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Latina Political Leadership in Massachusetts

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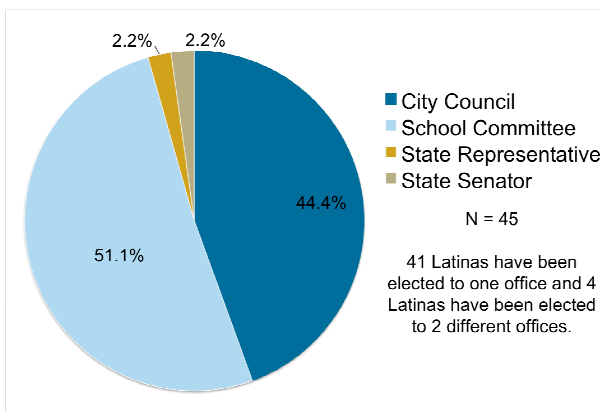
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Latina Political Leadership in Massachusetts

History of Latinas in Elected Office¹

- 41 Latinas have been elected to office in Massachusetts since 1983.
- The majority of Latinas elected have held municipal offices.
- Voters in 14 cities and towns out of 351 municipalities have elected Latinas to represent their constituents.
- The majority of elected Latinas have served in public office for six years or less.
- Grace Romero was the first Latina elected to office in Massachusetts, winning a seat on the Boston School Committee in 1983.
- Only one Latina has held a State Representative seat and one has served in the State Senate.
- In 1999, Cheryl A. Coakley-Rivera became the first Hispanic woman to hold a seat in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.
- In 2008, State Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz became the first Latina to be elected to the Massachusetts State Senate.
- No Latinas have ever run or been elected to countywide or constitutional offices.

Figure 1. Offices Held by Latinas in Massachusetts, 1984-2014



The Latino Population in Massachusetts: A Snapshot²

- Hispanics make up 10% of the state population – which is the 15th largest Hispanic population in the nation.
- The median age of Hispanics is 26.
- The median amount of annual personal earnings for Hispanics aged 16 and over is \$20,200.
- Top 5 cities and towns with largest Latino populations:

Lawrence: 73.8%
 Chelsea: 62.1%
 Holyoke: 48.4%
 Springfield: 38.8%
 Lynn: 32.1%

Latinas in the Commonwealth³

- The estimate of Latinas in Massachusetts is 378,037.
- The estimate of adult Latinas is 262,628.

The Latino Electorate in Massachusetts⁴

- There are 299,000 Hispanic eligible voters in Massachusetts representing the 11th largest Hispanic eligible voter population nationally.
- The majority (54.6%) of Hispanic eligible voters are female.
- 54.1% of Hispanic eligible voters are Puerto Rican.

Table 1. Elected Latinas, Massachusetts, 1984-2014⁵

Elected Official	Governing Body	Year(s) Served
Grace Romero	Boston School Committee	1984-1985
Betty Medina-Lichtenstein	Holyoke School Committee	1986-1993
Sara Garcia	Cambridge School Committee	1986-1987
Doris Cruz	Amherst School Committee	1989-1994
Marta Rosa	Chelsea School Committee; Chelsea City Council	1990-1995; 1996-1997
Leticia Ortiz	Chelsea City Council	1994-1995
Ruth Cruz	Holyoke School Committee	1994-1995
Carmen Rosa	Springfield School Committee	1994-1995
Susana Segat	Cambridge School Committee	1996-2001
Claudia Chuber	Salem School Committee; Salem City Council	1998-2001; 2002-2003
Cheryl Coakley-Rivera	Massachusetts House of Representatives	1999-2014
Julia Silverio	Lawrence City Council	2000-2003
Nilka Alvarez-Rodríguez	Lawrence City Council	2000-2009; 2014-present
Gladys Rivera Rogers	Malden School Committee	2002-2008
Mildred Santana	Holyoke City Council	2003-2005
Gladys Lebrón-Martínez	Holyoke School Committee; Holyoke City Council	2003-2011; 2012-present
Lillian Santiago	Holyoke City Council	2004-2007
Lucy Corchado	Salem City Council	2004-2007
Lucía H. Colón	Chelsea School Committee	2004-present
Gilda Ramirez	Chelsea School Committee	2005
Marilyn Vega Torres	Chelsea City Council	2006-2011
Martina Cruz	Lawrence School Committee	2006-2011
Grisel Silva	Lawrence City Council	2006-2011
Melinda Vega	Chelsea School Committee	2008-2011
María Carrasco	Lynn School Committee	2008-present
Sonia Chang Díaz	Massachusetts State Senate	2009-present
Ana Hernandez	Chelsea School Committee	2010-present
Sandy Almonte	Lawrence City Council	2010-present
Oneida Aquino	Lawrence City Council	2010-present
Denise M. Hurst	Springfield School Committee	2010-present
Zaida Luna	Springfield City Council	2010-present
Jeanette Velez	Chelsea School Committee	2011-present
Dolores Thibault-Muñoz	Fitchburg City Council	2012-2013
Jennyfer Cabral	Malden School Committee	2012-2013
Agma M. Sweeney	Westfield City Council	2012-2013
Estela Reyes	Lawrence City Council	2012-present
Saraí Rivera	Worcester City Council	2012-present
Francía Vieda Wisniewski	Greenfield School Committee	2013-present
Rosa Pérez	Springfield School Committee	2014-present
Hilda Ramírez	Worcester School Committee	2014-present
Jossie Valentín	Holyoke City Council	2014-present

Sources

¹ Cintrón, Ileana. Women’s Pipeline for Change. Based on several data sources including town and city clerk websites, Massachusetts Secretary of State, masslive.com, www.mariaslist.net, personal communications with Elizabeth Cardona, Gladys Lebrón-Martínez, Jordan Berg Powers, and Georgia Hollister Isman. In addition, *Latino Politics in Massachusetts: Struggles, Strategies and Prospects* by Carol Hardy-Fanta, Jeffrey Gerson (New York: Routledge, 2002).

² Demographic Profile of Hispanics in Massachusetts, 2011. Available at www.pewhispanic.org/states/state/ma. Last accessed 16 September 2014.

³ 2012 American Community Survey, estimates provided by UMass Boston’s Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy. Brazilians included in the estimates.

³ Race and Hispanic or Latino: 2010 - United States -- Places by State; and for Puerto Rico 2010 Census Summary File. Available at: <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.

⁴ Latinos in the 2012 Election: Massachusetts. Available at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/10/01/latinos-in-the-2012-election-massachusetts>. Last accessed 16 September 2014.

⁵ Cintrón, Ileana. Women’s Pipeline for Change.

Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy

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