominations for the Senate was 12 (8D, 4R) in 2006.

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## **U.S. House - 133 Women Candidates (96D, 37R)<sup>1</sup>**

One hundred thirty three women are major party candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives in 38 states, with one primary runoff involving a woman still to be decided in Louisiana.<sup>2</sup> This number includes ten woman-versus-woman races, nine involving incumbents facing challengers and one for an open seat. In addition, three incumbent women and one challenger are candidates for delegate to Congress from the District of Columbia, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa.

Among the candidates, 67 (50D, 17R) incumbents are running for re-election. 11 (9D, 2R) women are running in 10 districts with open seats. 55 (37D, 18R) are running as challengers.

The record for women candidates for the House was set in 2004, when 141 (88D, 53R) won their primaries.

## **Statewide Elective Executive Offices - 37 Women Candidates (26D, 10R, 1 NP)**

### **Governor 4 (4D)**

### **Lieutenant Governor 3 (1D, 2R)**

### **Other Statewide Elective Executive Offices 30 (21D, 8R, 1NP)**

In 2008, 11 states have gubernatorial races; in four there are open seats. Four (4D) women are candidates in four states. One is an incumbent running for re-election: Christine Gregoire (D-WA). The others are Beverly Perdue (D-NC), running for an open seat, and Gaye Symington (D-VT) and Jill Long Thompson (D-IN), both challenging incumbents. Eight women currently serve as governors.

Most gubernatorial elections are held in non-presidential election years; the record number of women candidates for governor (10) was set in 1994 and repeated in 2002 and 2006. The largest number of women running for governor in a presidential election year was 6 in 1996. The record number of nominees for lieutenant governor is 29, set in 1994; the record for a presidential year was 9 in 1996.

## **State Legislatures - 2,301 Women Candidates (1,519D, 766R, 9NP, 6Prg, 1I)<sup>3</sup>**

44 states hold legislative elections in 2008. In those states, a total of 2,301 women are running. In addition, there will be 319 holdovers, women legislators who are not up for election this year. Women currently hold 1,749 seats in state legislatures. The record number of women running for state legislative seats in a presidential election year is 2302, set in 1992; the record number of women running for state legislative seats in a non-presidential year was set in 2006, when 2,429 women ran. (More states hold legislative elections in non-presidential even-numbered years than in presidential election years or odd-numbered years.)

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A unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, CAWP is a leading authority in its field and a respected bridge between the academic and political worlds. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women's participation in politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life.

## **10/29/08 Addendum to Pre-Election Press Release:**

### **More Women Run for State Legislative Seats in 2008 Than in Past Presidential Election Years**

As additional information has become available, CAWP has revised its figures for women state legislative candidates running in 2008. The new numbers show a record number of women, 2,328, running for state

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<sup>1</sup> This figure does not include the candidates for the four non-voting delegate seats.

<sup>2</sup> In Louisiana, primary runoffs are held on November 4 to determine nominees if no candidate in a party won more than 50% of the votes in the October primary. The general election will be held on December 6.

<sup>3</sup> NP=Non-partisan      Prg=Progressive      I=Independent

legislatures in a presidential election year. However, this figure remains lower than the all-time record for women running for legislative seats, 2,429, which occurred in 2006, a non-presidential election year. The information below should replace the information provided on the original release.

**State Legislative Candidates 2,328 (1,541D, 770R, 9NP, 7Prg, 1I)**

44 states hold legislative elections in 2008. This year's 2,328 women candidates for state legislative seats set a record for a presidential election year, surpassing the previous record of 2,302 set in 1992. The record number of women running for state legislative seats in a non-presidential year was set in 2006, when 2,429 women ran. (More states hold legislative elections in non-presidential even-numbered years than in presidential election years or odd-numbered years.)