2003

Women in New England Politics: A Profile & Handbook for Action

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WOMEN IN NEW ENGLAND POLITICS

A Profile and Handbook for Action

Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy
at the
John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies

October 26-27, 2003
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements, Sponsors, and Honorary Committee</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Highlights</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Profile: A Regional Overview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Profile: Connecticut</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Profile: Maine</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Profile: Massachusetts</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Profile: New Hampshire</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Profile: Rhode Island</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Profile: Vermont</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Resources</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit Workbook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preface

This volume has been designed for use at the New England Women's Political Summit, an event organized by the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy and held in Boston, Massachusetts, on October 26 and 27, 2003. The goal of the Summit is to bring together 400 women from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont to (1) Examine the current status of women in politics in each of the six New England states; (2) Share lessons and strategies to strengthen women's impact on politics; (3) Develop targets for increased representation and influence; (4) Generate action plans for increasing women's representation that are concrete and feasible for implementation in each state; (5) Track progress over time and create a regional network among women's political organizations; and (6) Produce and disseminate a model for regional women's political summits in other states.

In addition to its use at the Summit, this publication is being made widely available to those interested in promoting women's leadership in politics—as elected officials, political organizers, community activists, policymakers, and women in civic life. In preparing for the Summit, we were surprised at how little had been written about the challenges, strategies, accomplishments, and contributions of women in New England politics. This publication represents the first examination in print of women's political contributions from a regional perspective and responds to a lack in the literature on women's politics. Included are chapters that provide a comparative overview of women's politics in New England as a region as well as a state-by-state profile for each of the six states.

The authors of these chapters were students in the Center's Graduate Certificate Program for Women in Politics and Public Policy at UMass Boston. During the spring of 2003, they worked in teams to research women in politics in each of the six New England states. They gathered data on the current status of women in politics, reviewed the political history from colonial days to the present, identified political resources for women, and conducted analysis to determine the factors that explain where women are today in each state's political landscape. We are very aware that these chapters are not the definitive word on women in politics in New England. There is much more that could be written. There may also be errors of omission, fact, or emphasis,
but, as a first effort, we are pleased to offer these chapters as a contribution to the field of women in politics. They are a first step in what we hope becomes a comprehensive and lively field of study.

The chapters that profile the region and each state make up only one part of this volume. We also have included a bibliography for those who wish to read in more depth on the subject, and a directory of some of the political resources for women. Each of these is organized first by state, then by region. For maximum value, we have included as well readings and resources that are national in perspective or scope. Again, these entries may not be exhaustive but do bring together, in one place, what we hope is a useful collection of informational and practical resources for women interested in the current status, history, and strategies of New England women in politics.

How To Use This Publication

The goal of the Summit and this publication—which is subtitled “A Profile and Handbook for Action”—is to encourage women to set political goals and then develop and take action as individuals and in groups to increase women’s political representation, participation, and influence. During the Summit, women receive information on the current status of women in politics for each of their states, and then participate in dialogues to identify targets and strategies for action.

You are invited to consider the information presented in the state profiles, bibliography, and directory of political resources, and then use the worksheet in the “Summit Workbook,” to identify your personal/political goals and an action step you may take to further those goals. If you did not attend the Summit and would like to participate in follow-up activities, please visit our website and sign up: www.mccormack.umb.edu/cwppp.

Carol Hardy-Fanta, Director
Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy
October 26, 2003
Acknowledgements

The mission of the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy is to promote women’s leadership in politics and policymaking by providing quality graduate education, conducting research that makes a difference in women’s lives, and serving as a resource for the empowerment of women from diverse communities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts—and throughout New England. The New England Women’s Political Summit and this volume reflect this mission in that it is they are educational, include research findings on women’s political status and activism, and bring women together in an inclusive and empowering way.

Publication of *Women in New England Politics: A Profile and Handbook for Action* was made possible through the support of Fleet Bank’s Women Entrepreneurs’ Connection; we owe a special thanks to Teresa Cavanagh, Senior Vice President.

As discussed earlier, this volume is a companion piece to the New England Women’s Political Summit. The Summit would not have been possible without the support and energies of our national and regional partners, our many organizational sponsors, and the colleagues we work closely with in an ongoing effort to promote women’s leadership and increased influence in politics and policymaking. These include our National Partner, The White House Project, which is supporting our efforts to produce and disseminate a national model based on the Summit, and our Regional Partners, the Coalition of New England Women’s Commissions and the YWCA New England Regional Council, who collaborated and worked hard to make the Summit a truly regional effort.

**Special Thanks** to the YWCA Boston, the Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, Boston and Cambridge Women’s Commissions, the Maine Women’s Lobby, and our partner for the Sunday forum, the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum. Katie Bilotta deserves special thanks for what seemed like limitless energy and enthusiasm beyond measure; her professionalism, vision—and attention to every detail—have made the Summit a success.
We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to a number of individuals who demonstrate their commitment to women’s political participation in many ways, including this Summit. They include:

Linda Brantley, Executive Director
Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Carol L. Cardozo, Research Associate
Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy

Deb Dickerson, Senior Division Director of Programs and Advocacy
YWCA Boston

Giovanna Negretti, Executive Director
¿Oíste?

Carrie Peters, Assistant to the Director
Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy

Nancy Ryan, Executive Director
Cambridge Women’s Commission

Marie Turley, Executive Director
Boston Women’s Commission

For all of their hard work setting up our state visits, developing our outreach databases, and much more, we would like to thank our summer interns:

Julie Balasalle, Guilford College
Susanna Dilliplane, Barnard College
Nancy Ramírez, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

A special acknowledgement to the team at UMass Boston that envisioned and implemented the Speak Up! Initiative:

Erika Kates, Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy
Julia Tripp, Center for Social Policy
Consuelo Greene, Center for Social Policy

For their “behind the scenes” efforts at the University of Massachusetts Boston, we thank: Paige Ransford, Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy; Candyce Carragher and Andi Sutedja, John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies; and Rose Coveney and Joseph Peters, University of Massachusetts Boston.

Special recognition goes to the graduate students in the Program for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston for the research and dedication they demonstrated in preparing earlier drafts of the
state profiles included in this volume: Corinna Balash, Nuvia Ball Burrell, Iraida Elena Blanco, Mary Bouchard, Elizabeth Goodwin, Deborah Hogan, Katherine Griswold, Lynne Grayton, Jennifer Hebert, Barbara Salvaterra Miranda, Tsige Negash, Sarah Nichols, Brenda Pedraza, Mariamawith Sileshi, and Linda Skurchak.

Many others contributed time and ideas including Martina Bouey, Angie Jolie, Linda Hickman, Judy Lauch, Norah Boyle, Denise Riebman, Martha Welsh, Alisa Stepanian, Jodie Silverman, Lisa Gurgone, Roni Thaler, Christine Lopes, Claire Benedict, Susan Tracy, and Denise Dabney. To each of you a heartfelt, thank you!

And finally, to Betty Taymor and Polly Logan, who need no introduction, but who continue to inspire women across the state and the nation.
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Honorary Committee for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

The Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy invited the Women’s Commissions in each state (and in Maine, the Maine Women’s Lobby) to determine criteria for selecting an Honorary Committee for their states and join us in inviting them to participate. The women listed above reflect their decisions.

We decided that, as the host state for the New England Women’s Political Summit, Massachusetts would develop a more extensive Honorary Committee than the other five New England states. The Massachusetts Honorary Committee includes, therefore, the names of a number of women who have achieved elective office at the state or local level and other prominent women known for their leadership on behalf of women in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It also includes the many women leaders who are members of the Boards of the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy (CWPPP): our Advisory Board, the Betty Taymor Scholarship Fund Board, and the Polly Logan Endowment Fund Board.

The list that follows represents a veritable “who’s who” of women in politics in Massachusetts; it also reflects the full range and diversity of political achievements and contributions in this state. We are pleased that the women on this list have agreed to serve on the Massachusetts Honorary Committee for the New England Women’s Political Summit.

Host Committee Chairs

Ms. Polly Logan, Vice Chairman, Massachusetts Republican Party
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New England Women’s Political Summit
Presented by

The Center for
UMASS BOSTON
WOMEN IN POLITICS & PUBLIC POLICY

Sunday, October 26, 2003
Monday, October 27, 2003
John F. Kennedy Library & Museum
Boston, Massachusetts

Program

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2003
4:00 – 5:30 pm  Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Women in American Politics
Geraldine Ferraro, 1984 Vice Presidential Nominee
Loretta Sanchez, United States Representative, California
Jane Swift, Governor of Massachusetts (2001-2003)
Moderator: Martha Raddatz, ABCNews Correspondent

5:30 – 7:30 pm  Networking Reception for Summit Participants and Special Guests

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2003
8:15 – 9:00 am  Registration and Continental Breakfast
9:00 – 9:15 am  Welcome & Opening Remarks
Carol Hardy-Fanta, Director of the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy
Barbara Lee, Principal, Barbara Lee Family Foundation

9:15 – 10:30 am  Panel: The State of the States
Anne Marie Cammisa, Professor of Government, Suffolk University
Denise Nappier, State Treasurer, Connecticut
Ruth Griffin, Executive Councilor for Third District, New Hampshire
Roni Thaler, Executive Director, Massachusetts Women’s Political Caucus
Karen Geraghty, City Councilor and Former Mayor, Portland, Maine
Rhoda Perry, State Senator, Rhode Island
Moderator: Margie Reedy, Television Journalist
10:30 – Noon  State Dialogues: Identifying Targets & Strategies

Noon – 12:15 pm  Greetings
Jo Ann Gora, Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Boston
Kerry Healey, Lieutenant Governor, Massachusetts

12:15 – 1:00 pm  Lunch

1:00 – 2:00 pm  Panel: Balancing a Political Career with a Personal Life
Dale Rogers Marshall, President, Wheaton College
Melba Depeña, President, Rhode Island Latino Civic Fund
Moderator: Janet Wu, WCVB-TV Channel 5 Political Reporter

2:00 – 3:30 pm  Cross-State Dialogues: Setting Political/Personal Goals & Taking Action

3:30 – 4:00 pm  Wrap Up & Call to Action
Marie C. Wilson, President, The White House Project/Women’s Leadership Fund
Carol Hardy-Fanta, Director, Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy
Speakers and Panelists

Anne Marie Cammisa
Professor of Government, Suffolk University
Dr. Anne Marie Cammisa is associate professor of government at Suffolk University, where she has taught since 1994. She received her B.A. in history from the University of Virginia, M.A. in Public Policy from Georgetown University, and her Ph.D. in American Government from Georgetown University. She has also conducted research on welfare and job training policy at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. Dr. Cammisa was appointed a Congressional Fellow by the American Political Science Association in 1993. She was a visiting scholar at the Murray Research Center at Radcliffe College from 1994 to 1999. In 1998-1999 she was selected as the recipient of the Beatrice Koretsky Bleicher Memorial Fund grant for her research on women in politics. She has published three books, including Governments as Interest Groups: Intergovernmental Lobbying and the Federal System and Checks and Balances: How a Parliamentary System Could Change American Politics. She won a prestigious Choice award for From Rhetoric to Reform? Welfare Policy in American Politics, which was selected as an “outstanding academic book of 1998.” The selection criteria for the award include excellence in scholarship and presentation; significance with regard to other literature in the field; and recognition as an important, often the first, treatment of a specific subject in print or electronic form.

Dr. Cammisa’s research interests include American politics generally, welfare policy, and women in politics. She lives in Somerville, Massachusetts with her husband, Paul Manuel, and their daughter, Maria.

Melba Depeña
President, Rhode Island Latino Civic Fund
Melba Depeña was born in the Dominican Republic. She is the Executive Assistant to the Vice Provost at the University of Rhode Island Providence campus. She is the president of the Latino Civic Fund, president of the Latino Political Action Committee, and Chair the Latina Leadership Institute. She also serves on the boards of the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island, Governor’s Commission on Women and The Dominican American National Roundtable.
Karen Geraghty

*City Councilor and Former Mayor, Portland, Maine*

Karen Geraghty is a City Councilor from Portland, Maine. She was first elected to the City Council in 1997 and has been a leader in bringing residents together to promote economic development, improve the quality of our urban experience, creatively tackle Portland's housing crisis, and master plan Portland's vibrant waterfront. Councilor Geraghty has been a persistent voice advocating for under-represented and underserved populations. Serving as Portland’s Mayor in 2002, Karen put the issue of affordable housing at the top of her priority list. Portland now has a Comprehensive Housing Plan, which calls for the creation of 5,000 new units of housing in the next 10 years.

Councilor Geraghty serves on the National League of Cities Human Development Steering Committee where National Municipal Policy on issues as diverse as Head Start and after school programs, immigration policy, and AIDS funding are formulated.

Beyond City Hall, Karen Geraghty continues to be a tireless political activist. During Maine legislative sessions, she represents the interests of affordable health care, domestic violence prevention, environmental protection, and child care and child development, among others, at the State House.

Councilor Geraghty is the first openly gay Mayor elected in the City of Portland.

Jo Ann M. Gora

*Chancellor, University of Massachusetts Boston*

Jo Ann M. Gora, Ph.D., is Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Boston, an institution with over 13,000 students, more than 800 faculty, and a $180 million budget. Since her arrival in 2001, she has led the institution in its efforts to invest in academic quality and to raise its visibility in Massachusetts and beyond. From 1992 to 2001, Dr. Gora served as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia.

From 1985 to 1992, she was Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and Provost of Fairleigh Dickinson University, Madison Campus. She is the author of two books, *The New Female Criminal: Empirical Reality or Social Myth*? and *Emergency Squad Volunteers: Professionalism in Unpaid Work*, and numerous articles in the fields of criminology, medical sociology, and organizational behavior. Dr. Gora’s current research interest is in the area of institutional culture. In 2002, she was named one of Women’s Business Boston’s “Women to Watch.”

Dr. Gora holds master’s and doctoral degrees in sociology from Rutgers University and received her bachelor’s degree from Vassar College.
Ruth Griffin

Executive Councilor for the Third District, New Hampshire

Ruth Lewin Griffin is the Executive Councilor for the Third District of New Hampshire, a District that spans from Dover, New Hampshire south to Seabrook and west to Windham and includes thirty-five cities and towns. Councilor Griffin is a continuing presence and participant in the Republican Party by choice. She has been an active member of the Party during her entire adult life.

Councilor Griffin has been a member of the Executive Council since 1987. Previous service includes being elected as a member of the New Hampshire Senate, as a member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives, and as a member of two Constitutional Conventions. She has served New Hampshire for a total of thirty years in elective office.

Councilor Griffin is a native of Fall River, Massachusetts. She moved to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, at an early age and was educated in public schools, graduating from Portsmouth High School. She subsequently graduated from the Wentworth Hospital School of Nursing and is a Registered Nurse.

Her service at the national level includes two terms as Republican National Committee Woman. She was a member of the Selection Committee of the RNC for the 2000 Convention as well as a member of the Committee on Arrangements for Convention 2000. She is also Chair of the George W. Bush For President Steering Committee in New Hampshire. In addition, Councilor Griffin has been a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1972, 1976, 1980, 1988, 1992, 1996 and 2000.

On the state level she serves on the Governor’s Commission on Intermodal Transportation. This Commission serves as the architect/designers of the New Hampshire Highway plan. She is a member of the New Hampshire Health Services Planning and Review Board, commonly known as the Certificate of Need Board.

At the local level, Councilor Griffin has served on the Portsmouth Board of Education, on the Portsmouth Police Commission for ten years, and is currently serving as Portsmouth Housing Authority Commissioner. She is a life member of the 100 Club of New Hampshire, Inc., an organization that “cares for those who care for us.”

From 1993 through 1999 Councilor Griffin was the recipient of New Hampshire’s Ten Most Powerful Women Award. The Rotary International also awarded her the Paul Harris Fellowship. In 2002 Councilor Griffin was presented the Exploring Good Scout Award from the Daniel Webster Council of the Boys Scouts of America.

Councilor Griffin is the widow of John K. Griffin, they have five children, five grandchildren, and two great grandsons.
Carol Hardy-Fanta
Director, Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy
University of Massachusetts Boston
Carol Hardy-Fanta is Director of the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy as well as a Senior Fellow at the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Carol Hardy-Fanta also serves as Director of the Graduate Certificate Program for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Dr. Hardy-Fanta is author of two books: Latina Politics, Latino Politics: Gender, Culture, and Political Participation in Boston (Temple University Press, 1993) and Latino Politics in Massachusetts: Struggles, Strategies and Prospects (Routledge Press, 2002, co-edited with J. Gerson). She is a nationally recognized scholar on Latina politics and has published widely on the intersection of gender, race and ethnicity in politics and public policy. Her policy experience also includes welfare reform, substance abuse and criminal justice, community organization, abortion rights, mental health, HIV/AIDS programs, and bilingual education.

Carol Hardy-Fanta received her Ph.D. in Social Policy from Brandeis University, an MSW from Smith College, and a B.A. from Occidental College.

Kerry Healey
Lieutenant Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Kerry Healey was elected Lieutenant Governor on November 5, 2002, on a ticket with Governor Mitt Romney. Healey brings impressive public policy experience and academic credentials to Romney’s business and management background.

Lieutenant Governor Healey is the daughter of a public school teacher and a World War II veteran. From a young age, her parents emphasized the importance of education, hard work and public service. At age 15, Healey worked after school to save money for college, counting among her jobs columnist for the local newspaper, computer programmer and souvenir shop clerk.

In 1982, Healey graduated from Harvard College with a bachelor’s degree in government. After receiving a Rotary International Scholarship, she went on to obtain her Ph.D. in political science and law from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

For nearly a decade, Healey was a consultant in the fields of law and public safety for Abt Associates, Inc. of Cambridge. She conducted research for the U.S.
Department of Justice in the areas of child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, gang violence, victim and witness intimidation and the prosecution of drug crimes. Healey published four books and was the author of numerous articles. In addition, she was a member of the adjunct faculty at Endicott College and the University of Massachusetts in Lowell. Healey also served on the Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board.

Lieutenant Governor Healey has a strong commitment to her community. She has served on the Foundation Board of North Shore Community College and the Friend’s Board of Beverly Hospital, and co-chaired Beverly’s United Way Campaign in 2001. A strong believer in literacy and learning, Healey also co-chaired a campaign to rebuild her city’s library, helping to raise more than $1 million in private funds and grants.

Healey was elected in 2001 Chair of the Massachusetts Republican Party, where she restored the party’s finances and energized the grassroots activists. Lieutenant Governor Healey, 43, and her husband, Sean, have two school-aged children and reside in Beverly.

Madeleine May Kunin
Governor of Vermont (1985–1991) and Former Ambassador to Switzerland

Madeleine May Kunin was elected Governor of Vermont in 1984 and is the first woman to have served three terms as governor of any state and the fourth woman to be elected governor in her own right. During her tenure, she substantially increased funding for education and concentrated on improving the quality of education. One of her environmental achievements was to establish the Vermont Housing and Land Conservation Trust Fund, a program that has created affordable housing and land preservation to the benefit of thousands of Vermonters.

Previously Kunin was the Bicentennial Fellow-in Residence at Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont, where she lectured on a variety of subjects, including her recent experience as U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland (1996-99) as well as on education, politics, the environment, leadership and women’s issues, and a Fellow of The Institute of Politics, Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government.

During her tenure as U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland, she dealt first-hand with the question of Jewish World War II assets and Nazi looted gold. She helped to prod Switzerland to confront its past and take action. At the same time she worked to maintain a positive relationship between Switzerland and the United States, two countries that have a long-standing friendship. Her knowledge of
languages and government, and her familiarity with Switzerland, the country of her birth, enabled her to be an effective ambassador.

Prior to her appointment as ambassador, she served for three-and-a-half years as U.S. deputy secretary of education in the Clinton Administration, working closely with Secretary of Education Richard Riley. As chief operating officer of the department, Kunin served on the president’s management council, which dealt with “reinventing government.”

While at the U.S. Department of Education, Kunin played a key role in establishing a more efficient system of managing student loans, initiated an office of education technology, and worked on a series of legislative acts that includes the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act.

During this period, Kunin was a member of the delegation to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. She also continued her environmental work that had engaged her as governor of Vermont. She served on the President’s Council on Sustainable Development, the board of the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation, and the President’s Interagency Council on Women.

Before coming to Washington, Kunin was involved in the 1992 Clinton campaign: co-chairing a national campaign of women for Clinton, serving as one of three members of a committee to assist the President in choosing his vice president, and acting as a key member of the presidential transition team.

Governor Kunin holds an appointment in the Department of Political Science at the University of Vermont as a distinguished visiting professor. Governor Kunin also gives guest lectures in a number of departments, including the Women’s Studies Program. Kunin is also a distinguished visiting professor at St. Michael’s College in Colchester, Vermont. She serves as President of the board of the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) a non-governmental organization which she founded in 1991. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She is also a regular commentator on Vermont Public Radio.

Born in Zurich, Switzerland, Kunin immigrated to the United States with her mother and brother because of the threat of the Holocaust in 1940. Her political memoir, Living a Political Life, was published in 1994 by Knopf.

Governor Kunin has four grown children and three grandchildren. Kunin holds a B.S. cum Laude from the University of Massachusetts; an M.S. from Columbia University; an M.A. from the University of Vermont; and she also has participated in the Program for State and Local Government, Harvard University Kennedy School of Government.
Barbara Lee
Principal, Barbara Lee Family Foundation
Barbara Lee brings boundless energy and enthusiasm to arts and social justice activism. She heads the Barbara Lee Family Foundation, established in 1999 to strengthen democracy by advancing women’s leadership in American society and by promoting the contemporary arts to wider audiences. In 1999, the Foundation commissioned a two-year research project designed to help elect more women governors. The result, “Keys to Governor’s Office” is a strategic guide for women candidates, which has been nationally distributed. Its follow up, “Speaking With Authority” helps women candidates discuss issues of national and economic security. To make the arts accessible to diverse audiences, she has provided leadership and funding for Arts on the Point, a sculpture garden located at University of Massachusetts, Boston. She also serves as Vice President of the Board of Trustees at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston where she jumpstarted the campaign to build a new museum. Barbara has also helped establish a number of programs to empower women. In the May 2003 issue of Boston Magazine, Barbara was featured in the column, “The 100 Women Who Run This Town”. Barbara is a former schoolteacher and social worker. As a modern day revolutionary, she feels at home in Boston.

Margie Reedy
Television Journalist
Margie Reedy has been a television journalist for 25 years. For seven years, she was the host of “NewsNight,” an hour long news interview program on New England Cable News (NECN). The award-winning program focused on the most pressing issues of the day, with a special focus on local and national politics. Most recently Reedy completed a fellowship at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. At the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, Reedy produced their first-ever documentary, entitled Cable News Goes to War: Is Objectivity a Victim? She has worked as a news anchor and reporter at WHDH-TV, Channel 7, in Boston and at television stations WDIV in Detroit and KVUE in Austin, Texas. Reedy has been awarded the Scripps Howard Foundation National Journalism Award, the Associated Press Regional Award for Best Public Affairs Program, and the Radio and Television News Director’s Association Award for Public Affairs.
Dale Rogers Marshall

President, Wheaton College

Dale Rogers Marshall has led Wheaton College through a period of remarkable success, significantly increasing admission applications and selectivity, growing student enrollment, setting historic fundraising records, establishing new programs in the arts and international education, and building and renovating numerous campus facilities. She was the 2002 recipient of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Pinnacle Award for women leaders in recognition of her outstanding leadership at Wheaton.

A political scientist, Marshall is co-author of Protest is Not Enough: The Struggle of Blacks and Hispanics for Equality in Urban Politics (University of California Press, 1984), which won two prestigious American Political Science Association prizes. She also co-edited, Racial Politics in American Cities (Longman, 1990; 1997; 2002) and has authored numerous articles in her field.

While president of Wheaton, Marshall chaired the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts and served on the board of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. She serves on the board of the New England Zenith Fund of the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company, is a member of the American Student Assistance Guarantor Board, and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. She was a member of the Cornell University Board of Trustees from 1983 to 1993 and served as vice president of the American Political Science Association and president of the Western Political Science Association.

Prior to coming to Wheaton, Marshall served as academic dean of Wellesley College and was acting president of that institution in 1987-88. She also served as associate dean of the College of Letters and Sciences at the University of California, Davis, and has taught at U.C. Davis, U.C. Berkeley and U.C.L.A.

Denise Nappier

State Treasurer, Connecticut

Connecticut Treasurer Denise Lynn Nappier is the first African-American woman elected to serve as a State Treasurer in the United States. The 82nd Treasurer of Connecticut, she is the first African-American woman elected to a statewide office and the first woman to be elected Treasurer in state history. Treasurer Nappier was elected in 1998 and re-elected in 2002.

Denise Nappier has a broad-ranging background in finance, public policy and administration, legislative affairs and urban planning. A native of Hartford, Nappier served as City Treasurer for nearly ten years, having been elected to five consecutive terms. Before that, she served as Executive Director of Riverfront Recapture, Inc., a not-for-profit organization that successfully spearheaded the
redevelopment of Greater Hartford's riverfront area, as Director of Institutional Relations for the University of Connecticut Health Center, and an analyst in the Hartford City Manager's office. She was also a consultant in the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management and a U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department Fellow.

Ms. Nappier holds a B.A. from Virginia State University and a master's degree in Community Planning from the University of Cincinnati. She has received the Corporate Responsibility Leadership Award from Citizens for Economic Opportunity (CEO), the Connecticut Association for Human Services “Public Policy Leadership Award,” recognition as the “Woman of the Year” from Hartford College for Women, and has been inducted in the National Association of Securities Professionals Wall Street Hall of Fame. Under her administration, the Treasurer's Office has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

Rhoda Perry
State Senator, Rhode Island

Senator Perry is currently a Rhode Island State Senator and is also a retired Health Care Administrator. Her business and professional groups include Member, Planned Parenthood Federation of America; American University Women; Sierra Club; NOW; Save the Bay; National Council of Jewish Women; and the Women's Policy Institute of Rhode Island.

Senator Perry's public service duties include: Deputy President Pro Tempore of Rhode Island Senate (1994-Present); 2002-2003 Vice Chairperson Senate Judiciary Committee; Member Health and Human Services Committee; Commission to Study the Mentally Ill in the Criminal Justice System (1998-Present); Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Permanent Holiday Commission (2002-Present) and Attorney General’s Domestic Violence Commission (1999-Present). Her legislative interests are Civil Liberties and Civil Rights, Reproductive Rights, Environmental Concerns, Criminal Justice, Substance Abuse and Mental Illness.

Sen. Perry, graduated from Melrose High, MA in 1961. Received a B.S. from the University of New Hampshire in 1965 and M.S. from Lesley College in 1986.

Jane Swift

Jane Swift earned her place in history as the first woman to serve as Governor of Massachusetts and as the first governor in the United States to give birth while in office, to twin
girls. Swift’s term as governor capped more than a decade of public service, as a state senator, a lieutenant governor and a governor, devoted to improving the lives of children and families across Massachusetts.

As a three-term State Senator, Swift assisted in drafting the landmark 1993 Education Reform Act. As Lieutenant Governor and Governor she implemented many of the critical, but controversial components of the new law. Elected Lieutenant Governor in November 1998, Swift was the first woman to run for statewide office while pregnant (she gave birth to her first daughter days before the election).

Swift became governor on April 10, 2001, when Governor Paul Cellucci resigned to become the U.S. Ambassador to Canada. The following month, Swift delivered twin girls, making history as well as national and international news. As the Chief Executive of the nation’s 13th largest state, Swift was responsible for overseeing a $23 billion annual operating budget, and for setting strategic direction for 13 cabinet agencies and divisions. She was elected by her fellow governors to the Executive Committee of the Republican Governor’s Association and the Vice-Chair of the New England Governor’s Association.

Swift began her political career in 1990, when the 25-year-old became the youngest woman ever elected to the Massachusetts State Senate. She quickly became the youngest woman in Senate history to hold a leadership position when she rose to the rank of Assistant Minority Leader.

In 1997, Governor Cellucci appointed Swift as Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation. Prior to that position, she served as Director of Regional Airport Development at the Massachusetts Port Authority.

Swift has been featured on national television programs such as 60 Minutes, The Early Show on CBS, The Today Show on NBC, The View on ABC, and Inside Politics on CNN. Glamour magazine once declared her “One of 11 Women Who Could Change the Country.”

Today, Swift is Special General Partner at Arcadia Partners, a Boston-based venture capital firm focused exclusively on the for-profit education and training industry. In addition, Swift speaks professionally on women’s leadership, education improvement and work-family integration. She recently completed a fellowship at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Swift, who has received six honorary doctorates and numerous awards, received a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies from Trinity College, in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1987.

The mother of three young daughters, Swift serves on the board of the Girl Scout Council of Western Massachusetts. A native of North Adams, Massachusetts, Swift resides with her husband, Chuck Hunt, and their daughters on the family farm in Western Massachusetts.
Roni Thaler
*Executive Director, Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus*

Roni Thaler is the Executive Director of the multi-partisan Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus (MWPC) whose mission is to increase the number of women elected and appointed to public office and public policy positions and to maximize the participation of women in the political process. She routinely advises women candidates and is quoted frequently in the press about women's political issues. Thaler has directed the successful Massachusetts Government Appointments Project since its inception in August of 2002. The initiative, which was co-founded by the MWPC, has been working with the administration to increase the number of women in high-level appointed positions.

Ms. Thaler previously served as Executive Director of the Boston Tradeswomen's Network which represents women construction workers. As director Thaler created legislation titled “Close the Gap” which established women workforce goals on state funded construction projects. In just eighteen months the legislation passed and was signed into law by the governor. From Jan. 1992-1997 Thaler served as both chair and member of the Sharon Board of Selectman.

Thaler is a recipient of the Downtown-Boston Business & Professional Women’s Group Woman of Achievement Award, and in May 2003 was named to Boston Magazine’s list of 100 most powerful women. Ms. Thaler holds a B.S.B.A in Accounting from Washington University in St. Louis and a Masters of Science in Public Affairs from the McCormick Institute of Public Affairs at UMASS/Boston.

Marie C. Wilson
*President, The White House Project /Women’s Leadership Fund*

A visionary advocate of women’s leadership for over thirty years, Ms. Wilson is Co-Founder and President of The White House Project/Women's Leadership Fund, which she launched in 1998 to advance women’s leadership in all spheres. The force behind Take Our Daughters to Work Day, she is currently in her seventeenth year as President of the Ms. Foundation for Women. A frequent guest speaker, Ms. Wilson has been quoted in national news outlets across the country including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, National Public Radio, The Boston Globe, The Los Angeles Times, CNN, Good Morning America, The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer, and People Magazine. She was a U.S. Government Delegate to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China in 1995. Ms. Wilson holds an Honorary Doctorate in Community Service from Drake University. Among her awards are two national honors for her contributions to women’s philanthropy from The Network of Women’s Funds and from Women in Philanthropy.
Janet Wu
Political Reporter, WCVB–TV Channel 5
Janet Wu has been the NewsCenter 5 State House reporter for WCVB-TV since January 1983. In 1998, Wu was awarded first place in the Associated Press Investigative/Enterprise category and the prestigious Edward R. Murrow Award for Investigative Reporting for her report, “Public Property, Private Lies.” In addition, the NewsCenter 5 political team, of which Wu is a member, was honored in 1989 with a First Place National Headliners Award and with a Murrow Award for the best political coverage of any station in the nation. Before coming to Channel 5 as a State House reporter, Wu spent 1978 to 1983 as the State House reporter for WGBH-TV, Boston’s public television station. She also worked as a reporter for United Press International from 1973 to 1978. Wu, a native of Bridgewater, N.J., received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. She is fluent in the Cantonese dialect of Chinese and is married with two children.

SPEAK UP! PARTICIPANTS

Twenty women attending the Summit are here because of a special initiative—Speak Up!—that was designed to assure that the voices of women with diverse leadership abilities and experiences are heard. We believe that the participation of activist women at the Summit is essential to develop realistic targets for achieving political representation and to determine courses of action for improving the political status of women. We think that encouraging a dialogue between activist and more “mainstream” women in politics will expand the terms of the political debate, and lead to new forms of political engagement. Speak Up! conducted extensive outreach to community organizations throughout New England. Selected participants attended a one-day planning session in September, and will attend a follow up session in December. Speak Up! was made possible through a Public Service Grant from the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Nyvia Colón (MA), Jessica Buhler (RI), Chansamay Phimmasone (RI) Debra Walton (VT)
Carol Bragg, Massachusetts
Has worked on peace, racial and social justice issues since the 1970s; co-founded and directed several initiatives including Women for a Non-Nuclear Future. Joined Jeanne Sheehan’s 2002 campaign for U.S. Senator.

Jessica Buhler, Rhode Island
Is in her mid-twenties and a leader organizer for the Gray Panthers, working for economic and social justice for the elderly. She is also an accomplished dancer in Middle Eastern and West African dance.

Nyvia Colón Massachusetts
Assists people to achieve greater economic security through computer training, knowing that her experience in overcoming obstacles is valuable for her students. Wants to see more community involvement in policy making.

Linda Corey, Vermont
Focuses on increasing consumer leadership and self-advocacy for people with psychiatric disabilities. Started the Recovery Movement in Vermont, and work to decrease the stigma of mental illness.

Valerie Cunningham, New Hampshire
Has worked in historic preservation. Founded the Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail and has taken a leadership role in restoring the first Black church in New Hampshire, collaborating with Black and non-Black communities.

Gail Hall, Massachusetts
Works on promoting awareness and understanding of people leaving prison and provides guidance to ex-inmates. Would like to see more awareness among policy makers of environmental issues and the needs of ex-inmates.

Anna Kent, Maine
Helping to organize a conference on Women in Public Life, and is involved in a mentoring project for college students. Was a union leader and professional organizer for women clerical workers at two universities.
**Judy Kerr, Connecticut**  
Has worked for sixteen years with ministries in New England, New York, and Bermuda, planning women’s spiritual retreats. Is currently working with women ministries’ teams to provide mentoring for young women, 13-20 years of age.

**Hilde-Mayranen-O’Brien, Connecticut**  
As a member of a Board of Education for fifteen years, helped to get females hired to leadership positions, and hired the first female school superintendent. Worked on community policing and school-based health centers.

**Magdalene McCann, Rhode Island**  
Is active in tenants rights, housing and campaigns to end homelessness. Works with the Alliance for Retired Americans, and with Gray Panthers of Rhode Island. Hopes to run for office one day.

**Judy Neufeld, Massachusetts**  
An undergraduate student organized the revival of Women's Week at Tufts University to make the campus aware of women's issues. Also works as a peer educator on bias issues and organized a Speak Out Stop Hate rally.

**Emily Ortiz, Massachusetts**  
Works as a domestic violence advocate and trainer for a social justice/social change organization serving lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Latinas. Is also active with Incite! Women of Color Against Violence and Fight the Right.

**Chansamay Phimmasone, Rhode Island**  
Assists new immigrants, especially Laotians, with overcoming language barriers and with finding community resources. Teaches a citizenship course. Wants to create more awareness of social injustice.

**Amy Retsinas, Rhode Island**  
Works on domestic violence issues, and is committed to non-violence through educating youth about peaceful conflict resolutions and healthy relationships. Designed and created a furniture donation and exchange program.

**Iris Rivera, Massachusetts**  
Works with women with HIV/AIDS at the Boston AIDS Consortium. Founded Casa Iris, Inc., and helped Spanish-speaking women and other minorities participate in the programs. Has received awards for her volunteer work.

**Linda Scott, Massachusetts**  
Is active in many areas related to children. Co-wrote and lobbied for a bill for stiffer penalties for murderers of young children. Assisted in Peter Cianchette’s gubernatorial campaign and hopes to run for office one day.
Maricel Sheet, Massachusetts
Is active in school-related issues, organizing community groups around Boston school budgets, promoting parent-involvement, and working on neighborhood safety issues. Ran as a ward delegate for the Democratic State convention.

Lori Thames, Massachusetts
Began her activism twelve years ago by participating in Worthy Wage, working for better pay for early child educators. Became a union steward and participates in Leadership Empowerment Projects for educators.

Debra Walton, Vermont
Her activism began four years ago with improving Medicaid reimbursements for mental health services. A member of a task force on smoking cessation, she is also on the steering committee of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students project.

Xenia Williams, Vermont
Has been a peace organizer since the 1960s. Helped to found a bail fund for poor people. Organized a Peanut Butter Fudge Gang in federal prison. Makes political buttons and founded psychiatric survivor support group.
New England Women in Politics: A Regional Overview

By Anne Marie Cammisa, Ph.D.

In Brief

At the National Level:
- Women from New England make up only 11.4 percent of the combined U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.
- Only two of the six New England states have representation at the federal level: Maine (2 U.S. Senators) and Connecticut (2 U.S. Representatives).
- New Hampshire and Vermont have never sent a woman to either the U.S. Senate or House of Representatives; a woman has not served from Massachusetts in more than 20 years.

At the State Level:
- Nationally, 79 women hold statewide elective executive offices; women hold 25.3 percent of the 316 available positions.
- Women in New England do slightly better than the national average; 29.2 percent of officials in the region who are elected statewide are women (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: WOMEN IN STATEWIDE OFFICE, IN U.S., NEW ENGLAND, AND SIX STATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Statewide Officials</th>
<th>Number Women</th>
<th>Percent Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Center for American Women in Politics (2003). Note: Maine and New Hampshire each have just one statewide elected official. Other women serve in prominent offices, but they are not elected by the voters in statewide elections.
None of the New England states currently has a woman governor.

Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Maine have never elected a woman governor.

Five of the 24 women (just over 20 percent) who have served as governors in the United States have been from New England: Ella Grasso (D-CT, 1975–1980); Vesta Roy (R-NH, 1982–1983, served for 7 days when incumbent died); Madeleine Kunin (D-VT, 1985–1991); Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH, 1997–2003); and Jane Swift (R-MA, became acting governor in 2001 and served until January 2003).

The percentage of women in state legislatures is higher in the region (27.3 percent) compared to the nation as a whole (22.3 percent), but this varies widely among the six New England states. (See Table 2.)

**TABLE 2: WOMEN IN STATE LEGISLATURES, U.S., NEW ENGLAND, AND SIX STATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total State Legislators</th>
<th>Number Women</th>
<th>Percent Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>7382</td>
<td>1648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>1203</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Center for American Women and Politics (2003).*

Connecticut has the highest percentage of women legislators (33.3 percent), followed closely by Vermont with 30.6 percent.

Rhode Island ranks last in the region, with women making up only 19.5 percent of the legislature.

Four states have seen declines in the percentage of women legislators since 1993: Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. (See Figure 1.)
Women in New England vote at rates higher than the national average but…

In 2000 women's registration and turnout rates were much higher in Maine (80.3 percent registered and 70.5 percent voted) compared to Connecticut (65.3 percent registered and 57.3 percent voted). (See Figure 3.) Rhode Island and Massachusetts also had relatively low turnout rates.
At the Municipal Level:

- Municipal office holding among women rose rapidly in the 1970s but has remained flat in the past decade. In most New England states, less than 20 percent of city councilors/selectboard members are women (see Table 3).
- Many cities/towns have no women at all on their city councils/selectboards. Connecticut has the highest percentage of women in municipal office (27.0 percent) and Maine the lowest (14.8 percent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percent Women</th>
<th>Percent Cities/Towns with No Women on City Council/Selectboard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Analysis by Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy (2003) based on municipal data (see Data Sources in Bibliography).*

The State of the Region

New England: the birthplace of American democratic ideals, the land of sturdy Pilgrims, ascetic Puritans, and frugal Yankees, the center of academic learning, the place where the abolitionist and suffragist movements began and flourished. The very name conjures up poetic images of idyllic college towns, quaint fishing villages, winter skiing on snow-covered mountains, old-fashioned family farms, colorful autumn drives along tree-filled highways and byways, picnics on isolated and craggy beaches. And yet New England is also a region of bustling urban centers, new (and older) immigrant groups, pockets of poverty, high-technology businesses, and suburban sprawl. The romantic picture of a “Norman Rockwell” lifestyle, even if true in the past, tells only part of the story today.

The history of women in New England is similarly multi-faceted. For every frugal Yankee farmer, there was an equally frugal and hard-working wife. The patriarchal Pilgrim and Puritan societies relied on women to maintain homes and fami-
lies and to inculcate the Protestant work ethic in their children. The colonial boycotts of British tea and fabrics could not have worked had women not been willing to go without and make substitutions. But while democratic ideas about the rights of man flourished during and after the colonial period in New England, women were excluded from political and economic rights. Of course, New England was not the only place in the nation or the world where women were relegated to hearth and home, but the contrast between democratic liberty and individualism on the one hand, and women's status as property of husbands and fathers on the other seems particularly stark here.

Women in New England have long been involved in politics, but that involvement has only recently been in elective offices. The history of New England is replete with women who played their parts in imparting democratic values through their families as well as those who took a more public role by speaking, marching, and protesting about such issues as abolishing slavery and granting women the vote. While not all women had the economic means (and progressive-minded husbands) to allow them to participate in the latter activities, the very nature of New England's economic and social structure created the wherewithal for a privileged class to involve itself in politics. The women who took on these roles were acting in both a traditional and a progressive manner. They were traditional in the sense that they were, for the most part, married women of means whose political interests stayed close to the private world of family and children (as opposed to business or academia). They were progressive in the sense that they ventured out of that private world to make a mark on the public sphere, and that their goals often included a radical restructuring of society.

Traditionalism and progressivism were and are hallmarks of New England society. Women who initially entered the political world of state and local government came from both schools of thought. Some were traditional homemakers, civic-minded women whose efforts at volunteerism easily translated into political action and office holding. These women sought not to radically transform the world of politics, but rather to add their voices to it. They wanted to be accepted and respected in what was (and still is) the masculine domain of state politics. Others came to politics by way of the women's rights movement of the 1960s. Their interests were more radical and transformative. They wished to change both public policy and the political process itself, making it more open to both feminist policy agendas and what they saw as women's unique ways of practicing politics.
A quick glance at the landscape of women in New England politics today shows both that old traditions die hard—and that progressivism is alive and well. Women have made great strides in New England in some ways and in some areas; women are still lagging far behind in other respects. Let us take a quick walk through New England, with an eye toward its political women. As it is in many other ways, New England here is a study in contrasts.

**New England Women in Congress**

The first woman elected to the Senate without having been appointed beforehand—Margaret Chase Smith in 1948—was from New England, but the region has not kept up with this early promise. Congressional seats are important for at least two reasons: First, they are offices of statewide significance (indeed, U.S. senators are elected by the state as a whole), influencing programs and funding that will affect the entire state. Second, they are offices of national significance, providing visibility to the state and influencing national policies. Having women in these offices means that women have power, prestige and influence. If women are well represented in Congress, then they have achieved a high political profile and have moved into the upper-echelons of decision makers. Without representation at the Congressional level, then their status as political players has not been solidified.

New England is a “mixed bag” with respect to women in Congress. On the down side, only four women from New England (Rosa DeLauro D-CT, Nancy Johnson, R-CT, Olympia Snowe, R-ME, and Susan Collins, R-ME), currently serve in Congress, and these women represent only two states: Connecticut and Maine. New England women hold only two (8 percent) of the 23 seats in the U.S. House in contrast to the percentage of women as a whole: 13.6 percent. Further, two (40 percent) of the five states that have never sent a woman to the U.S. Congress are in New England—New Hampshire and Vermont. Only two women serve in the U.S. Senate—and both are from Maine. Clearly, women from New England are not well-represented in the halls of the U.S. Capitol.

And yet, the picture is not completely bleak. The first woman in the history of the United States ever to serve in both the House and the Senate was Margaret Chase Smith (R), who was first elected to the Senate in 1948 after four full terms in the House of Representatives. Maine is also one of only four states ever to have sent two women simultaneously to the U.S. Senate. Currently, California is the only state other than Maine to have two women U.S. Senators: Olympia Snowe has been serving in the Senate since 1995, Susan Collins since 1997. (Both are
Republicans. They hold two of the 10 Senate seats in New England, bringing the region’s senatorial delegation to 20 percent women—higher than the 14 percent that women comprise of the Senate as a whole. Maine is, however, pulling more than its weight in keeping New England women represented in the Senate.

Interestingly, Maine also far exceeds the national average of women’s voter registration and turnout. Nationwide, 65 percent of women are registered to vote; in Maine, that number is a whopping 80 percent. Similarly, 56.2 percent of women in the nation as a whole actually vote; in Maine, 70 percent turned out in the 2000 election. Although all New England states are above average in percentage of women registering and voting, Maine has the highest rates in the region for both. Perhaps there is a relationship between women voting and women winning, at least at the congressional level.

Women as Governors

State-level offices are of clear importance to each state. It is in these offices that policies affecting everyday life—from taxes to education, transportation to medical care—are made.

Obviously, state governors are the most visible statewide elected officials. This office has national importance as well, considering that four of the last five U.S. presidents have had experience as governors. As a region, New England fares a bit better with women governors than it does with women in Congress.

The first woman governor ever to be elected in her own right was Ella Grasso, a Democrat from Connecticut, who served from 1975 to 1980. Since then, there have been only 24 female governors in the United States as a whole. Five of these—more than 20 percent—have been from New England: Grasso, Vesta Roy (R-NH), Madeleine Kunin (D-VT), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Jane Swift (R-MA). Four of the six New England states have had female governors, although none currently does. Of course, statistics don’t tell the full story. Vesta Roy, for example, only served for 7 days (she was appointed to office when the incumbent had died). Jane Swift, after having been elected lieutenant governor, succeeded Governor Paul Cellucci in 2001 when he resigned to become ambassador to Canada. She dropped out of the race for governor in 2002 after a grueling campaign in which some say she was unfairly attacked because she was a woman. Prevailing wisdom is that gender was also an issue in subtle ways for Shannon O’Brien, the Democratic candidate in the same race, as it was for candidate Deborah (Arnie) Arneson in the 1992 New Hampshire gubernatorial primary.
Other Statewide Elective Offices

Currently, New England has two women lieutenant governors: Kerry Murphy Healey (R-MA) and Jodi Rydell (R-CT). Two women also serve as secretary of state: Susan Bysiewicz (D-CT) and Deborah Markowitz (D-VT). Notably, there are only five women of color serving in statewide elective offices throughout the entire United States. One of these, Denise Nappier (D-CT), is from New England.

In the United States as a whole, there are 316 statewide elective offices; women hold 79 (25 percent) of these. Two states in New England—Connecticut and Vermont—have a much higher percentage of women serving in statewide elective office: 60 and 40 percent, respectively. New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island, at the other extreme, have no women serving in statewide elective office. Massachusetts meets the national average, with 20 percent of its statewide elective offices held by women. Interestingly, of the three most rural states in New England, one (Vermont) exceeds the national average for women in statewide elective office and two (New Hampshire and Maine) have no such women.

Maine is also, one of only two states in the country never to have elected a woman to statewide elective office. Of course, Maine, unlike other states, has only one statewide elective office, that of governor.

State Legislature Characteristics: Impact on Women

Much of the activity of state government—the passage of laws and budgets—takes place in state legislatures. In the last quarter century, the number of women in these bodies has increased, and in the last several years, the diversity of these women has increased as well. Women now comprise 22 percent of all state legislators, from a low of 9 percent of the South Carolina legislature to a high of 37 percent in Washington State.

In all but one of the New England states, the percentage of women in state legislatures exceeds the national average. (See Table 2.) Indeed, in every New England state, with the exception of Rhode Island, women comprise more than 26 percent of the state legislature. In addition, Vermont and Connecticut are among the top 10 states with the highest percentages of women state legislators (ranked 5 and 8, respectively). Women in Rhode Island, on the other hand, comprise only 19.5 percent of that state legislature. For New England as a whole, there are 301 women legislators, comprising 27 percent of the 1104 legislators in the region.
The absolute number of women in state legislatures, while small compared to the number of men, has always been much higher than the number of women in state-level executive positions or in Congress. Political scientists have found that the ease of access to female officials and comparability of institutions makes the state legislatures a fruitful place for research. In particular, political scientists have noted three concepts that may have an effect on the number and impact of women in state legislatures: professionalism, critical mass, and political culture.

State legislatures may be classified as “professional,” “citizen,” or “mixed.” A professional legislature generally meets full-time, pays its legislators full salaries, and provides staff and other resources to the legislators. Researchers have posited that a professional legislature may make it difficult for newcomers, such as women, to enter. On the other hand, once those newcomers enter, they may be able to integrate into the legislature and impact policies, so long as they play by the rules of the game. In other words, women may have a harder time entering professional legislatures, but may be able to exert more influence over lawmaking once they get there. A citizen legislature is one in which the job of legislator is not considered a full-time profession, and there are generally few resources available to state legislators. The rationale behind a citizen legislature is that it keeps legislators closer to the people. Ordinary citizens, not professional politicians, may be elected to a citizen legislature, making it more in keeping with the concept of direct democracy.

As one might imagine, New England states, with their strong tradition of direct democracy and citizen involvement in government, are more likely to have citizen legislatures. Indeed, only one state, Massachusetts, has a professional legislature. One other, Connecticut, has a mixed legislature (it has some characteristics of a professional legislature and some characteristics of a citizen legislature). The professional nature of the Massachusetts state legislature may partially explain why the state, which is progressive in many areas, is almost at the bottom of New England states with respect to its proportion of women state legislators: faced with opportunities for good salaries and prestige, men compete more vigorously for seats in the Massachusetts legislature, effectively blocking women’s chances. The type of legislature is not sufficient to explain variation in women’s representation, however. Rhode Island, for example, is a citizen legislature and yet it trails far behind Massachusetts in its percentage of women state legislators.
**Importance of a Critical Mass**

Critical mass theory posits that there are two thresholds that make a difference for women in state legislatures. The first threshold occurs somewhere around 10 percent, when women become a large enough minority to effect legislative priorities. At this level, women legislators are more likely to identify women’s issues as priorities than are men legislators. In legislatures in which women comprise less than 10 percent of legislators, men and women are both unlikely to identify women’s issues as priorities.

The second threshold appears to be somewhere around 25 percent. At this point, women are more fully integrated into the legislature, and some researchers have predicted that women will thus have a greater impact on policies affecting women. Others suggest that when women constitute a sizeable minority, they may be less likely to pursue women’s issues. With a larger number of women in a legislature, women legislators may feel that they are under less obligation to pursue women’s issues, and instead pursue whatever issues interest them the most.

By 1983, all of the New England legislatures had become at least 10 percent female. (See Figure 1.) By 2000, all but Rhode Island had become at least 25 percent female. However, we do not know what impact this has had on legislative processes and policies in the region. This points to a large omission in the field of political science: there are very few case studies of the impact of women in a particular state. There have been quite a few large-scale studies, and some state-by-state research, but New England is particularly lacking in academic research regarding its political women, both as a region and in terms of its individual states.

**The Pipeline**

One other area that political scientists have researched is often referred to as “the pipeline.” Most politicians rise through the ranks by running for local office, state legislative office, statewide office and then congressional office or perhaps even the presidency. Thus, the pool of eligible officeholders for any particular office comes from the level of government just beneath it. The more women there are in municipal office, the more “eligibles” there are for state legislative office. The more women in state legislatures, the more eligible
women there are for gubernatorial and congressional positions. The more women in statewide elective office, the more "eligibles" there are for national office. Municipal office holding is low in all New England states see Table 3).

In the five of the six New England states, women are well-poised as eligibles for congressional and statewide office, at least in terms of the number of women in state legislatures. (Underdog Rhode Island does not appear to be well-poised for either.) And yet, New England is not particularly well-represented in terms of women in statewide elective office, and is even less well-represented in terms of women in congressional office. According to the pipeline theory, the problem may simply be a matter of time. It takes time for women to rise through the pipeline and run for higher offices. There is a limited pool of such offices themselves, and, at the congressional level, it is often necessary to wait for a retirement in order for a seat to open up to newcomers. Again, political science has tantalizing theories to offer, but no hard data.

**Room to Improve: Priorities and Strategies**

New England political women have made great progress, but they still have a long road ahead. An analysis of the chapters that follow suggest the following targets and strategies to increase women’s representation in New England:

1. **We need more women from more New England states in Congress.** New England has a high percentage of women voters; women who run for Congress have a natural electoral base.

2. **We need more women from New England in statewide elective office.** There have been several women governors but none at this point in time. Furthermore, women need to be present in the highly visible and powerful statewide offices. Remember, most recent Presidents have been state governors.

3. **We need more women in state legislatures.** Although New England fares better than average here, women in state legislatures not only have an affect on the policies in those bodies, they also enter the “pipeline” as potential candidates for higher offices.

4. **Municipal-level officeholding is very low in all of the six states other than Connecticut.** An important target for women in New England is to raise the percentage of women on city councils, selectboards, and alderman boards to at least 25 percent in the next several years. Rhode Island needs to increase its numbers of women at all levels of political office.
5. Political scientists take note: New England has a rich and fascinating history with respect to women in politics. Use it as a research laboratory. Political science can learn much from women in New England; New England women would also benefit from political science analysis of effective strategies.

Read On!

The following sections of this volume include chapters that profile each of the six New England states. They provide details about the current status, organizing history, and “firsts.” Each chapter concludes with a set of “targets and strategies” suggested for women interested in increasing women’s participation and representation. Read on!
State Profile: Connecticut

By: Corinna Joy Balash, Tsige Negash, and Erika Kates, Ph.D.

In Brief

At the National Level:
- Connecticut has two female U.S. congressional representatives: Rosa DeLauro (Democrat), who has served since 1991, and Nancy Johnson (Republican), who has served since 1983. Women make up one-third of the Connecticut delegation to the U.S. Congress.
- There have been no U.S. Senators elected from Connecticut.

At the State Level:
- Women occupy four out of six statewide constitutional offices in Connecticut.
- Connecticut ranks 8th in the nation for the percentage of women participating in the state legislature. The number of women legislators has grown steadily, from 20 percent in 1979 to 30 percent in 2003 (see Figure 1).
- In the Senate, women comprise 8 of the 36 members (22 percent), and women hold 49 of the 151 seats (33 percent) in the House of Representatives.

TABLE 1: WOMEN ELECTED OFFICIALS IN CONNECTICUT, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US Senate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US House</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt. Governor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other statewide (N=4)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State legislature (N=187)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal (N=136)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor/First Selectman/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Manager (N=180)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Council/Selectboard/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman (N=762)</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are female chairs on 14 of the 26 committees in the General Assembly, although women chairs are absent from Education, Government Administration, Elections, and Judiciary committees.

A woman, Moira K. Lyons, holds the highest position in the House of Representatives. As Speaker of the House, Lyons leads the Reapportionment Commission and the Joint Committee on Legislative Management.

Secretaries of state have been a stronghold for women in Connecticut. The state has had 13 female secretaries of state since 1939. (See Table 3.) Susan Bysiewicz is the current Secretary of State and has held the position since 1999. The woman who held the post for the longest period was Ella Grasso, who served for 11 years and later became governor of Connecticut.

Connecticut’s current treasurer, Denise Nappier, who has served since 1999, is the first African-American woman to be elected to serve as a State Treasurer in the United States, and the first African-American woman to be elected to a statewide office in Connecticut. (Only five African-American women hold statewide elected office in the nation.)

**Fig. 1: Women in Connecticut**

State Legislature, 1979-2003

Source: Center for American Women and Politics (2003).
Jodi Rell has served as the Lieutenant Governor since 1995. An article in the *Hartford Courant* (2002) mentions Governor John Rowland’s opinion of Rell as “the best lieutenant governor in the country” (Simpson, 2002).

Nancy Wyman, State Comptroller, is the first woman to hold that position in Connecticut’s history.

Despite these achievements, Connecticut ranks comparatively poorly in the number of women policy leaders (i.e., heads of departments, agencies, offices, boards, commissions, top authorities, and top advisors) (Permanent Commission on the Status of Women [PCSW], 2001).

At the Local Level:

- Of the 762 municipal elected officials who are city councilors, selectboard members, or aldermen, 206 (27.0 percent) are women.
- Women make up 17 percent of the leadership roles in the 169 towns and cities. There are 31 women among 180 mayors, first selectmen, and town managers.

**The State of the State**

In its recent report on the Status of Women in Connecticut, the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR, 2002) awarded the state a grade of C+ on political participation. This grade is based on a composite index of women’s voter registration and turnout, representation in elected office, and institutional resources (e.g., a state women’s commission and women’s legislative caucus). When compared to other states on this index, Connecticut ranks 11th in the nation and 4th in the New England region. On individual indices it ranks high on women holding elected office: 9th in the nation and 2nd in the region.

Connecticut ranks much lower, however, on women’s voter registration rates (27th in the nation and 6th in the region) and on women who turn out to vote (32nd in the nation and 6th in the region). As Table 2 shows, only 65.3 percent of women in Connecticut are registered to vote and 57.3 percent turned out to vote in 2000 (U.S. Census, 2002). This compares unfavorably to Maine: 80.3 percent of women in Maine were registered to vote and 70.5 percent turned out in 2000.
Demographic Profile of Connecticut

Connecticut has a population of 3.4 million. In 1999, Connecticut had the nation's highest per capita income, 10 percent greater than the next-highest states—Massachusetts and New Jersey—and 37 percent higher than the U.S. as a whole.

Within this context, Connecticut's women are the most prosperous women in New England, ranking first on employment and earnings, and on social and economic autonomy indices (IWPR, 2002). Connecticut has the highest proportion of women with four or more years of college (35 percent), and the highest annual median earnings in New England (IWPR, 1998). In 2000, 59 percent of Connecticut women aged 18 years and older reported they were employed (compared to 76 percent of men). Also, women have a lower unemployment rate compared to other New England states and to Connecticut men (IWPR, 1998).

Connecticut is the most diverse state in New England: although 81.7 percent of Connecticut women are white, 9.3 percent are African American/black, 2.4 percent are Asian or Pacific Islanders, and another 6.3 percent are either of “multiple races” or “other” race. In addition, 9.0 percent of women are Hispanic/Latina (who may be of any race).

During the 1960s, many Puerto Ricans moved to Connecticut and by 1970 more than 80,000 Spanish-speaking people had established sizable communities in Bridgeport, Willimantic, Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford (Janick, 1975, 9). Furthermore, 18 percent of women in Connecticut today are women of color and the state has a faster-growing proportion of minority groups as compared to other New England states.

Women’s median income in actual dollars is the highest in the region but, when compared to that of men, is on the low side. Connecticut women make 72.8 percent of men’s median income (see Table 2). Women in Vermont, in contrast, make 78.0 percent and women in Massachusetts and Maine make more: 74.5 percent. Rhode Island’s women/men ratio is 72.8, and New Hampshire’s is lower, just 69.8 percent. We found wide economic disparities among women in Connecticut by race/ethnicity, and the state ranks low on a number of measures important to women of color (IWPR, 2000).
TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CONNECTICUT WOMEN, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population: State</td>
<td>3,405,565</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women, by Race/Ethnicity (% of women)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>1,434,844</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>162,712</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>41,888</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American*</td>
<td>5,320</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>73,818</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple race</td>
<td>37,664</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino (may be of any race)</td>
<td>160,303</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median income (% of men's)</td>
<td>$33,318</td>
<td>72.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Below poverty</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Labor force participation (16+ yr.)</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% BA/BS degree or higher (25+ yr.)</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women-owned firms (1997)</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women-owned firms: Sales/receipts (1997)</td>
<td>$9,276,337</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter registration rate</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter turnout rate</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Native American includes American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Race/Ethnicity percentages do not add up to 100 because Hispanics/Latinos may be of any race.

The Historical Perspective: Colonialism, Abolition, Labor, and Suffrage

Prior to the coming of the Puritans, Native American people were a strong presence in Connecticut. At the time of the arrival of the Puritans, the Pequot tribe controlled a sizable portion of what is now eastern Connecticut. Disease and wars devastated the tribe, killing many women and children. Other tribes included the Mohegans, Narragansetts, and Nantics (Campisi, 2003).

The Puritans, who had fled England because of religious persecution, promulgated women's inferiority through church sermons. They embodied in the “Fundamental Orders of Connecticut” a written constitution that “excluded women, indentured servants, Negroes, and Indians from enfranchisement” (Schultz, 1999, xxxv).
In colonial-era Connecticut, most families lived in rural areas and women worked on the land, raising cattle, weaving, and spinning, in addition to taking care of the home and raising children.

The importance of public education was recognized early and continued as a tradition into the 19th century. In 1650, a code was established requiring towns with fifty or more families to hire teachers to teach children reading and writing. Towns with 100 families had to establish publicly funded day schools for girls as well as boys, and a grammar school for young men who wished to attend college. This education helped colonial women to work with their husbands on their farms, as tavern keepers, printers, and occasionally as administrators or executors of their husbands’ estates (Tyler, 1979, 167). Upper-class girls could enter private schools and female academies that offered a combination of primary and secondary education, such as the Sarah Pierce Academy in Litchfield, Connecticut (Kleinberg, 1999, 34; Wolloch, 1992, 229).

Catherine Beecher, the daughter of the influential Puritan Reverend Lyman Beecher and sister of the writer Harriet Beecher Stowe, together with other educators, recognized that women needed an education comparable to men’s. The Hartford Seminar was established in 1823 to train women, mostly daughters of elite families, in teaching and missionary work. In 1833, Beecher founded the Western Female Institute, a teacher training school. The demand for teachers in other parts of the country gave rise to organizations, like the National Board of Popular Education in Hartford, that “prepared female teachers and missionaries for the western territories” (Kleinberg, 1999, 68).

**Women, Abolition, and Native American Tribal Affairs**

In general, white women were not strongly antislavery, but in 1832 Prudence Crandall, a white educator, captured the attention of the abolitionist community when she attempted to expand educational opportunities to young black women. Crandall was jailed and the school destroyed (Williams, 1994, 162). Zillah, an African-American woman writer from Philadelphia, stated “that the teachers’ suffering were the result of fears of our enemies...that education will elevate us to an equality with themselves” (Yellin, 1994,108).
In the early 1830s, the Colored Female Anti-Slavery Society cooperated with associations and leaders from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia to coordinate a multistate antislavery petition campaign among female abolition societies in New England. Although this movement had little legislative impact, it helped to mobilize women against slavery (Yellin, 1994, 51). For example, the Fairhaven Anti-Slavery society contacted groups for advice and used sewing circles and local fairs to raise funds and awareness of their campaign. However, it was not unusual to find women like Rebecca Primus who, although they played an important part in rejecting notions of white superiority, also accepted the prevailing 19th century view of women’s “cult of domesticity” (Beeching, 1999, 1).

In addition to women’s efforts in support of abolition, Native American women had important roles in preserving their culture in the face of pressures toward assimilation. Fidelia Hoscott Fielding (1827–1908), for example, is known as the last speaker and preserver of the Mohegan Pequot language. Emma Fielding Baker, who was posthumously elected as the Medicine Woman of the Mohegan in 1992, revitalized “the Mohegan Green Corn Festival…in 1861 to unify the Mohegan people….Moreover, Emma was responsible for regulating tribal land divisions and maintaining Mohegan historical records” (Connecticut Women’s Hall of Fame, 2003).

**Women and the Labor Movement**

By 1880 Connecticut was one of the most industrialized states in the country. Immigrants constituted over 60 percent of industrial workers. The majority were from Ireland, with others from Italy, Poland, and Lithuania. However, even before the arrival of the Irish immigrants in the late 1830s, native, white, and single women, and children worked in factories, mainly in the textile mills. Their low wages “in a sense subsidized the early industrial movement” (Trecker, 1975, 12). It was not until the Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed the extremely poor working conditions in the factories that, in spite of opposition from employers, the sixty-hour week was introduced for women factory workers. However, the implementation of the law was left up to the employers, many of whom did not comply.

Women at that time—as now—earned less than men, but the gap was even greater. Women working in bakeries received $4.96 a week, as compared to their male counterparts, who earned $12.52. Women in the brass
industry earned $4.86 a week, as compared to men's earnings of $15.32 (Andersen, 1975, 60). Although it was harder for African-American women to find work, they were “at least twice as likely to work, worked for more years than a white women” (Wilson, 1981, 4), but they were more likely to work in rural areas.

By the early 20th century Connecticut had become a leading producer of firearms and ammunitions in the U.S., producing “55 percent of the munitions used by the U.S. in the war as well as a share of other war supplies” (Wilson, 1981, 6). Many of the girls and women working in the textile mills, metal works, corset and hosiery factories, or in domestic service left these jobs to work at the Remington Arms and Munitions and Remington Union Metallic Companies. Remington Arms alone employed 4,000 women, about one quarter of its total work force (Jenich, 1975, 16). Yet impoverished conditions at work and at home fueled frustration and generated several strikes. Between 1913 and 1919, women participated in at least fifteen strikes in Hartford demanding improved pay and working conditions (Wilson, 1981, 5).

**Link Between Abolition, Labor, Reform, and Suffrage**

The Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 marked the birth of the women's movement in the United States. Connecticut women became fervent activists for the suffrage movement. In the 1860s, Isabella Beecher Hooker formed the Connecticut Women's Suffrage Association in Hartford, writing legislation, giving speeches, and testifying before state and federal legislative committees. Other women used nonviolent protest, such as the refusal to pay taxes, and cited the principle of “no taxation without representation” (Yellin, 1994, 296).

In 1885 a group of women formed the Equal Rights Club in Hartford, and participated with other women's organizations to plan suffrage conventions and parades in Connecticut and Washington. They reached out to Connecticut politicians and “bitterly berated Frank B. Braegge, a representative in the U.S Senate when he voted against the child labor amendment” (Andersen, 1975, 23). Members of the Club continued lobbying, writing and publicizing women's victories and rights, and strategizing until the Nineteenth Amendment, granting the right of women to vote, was added to the U.S Constitution.
In 1889, Isabella Hooker of the Connecticut Women's Suffrage Association (CWSA) and her husband proposed two bills seeking the vote of women on the “local option sale of liquor and on local school issues” (Russell, 1981, 8). In 1893, women were allowed to vote for school officers, but not until 1909 were they permitted to vote on questions related to schools or to public libraries (Andersen, 1975, 23).

Other legislative changes favored women who belonged to the middle and upper class. For example, in 1877 an act of the General Assembly gave women the right to control their own property and stated that “neither husband nor wife shall acquire, by force of marriage, any right to or interest in any property held by the other before marriage, or acquired after marriage” (Andersen, 1975, 22). The Act also included the right of women to make contracts and own their earnings in case they sold or transferred land or other property.

By 1912, a new generation of college-educated women had taken over the leadership of the CWSA, and by 1917 the CWSA had a membership of “35,000 in 60 local leagues with a treasury of close to $30,000” (Janick, 1975, 16). Carrie Chapman and Harriet Stanton were active in the national suffrage movement (NAWSA). They identified grassroots organizing as the path to winning suffrage, and encouraged regional activists to carry “our question into every town meeting, caucus and primary for it is there that the rank and file voters go; they won’t come to our meetings” (Hymowitz and Weissman, 1981, 271).

Congress approved the Nineteenth Amendment on January 4, 1919, and in their efforts to have it ratified, Connecticut women hired a professional public relations company. These new leaders expanded their political struggle beyond suffrage to other issues, such as health care, living and working conditions, education, and immigrants. On labor laws, some leaders advocated for special treatment for women because of differences in strength and family responsibilities. Others, like Alice Paul, a suffragist who resided in Connecticut, considered gender-based labor laws as “another handicap for women in the labor struggle” (Kleinberg, 1999, 290). Paul founded the Congressional Union, which later became the National Woman's Party.
Two women from Hartford, Charlotte Gilman and Katherine Houghton Hepburn, influenced the movement through their writings, activism, and demonstrations. Gilman, niece of Catherine Beecher and a renowned sociologist, journalist, and writer, participated actively in a variety of clubs, lecturing against the cult of domesticity, but she did not participate in black women’s organizations (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1998, 133). Katherine Hepburn spoke throughout Connecticut and New England in favor of the suffrage movement and better working conditions, and, along with her husband, advocated for birth control and against anti-abortion laws (Kleinberg, 1999, 234).

Connecticut approved the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, after thirty-six other states had done so. However, women were not as united as they had been in earlier times, causing women’s rights activists to observe that the right to vote “seemed to give women less political power, not more” (Russell, 1981, 15).

Other activists continued working for groups such as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) or the Connecticut Federation of Churches (CFC). The WCTU had 4,500 members and a conservative agenda that combined temperance with a program of social uplift, including the teaching of English, personal hygiene, and citizenship to foreigners (Janick, 1975, 34–35).

**Recent History Post-Suffrage**

Beginning in the 1930s, Connecticut women were “entering government service in both bureaucratic and elective offices.” The percentage of women in these offices increased from 5 percent in 1921 to 7 percent in 1941 and 18 percent in 1961. Between 1971 and 1981, it declined to 10 (Russell, 1981, 15). As shown in Table 3, Connecticut is a state with a remarkable number of women secretaries of state.

In 1939, Sara Crawford became the first woman secretary of state in Connecticut; she was followed by Chase Going Woodhouse in 1941 and a number of other women, up through and including the present Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz.
TABLE 3: SECRETARIES OF STATE, 1939–PRESENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years Served</th>
<th>Party Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan Bysiewicz</td>
<td>1999-present</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline Kezer</td>
<td>1991 - 1995</td>
<td>Republican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia H. Tashjian</td>
<td>1983 - 1991</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maura Melley</td>
<td>1982 - 1983</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Kennelly</td>
<td>1979 - 1982</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Shaffer</td>
<td>1971 - 1978</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ella T. Grasso</td>
<td>1959 - 1970</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildred P. Allen</td>
<td>1955 - 1958</td>
<td>Republican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice K. Leopold (resigned)</td>
<td>1951 - 1953</td>
<td>Republican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winifred McDonald</td>
<td>1949 - 1950</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Burke Redick</td>
<td>1943 - 1944</td>
<td>Republican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1947 - 1948</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chase Going Woodhouse</td>
<td>1941 - 1942</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara B. Crawford</td>
<td>1939 - 1940</td>
<td>Republican</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Center for American Women in Politics (2003).

Clare Boothe Luce rose from humble beginnings to become an editor for Vanity Fair. Her second husband was the co-founder of Time and Life magazines. A Republican, she first decided to run for office in 1940, “filling the seat held by her step-father, won the election and in 1949 [sic] was re-elected” (Connecticut Hall of Fame, 2003). In Congress she was named to the Committee on Military Affairs, and in 1946 President Eisenhower named her Ambassador to Italy. She was a member of the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board under Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Reagan.

Antonia Ucello, also a Republican, came from a Catholic Italian family. She studied government at Trinity College, attended the University of Connecticut Law School, and later worked as a teacher and in business. She became the first woman mayor in Hartford and the first Republican mayor in twenty years.

Despite these remarkable achievements, a number of women in Connecticut (primarily Republicans) “opposed female jury service,” claiming that “women should be more concerned over the breaking down of homes than over the breaking down of the jury system” and that “they were less suited to jury service than men” (Kleinberg, 1999, 288). Connecticut blocked female jury service until the late 1930s.
FIGURE 2: HIGHLIGHTS OF WOMEN IN CONNECTICUT POLITICS

1832 – Prudence Crandall captures the attention of the abolitionist community when she attempts to expand educational opportunities to young black women.

1860s – Isabella Beecher Hooker forms the Connecticut Women’s Suffrage Association.

1861 – Emma Fielding Baker revitalizes the Mohegan Green Corn Festival to unify the Mohegan people.

1885 – The Equal Rights Club, promoting women’s suffrage, is formed in Hartford.

1919 – Alice Paul, a Connecticut resident, founds the Congressional Union, which later becomes the National Woman’s Party. She considers gender-based labor laws a “handicap for women in the labor struggle.”

1939 – Sara B. Crawford is elected first woman secretary of state. She is followed by a number of women to hold that post (see Table 3).

1942 – Clare Boothe Luce is elected to the U.S. Congress, serving until 1946, when she becomes Ambassador to Italy.

1958 – Ella Grasso is elected secretary of state; serves from 1959 to 1970, when she is elected to the U.S. Congress; she serves in Congress from 1971 to 1975.

1966 – Constance Baker Motley becomes first female African-American federal court judge; she goes on to successfully argue nine U.S. Supreme Court civil rights cases.


1975 – Edythe J. Gaines becomes the first African American and one of the first two women to hold the position of superintendent of schools in Connecticut.

1982 – Barbara Kennelly wins special election to take a seat in the U.S. Congress, is reelected, and serves until 1999.

1982 – Nancy Johnson elected to U.S. Congress, continues in office.

1983 – Nancy Meléndez becomes first Latina elected to the Hartford City Council.

1988 – Carrie Saxon Perry, an African American woman, elected Mayor of Hartford.

1988 – María Sánchez becomes first Latina/o elected to the Connecticut State Legislature.

1990 – Rosa DeLauro elected to the U.S. Congress, continues in office.

1998 – Denise Nappier elected State Treasurer, one of only five women of color to hold statewide office, and the only one in New England. She is still in office.
**1960s–1980s**

The women mentioned above were pioneers in politics, but for the most part, their focus was on the betterment of women within the domestic sphere.

This changed in the 1960s. Inspired by the civil rights movement, Connecticut women became more active in their demand for equality. “Women for a Better Yale” supported college admission policies without sex quotas. The Planned Parenthood League of Connecticut fought for the sale of contraceptives for twenty-five years, until in 1967 the United States Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a state law forbidding the use of contraceptives (Janick, 1975, 99).

**1974: The Year of Ella Grasso**

Ella Grasso, an Italian-American, was the first woman elected governor in her own right in the United States. She was elected in 1974 at the age of 55, having spent 21 years involved in Connecticut politics. In 1953 she was elected state representative, served as secretary of state from 1959 to 1970, and held a seat in the U.S. Congress from 1971 to 1975. Grasso was particularly well educated, holding a master’s degree in economics from Mount Holyoke College. She was known for her ability in state finances as well her handling of the media. Tough when she needed to be, she also could successfully connect to her constituents using her “warm” and “motherly” manner (Bysiewicz, 1984, 111).

Party politics played a key role in Grasso’s 1974 victory. The Democratic party, under the leadership of the state party chairman, John Bailey, was a strong supporter of Grasso. She won a second term in office but resigned in December 1980, having been weakened by chemotherapy treatments she had undergone for ovarian cancer. She died in 1981. Connecticut magazine named her one of the state’s top ten greatest governors (Warshauer, 2002).

**Notable Women of Color in Connecticut Politics**

Women of color have made remarkable contributions to Connecticut politics—and at a relatively early point in the state’s history. As noted above, Native American women played important roles in maintaining and fighting for their cultural heritage, and Agnes Cunha currently holds the position of Tribal Elder and Tribal Council Chairperson of the Pequots.
Hartford city politics have been an important avenue for women of color. African-American women have held important posts, including, for example, Carrie Saxon Perry as mayor of Hartford, and the important post of deputy mayor is currently held by an African American woman.

Likewise, Latina women have been organizing since the arrival of Puerto Ricans in the 1960s. María Sánchez (1926–1989) is perhaps the most well known of the many Latinas to have made their mark during the 1960s through the present. From “Maria’s News Stand” on Albany Avenue, she was tireless in her organizing efforts—and Democratic party support—for decades. She first won election to the Hartford school board in 1973 and served until she ran for and won a seat in the Connecticut House of Representatives. Other Latinas, less well known outside of Hartford, include Mildred Torres, who was the first Puerto Rican appointed to the Hartford City Council in 1979. Nancy Meléndez was the first Latina elected to the City Council in 1982 and served until 1987.

A few statistics point to the pathbreaking achievements of Latinas in Hartford politics: between 1973 and 1991, 10 of the 24 election campaigns with Latino candidates were run by Latina women and 5 of the 9 Latino candidates who won were women.

Meeting Political Challenges
The Role of Political Parties

Connecticut experienced an economic decline during the 1920s due to its reliance on an economy based on war industries; the decline was further exacerbated by the Depression of the 1930s. During this period, the Democratic party built a solid power base in the cities where large numbers of immigrants lived, attending to the needs of working-class people and a growing labor movement. They introduced unemployment insurance and pensions. During the same period, the Republican party initially was “content to rely on a businessman-farmer coalition” but soon realized the necessity of…“an infusion of new leadership and new ideas” (Jenkins, 1975, 36). The majority of the women state legislators in Connecticut have been Republican.

The number of women running for office is limited, however. Some women choose not to run for office for various reasons. Approximately 85 percent of legislators are 40 years of age or older, and many legislators do not have
young children. Many feel that public service is too demanding and takes up too much time. “If you put this job description down—underpaid, overworked and subject to great public scrutiny—who’s going to apply for that?” Since both men and women have to sacrifice time with their family to serve, many choose not to seek office or wait until they are middle-aged and their children are older (Gary F. Moncrief, cited in Altimari, 2002).

On the other hand, Rep. Evelyn Mantilla (D-Hartford), who has a young child, felt even more compelled to serve when she became a mother. “She is convinced that policy matters such as paid family leave would gain more notice at the Capitol if more legislators had young children.” And women may offer a different perspective to policy making. “Studies have shown that when women are involved in the policymaking, there’s more real life information [presented] about day care issues and health care” (Altimari, 2002).

**Future Opportunities**

Susan Bysiewicz, 40, Connecticut’s current Secretary of State, has not made it a secret that she would like to follow in Ella’s footsteps. Bysiewicz wrote *Ella: A Biography of Governor Ella Grasso* when she was an undergraduate at Yale University. Since then, Bysiewicz has been compared to her idol many times. “Ella Grasso, coincidentally, offered the same moderate-Democrat brew of social liberalism and fiscal conservatism. She raised sales taxes and cut the budget to stem a fiscal crisis—and still managed to get elected, beloved for her down-to-earth, accessible reputation. Like Bysiewicz, she emphasized no-nonsense hard work over big-picture philosophy; Grasso personally ran the state’s handling of a 1978 blizzard, even shoveling snow.” As she has stated, “It’s great being underestimated. You can just put your head down and do your work. By the time they pay attention, you’ve won. Voters don’t want nice. They want people who stand up and say what they think” (quoted in Bass, 2002).

At least four women politicians may run for governor in the next election: Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz, Treasurer Denise Nappier, Comptroller Nancy Wyman, and Lieutenant Governor Jodi Rell (Simpson, 2002). Bysiewicz is the only candidate who has opened up an exploratory committee to run for governor. Connecticut confirms the view that statewide office offers an important stepping-stone for the governorship and higher-level offices.
Conclusion: Priorities and Strategies

Connecticut holds the distinction of having a strong record on the number of women holding statewide office and currently has two women in the U.S. Congress. Among the New England states, Connecticut is one of the very few that have not seen a decline in the percentage of women in the state legislature. The percentage of women in local offices is also relatively high.

Despite the strong level of institutional support, a talented and highly educated population, and a proud tradition of sending women to statewide elected positions (including the governorship), Connecticut ranks only 4th in the region for overall women's political participation. One reason is the fact that women's voter participation is the lowest in the region.

An analysis of the information gathered for this chapter suggests that women and women's organizations in Connecticut should focus on the following priorities and related strategies for the next five years:

1. Increase women's voter registration and turnout rates.

2. Develop a unified strategy for securing the governorship. An ideal situation would be to secure both the Democratic and Republican nominations—by having two women running against each other, as in the recent Hawaii election, a woman is sure to win.

3. Anticipate and prepare in advance for any potential challenges to the current U.S. Representatives—and for a point in time when either Congresswoman Johnson or DeLauro leaves office. Identify and groom likely successors.

4. Publicize the workshops, trainings, mentoring opportunities, campaign schools, and university-based education programs that are crucial to women's political advancement. The Women's Campaign School at Yale University is an important resource for women in this state.

5. Develop targeted efforts for young women and women from diverse backgrounds to gain the skills and support necessary to combine personal goals with political careers.
6. Build bridges with women leaders in communities of color and immigrant communities to increase the civic and political participation of immigrant women and women from communities of color. Even newly arrived immigrants who are not citizens can and should be welcomed into the political process.

7. Create a synergy between women in business and women in politics. The former have talents that can help sustain the higher levels of fundraising women candidates need to win, and the latter have contacts and connections important to women’s business needs.

This list of priorities is not exhaustive. Different groups may order them differently—or consider others more urgent. Further research, writing, and discussion are obviously needed. This chapter nevertheless offers a look at the history, current status, and experiences of women in Connecticut and, it is hoped, will energize women across the state to take concerted action to increase women’s political participation, representation, and influence.

NB: All references cited in this Profile may be found in the Bibliography section of this volume.
State Profile: Maine

By: Katherine Griswold, Sarah Nichols, Linda Skurchak, Susanna Dilliplane, and Denise Riebman

In Brief

At the National Level:
- In 2002, the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR, 2002), ranked Maine second in the country for women’s political participation.
- Currently, women hold both of Maine’s seats in the United States Senate: Senator Olympia Snowe (R) and Senator Susan Collins (R).
- Olympia Snowe also served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1979 to 1995.
- Margaret Chase Smith (R) was the first woman nationwide to serve in both the U.S. House of Representatives (1940-1949) and the U.S. Senate (1949-1973).
- Presently, Maine has no female U.S. Representative.
- Maine ranks 17th in the country for the percentage of women serving in the state legislature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Women Elected Officials in Maine, 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government &amp; Elected Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State legislature (N=186)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Council/ Selectboard/ Alderperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


At the State Level:
- Maine has never elected a woman to its only elected statewide executive office of governor.
- Women represent 27 percent of Maine’s State Legislature (13/35 in the Senate and 37/151 in the House). This percentage is up 12 percent from 1979.
Representation was at an all-time high in 1991, when the legislature consisted of 33 percent women but has declined since then. (See Figure 1.) Women currently hold leadership positions on 14 out of 44 state legislative committees.

Beverly Daggett is the sitting Maine Senate President and Sharon Treat is the Senate Majority Leader.

The only woman of color in the state legislature is Native American Representative Donna Loring, the (non-voting) Tribal Member representing the Penobscot Nation.

In the judiciary, women hold 28.6 percent of the Superior Supreme Court justice positions, including chief justice.

Fig. 1: Women in Maine State Legislature, 1979-2003

At the Local Level:

Women comprise only 14.8 percent of Maine’s elected city officials, such as councilors, selectpersons, and alderpersons. In line with nationwide trends, Maine women show a greater representation on school boards and committees. Maine’s school boards are comprised of 49.5 percent women. (See Table 1.)

In Maine, 91.3 percent of town registrars and 82.9 percent of town clerks are women.

Women currently have a solid presence in the Maine Municipal Association (MMA). Not only are the association’s president and vice president female, but women also hold five out of the eight MMA director positions.

Source: Center for American Women and Politics (2003)
The State of the State

In 2002, Maine ranked second in the country for women’s political participation, according to the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (2002), just behind the state of Washington. The indicators analyzed for this ranking were voter registration, voter turnout, women elected to office, and women’s institutional resources. Women’s political participation has been strong in Maine ever since the first woman, Dora Pinkham, was elected to the Maine House of Representatives in 1923. Since then, women have consistently participated in all facets of Maine politics.

Two women currently represent Maine at the national level: United States Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins. In the state legislature, there are currently 13 women senators and 37 women representatives. From the 1970s to the mid-1990s, women’s representation in the Maine legislature showed a steady increase, never decreasing by more than one percent during any one-year interval. In 2002, 30.1 percent of state legislators were women, though that number noticeably declined to 26.9 percent in 2003 (Center for American Women and Politics, 2003; see Figure 1).

Nonetheless, women currently hold leadership positions on 14 of the 44 legislative committees. Although this number does not reflect the proportion of the state’s female population, the fact that women hold 31 percent of the committee chairs shows that they have made headway in attaining positions of leadership. In addition, two women—Beverly Daggett and Sharon Treat—were elected to the offices of Senate president and Senate majority leader, respectively. There is little diversity of women in the Maine legislature, reflecting the lack of diversity in the state as a whole. There is only one woman of color, Native American Representative Donna Loring, who is the (non-voting) Tribal Member representing the Penobscot Nation.

Women in Maine also hold many other prominent positions. In the judiciary, women hold 28.6 percent of State Supreme Court justice positions, including that of chief justice. Women also hold 11.1 percent of Superior Court justice positions, again including that of chief justice (State of Maine, 2003f). Furthermore, Governor Baldacci recently appointed a number of women to top posts in his administration, including Laura Fortman as Commissioner of the Maine Department of Labor.
At the statewide executive level, the offices of state auditor and state treasurer are held by women: Gail M. Chase and Dale McCormack, respectively. It should be noted that in Maine the only elected statewide executive office is that of governor. A woman has never been elected governor in Maine (Center for American Women and Politics, 2003).

As mentioned above, both of Maine’s U.S. senators are women. Susan Collins, the junior of the two, was reelected in 2002 after running against another woman, Chellie Pingree. Senator Collins is currently chair of the Committee on Governmental Affairs. Senator Olympia Snowe, who previously served in the Maine legislature as a representative and a senator, as well as a U.S. representative, is now serving her second term as a U.S. senator.

At the municipal level, the two positions most commonly held by women are town registrar, at 91.3 percent (State of Maine, 2003c), and town clerk, at 82.9 percent (State of Maine, 2003b). As Table 1 (see In Brief section) indicates, however, women comprise only 14.8 percent of Maine’s elected city councilors, selectpersons, and alderpersons (depending on the form of municipal government in individual towns). At the municipal level, women have the strongest showing on school committees, where they represent 49.5 percent of all school committee members.

Women in Maine are strong organizers and political participants, as indicated by their notable presence across the state’s political, judicial, and appointed positions, as well as in the state’s non-electoral political and community organizations. For example, women hold the presidency, the vice presidency, and five of the eight director positions on the Maine Municipal Association (Maine Municipal Association, 2003). The women of Maine also have many opportunities to mobilize politically through various organizations, such as the League of Women Voters, the Maine chapter of the National Organization of Women, and the Maine Federation of Republican Women. With economic barriers often keeping women from organizing politically and socially, many groups aim to help women overcome these obstacles; these organizations include the Maine Center for Economic Policy, Business and Professional Women of Maine, the Genesis Community Fund, and the Women’s Business Development Corporation.
Although Maine does not have a state women’s commission, like those that exist in many other states, the Maine Women’s Lobby serves in this capacity. The Maine Women’s Lobby is an organization for research, education, and public outreach on issues affecting women and girls in Maine. According to one member of the Women’s Lobby (who asked to remain anonymous), “Maine has a very respectful climate. It is not normal to see attack ads during campaign seasons, which is something that often keeps women away.” She added, “The clean elections law has also helped women, making it financially easier to run for office. They don’t have to raise a crazy amount of money” (Interview, 4/17/03). Another law that impacts the ability of women to run is the time limit for positions in the state legislature. A legislator may only hold office for eight years, after which he or she cannot run for re-election. This may have a positive effect, in that there are constantly open seats available for women. Conversely, women have a relatively short amount of time to attain positions of leadership; as soon as women attain office, they have to promote themselves aggressively to attain these leadership positions.

Even as clean elections and term limits might enhance opportunities for women, a member of the Women’s Lobby points to the difficulty of balancing parenthood and state representation, as women juggle demands of motherhood and legislative office. Obstacles impeding the ability of women to achieve political parity include “long hours, low pay, and inefficient childcare” (Interview, 4/17/03).

In spite of these difficulties, women in Maine have been relatively successful in the political arena. Maine women have proven successful in getting the legislation they support passed, being elected, and generating broad-based support. Women also have had a strong, if limited, showing at the local level. Maine women appear to be using a welcoming environment as a starting point for higher office. And although women still make up the minority of elected officials, their numbers continue to grow. However, there is room for further growth: for example, Maine has not yet elected a female governor.

**Demographic Profile of Women in Maine**

The state of Maine has a population of 1,274,923—51.3 percent of which is female. Maine’s area covers over 30,000 square miles, with about 41 people per square mile. Massachusetts, by comparison, has 809 people per square mile.
TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF MAINE WOMEN, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population: State</td>
<td>1,274,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population: Women (% of total)</td>
<td>654,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women, by Race/Ethnicity (% of women)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>635,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>2,784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American*</td>
<td>3,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed race</td>
<td>6,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latina (may be of any race)</td>
<td>4,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median income (% of men's)</td>
<td>$24,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Below poverty</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Labor force participation (16+ yr.)</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% BA/BS degree or higher (25+ yr.)</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women-owned firms (1997)</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women-owned firms: Sales/receipts (1997)</td>
<td>$3,212,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter registration rate</td>
<td>80.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter turnout rate</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: 2000 U. S. Census (1997, 2000, 2002); Institute for Women's Policy Research (2002). *Native American includes American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Race/Ethnicity percentages do not add up to 100 because Hispanics/Latinas may be of any race.

As Table 2 indicates, 97.0 percent of Maine's female population is white. Despite the state's reputation as predominantly white, there are pockets of surprising ethnic diversity in Maine. There is a significant immigrant presence in Portland, for example. In Portland's public schools, 57 languages other than English are spoken, with Khmer, Somali, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Arabic dominating (Maine's Changing Demographics, Maine Women's Fund, 2003). As of April 2003, residents of the complexes run by the Portland Housing Authority communities represented 38 nationalities; 56 percent of the residents were new Americans, as opposed to native-born residents (Maine's Changing Demographics, Maine Women's Fund). Statistics from the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP)—Maine's only nonprofit provider of legal services to immigrants, refugees, and U.S. citizens—show that out of the total number of
people served in 2002 across 16 counties, 34 percent were black (primarily natives of Africa and the Caribbean), 26 percent were Hispanic, and 89 percent were noncitizens (ILAP, FY 2002). The average median income in Maine is $37,240; women's median income, however, is much lower: $24,251 (U.S. Census, 2000). Although women's wages may be low (Maine ranked 25th in the country), almost 60 percent of women participate in the labor force, and in 1997 twenty-four percent of Maine's firms were owned by women (see Table 2).

Participation in higher education is low in Maine because much of the state is very rural and low-income. Only 22.9 percent of Maine's population has a bachelor's degree or higher, and an even lower percentage (22.5 percent) of women in Maine have higher-education degrees (U.S. Census, 2000). Reflective of the wage disparity between men and women nationwide, however, research published in Voices of Maine Women found that women who have a college degree earn, on average, a salary that is comparable to the salary of a male high school graduate (Women's Development Institute, 1996b).

The History of Women's Politics in Maine

Statehood and the Anti-Slavery Movement

Before it was granted statehood, Maine was considered part of Massachusetts. However, as early as 1770 the people of Maine began to organize efforts to secede from Massachusetts. Politicians began to speak statewide about the benefits of Maine running its own government, stating that Maine would be able to run a cheaper and simpler government than Massachusetts (Maine Historical Society, 2000). The bill ratifying Maine's statehood was presented to Congress in December 1819 at the same time that the pro-slavery state of Missouri was filing for statehood. Since Maine had a strongly abolitionist population, Congress saw this as an opportunity to debate states' rights and slavery and consequently presented the two applications as a unified piece of legislation. Ultimately, Maine's application was severed from Missouri's, but the politics surrounding this debate in Congress led to the Missouri Compromise, and Maine's statehood was granted (in 1820) in part to balance the power between the free and slave states (Maine Historical Society, 2000). The strong anti-slavery sentiment of Maine's early history is important to note, as the abolitionist movement was later to become key to women's organizing in Maine.
Party Politics

In terms of the political landscape, Maine voters supported Democratic candidates during the early years of the state’s existence, and then became solidly Republican for a century. From 1854 to 1954, it was a one-party state in which the Republican primary election was the most important (Maisel and Ivry, 1997). However, by the 1970s, a two-party system had emerged, a change that was touched off by the election of Democrat Edmund S. Muskie to the governorship in 1954. In fact, Maine now has a strong non-major party tradition, with Independent and third-party candidates often capturing a notable number of votes (Maisel and Ivry, 1997). General electoral trends in Maine include ticket-splitting, divided control of the government, and elections that are closely won after fiercely partisan races (Maisel and Ivry, 1997).

In terms of the state party committees, the Democrats have been energetic in their efforts to build local organizational support systems, whereas the Republican leadership has not pursued state party organization with quite as much zeal. However, the 1990s did bring stronger centralization and concentration of responsibility in the state parties, particularly in the Republican party, which increased its direction of the activities of local and county committees (Appleton and Ward, 1997). In the mid-1980s, the Republican state party committee also moved more toward the center, with moderates supporting the Equal Rights Amendment and a pro-choice plank in 1984 and 1988, respectively (Appleton and Ward, 1997).

Two other aspects of Maine politics are noteworthy. First, in 1996 Maine switched from a caucus system to participation in the New England primary system. This threatens to have a negative effect on party organization, as the state committees have become less important in the guaranteeing of contests for office (Maisel and Ivry, 1997). Second, in 1996, Maine adopted term limits for state legislators and statewide officials. Not only have these limits led many more legislators to retire—as the office is no longer perceived as a path to power and policy influence—but also they have posed a potentially new barrier to women. Term limits have been identified as a factor in the decline of female leadership in the Maine House of Representatives, and it is feared that a similar degradation will occur in the Senate. On the other hand, term limits represent an opportunity for women, as it is easier for them to compete for open seats rather than to run against an incumbent.
The Economic and Cultural Climate

Although historically Maine has been a rural state, with its economic strength lying in businesses such as potato harvesting and papermaking, the Maine economy underwent considerable change in the 1980s and 1990s, as it began to focus on tourism and high-tech businesses (Almanac of American Politics, 2002). Despite this economic growth, many Mainers have worked to maintain a balance between private commercial interests and environmental preservation. Maine voters have also weighed in on key cultural issues, rejecting gay rights initiatives in 1998 and 2000, as well as a partial abortion ban in 1999, but endorsing the medical use of marijuana (Almanac of American Politics, 2002).

Women’s Political Organizing Pre-Suffrage

Maine Women Find Their Voice

The early history of women in Maine politics is not well documented. This is not because women were not active participants in society and politics, but because the lives of women were often considered ancillary to American history. In order to bring into view the legacies of Maine women, as well as their struggles for equal rights and political representation, it is necessary to highlight several themes and events that were key in women’s early efforts to organize.

As Maine’s early political scene evolved, so did the organization of Maine women. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, women’s clubs were transformed from female prayer meetings and sewing clubs to literary clubs and, ultimately, organizations for social prosperity, such as welfare, abolition, and suffrage. This evolution of women’s organizing efforts reflects the contemporary issues that were developing and coming to the forefront of public debate.

The first prayer meetings, maternal associations, and sewing circles were usually monitored by ministers. It was in these congregations that women began to understand the importance of organizing and to recognize the validity of their opinions. Women also founded organizations such as the Female Cent Society, the purpose of which was to promote “aid in the support of the Gospel” and to “elevate the moral tone of society” (Coffin-Beedy, 1895). Over time, the number of such clubs increased, and many of them generated and distributed literature in order to further their causes.
Private organizations designed to assist specific groups of people also began to form in the early 1800s. Even though this type of organizing had an inward focus in terms of furthering a particular membership's interests, some groups began to look outward at larger societal needs (Barry, 1988). For example, in 1803 the Portland Benevolent Society convened to assist in the support and employment of the poor. The Female Charitable Society, which helped the poor and underprivileged citizens of Portland, was established in 1812 and was run entirely by women. In 1828, the Female Orphan Asylum was founded by a group of women who worked to rescue young orphans from poverty, providing the children with clothes, food, and an education.

During this time, women were also beginning to participate in literary clubs. In 1828, the first literary club to admit women was Nucleus in Portland (Coffin-Beedy, 1895). It was in this type of club that women further developed their academic prowess, as well as their ability to voice opinions and engage in public discussions and debates pertaining to contemporary published literature. Women eventually were able to move from literary topics to discussions of scientific advances and politics.

**Confronting Political Issues: Temperance and Abolition**

These early organizations for intellectual and societal betterment allowed women to gain crucial skills and experience, which helped them as they began to take part in larger movements, such as the temperance movement. Indications of the “temperance renaissance” were visible in the early 1800s, as Maine women first instituted temperance reform in their own homes by refusing to serve liquor to family and guests. Maine’s first temperance society was formed in the town of Industry in the late 1820s and its membership was entirely female (Coffin-Beedy, 1895). Eventually, ladies’ aid and temperance organizations were located across the entire state. One organization that proved to be a valuable part of the temperance movement in Maine was Winthrop’s Martha Washington Society, a division of the Daughters of Temperance (Coffin-Beedy, 1895). Aggressive work was also accomplished by the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), as many Maine women quickly joined the efforts of the WCTU and ably advocated temperance (Coffin-Beedy, 1895). In the town of Allen’s Mills, women organized a Ladies’ Temperance Band. Active in 1856, this organization commanded a large membership and also made it a priority to help people who were sick or needy.
Women of the Ladies’ Temperance Band worked in conjunction with other philanthropic organizations in order to provide social aid and pursue their causes in the name of justice (Coffin-Beedy, 1895).

By the mid-1800s, Maine women had established a voice for themselves, thus allowing them to take part in discussions on contemporary political and social issues. They had become a viable presence in public debates, and as the abolitionist movement gained momentum, women proved to be an influential force. In 1853, the Ladies’ Anti-Slavery Society was founded in Peru, Maine, led by Esther Gibbs (Coffin-Beedy, 1895). Within the next few years, women formed comparable clubs in Androscoggin, Cumberland, Franklin, Oxford, Somerset, and York counties (Coffin-Beedy, 1895). By 1854, there were 37 similar female organizations throughout the state, and on July 3 of that year, delegates from all of the societies met in order to organize a statewide society, the Daughters of Freedom (Agger, 1982). On July 4, the society, which was headed by Gibbs, held the first political meeting in Maine at which a woman presided and assumed a position of leadership (Coffin-Beedy, 1895). The Ladies’ Anti-Slavery Society existed until 1856, at which time its work was adopted by Maine’s leading political party (Coffin-Beedy, 1895). One of the most well-known figures in the anti-slavery movement was Maine daughter Harriet Beecher Stowe. Stowe’s earliest memory was of her father, an eminent Congregational minister, who spoke out against slavery and the Missouri Compromise (Agger, 1982). Later in her life, Stowe read widely on the subject of slavery, including the critically important writings of Maine resident Lydia Marie Childs (Agger, 1982). Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852), Stowe’s landmark work, made her a heroine of the anti-slavery movement. As Stowe and the women of the anti-slavery societies demonstrate, Maine women were active participants in a political and societal debate that echoed throughout the 19th century.

The Fight for Women’s Suffrage in Maine

In this increasingly participatory environment, Maine women were ready to listen when Susan B. Anthony arrived in Bangor to speak about women’s suffrage in 1854. During the previous ten years, the state legislature had passed acts that granted married women the right to hold their own property and to keep their own wages (University of Southern Maine [USM], 2002). With these legislative acts, Maine women saw their status strengthen at home and in the community. By 1855, when Lucy Stone came to Maine to lobby on behalf of women’s voting rights in Augusta and Cornish, women were willing not only to listen but also to organize (USM, 2002). That same year, a women’s rights society was founded in Portland.
The fight to end slavery and the impending Civil War overshadowed the suffrage movement in Maine (Maine Memory Network, 2003a). Yet, although there was a pause in the suffrage movement, women still made advances in society and helped to pave the way toward equality. During the Civil War, Maine women contributed significantly to the war effort. Determined to aid the Union cause, many women took over as heads of households, worked outside of their homes, or became involved in aid societies (Maine Memory Network, 2003a). Still others, like Rebecca Usher of Hollis, served as volunteer nurses. During a period when female roles were largely defined by women’s work within the home, serving as Union army nurses defied the convention of acceptable female behavior (Maine Memory Network, 2003b). The active part that Maine women played in the Civil War demonstrates that they continued to challenge social norms for women’s place in society, even if the fight for suffrage was temporarily placed on the back burner.

After the war, however, the suffrage movement regained momentum. In 1868, Maine’s first suffrage club was incorporated in Rockland, followed two years later by another club in Portland (Curran, 1982). To draw in the women of Maine, the clubs advertised in local newspapers. Aided by women’s increasing participation, these two clubs submitted Maine’s first suffrage petition to the state legislature in 1871 (Curran, 1982). The Maine Legislature ultimately voted down the bill, as well as similar bills that were introduced in subsequent years (Maine Memory Network, 2003a).

Despite the defeat in the legislature, women remained determined to keep suffrage at the forefront of the public agenda. In 1873, the statewide pro-suffrage group, the Maine Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA), held its inaugural meeting. More than 1,000 people attended this meeting, including Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe. The MWSA documented the advancements of women, which included breakthroughs such as the admission of women to the New England Bar Association, a commission by the governor to solemnize marriage, and appointments to various Maine school boards and the Registry of Deeds (Curran, 1982). The MWSA continued to hold meetings throughout the state in order to promote women’s rights and suffrage, and, by the turn of the century, there were local suffrage leagues in Augusta, Saco, Waterville, Hampden, Old Orchard, Skowhegan, Auburn, Machias, and Hancock County (Curran, 1982). In addition to spreading the message through local clubs, the MWSA established Suffrage Day at Old Orchard Beach. Held annually for twenty years, this event effectively increased awareness of the cause (Curran, 1982).
The Maine suffrage movement, headed by Helen Bates, employed increasingly savvy methods to disseminate information, including use of the media, skits performed at public hearings, open-house teas, booths at department stores, pamphlet distribution, and statewide marches. However, even as the movement grew, so too did anti-suffrage sentiment, with groups forming to oppose women's suffrage. In 1913, the Maine Association Opposed to Suffrage for Women (MAOSW) began a campaign to block the efforts of the MWSA. Between 1913 and 1917, MAOSW built a female membership of close to 2,000. Mostly upper-class women, these members strongly believed in the Victorian definition of womanhood, which upheld the sanctity of the home and maintained separate spheres for men and women (Maine Memory Network, 2003a). Yet this is not to imply that all upper-class women in Maine were against suffrage; Deborah Knox Livingston and Katherine Reed Balantine, for example, were members of the elite who led chapters of the MWSA in Bangor and Portland, respectively (Maine Memory Network, 2003a).

As the people of Maine aligned themselves on either side of the debate, measures to fortify a woman's right to vote were repeatedly brought before the state legislature. In 1913, advocates of suffrage gained support from key organizations in Maine, including the State Grange, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), and the Progressive party. Although this added support helped to move the measure to the House floor, it was again defeated. Yet the suffrage movement continued to advance, enlisting even more help from newly formed organizations, such as the College Equal Suffrage League (founded by young college women) and the Men's Equal Suffrage League of Maine. The latter, formed in 1914, was headed by Robert Treat Whitehouse, a former U.S. district attorney and the husband of suffragette Florence Brooks Whitehouse (Maine Memory Network, 2003a).

In 1917, women's suffrage advocates secured an amendment that was put to a popular vote in the state of Maine. The House and Senate unanimously passed a resolution for a special election, but on September 10, 1917, the referendum failed by a ratio of three to two (Curran, 1982). Undaunted by this latest defeat, suffragists continued to publicly broadcast their message, and during the next legislative session, an amendment calling for women to have the right to vote in presidential elections was proposed (Curran, 1982). The amendment passed in the state legislature on March 28, 1919, and received overwhelming support in the popular vote on September 19, 1919. Women's suffrage in Maine had finally become a reality. Nationwide ratification of the 19th Amendment occurred on August 26, 1920, and Maine has the distinction of having the first women to register and vote after the constitutional amendment was passed (Maine Memory Network, 2003a).
FIGURE 2: HIGHLIGHTS OF MAINE WOMEN’S POLITICAL HISTORY

1853 – Ladies’ Anti-Slavery Society founded in Peru.
1854 – Susan B. Anthony speaks about suffrage in Bangor.
1868 – Maine’s first suffrage club incorporated in Rockland.
1873 – The Maine Woman Suffrage Association, Maine’s first statewide pro-suffrage organization, holds its inaugural meeting.
1917 – An amendment securing the right for women to vote passes in the state legislature and wins popular support.
1920 – The 19th Amendment ratified. Maine women are the first women to register and vote after ratification.
1923 – Dora Pinkham is the first woman elected to the Maine Senate.
1940 – Margaret Chase Smith is elected to United States House of Representatives.
1949 – Smith is elected to the United States Senate making her the first woman to have served in both houses of Congress.
1965 – Mary Chisholm, first Democratic female senator is elected.
1973 – Mary Ross becomes Maine Senate assistant secretary.
1979 – Olympia Snowe is elected U.S. representative.
1987 – Nancy Randall Clark becomes Senate majority leader.
1990 – Honorable Leigh Ingalls Saufley appointed 1st Supreme Court chief justice.
1994 – Olympia Snowe elected to the U.S. Senate
1996 – Beverly Daggett becomes 1st female Senate President.
1997 – Susan Collins elected to U.S. Senate; both of Maine’s U.S. senators are women.
1997 – Dale McCormack and Gail Chase become 1st female State Treasurer and Auditor, respectively.
Recent History and Highlights Post-Suffrage

Maine women may look back with pride upon a long string of political breakthroughs achieved during the decades following the passage of the 19th Amendment. Women in Maine have attained high levels of political office, beginning with the election of the first woman state representative, Dora Pinkham, in 1923 (State of Maine, 2003g). In 1927, Pinkham and Katherine Allen were both elected to the Maine State Senate, becoming the first women to do so (State of Maine, 2003g).

Margaret Chase Smith: Political Pioneer

Margaret Chase Smith, a seminal figure in Maine’s political history (as well as in American history), achieved several breakthroughs. She was the first woman to be elected to the U.S. Senate in her own right (rather than through the death of a spouse), the first woman to be elected to both chambers of the U.S. Congress, and the first woman to have her name placed in nomination for the U.S. presidency (State of Maine, 2003g).

Smith first ran for the U.S. House of Representatives after her husband died and left the seat open in 1940. She served in the House until 1949, when she ran for the U.S. Senate and won. Chase served in the Senate until 1973. In 1948, the Mutual Broadcasting System named her one of the top ten Americans (note: this distinction was not gender-specific) who had done the most for their country.

Maine garnered national attention in 1960 when Republican Smith ran a reelection campaign against her opponent, Democrat Lucia Cormier. Maine was the first state to have a national election consisting of two women running for the same seat.

In 1964, Smith made her first bid for the presidency, attempting to win the Republican nomination. Smith was not the first woman to run for president, but she was the first woman who actually campaigned to win rather than to make a political point (Madam President, 1964). Smith’s campaign drew a lot of attention and discredited critics’ comments that she was unable to handle the rigor of the campaign process. Her strong work ethic was noted repeatedly during the campaign, helping to dispel the “weak female” myth. At a time when female politicians appeared in the “women’s sections” of the newspaper, Smith proved that
women could focus on being full-time, serious politicians (Curran, 1982). Smith made a second bid for the presidency in 1968. The fact that her first loss did not deter her indicated that a woman could continue to compete and be a persistent political presence in spite of defeat.

Marion Martin, Lucia Cormier, and Increased Influence

Another prominent political figure of the 20th century from Maine is Marion Martin. During the 1940s, Martin urged Republican governors throughout the United States to appoint women to state offices, while simultaneously encouraging women to run for office. She also mobilized more than 400,000 Republican women throughout the country in various National Federation of Women’s Republican Clubs (NFWRC). Her work with the NFWRC was long-lasting; today the NFWRC is the largest organization of political party women in the country (Freeman, 2000a).

In 1959, Lucia Cormier was the first woman elected to a position of leadership in the Maine legislature. Serving as the minority floor leader of the House, Cormier was received as a “capable politician” and a “respected legislator” (Curran, 1982). This was during a time when there were few women in the legislature. In the 1950s, the media painted the female legislators’ work as “hobbies,” viewing their participation in politics in the same light as garden and book clubs (Curran, 1982). However, by serving in a leadership position, Cormier rebutted such a view, demonstrating that she was doing more than simply filling a seat in the House.

In the 1960s, women legislators in Maine gained political experience through civic, social, charitable, and church organizations. The thirty-two women who served in the legislature during this decade were even more involved at the local level than their predecessors, primarily because women had learned that community activism could help launch political careers (Curran, 1982). In many ways, membership in these groups was similar to that in the “boys’ club” organizations that help male politicians launch their careers. Participation in these organizations represented one method of surmounting the barriers that blocked women’s access to political power bases.

During the 1970s, more and more women began participating in Maine politics. In 1974, 55 women ran for elected office, which represented a new record and
brought about a positive net gain of five women in the legislature (Curran, 1982). In 1975, 11 of the 12 women who ran for reelection won their races. This is in notable contrast to their male counterparts; 95 men ran for reelection, but only 65 retained their seats (Curran, 1982). These numbers were encouraging, because they showed that women who ran for re-election were overwhelmingly being returned to office. However, these statistics also reveal the disproportionately smaller number of women who actually ran for office in comparison to the number of men.

Over the past 25 years, women in political office have had great success in Maine. In 1978, 34 women were elected to the Maine legislature, an all-time high (Curran, 1982). At the beginning of the 1980s, 81 women ran for state legislative seats and 42 of them won. They also demonstrated increased leadership and influence. During the 109th legislative session (1979-80), for example, although women did not make up even close to half of the legislature at the time, they sponsored close to half of the bills and more than half of those bills became law (Curran, 1982). In contrast, “men sponsored a little more than half, but got less than half of their bills enacted” (Curran, 1982). In addition, in 1987 Nancy Randall Clark became the first female Senate majority leader in Maine, marking yet another breakthrough for Maine women in politics (State of Maine, 2003g).

Olympia Snowe: Leading the Way

In examining the current status of Maine women in politics, it is both encouraging and inspiring to note the legislative work of Olympia Snowe, who stands out as a prominent figure at the national level. Beginning her political career as many women had done before her, Snowe filled a seat vacated by her late husband. She served first in the Maine House of Representatives (1973-1976) and then in the Maine State Senate (1976-1978). She was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1978, becoming the youngest Republican woman and the first Greek-American woman ever to be elected to the House (Senator Snowe Website, 2003). She served in this position until 1995, yet opted to run for the U.S. Senate in the 1994 election. She won this seat and became the first woman in the United States to serve in both houses of a state legislature as well as in both houses of the U.S. Congress. She was reelected to the U.S. Senate in 2000, and both she and Senator Susan Collins continue to give Maine women representation at the national level. Collins joined Snowe in the U.S. Senate in 1996.
and went on to win reelection in 2000. Snowe was the first freshman Senator to lead the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (Senator Snowe Website, 2003).

Other recent achievements include the appointment of the Honorable Leigh Ingalls Saufley to the position of chief justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court in 2001. Previously one of Maine’s first female deputy attorneys general, Saufley was the first woman to become chief justice of Maine’s highest court.

Maine’s solid history of women’s achievements in politics is marred somewhat by the fact that there has never been a woman governor. Of further significance, and perhaps more troubling, is the decline of women in the state legislature. As noted before, after consistently ranking in the top 10 in the country until the mid-1990s for its number of female legislators, Maine now ranks 18th, from 32.3 percent in 1992 to the current 26.9 percent. Although the loss of women legislators is disturbing, on the bright side women are still claiming leadership positions.

**Term Limits, Money, and the Media: Issues for Women in Maine**

Maine women continue to face significant political challenges. One example is the issue of term limits, which poses a new barrier to women in the legislature. The limits were often touted as beneficial for women, as it was thought that they would help women overcome the barrier imposed by male incumbents (Carroll, 2001). Confounding these expectations, however, women’s representation in the state legislature actually decreased after term limits were instituted. Furthermore, term limits have made it substantially more difficult for women to achieve positions of leadership; they no longer have time to build up experience with legislative issues, and must immediately push for a leadership position upon achieving office.

After collecting data from the 1998 and 2000 elections, Susan Carroll of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University found that the number of women serving in term-limited house seats decreased, as more women were forced to vacate their seats than were elected (Carroll, 2001). In examining the 11 states (including Maine) in which term limits had been instituted, Carroll concluded that the principal reason for this disproportionate turnover is that a significant number of the seats left open by term limits were uncontested.
by women candidates; term-limited female legislators were thus often replaced
by men (Carroll, 2001). Although women state senators fared better than
women state representatives, this was in part due to the simple fact that a small-
er proportion of women serve in state senates and therefore fewer of their seats
were subjected to terms limits in these two elections (Carroll, 2001). Carroll indi-
cates, however, that the primary reason for the difference between the House
and Senate is that oftentimes women representatives, forced out of their posi-
tions in the House, chose to run for the newly vacated Senate seats.

In pointing out the trend of former women state representatives running for the
Senate, Carroll highlights the crucial issue for women in politics: the need for a
pool of women ready to run for office. The Maine Senate may not be experienc-
ing as great a decline in female representation because it has a pool of former
House officials to draw upon. However, there is no such group of potential can-
didates for the House, particularly since women—more than men—tend to run
for office as a result of encouragement or specific recruitment efforts. This is con-
ected to the broader issues of providing women with support systems, such as
technical and financial assistance, and of enlisting the help of incumbent legisla-
tors to identify and groom female successors (Carroll, 2001).

Although money is often an obstacle for women, Maine has adopted a clean
elections law that allows women to run for office without raising a huge sum of
money. Libby Mitchell from the Muskie Institute says: “Low pay and the part-
time nature of the Maine State Legislature has been a reason women have had a
chance” (Interview, 4/25/03). Many have justly celebrated the easier access grant-
ed through the clean elections law, and the issue of campaign finance and its
effects on women in politics deserve further study, both within Maine and
nationwide.

A second issue requiring future research is the relationship between the media
and women in politics. During Margaret Chase Smith’s tenure in public office,
the media consistently focused on her gender rather than her accomplishments.
While serving as a U.S. Senator, Smith felt strongly that being a woman did not
make a difference in how she did her job. But the media consistently made gen-
der the primary focus of the news coverage. The treatment upset Smith, but she
understood the power of the media. Also, the media sometimes helped her, rec-
ognizing her with awards and even encouraging her to take a stand against
Senator Joseph McCarthy. The most powerful political columnist of the day,
Walter Lippman, was a strong advocate of Smith's stance against McCarthy, and her speech against McCarthy was one of the biggest triumphs of her political career. The press lauded both her courageous decision and her powerful words (Braden, 1996).

Historically, local press coverage of women in Maine politics often had a very civil tone to it, but it was not significantly helpful in advancing the status of women in politics. Women politicians were usually mentioned in the lifestyles sections of the paper, and political information was put in the same paragraphs as gardening and cooking tips from the female politicians (Curran, 1982). Additionally, the media often painted women’s political work as “hobbies” rather than “work,” which diminished the substantial accomplishments of women officials (Curran, 1982).

Current media coverage of women in Maine politics focuses much more on women’s accomplishments, although an examination of many articles reveals that pieces written about female elected officials often focus a great deal on their family life and the support they receive from their spouses. Although many women do tend to enter politics later in life than men (often first raising families), and whereas it is important to note the support offered by the husbands of women politicians, these topics are not routinely covered in articles about male politicians. The majority of current articles about Beverly Daggett focus on her family life and her status as the first female Senate president. Few journalists mention her political path to the top of the State Senate, and only occasionally note the committees she has worked on and her priority issues.

Term limits, money, media: Women of Maine face specific challenges in their political development. Their records of leadership and electoral success, however, are among the best in the country and they have a solid foundation on which to build.

**Conclusion: Priorities and Strategies**

Among the six New England states, Maine ranks highest in women’s political participation (Institute for Women’s Policy Research [IWPR], 2002). In fact, due in great part to its two women U.S. Senators and high level of women’s voter participation, Maine ranks second in the nation on the IWPR political participation index. Women’s representation in the state legislature and their percentage of leadership positions are also high.
Women familiar with Maine politics point to strong organizing by women as an explanation for women's success in electoral politics. The success of women in Maine is striking, especially considering their lower economic status and educational attainment as compared to, for example, Massachusetts.

Women in Maine lag, however, in municipal office-holding and Maine has never elected a woman governor. Finally, as noted above, term limits have already contributed to a decline in women's representation in the state legislature (although other states in the region have also seen similar declines, even without term limits).

An analysis of the information gathered for this chapter suggests that women and women's organizations in Maine should focus on the following priorities and related strategies for the next five years:

1. Anticipate and prepare in advance for any potential challenges to the current U.S. Senators—and for a point in time when either Senator Snowe or Senator Collins leaves office. Identify and groom likely successors.

2. Identify U.S. congressional districts likely to have open seats in upcoming election cycles; identify and groom women for each of those seats. Think long term as well as short term.

3. Develop a specific strategy for running a woman for governor at the next opportunity. Utilize recent research on the “Keys to the Governor’s Office” to identify, groom, and support such a candidate.

4. To counter the effects of term limits on women’s representation in the Maine state legislature, it is important for women currently in office to identify likely successors to groom, position, and support prior to leaving office.

5. Increase women’s representation at the local level. Circulate a list of cities and towns that have no women on their city councils/selectboards. Utilize organizational connections and meetings to identify and urge women from those cities and towns to run for office. Research suggests that women need to be asked to run—so ask!

6. Publicize the workshops, trainings, mentoring opportunities, campaign schools, and university-based education programs that are crucial to women’s political advancement. The Maine Women’s Leadership Conference, the activities of the Maine Women’s Lobby, and the support of the Maine Women’s Fund are important resources for women in this state.
7. Develop targeted efforts for young women—and those from diverse backgrounds—to gain the skills and support necessary to combine personal goals with political careers.

8. Build bridges with women leaders in the increasingly diverse communities of Portland to assure the political participation of immigrant women and women from communities of color. Even newly arrived immigrants who are not citizens can and should be welcomed into the political process.

9. Create a synergy between women in business and women in politics. The former have talents that can help sustain the higher levels of fundraising women candidates need to win, and the latter have contacts and connections important to women’s business needs.

This list of priorities is not exhaustive. Different groups may order them differently—or consider others more urgent. Further research, writing, and discussion are obviously needed. This chapter nevertheless offers a comprehensive look at the history, current status, and experiences of women and politics in the state of Maine and, it is hoped, will energize women across the state to take concerted action to increase women’s political participation, representation, and influence.

NB: All references cited in this Profile may be found in the Bibliography section of this volume.
State Profile: Massachusetts

By: Carol L. Cardozo, Nuvia Ball-Burrell, Brenda Pedraza and Barbara Miranda

In Brief

At the National Level:

- Massachusetts has never elected a woman to the U.S. Senate.
- Only three women from Massachusetts have ever served in the U.S. House of Representatives: Edith Nourse Rogers, who served from 1925-1960; Louise Day Hicks, 1971-1973; and Margaret Heckler, 1967-1983.
- No woman has served in the U.S. Congress in more than 20 years.

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<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: WOMEN ELECTED OFFICIALS IN MASSACHUSETTS, 2002</th>
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<td>Number</td>
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<td>US Senate</td>
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<td>Municipal (N=351)</td>
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<td>Mayor*</td>
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<td>City Council/ Selectboard/ Alderman</td>
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Source: Center for American Women in Politics (2003); municipal data are from analysis by the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy. * A 6th woman serves as mayor but was elected by the City Council not by the voters.

At the State Level:

- Lieutenant Governor Jane Swift became Governor of Massachusetts in 2001 when she took over from departing Governor Paul Cellucci, who left before the end of his elected term. Acting Governor Swift made national headlines when she became the first sitting governor to deliver twins while in office.
- There have been only four women elected to statewide office in the Bay State: Evelyn Murphy served as Lieutenant Governor from 1987-1990, as did Jane Swift (1999-2001), and current Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey. Shannon O’Brien served as State Treasurer from 1999-2003. In contrast, women currently hold four of the six constitutional offices in Connecticut.
Only 26 percent of Massachusetts state legislators are women. Women do hold several top leadership positions: Joan Menard is Majority Whip in the Senate and Lida Harkins is Assistant Majority Leader in the House. In addition, Therese Murray is the Chair of the powerful Senate Ways and Means Committee. Maine, however, has a woman Senate President (Beverly Daggett) and Connecticut’s Speaker of the House is a woman: Moira Lyons.

There are several woman of color in the Massachusetts State Legislature: Dianne Wilkerson, the only African-American woman in the Senate, as well as Representatives Gloria Fox and Shirley Owens-Hicks. Representative Marie St. Fleur is Haitian American and Representative Cheryl Rivera is Latina.

Fig. 1: Women in Massachusetts State Legislature, 1979-2003

Source: Center for American Women and Politics (2003).

At the Local Level:
- Of the 351 communities in Massachusetts, 134 (38.2 percent) have no women on their councils or boards above the school committee level.
- Women hold only five of the 44 elected mayoral positions in Massachusetts.
- Only 20 percent of elected municipal officials above the school committee level are women, and this number has not changed significantly in the past 10 years.
- In the four largest cities – Boston, Lowell, Springfield, and Worcester – only four out of a total of 42 council seats are held by women. The percentage of women on the Boston City Council has declined during the past several years.
The State of the State

The Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR), in its recent report, *The Status of Women in Massachusetts* (2002), gives the state a grade of C+ for political participation, based on a composite index of voter registration and turnout, women in elected office, and women’s institutional resources (e.g., a state women’s commission and a women’s legislative caucus). This grade is high enough to earn a ranking of 8th in the nation and 2nd in New England. Massachusetts ranks 19th in the nation for the percentage of women in the state legislature, but it has not elected a woman to the U.S. Congress since 1983; indeed, Massachusetts has never had a woman U.S. senator and has never elected a woman governor. In contrast, three New England states have had women governors: Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Vermont. One must conclude that Massachusetts has a decidedly mixed record for women’s political advancement compared to other states.

It is unclear why the women of Massachusetts have not made more political progress. In this context, it is troubling that women’s voter registration (71.8 percent), although higher than the national average (65.8 percent), is 3rd in the region. The Commonwealth ranks just 5th in voter turnout. Only 61.4 percent of women in Massachusetts voted in 2000, behind all other New England states except for Connecticut. In fact, whereas Maine ranks 3rd in the nation for voter registration (with 80.3 percent registered in 2000), Massachusetts ranks 20th (U.S. Census, 2002). After providing a brief overview of the demographic and historical context, the bulk of this chapter will attempt to identify a number of factors that may explain the current status of women in Massachusetts politics.

Demographic Profile of Women in Massachusetts

The relatively low score on the IWPR political scale is especially troubling because Massachusetts scores particularly well in other areas, including educational attainment, employment and earnings, and health and well-being—factors usually indicative of growing equality for women. In three important areas of women’s lives, for instance, IWPR ranks Massachusetts in the top ten states nationally: 5th in the nation for median annual full-time earnings, 5th in percentage of women employed in managerial or professional occupations, and 2nd for percentage of women with four or more years of college.
### TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF MASSACHUSETTS WOMEN, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population: State</td>
<td>6,349,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population: Women (% of total)</td>
<td>3,290,281 51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women, by Race/Ethnicity (% of women)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>2,787,385 84.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>177,803 5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>121,321 3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American*</td>
<td>8,761 0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>121,026 3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple races</td>
<td>73,985 2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latina (may be of any race)</td>
<td>217,026 6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median income (% of men's)</td>
<td>$32,059 74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Below poverty</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Labor force participation (16+ yr.)</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% BA/BS degree or higher (25+ yr.)</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women-owned firms (1997)</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women-owned firms: Sales/receipts (1997)</td>
<td>$16,752,596 3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter registration rate</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter turnout rate</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: U. S. Census (1997, 2000, 2002); Institute of Women’s Policy Research (2002). *Native American includes American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Race/Ethnicity percentages do not add up to 100 because Hispanics/Latinas may be of any race.

The state ranks 2nd among New England states overall, but only 3rd on the index of elected officials. This modest achievement comes despite a relatively high level of economic and educational attainment (and ranking at the top in political resources).

As can be seen in Table 2, for example, the median earnings for women in the state ($32,059) are second only to Connecticut, although, as a percentage of men's earnings (74.5 percent), Massachusetts again ranks 3rd, behind Vermont (78.0 percent) and Maine (74.9 percent). At 60.4 percent, women's labor force participation rate is lower than that of New Hampshire (64.4 percent) and Vermont (64.3 percent)—and tied with Connecticut.
Table 2 also shows that the female population of Massachusetts is largely white (84.7 percent), although the non-white population is growing steadily. The largest minority group is Hispanic/Latina (6.6 percent of women), followed by African American/black (5.4 percent of women), and Asian (3.7 percent of women). Women in Massachusetts are more likely to live in urban areas than women in the rest of the region—and the country. The Bay State is the most urban state (91.4 percent) in New England.

More striking, 29.5 percent of African-American women live in poverty in Massachusetts, and 30 percent of Latinas in the state are poor, far higher than the 7.8 percent poverty rate for white women. Thus, in addition to the lack of equality between men and women, there is the troubling growth in inequities between women: Kates (2003) notes that 55 percent of Massachusetts women are employed in lower paid “women’s” occupations—retail, service, and office. Women who make the minimum wage earn just above the poverty line for a family of three even when working full-time, year-round. Immigrant women fare even worse: their average earnings are $12,000. Low-income women with little education are at a decided disadvantage in a state where two-thirds of all jobs require specialized skills or higher education.

The facts discussed here highlight two points. First, in Massachusetts women’s progress in other areas is not reflected in the political arena to the extent expected. Second, if more women were elected to office, it is possible that the issues of women’s relative inequality and solutions to these problems might receive greater attention from policymakers. Recent research suggests, for example, that “having women in elected office may be important to encouraging states to adopt policies relevant to women’s lives. Conversely, women’s resources and rights may influence the number of women elected to public office” (Caiazza, 2002).

The Historical Perspective: Colonialism, Abolition, Labor, and Suffrage

Pre-Colonial and Colonial Massachusetts

At the time of the first European settlements in 1620 in what is now Massachusetts, Native Americans had lived in the region for two to three thousand years. Unfortunately, the political organization and history of Native American women in New England during this period are virtually unknown outside of the native communities; considerable research remains to be done. The
first colonial settlements comprised groups who were seeking religious freedom; this did not stop them, however, from persecuting others, including women. In the 1630s, for example, Anne Hutchinson was accused of heresy for claiming to receive direct revelations from God and as a result she was excommunicated and banished (Brown and Tager, 2000). A worse fate befell Mary Dyer: she was executed in 1660 for following the Quaker faith. Later in the century the witchcraft trials in Salem condemned both men and women to death, but blame for the satanic plot was laid at the feet of women.

By the 1700s, Massachusetts had grown into a pre-eminent fishing, shipping, and commercial center, developing, according to Brown and Tager (2000, 58), two distinct cultures: the Yankee culture, “ascetic and oriented toward fulfilling the aspirations of common farmers and tradesmen, the other, [British], frankly elitist and cosmopolitan, aimed at refinement, excellence, and order.” These cultures would clash during the revolutionary period and long thereafter.

**Women and Abolition**

Ironically, although Massachusetts is known as the “cradle of liberty” and the home of some of the best-known and honored revolutionaries and thinkers of the eighteenth century, the ideals of freedom and representative government did not extend to Africans, women, or poor whites. These groups were not only denied the franchise; they were considered property with few, if any, legal rights.

Women were the property of their husbands or fathers. The contradictions of a free society and a system of patriarchy were glaring, if ignored. In spite of Abigail Adam’s famous admonition to her husband to “remember the ladies,” women would have to wait until the mid-nineteenth century to begin to claim their rights. Indeed, Abigail’s husband, John Adams, warned that if the claims of liberalism were pressed too far, “(t)here will be no end of it. New claims will arise. Women will demand a Vote” (quoted in Kerber, 1992, 368).

**Women and the Labor Movement**

In the decades after the revolution, the process of industrialization changed the nature of life in Massachusetts, for women as well as for men. Farmhands were turned into factory workers. At first, these new laborers were all Yankees, but as the nineteenth century continued, more and more immigrants from all
over Europe took their places. The figure of the “mill girl” was a popular one, and a paternalistic system of labor control emerged in the factory towns; known as the “Waltham System,” it controlled the lives of young women, from curfews to Sunday services. Girls and women were thought to be better off working in the factories than idling on the farm. In fact, young women were an important economic asset to their families, especially as Massachusetts agriculture, never robust to begin with, further declined. By 1865, only 13 percent of the workforce was on farms and by 1875 half of the state’s working women were in the newer industries. More people lived in urban areas than in rural ones (Brown and Tager, 2000). This economic transformation did not come easily, though: one of the earliest strikes took place in Lowell in 1836, and Sarah Bagley of that city was one of the first women labor leaders in the country during this period.

Early Organizing and the Reform Movement

The 1800s in Massachusetts also saw an intense religious revival, increasing material prosperity, the rise of a capitalistic competitive market, and ever-increasing urbanization. These changes all led to an age of social reform and ferment—and this time women were not forgotten. Indeed, “[w]omen were particularly active in the reform movement. Northern society offered few outlets for educated or talented women, most of whom were confined to the home. But because women were expected to be active in religious work, they easily moved into the social reform movement as well” (Gienapp, 27, in Jacobs, 1993). Women were expected to be moral leaders, even if they did not have power and authority of their own, and the multiple movements for social change in all spheres gave them a chance to participate in public discourse. Massachusetts was one of the most active states in the reform movement.

Women’s clubs were the first manifestation of women’s organizing. These clubs actually preceded the founding of the well-known women’s colleges in Massachusetts. (Mt. Holyoke, Radcliffe, Smith, and Wellesley, for example, were all founded between 1837 and 1870.) The first “Ladies’ Association,” formed as a church group in Brighton, was chartered in 1800. Initially, the purpose of the clubs was social and cultural, but gradually they evolved into social service organizations. The New England Women’s Club was organized in 1868 and was the first to sponsor a “diverse program including social, literary, philanthropic, reformatory and educational projects” (Massachusetts Federation of Women’s Clubs, 1988, 49). In 1893, the Massachusetts State Federation of Women’s Clubs
(MWFC) was established, with Julia Ward Howe as president. In 1894 a state survey by the MFWC indicated that there were 726 women’s organizations in Massachusetts (Massachusetts Federation of Women’s Clubs, 1962, 29).

**Link between Abolition, Labor, Reform, and Suffrage**

Perhaps the most intertwined of all the reform movements were abolitionism and suffrage. When seen in terms of equal rights, and not simply the abolition of slavery, the one led logically to the other, although success would come much sooner for the anti-slavery movement. Maria W. Stewart (1803–1879), though not as famous as some in the movement, was a black woman who was an outspoken abolitionist and fierce defender of women’s rights. Born in Connecticut, she spent only a few years in Boston, but she gave public speeches and published political pamphlets; she especially urged African-American women to advance themselves and their children educationally and economically. Although women had been preaching on religious themes for quite some time, Stewart’s militancy and the political subject matter of her speeches was unprecedented—especially for a woman of African descent at that time (Richardson, in Jacobs, 1993).

Black women who challenged the dominance of whites in the anti-slavery movement met with immediate controversy. The Fall River Anti-Slavery Society, for instance, almost dissolved when the Quaker sisters Elizabeth Buffum Chace and Lucy Buffum Lovell decided to invite black women to join (Hall, 82, in Jacobs, 1993). Many blacks, both men and women, resented this subordination to whites in the movement and the paternalism of whites of both sexes (who were usually of the upper classes). This division would be echoed later in the century between middle class reformers and newer immigrants from Ireland and Central and Eastern Europe. It should also be noted that there was much opposition in Massachusetts to the abolitionists; many industrialists depended on the South for their raw materials and as a regional trading partner. Consequently, there were numerous riots and mob disturbances during these years. Another offense, in the eyes of some, was the fact that women’s anti-slavery groups were so prominent in the movement (Brown and Tager, 2000).

Some male abolitionists vehemently objected to women holding authority in their organizations. In 1840 the radical William Lloyd Garrison, supported by his Boston colleagues, attempted to put women on the board of the National American Anti-Slavery Society. Success led his opponents to promptly form a
new organization. These “schismatics” who objected to women’s voting rights—rights supported by both William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips—formed the Massachusetts Abolition Society (Gienapp, 36, in Jacobs, 1993).

Lydia Maria Child, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Ann Phillips (wife of Wendell) were all active in the antebellum anti-slavery movement. During the Civil War, Clara Barton, another Massachusetts native, organized a volunteer relief system for victims of the war. Founder of the Red Cross, Barton went on to crisscross the globe helping people devastated by natural or man-made disasters.

Women’s organizations in the nineteenth century were greatly strengthened by the founding of the new liberal arts women’s colleges, “normal” schools, and high schools for girls. Working and middle class women began taking advantage of new white-collar opportunities in the workforce as clerks, typists, and secretaries (Dalton, et al., 1984). Many other women, however, especially the newer immigrants flocking to cities and factory towns, found that the manufacturing jobs in, for example, textile and shoe factories were places of poor working conditions, long hours, and low wages. Single women and female heads of households were especially hard pressed to make ends meet.

One of the first national women labor leaders was Mary Kenney O’Sullivan, born in 1864. Not a Massachusetts native, she was sent to Boston by the AFL and, in 1903, organized the first national women’s trade union, the National Women’s Trade Union League. O’Sullivan’s work was an example of cross-class collaboration, in that she worked with a group of society women called the “Allies” (Brown and Tager, 2000). Other women reformers were active as well in the labor movement in Massachusetts, pressing hard for equal rights and equal pay. They recognized that many women were now wage workers and that the stereotype of the “Ideal Woman” reflected a very narrow, class-based view of married domestic life.

It was working women themselves, however, who took a prominent role in the fight for labor, culminating in the famous “Bread and Roses” strike in Lawrence in 1912. In the great strike of 1912, it was women activists organizing in their own neighborhoods who were at the forefront of the movement, not organized, male-dominated labor. Their role stemmed from the fact that new technology and capacity had created new sources of labor in the textile industry in Massachusetts in the period prior to the Civil War. Thousands of new immigrants from Canada and Ireland replaced the Yankees in the mills. By 1870,
immigrants comprised almost half the population of Lawrence (Cameron, 1993). More significantly, a disproportionate number were women and, of those, a majority worked in the textile industry. As Cameron notes, “[I]n no way were female efforts more crucial to strike success than in the effective mobilization of neighbors and kin…. Women had politicized daily life in ways often beyond the reach of formal institutions” (136). Denied a place in public life, both middle and working class women developed their own relational webs in collaborative activity. This “woman’s way” of organizing is still apparent today, where hierarchy is downplayed and the nature of leadership is less competitive than cooperative. 

The Lawrence strike was a watershed moment in the history of American labor, leading to further organizing efforts to improve the wages and working conditions of industrial workers. Forty different nationalities were represented among the over 30,000 strikers, and local women like Annie Welsenback became heroines in the movement (Cameron, 1993). 

Reform movements in cities like Lawrence revealed the same contradictions as those in the suffrage and abolitionist movements: the sometimes paternalistic nature of the reformers and their fear that the ordinary masses of people, whether African American or immigrant, would upset the social order. Although some of the radical reformers believed in a classless system of equality, most middle-class women’s organizations focused on improving individual lives through various social service projects—“Americanizing” immigrants and bringing cleanliness and order to urban areas. In addition to the Irish, Massachusetts also saw a large influx of Central and Eastern European immigrants in the second half of the century, adding to the ethnic mix. Not only were there class issues, there were also numerous racial and inter-ethnic conflicts, many of which continue to this day.

Some groups, like the “Allies” and those who founded Denison Settlement House, sought to bridge the gap between the classes (Brown and Tager, 2000). Three professors from Wellesley College—Emily Greene Balch, Katherine Coman, and Vida Scudder—established living quarters in Boston’s South End in 1892. Although they initially intended it to be an integral part of the neighborhood and a refuge for women, offering programs and services like child care and political forums, these women eventually found themselves doing battle with municipal government and depending on male access to political and economic power. More importantly, the change to a professional staff distanced the employees from the neighborhood: common community action among neighbors and a
place for women run by women—the original ideal—was lost (Deutsch, 1992). As many women’s groups have discovered since, to survive and move into the mainstream may mean losing a vital part of your identity.

Reformers who called for suffrage were active in Massachusetts even before the Civil War. Lucy Stone (1818-1893) called the First National Women’s Rights Convention in Worcester in 1850. There she met Susan B. Anthony, another Massachusetts native. Stone became an executive of the American Woman Suffrage Association and with her family published The Women’s Journal (Brown and Tager, 2000). Her daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell, was also prominent in the movement. Suffrage did not have a smooth trajectory, however. Although women were given the right to vote and serve on local school committees in 1879, the attempt by the Massachusetts Women’s Suffrage Association (MWSA) to win the municipal vote for women to clean up “dirty” urban politics and “bossism” ended with an unfortunate alliance with an anti-Catholic group. Republicans, who had supported the school committee vote to block the influence of immigrant and working men, abandoned the movement. In 1895, a non-binding referendum saw the turnout of only 4 percent of eligible women, thus “proving” that even women did not want the vote. Those who did go to the polls, however, overwhelmingly voted “Yes” (Strom, 1975).

The Massachusetts suffrage movement was stymied several times before the passage of the federal constitutional amendment granting women’s suffrage. In 1911, for example, there was a defeat in the state legislature; in 1915 the legislature passed a suffrage bill but the voters defeated it by a margin of 2 to 1 (Dalton, et al., 1984). During this period, however, suffrage leaders reached out to other women’s organizations and allies. For instance, by 1909 suffrage had been endorsed by 235 unions. Labor, progressives, and various ethnic groups’ civic organizations all united against the “establishment” (Strom, 1975). When the time came, the women were ready. In June 1919, 118,400 Bay State women signed petitions for immediate ratification. The House and Senate quickly approved the measure and Massachusetts became the 8th state to ratify the 19th Amendment. It went into effect in 1920.
FIGURE 2: HIGHLIGHTS OF MASSACHUSETTS WOMEN’S POLITICAL HISTORY

1837 – Mount Holyoke Seminary, the first college in the United States established specifically for the education of women, opens.

1847 – Lucy Stone becomes one of the first Massachusetts women to earn a college degree when she graduates from Oberlin College. Ms. Stone studies Greek and Hebrew and graduates with honors.

1850 – First national convention for women advocating female suffrage meets in Worcester.

1919 – Massachusetts legislature ratifies the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote.

1922 – Sylvia Donaldson elected to Massachusetts House of Representatives.

1922 – Susan Fitzgerald elected to Massachusetts House of Representatives.

1924 – Edith Nourse Rogers (Republican) is the first Massachusetts woman to serve in the United States House of Representatives.

1936 – Sybil Homes elected to Massachusetts State Senate.

1966 – Margaret M. Heckler of Massachusetts elected to the United States House of Representatives.

1970 – Louise Day Hicks of Massachusetts elected to United States House of Representatives.

1972 – Iris Holland elected as a state legislator.

1972 – Mary Fonseca elected as Massachusetts Senate Majority Whip.

1978 – Iris Holland elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives and as Majority Whip.

1986 – Evelyn Murphy elected Lieutenant Governor.


2000 – Margaret Marshall appointed Chief Justice of the State Supreme Judicial Court.


2002 – Kerry Murphy Healey elected Lieutenant Governor.
Recent History: Post Suffrage

Soon after the passage of the 19th Amendment, Massachusetts elected its first women legislators: Representative M. Sylvia Donaldson, a Republican from Brockton, who served four terms from 1923-1931, and Susan Fitzgerald, a Boston Democrat, who served one term. The first woman to serve in the State Senate was Sybil H. Holmes, a Brookline Republican elected in 1936 (Dalton, et al., 1984).

The first congresswoman from Massachusetts was Edith Nourse Rogers, a Republican from Lowell. In 1925 she replaced her husband who had died—a common career path for political women in that era. She was, however, re-elected by her constituents for decades and holds the record as the longest serving women in the U.S. Congress: she died while campaigning for her 19th term in 1960. Her public policy specialty was veterans and veterans’ affairs and she was influential in creating the women’s branches of the armed services. The highlight of her career was the passage of the famous GI Bill of 1944. Furthermore, Rep. Rogers consistently was a strong opponent of gender discrimination and supported the ERA.

Rogers’s early promise for Massachusetts women’s representation in Congress has not been fulfilled. Only two other women have been elected to Congress. Louise Day Hicks, Democrat of Boston who ran on an anti-busing platform, served one term from 1971–1973. Margaret Heckler, a Republican, won election in 1966 and served from 1967 until 1983, when she lost to Barney Frank when her district was redrawn following the 1980 U.S. Census.

The Role of Political Parties

The evolution of political parties in Massachusetts reflects the changes in the state’s social and economic structure: a century of Yankee domination under various party names gave way to a Democratic party dominated by “white ethnics,” especially the Irish, beginning in the 1930s. Massachusetts has essentially become a one-party state. Bay State voters, however, have often elected Republicans to high office, most notably the governor’s post: since 1990 the minority party has held that office. Voters have also sent Republicans to the U.S. Senate, the state’s attorney general’s office, and the state treasurer’s position (Appleton and Ward, 1997).
Kira Sanbonmatsu suggests a number of party-linked variables likely to have an impact on women's representation: party dominance; beliefs about the electability of women candidates; familiarity of party leaders with potential women candidates; beliefs about the relative importance of descriptive representation (e.g., gender parity); and organizational pressure (Sanbonmatsu, forthcoming). Roni Thaler, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus, points out that the Republican party, because of the need for candidates to run, may reach out more to women than the Democratic party. She lends credence to Sanbonmatsu's research suggesting that intra-party competition may make running more difficult for Democratic women. Of course, as she notes, it is still easier to win as a candidate from the majority party (Interview, 9/5/03). Women were certainly recruited—or seized opportunities from—third parties in the 2002 election: Jill Stein (Green), Carla Howell (Libertarian), and Barbara Johnson (Independent) all joined Shannon O'Brien in the race for governor. Some political observers have noted that this large field of women candidates might have benefited Mitt Romney in that race.

The experience of Jane Swift illustrates the "electability" problem. As acting-governor, she enjoyed the benefits of incumbent status at the beginning of the 2002 gubernatorial race. Once the Republican party officials, eager to hold on to the corner office, and political pundits began to raise questions about her electability (especially after 9/11), her prospects as a candidate shrank precipitously. She withdrew in support of Mitt Romney who beat Shannon O'Brien in an acrimonious race. It is likely that, given O'Brien's loss—after an early and healthy lead—should she choose to run again, questions about electability may surface again.

Beliefs about the importance of descriptive representation pose other problems for women. Whereas men seem able to assert the importance of gender equity, women candidates often seem pushed to assert that they are not "running as a woman." Ambivalence on the part of the voters about this issue, for example, dogged Pat McGovern's campaign for governor in 1998.

Finally, non-partisan organizations such as the Caucus of Women State Legislators and the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus (MWPC) may play key roles that supplement or even outweigh those of the parties. Sanbonmatsu stresses the importance of women legislators, networks, and organizations (Sanbonmatsu, forthcoming). In Massachusetts, Representative Karen Spilka, a second term Democrat from Ashland who represents Ashland and Framingham,
finds “receptivity” to women and indicates that she has received a lot of support from both men and women. Still, she saw the need for and started a formal mentoring program for new women legislators. She hopes this can be extended to women aides in the State House, so they can jump-start a political career (Interview, 8/25/03).

Furthermore, Roni Thaler of the MWPC feels that women have to start “laying the groundwork now” for potential congressional campaigns, “planning ahead” and looking at “potential openings.” Finding, approaching, and recruiting women candidates is part of the MWPC’s mission. Thaler also points out two breakthroughs that bode well for women’s political future in Massachusetts. First is the involvement of women in the business community with the political community. The linkage of these groups is important for donations and fundraising. Second, the “MASS Gap” project, which was cofounded by the MWPC in summer 2002, secured pledges from the gubernatorial candidates of both parties to increase the number of women appointed to high-level executive offices. This project, Thaler feels, is important because it will increase the influence of women in policymaking positions (Interview, 9/5/03).

Whatever problems or advantages the political parties pose for women’s representation, their absence may suppress the election of women at the local level. Massachusetts municipal elections are non-partisan, thus limiting the potential for party recruitment, financial support, or links to candidates at the state or national levels.

**Massachusetts at the End of the 20th Century**

The postwar years saw a marked decline of the Bay State’s manufacturing and industrial centers. The Cold War, with its massive defense spending, and the development of first the electronics and then the computer industry, transformed the state into a high-tech center. Along with the rapid rise of the service industry, world-class educational institutions, and health care centers, Massachusetts has managed to transform itself once again (Brown and Tager, 2000). This “reindustrialization,” however, has left some areas of the state behind, with declining populations and jobs. There are depressed areas in the western part of the state and not all cities are doing well. Many of the new jobs are low-wage service positions. There has also been a massive population shift to the suburbs by both professional and middle class people, leaving central cities home to either the very privileged or the urban poor, who are increasingly immigrant and of color. Furthermore,
Boston and the surrounding communities in particular are home to an enormous number of young college students who add to the economy but strain some resources, particularly housing.

Changes beyond the economic arena have also transformed Massachusetts. The Civil Rights Movement and the “Second Wave” Women’s Movement in the 1960s; the racial tensions and violence provoked by the busing era in Boston in the 1970s (which still reverberate today); the rise of new immigrant populations, especially Latinos and people from the African and Asian diasporas; and the abortion debates have all been factors in the changing political landscape of the state—and women have been a part of that change. The pro-choice/pro-life dichotomy hurts women, according to Claire Freda, a city councilor from Leominster. She holds the opinion that many talented women refuse to become involved in politics because a number of women’s organizations make being pro-choice a litmus test. While some might not agree, according to Freda, Massachusetts is “losing good women” because of this (Interview, 8/21/03).

Notable Achievements

On the positive side, in 1972 Massachusetts became the 20th state to ratify the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the federal Constitution. In the next year, 1973, the legislature gave initial approval to a state ERA, which the voters ratified in 1976, despite the fact that a million people voted against it (Dalton, et al., 1984). Furthermore, Evelyn Murphy made history when she served as Lieutenant Governor from 1987-1991, the first woman to hold statewide elected office in the Bay State.

Also striking is the advancement of Massachusetts women to the top of the judicial branch. Although not elected positions, these posts are influential and prestigious. Three years ago, Margaret Marshall became Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) and two of the Associate Justices of the SJC are also women. Suzanne DelVecchio is Chief Justice of the Superior Court Department and Barbara A. Dortch-Okara, a woman of color, is Chief Justice for Administration and Management for the Trial Court (Massachusetts Political Almanac, 2003).

In 1998, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women was established, which grew out of the 1995 international Beijing Conference on Women. Mass Action for Women, a networking organization formed in the wake of Beijing, served as a catalyst for and worked with numerous other organizations for over two years to make the 19-member commission a reality.
Extremely accomplished women have served in the state legislature in the modern era, including Lois Pines and Patricia McGovern (former chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee), both of whom have run for statewide office. Other talented leaders include Barbara Gardner and Joan Menard (currently Senate Majority Whip). Barbara Gardner was named House Majority Whip in 1996, and at that time was the highest-ranking woman in the House. Of her political career, she remarked that “[a] lot of women fall into that trap—that they have to have a résumé that’s perfect and five pages long” before they are willing to run for office. She went on to say that a friend of hers challenged her to run for the legislature: “You’ve got to get in there. These old boys are unbelievable” (Women’s Business, June 1999, 9).

There have been other notable political achievements by women in Massachusetts in the past five decades: the first African-American woman to serve in the state legislature, Doris Bunte, was elected in 1973. Saundra Graham, another African American, was a state representative from Cambridge from 1976 to 1988. Cheryl Rivera, currently a third term representative from Springfield, is the first Latina to serve. Lois Pines and Barbara Gray founded the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators in 1975. At that time there were only 16 women senators and representatives; currently there are 52 (26 percent of the total) (Center for American Women and Politics, 2003).

Although this might not seem like a large number, it is enough to rank Massachusetts 19th in the country for the percentage of women legislators (Center for American Women and Politics, 2003). As Anne Marie Cammisa, professor of government at Suffolk University, points out, the state has fewer women legislators than the other New England states, but it is also the only “professional” legislature, i.e., with a reasonable salary, staff, and year-round sessions. The professional legislature model, according to Cammisa, makes it more difficult to get elected in Massachusetts, but women politicians tend to be very experienced and “savvy and strategic” once elected. The oft-noted patriarchal culture with WASP/puritanical and Irish/Catholic roots may retard women in politics in some ways but actually is a “double edged sword.” Women raised in the state who absorb that culture and feel comfortable in that environment can use it to their advantage. At the same time, women who move to Massachusetts from elsewhere have not grown up in the political culture and do not share the same inhibitions of many native-born women (Interview, 8/15/03). Together, they represent an important pool of talented women to serve in the state legislature.
Meeting Political Challenges

Numerous observers of politics in the Commonwealth conclude that Massachusetts is a tough state for women. Politics is a high-stakes game; men compete fiercely for the prestige and power associated with elected office. Marie A. Turley, Executive Director of the Boston Women’s Commission, points out that the tough climate, while a challenge, is not necessarily a barrier. No one gives up power easily, but women who “learn the trade on the ground” and “earn their stripes” can succeed—although she notes that women have to earn more stripes than men. She also points out that there are many “good guys” in Massachusetts politics who support their women colleagues and help them advance through the ranks (Interview, 9/5/03).

Betty Taymor, founder of the influential Program for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston, points out that women, unlike men, do not often think of politics as a career and have fewer role models to follow. Although Taymor thinks that women’s political progress in the state has been “creepingly slow” (Interview 9/5/03), the more worrisome trends appear not at the legislative level, where Massachusetts’ performance, while inadequate, is not below the national average. The critical need is at the municipal and statewide levels and, notably, in Washington.

There are 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts; 49 communities have a city form of government, 302 have a town form. Typically, a town Board of Selectpersons has three or five members; city governments have larger legislative bodies. At the local level, women hold only about 20 percent of municipal offices above school committee. Furthermore, 132 towns have no women on their boards. Three cities (Pittsfield, Quincy, and Revere) have no women on their councils. Boston has only two out of 13—a decline in recent years. These numbers represent, nevertheless, a significant gain: in 1975, there were only 70 women in local elected office and twenty years later there were over 300.

In a troubling trend, however, these numbers have not moved appreciatively in the past decade. Possible explanations include the fact that political participation for both men and women has declined nationally and locally over the years. More important for women, however, is the fact that most now work outside the home yet still remain responsible for the bulk of care giving. Although it is true that all mothers are working women, a woman with children or other care-giving responsibilities plus a paying job is especially pressed for time. The addition of running a political campaign and serving in elected office creates a “triple shift.”
Susan Shaer, executive director of WAND (Women’s Action for New Directions), notes that women today also have many more options than they did in the 1960s and 1970s. Talented women who might have gone into politics have followed different career paths (Interview 9/8/03). Even a young person with an interest in politics and without family responsibilities is usually burdened by heavy education debt, as long-time Republican activist Polly Logan points out. They, too, might not have the time or resources to become candidates (Interview 8/25/03).

A 1996 survey of 110 women local officials in Massachusetts found that most were older, with grown children, and affluent (Sherman and Rohrbach, 1996). Most respondents (66 percent) also self-identified as “public servants” rather than as “politicians.” Although illustrative of women’s integrity and their principled dedication to serving their communities, this perspective raises issues about the prospects for representation that achieves gender parity. Passoni (2003) believes, for example, that women will have to see politics as a profession—not as a second stage of a career or a side interest. Women will also have to start on the local “farm team,” developing and honing skills at the city council level in order to move through the political pipeline.

This strategic way of thinking might be important for those who aspire to statewide or federal positions; for many women, however, the satisfaction of serving their communities is a rewarding and gratifying endeavor and, in fact, they have no desire to run for higher office. They feel that their work makes an important difference in the issues that affect women’s lives and they serve because they are committed to change in both process and policy (Sherman and Rohrbach, 1996). These possibly contradictory outlooks on women’s political advancement need not become a barrier, however. Just as women can make contributions outside the electoral system, women in politics can effectively serve at all levels of office; Massachusetts needs committed women throughout the political system. Another element that cannot be overstressed is the importance of non-electoral activism: Anne Marie Cammisa, Professor of Government at Suffolk University, says that organizations and advocacy groups provide a “way for women to participate in the political process” without actually running for office (Interview, 8/15/03). Encouraging broad-based activism at all levels will be critical for increasing women’s representation in Massachusetts and the region as a whole.
Challenges—and Opportunities—of Diversity

It should also be noted that minorities are not well represented in municipal elected offices in Massachusetts. No woman of color has ever served on the Boston City Council, for instance, although ten African-American women have run since 1973 (Hardy-Fanta and Amenoff, 1998) and the City of Boston is now majority-minority. In a 1996 survey of women elected municipal officials, only one respondent identified herself as a woman of color. Ten years ago there were only 30 Black elected officials in Massachusetts, of whom eight were women (Sherman and Rohrbach, 1996). In 1995, there were only four Latinos in local office, of whom one was a woman (Hardy-Fanta, 1997). As Massachusetts grows more diverse, it is crucial that the political system reflect this diversity.

At the same time, women of color in Massachusetts seem to win at rates higher than white women. In Massachusetts, African-American women make up a larger percentage of African American state legislators than do men. Four of the seven African-American legislators are women. Furthermore, Latina women win elections at higher rates than Latino men. These trends are also true nationally (Hardy-Fanta, 1997). This suggests that women of color may be a resource for campaign strategies of women candidates in general.

Massachusetts Women and the U.S. Congress

It has been 20 years since Massachusetts last sent a woman to the U.S. Congress. Rather than not being elected, the problem is that very few women have even run for these seats. In 1998, for instance, only two women ran for the U.S. House, one a Republican and one from a minority party. In 2000, one Republican woman ran for a House seat and a woman from a minor party challenged Senator Kennedy. In 2002, no women ran for the U.S. House and a write-in candidate was the only woman to challenge Senator Kerry. It should be noted that incumbency is a very strong factor in waging a political campaign, especially at the national level. It is very difficult for any challenger, male or female, to raise enough money, garner enough media attention, and build a solid base to mount a challenge. In recent races in Districts Eight and Nine where there were open seats, women like Susan Tracy, Marjorie Clapprood, Cheryl Jacques, and Jo Ann Sprague ran credible campaigns in crowded fields. There is a critical need is for women to prepare for and to take advantage of all open seats at the congressional level.
Prospects for Change

The start of the millennium looked good for women in Massachusetts politics: Shannon O’Brien, who was the first woman to serve in statewide office as an Independent candidate—she had won the treasurer’s post in 1998—planned to run for governor in 2002 as a Democrat. On the Republican side Jane Swift, the second female lieutenant governor, also elected in 1998, became acting governor in 2001, an historic first, and was poised to run for governor in her own right. It looked likely that both the major party candidates would be women: a first for the Bay State.

What happened? First, Swift, dogged by criticism—many women say unfairly—for using aides to baby sit, for using a state helicopter to go home to a sick child, for conducting state business from a hospital after giving birth to twins (all, notably, gender-related criticisms), also suffered some missteps in other areas. Faced with low poll numbers, she withdrew from contention—or was “muscled out” according to Betty Taymor (Interview, 9/5/03). Swift gained national attention not for her ideas or policy positions, but for her pregnancies and family responsibilities. Women still faced a higher bar to cross than their male counterparts. Women who run and lose are criticized more and treated with more contempt after their loss.

Shannon O’Brien found this out, too. She was the first woman nominated for governor by a major party, won her primary, had a strong base, and was a successful fundraiser. She also had good poll numbers. Yet she lost, though not by that much: she received 45 percent of the vote, versus 50 percent for her opponent, Mitt Romney. She could not mobilize the Democrats’ natural base and, according to the Boston Globe, alienated urban, suburban, female and union voters by being “too liberal, too combative in debates, [and] too responsible for the campaign’s negative tone” (Boston Globe, 11/6/02). It should be noted, however, that 53 percent of women voted for O’Brien whereas only 39.8 percent of men did so.

Is there a glass ceiling for women in Massachusetts? The fact is that there are just six women governors in the country, and only 12 have ever been elected, out of 2,000 or so in the history of this country. Thus, the Bay State is certainly not unique. Referring to a national organization committed to electing a woman President, Hardy-Fanta writes, “We need a Massachusetts version of the White House Project: identify and groom women from both parties to be poised and ready to run in 2006” (Hardy-Fanta, 2002).
Conclusion: Priorities and Strategies

Women in Massachusetts are talented, well educated, and experienced. They have many of the institutional resources available to support political influence and increase their representation as elected officials, including a permanent women's commission, a women's legislative caucus, and other women's organizations committed to supporting political participation and influence. Massachusetts history is replete with examples of women organizing for abolition, suffrage, improved labor conditions, and social reforms. Furthermore, with an increasingly diverse population, there are many examples of the extraordinary success of women of color in winning elections.

These factors have not been sufficient, however, to propel Massachusetts women to more than a middling level of representation and influence when compared to their sister states in New England. Massachusetts has never elected a woman governor. No woman has been elected to the U.S. Congress in more than 20 years and there has never been a woman in the U.S. Senate. Municipal office holding is low and has been flat for the past decade. Of particular concern is the fact that voter registration and turnout are among the lowest in New England. When women wonder why Maine has two women U.S. Senators and Massachusetts has had none, it might be useful to consider the fact that Maine ranks 3rd in the country for women's voter registration whereas Massachusetts ranks just 20th.

An analysis of the information gathered for this chapter suggests that women and women's organizations should focus on the following priorities and related strategies for the next five years:

1. Identify congressional districts likely to have open seats in upcoming election cycles; identify and groom women for each of those seats. Think long term as well as short term.

2. Circulate a list of cities and towns that have no women on their city councils/ selectboards. Utilize organizational connections and meetings to identify and urge women from those cities and towns to run for office. Research suggests that women need to be asked to run—so ask!

3. Publicize the workshops, trainings, mentoring opportunities, campaign schools, and university-based education programs that are crucial to women's political advancement. These include, among others, those offered by the
Massachusetts Women’s Political Caucus, the Yale Campaign School in Connecticut, and the Graduate Program for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

4. Increase women’s voter registration and turnout rates by at least 10 percent—to rates approximating those of Maine. An important pool of potential and untapped voters includes recent immigrants who await outreach by the political parties and women’s organizations; another is the 18 – 25 year age group, which tends to vote less than older women.

5. Support dialogue and exchange of ideas between women of color and other women about campaign strategies that work and break down barriers that get in the way of collaboration and mutual support.

6. Develop targeted efforts for young women from diverse backgrounds to gain the skills and support necessary to combine personal goals with political careers.

7. Create a synergy between women in business and women in politics. The former have talents that can help sustain the higher levels of fundraising women candidates need to win and the latter have contacts and connections important to women’s business needs.

This list of priorities is not exhaustive. Different groups may order them differently—or consider others more urgent. In addition, there are a number of areas that were not included in the analysis presented in this chapter, including, for example, the all-important issues of money and media. Further research, writing, and discussion are obviously needed. This chapter nevertheless offers a first look at the history, current status, and experiences of women in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and, hopefully, will energize women across the state to take concerted action to increase women’s political participation, representation, and influence.

NB: All references cited in this Profile may be found in the Bibliography section of this volume.
State Profile: New Hampshire

By: Mary Bouchard and Mariamawit Sileshi

In Brief

At the National level:

■ New Hampshire has never elected a woman to the U.S. Senate or the U.S. House of Representatives.
■ New Hampshire is one of only five states in the nation—and only two in New England—that have never sent a woman to either branch of the U.S. Congress.

TABLE 1: WOMEN ELECTED OFFICIALS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US Senate</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US House</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Council*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant Governor**</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other statewide elected officials**</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State legislature</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal (N = 234)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor/chief elected official</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Council/Selectmen/Alderman</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Committee</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* The Executive Council is unique to New Hampshire, with five representatives elected from districts; its role is to oversee and provide final authorization on most actions initiated by the governor.

** New Hampshire does not have a lieutenant governor or any other statewide elected officials.

At the state level:

■ Jeanne Shaheen was elected Governor of New Hampshire in 1996 and served for three terms. She ran for the U.S. Senate in 2002 but lost the election to former Congressman John E. Sununu.
Three women have held leadership positions in the New Hampshire legislature: Vesta Roy (1983–1986) and Beverly Hollingsworth served as Senate President and Donna P. Sytek served three terms as Speaker of the House.

Only one of the 5 Executive Council members is a woman: Ruth Griffin (see note in Table 1).

From Sept. 1999 to the Nov. 2001 election, New Hampshire became the only state in the U.S. to have women serving simultaneously as governor, speaker of the house, and senate president.

By 2003, however, women in New Hampshire held none of the top seats in state government.

27.8 percent of the 424 state legislators are women, making the Granite State 3rd in New England for women in the legislature.

As can be seen in Figure 1, however, the percent of women in the NH legislator has declined since 1993 and is less than 1 percentage point higher than it was in 1979.

![Fig. 1: Women in the New Hampshire State Legislature, 1979-2003](image)

**Source:** Center for American Women in Politics, www.cawp.rutgers.edu/facts/STbyST.

At the local and county level:

Women hold only one (7.7 percent) of the 13 mayoral positions in the state of New Hampshire.

New Hampshire has 234 municipalities, and about 44 percent of the approximately 1,000 school board members in New Hampshire are women.
Just 18.8 percent of city/town councilors, aldermen, or members of selectboards are women.

Women make up 30 percent of county officials.

Almost half (48 percent) of the 234 municipalities have no women elected officials above school committee level.

The State of the State

Women in New Hampshire have demonstrated consistent effort to gain a level of political representation commensurate with their population. Unfortunately, their status at this time seems to be one of declining—rather than rising—fortunes. On a political participation index of the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR, 2002) based on women’s voter registration and turnout, percentage of women in elected office, and women’s institutional resources, New Hampshire ranked 14th in the nation and 5th in New England, earning a C overall (IWPR, 2002). The state’s rank and “grade” has declined since 2000, when it earned a C+ and ranked 8th in the nation and 3rd in New England (IWPR, 2000). The decline was due for the most part to a sharp decrease in the number of women in elected office.

Indeed, New Hampshire ranked number one in New England from 1979 through 1989 with percentages of women in the legislature the highest in the region (see Figure 1). From a peak of 33.5 percent in 1993, the percentage has now declined to 27.8 percent. It is not clear what is driving this decline. Of note, however, is the fact that New Hampshire ranks 5th in voter registration; only 70.9 percent of women were registered to vote in 2000, compared to 80.3 percent in Maine, 74.9 percent in Vermont, and more than 71 percent in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Furthermore, both women’s voter registration and turnout have declined significantly since 1992. Women’s voter registration declined 4.4 percentage points between 1992 and 2003, while turnout declined 12.1 percentage points during the same period (IWPR, 2000, 2002).

Despite these declines, women in New Hampshire have claimed many victories. The state is, for example, one of the three New England states to elect a woman governor. Jeanne Shaheen was elected in 1996 and served for three terms before she ran for the U.S. Senate. In addition, two women have held leadership positions in the New Hampshire legislature: Vesta Roy (1983–1986)
served as Senate President and Donna P. Sytek became Speaker of the House in 1996 and served three terms in that role. Beverly Hollingsworth also served as Senate President. On the other hand, New Hampshire remains one of only five states in the nation that have never sent a woman to either branch of the U.S. Congress.

The early success of women in the state legislature may have been due to the unusually large size of New Hampshire’s state legislature. Currently, 114 women of the 400 representatives in the House and four of twenty-four senators are women. Women hold approximately 30 percent of elected positions in the 10 county governments (Dupont Group, 2003).

Women’s participation in New Hampshire’s municipal governments is even lower than that of the state legislature. In 112 (48 percent) of the 234 municipalities, there are no women elected officials higher than the school committee level. Only one of the thirteen city mayors is a woman, while 18.8 percent of elected councilors, aldermen, or selectmen are women (New Hampshire Municipal Officials Directory, 2002/2003). School committees had the best showing, with women representing 43.6 percent of school committee members across the state (New Hampshire Board of Education, 2003). Appointments to top policy-making positions in government are another indicator of political influence. According to a survey conducted by the Center for Women in Government and Civil Society (2001), 30.6 percent of appointed policy makers in the state are women. In comparison, a similar survey indicated that 42 percent of such positions in Massachusetts were held by women.

Demographic Profile of New Hampshire Women

With a population of 1.2 million, New Hampshire is one of the smallest states (it ranks 41st in the U.S. overall (U.S. Census, 2000). Table 2 provides some key facts about women in the Granite State. The population is fairly evenly divided between males and females and is 96 percent white. New Hampshire is significantly less diverse than the U.S. as a whole, which is 75.1 percent white, but similar to Vermont and Maine. These three states are the northernmost in the region and are largely rural, with few large cities. Hispanics/Latinos have begun settling in a number of cities in recent years, however; according to the 2000 Census, Hispanics/Latinos make up 6.3 per-
percent of the population in Nashua and 4.7 percent in Manchester. (U.S. Census, 2000).

New Hampshire has the highest rate of women in the labor force in the region, 64.4 percent, and women's median earnings ($27,488) make New Hampshire 3rd out of the six states. However, women make only 69.5 percent of men's earnings—putting the state last on this measure.

Table 2 also shows that, in 2000, 26.8 percent of women 25 years or older have attained 4 years or more of college, ranking New Hampshire 4th in New England—behind Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Vermont.

TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE WOMEN, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population: State</td>
<td>1,235,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population: Women</td>
<td>628,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women by Race/Ethnicity (% of women)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>598,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>3,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American*</td>
<td>1,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple race</td>
<td>6,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino (may be of any race)</td>
<td>9,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median earnings (% of men's)</td>
<td>$27,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women below poverty</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor force participation (16+)</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% BS/BA degree or higher (25+)</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women-owned firms</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter registration rate</td>
<td>70.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter turnout rate</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Native American includes American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Race/Ethnicity percentages do not add up to 100 because Hispanics/Latinos may be of any race.
New Hampshire's economy is one of the best performing in the United States. At the time of the 2000 Census, the unemployment rate in New Hampshire (2.7 percent) was lower than the US rate (3.7 percent) and among the lowest in the region (US Census, 2000). More recently, the revised figures for December 2002 reported by New Hampshire's Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau (ELMI) reflect an unemployment rate for New Hampshire of 4.8 percent. This was well below the national rate of 6.3 percent and tied for second with Vermont among the New England states, which were led by Connecticut at 4.6 percent (ELMI, 2003).

Women's poverty rates for New Hampshire are the lowest in the region: 5.4 percent in 2002, compared to 9.3 percent in Maine and 9.0 percent in Rhode Island. In the business world, women own 23.6 percent of all firms in New Hampshire, which, again, is the lowest in New England (US Census, 2000). The data leads us to believe that there is still some work to be done to achieve economic equality for women in New Hampshire.

The Political Context for Women: Distinctive Features

The current state motto, "Live Free or Die," epitomizes the spirit of New Hampshire citizens since the days of the Revolutionary War when the state enacted its own declaration of independence two weeks before the rest of the colonies (Gregg, 1993). Cynical attitudes of its citizens about government have influenced how the state's government is organized and funded, and what its objectives are. For example, it is one of only two U.S. states (the other is Alaska) with no personal income or general sales tax (Citizens for Tax Justice, 2002). This anti-tax culture has long been supported by the citizens of New Hampshire: During the colonial period, to avoid paying for government buildings, government officials instead held meetings and conducted the government's business in local taverns (Blaine, 1999).

Governor Council Executive Branch

There are only three officials elected in New Hampshire on a statewide basis: the governor and the two U.S. Senators. New Hampshire has a Governor and Council form of executive branch of state government, which is unique
to the state. The five members of the Executive Council, also known as the Governor’s Council, are elected from five districts of the state. Both the Governor and Councilors are elected to two-year terms in the same years. Presently, Councilors are compensated at $12,154 annually (State of New Hampshire Revised Statutes, 2003). One of the Councilors, Ruth Griffin, is a woman currently serving her ninth term and she is only the second woman to be elected to the Council since its inception. Under the state’s constitution, the Governor and the Council have veto authority against each other. Therefore, no executive business can be enacted without the approval of the Governor with confirmation of the Executive Council (New Hampshire State Website, 2003).

Since the state does not elect a lieutenant governor, the senate president, who is elected by the senate members, serves as acting governor whenever the governor is out of state or otherwise unable to perform the duties of the office. In addition, other positions that are normally elected in other states, such as treasurer, secretary of state, attorney general, etc., are appointed by the Governor with confirmation of the Executive Council. This structure further limits the opportunities for women, since making appointments in a male-dominated environment generally means fewer opportunities for women.

**Legislative Branch**

The legislature consists of a 24-member Senate and a 400-member House of Representatives, which are elected to two-year terms. The New Hampshire legislature is the largest state legislature in the U.S. (and larger than the legislative bodies of most countries). New Hampshire State Senators and Representatives are considered part-time and are paid only $100 per year plus mileage reimbursement. In large part due to the insignificant stipend paid, the New Hampshire legislature is often referred to as a “citizen” or “non-professional” legislature. This is unlike some other states, such as Massachusetts, where legislators hold full-time positions, and is attributable to its citizens’ skeptical attitude toward government and their resistance to a large bureaucratic government structure. New Hampshire has also been fortunate to have a wide variety of the state’s men and women serve in its legislature, including businesspeople, homemakers, educators, engineers, doctors, lawyers, students, and retirees (New Hampshire State Website, 2003).
“First in the Nation” Presidential Primary

The New Hampshire Presidential Primary was created by the state legislature in 1913 to allow citizens to vote for the delegates who would choose the parties’ nominees for president. In 1952, it was changed to allow New Hampshire’s citizens also to vote directly for a presidential candidate. Since that time, every president-elect has won in the New Hampshire primary, until 1992, when Bill Clinton lost to former Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas, and again in 2000, when George W. Bush lost to Arizona Senator John McCain. Charles Brereton attributes the importance and success of the New Hampshire primary to two factors. “First it is first” (1987, xiv). Second is the extensive media coverage of the event. The media love it because, as opposed to a poll, it is the first real vote by an albeit small electorate, but nonetheless a fully engaged one. In 1996, a change in the registration regulations allowed election-day registration, resulting in an additional 26,000 voters and voter turnout of 74 percent for Republicans and 45 percent for Democrats, in spite of the fact that Clinton ran virtually unchallenged for reelection (Gregg, 1997). Another positive aspect of the New Hampshire primary, according to Brereton (1987) and Gregg (1997), is that the size of New Hampshire encourages candidates to engage in the “retail” politics that New Hampshire is famous for and “meet and greet” many of the voters directly. Also, history has proven that the voters are not as influenced by the biggest campaign spenders. Thus, it is possible for virtual unknowns to come to New Hampshire, make their case to the voters, and go on to win the presidency.

There are, however, many critics of New Hampshire having such a prominent position in the process of electing a president. Most criticisms relate to the fact that New Hampshire has a small population, its population is not very diverse and thus not representative of the nation as a whole, and its economy is better than those of most other states (Brereton, 1987). Despite the validity of these criticisms, one could argue that a state such as California, for example, which is perhaps more racially diverse, would be a difficult venue for the face-to-face campaign style utilized in New Hampshire (Brereton, 1987). Finally, Gregg (1997) quotes columnist David Broder, who observes: “Every four years, someone will ask why a nation this large, this diverse, lets a couple of hundred thousand voters in an out-of-the-way corner of this country decide who should be president. The answer is obvious. Nobody does it better.”
Party Politics

Like Massachusetts, New Hampshire is essentially a one-party state but the party in New Hampshire is Republican. The state even claims to have created what is now the Republican party as the result of a split of the Democratic party in 1853 into two groups. The Republicans elected their first Governor of New Hampshire in 1857, and since that time, only five Democrats have been elected Governor of the state (Fistek and Egbert, 1997).

Structural obstacles to strong party organization include the large size of the legislature, which makes it difficult to achieve party unity and to recruit adequate numbers of candidates to run. Also, there is no observable common ideology within the parties, as both seem to be made up of conservative and liberal members, and legislators' votes are often not based on the party's ideology (Fistek and Egbert, 1997).

One-party dominance has a negative effect on women's representation because, as a member of the Democratic party committee indicated, they cannot afford the “luxury” of focusing on electing women—rather, they “just need to elect a Democrat.” To further this point, Deborah “Arnie” Arnesen, New Hampshire radio and television political commentator and former candidate for governor, remarked that women's participation is predicated on an “invitation in” and that “especially within the Democratic party you never win so what's the ‘invitation in’?” (Interview, 9/11/03)

The Historical Perspective

Role of Women in 17th- and 19th-Century New Hampshire

Marcia Schmidt Blaine studied New Hampshire records from 1690 to 1770 and concluded: “New Hampshire women, like all Anglo-American women, lived in a society based on patriarchy” (1999, 2). Women were mainly identified with the social roles they had in relation to men—e.g., daughters, wives, mothers, etc. With the exception of the African-American and Native American women who were forced into slave labor, the domain of women had been limited to caring for family members, child rearing, homemaking, and educating children. Women's primary choices were either to stay at home as housewives and mothers or work in the schools as teachers, and
thus rarely did they enter fields that gave them an opportunity to have a voice in the administration of society.

Despite these restrictions, New Hampshire women became highly involved in government early on due to the informal type of government in place at that time. As noted above, frugal attitudes resulted in government business being conducted in taverns with others in the community; women were often called upon to host such meetings. The involvement by women who hosted government meetings placed them in the room where government business was transacted, and they were accepted and trusted in this role. Thus, despite the restrictions imposed by a patriarchal social structure, scores of ordinary New Hampshire women brought petitions, submitted invoices to the government for services or redress of some sort, submitted applications for business licenses, and received attention to their requests equal to that accorded men. Furthermore, in the process of taking care of their families they made choices that affected their lives and the lives of their families, and they utilized their access to the government to help them exercise these choices for the best interests of their families (Blaine, 1999).

**Women and Abolition in the Granite State**

*Courage, then, Northern hearts! Be firm, be true
What one brave State hath done, can ye not also do?*

John Greenleaf Whittier wrote these lines about New Hampshire abolitionists in 1846 (quoted in Seacoastnh.com, 2003). The number of people of African descent forced into slavery in the early history of New Hampshire is estimated at 70 in 1707, 150 in 1715, and 656 in 1775, with the majority being concentrated around Portsmouth (Seacoastnh.com, 2003). During the Revolutionary War, black soldiers fought to liberate the colonies from the British army in New Hampshire. Although New Hampshire did not formally declare slavery illegal, the growth of the industrial revolution in the northern states, including New Hampshire, diminished the need for slave labor. This, along with the growing worldwide distaste for slavery and feudalism after the French and Haitian Revolutions, led many in the north to question the morality of slavery. Many abolitionist movements, religious and non-religious, arose in the 1800s in the northern states. Slavery became an uncommon practice in the state. Despite not having the right to vote, New Hampshire’s women were active in advancing causes and raising awareness of issues during the
abolitionist movement by becoming strong speakers and leading the way with petitions. Many women were active in the abolitionist movements in New Hampshire, including Abby Kelly, Marilla Ricker, and others who spoke throughout New England against slavery.

FIGURE 2: “FIRSTS” IN NH WOMEN’S POLITICAL HISTORY

1910 – Marilla Marks Young Ricker announces candidacy for Governor.
1920 – Jessie Doe, elected to the New Hampshire House of Representatives
1920 – Mary Louise Rolfe Farnum elected to the New Hampshire House of Representatives
1920 – Ella F. Gee elected Register of Probate, Cheshire County
1931 – E. Maude Fergusson elected to the New Hampshire Senate
1944 – Mary Carey Dondero of Portsmouth becomes the nation’s first woman mayor
1977–1985 – Dudley Webster Dudley serves as Executive Councilor
1983-1986 – Vesta M. Roy serves as New Hampshire Senate President
1999 – 2001 – New Hampshire only state in the U.S. with women Governor, Speaker of the House, & Senate President

Source: New Hampshire Women Legislators 1921 – 2000

Organizing for Change: Women’s Clubs, Reform and Labor

The end of the Civil War brought a new sense of spiritual and intellectual awakening throughout New Hampshire. Many women who worked together during the abolitionist movement formed social and scholarly clubs to meet and connect with other women. The clubs were forums for discussions on the advancement of women. There were over 30 clubs in New Hampshire in the late 1800s, many of which were study or book clubs, such as the many clubs in the state devoted to the study of Shakespeare (Harriman, 1941).
In 1895, Lilian C. Streeter invited delegates from New Hampshire's women's clubs to meet at the Unitarian Church in Concord to form a unified statewide coalition of the clubs. The meeting was successful in creating the New Hampshire Federation of Women's Clubs, of which Streeter became the Honorary President for Life. Twenty-eight clubs were brought together in the federation. The delegation elected its first president, Mrs. Eliza Blair (Harriman, 1941). By the end of its first decade, the membership of the federation had doubled from the first year. Women from many walks of life worked together for the overall advancement of women by exchanging thoughts on such things as "the training of teachers, school methods, morals, environment of children, roads, cleanliness," etc. (Harriman, 1941, 15-50). In its progression, the federation was active in advancing women's issues by raising and donating money to various causes, such as finding cures for diseases, assisting veterans, teachers and schools, libraries, overseas social work, etc. (Harriman, 1941).

The Industrial Revolution saw women's activism in the labor movement as well. Once women began leaving the farms to work in the new mills, New Hampshire women were pioneers in organizing to improve working conditions in the mills. A Dover, New Hampshire, cotton mill was the site of the first strike held by women in 1828. One of these organizers, Sarah Bagley of Meredith, New Hampshire, organized and became the first president of the Lowell Female Reform Association. With 600 members, this group was a powerful presence, and in 1845 it testified at a Massachusetts legislative hearing on labor conditions. They did not prevail: the legislative committee decided not to recommend legislation for a ten-hour day. Undaunted by this defeat, Sarah Bagley continued organizing and pressing for reforms by organizing branches of the Female Reform Association in mill towns throughout New Hampshire and Massachusetts (Tardiff, 1980).

**Outstanding Suffragist: Marilla Marks Young Ricker**

One New Hampshire woman stands out for her struggles to gain acceptance for women into the political process: Marilla Marks Young Ricker. She was born in 1840 in New Durham, New Hampshire. Her father was an early supporter of women's education and suffrage. Not surprisingly, she also became a freethinker and suffragist. Marilla taught school for a number of years and married John Ricker, a wealthy farmer from Madbury, New Hampshire, in
1863. He died five years later, leaving her a rich widow. After spending a few years in Europe learning German, and spending time engrossed in European freethinkers’ doctrines, she returned to the U.S. and settled in Washington, D.C., to study law. At the age of 42, following four years of study, she passed the bar exam with the highest score of the seventeen applicants, of which she was the only woman. She practiced law in the D.C. area with other women attorneys, and in 1891 she became the ninth woman member of the United States Supreme Court bar. While she never filed any briefs or argued any cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, it does seem plausible that she was motivated by her desire for women’s advancement. One year earlier, she petitioned the New Hampshire Chief Justice for admission to the New Hampshire state bar, and became the first woman admitted to practice law in the state (Richey, 2002).

She became involved in the woman suffrage movement after she attended the first convention of the National Woman’s Suffrage Association (NWSA) in 1869. Reportedly, she “was so moved that she hurried home to New Hampshire and tried to vote” in the 1870 election but was unsuccessful (Richey, 2002, 23). Beginning that year, she began sending letters with her tax payments, demanding that she be allowed to vote because of her status as a taxpayer and for the contributions she had made over the years to the “maintenance of an organized government” (Richey, 2002, 24). She would continue these protests for the next 50 years, until women were granted suffrage in 1920. She was very active in the women’s suffrage movement for years to come as a member of the NWWSA, and then the NAWSA after the two groups merged. She participated as a delegate to the national conventions, a lecturer, and a generous benefactor. She was also responsible for several “high publicity political maneuvers that brought attention to women’s rights issues” (Richey, 2002).

In 1897, Marilla became the first woman to apply for a foreign ambassadorship. Though she was not appointed to the post, the fact that she applied caused quite a stir and received a lot of attention in the newspapers (Richey, 2002). She was the first woman to announce her candidacy for governor of New Hampshire. She did so in 1910, when she submitted her application fee of $100 and a handwritten request for her name to be included on the ballot as a Republican candidate for governor. Her application was returned to her and she was not allowed to run, yet again she received attention from the
press and was even quoted in the Boston Herald explaining her attempt to run for governor: “I’m running for Governor in order to get people into the habit of thinking of women as Governors. . . . People have to think about a thing for several centuries before they can get acclimated to the idea. I want to start the ball a-rolling” (Stevenson, quoted in Richey, 2002, 33).

Marilla Marks Young Ricker lived to see the 19th amendment ratified in 1920. She died just three months later, at the age of 80.

**Women’s Achievements Post-Suffrage**

Once women were allowed the right to vote, New Hampshire women were quick to run for elected office. Dr. Mary Rolfe Farnum, one of only two women graduates from Boston University Medical School, was elected to the state legislature as a Democrat only twelve days after suffrage ratification. Jessie Doe, a Republican, was also elected in 1920. The two women immediately organized the first New Hampshire Association of Women Legislators (New Hampshire Women Legislators, 2001). The third woman elected in 1920 was Ella F. Gee, who became the first female Register of Probate in New Hampshire, in Cheshire County. There were no women elected to the State Senate during the 1920s, but women won 40 elections to the House of Representatives during the first decade following suffrage.

In 1931, Mrs. E. Maude Ferguson became the first female state senator in New Hampshire, after having completed two terms in the House of Representatives. In 1937, Mrs. Lula J. A. Morris became the second woman elected to the New Hampshire Senate. Women were elected 56 times to the House of Representatives in this decade, and 4 times to the State Senate. Women were elected 78 times to the House in the 1940s and four times to the Senate. Additionally, New Hampshire saw the nation’s first woman mayor, Mrs. Mary Carey Dondero of Portsmouth elected in 1944 (Anderson, 1971).

**1950s – 1980s**

The 1950s were watershed years for New Hampshire women in politics. This decade saw women elected to the house 115 times, more than twice as many as in the 1940s. Additionally, women were elected to the Senate 18
times. Progress continued in the 1960s, with women elected 131 times to the House and 16 times to the Senate (Anderson, 1971).

The 1970s brought to New Hampshire its first woman Executive Councilor, Dudley W. Dudley, who was elected to the five-member Executive Council on November 2, 1976. Councilor Dudley enjoyed a long political career; she was elected twice to the General Court in her hometown of Durham prior to being an Executive Councilor. She served four terms until 1985 (New Hampshire Women Legislators, 2001).

The 1970s also saw the first African-American woman elected to New Hampshire state office. Despite the lack of racial diversity in the state, Sharon C. Demers was elected to the House of Representatives in 1978. During the 1970s, women were elected 482 times to the house, representing more than three times the figure in the 1960s and twelve times to the Senate (New Hampshire Women Legislators, 2001).

The 1980s may be described as the decade of Vesta Roy. After serving three terms in the Senate, she became the first woman Senate President in New Hampshire, serving from 1983–1986. She also served as Governor of New Hampshire from December 1982 to January 1983, after Governor Gallen died in office. John H. Sununu was sworn in to replace Acting Governor Roy in January 1983 (New Hampshire State Website, 2003).

The 1980s were also fruitful for other women who ran for legislative seats in New Hampshire. Women were also elected five times to executive councilor positions, one in each election, 30 times in the Senate and 630 times in the House. In addition, Georgie Thomas became the first woman state treasurer in 1984 (New Hampshire Women Legislators, 2001).

1990s: Years of the Woman

Women in New Hampshire seem to face particular difficulties in statewide elections. In 1992, two women candidates, Deborah “Arnie” Arnesen (Democrat) and Elizabeth Hager (Republican) made state history when they became the first women to run in the New Hampshire gubernatorial elections. Both women, pro-choice and in favor of a statewide income tax, were defeated in their respective parties’ primaries (Butterfield, 1992). It was not until 1996, when State Senator Jeanne Shaheen (Democrat) won the guber-
natorial election with 57 percent of the vote, that New Hampshire saw its first and only female statewide elected official and first female governor.

The following year, Donna Sytek, named the “Most Powerful Woman in New Hampshire” by NH Editions magazine, became the first woman Speaker of the House (New Hampshire Women Legislators, 2001). New Hampshire made history from September 1999 until the November 2001 elections by becoming the first and only state in the U.S. to have women serving simultaneously as governor, speaker of the house, and as senate president (Goldberg, 2002). In her article for the New York Times, Carey Goldberg (2001) notes that New Hampshire became “one of the most interesting laboratories in the country for gender relations in politics” during this era. She says that the fact that these women held the most powerful positions in the state meant that more women were hired as staff as well. Arnie Arnesen attributes the success of Sytek reaching the top spot in the New Hampshire House to her intellect and her years of “time on the bench, waiting.” She insists that time on the bench is an important factor in reaching these leadership roles (Interview, 9/11/2003). In 2000, State Representative Martha Fuller Clark (Democrat) ran for US Congress in the first district of New Hampshire but lost to John E. Sununu (Republican). She ran again for Congress in 2002 but lost to Jeb Bradley (Republican).

New Hampshire Women in Politics Today

The 1990s were not kind to the cause of women’s representation in New Hampshire. During the past decade there has been a marked decline in the number of women elected to public office in New Hampshire. The percentage of women legislators dropped from its peak of 33.5 percent in 1993 to 27.8 percent in 2003, which is comparable to the level in the late 1970s (see Figure 1). The decline might be attributed to the fact that the women in the highest positions in New Hampshire government left to pursue other opportunities, and there were no woman candidates ready to step in and run for election to fill these seats. Such was the case when Governor Jeanne Shaheen ran for the US Senate and lost against former Congressman John E. Sununu (Republican). As of 2003, men once again occupy the gubernatorial seat and the legislative leadership positions. Also, despite having a commission for women, New Hampshire does not have a women’s legislative caucus to support and promote the active roles of women in office.
Arnesen suggests that the decline is economic in nature stating that when she served and later ran for statewide office that New Hampshire women “didn’t need to be gainfully employed….The problem and the story about [New Hampshire] women now is that more and more must be gainfully employed, that a second income is crucial.” Furthermore, “the sad commentary about New Hampshire is that once again money is the barrier. If they gainfully employed us, maybe we could participate at a more significant level but because it’s $100 a year. Who’s got the time, luxury and the cash? (Interview, 9/11/03). She continues, “In order to keep families solvent today, two incomes are a necessity, not a convenience...therefore, when you only pay legislators $100 per year, only the rich, the retired, and the remunerated can run. When volunteers meant women and we had plenty of women who could spend time at home, then you saw [New Hampshire] showcasing one of the highest percentages of women in their legislature....[A]s the 70s and 80s faded, there were fewer women to volunteer....Suddenly the possibility of volunteering for the [New Hampshire] Legislature became an unrealistic option and the percentage of women who could and would participate stagnated” (Personal communication, 10/15/03).

One expert interviewed for this chapter suggests that women are still being marginalized because they are women and that New Hampshire’s sociopolitical culture is patriarchal and backwards. Unwilling to support gay rights, in contrast to its neighbor Vermont, the Granite State passed laws prohibiting gays from adopting children, for example. Arnesen also noted that the societal view of women’s traditional roles and expertise still exists in New Hampshire and has a negative impact on women’s ability to win elections. She attributes the success of Jeanne Shaheen to her moderate stance on many issues as well as her background and interest in education, deemed a traditional area of interest and expertise for women (Interview, 9/9/03).

Elizabethada “Liz” Wright, co-director of women’s studies at Rivier College in Nashua, also remarked on the persistence of the stereotypes applied to women. She gave the following example: When women organizers met with male legislators about legislation concerning gun safety, the men “told them if they really wanted to help their children they should be home, not at the State House” (Interview, 9/12/03).

Liz Wright also expressed concern about the number of young women in political organizing. She describes, for example, the New Hampshire League of
Women Voters as a terrific organization whose numbers in New Hampshire are both graying and waning. In terms of mobilizing women for the future, she likened the Million Mom’s March (MMM) organization to that of the 19th century women’s Christian Temperance Movement whose purpose was to stop alcohol from destroying families, and which mobilized a lot of women to participate in the political process. She sees the MMM having the same potential, with a purpose of promoting gun safety as one that many women can support, to provide a vehicle for mobilizing and training women in the political process (Interview, 9/12/03).

**Conclusion: Priorities and Strategies**

What factors explain the current status of women in New Hampshire politics? Diamond (1977) suggests that the large size of the state’s house of representatives means a large number of seats to be filled—creating opportunities for women. In addition, the biennial salary of $200, which is substantially less than that of any other state in the country, communicates—and generates a perception of—lower status and power of the representative positions. Furthermore, New Hampshire’s legislature is referred to as a “citizen” legislature and, as such, the requirements for prior political experience, a law degree, or some other equivalent qualification are not as prevalent in New Hampshire as they are in some other states. The relatively small number of seats in New Hampshire’s Senate supports Diamond’s (1977) theory about competition: Women’s success has been much greater in the House than the Senate.

In summary, women in New Hampshire had a fairly good start in political activity, having first elected three female politicians just two weeks after the ratification of the 19th amendment. In the decades after that, there was a consistently strong presence of women in legislative elected office until 1993 (Figure 1) and at the level of school committee. The decline since 1993 seems due, in large part, to women leaving powerful posts either to go on to other activities or run unsuccessfully for higher office (as in the case of Shaheen).

An analysis of the information gathered for this chapter suggests that women and women’s organizations focus on the following priorities for the next five years:
1. Create a Women’s Legislative Caucus to support women legislators and to be strategic about women leaving office: identify and groom replacements.

2. Increase women’s voter registration and turnout rates by at least 10 percent – to rates approximating those of Maine. An important pool of potential and untapped voters includes recent immigrants who await outreach by the political parties and women’s organizations; another is the 18 – 25-year-old age group, which tends to vote less than older women.

3. Develop strategic mechanisms for identifying successors for women legislators or women holding top positions (e.g., Governor, Speaker of the House, etc.).

4. Identify and publicize the workshops, trainings, mentoring opportunities, campaign schools, and university-based education programs that are crucial to women’s political advancement. These include, among others, local efforts such as the Vesta Roy Excellence in Public Service Series, a political leadership-training program for Republican women and Leadership New Hampshire—a non-partisan program founded in 1991 to “select, train, and build a network of leaders for the state of New Hampshire” (Leadership New Hampshire, 2000). There are also national and regional resources such as Emily’s List, the Yale Campaign School in Connecticut, and the Graduate Program for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

5. An important priority must be increasing the numbers of women in municipal elected office above the school committee level. Almost half of the municipalities in New Hampshire do not have women on their councils. One strategy would be to circulate a list of cities and towns that have no women on their city councils/selectboards, and utilize organizational connections and meetings to identify and urge women from those cities and towns to run for office. Research suggests that women need to be asked to run—so ask!

6. Develop targeted efforts for young women to gain the skills and support necessary to combine personal goals with political careers.

7. Build bridges across party lines to identify ways of nonpartisan support for the election of women.

8. Create a synergy between women in business and women in politics. The former have talents that can help sustain the higher levels of fundraising women candidates need to win, and the latter have contacts and connections important to women’s business needs.
This list of priorities is not exhaustive. Different groups may order them differently—or consider others more urgent. Further research, writing, and discussion are obviously needed. This chapter nevertheless offers a first look at the history, current status, and experiences of women in the state of New Hampshire and, perhaps, will energize women across the state to take concerted action to increase women’s political participation, representation, and influence.

NB: All references cited in this Profile may be found in the Bibliography section of this volume.

Acknowledgments:
Many women contributed to this chapter. We would like, in particular, to thank Arnie Arnesen, political commentator and former candidate for governor, and Elizabethada Wright, Ph.D., Co-Director, Women’s Studies Program, Rivier College who shared their perspectives and experiences in lengthy interviews. To others, who preferred not to be identified, we also extend our appreciation.
State Profile: Rhode Island

By: Elizabeth Goodwin, Deborah A. Hogan, and Carol Hardy-Fanta

In Brief

At the National Level:
- Rhode Island currently has no women in the U.S. Congress or Senate.
- Rhode Island has never sent a woman to the U.S. Senate.

| TABLE 1: WOMEN ELECTED OFFICIALS IN RHODE ISLAND, 2002 |
|---------------------------------|--------|------|
| US Senate                       | 0      | 0    |
| US House                        | 0      | 0    |
| Governor                        | 0      | 0    |
| Lt. Governor                    | 0      | 0    |
| Other statewide (N=3)           | 0      | 0    |
| State legislature (N=113)       | 22     | 19   |
| Municipal                       |        |      |
| Mayor/Chief Official            | 5      | 16   |
| City Council/ Selectboard/      |        |      |
| Alderman                        | 57     | 24   |
| School Committee                | 42     | 23   |

Sources: Center for American Women in Politics (2003); Municipal Yearbook, 2001 (2002).

At the State Level:
- Women hold none of the statewide offices in Rhode Island.
- No woman has ever been elected Governor or Lieutenant Governor.
- Women make up 19.5 percent of the Rhode Island legislature, down from a high of 26 percent in 1997; this is the lowest percentage in all of New England. (See Figure 1.)
- In a majority Democratic party state, 4 of the 5 women elected to statewide office have been Republicans.
Women make up 23.8 percent of the State Senate and just 17.3 percent of the House of Representatives.

Three women of color are state representatives: Melvoid J. Benson, Maxine Bradford Shavers, and Anastasia P. Williams; there are no state senators who are women of color.

Fig. 1: Women in Rhode Island State Legislature, 1979-2003

Source: Center for American Women in Politics (2003).

At the Local Level:

- 24 percent of municipal officials at the city or town council/selectboard level are women. This is among the highest of all the New England states.
- 23 percent of school committee members in Rhode Island are women.
- 5 (16 percent) of town chief officials are women.
- There is one woman Mayor: Susan Menard of Woonsocket.
- Women make up just 23 percent of school committee members.

The State of the State

One of the leading political scientists in the state, when asked the impact of the political culture in Rhode Island on women's progress in gaining elected office, responded: “We have not done any research on this subject, but Rhode Island is a pretty traditional state when it comes to gender relations. Women
have not done so well because of problems of raising money, getting media attention, and getting party endorsements. Ironically, when you look at successful statewide female candidates, GOP women have done better than Democratic women” (Interview with D. Hogan, 2003).

In 2002 the Institute for Women’s Political Research released its report: The Status of Women in Rhode Island. In this report, Rhode Island received the grade of D in the political participation of women—a composite index measuring the percent of women in elected office, percent of women registered to vote, percent of women who voted, and the number of institutional resources available to women.

Rhode Island thus ranked last in the New England states and 32nd nationally. This occurred despite ranking first in New England (in a tie with Massachusetts) in institutional resources for women and 3rd in the region for women’s voter registration. It is clear that women’s institutional resources and votes are not being converted to better representation in elected office. The challenge is how to best understand this paradox from a political perspective.

Women make up almost 52 percent of the state’s population. Yet representation in elected and appointed offices falls far short of parity. As can be seen in Table 1, there are no women in statewide elected office, despite a vigorous campaign by Myrth York for Governor in 2002. Historically, only five women have served at the statewide level: Arlene Violet (Attorney General), Nancy Mayer (Treasurer), Susan Farmer, Barbara Leonard, and Kathleen Connell (Secretary of State), with Nancy Mayer the last to leave office in 1999. U.S. Representative Claudine Schneider is the only Rhode Island woman to have served in national office, with her term ending over a decade ago.

In the state legislature, women’s representation rose dramatically in the early 1990s (see Figure 1 above). Like several other New England states (i.e., Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire), the percentage of women at this level has been decreasing. Rhode Island women’s representation has suffered from the most dramatic decline: from a high of 25.7 percent to the current 19.5 percent. The decline, which was exacerbated by the downsizing of the General Assembly from 150 to 113 members in 2002, not only reduced the absolute number of women, but also in several cases, pitted women against women for a reduced number of seats. Figure 2 shows, however, that another reason for the decrease in women’s representation in Rhode Island is simply
that fewer women ran for office beginning in 1994. From a high of more than 60 in 1994, the number of women running for the legislature decreased by almost half, to just a little more than 35 in 2002.

Women of color do well compared to white women in winning election to the state legislature. Whereas, white women make up just 17.8 percent of the white legislators; women of color represent half (50 percent) of legislators of color. This is similar to Massachusetts where women of color make up a majority of legislators of color.

At the local level, representation of women is well below their numbers in the general population. At the chief executive level in municipalities, only 16 percent are women. As seen in Table 1, representation on municipal level governing councils and even school committees falls far below the percentage of women in the overall population. Only one woman serves as mayor of one of the five cities: Susan Menard is mayor of Woonsocket (Rhode Island City and Town Officials, 2003). In these cities, ten women serve on and make up 22 percent of these city councils. Ten of the state’s towns (29.4 percent) have no women on their town councils and most of those who do have just one. Unfortunately, without further research, it is not possible at this time to ascertain the representation by women of color on either the city or town councils.
The Narragansett Indian Tribe is led by a chief sachem who is a man but 44 percent of the tribal council members are women: Kim Hazard, Heather Mars, Paulia Dove Jennings, and Regina R. Reckling (Rhode Island City and Town Officials, 2003).

Finally, although the registration rate for Rhode Island women in 2000 was relatively high (71.5 percent), voter turnout was just 62.5. This places Rhode Island women above the national average for voter turnout but 4th in New England, behind Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire. Clearly, increasing voter registration and turnout is an important goal for future organizing.

**Demographic Profile of Women in Rhode Island**

Rhode Island is the smallest state in the nation and, with 400 miles of shoreline, it is known as the Ocean State. As Table 2 shows, Rhode Island is one of the more diverse states in New England: 8.5 percent of women in Rhode Island are Hispanic/Latina, followed by 4.3 percent Asian; 4.9 percent chose “other” and 2.7 percent chose multiple races. Communities of color are not evenly dispersed throughout the state, however. The population (male and female) in Providence, for example is 30 percent Hispanic/Latino, 15.5 percent African American, and 6.4 percent Asian, making it a “majority-minority” city. Woonsocket also has a large minority population: 18.1 percent (U.S. Census 2000).

Women's economic status in Rhode Island may be measured by median income ($27,358) and the ratio of women’s full-time earnings compared to men's (72.8 percent). This ratio is among the lowest in New England, suggesting that, at least on this measure, women in Rhode Island have not attained gender equity in economic security. Indeed, women’s poverty in the Ocean State is 12.3 percent; Maine is the only state in the region with a higher percentage of women in poverty. Rhode Island women have the lowest labor force participation rates of all the New England states. Finally, the percentage of women in Rhode Island 25 years and older with a college degree or higher is 23.6 percent—a rate just one percentage-point higher than Maine. Given Maine's status as a state with high rates of rural poverty, the fact that Rhode Island shares some distinctive socioeconomic conditions with this rural, large, predominantly white, and northern state is puzzling. The political context and culture may provide some explanations.
TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RHODE ISLAND WOMEN, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population: State</td>
<td>1,048,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population: Women (% of total)</td>
<td>544,684</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women, by Race/Ethnicity (% of women)</td>
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<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>23,285</td>
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<td>Asian</td>
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<td>Native American*</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino (may be of any race)</td>
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<td>Median income (% of men’s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Below poverty</td>
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<td>% Labor force participation (16+ yr.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>% BA/BS degree or higher (25+ yr.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women owned firms (1997)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women owned firms: Sales/receipts (1997)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voter registration rate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter turnout rate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sources: U.S. Census (1997, 2000, 2002). *Native American includes American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Race/Ethnicity percentages do not add up to 100 because Hispanics/Latinos may be of any race.

The Political Context for Women in Rhode Island

Rhode Island’s claim to fame is certainly its size. At 1241 square miles and 400 miles of shoreline, by car the state is roughly 60 minutes long by 45 minutes wide. For a population of only one million people, there are 39 communities, 36 school districts, and no county government. Also with approximately 1000 people per square mile, Rhode Island has the densest population in New England. Of the population of only one million, almost 50 percent of the state’s population is concentrated in Providence, East Providence, Cranston, Warwick and Pawtucket. In other words, outside of those areas, there are 34 local governments and 32 school districts for the other five hundred thousand people. (This is a local government for every 15,000 people) This unique distribution of government has fostered many a discussion about organizing the State as a “city-state” (Moakley and Cornwell, 2001). Although in no danger
of becoming a city-state in the state’s fiercely independent environment, when looking for opportunities to reduce government spending, solve for inefficiencies, and make more funds available to those in need, it is difficult not to speculate about the potential savings such a city-state would create. Size also factors into the state’s visibility on a national level.

One of the most distinctive features of Rhode Island is the government structure. Unique to Rhode Island, its constitution has remained relatively unchanged since its Royal Charter from Britain in 1663. “Rhode Island’s [constitutional] history is that of a quintessential system of parliamentary supremacy” (Moakley and Cornwell, 2001, 50). In broad terms, this means that the General Assembly holds the central position in government with very few restrictions on its power. With few checks and balances, this structure has contributed significantly to abuses at the state level, especially in patronage, lifetime pension benefits, and other financial gains for those associated with the legislature (Bakst, 2002; Fitzgerald, 2002; Moakley and Cornwell, 2001).

The state itself has seen a significant amount of scandal at the state and local level over the years. Mayors and governors have resigned and/or been sentenced to prison for financial improprieties relating to their positions. The collapse of the banking system in 1990s led to development of one of the strongest state ethics commissions and also several changes that ultimately strengthened the power of the governor (Moakley and Cornwell, 2001). Achorn (2003) and Fitzgerald (2002) suggest that despite recent reforms, the concentration of power in the legislature will probably continue to have some impact on access to offices by those not part of the “old boys” network over the next several years. It should be pointed out, however, that in 2003, this structure will change: the legislature passed and the governor signed a “separation of powers” bill. Once implemented, it will work to balance the relationship between the legislative and executive branches.

Women in Rhode Island received a substantial blow when the legislature was downsized from 150 to 113. This 25 percent reduction has had a severe impact on women’s representation. In the House, the overall reduction in women was significant—down to 22 from 34—and, according to Brown University Professor Darrell West “makes the House look even more ‘old boy’ than previously had been the case. …The Senate seems to be the bright spot” (Providence Journal, 11/13/02). He goes on to say that although the percentage was not reduced, the absolute loss of 34 women to 22 voices is signifi-
The consequence of the reduction was that not only did several experienced women leave the General Assembly, but also that, with fewer seats, the pool of potential candidates for statewide elections in the future has decreased.

Despite the statewide majority of white residents, African-American and Latino/a voters represent the majority of voters in the City of Providence. In the 2002 mayoral in Providence, a survey conducted by the Taubman Center at Brown University indicated that the African-American and Latino population organized early and contributed significantly to the election of a new mayor. This effort was a clear response to their perspective of not being previously represented in city government by the former mayor. The new mayor has been very visible in the community, hosting town meetings on the budget and education, and has presented an inclusive front. This mayor’s leadership (he is a former state representative) may signal an opportunity for more participation and engagement of women and people of color in Rhode Island government.

Political Culture and the Role of the Political Parties

Surprisingly very little has been written on the political culture within Rhode Island. There are certainly many articles about the corruption, patronage, questionable “arms length” appointments, and specific races documented, but only one book seems to offer a comprehensive overview of Rhode Island and its politics. Written by political scientists Maureen Moakley and Elmer Cornwell, Rhode Island Politics and Government seems to be the only comprehensive look at politics in the state, from culture, to education, special interests, to budget and policy. The book offers insight into the executive branch, General Assembly, political parties, courts and local government. By their own definition, it is a culmination of their “listening, observing, reading, and marginal involvement” (2001, xiv). Cheit (2002) criticized them because although providing a rich history of Rhode Island politics, the writing is soft on the structure that has created the corruption that Rhode Island has become known for.

The book offers little specific analysis of gender on Rhode Island politics other than to reinforce the advantage women candidates may have in the minority party. There is also no specific analysis of the impact of African-American and Latino populations, other than a review of the concentration of demographics. However, as Moakley and Cornwell indicate, the political culture of Rhode Island...
Island can be summed up as follows: “The more things change[d] the more they stay[ed] the same. From the colonial period on, the entire history of the state has fostered a view of government and politics as individualistic. That is, politics is seen as a resource to be used for individual or group advantage: those in power claim the jobs, create the tax benefits, and reap political and economic advantages in others ways” (Moakley and Cornwell, 2001, 216).

Nancy Mayer, the Republican former State Treasurer, expressed the same sentiment when describing the cyclical nature of closely held power in Rhode Island (Interview, 5/12/03).

**Early History**

**Colonialism and the “Independent Man”**

Rhode Island was founded in the 1600s as a white settlement for those fleeing religious persecution in Massachusetts. Founded by Roger Williams, this colonization set the tone for the long history of a small state that refused to fit the mold. Despite their Puritan and Quaker-leaning population, the leaders of Rhode Island, especially Roger Williams, were opposed to any relationship between church and state. This perspective led to the state becoming a safe haven for outcasts from other colonies as well.

Anne Hutchison—banished from Massachusetts for her religious beliefs—followed Roger Williams. “Anne Hutchins with her husband, children and 60 followers settled in the land of Narragansetts, from whose chief, Miantonomah, they purchased the island of Aquidneck (Peaceable Island), now part of Rhode Island” (Behling, 2003). It was the spiritual leadership of Hutchinson, a religious zealot, and her partnership with William Coddington that were responsible for negotiating with Roger Williams for land from the Sachem tribe for their new community (Garman, 1996).

Roger Williams’s views, likely due to his own experience in Massachusetts, fostered a relatively tolerant political culture. Despite its Puritan moralistic perspective, the state evolved as an individualistic political culture, one in which politics is a business and groups or individuals participate in it to advance their own interests (Moakley and Cornwell, 2001). One only has to look at the top of the statehouse, to what is known as “The Independent Man,” to understand how to characterize the individualistic (and gendered) politics of this state.
1800s to 1920s: The “Independent Woman”

Rhode Island’s early Quaker religious orientation had a profound impact on its role in abolition. It is in that framework that the women of Rhode Island became some of the most visible female activists in the abolitionist movement. During the earliest period of the anti-slavery movement, women were involved behind the scenes, in direct support of the initiatives of men. Throughout this early period, the economy was growing, population (and power) was becoming more concentrated in the Providence area, and landholding was still a barrier for many males in gaining access to the vote (Van Broekhoven, 2002). As slavery became non-existent in Rhode Island, it put the non-landholding male population in competition with the freed slaves for access to the vote and power. Between 1830 and the early 1840s, the state then became gripped by a depression and infighting, which was sometimes reported as a civil war (Van Broekhoven, 2002). The result of the infighting created such a distraction from their core focus that abolitionist organizations run by men essentially became defunct.

With the abdication of their male colleagues, women were forced to manage on their own in order to continue the cause. Although initially an informal network, women’s groups had their roots in religion and were, therefore, morally guided. These women used all the “tried and true” methods of grass root organizing. They developed literature, wrote articles, organized state and local societies, and published anti-slavery books and poems. They were visible in obtaining petition signatures and became effective in raising funds, through sewing circles and fairs, in order to keep their movement alive.

Women’s roles evolved over the course of the anti-slavery movement from one of behind-the-scenes supporters, to moral and religious leaders in the movement, to skilled professional organizers, and finally to not just moral but political engagement. They had become focused on immediate emancipation rather than just “slavery is morally wrong.” One key milestone was the 1837 speech by Angelina Grimke—the first women to give an antislavery speech in Rhode Island. Another was the appointment, in 1894, of a woman to run the state anti-slavery office (Van Broekhoven, 2002). The political activism of these early women is well documented in the journals and annual reports of several organizations. Through the works of the women in these organizations, one can see first hand how the anti-slavery movement evolved to suffrage advocacy in Rhode Island.
From Abolition to Suffrage

From the first petition list calling for a suffrage convention in 1868 to the 1892 copy of the original enactment of the Rhode Island Woman's Suffrage Association by the General Assembly, the character and commitment of early Rhode Island women to stay the course is quite clear, and admirable. These women demonstrated the political skills that have stood the test of time and are still in practice today in politics. Notably, their effective organization and engagement of membership as well as the methodical, systematic approach to political gains made during that 25 year history—election to juries, overseers of the poor, etc.—provide a framework for action for contemporary women.

Members of the Providence Women’s Christian Union and Providence Women’s Temperance Union were, like the abolitionists, more driven more by moral goals. They viewed suffrage as a means to a moral end: rather than seeking representative participation in government as matter of equality, these women worked hard alongside the suffragists with the hope that suffrage would allow them the vote they needed to pass temperance legislation.

Noteworthy in all of these early women’s organizations (including the Young Women’s Christian Association) is the inclusiveness of all women in their activities. The organizations’ annual reports of that period refer frequently to partnerships and relationships with similar activists in Massachusetts and Connecticut. In contrast to today’s attitudes against traveling “long” distances to other areas within the state, to Providence, or neighboring states, these earlier women capitalized on their “close proximity” to other activists and frequently traveled across state boundaries to meet them.

Of particular interest given the increasing diversity of the Ocean State is that they acknowledged the importance of—and their responsibility for—immigrant women in the cause of suffrage. In fact, a document in the Rhode Island Collection, written in 1917, was a primer on suffrage for women that offered information to non-citizens on “what to know,” “how to register,” and “how to vote.” It also provided citizen women instructions on mobilizing foreign-born women, communicating the importance of language and education, and assuring that immigrants had access to citizenship (Algeo, 1917).
Women’s Path to Political Office

The Elect : 1923-1948

With the first election after suffrage, two women ran unsuccessfully for seats in the Rhode Island House of Representatives. There was also a female candidate for Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of State. Rhode Island had been a very conservative state, especially about rights for women, compared to its counterparts in the Midwest and West. What would be the impact and how long would it take for a woman to be elected to office?

It took two years. The first woman elected to the Rhode Island legislature was Isabelle Ahearn O’Neill who served four terms in the House (1923-1930) and two terms in the senate (1931-1934). Nine more women followed over the next 25 years. (See Figure 3.) Although symbolically important, their overall influence surely was small since at no time did they reach more than 5 percent of the total legislature and, during most of these decades post-suffrage, the average percentage of women was just 2 percent.

Figure 3: Women in the Rhode Island State Legislature, 1923-1974

Although not a homogeneous group, the ten women that served in the legislature during this period shared one thing in common—the age when first elected. On average they were 48 years old when elected, half were married and had children. Most were homemakers and there worked full time. Only two would willingly retire, five lost elections and three were pushed aside.

During this period, candidates were chosen to run by the political parties for several reasons. Potential female candidates were usually selected based on their family political connection or the political activity of their family members. Equally important to note during this period is that women would be encouraged to run to hold onto seats when no male candidate was available, either as a sacrificial lamb or a “placeholder.” Frequently, they would be asked to serve, be elected, and would be removed from office once a male indicated interest in the seat. The recruitment of women was also influenced by the availability of uncontested seats in the weaker party in suburban areas.

**Women’s Activism: 1920-1948**

To gain insight into the political activities of non-candidate women during this period, we examined of The Rhode Island Elephant, a monthly publication of the Women’s Republican Club. Interestingly, this publication presented these women as politically savvy, knowledgeable on issues both state and national, and it offered many recommendations for activity at the local level. It kept women informed on candidates running and offered space for candidate position letters, issues, as well as editorials, voting instructions, and candidate endorsements. These women advocated strongly for equal pay and provided insights into how best women could work within their party structure and still have representation of their issues. Women were encouraged to get involved in local caucuses as it was expected that they vote the party at the state level. In this way, they would have input into who moves forward in the party.

Also of importance during this period was the League of Women Voters. The Rhode Island Collection contains reports on their early history, documenting the growth from a volunteer organization to a part-time and then full-time staff. It also describes in detail the committees and the impact and role they wished to play in the aid to good government. Throughout Rhode Island’s history, the League’s goals have been met while also becoming a key path for women to gain access to the political process.
The Elect: 1948-1974

During this period fifteen women were elected to the legislature, five more than in the previous three decades. Five women served in the state senate: Florence K. Murray (1949-1956); Gladys M. Brightman (who was elected to the House of Representatives in 1948, served five terms, and went on to the state senate serving from 1957 to 1962); Eleanor Slater (1967–1968); Millicent S. Foster (1967–1970); and Lila M. Sapinsky (1973–1974).

The profile of these elected candidates shifted a little. In addition to the importance of family politics, volunteerism had also become a path to political success. Reading the biographies of these women, one sees involvement in local civic organizations, party organizations, and other appointed boards and committees. It is during this period also that the League of Women Voters also became a place for launching statewide elected office.

There were also greater religious and ethnic diversity and career paths amongst the candidates. In addition to seven Protestants and five Catholics, a Unitarian and a Jewish woman were elected. Although no French Canadians were elected as in the first group, British and Irish were represented along with a Pole, a Russian, and one Czech. Retired women had also become more involved, raising the average age slightly over the over the previous ten women. These legislators also matched the stereotypical expectation of women—married, homemakers, and mothers. The first female lawyer was elected during this period. Furthermore, in 1951, Florence Murray was the first in the General Assembly to give birth while in office. In 1955, she became the first woman to chair a legislative committee and in 1980 was appointed to the Rhode Island Supreme Court.

These women had a higher potential for serving effectively and not being forced into retirement because a male candidate had become available. Legislative careers ended in the same way as their male counterparts, either through opting not to run, moving out of district (although the impact of husband's role in this is not fully developed), and three were beaten in subsequent elections. This group of candidates was also the first to really extend their public service once they left office through appointments to public sector roles.
The Elect: 1974-1990

The Women’s Movement and the Equal Rights Amendment would drive the experiences of the next cohort of legislators. With more women in the workforce and attending college, and the debate about women’s roles becoming more public, even women who did not embrace the “feminist agenda” were positioned to realize some benefit during this period.

Women began to make more gains at the local level as legitimate candidates for local councils and school committees. This marked the beginning of the “farm team” of candidates that would rise to the legislature with more political and government experience than their predecessors. There was now less stigma on a woman’s political activism and there was less a concern about the capabilities of a female candidate.

In the period of 1983 to 1990, twenty-three women served in each session and in 1990, twice as many women had been elected as had served in the previous 50 years. In other words, over half of all women who have served in the General Assembly, sat between 1980-1990.

The discussion about the need for a woman’s political caucus started around this time. It was during the 1980s that an informal group of women legislators began to develop a concept of a women’s political caucus. There was difficulty in reaching consensus on the nature of the group, be it social and collegial or agenda driven. After struggling to develop the vision during the 1980s, in 1988 the result was the formation of the Caucus of Women Legislators. Representative Giannani, current chair of the Caucus, has made it a priority to make sure that more is known about the specific legislative successes growing out of this group. She believes, and the research shows, that not enough information is publicized about this organization’s role in shaping Rhode Island government (Giannini, 2003). In fact, it is the continuation of this organization, along with the establishment of the Commission on Women that helped rate Rhode Island high in institutional support for women (IWPR, 2001).

As in other periods, the minority status of the Republican party represented the best opportunity for women candidates to enter campaigns. However, 68 percent of women elected continued to come from the dominant party and were overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, representing the actual political and religious characteristics of the state’s population.
This group of women was also the first that tried to “have it all.” Many were juggling jobs, families, and part-time legislator responsibilities. They were slightly younger than their predecessors. Most identified themselves as legislators who were women, rather than as women legislators. There were certainly differences in education, and how they came up through the ranks. Yet they also began to experience some real inroads and upsets. Redistricting in the 1980s hurt several women and a similar effect was noted in the 2002 redistricting (Fitzpatrick, 2002).

Adler and Lemons conclude that women can run and are as electable as men. Although they may not have as easy access to money, they are perceived as being more honest and trustworthy, findings not inconsistent with others who have studied the electability of women at the state and national levels (National Women’s Political Caucus, 1994). They do however acknowledge that despite greater work force participation, women are under represented in managerial and professional roles, a finding reinforced in The Status of Women in Rhode Island (IWPR, 2002).

The interesting dynamic which holds true today is that gender alone seems to make little difference in electability. Republicans have a more daunting task to capture open seats although Republican women do somewhat better than Republican men. Democratic men are two to three times as likely as Democratic women to be successful (Adler and Lemons, 1990). The impact of incumbency and endorsements continues to be significant.

The 1980s also saw a number of important “firsts” (see Figure 4). In 1981 Claudine Schnieder won election to the U.S. Congress—a seat she held for ten years. Active in the environmental movement, she founded the Conservation Law Foundation in 1973 and served as executive director until 1978. She first ran for the U.S. Congress in 1978 but lost; she ran again and won in 1981. Susan L. Farmer was elected Secretary of State in 1983 and served one term. Arlene Violet served as Attorney General for one term from 1985–1987. Violet’s career path may be unique: prior to becoming Attorney General for the state of Rhode Island, she was a Sister of Mercy. One other woman won statewide office: Kathleen Connell—the lone Democrat among all these women—was elected Secretary of State in 1987 and served until 1992.
FIGURE 4: HIGHLIGHTS OF WOMEN IN RHODE ISLAND POLITICS

1837 – Angelina Grimke gives first anti-slavery speech
1868 – First suffrage petition
1892 – Enactment of the Rhode Island Woman’s Suffrage Association by the General Assembly
1922 – Isabelle Ahearn O’Neill, first woman elected to legislature; serves 4 terms in House; elected to Senate and serves 1931-1934
1922 – Florence Murray first woman elected to Rhode Island Senate
1955 – Florence Murray first woman to chair a legislative committee; in 1956 she is appointed to the Rhode Island Superior Court
1980 – Claudine Schneider elected to the U.S. Congress; serves until 1991
1980 – Florence Murray appointed to the Rhode Island Supreme Court
1982 – Susan Farmer elected Secretary of State
1984 – Arlene Violet elected Attorney General
1986 – Kathleen Connell elected Secretary of State
1988 – Maria J. Lopes, first African American woman, elected to the House of Representatives
1988 – Caucus of Women Legislators formed
1990 – Melvoid Benson, African American woman elected to legislature, serves 1991–present
1992 – Barbara Leonard elected Secretary of State
1992 – Anastasia Williams, first Latina elected to legislature
1992 – Nancy Mayer elected State Treasurer
1992 – General Assembly Rhode Island Commission on the Status of Women amends the General Laws to create the Rhode Island Commission on the Status of Women, changing it from an advisory commission to a state agency
From 1990 to Today

It is in this period that so little has been written about the politics of female candidates in Rhode Island. However, due to the diligence of Professor Stanley Lemons, we are afforded a more current analysis of incumbency, party influence, and endorsements on the election of women.

Since 1990, 41 new women joined the ranks of those elected to the General Assembly. During this period also, one woman was elected to Secretary of State and one to State Treasurer. Despite slow and steady growth up through the mid-1990s, women’s representation has been eroding in recent elections. With the decline in the number of available seats due to the downsizing of the legislature, competition increased. (See Figure 2, which shows the relationship between the number of women who ran and the number elected).

Women Candidates for Statewide Office

The 1990s also saw a number of women run for—and win—statewide office. Barbara Leonard was elected Secretary of State in 1992 and served one term (1993–1995); Nancy Mayer was elected State Treasurer in 1992 and served three terms (1993–1999).

No discussion about Rhode Island women and politics would be complete without considering the election campaigns of Myrth York. York, a businesswoman, has run for governor three times, in 1994, 1998, and 2002. In 1994, she won the Democratic primary with 57.2 percent of the vote, easily beating her closest rival by almost 30 points. She lost the general election by less than 4 percentage points to Republican Lincoln Almond. (Independent candidate, Robert Healey, captured 9 percent of the votes.)

York came back four years later to run against Almond but lost again, this time by 9 percentage points: 44 percent to 51 percent (with, again, Healey garnering a smaller percentage: 6.6 percent). In 2002, facing not an incumbent but an open race, Myrth York ran again for governor of Rhode Island. She squeaked by a primary opponent but, despite spending $4 million of her own money, lost in the general to Don Carcieri, 45.3 percent to 54.7 percent.
The explanations for York’s losses over the past decade are, to be sure, numerous. It is possible that in Rhode Island, like Massachusetts, voters prefer a Democratic legislature and a Republican as the state’s chief executive. Carcieri’s newcomer status appealed to voters who were tired of the status quo. Her advertisements criticizing his corporate background may not have garnered points for her. Also, despite the fact that Democrats outnumber Republicans 3 to 1, Independents make up the majority of voters. Strong support among minority voters, especially Latinos, may have alienated white voters outside of Providence. York herself often commented that her opponents in the primaries did not extend much support in the general election. Finally, a review of political commentary yields some hints that are tied to themes that typically dog many women candidates, especially their appearance or personal features (See, for example, Carnevale, 2002). York herself attributes at least a portion—albeit not all—of her loss in 2002 to gender (Mello, 2002).

**Women of Color and Political Activism**

As noted above, women of color make up half of the state legislators of color compared to only 17.5 percent of white women as a percentage of white legislators. Three women of color currently serve in the House of Representatives: two African Americans, Melvoid Benson and Maxine Bradford Shavers, and one Latina, Anastasia Williams. Despite the fact that Latinos make up 30 percent of the population in Providence, there are no Latinas on the Providence City Council; Olga Noguera is, however, president of the Providence School Board. Latina women also seem to be playing a major role in promoting civic engagement and political participation in Latino communities. Melba Depe_a, for example, is currently president of the Rhode Island Latino Civic Fund and Executive Vice President of the Rhode Island Latino PAC. With Nellie Gorbea, President of the Rhode Island Latino PAC, they have become a force to be reckoned.

**Why is Women’s Representation in Rhode Island So Low?**

The question still begs an answer, why such a poor representation for women in Rhode Island—at the national, state, and local levels? Several other states in New England have seen a decline in their state legislatures since the “Year of the Woman” in 1992. The combination of this trend with the downsizing of the legislature and the decline in the number of women running for the legislature is one explanation.
Another important explanation for the decline in women's representation is that, throughout the state's history, the one-party system has had an impact on women's political access. Within the context of such a disproportionate majority, even minority candidates have struggled against a formidable political history. Republican women such as Senator June Gibbs (Interview, 4/30/03) and Lila Sapinsley, former state senator (Interview, 5/7/03), say gender is not the largest issue—it is simply more difficult to be a Republican in Rhode Island than to be a woman in the legislature (a comment consistent with the findings of Adler and Lemons (1990).

Democratic women legislators and candidates speak more frequently about the need to form allegiances with the "leadership" which means, according to some—solidifying a favorable place in the "old boys" network in the House. Until women's numbers increase substantially, this will likely continue to be true. Representative Giannini stressed the need for each party to invest more time in helping female candidates with (a) access to raising money, and (b) mentoring and counseling on successful campaign strategies. This view was supported by Senator M. Teresa Paiva-Weed who was quoted as saying of the 2002 election, "Look at the statewide offices today. None are women—not one." She went on to say later that she felt that the Democratic party needs to encourage and recognize more women and minorities in the party (quoted in Fitzpatrick, 2002).

**Media and Money**

Another important factor useful in explaining Rhode Island women's low levels of political representation is media and money. It is difficult to assess specifically the impact the media have had on women running for office. The Providence Journal does set the agenda for news (including for local television stations) and without systematic research one can only assess the Journal's impact on the election of women. Generally speaking the women we interviewed felt that they have been treated fairly and that several reporters from the Journal had been fair to women. From our interviews we were told that maintaining a healthy and friendly relationship with your local reporters (usually no more than two or three), assures that your views will be fairly represented locally, even if in contradiction to the editorial position of the paper. There has been nothing specific to indicate a serious bias against women, but
one can likely assume that the coverage has the same limitations as noted in studies of other state and national elections.

More likely the issue has been one of omission. As Representative Giannini indicated in our interview, getting equal coverage for women’s issues such as health care, senior issues, child abuse, etc., is extremely difficult despite continued press releases providing substantive information. Coverage in Rhode Island is more likely to focus on “good government” issues such as budgets, appointments, and the separation of powers.

Not only do the media impact women in elected office, how women view their role in politics and the media is important. Senator Gibbs felt in her experience of trying to recruit women to political life, that women’s fear of public speaking and consequently their presentation in the media, are significant barriers to their interest in running for office.

Former Treasurer Nancy Mayer added another dimension to an apparent reluctance by women to run. Mrs. Mayer explained that for many women competition at this level is foreign. Many of the women running for office grew up before the implementation of Title IX and equality in sports. Not having participated in team and competitive sports as their male colleagues have, women have missed the opportunity to learn to try, miss, and try again without taking it personally. The ability not to personalize a game, a match, or an election is key to success in the long term in political life. The media’s portrayal of a candidate who lost the election as a “loser” fuels the insecurity women may have, and thus unfortunately lowering the risk women would be willing to take in a campaign. Both Joanne Giannini and Nancy Mayer suggest that women have made more progress in business than in politics.

Money is a critical barrier for women running in Rhode Island. Rhode Island has a part-time, half-year state legislature, paying $12,000 for services (plus free health insurance). As in years past, candidates must be able to support themselves. Furthermore, if they do have a paid job, they must be able to leave midday, four days a week, for four months to fulfill their elected role. With women’s lower representation in professional and managerial positions (IWPR, 2002), these two factors may screen out a significant number of women. Businesswoman Myrth York spent $4 million of her own money on her campaign but most women are much less likely than men have those financial resources to run for statewide or higher level office.
Women’s Roles as a Barrier

In general, reasons for running are also different for men and women and that seems to hold true in Rhode Island. Men tend to view election as a career and a way to achieve more power. Women typically will run because there is something they want changed or something to be done better. According to Senator Rhonda Perry, “The idea of getting into the General Assembly is something men look to as an advantage in their careers….Look at the history of the General Assembly and the guys that have leveraged power and networked. Women just don’t do that as much” (quoted in Fitzpatrick, 2002).

What was and still is a significant barrier to more women running for office is the amount of responsibilities in addition to their professional life that they must carry. Each woman interviewed was able to frame the situation with this very real and somewhat exclusionary barrier. Although being a woman may not be a barrier to getting elected, it certainly has an impact on running. Senator Gibbs when asked to identify leaders, could note several strong women but felt they were constrained from moving forward because of their multiple responsibilities. Nancy Mayers and Lila Sapinsley both echoed the fact that women have to juggle more. Joanne Giannini pointed out that time was something few women had to spare.

Conclusion: Priorities and Strategies

In conclusion, women in Rhode Island have seen a decline in their political fortunes over the past decade. The number of women running for election to the legislature—and consequently women’s representation—has declined. Even when women have run with great determination, such as Myrth York, electoral success has been elusive. Women’s local representation is also relatively low. Women in Rhode Island need to address a number of important questions: First, how important is increased representation for women? They must understand together how, by being in office, they can influence policy, budgets, and outcomes for issues that they care about. Second, and perhaps more daunting, is providing an answer to the general public as to why more women must be elected. What would women do differently? Both Rep. Giannini and Sen. Gibbs could point to specific issues advanced solely due to the representation by women. The Caucus of Women Legislators is an important vehicle for raising awareness of the benefits to the general public of achieving a “critical mass” of women in elected office.
What women can do, that we are not doing enough of, is try and work together. The Rhode Island Commission on Women has plans to develop a database of women in elected office, women who may be interested in running, and young women, recent graduates, and others who can begin to see a career in elected office like their male counterparts. This is an excellent first step. More pressure must be brought to bear on party leadership for increased representation of women and their issues. More mentoring support must be made available. Most women’s issues today get coverage through the activities of advocacy groups, such as The Poverty Institute, RI Kids Count, OneRhodeIsland, the Rhode Island Foundation’s Women’s Fund, and the women of the Latino Civic Fund. Think how much more effective these initiatives would be if significantly more women had day to day access to the formation of policy in Rhode Island.

It is also important to remember that politics is more than just running for office. Through more outreach and networking, women need to combine their skills so that interested women have a support system for organization, fundraising, policy, and leadership. Rather than one woman having to “do it all” for one seat, maybe we can combine forces and provide those that will run with the tools and the feet on the street to make it happen. At the end of the 2002 election, Kate Coyne-McCoy, director of the state legislative training program for Emily’s List and also a volunteer on Myrth York’s gubernatorial campaign, best summarized the next steps. "No one gives up power," she notes. "You have to take it, and you have to do the work to take it, and we haven’t done that" (Donnis, 2002). Our history shows that Rhode Island women come from good stock. Rhode Island women historically have put their individualistic and independent streak to work for their goals. We still have a long way to go for equality and equity.

An analysis of the information gathered for this chapter suggests that women and women’s organizations should focus on the following priorities and related strategies for the next five years:

1. Identify and groom women candidates to rebuild the candidate pool.

2. To create a “farm team,” circulate a list of cities and towns that have no women on their city and town councils/selectboards. Utilize organizational connections and meetings to identify and urge women from those cities and towns to run for office. Research suggests that women need to be asked to run—so ask!
3. Publicize the workshops, trainings, mentoring opportunities, campaign schools, and university-based education programs that are crucial to women's political advancement. The Rhode Island Foundation's Women's Fund should regularly support the Campaign Skills for Women seminar sponsored by the YWCA of Northern Rhode Island. Other programs in neighboring states are also available. These include, for example, the Yale Campaign School in Connecticut, and the Graduate Program for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

4. Increase women's voter registration and turnout rates by at least 10 percent—to rates approximating Maine's 80 percent registration rate. An important pool of potential and untapped voters includes recent immigrants who await outreach by the political parties and women's organizations; another is the 18 – 25 year age group, which tends to vote less than older women.

5. Support dialogue and exchange of ideas between women of color and other women about campaign strategies that work and break down barriers that get in the way of collaboration and mutual support. Develop mechanisms of mutual support during election seasons.

6. Develop programs for young women from diverse backgrounds to gain the skills and support necessary to combine personal goals with political careers.

7. Create a synergy between women in business and women in politics. The former have talents that can help sustain the higher levels of fundraising women candidates need to win and the latter have contacts and connections important to women's business needs.

This list of priorities is not exhaustive. Different groups consider others more urgent. Further research, writing, and discussion are obviously needed. This chapter nevertheless offers a comprehensive look at the history, current status, and experiences of women in the Rhode Island and, hopefully, will energize women across the state to take concerted action to increase women's political participation, representation, and influence.

NB: All references cited in this Profile may be found in the Bibliography section of this volume.

Acknowledgements: Many individuals contributed to the research presented here. We would like to thank Dr. Toby Ayers of the Rhode Island Commission on Women, Lucille Caselli, Representative Joanne Giannini,
Senator June Gibbs, former Senator Lila Sapinsley, and former State Treasurer Nancy Mayer. They provided not only perspective, but also many personal experiences about elections both won and lost, that enriched and personalized our understanding of the research. And last, but certainly not least of all, we are indebted to Emily Stier Adler and J. Stanley Lemons for extending themselves and providing additional data covering Rhode Island women in the state legislature from 1990 to the present within the framework of the history that their original publication, *The Elect*, provides.
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State Profile: Vermont

By: Jennifer Herbert, Lynne Grayton, and Susanna Dilliplane

In Brief

At the National Level:
- Vermont is one of only five states that have never sent a woman to the U.S. House of Representatives or U.S. Senate.

At the State Level:
- Vermont holds the distinction of having elected a woman governor: Madeleine Kunin served from 1985 to 1991 and is the only female governor to serve three terms.
- Women currently hold two statewide elected offices: Deborah Markowitz was elected Secretary of State in 1999 and Elizabeth M. Ready was elected State Auditor in 2001.

TABLE 1: WOMEN ELECTED OFFICIALS IN VERMONT, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US Senate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US House</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt. Governor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other statewide (N=4)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State legislature (N=180)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Council/ Selectboard/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Two women currently hold leadership positions in the House of Representatives: Connie Houston is the House Majority Leader and Gaye Symington is the House Minority Leader.
Nine women have held statewide office in the state of Vermont; the state ranks 2nd in New England for women elected to statewide office (behind only Connecticut with 19, but ahead of Massachusetts and Rhode Island with 5 each, New Hampshire with just 2, and Maine with 0).

Vermont has one of the highest percentages of women state legislators in the nation: 31.7 percent (see Table 1).

Vermont ranks 1st in New England and 5th in the U.S. for the percentage of women in the state legislature.

This percentage represents, nevertheless, a decline since a high of 33.9 percent women in 1993.

At the Local Level:

Women make up only 12.5 percent of town selectboard members.

One of the eight city mayors is a woman; Thelma “Kitty” Oxholm is the mayor of Vergennes, the “smallest city in America” (State of Vermont, 2003).

Of Vermont’s 188 boards and commissions, 14 percent have a majority of women, 38 percent have a majority of men, and 48 percent are gender-balanced.

The State of the State

Vermont has the distinction of having one of the highest percentages of female state legislators in the country: 31.1 percent. Despite its small size and rural nature, Vermont women have been remarkably successful in getting women elected to the legislature, currently ranking 5th in the country (Center for American Woman and Politics, 2003). Women have held high level statewide offices as well: Madeline Kunin was elected governor in 1978 and served from 1979–1982. Currently two women hold statewide office: Deborah Markowitz is Secretary of State and Elizabeth M. Ready is State Auditor. Overall, there have been nine women elected to statewide office in the history of the Green Mountain State. Two women hold leadership positions in the Vermont House of Representatives: Connie Houston is the House Majority Leader and Gaye Symington is the House Minority Leader. Furthermore there are five women serving as Chairs of House committees, and four female Chairpersons on Senate committees.
On the other hand, Vermont’s nationally elected offices are held by men, as are the offices of governor and lieutenant governor. (See Table 1). Furthermore, there has not been a female governor since Madeleine Kunin left office in 1995, and there has not been a female lieutenant governor since Barbara Snelling held the position in 1996.

Vermont is one of only five states that have never sent a woman to either United States Senate or House; New Hampshire is the only other New England state in which this is the case (Center for American Women in Politics, 2003).

“Although women have made significant gains within Vermont Republican politics, as indeed they have in Democratic politics, they have not reached parity with men within the state’s political system” (Madden, 2002, 150). In addition, although Vermont’s ranking has slipped since 1993 (see Figure 1), when it was ranked 1st—and has a lower percentage of women in the legislature today than ten years ago, the state still has one of the highest percentages of women in its state legislature and is ranked, as indicated above, 5th in the nation on this measure.

![Fig. 1: Women in Vermont State Legislature, 1979-2003](source: Center for American Women in Politics (2003).}
Municipal office is an area, however, where women’s representation lags in Vermont. Only 12.5 percent of selectboard/city council members are currently women. This percentage is virtually the same as in 1992, but up compared to 8 percent in 1982. Women do represent higher percentages on the state’s school boards. In Chittenden County (which includes the city of Burlington and has about a quarter of the state’s population), for example, about 50 percent of the school board members but only 20 percent of the selectboard members and city councilors are women (Sutkoski 2003). Just one of the 8 city mayors is a woman.

While there is still a gender imbalance in local politics, women do serve on a number of boards and commissions, such as the Education Board, the Emergency Response Commission, the Nursing Board, and the Environmental Board. Members of Vermont state boards and commissions are appointed by several appointing authorities, including the Governor, the Secretary of State, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Senate President, Agency Secretaries, and various organizations, as designated by statute. Of Vermont’s 188 boards and commissions, 14 percent are majority women and 38 percent are majority men, while 48 percent are gender balanced (Vermont Commission on Women, 2001).

Although many women may not feel qualified to serve on a board or a commission, women must realize how vital local level politics are for their communities. It is important to have women serve on local boards in order to attain a variety of opinions and represent diverse interests within communities. Local boards also often act as initial stepping-stones for politicians. Former governor of Vermont, Madeleine Kunin, stated that she is “surprised more women are not on town selectboards. At the local level, it’s easier to combine family responsibility with politics. Maybe people feel that not much happens at the local level, but that’s obviously a misconception” (Sutkoski, 2003).

A member of the Vermont Commission on Women, Elayne Clift, says, “Women have made strides. Women are more active in civic life. Let’s keep that rolling and get these numbers up and get some parity” (Sutkoski 2003). As Jan Eastman of the Snelling Center for Government points out, women’s routes to leadership and skill sets and experience should be viewed as equal to that of men. Women are just as qualified as men to succeed in the public sector (Interview, 8/6/03). Although the number of women currently serving on
local boards is not high, there is great optimism for the future. Jan Eastman, for one, believes that because Vermont is a small state, it “is a great state for a woman to get a chance” (Interview, 8/6/03).

In terms of overall political participation, based on a composite index of women in elected office, voter registration and turnout, and women’s political resources, the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (2002) places Vermont 9th in the nation, earning a grade of C+. Vermont has no representation at the national level and has not elected a governor or lieutenant governor in some years. Municipal office holding is very low and, although the percentage of women state legislators is relatively high, it has declined since 1993. All of these disappointing statistics are surprising, especially in light of the fact that, as can be seen in Table 2 below, Vermont women have high voter registration (74.9 percent) and turnout rates (67.1 percent), second in New England only to Maine (80.3 percent registration and 70.5 turnout) (U.S. Census, 2000).

### Demographic Profile of Women in Vermont

With its mountainous terrain and vast open space, Vermont is known as the Green Mountain State. It is one of the most rural New England states, covering some 9,609 square miles (The Green Mountain State, 2003). Although Vermont’s early economic history was primarily agricultural, its economy developed over time, with notable changes beginning in the 1960s. Leisure-time (tourism) and high-tech industries grew considerably, although Vermont’s cottage industries continue to flourish (Almanac of American Politics, 2002). Vermont also experienced a population surge beginning in the 1960s. This increase was mostly due to interstate mobility; people came to Vermont from other states, settling permanently, and Vermont’s population grew from 390,000 in 1960 to 608,000 in 2000. Despite this high rate of population growth, Vermont’s population is small relative to the size of some of the other New England states. Vermont has the smallest population of all the New England states.
TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF VERMONT WOMEN, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population: State</td>
<td>608,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population: Women (% of total)</td>
<td>310,490</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women, by Race/Ethnicity (% of women)

- White (non-Hispanic): 300,656 (96.8)
- Black/African American: 1,268 (0.4)
- Asian: 2,840 (0.9)
- Native American*: 1,256 (0.4)
- Other: 708 (0.2)
- Multiple races: 3,762 (1.2)
- Hispanic/Latina (may be of any race): 2,761 (0.9)

Median earnings (% of men’s) $25,322 (78.0)

% Below poverty: 10.3
% Labor force participation (16+ yr.): 64.3
% BA/BS degree or higher (25+ yr.): 29.5
Women-owned firms (1997): 25.2
Women-owned firms: Sales/receipts (1997) $1,313,146 (3.9)
Voter registration rate: 74.9
Voter turnout rate: 67.1

Sources: U.S. Census (1997, 2000, 2002). *Native American includes American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Race/Ethnicity percentages do not add up to 100 because Hispanics/Latinas may be of any race.

As Table 2 indicates, Vermont is not a very diverse state racially or ethnically: 96.8 percent of women in Vermont are white and the minority populations are generally under one percent each.

Women’s economic status may be measured by median income ($25,322) and the ratio of women’s full-time earnings compared to men’s (78.0 percent). This ratio is the highest in New England, suggesting that, at least on this measure, Vermont women have attained a relatively high level of economic security. On the other hand, women’s poverty in Vermont is 10.3 percent; Connecticut and New Hampshire have lower poverty rates for women than Vermont. In addition, 64.3 percent of Vermont women participate in the workforce, and this number has been increasing over the past few decades. Finally, 29.5 percent of Vermont women have college degrees or higher, a rate second only to Massachusetts.
areas. In addition, women were seen as educators, participants in political organizations, and service workers; they were most likely to be elected to positions that fit these types.

**Party Politics**

Until relatively recently the Republican Party dominated politics in the state. For more than a century (1854–1958), Vermont was a one-party state. The Republican presidential candidate won the state of Vermont in every national election from 1856 to 1960. Furthermore, Republican candidates won the majority of local and state seats. Due to the small size of the state and the historical Republican dominance, the parties have been weakly organized. It was difficult for the minority party to organize because there were few voters to mobilize; party organization for the Republicans was unnecessary because the party won the election regardless of organizational strength (Appleton and Ward, 1997).

The past dominance of the Republican Party benefited women in many ways. Since there was limited competition for seats on both the local and state level, many women could be elected without having statewide party support (Madden 2002). Women also did not have to run primary campaigns, which in turn meant they could be elected without spending large sums of money on campaigning. In addition, from 1920 to 1964, Vermont had a one-town one-vote system, in which every town sent a representative to the legislature in Vermont. This created more political opportunities for women in the state because there was less competition for seats in the smaller towns and women did not need party support to win the election.

**Reapportionment and Immigration: Impact on Political Parties**

Two distinct events, reapportionment and increased immigration, occurred in the early 1960s and changed the political landscape in Vermont—especially for party politics. In 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court mandated reapportionment, which altered the structure of the Vermont state government.

Reapportionment changed the Vermont system of representation from a one-town one-vote system to a one-person one-vote system (Madden 2002). In order to equalize the number of voting citizens, a single legislative district now encompassed the populations of several smaller towns (Drown, Hammond,
The Political Context: Distinctive Features and Women’s Roles

Vermont historically has been an agricultural state. The capital of Vermont is located in the city of Montpelier, nestled in central Vermont. The founding mothers and fathers situated the capital near the geographic center of the state in order to make it easier for Vermonter to travel to the seat of government and to avail themselves of the central services provided there (The Green Mountain State, 2003).

Although the political institutions and political culture of Vermont have traditionally been male dominated, women were elected and appointed to local political positions even before they attained the right to vote. The traditional view of a woman’s place being at home raising the children clashes with the demands of rural life. A family is a working unit on a farm, and the women and children often participate in non-traditional roles as needed (Hallowell, 1989).

Women served as town clerks and school superintendents as early as 1880, and as town treasurers, notary publics, and library trustees as early as 1906 (Hallowell, 1989). After suffrage was achieved, women often held office as “part-time jobs that conferred limited power and were often seen as extensions of women’s housekeeping responsibilities, [and] female candidates for these positions were less threatening to male politicians and voters” (Madden, 2002, 108).

While some of the positions were seen as more secretarial in nature (and therefore deemed women’s work), Ann Hallowell (1989) argues that the nature and demands of rural society often outweighed traditional sex roles. She found this to be true of women in politics in Vermont between 1921 and 1983. She called this the “need/service thesis.” Women were needed to fill in when men were unable to run for office. Hallowell believes that women’s political roles and political offices change when extraordinary circumstances, such as a socioeconomic or political crisis, create a new or critical need; the availability of the position, however, depends upon the perceived power of the position (1989). Her research found that women from small rural towns were more likely to gain representation in local government because there were fewer men available to run for office in rural areas as compared to urban...
and Hayden 1973). The smaller Vermont towns no longer had individual representation, and were instead grouped into larger districts.

By reducing the number of seats in the Vermont House from 238 to 150, reapportionment greatly affected the number of women represented in Vermont state government. Frank M. Bryan, a University of Vermont professor of political science said: “It is not an exaggeration to suggest that Baker v. Carr case [ruled on by the Supreme Court] set the women-in-politics movement back twenty years in Vermont” (Madden 2002, 109). As noted above, the one-town one-vote system had helped women candidates, as there was less competition for seats in smaller towns and less need for party support. This “changed the political landscape for women seeking political office in Vermont” (Farmham 2002, 101). Candidates now needed party support to run in larger districts, and political party candidates replaced the small town candidates, who were, in many cases, women. The difficulties women experienced in this new system are reflected in the decreased number of women elected after reapportionment. House membership in 1965 was 46 women representatives; after reapportionment, there were only 21 women representatives. This represents a loss of more than half of the female representatives, which is a far higher percentage than the percentage of seats eliminated by reapportionment.

Reapportionment also restructured the political parties. The Democrats, in particular, received greater representation from their areas of strength (Thurber, 1968). The Democratic Party worked to strengthen its statewide organization, which further helped to improve the Democrats’ representation in the legislature. Democrats also began to win statewide offices, although Democratic candidacies tend to be candidate-centered, rather than dependent upon the organizational strength of the state party committee (Nelson, 1997). In addition, many of the newly settled residents, who began flooding into Vermont from the 1960s on, had more liberal views, which effected a change in the state’s overall political dynamics (Nelson, 1997). By 1981, Vermont had become a two-party state (Doyle, 1983).

Today, Vermont voters often split their tickets, dividing control of the constitutional offices between the parties. On the general election ballot, there is no party column, and the grouping together of candidates by office has facilitated this ticket-splitting (Nelson, 1997). Also, the Progressive Party maintains a relatively strong and enduring position as a third-party presence in Vermont.
politics, which often has a significant impact on the outcome of tightly contested races. Vermont is unique among the New England states in that it has no party registration for its primaries. Since 1970, Vermonter who vote in the primary receive a secret consolidated ballot that lists candidates for each party under each office, although voters may only vote for one party. The law was intended to encourage greater turnout in the primaries (Doyle, 1983).

The Historical Perspective

Voluntary Associations and Pre-Suffrage Organizing

The beginnings of women’s political organizing in Vermont can be traced back to the early 1900s, when women began forming social clubs. One such voluntary association was the Old Americans, a Burlington community and lobbying organization that was formed in 1906. In 1907, President Roosevelt suggested that the members change the association’s name to the Athena Club. In 1911 the Athena Club joined the State Federation of Women Clubs, which was founded in 1890. The purpose of this association was to educate women about issues of interest so as to effect change by informing the public and petitioning local and state representatives. Significantly, club members were able to influence the allocation of local and, at times, state resources. They focused primarily on initiatives that would improve the lives of women and children in their community (Madden, 2002, 192). One notable accomplishment of the club was the organization of the first restroom for women in 1913.

Women’s participation through these voluntary associations eventually led to the formation of suffrage organizations. Although the suffrage groups in Vermont were not well attended, they still served to influence the political process, helping to shape local and state decision-making. The mass meetings and organized marches, while not immediately successful, kept suffrage and other women’s issues in the public eye (Madden, 2002, 192).

Representation Post-Suffrage

Ever since passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, there have been women representatives in the Vermont State House. Edna Beard was the first woman elected to the state house in 1921; she served as a state representative and later as a state senator. Throughout the 1920s, women’s
FIGURE 2: HIGHLIGHTS OF WOMEN IN VERMONT POLITICS

1890 – Women founded the State Federation of Women Clubs

1921 – Edna Beard becomes first woman elected to the Vermont House of Representatives

1930 – Consuelo Northrop Bailey elected State Senator from Chittendon County

1930 – Bailey becomes first woman Speaker of the House

1935 – Vermont women legislators form chapter of OWLS (Order of Women Legislators)

1947 – Helen E. Burbank appointed Secretary of State

1954 – Consuelo N. Bailey elected Lieutenant Governor, serves one term

1968 – Madelyn Davidson appointed State Treasurer

1974 – Stella Hackel elected State Treasurer

1978 – Madeleine Kunin elected Lieutenant Governor, serves two terms

1984 – Madeleine Kunin elected first woman Governor of Vermont; first woman in U.S. to serve three terms

1992 – Barbara Snelling elected Lieutenant Governor, serves two terms

1998 – Deborah Markowitz elected Secretary of State, currently in office

2000 – Elizabeth Ready elected State Auditor, currently in office

organizations in Vermont functioned primarily as pressure groups to compensate for the small number of women in political office. Hallowell (1989) analyzed local election results in rural Vermont between the years of 1921 to 1941 and found that women were elected to the positions of clerk, auditor, school director, and treasurer. With the exception of school director (a position which women had been elected to for nearly half a century), and the town clerk, (which is a fairly powerful position, but not considered very masculine), these positions did not yield much power; they were viewed more as service positions and thus acceptable for women (Hallowell, 1989). At this local level,
women could participate in government without being politicians themselves, which also made these positions more socially acceptable for women to hold (Madden, 2002).

In 1935, the Vermont women legislators also formed a chapter of OWLS (Order of Women Legislators), which is still in existence today. The purpose of OWLS is to provide a forum for women legislators to understand the laws and to get to know each other better. Specifically, members of OWLS work to study, examine, and explain the bills, but the goal is not to vote as a block. In fact, in 1973, the legislators took an oath to vote their conscience, and the vote on various issues has been divided (Drown, Hammond, and Hayden, 1973).

1950s and 1960s

In the latter half of the 20th century, Vermont’s political landscape underwent significant changes, influenced by such factors as feminism, the population surge, and the opening of the interstate highway system. These changes led to the transformation to a multi-party state. For women, the “Second Wave” of the Women’s Movement influenced some women to enter politics by making them aware of women’s issues, and provided “the political and social background for which certain issues could be legitimately brought forward in the context of the legislature” (Aronson, 1985, 45).

During the 1960s the population of New Hampshire was more than double that of Vermont—as it is today. In the interest of maintaining the state’s economic livelihood, state political and economic leaders launched a significant advertising effort to encourage people to visit and settle in Vermont. This campaign proved successful, and Vermont’s growth rate sharply increased to surpass the national rate for the first time in about 150 years (Nelson, 1997). As noted above, many of the newcomers settling in Vermont tended to be more liberal than the “natives,” which affected the state’s overall political orientation. The new Vermonters included young entrepreneurs who felt their relatively small amounts of investment capital could go further and yield a greater economic return in Vermont than in Boston or New York City (Appleton and Ward, 1997, 325). There was also an influx of younger people who had had a counterculture upbringing and saw Vermont as a “hassle-free” place to live (Appleton and Ward, 1997). These new immigrants, many of who were
Democrats, tended to be more liberal than the native rural Republican Vermonters and have also led to what Jan Eastman, executive director of the Richard Snelling Center for Government in Burlington, terms “culture clashes” (Interview, 8/6/03). This population shift helped foster the growth of the Democratic Party, which meant that candidates now had to run primary campaigns and face stiffer competition for seats.

The Republican Party also changed, shifting more to the right in the second half of the 20th century. The party opposed the Equal Rights Amendment as well as legalized abortion. Although there has not been any research that analyzes how these positions affected the number of women who ran as Republican candidates in Vermont, the Party's opposition to these key women's issues may have affected female membership. Judith Livingston, a Republican State Representative, feels that more liberal, pro-choice women have been in a dominant position in many women's organizations in Vermont, alienating many other, more conservative women (Interview, 8/15/03).

Vermont has recently garnered attention as the only state that allows same-sex couples the same rights under state law as heterosexual married couples. Although Vermont does not legally recognize same-sex unions as marriage, granting gay and lesbian couples this “civil union” reflects Vermont's overall reputation as a progressive state. This progressivism may help to foster a political environment that nourishes opportunities for women of a certain political type, i.e., pro-choice and liberal on social issues, to participate more in Vermont politics. However, it is important to note that there was a significant bloc of the Vermont population, both male and female, that adamantly opposed civil unions. These Vermonters formed groups with large followings, such as Take Back Vermont and Who Would Have Thought, and fiercely voiced opposition to the civil union law (Almanac of American Politics 2002).

**Notable Women in Vermont**

A number of women have left lasting legacies after serving in the Vermont government. After Edna Beard's initial breakthrough as the first woman state representative, the number of women elected to the Vermont House and Senate grew steadily until reapportionment. More recently, two women stand out as notable “firsts” for women in Vermont politics: Consuelo Northrop Bailey and Madeleine Kunin.
Consuelo Northrop Bailey was a native Vermonter and grew up Lamoille County at the turn of the 20th century. Despite her Spanish name, Consuelo came from a strong Yankee family. She attended law school at Boston University and later became a successful criminal lawyer in Vermont. During her law career she met many prominent politicians both in Vermont and nationally, and her prosecution work became well known. She decided to run for office because she was interested in several pieces of legislation, and because she believed she could win with little campaigning. She was elected State Senator from Chittenden County in 1930. In her campaign for Speaker of the House, she faced opposition from male colleagues. She wrote, "My good friends, Attorney Feen and former Congressman Plumley, told me I could not win, but discounting their advice to stay out of the race, I started out on November 16 to contact each of the legislators" (Bailey, 1976, 247). She visited all two hundred and forty-four towns in forty-four days to ask each legislator for their vote, and ultimately triumphed, becoming the first woman Speaker of the House.

On January 7, 1954, Bailey announced her candidacy for Lieutenant Governor. At the beginning of her campaign she wrote five hundred personal letters in longhand to the members of the 1951 and 1953 legislative session, asking them for their vote. She had tough competition, but her determination led her to victory. She became the first female Vermont Lieutenant Governor in 1955.

Madeleine Kunin has the distinction of being the first woman Governor of Vermont (1985–1991), a triumph crowned by the fact that she is the only female in the nation to serve three terms. After her family immigrated to Vermont from Switzerland in 1949, Kunin went on to earn an undergraduate degree from the University of Massachusetts, an M.S in journalism from Columbia University, and an M.A in English literature from the University of Vermont (Kunin, 1994). She was elected to the Vermont General Assembly in 1972 and served three terms. During her time she was elected assistant Democratic Party leader and chaired the House Appropriations Committee. She was elected twice to the office of Lieutenant Governor in 1978 and 1980, and then became governor in 1985.

Kunin’s campaign for governor layered a traditional political campaign with a feminist flavor. She made personal connections with women all over the
state, and it seems that female voters were vital to her electoral success. Although Kunin was a key advocate for the improvement of children’s lives, education, mental health, and the environment, her greatest legacy was broadening women’s place in politics by appointing women from all walks of life to important positions within her administration. These women included Ellen Fallon as Legal Counsel; Elizabeth Bankowski, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs; Sallie Soule, Commissioner of Employment and Training; Susan Crampton, Secretary of the Agency of Transportation; Jeanne Van Vladen, Director of Labor and Industry; and Mollie Beattie, Director of Forests, Parks, and Recreation. Thus, Kunin’s governorship represented a two-tiered breakthrough—a woman Governor and women appointed to powerful executive positions.

Her battles to accomplish her goals are all discussed in her autobiography, Living a Political Life: One of America’s First Woman Governors Tells Her Story (Kunin, 1995). The book is a personal journal of her fears and experiences throughout her political career, as she describes the difficulties of being a woman in a prominent political position and her relationships with co-workers.

Making Strides Toward Greater Representation: A Theoretical Analysis

For women to make strides in Vermont they must continue to push the limits and continue to get elected to powerful positions and then, in turn, these women must help other women do the same. Madeleine Kunin wrote, “Despite the dramatic strides that women have made in almost every area—law, medicine, finance—and as participants in the labor force in every echelon, our share of political power is pitifully small” (Kunin, 1987, 209). She mentions several reasons for this progress, but among the most important are the great demands that women place upon themselves, even as they support and encourage other women to do the same. There needs to be a structure where women can show other women the ropes and act as a mentor. Kunin believes this is one way women can achieve political power. Jan Eastman, executive director of the Richard Snelling Center for Government in Burlington, believes that women often see the term “power” as a negative, instead of realizing that you have to be strategic and influence the people around you in a positive way; this is leadership (Interview, 8/6/03).
Although women have played an increasingly influential role in Vermont politics, there still exist many barriers that inhibit women’s ability to achieve elected office. In “The Political Socialization, Legislative Participation, and Productivity of Women Legislators in Vermont,” Linda Aronson (1985) highlights several situational, structural, and cultural barriers—including women’s political socialization—th at help to explain male dominance in the Vermont legislature.

Situational barriers are both women’s “homeboundedness” and the obligations of the role as homemaker, mother, and wife. Structural barriers are external forces, which include the political system as well as public attitudes towards women who run for office. Specifically, the structural barriers most commonly cited by the women legislators were financial cost, voter bias, and the “old boy” network.

Political socialization barriers that are societal in origin also have influenced women’s perceptions of themselves. Social conditioning was identified as a barrier by 35 percent of the women studied. “Roles have been internalized, either individually or collectively, which influence sex role behavior” (Aronson, 1985, 3). The development of a woman’s interest in politics is related to her political socialization, which is influenced by whether girls have opportunities to watch and learn from women who are in politics. Since men have dominated politics—with political office traditionally viewed as a man’s job—political socialization itself is a barrier for women, as there have been relatively few women role models in politics. Another, concrete barrier for women, as Judith Livingston, a Republican Vermont state representative from Bennington, points out, is the difficulty of living in the state capital for five months out of the year (Interview, 8/15/03).

Aronson (1985) interviewed women from the 1959, 1968, and 1978 legislative sessions, analyzing the political socialization, legislative participation, and productivity of women legislators. A significant cultural barrier proved to be the attitude that women legislators should not socialize with their male counterparts casually after work. This prevented women from being as effective as they could have been, as after-hours socializing was often a time when business ensued. During the interviews Aronson asked the Vermont legislators whether they experienced any gender discrimination. She found that women in the 1959 and 1968 legislatures were not consciously aware of any discrimi-
nation while running for office. In contrast, 67 percent of the women legislators from the 1978 session said they experienced sexual discrimination, which Aronson attributes to the Women’s Movement. This discrimination was often subtle and even unintentional; many women agreed, however, that it became worse as they tried to obtain leadership positions. Unlike earlier legislators, these women did not feel restricted by previous social mores and participated in the after hours social scene (Aronson, 1985).

Although these findings are now almost 20 years old, the barriers highlighted by Aronson are deep-rooted and continue to present challenges for women in politics today—even at the local level. Hallowell (1989), examining the various local positions that women were elected to in the years between 1921 to 1983, hypothesized that women would gradually be elected to more powerful positions, such as selectmen, as the decades progressed. However, while the total number of municipal elected women increased, they continued to serve mostly in service positions or positions traditionally designated for women, such as school director and clerk. Women made some gains in the offices of auditor and treasurer, but few were elected to selectboards or other more powerful positions. Hallowell also found that the perceived power of a position seems to have a direct effect on the number of women who are elected to office. As noted previously, there was a disproportionate drop in the number of women legislators after 1965 (greater than the more recent decline after 1993 discussed above), and the loss of seats in the Vermont House of Representatives after reapportionment increased the value and amount of power associated with each position. Today, women continue to be a minority in elected positions at the municipal level, as well as at the statewide and national levels.

**Media and Money: A Call for More Research**

There is no easy solution to the problem of how to get more women elected in Vermont. As discussed above, a number of barriers, both internal and external, exist for women seeking political office. Money and the media are two others. Little has been written on campaign finance for women in Vermont. As Aronson notes, the women she interviewed mentioned that, since they were excluded from the old boy’s network, certain sources of funding were not available to them. On the other hand, historically, Vermont women did not face much competition, so therefore they did not have to spend a great deal
of money on campaigning. Consuelo Northrop Bailey and others, for example, often pursued the door-to-door campaign approach. The expense of television advertising and the issue of campaign finance make money increasingly relevant today.

Media is another area that has not been explored in great detail. Vermont did receive a great deal of press in 1953 when a full page feature article including a picture of all 52 women legislators and speaker Consuelo Northrop Bailey in the State House appeared in Life Magazine. At that time, Vermont had the largest number of female legislators in the country, as well as the first women Speaker of the House. The article explains that the women legislators voted as a solid bloc to successfully elect one of their own as speaker. The article also identifies several reasons why there were so many women in the Vermont legislature, explaining that Vermont’s declining and aging population resulted in too few men for the number of legislative positions, as younger men moved out of state. The article also mentions changes that had taken place with a female as Speaker of the House -- the men minded their manners, flowers were placed in the halls, infants crawled around the floors, and the spittoons were hidden. A male legislator, when asked about what he thought of all the women, said, “They ain’t any worse than men,” which Life Magazine called an “ultimate tribute” (“Vermont Ladies…,” 1953, 21).

More recently, several of Kunin’s speeches have appeared in magazines, such as Ladies Home Journal. Her autobiography, as well as other articles that she has written herself, received considerable attention in the press. Judith Livingston feels that Vermont has a very liberal media, which she believes works to the advantage of very liberal women (Interview, 8/15/03). In general, little has been written on the effect media has had upon women in politics in Vermont. It is crucial that more research be completed on how the media and money factors into the election of women officials in Vermont.

**Conclusion: Priorities and Strategies**

Vermont is definitely a “mixed bag” for women in politics. It is only one of five states never to send a woman to the U.S. Congress or Senate. It has a remarkably low level of women in elected positions at the local level above school committee (i.e., city council/selectboard). On the other hand, women have consistently held a relatively large percentage of seats in the state legisla-
ture and a number of statewide offices. Compared to other states in New England, Vermont is surpassed only by Connecticut. Furthermore, Vermont holds the distinction of electing a woman governor, something Massachusetts, Maine, and Rhode Island have not been able to achieve. Vermont seems to be, relatively speaking, more politically receptive than the neighboring states.

More research needs to be done on a number of important issues beyond money and media. Of particular concern is the recent drop in the number of women legislators and the low levels of women in municipal office. Madeleine Kunin suggests one strategy: women who are already in the political system must encourage women who are in elected office or who wish to run. She writes: “Those of us already inside must continue to extend those invitations, make the place look good, and also offer the very practical help and advice that is needed” (Kunin, 1987, 211). Experienced women legislators, who have overcome barriers themselves, help other women to pursue political careers. By creating the networks that men have always had, women will be able to break down existing barriers, achieve elected office, and continue to thrive in public life.

An analysis of the information gathered for this chapter suggests that women and women’s organizations focus on the following priorities for the next five years:

1. An important priority must be to increase the numbers of women in municipal elected office above the school committee level. One strategy would be to circulate a list of cities and towns that have no women on their city councils/selectboards, and utilize organizational connections and meetings to identify and urge women from those cities and towns to run for office. Research suggests that women need to be asked to run – so ask!

2. To reverse the decline in the percentage of women in the state legislature, develop strategic mechanisms for identifying successors for women legislators who leave office.

3. Use the power of the women’s vote—and the high registration and turnout rate—to elect another woman governor.

4. Develop a long-term plan to identify and position a woman to run and be elected to the U.S. Congress. Given the educational levels, experience, and talents of current leadership, this should be a realistic goal.
5. Develop targeted efforts for young women to gain the skills and support necessary to combine personal goals with political careers.

6. Identify and publicize the workshops, trainings, mentoring opportunities, campaign schools, and university-based education programs that are crucial to women’s political advancement. The Secretary of State and Speaker of the House have developed several initiatives. Secretary of State Deborah Markowitz’s office sponsors an initiative to increase youth voter participation (Markowitz, 2000) and they are working together on a women’s leadership initiative.

This list of priorities is not exhaustive. Different groups may order them differently—or consider others more urgent. This chapter nevertheless offers a first look at the history, current status, and experiences of women in the state of Vermont and, perhaps, will energize women across the state to take concerted action to increase women’s political participation, representation, and influence.

NB: All references cited in this Profile may be found in the Bibliography section of this volume.

Acknowledgments:
Many women contributed to this chapter. We would like, in particular, to thank Jan Eastman, executive director of the Snelling Center for Government, and Judith Livingston, Vermont State Representative. To others, who preferred not to be identified, we also extend our appreciation.
Bibliography

Introduction

Knowledge is power. One source of knowledge about women in politics is the lived experience of women elected officials, candidates, activists, organizers, and other women concerned about having a voice at the table. The goal of the New England Women’s Political Summit is to bring these women together to share this knowledge in the service of increasing women’s political participation, representation, and influence across the region.

Another source of knowledge is, of course, the literature written on the subject of women in politics. This literature, while relatively limited in its examination of New England women, does provide the sociopolitical context, historical perspective, and theoretical analysis necessary for a complete understanding of the current status of women’s politics in these six states. We offer this bibliography so that participants at the Summit and others reading this volume may explore this written knowledge in more depth and at their leisure. We also offer this bibliography because we were surprised at how little has been written that systematically looks at New England women and politics. Further research is needed, and we hope that this bibliography, which is just a beginning, will be a valuable resource to those who follow.

The method of constructing this bibliography was as follows: Students in the Graduate Program for Women in Politics and Public Policy were assigned the task of conducting a thorough search of the literature on women and politics in “their” state. (They were working in small groups, one for each of the six states.) They then read through the literature and created an annotated bibliography, which was used in drafting the state profiles included here. We then selected works that provided the most relevant information on the current status of women in politics, sociopolitical context, historical perspective, and theoretical analysis.

This bibliography is the result of a careful review of the literature currently available on New England women and politics. It includes not only references cited in each State Profile but also other articles, books, reports, and publications we thought women might find useful for further reading or research. We attempted to be as careful and comprehensive as possible.
Many of the works listed are available in our special women’s collection at the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy. We regret any omissions or errors and invite the reader to forward citations we might have missed or left out to the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Carol Hardy-Fanta, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy
Boston, Massachusetts
September 24, 2003
State by State

Connecticut


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Maine

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164
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New England


National


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Data Sources

Data on the numbers and percentages of women in elected office at the state level and higher were gathered from the Center for American Women in Politics at Rutgers University. Other data are available from the Status of Women in the States Series produced by the Institute for Women's Policy Research in Washington, DC. Demographic, economic, and voting behavior were drawn from the U.S. Census 2000. The following list provides citations to these various sources.

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Institute for Women's Policy Research


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U.S. Census
The U.S. Census is a wealth of information on a large range of topics. We use the following sources to gather and analyze data on women’s demographic and economic status as well as voter registration and turnout. Some of the information is accessible in easy-to-use tables; other data were exported to and analyzed using statistical analysis software.


Political Resources for Women

Introduction

Women need access to many resources to increase their political representation and participation. The readings listed in the previous section—Bibliography—are one resource. Another is this directory of women’s political resources—organizations women may turn to for networking, skills and training, educational and public forums, access to money, and so on.

It was a challenge deciding what to include as a “women’s political resource.” After researching and gathering what we hoped was a comprehensive list of women’s organizations, we discussed what should be included. Should we include organizations that provide direct or social services? What about policy advocacy groups? How partisan should we be with respect to political parties or positions on a number of policies of concern to women?

After careful consideration we decided that, while attempting to be as comprehensive as possible, this could not be a complete listing of all women’s organizations. For that, we encourage you to go directly to the websites and publications of the women’s commissions in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, and the Women’s Policy Center/Women’s Lobby in Maine. Each state section begins with the way to contact these important resources. Each state’s YWCAs are other important resources for women at the community level of politics, and we have included their contact information at the start of each section as well.

We decided instead to focus on groups and organizations that are (1) explicitly political and (2) run by and for women. We also decided to include three other types of organizations: state committees of the political parties; women’s centers on university/college campuses; and the state commissions for African American, Latino/a, and Asian communities. These are resources that may not focus exclusively on women—or, for that matter, politics—but they serve as important sources of information nevertheless.

To finalize the list, we shared them with our Summit partners to reach a consensus on which groups to include. Indeed, the decision was difficult, and there are likely to be resources that have been omitted. We apologize for any
omissions but hope that this directory is nevertheless useful in the efforts to increase women's political participation and representation in your state.

The resources are organized as follows: Summit partners, an alphabetized list of political organizations, university/college-based women's centers, and political parties.
Connecticut

Summit State Partners

Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
18–20 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Ph: (860) 240–8300
Fax: (860) 240–8314
Director: Leslie Brett
www.cga.state.ct.us/pcsww/

YWCA of Connecticut
PO Box 2545
New Britain, CT 06051
Ph: (860) 225–4681 ext. 248 or 212
Fax: (860) 826–7026

Political Organizations (Alphabetical)

African American Affairs Commission
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue, Room 509
Hartford, CT 06106
Ph: (860) 240–8555
Fax: (860) 240–8444
Email: AAC@po.state.ct.us
www.cga.state.ct.us/aaac/

Central Connecticut Women’s Forum
5 Lilac Lane
Farmington, CT 06032–2722
Ph: (860) 674–0451
ccwf.bizhosting.com/

Conference of Women’s Organizations
4200 Park Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604
Ph: (203) 372–6567 ext. 172
Fax: (203) 374–0770

Connecticut Federation of Democratic Women
1017 Ellington Road
South Windsor, CT 06074
Ph: (860) 527–6663 ext. 229
Fax: (860) 528–3348

Connecticut Federation of Republican Women
109 South Avenue
New Canaan, CT 06840
Ph: (203) 966–8120
Fax: (203) 966–5902
Email: apyinsurance@msn.com
www.nfrw.org/statefederations/connecticut.htm
Connecticut National Organization for Women (NOW)
135 Broad Street
Hartford, CT 06105
Ph: (860) 524–5978
Fax: (860) 524–1092
Email: ct_now@yahoo.com
www.ct-now.org

Connecticut Women’s Council
280 Trumbull Street
Hartford, CT 06103
Ph: (860) 275–8303
Fax: (860) 275–8299
www.cwcouncil.org

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)
www.glad.org/Your_Rights/connecticut.shtml

Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission
18–20 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Ph: (860) 240–8330
Fax: (860) 240–0315
www.cga.state.ct.us/lprac/

League of Women Voters
1890 Dixwell Avenue, Suite 113
Hamden, CT 06514–3183
Ph: (203) 288–7996
Email: LWVCT@lwvct.org
www.lwvct.org

Manchester Republican Women’s Club
269G Oakland Street
Manchester, CT 06040

National Coalition of 100 Black Women
Greater Hartford Chapter
130 South Highland Street
Ph: (860) 232–9651
Contact: Patricia Frost
West Hartford, CT 06119

National Council of Negro Women
337 Vauxhall Street
New London, CT 06320

The Urban League of Greater Hartford
140 Woodland Street
Hartford, CT 06112
Ph: (860) 527–0147
rbrown@ulgh.org
www.ulgh.org
National Women’s Political Caucus of Connecticut
282 Silas Deane Highway
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Connecticut Order of Women Legislators (OWLS)
LOB, Room 4069
Hartford, CT 06106
Ph: (860) 240–8700
Fax: (860) 240–0207

Women Organizing Women
PO Box 1652
New Haven, CT 06507
Ph: (203) 281–3400
Contact: Barbara Pierce

Women’s Campaign School at Yale University
PO Box 3307
New Haven, CT 06515
Ph: (203) 734–7385
Fax: (203) 734–7547
Email: wcsyale@aol.com
www.wcsyale.org

**University/College–Based Women’s Centers**

Career Counseling Center of Hartford College for Women
University of Hartford
50 Elizabeth Street
Hartford, CT 06105
Ph: (860) 768–5619
Fax: (860) 768–5680
careercounselingcenter.org

Ruthe Boyea Women’s Center
Central Connecticut State University
1615 Stanley Street
Student Center Room 215
PO Box 4010
New Britain, CT 06050
Ph: (860) 832–1655
Email: womensctr@cssu.edu
www.ccsu.edu/WomenCtr/default.htm

Trinity College Women’s Center
Campus Box #702584
300 Summit Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Ph: (860) 297–2408
Fax: (860) 297–2057
www.trincoll.edu/pub/student–services/womans_center.html
Institute for Advancement of Political Social Work Practice  
University of Connecticut, School of Social Work  
1798 Asylum Avenue  
West Hartford, CT 06117  
Ph: (860) 570–9166  
www.socialwork.uconn.edu

University of Connecticut Women's Center  
417 Whitney Road, Unit 1118  
Storrs, CT 06269  
Ph: (860) 486–4738  
Fax: (860) 486–1104  
www.womenscenter.uconn.edu

University of Hartford Women's Center  
200 Bloomfield Avenue  
Ph: (860) 768–5275  
Fax: (860) 768–4554  
West Hartford, CT 06117  
uhaweb.hartford.edu/WOMENCTR

Yale University Women's and Gender Studies Program  
PO Box 208319, 315 WLH  
100 Wall Street  
New Haven, CT 06520  
Ph: (203) 432–0845  
Fax: (203) 432–8475  
www.yale.edu/wgst

**Political Parties**

Connecticut Labor Party  
ctlp.homestead.com

Connecticut Republicans  
97 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106–1633  
Ph: (860) 547–0589  
Email: chairman@ctgop.org  
www.ctgop.org

Democratic State Central Committee  
380 Franklin Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06411  
Ph: 860 296–1775  
Fax: 860 296–1522  
www.ctdems.org

Green Party of Connecticut State Central Committee  
PO Box 231214  
Hartford, CT 06123  
Ph: (888) 877–8607  
www.ctgreens.org/
Libertarian Party of Connecticut
PO Box 551
East Granby, CT 06026
Ph: (866) 296–2888
Fax: (860) 585–5857
Email: liberty@lpct.org
www.lpct.org

Natural Law Party of Connecticut
PO Box 61
Colchester, CT 06415
Ph: (860) 961–7546
Email: spowens@webmastersct.com

Reform Party of Connecticut
State Chair: Donna Donovan
Ph: (860) 635–7624
www.reformpartyct.org
Maine

Summit State Partners

Maine Women’s Lobby
PO Box 15
Hallowell, ME 04357
Ph: (207) 622–0851
Fax: (207) 621–2551
Email: MWomenL@aol.com

Maine YWCA
87 Spring Street
Portland, ME 04101
Ph: (207) 874–1130
Fax: (207) 874–1136
Email: llivingston@ywcaptldme.org
www.ywcaptldme.org

Political Organizations (Alphabetical)

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)
www.glad.org/Your_Rights/maine.shtml

League of Women Voters of Maine
PO Box 863
Augusta, ME 04332–0863
Ph: (207) 622–0256
Fax: (207) 729–8292
Email: lwvme@aol.com
www.curtislibrary.com/lwv

Maine AFL–CIO
PO Box 1072
Augusta, ME 04332–1072
Ph: (207) 622–3151
Fax: (207) 623–4137
Email: MaineLabor@aol.com
www.maineafclcio.org

Maine Federation of Republican Women
Email: mbsalib@loa.com
www.mainegop.com/mefrw

Maine National Organization of Women (NOW)
665 Saco Street
Westbrook, ME 04092
Ph: (207) 797–8508
Email: labrys@maine.rr.com
www.mainenow.org
Native American Women in Maine
A selection of websites with links on this topic include:
www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/9118/menu.html
www.abbemuseum.org/pages/exhibitions.html

**University/College-Based Women’s Centers**

Bowdoin Women’s Resource Center
Bowdoin College
7150 College Station
Brunswick, ME 04011
Ph: (207) 725–3620
Fax: (207) 725–3659
academic.bowdoin.edu/wrc/index.shtml

Women’s Resource Center
University of Southern Maine
132 Woodbury Campus Center
PO Box 9300
Portland, ME 04104–9300
Ph: (207) 780–4996
Fax: (207) 780–4463
usm.maine.edu/womenctr

Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Colby College
4000 Mayflower Hill Drive
Waterville, ME 04901–8852
Ph: (207) 872–3416
Fax: (207) 872–3802
www.colby.edu

Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service
96 Falmouth Street
PO Box 9300
Portland, ME 04104–9300
Ph: (207) 780–4430
Fax: (207) 780–4417
muskie.usm.maine.edu

Maine Ctr. for Women, Work & Community
University of Maine at Augusta
Stoddard House
46 University Drive
Augusta, ME 04030
Ph: (207) 621–3440
Contact: Gilda Nardone
Email: nardone@maine.edu
www.womenworkandcommunity.org
Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy
University of Maine at Orono
5715 Coburn Hall
Orono, ME 04469–5715
Ph: (207) 581–1648
Fax: (207) 581–1266
Email: mcsc@umit.maine.edu
www.umaine.edu/mcsc

Women’s Center for Ethics in Action in Alliance with Men
University of New England
Westbrook College Campus
716 Stevens Avenue
Portland, ME 04103
Ph: (207) 797–7261

Political Parties

Maine Democratic Party
12 Spruce Street
Augusta, ME 04332
Email: exec@mainedems.org
www.mainedems.org

Maine Green Independent Party
PO Box 2046
Augusta ME 04338
Ph: (207) 623–1919
Email: info@mainegreens.org
www.mainegreens.org

Maine Libertarian Party
PO Box 2020
Biddeford, ME 04005
www.lpme.org

Maine Natural Law Party
www.natural-law.org/states/Maine.html

Maine Reform Party
24 Republican Avenue
Oxford, ME 04270
Contact: Nelson Skip Foley
Email: mereform@megalink.net
www.spo-rpusa.org/maine/default.htm

Maine Republican Party
100 Water Street
Hallowell, ME 04347–1313
Ph: (207) 622–6247
Fax: (207) 623–5322
Contact: Dwayne Bickford
Email: Dwayne@MaineGOP.com
www.mainegop.com
Massachusetts

**Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy**
and the **Graduate Program for Women in Politics & Public Policy**

University of Massachusetts Boston
McCormack Graduate School
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125–3393
Ph: (617) 287–5541
Fax: (617) 287–5544
Email: cwppp@umb.edu
www.mccormack.umb.edu/cwppp

**Summit Partners**

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women
19 Staniford Street
Boston, MA 02114–2502
Ph: (617) 626–6520
TTY: 711– (617) 626–6520
Fax: (617) 626–6530
Email: mcsw@state.ma.us
www.mass.gov/women

YWCA Boston
140 Clarendon Street
Boston, MA 02116
Ph: (617) 556–YWCA
www.ywcaboston.org

Boston Women's Commission
Boston City Hall, Room 716
1 City Hall Plaza
Boston, MA 02201
Ph: (617) 635–4427
Fax: (617) 635–3031
Email: BostonWomen@ci.boston.ma.us
www.ci.boston.ma.us/women/

Cambridge Women's Commission
51 Inman Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
Ph: (617) 349–4697
Fax: (617) 349–4766
Email: nryan@ci.cambridge.ma.us
www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~Women

**Other Women's Commissions**

Brookline Commission on the Status of Women
Brookline Town Hall
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445
Ph: (617) 232–4604
Newton Commission on the Status of Women
Newton City Hall: Mayor’s Office
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02159
Contact: Marie Platti
Ph: (617) 552–7100
Fax: (617) 965–6885

Quincy Mayor’s Commission on the Status of Women
PO Box 2148
Quincy, MA 02269–2148

Somerville Women’s Commission
167 Holland Street
Somerville, MA 02144
Ph: (617) 625–6600 x 2400
Fax: (617) 625–2519

Springfield Commission for Women
42 Magnolia Terrace
Springfield, MA 01108

Worcester City Manager’s Advisory Committee on the Status of Women
Worcester City Hall
455 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Ph: (508) 799–1031
Fax: (508) 757–1040
Email: raymondl@ci.worcester.ma.us

Political Organizations (Alphabetical)

Caucus of Women Legislators
Room 4B, State House
Boston, MA 02133–1054
Ph: (617) 722–2266
Fax: (617) 626–0354

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)
30 Winter Street, Suite 800
Boston, MA 02108
617.426–1350
Email: gladlaw@glad.org
www.glad.org

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
133 Portland Street
Boston, MA
Ph: (800) 882–1649
Fax: (617) 248–0881
Email: Lwvma@ma.Lwv.org
Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus
59 Temple Place, Suite 449
Boston, MA 02110
Ph: (617) 451–9294
Email: mwpcchq@aol.com
www.mwpc.org

MIT Workplace Center/Sloan School of Management
One Broadway, 8th floor
Cambridge, MA 02142
Ph: 617-253–7996
Email: workplacecenter@mit.edu
www.web.mit.edu/workplacecenter

Mujeres Unidas en Acción
15 Medway Street
Dorchester, MA 02124
Ph: (617) 296–3016
www2.wgbh.org/mcbweis/ltc/wun/hompage.htm

National Organization for Women (Boston NOW)
214 Harvard Ave.
Boston, MA 02134
Ph: (617) 232–1017
Fax: (617) 232–4162
Email: massnow@hotmail.com
www.gis.net/~massnow/

North American Indian Center
105 South Huntington Avenue
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
Ph: (617) 232–0343
Fax: (617) 232–3863
www.bostonindiancenter.org/

¿Oíste?
37 Temple Place, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02111
Ph: (617) 426–6633
Fax: (617) 426–0324
www.oiste.net

The Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts
88 Warren Street
Roxbury, MA 02119
Ph: 617–442–4519
www.ulem.org

Women In
The Commonwealth Coalition
37 Temple Place, 5th floor
Boston, MA 02111
Tel: (617) 422–0118
Fax: (617) 451–7895
www.massvoters.org/ComCoal/womenin.html
The Women's Union
356 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116
Tel: (617) 536–5651, ext. 100
Fax: (617) 247–8826
Email: info@weiu.org
www.weiu.org

Women's Institute for Leadership Development (WILD)
(Women and Labor)
33 Harrison Avenue
4th Floor
Boston, MA 02111
Ph: (617) 426–0520
Fax: (617) 426–6519
Email: WILDLABOR@aol.com
www.wildlabor.org

University/College–Based Women’s Centers

Center for Women and Work
University of Massachusetts Lowell
850 Broadway Avenue
Suite #11B
Lowell, MA 01854–3000
Ph: (978) 934–4380
Fax: (978) 934–4053
www.uml.edu/centers/women–work

Center for Gender in Organizations/
Center for Women, Leadership & Management
Simmons School of Management
409 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
Ph: (617) 521–3800
Fax: (617) 521–3880
Email: somadm@simmons.edu
www.simmons.edu/gsm/cgo

Everywoman’s Center
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Wilder Hall
221 Stockbridge Road
Amherst, MA 01003–9315
Ph: (413) 545–0883
Fax: (413) 545–3843
www.umass.edu/ewc

Mary McLeod Bethune Multicultural Center
Clark University
950 Maine Street
Worcester, MA 01610
Ph: (508) 421–3720
www.clarku.edu/offices/dos/bmcc/index.shtml
The Radcliffe Public Policy Center
Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study
Harvard University
69 Brattle Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
Ph: (617) 496–3478
www.radcliffe.edu/pubpol/index.html

Tufts University Women's Center
55 Talbot Avenue
Medford, MA 02155
Ph: (617) 627–3184
Fax: (617) 627–3228
Email: womenscenter@tufts.edu
ase.tufts.edu/womenscenter

The Wellesley Centers for Women
Wellesley College
Center for Research on Women
Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481
Ph: (781) 283–2500
www.wcwonline.org

Women and Public Policy Program
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University
79 John F. Kennedy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
Ph: (617) 496–6154
www.ksg.harvard.edu/wappp

Women's Center
University of Massachusetts Boston
Ph: (617) 287–7986
Email: womens.center@umb.edu
Women's Resource Center
Massasoit Community College
One Massasoit Boulevard
Brockton, MA 02402
Ph: (508) 588–8900 ext.1484

Women's Resource Center
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
Phase II, House 6, Suite 017
285 Old Westport Road
North Dartmouth, MA 02747–2300
Ph: (508) 910–4584
Fax: (508) 910–6456
Email: ksylvia@umassd.edu
www.old.umassd.edu/WomensResourceCenter/
Political Parties

Communist Party of Massachusetts
550 Mass. Ave., 2nd Floor
Cambridge, MA 02139
Ph: (617) 354–2876
Email: jacruz@attbi.com
www.crosswinds.net

Constitution Party of Massachusetts
Email: hg@constitutionparty.com
www.constitutionparty.com

Democratic Party of Massachusetts
10 Granite Street
Quincy, MA 02169
Ph: (617) 472–0637
Email: Jane.Lane@massdems.org
www.massdems.org

Green–Rainbow Party of Massachusetts
PO Box 440353
Somerville, MA 02144–0353
Ph: (978) 688–2066
Email: office@green–rainbow.org
www.massgreens.org

Libertarian Party of Massachusetts
PMB #276
203 Washington Street
Salem, MA 01970
Ph: (800) JOIN–LPM
www.lpma.org

Natural Law Party of Massachusetts
70 Mokema Avenue
Waltham, MA 02451
Ph: (781) 736–0889
Email: ahall@rcn.com
www.natural–law.org/states/Massachusetts.html

Republican Party of Massachusetts
85 Merrimac Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
Ph: (617) 523–5005
Email: info@massgop.com
www.massgop.com
**New Hampshire**

**Summit Partners**

New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women  
State House Annex, Room 334  
25 Capitol Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
Ph: (603) 271–2660  
Fax: (603) 226–3829  
Email: kfrey@admin.state.nh.us  
www.state.nh.us/csw

YWCA of New Hampshire  
72 Concord Street  
Manchester, NH 03101  
Ph: (603) 625–5785  
Fax: (603) 624–4765  
Email: ywcanh@aol.com

**Political Organizations (Alphabetical)**

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)  
www.glad.org/Your_Rights/newhampshire.shtml

League of Women Voters of New Hampshire  
4 Park Street, Suite 200  
Concord, NH 03301  
Ph: (603) 225–5344  
Email: president@lwvnh.org  
www.lwvnh.org

National Organization of Women (New Hampshire NOW)  
7 Colby Court, Unit 4–252  
Bedford, NH 03110–6427  
Ph: (603) 749–8900  
Fax: (603) 224–0033  
www.nh.ultranet.com/~nh–now

New Hampshire Feminist Connection  
PO Box 311  
Concord, NH 03302–0311  
Ph: (603) 225–3501  
Email: nhfc@nhwomensweb.org  
www.nhwomensweb.org

New Hampshire Order of Women Legislators (OWLS)  
Contact: Representative Sandra Harris  
Ph: (603) 542–6973
New Hampshire Women's Lobby/Women's Policy Institute
PO Box 1072
Concord, NH 03301
Ph: (603) 224–9105
Fax: (603) 224–0033
Email: info@nhwomenslobby.org
www.nhwomenslobby.org

The Women's Fund of New Hampshire
46 South Main Street
Concord, NH 03301
Ph: (603) 226–3355
Fax: (603) 228–0395
Email: WFNH@ttlc.net
www.wfnh.org

University/College–Based Women's Centers

University of New Hampshire
President's Commission on the Status of Women
Batcheller House, 11 Rosemary Lane
Durham, NH 03824–3530
Ph: (603) 862–1058
Email: womens.commission@unh.edu
www.unh.edu/womens-commission

Women's and Gender Studies Program
Dartmouth College
6038 Carpenter, Room 2
Hanover, NH 03755–3570
Ph: (603) 646–2722
Fax: (603) 646–3761
Contact: Anne Brooks
Email: Anne.Brooks@Dartmouth.edu
www.dartmouth.edu/~wstudies/wsoffice.html

Women's Services & Gender Resources Center
Plymouth State University
17 High Street
Plymouth, NH 03264–1595
Ph: (603) 535–2387
Email: estiller@oz.plymouth.edu
abelard.cs.plymouth.edu/~cleblanc/wsc/

Political Parties

Constitution Party of New Hampshire
PO Box 121
Warner, NH 03278
Email: info@nhconstitutionparty.org
www.nhconstitutionparty.org
Democratic Party of New Hampshire
2 Beacon Street
Concord, NH 03301
Ph: (603) 225–6889
Email: office@nhdp.org
www.nhdp.org

Green Party of New Hampshire
PO Box 1589
Concord, NH 03302–1589
www.nhgreens.org

Libertarian Party of NH
PO Box 5293
Manchester, NH 03108–5293
Ph: (800) 559–LPNH
(603) 431–1618
Email: info@lpnh.org
www.lpnh.org

Natural Law Party of New Hampshire
65 Dorchester Way
Nashua, NH 03064
Ph: (603) 889–0170
Email: coridollettepeelee@yahoo.com
www.natural–law.org/states/New_Hampshire.html

Reform Party of New Hampshire
PO Box 704
Fitzwilliam, NH 03447
Ph: (603) 239–4394
www.reformparty.org

Republican Party of New Hampshire
134 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301
Email: jayne@nhgop.org
www.nhgop.org
Rhode Island

Summit Partners

The Rhode Island Commission on Women
260 West Exchange Street, Suite 4
Providence, RI 02903
Ph: (401) 222–6105
Fax: (401) 222–5638
Contact: Dr. Toby Ayers
www.ricw.state.ri.us

YWCA of Northern Rhode Island
790 North Main Street
Providence, RI 02904
Ph: (401) 831–9922
Fax: (401) 831–9928
Email: ywbranch@aol.com

Political Organizations (Alphabetical)

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)
www.glad.org/Your_Rights/rhodeisland.shtml

League of Women Voters of Rhode Island
172 Taunton Avenue, Unit 8
East Providence, RI 02908
Ph: (401) 434–6440
Email: hucourage@aol.com
Contact: Hollie Courage
www.lwvri.org

National Organization of Women (Rhode Island NOW)
PO Box 8413
Warwick, RI 02888
www.rinow.org

Rhode Island Women's Fund
One Union Station
Providence, RI 02903

The Urban League of Rhode Island
246 Prairie Avenue
Providence, RI 02905
Ph: (401) 351–5000
www.providence.edu/afro/students/genao/league.htm

Women Legislators Caucus of Rhode Island
Chairperson: Representative Joanne M. Giannini
www.rilin.state.ri.us/gen_assembly/GenMisc/womenlegislators.htm
University/College–Based Women’s Centers  

The Johnson & Wales Women’s Resource Center  
8 Abbot Park Place  
Providence, RI  
Ph: (401) 598–1138  
Email: coreen.martin@jwu.edu  
www.jwu.edu/prov/women/resource.htm  

The Sarah Doyle Women’s Center  
Brown University  
26 Benevolent Street  
Providence, RI 02912  
Ph: (401) 863.2189  
Email: sdwc@brown.edu  
www.brown.edu/Departments/Sarah_Doyle_Center/information.html  

Political Parties  

Democratic Party  
249 Roosevelt Avenue, Suite 202  
Pawtucket, RI 02860  
Ph: (401) 721–9900  
Fax: (401) 724–5007  

Green Party  
PO Box 1151  
Providence, RI 02901  
www.greens.org/ri  

Libertarian Party  
Box 603159  
Providence, RI 02906  
Email: RL Libertarians@yahoo.com  
www.rilp.org  

Natural Law Party  
136 Riverside Drive #2  
Tiverton, RI 02878  
Email: plautus1@msn.com  
www.natural-law.org/states/Rhode_Island.html  

Republican Party  
413 Knight Street  
Warwick, RI 02886  
Ph: (401) 732–8282  
Email: contact@rigop.org  
www.rigop.org  

Socialist Party of Rhode Island  
PO Box 2433, East Side Station  
Providence, RI 02906  
Email: sprhodeisland@hotmail.com  
www.sp-usa.org/spri
Vermont

Summit Partners

Vermont Commission on Women
126 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633
Ph: (802) 828-2851
www.women.state.vt.us

Vermont YWCA
64 North Street
Burlington, VT 05401
Ph: (802) 862-7520
Fax: (802) 862-0926

Political Organizations (Alphabetical)

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)
www.glad.org/Your_Rights/vermont.shtml

The Governor's Institute of Vermont: Asian Cultures
25 Hubbard Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
Email: jwang@zoo.uvm.edu
Ph: (802) 656-5765
Contact: Juefei Wang, Director
Email: jwang@zoo.uvm.edu
www.giv.org/inst/asia.html

Green Mountain Order of Women Legislators (OWLS)
67 Independent Green
Montpelier, VT 05602
Ph: (802) 229-0782
Email: Mpower9@yahoo.com
League of Women Voters
PO Box 8314
Essex, VT 05451
Ph: (802) 657-0242
Fax: (802) 658-7616
www.lwvofvt.org

Peace and Justice Center of Vermont
21 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05402
Ph: (802) 863-2345
www.pjcvt.org

Richard Snelling Center for Government
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT 05401
Ph: (802) 859-3090
Vermont Community Leadership Training  
PO Box 261  
Montpelier, VT 05601  
Ph: (802) 229-6377  
pctl@vtlink.net  

Vermont National Organization of Women (NOW)  
Chapter Information:  
www.now.org/chapters/vt.html  

The Women's Union  
c/o 35 Wilson Street  
Burlington, VT 05401  
Ph: (802) 658-1047  

Women of Color Alliance  
PO Box 1534  
Burlington, VT 05402  
Ph: (802) 660-0606  

University/College-Based Women’s Centers  

The Women’s Center at Saint Michael's College  
Box 221  
Colchester, VT 05439  
Ph: (802) 654-2667  
Email: WomensCenter@smcv.edu  
www2.smcvt.edu/womenscenter  

UVM President’s Commission on Women  
34 South Williams Street  
Burlington, VT 05401  
Ph: (802) 656-7892  

Political Parties  

Constitution Party of Vermont  
Email: info@constitutionpartyvt.com  
www.constitutionpartyvermont.com  

Vermont Democratic Party  
PO Box 1220  
Montpelier, VT 05601  
www.vtdemocrats.org  

Vermont Grassroots Party  
PO Box 537  
Waitsfield, VT 05673  
www.vtgrassrootsparty.org
Vermont Green Party
PO Box 1413
Montpelier, VT 05602
Email: exec@vermontgreens.org
www.vermontgreens.org

Libertarian Party of Vermont
Email: Brendankinney@yahoo.com
www.vtlp.org

Liberty Union Party
MC 4074
Middlebury, VT 05753

Natural Law Party of Vermont
1075 Butternut Hill Road, Unit 2
Waitsville, VT 05673
Ph: (802) 496–8026
Email: anne@pixelridge.com
www.natural–law.org

Vermont Progressive Party
PO Box 281
Montpelier, VT 05601
Ph: (802) 229–0800
Email: info@progressiveparty.org
www.progressiveparty.org

Reform Party of Vermont
898 Bushey Hill Road
Newport, VT 05855
Ph: (802) 766–4929
Email: procco@webtv.net

Vermont Republican Party
100 State Street, Suite 2
PO Box 70
Montpelier, VT 05601
Ph: (802) 223–3411
Email: VTGOP@VTGOP.org
www.vermontgop.org
National Political Resources

Political Organizations (Alphabetical)

Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
191 Ryders Lane
New Brunswick, NJ 08901–8557
Ph: (732) 932–9384
www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cawp

Center for Women in Government
SUNY at Albany
Draper Hall #302
Albany, NY 12222
Ph: (518) 442–3900
Email: cwig@cnsvax.albany.edu
www.cwig.albany.edu/

Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW)
1925 K Street NW, Suite 402
Washington, DC 20006
Ph: (202) 223–8360
Fax: (202) 776–0537
Email: info@cluw.org
www.cluw.org

Center for Women’s Policy Studies
1211 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 312
Washington, DC 20036
Ph: (202) 872–1770
Fax: (202) 296–8962

Emily’s List
805 15th Street NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005
Ph: (202) 326–1400
Email: information@emilyslist.org
www.emilyslist.org

The Feminist Majority Foundation
1600 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 801
Arlington, VA 22209
Ph: (703) 522–2214
Fax: (703) 522–2219
Email: mail@feminist.com
www.feminist.org
International Women's Democracy Center
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Suite 715
Washington, DC 20036
Ph: (202) 530–063
Fax: (202) 530–0564

Institute for Women's Policy Research
1707 L Street Northwest, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20036
Ph: (202) 785–5100
Fax: (202) 833–4362
Email: iwpr@iwpr.org
www.iwpr.org

Labor Notes
7435 Michigan Avenue
Detroit, MI 48210
Ph: (313) 842–6262
Fax: (313) 842–0227
Email: labornotes@labornotes.org
www.labornotes.org

League of Women Voters
National Office
1730 M Street Northwest, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036–4508
Ph: (202) 429–1965
Fax: (202) 429–0854
www.lwv.org

National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW)
National Office
8630 Fenton Street, Suite 934
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Ph: (303) 585–8101
Fax: (303) 585–3445
www.nacw.org

National Council for Research on Women
530 Broadway, 10th floor
New York, NY 10012
Ph: (212) 274–0730
National Federation of Republican Women
124 N. Alfred Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Ph: (703) 548–9688
Fax: (703) 548–9688
www.nfrw.org

National Organization of Women (NOW)
1000 16th St. NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
Ph: (202) 331–0066
www.now.org/
National Urban League
120 Wall Street
New York, NY 10005
Ph: (212) 558–5300
Fax: (212) 344–5332
Email: info@nul.org
www.nul.org

National Women's Health Network
514 10th St. NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20004
Ph: (202) 347–1140

National Women's Political Caucus
1630 Connecticut Avenue Northwest, Suite #201
Washington, DC 20009
Ph: (202) 785–1100
Fax: (202) 785–3605
www.nwpc.org/

NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund
119 Constitution Ave. NE
Washington, DC 20002
Ph: (202) 544–4470
Email: nowledf_dc@nowldefdc.org
www.nowldef.org/

WEDO: Women's Environment & Development Organization
355 Lexington Avenue, 3rd floor
New York, NY 10017–6603
Ph: (212) 973–0325
Fax: (212) 973–0335
Email: wedo@wedo.org
www.wedo.org

The White House Project
110 Wall Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10005
Email: admin@thewhitehouseproject.org
www.thewhitehouseproject.org/

The Wish List
499 S. Capitol Street, SW
Suite 408
Washington, DC 20003
Ph: (800) 756–9474
Fax: (202) 479–1231
Email: wish@thewishlist.org
www.thewishlist.org
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
1213 Race Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107–1691
Ph: (215) 563–7110
Fax: (215) 563–5527
www.wilpf.org

Working Women, AFL–CIO
www.aficio.org/yourjobeconomy/women

Women's Campaign Fund
734 15th Street Northwest, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
Ph: (202) 393–8164
Fax: (202) 393–0649
www.wcfonline.org/

The Women's Voting Guide
www.womenvote.org
Young Democrats of American Women's Caucus
733 15th Street
Northwest, 12th floor
Washington, DC 20005
Ph: (202) 639–8585
Fax: (202) 318–3221
Email: office@yda.org
www.women.yda.org

Political Parties

Communist Party USA
235 West 23rd Street
New York, NY 10011
Ph: (212) 989–4994
Fax: (212) 229–1713
Email: cpusa@cpus.org
www.cpusa.org

The Constitution Party
23 North Lime Street
Lancaster, PA 17602
Ph: (717) 390–1993
Fax: (717) 390–1996
Email: info@constitutionparty.org
www.constitutionparty.org

Democratic National Committee (Women's Leadership Forum)
430 S. Capitol Street SE
Washington, DC 20003
Ph: (202) 863–8000
www.democrats.org
Democratic Socialists of America
180 Varick Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10014
Ph: (212) 727–8610
Fax: (212) 727–8616
Email: dsa@dsausa.org
www.dsausa.org

Greens/Green Party USA
PO Box 1406
Chicago, IL 60690
Ph: (866) GREENS2
Email: gpusa@igc.org
www.greenparty.org

The Labor Party
PO Box 53177
Washington, DC 20009
Ph: (202) 234–5190
Fax: (202) 234–5266
Email: info@thelaborparty.org
www.thelaborparty.org

Libertarian Party
2600 Virginia Avenue NW, Suite 100
Washington, DC 20037
Ph: (202) 333–0008
Fax: (202) 333–0072
Email: hq@lp.org
www.lp.org

Republican National Committee (Winning Women)
310 First Street SE
Washington, DC 20003
Ph: (202) 863–8500
Fax: (202) 863–8820
Email: info@winningwomen.org

Socialist Party USA
339 Lafayette Street, # 303
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