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Will Women Gain Seats?: The 2012 Election and the Representation of Women in the Massachusetts Legislature

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Will Women Gain Seats?

The 2012 Election and the Representation of Women in the Massachusetts Legislature

Current Snapshot

	Total Number of Legislators	Percent Women	Percent Democrat	Percent Republican
House	160	23.8 (N=38)	84.2 (N=32)	15.8 (N=6)
Senate	40	27.5 (N=11)	100 (N=11)	0 (N=0)
Legislature	200	24.5 (N=49)		

Primary Election Outcomes

	Number of Women who Ran in the Primary Election			Number of Women who Won their Primary Race		
	Democrat	Republican	Other*	Democrat	Republican	Other*
House	46	16	1	38	14	1
Senate	15	1	0	13	1	0
Total	61	17	1	51	15	1

*Independent People's Party

The General Election

By the Numbers

A total of 68 women across the Commonwealth are running for the Massachusetts Legislature. This number includes one female write-in candidate.

House of Representatives

- In 23 races, women are running with opposition; *there are a total of 28 women in races with opposition as some districts have more than one female candidate.*
- 26 women are running unopposed.
- In 6 House races, women are running for open seats; *in 4 of these races, there are male candidates in the race, in one race two female candidates are running against each other, and in one a woman is running unopposed.*
- In 4 races, female incumbents face female challengers.
- 8 women are challenging male incumbents.
- 6 female incumbents are facing male challengers.

State Senate

- In 13 races, there are women candidates.
- In 5 races, women face opposition; one of these races has two women running for the seat.
- In 2 races, women are running for open seats; women are running against male candidates in both of these races.
- 1 male incumbent faces a female challenger.
- In 2 races, female incumbents face male challengers.

Women of Color in the Legislature

- According to the Women’s Pipeline for Change, women of color currently constitute 10.2% of the 49 women serving in the legislature.
- There are only 5 women of color running in the General Election in November and all five are incumbents. Four are running unopposed and one is running against a challenger.

Women in Legislative Leadership Positions

Legislative Leadership Positions Held by Women, By Candidate Status	
Senate	House
Therese Murray President of the Senate <i>(opposed by male challenger)</i>	Patricia A. Haddad Speaker Pro Tempore <i>(unopposed)</i>
Harriette L. Chandler Majority Whip <i>(unopposed)</i>	Kathi-Anne Reinstein Second Assistant Majority Leader <i>(unopposed)</i>
Karen Spilka Assistant Majority Whip <i>(unopposed)</i>	Ellen Story Division Chair <i>(unopposed)</i>
	Elizabeth A. Poirier Third Assistant Minority Leader <i>(unopposed)</i>

Sources:

Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy analysis of data collected from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Court. Retrieved October 18, 2012 from <http://www.malegislature.gov/>.

Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy analysis of data collected from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Secretary of State. Retrieved October 18, 2012 from http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/ele12/state_election_cand_12.htm.

Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy analysis of data collected from Boston Globe State Primary Results. Retrieved October 18, 2012 from <http://www.boston.com/news/special/politics/2012/state-primary>.

Possible General Election Outcomes

Potential Gains, Losses for Women in the Massachusetts Legislature, 2012				
	Most Number of Seats Could be Won by Women		Fewest Number of Seats Could be Won by Women	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
House	49	30.6	26	16.2
Senate	13	32.5	8	20.0
Total Legislature	62	31.0	34	17.0

About the POLITICAL PROGRESS FOR NEW ENGLAND WOMEN Project

The Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy (CWPPP) at UMass Boston’s McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies has been tracking the status of women in all levels of government in New England since 2003. The center is the only research center in the United States that regularly tracks women’s political representation at the local level across New England. The center also maintains a particular focus on women’s political leadership in Massachusetts.

Fact sheet produced by:

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