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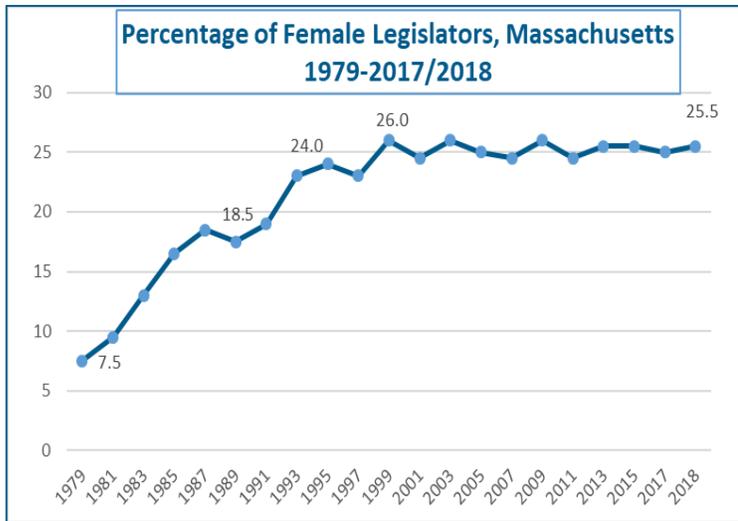


Fact Sheet

2 November
2018

Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy
John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies

Women’s Political Leadership in MA: Advances Expected, Gaps Remain



Progress Stalled for 25 Years: Legislative Gains Anticipated, Continued Underrepresentation of Women of Color

The rate of women’s representation in the legislature has hovered around 25% for more than two decades.

Women comprise **26%** of all state legislators and **women of color make up only 2%** of all legislators.

Massachusetts ranks 29th in the nation for the rate of women serving in the state legislature, according to the Center for American Women in Politics.

Record Numbers of Women Running in General Election

83 women are running for the legislature. If all of the women on the ballot are victorious, 77 women would serve in the legislature and comprise 39% of all legislators. If all three female District Attorney candidates win, women would constitute **27% of all District Attorneys** in the state.

History Already Made: First Woman of Color Elected to U.S. House from Bay State & More Women to Serve in Congress

Boston City Councilor Ayanna Pressley, running unopposed, will be the first **Black woman** elected from the Commonwealth to the U.S. House. Five women are candidates for the U.S. House (three Democrats, one Independent, and one Republican). Massachusetts could see up to 56% of its 9-member delegation female if all women on the ballot win.

Women of Color Remain Underrepresented at All Levels

With seven women who identify as racially and/or ethnically diverse running for a Massachusetts House seat and one woman of color on the ballot for the State Senate, **up to six women of color** may serve in the legislature, according to publicly available sources. No woman of color has ever been elected statewide.

The 2018 General Election: Key Context

U.S. Congress

- Historically, Massachusetts has had a poor record of gender, as well as racial parity when it comes to who represents the Commonwealth in D.C. According to the Congressional Research Service's recent publication on *Women in Congress (65th-115th Congresses)*, 17 states have sent more women to Congress than Massachusetts.
- Massachusetts has only elected five women to the U.S. House of Representatives: Margaret M. Heckler (R), Louise Day Hicks (D), Edith Nourse Rogers (R), Niki Tsongas (D), and Katherine M. Clark (D). The 2007 election of Congresswoman Tsongas ended a 25-year period during which no women from Massachusetts served in the U.S. House of Representatives. The first and only woman ever elected from the Bay State to the U.S. Senate is Elizabeth Warren, elected in 2012.

Statewide Office

- Over the history of the Commonwealth, only nine women have been elected as a constitutional officer. Four women have served as Lieutenant Governor starting with the election of Evelyn Murphy (D) who was elected in 1986. Republicans Jane Swift, Kerry Healey, and Karyn Polito have all been elected Lieutenant Governor and Swift served as Governor from 2001-3 when Governor Cellucci was appointed to an ambassadorship. No woman has ever been elected to serve as Governor of the Commonwealth and Massachusetts remains one of two states in New England to have never elected a female governor. The first woman elected State Treasurer was Shannon O'Brien in 1998 and first woman elected Attorney General was Martha Coakley in 2006.
- At present, women hold four of the six constitutional offices, reflecting the highest percentage of women in such positions at any given time: Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito (R), Attorney General Maura Healey (D), State Treasurer Deborah Goldberg (D), and State Auditor Suzanne Bump (D). No woman of diverse racial/ethnic background has ever served in statewide office.
- There are six women running for statewide office, including one woman of color, State Rep. Keiki Orrall (R), running for Treasurer and Helen Brady (R), candidate for Auditor.

The Legislature

- More women are seeking a legislative seat than in past years. In the 2018 election cycle, 105 women ran for the legislature in the 2018 primary [86 House candidates and 19 Senate] compared to 86 female legislative candidates on the 2016 primary ballot and 79 on the 2012 primary ballot.
- In the general election, five Democratic women are challenging Republican incumbents in State Senate races, with a total of 17 women running for a State Senate seat (with two running for same seat).
- Sixty-six women are vying for House seats. The vast majority (47 women) are Democratic candidates and 15 are Republicans, in addition to one Independent candidate, one Green-Rainbow, one Independent Progressive, and one Unenrolled candidate.
- 27 women on the ballot for a House seat have no opposition and 34 are incumbents.

	Fewest Number of Seats Could be Won by Women		Most Number of Seats Could be Won by Women	
	Number	%	Number	%
House	31	19%	61	38%
Senate	8	20%	16	40%
Legislature	39	20%	77	39%

Women of Color in the State Senate and House of Representatives

- Women of color currently constitute 2% of all legislators: three women of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds serve in the House (Reps. Juana Matias, Keiko Orrall, and Chynah Tyler), and one in the Senate (Senator Chang-Díaz).
- According to publicly available information, seven women of color are running in the General Election; two are unopposed incumbents (Senator Chang-Díaz and Representative Tyler) and two are running for the same seat. If all are elected, women of color would comprise 3% of legislators.

District Attorneys and Governor's Councilors

- At present, only one of the 11 District Attorneys (DA) is a woman and there are no women of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds serving as District Attorney. Very few female DAs have been elected in Massachusetts to date. With three women on the ballot, including the first Black woman to win the primary for Suffolk County DA, the number of women serving as DA could increase from one to three in the Commonwealth, and the first-ever woman of color could hold the position of District Attorney for Suffolk County.
- Of the eight Governor's Councilors currently in office, four are women and none identify as women of color, according to publicly available sources. All four female incumbents are on the ballot seeking re-election.

Sources

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Notes

Potential write-in candidates not officially listed on the Secretary of State's website or write-in candidates receiving fewer than five votes may not be included in data presented. Data do not include special primaries held due to vacancies. Calculations on current female legislators based on total number of legislators in office; vacant seats are not counted.

About the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy

Established in 1994, UMass Boston's Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies works to advance women's public leadership and policies that make a difference in the lives of all women. Through its innovative Gender, Leadership, and Public Policy graduate programs (certificate and Master of Public Administration), public forums, and policy-relevant and action-oriented research, the center works to ensure that the voices, expertise, and experiences of all women are valued and included in civic discourse and in policy making. In partnership with nonprofit organizations, private companies, and all levels of government, the center helps strengthen democratic values in public life and build a prosperous economy for all, particularly low-wage workers and women of color. All center initiatives and research explore the intersection of gender, race/ethnicity, and class on policy making and politics.

Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy

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