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For immediate release

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Mixed Results for Women in 2015 Elections

Elections in five states yielded mixed results for women candidates. Numbers and party balances shifted slightly among women in state legislatures; among the three legislatures where results are complete or nearly so, the proportion of women will increase slightly in two and decrease in one. For current and historical context, CAWP's website provides [state-by-state information](#) about women in federal, statewide and state legislative offices.

New Jersey: Legislature (Assembly, plus one special election for State Senate)

Three Republican incumbent women lost their seats in Assembly races, one defeated by a Democratic woman. A total of five new women (4D, 1R) won Assembly races, joining 20 incumbents who were re-elected. The number of women in the New Jersey Assembly will increase by 1 (to 25), but the party balance among women will change to 18 Democrats and 7 Republicans (from the previous 15D, 9R). The newcomers (4D, 1R) include two women of color: Angela McKnight (D-31, who is Black) and Annette Chaparro (D-33, who is Latina). The other newcomers are Patricia Egan Jones (D-5), Joann Downey (D-11), and Gail Phoebus (R-24).

“While five new women will serve in the Assembly, the balance of women in the party caucuses will shift,” noted CAWP director Debbie Walsh. “Women will now make up more than a third of the Democratic caucus, but around a quarter of the Republican caucus. It’s a loss for the state not to have women’s perspectives fully represented in both parties.”

In the only State Senate election, incumbent Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez, appointed earlier in the year to fill a vacancy, won her special election. The New Jersey Senate will continue to have 11 women (8D, 3R).

The state maintains its rank of 11th in the nation for the proportion of women legislators.

New Jersey Assembly Candidates and Winners

	D		R		Total	
	Can	Win	Can	Win	Can	Win
Incumbent	14	14	9	6	23	20
Challenger	11	1	7	0	18	1
Open Seat	4	3	1	1	5	4
Total	29	18	17	7	46	25

Kentucky: Statewide Executive

Jenean Hampton (R) will become Kentucky’s new lieutenant governor, while Republican Allison Ball won an open-seat race for state treasurer. Incumbent Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes (D) won re-election.

Louisiana: Statewide Executive and Legislature

Louisiana elections feature an open primary, and candidates who secure more than 50% of the vote are elected without run-off contests; if no candidate receives 50%, the top two compete in a run-off, held this year on November 21. No women were elected or chosen for run-offs for statewide offices.

Four women (3D, 1R) won their primaries for the State Senate, and another woman (1R) competed in and won a run-off. Seventeen women (9D, 8R) won their races for the State House, including 12 (6D, 6R) who won their primaries, and another 5 (3D, 2R) who won run-offs. Louisiana will have a total of 22 women in its legislature (12D, 10R) for 15.3%, lifting the state to 45th in the nation from its previous last-place standing.

Mississippi: Statewide Executive and Legislature

In statewide executive races, Lynn Fitch, the incumbent state treasurer, won re-election, as did Cindy Hyde-Smith, the incumbent agriculture commissioner. Both are Republicans.

In the state legislature, there is one Senate race involving a women candidates that is still too close to call (tctc),. Pending the result of that race, the total number of women in the legislature will drop from the current 30 to no more than 25. Already among the ten worst states for women’s representation, Mississippi is likely to drop still further.

Mississippi Legislative Candidates and Winners

	Senate						House of Representatives						Legislature	
	D		R		Total		D		R		Total		Total	
	Can	Win	Can	Win	Can	Win	Can	Win	Can	Win	Can	Win	Can	Win
Incumbent	2	2	5	4 (+1 tctc)	7	6 (+1 tctc)	11	10	4	4	15	14	22	20 (+1 tctc)
Challenger	2	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	6	0
Open Seat	2	2	1	1	3	3	3	0	1	1	4	1	7	4
Total	6	4	6	5 (+1 tctc)	12	9 (+1 tctc)	18	10	5	5	23	15	35	24 (+1 tctc)

Virginia: Legislature

The number of women in the Virginia legislature will rise from 24 (17.1%) to 27 (19.3%).

Virginia Legislature Candidates and Winners

	Senate						House of Delegates						Legislature	
	D		R		Total		D		R		Total		Total	
	Can	Win	Can	Win	Can	Win	Can	Win	Can	Win	Can	Win	Can	Win
Incumbent	6	6	1	1	7	7	11	11	4	4	15	15	22	22
Challenger	3	0	1	0	4	0	11	0	2	0	13	0	17	0
Open Seat	1	0	2	2	3	2	3	3	0	0	3	3	6	5
Total	10	6	4	3	14	9	25	14	6	4	31	18	45	27

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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