

# THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN NORTH CAROLINA POLITICAL PARTICIPATION



**Council for Women &  
Youth Involvement**  
Department of Administration



## ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Status of Women in North Carolina: Political Participation is the third in a series of four publications on women's status in North Carolina commissioned by the North Carolina Council for Women and Youth Involvement. The first publication, Employment & Earnings, was released in 2018, and the second, Health & Wellness, was released in 2019. The fourth, and last, publication will cover poverty and opportunity. The report builds on the Institute for Women's Policy Research's long-standing report series, The Status of Women in the States, which has provided data on the status of women nationally and for all 50 states plus the District of Columbia since 1996, including a Status of Women North Carolina report in 2013 and a series of briefing papers for specific geographic areas within the state. The Status of Women in the States publications use data from the U.S. government and other sources to analyze women's status across multiple issue areas. These reports have been used to highlight women's progress and the obstacles they continue to face and to encourage policy and programmatic changes that can improve women's opportunities.

## ABOUT THE NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

The North Carolina Council for Women and Youth Involvement, a division of the North Carolina Department of Administration, was established in 1963. The state agency advises the Governor, state legislators, and leaders on issues that impact women and youth by: raising awareness of the impact of violence against women and directing available resources to serve victims in communities across the state; providing resources, training, and outreach to support anti-human trafficking efforts; collecting and distributing information about the status of women in North Carolina; acting as a resource for local and regional councils/commissions for women; collaborating with other groups and individuals working on behalf of women; assuring that necessary services, policies, and programs are provided to those in need and strengthening existing programs; monitoring and ensuring accountability of state grant funding to support services for domestic and sexual violence survivors; and enhancing the quality of life of children and youth through leadership development and experiential education.

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Commissioned by the  
North Carolina Council  
for Women and Youth  
Involvement



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The equal participation of women in politics and government is integral to building strong communities and a vibrant democracy in which people of all genders can thrive. Women engage with the political process in a number of ways, from registering and voting, to running for local office, to supporting and working for campaigns, to running for a seat in the U.S. Congress or the Presidency. The participation of women in politics helps ensure that a broad range of issues are covered and addressed in government. While women constitute a powerful force in the electorate today and inform policymaking at all levels of government, women continue to be underrepresented at all levels and face barriers that often make it difficult for them to exercise political power and assume leadership positions in the public sphere. COVID-19 may also affect women's ability to participate fully in the electoral process, as the pandemic has raised concerns about people's ability to vote safely and securely.

*The Status of Women in North Carolina: Political Participation* presents data on several aspects of women's involvement in the political process in North Carolina, comparing North Carolina to other states and the United States overall. The report provides data on voter registration and turnout, female state and federal elected and appointed representation, and state-based institutional resources for women. It examines how women fare on these indicators of women's status, the progress women have made and where it has stalled, and how racial and ethnic disparities compound gender disparities in specific forms of political participation.



## KEY FINDINGS

The Political Participation Composite Index combines four component indicators of women's political status: voter registration, voter turnout, representation in elected office, and women's institutional resources. North Carolina ranks 35th in the United States overall, with a composite index score of -2.68, and receives a grade of "D" for the Political Participation Composite Index.

### *Trends in Women's Political Participation*

Between 2015 and 2020, North Carolina women's participation decreased in most Composite Index component areas, with an increase in only two areas: the share of women who voted and the share of women in the North Carolina state House of Representatives.

- While the share of women who voted in North Carolina has increased slightly (55.1 percent in 2012 and 2014 combined compared with 56.2 percent in 2016 and 2018), the share of North Carolina women who registered to vote declined from 71 to 68 percent.
- Women in North Carolina have seen a decrease in representation in statewide elected office from a little more than half in 2015 to a third in 2020.
- The share of women representing North Carolina in the U.S. House of Representatives decreased between 2015 and 2020 from 23.1 percent to 15.4 percent.
- While two female Senators have represented North Carolina in the past – Kay Hagan and Elizabeth Dole – there are no women representing North Carolina in the U.S. Senate in 2020.
- North Carolina has elected one woman Governor: Beverly Perdue served from 2009-2013 and did not run for re-election.
- North Carolina has seen an increase in the share of women state representatives, from holding 22 percent of seats in 2015 to 28 percent in 2020. At the same time, the share of women in the state Senate has declined from 24 percent to 20 percent.

### *Voter Registration & Turnout*

Voting is a critical way for women to express their concerns and ensure that their priorities are fully considered in public policy debates and decisions.

- While similar shares of women in North Carolina and the United States overall were registered to vote for the 2016 election (69 percent compared with 70 percent, respectively), women in North Carolina are slightly more likely to turn up at the polls and vote: in North Carolina, 62 percent of women voted in the 2016 general election compared with 59 percent who voted nationally.
- North Carolina falls in the middle third of the 50 states when it comes to voter registration and turnout nationally.
- When compared to women in neighboring states, women in North Carolina had higher voter turnout in 2016 and 2018 (combined) than women in Tennessee and South Carolina, but voted at lower rates than women in Virginia.
- The share of women registered to vote for the 2016 and 2018 elections (combined) in North Carolina varies by county. For counties where data are available, women in Hertford County and Robeson County are the most likely to be registered to vote at 56 percent, followed by women in Edgecombe County (55 percent). Women in Anson County (48 percent) and Madison County (50 percent) had the lowest average voter registration rates.
- In 2016 – the last presidential election year – White and Black women had the highest voting rates nationally, at 65.6 percent and 60.4 percent, respectively.



## ***Women in Elected Office***

Although women have become increasingly active in U.S. politics, the majority of North Carolina political office holders at the state and federal levels are male.

- North Carolina has two female members in the U.S. Congress; Representative Alma Adams and Representative Virginia Foxx.
- In North Carolina, women make up 25 percent of the North Carolina State Legislature: women hold 20 percent of state Senate seats and 28 percent of state House seats.
- Women in North Carolina hold slightly smaller shares of the seats in both the state House and Senate compared with the United States. In the United States, women hold 26 percent of state Senate seats and 30 percent of state House seats.
- Despite being the majority of North Carolina's population, women in North Carolina hold only a third of statewide elected executive office seats.
- Black women make up 30 percent of the women elected to the North Carolina State Legislature. However, women of color do not hold any of the statewide elected executive office seats in North Carolina.
- Outside of the State Legislature, women hold three state council seats: Secretary of State, (Elaine Marshall), State Auditor (Beth A. Wood), and Secretary of Labor (Cheri K. Berry). Additionally, women hold four of the Governor-appointed Cabinet Department seats: Department of Administration (Machelle Sanders), Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (Susi Hamilton), Department of Health and Human Services (Mandy K. Cohen, M.D), and Chief of Staff (Kristi Jones).
- Between 2017 and 2020, women made up 48.9 percent (1,170 of 2,395) of the North Carolina governor's appointments to state-level boards and commissions, including "power" boards and commissions – those that have policy-making authority.

## ***Women's Institutional Resources***

Institutional resources dedicated to helping women succeed in the political arena and to promoting and prioritizing women's policy issues play a key role in connecting women constituents to policymakers. These resources help magnify the voices of women in government and increase access to decision makers.

- In the United States: 44 states have state-level campaign trainings specifically for women, 34 states have women's PACs, 26 have women's commissions, and 12 have National Women's Political Caucuses.
- North Carolina ties with 20 other states by having three of the four institutional resources. North Carolina has at least one women-focused campaign training, a women's PAC, and a women's commission.
- North Carolina also has five county-level women's commissions or advisory boards, which are appointed by the County Commissioners, in Mecklenburg, Durham, Greensboro, New Hanover, and Asheville/Buncombe counties.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

As seen in the previous Status of Women in North Carolina reports on Employment & Earnings and Health & Wellness, there is a need for policymakers to support policies that reduce barriers and ensure equity for all women in North Carolina. As research shows, increasing women's participation in politics – both by making their voices heard and by running for office – means issues central to the health and

well-being of women will more likely be addressed through policy change. Although women have made significant progress in recent years in their overall political participation, obstacles persist at all levels. While women in North Carolina have been voting at higher rates in recent years, their representation in elected office has declined. Women's lesser economic resources in North Carolina compared with men's, their greater caregiving responsibilities, and their more limited access to important resources restrict their political participation.

Efforts to increase women's representation should include:

- **Ensure that all women have equal access to a fair electoral process**, including implementing a fair system of drawing states' political maps – to combat gerrymandering – and eliminating unjust voter ID laws that disenfranchise vulnerable women. Policies should also focus on removing barriers to voting for immigrant women who face additional language barriers.
- **Prepare strategies to ensure safety for voters.** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important for North Carolina to take extra precaution to ensure the safety of voters. This includes increasing electronic voter registration, expanding use of absentee ballots and mail in voting – including ensuring North Carolina has the ability to process a higher volume of mail-in ballots – and making election day a paid holiday so those who are able to make it to the polls have the time off from work needed to wait in longer, socially distanced lines. Additional activities could also include increasing the number of polling locations to help cut down the number of people voting at one location.
- **Recruit more women to run for office and higher office.** Expanding recruitment could include targeting women who are already leaders within their communities as well as ensuring that women who are in politics at the state and local levels are introduced to national networks.
- **Institute policies that will increase the number of women in elected office.** This could include instituting campaign finance reforms, policies and practices that ensure political parties promote women within the party structure, and quotas.
- **Improve access to opportunities for both mentorship and sponsorship.** Mentoring programs often help women build their networks and gain valuable insight and understanding of their political party. Sponsorship takes mentorship one step further and includes introducing women political candidates to moneyed connections and putting women's names forward as candidates for higher office.
- **Expand programs that provide education and training for women.** Program expansion could include increased support for existing education and training programs for women running for elected office or developing new programs in areas that lack training programs. This includes outreach and partnership with colleges and universities to reach younger women.
- **Expand resources that support women's involvement in the political process at all levels.** This could include activities such as expanding women's commissions to all counties across North Carolina to ensure greater representation and focus on issues impacting women and families at the local level. Programs and commissions should also do additional outreach to colleges and universities to provide young women with opportunities for political engagement in roles such as volunteers and campaign managers, among others.
- **Address structural barriers that prevent women from running for office.** Lack of affordable child care and paid leave are some of the barriers that prevent women, especially mothers, from running for federal, state, and local offices. Proving affordable child care, universal pre-k, and paid leave will ensure that women are able to care for their families while being involved in political campaigns.

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## INTRODUCTION

The equal participation of women in politics and government is integral to building strong communities and a vibrant democracy in which all women and men can thrive. By voting, volunteering, supporting and working for campaigns, running for office, and engaging in civil society as leaders and activists, women shape laws, policies, and decision-making in ways that reflect their lived experiences, interests, and needs, as well as those of their families and communities.

Public opinion polling shows that, though many of their policy preferences align, women do express different political preferences from men. A poll conducted by the Pew Research Center (2019) found that women express concern about issues such as education, health care, the environment, Social Security, and Medicare at higher rates than men. The engagement of all women in the political process—both voting and running for office—is essential to ensuring that these issues are addressed in ways that reflect the needs of women from diverse backgrounds. Research also shows women’s participation in the political process is critical to an effective legislative process. First, women are more active on the floor of the U.S. House (Pearson and Dancy 2011) and women sponsor more bills than their male colleagues (Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer 2013). While the legislative agendas for women are more likely to contain traditionally “women’s” issues such as education and health (Bratton and Haynie 1999; Gerrity, Osborn, and Mendez 2007; Reingold 2003; Swers 2002; Swers 2005), women in Congress do not restrict their agendas to these issues. In fact, they often have larger legislative agendas than their male counterparts as a means of building credibility as political leaders (Schmitt and Brant 2019). The participation of women in politics helps to ensure that a broad range of issues are covered and addressed in government.



This report presents data on several aspects of women’s involvement in the political process in the North Carolina, comparing North Carolina to other states and the United States overall. The report presents data on voter registration and turnout, representation of women at the state and federal levels in elected positions, and state-based institutional resources for women. It examines how women fare on these indicators of women’s status, the progress women have made and where it has stalled, and how racial and ethnic disparities compound gender disparities in specific forms of political participation. In addition to the data presented, the report presents profiles of five North Carolina women who either hold elected or appointed positions or work as organizational advocates. These profiles illuminate the many different ways women can participate in the political process and impact their communities in North Carolina.

## **Barriers to Women's Political Participation**

Today, women constitute a powerful force in the electorate and inform policymaking at all levels of government. Yet, women continue to be underrepresented in governments across the nation and face barriers that often make it difficult for them to exercise political power and assume leadership positions in the public sphere.

***I didn't decide to run because I needed the position, it needed me.***

**Representative Sarah Stevens  
Speaker Pro Tempore  
North Carolina House of  
Representatives**

When it comes to elected office, multiple factors contribute to fewer women than men running for office. Women are less likely than men to pursue politics as a career; rather, many enter politics to solve a problem in their community (Baer and Hartmann 2014) and tend to run for office later in life (Burrell 1994; Dolan, Deckman, and Swers 2010). Women are also less likely than men to decide to run for office on their own (Sanbonmatsu, Carroll, and Walsh 2009). They are also less likely to be recruited to run by political party leaders (Lawless and Fox 2010; Lawless and Fox 2012). Female candidates also report that "campaigning while female" – such as

experiencing uniquely gendered questions and media coverage – is a barrier to getting elected (Baer and Hartmann 2014; and see also the *Campaigning While Female* focus box below). Black, Latina, Native American, and Asian women face additional challenges such as racial bias, which compound campaigning while female (Hardy-Fanta and Lien. 2007).

In addition, women candidates are more likely to face funding challenges. Research shows that women worry more about raising sufficient funds (Sanbonmatsu, Carroll, and Walsh 2009), and while established female candidates raise as much money as men do (Burrell 1996), first time candidates struggle more with fundraising. Female candidates and office holders expressed difficulty with developing relationships with major donors and expanding and deepening donor lists (Baer and Hartmann 2014).

While women play a significant role in deciding outcomes of elections – making up a majority of registered voters – they also face numerous barriers when it comes to voting. Gerrymandering – the redrawing of state districts to benefit a political party – can lead to the concentration of Black voters in one or two districts (North Carolina State University 2019) and new restrictive voter identification laws negatively impact women – especially Black women (see focus box on Impact of Voter ID Laws & Gerrymandering below for more information). Voters in 2020 face additional obstacles, as COVID-19 makes it increasingly difficult to register and vote. News reports suggest that the pandemic has negatively impacted the registration of new voters – including youth who are voting for the first time and newly naturalized citizens (New York Times 2020a). While some states have increased the ability to vote by mail, political opposition to expanding the use of mail-in ballots and the lack of funding for printing, distributing, and processing the increased number of "absentee" ballots negatively impacts the ability to vote (New York Times 2020b). Social distancing and increased safety measures at the polls also cause barriers as they increase the time spent in line waiting to vote, making voting more difficult for those who work in low-wage jobs – of which Black and Hispanic women make up a disproportionate share.





**Table 1. Political Participation Composite Index**

States	Composite Political Parity Index			Women in Elected Offices Index		Percent of Women Who Registered to Vote, 2016/ 2018 Average		Percent of Women Who Voted, 2016/2018 Average		Women's Institutional Resources Index	
	Score	Rank	Grades	Score	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Score	Rank
Alabama	-2.08	30	D	-0.48	31	69.6%	16	54.9%	34	1.00	25
Alaska	-2.20	32	D	0.09	19	66.6%	29	56.1%	25	0.00	50
Arizona	5.82	7	B-	1.80	5	62.4%	40	55.5%	32	1.00	25
Arkansas	-7.37	50	F	-0.94	46	61.7%	43	49.6%	44	0.50	40
California	3.50	11	C+	1.41	7	54.5%	49	47.6%	48	2.00	1
Colorado	-0.02	20	C-	-0.02	21	65.4%	32	60.4%	12	1.00	25
Connecticut	-1.41	26	D+	-0.33	25	64.9%	36	54.3%	35	1.50	5
Delaware	1.51	15	C	0.22	18	67.5%	26	55.7%	30	1.50	5
Florida	-1.89	29	D+	-0.35	26	59.5%	45	51.8%	40	2.00	1
Georgia	0.19	19	C-	-0.05	22	65.1%	35	56.6%	22	1.50	5
Hawaii	-2.57	34	D	0.46	16	51.8%	50	43.7%	50	1.50	5
Idaho	-4.31	44	D-	-0.33	24	61.8%	42	52.8%	37	0.50	40
Illinois	1.77	14	C	0.55	14	67.3%	27	55.8%	29	1.00	25
Indiana	-2.36	33	D	-0.45	29	64.2%	39	52.3%	39	1.50	5
Iowa	5.58	9	B-	0.91	10	70.3%	15	60.1%	13	1.50	5
Kansas	2.44	13	C	0.26	17	69.5%	19	58.0%	19	1.50	5
Kentucky	-3.21	39	D-	-1.20	47	72.4%	9	56.0%	28	1.50	5
Louisiana	-7.01	49	F	-1.52	50	70.4%	13	55.7%	30	0.50	40
Maine	11.84	1	B+	1.83	4	79.8%	1	70.5%	1	1.00	25
Maryland	-3.50	42	D-	-0.77	38	67.8%	24	55.4%	33	1.00	25
Massachusetts	3.85	10	C+	0.63	13	65.2%	34	56.1%	25	2.00	1
Michigan	9.29	3	B	1.64	6	72.8%	7	61.8%	8	1.50	5
Minnesota	8.96	5	B	1.36	8	74.3%	3	64.6%	4	1.50	5
Mississippi	1.02	17	C	-0.42	28	77.9%	2	62.4%	6	1.00	25
Missouri	-0.63	22	C-	-0.82	41	73.7%	5	60.6%	10	1.50	5
Montana	-1.55	27	D+	-0.72	37	72.8%	7	65.7%	3	0.50	40
Nebraska	-3.29	40	D-	-0.69	35	69.6%	16	58.6%	18	0.50	40
Nevada	6.04	6	B-	2.55	1	59.3%	46	49.1%	45	0.50	40
New Hampshire	9.03	4	B	1.93	2	71.1%	10	61.6%	9	1.00	25
New Jersey	-3.37	41	D-	-0.63	33	62.3%	41	52.6%	38	1.50	5
New Mexico	0.34	18	C-	0.70	12	61.6%	44	50.3%	43	1.00	25
New York	-0.15	21	C-	0.50	15	58.8%	48	49.1%	45	1.50	5
North Carolina	-2.68	35	D	-0.87	43	67.8%	24	56.2%	24	1.50	5
North Dakota	-1.38	25	D+	-0.88	44	73.7%	5	63.5%	5	1.00	25
Ohio	-1.62	28	D+	-0.89	45	71.1%	10	59.3%	14	1.50	5
Oklahoma	-3.84	43	D-	-0.80	39	64.5%	38	51.7%	41	1.50	5
Oregon	5.61	8	B-	0.93	9	69.5%	19	60.5%	11	1.50	5
Pennsylvania	-2.11	31	D	-0.82	40	68.7%	22	57.4%	21	1.50	5
Rhode Island	1.45	16	C	0.83	11	66.8%	28	54.0%	36	0.50	40

Table 1. Political Participation Composite Index											
South Carolina	-5.95	47	F	-1.44	49	68.2%	23	56.1%	25	1.00	25
South Dakota	-0.91	24	C-	-0.25	23	69.6%	16	56.4%	23	1.00	25
Tennessee	-3.04	37	D	-0.58	32	64.7%	37	51.1%	42	1.50	5
Texas	-4.81	45	D-	-0.85	42	59.1%	47	47.2%	49	2.00	1
Utah	-6.30	48	F	-1.26	48	66.2%	31	57.9%	20	0.50	40
Vermont	-0.82	23	C-	-0.39	27	70.4%	13	59.2%	15	1.00	25
Virginia	-3.16	38	D	-0.63	33	68.8%	21	58.8%	16	0.50	40
Washington	9.91	2	B	1.89	3	70.6%	12	62.0%	7	1.50	5
West Virginia	-4.99	46	D-	-0.71	36	65.4%	32	48.2%	47	1.00	25
Wisconsin	3.32	12	C+	0.10	19	74.1%	4	67.4%	2	1.00	25
Wyoming	-2.94	36	D	-0.47	30	66.6%	29	58.7%	17	0.50	40
United States						66.7%		54.4%			

Source: See Appendix I for methodology and sources. Calculated by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.



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# TRENDS IN WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

## *United States Trends*

Between 2015 and 2020, the overall number and share of women in state legislatures, in statewide elective executive office, and in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives all increased (CAWP 2020a; Hess et al. 2015). Women's voter registration and turnout also showed signs of progress. Though voter registration and turnout were lower in 2018 than in 2016 – which is typical of a mid-term year versus a presidential election year – turnout for 2018 was the highest mid-term election turnout in four decades (See Hess et al. 2015; U.S. Department of Commerce 2019). The current numbers of women holding seats in Congress, statewide elective offices, and state legislatures are at an all-time high; however, the share of women in these positions still remains below women's share of the overall population. Though women have seen an increase in representation in the U.S. Congress, if the current rate of change remains the same since 1960, women will not achieve parity – 50 percent of seats – in the U.S. Congress until 2108 (IWPR 2020a).

- In 2020, 26 of the 100 members of the U.S. Senate (26 percent) and 101 of the 435 members of the U.S. House of Representative (23.2 percent) are women (Appendix Table 1). These numbers represent a **30 percent and 34.7 percent increase**, respectively, since 2015. In 2015, women held 20 of the 100 seats in the U.S. Senate and 84 of the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives (Hess et al. 2015).
- While women held 1,786 of the 7,383 seats in state legislatures across the country in 2015 (24.2 percent; Hess et al. 2015), in 2020 women hold 2,142 of the 7,383 (29 percent) seats. Women make up 513 of the 1,972 (26 percent) state Senate seats and 1,629 of the 2,142 (30.1 percent) state representative seats (Appendix Table 2).
- In 2015, women made up 25.7 percent of statewide elective officials (Hess et al. 2015). Women's share of statewide elective officials rose to 27 percent in 2020 (CAWP 2020g).
- In the 2012 and 2014 elections combined, 64.3 percent of women aged 18 and older registered to vote, and 50.6 percent went to the polls (Hess et al. 2015). In the 2016 and 2018 elections combined, 66.7 percent of women registered and 54.4 percent voted (U.S. Department of Commerce 2019).

## *North Carolina Trends*

Between 2015 and 2020 North Carolina women's participation in the Political Participation Index component decreased in most areas, with an increase in only two areas: the share of women who voted and the share of women in the North Carolina state House of Representatives.

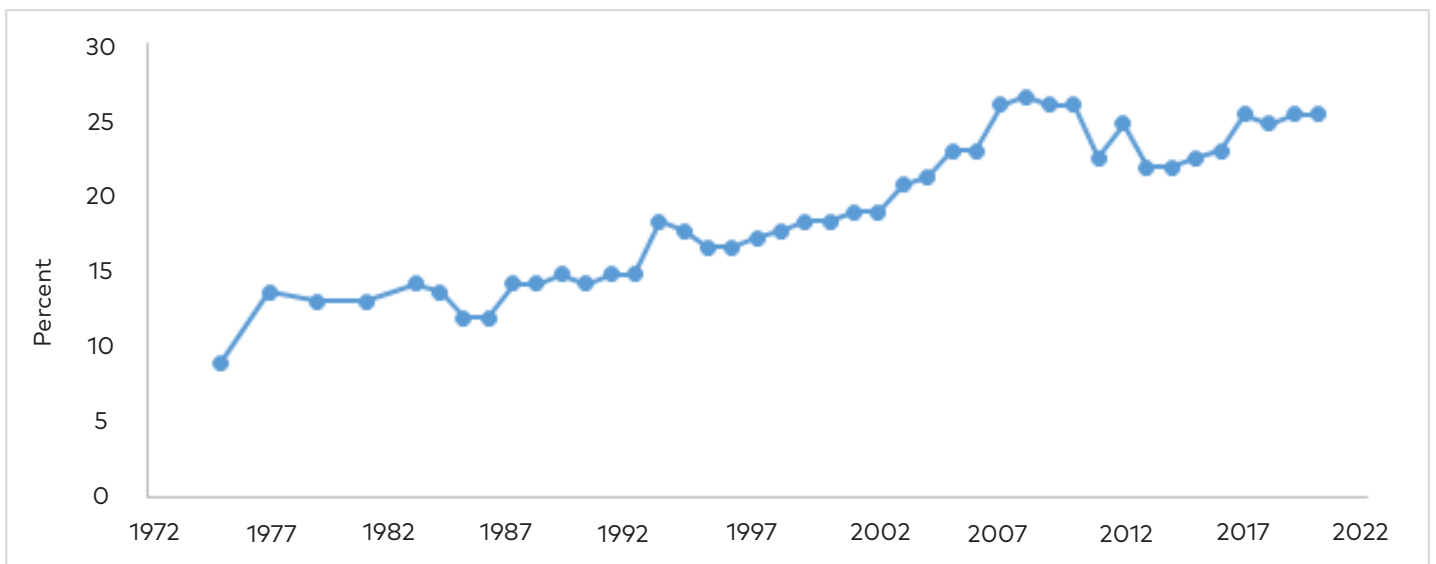
- While women in North Carolina are showing up to vote at higher proportions in 2020, fewer North Carolina women are registered to vote. In the 2012/2014 elections, 70.6 percent of North Carolina women registered to vote, and 55.1 percent of North Carolina women went to the polls. While the share of North Carolina women who registered to vote declined to 67.8 percent in the 2016/2018 elections, the share of North Carolina women who cast their vote increased to 56.2 percent (Table 1; Hess et al. 2015).
- Women in North Carolina have seen a decrease in representation in statewide elected office: in 2015, North Carolina women held more than half (55 percent) of the statewide elected offices, but this fell to a third (33 percent) of statewide elected offices in 2020.
- The share of women representing North Carolina in the U.S. House of Representatives decreased between 2015 and 2020: while 23.1 percent of North Carolina's U.S. House Representatives were women in 2015, this has fallen to 15.4 percent in 2020 (Appendix Table 1; Hess et al. 2015). At the same time, the number of women representing North Carolina in the U.S. Senate remains zero.



- While North Carolina has seen an increase in the share of women state representatives, the share of women in the state Senate has declined between 2015 and 2020. Women in North Carolina hold 20 percent of the seats in the state Senate, a drop from 24 percent in 2015. However, the share of women representatives in North Carolina has increased from 21.7 percent in 2015 to 27.5 percent in 2020 (Appendix Table 2; Hess et al. 2015).
- Since 1975, the total share of women in the North Carolina state legislature has increased from 8.8 to its peak at 26.9 percent in 2008 and has since dropped to 25.3 percent in 2020 (Figure 1). According to IWPR's calculations, if the rate of progress in North Carolina remains the same since 1975, women will reach parity in the State Legislature in 2084 (IWPR 2020b).

**If the rate of progress in North Carolina remains the same, women will have to wait until 2084 to reach parity in the State Legislature.**

**Figure 1. Share of Women in North Carolina State Legislatures, 1975-2020**



Source: IWPR compilation of data from CAWP 2020d.



## Cheri Beasley

Chief Justice, North Carolina Supreme Court

**"The legal profession has historically been male-dominated. Women bring different professional perspectives and life perspectives to this work, breaking many of the barriers that communities face in accessing justice. Women are instrumental in strengthening the rule of law,"** says Chief Justice Cheri Beasley.

Chief Justice Beasley has spent over 20 years dedicated to the legal profession. After serving as a district court judge in Cumberland County for a decade, she was elected to the North Carolina Court of Appeals in 2008. Chief Justice Beasley later served as an associate justice on the Supreme Court of North Carolina for seven years before being appointed by Governor Roy Cooper in 2019 to lead the state supreme court, becoming the first African American woman in the Court's 200-year history to serve as Chief Justice.

Chief Justice Beasley is responsible for numerous administrative and operational duties as the leader of the Judicial Branch. As Chief Justice, she has two distinct roles. First, Chief Justice Beasley oversees the operations of the Supreme Court, hearing and deciding cases alongside the six associate justices. Second, she leads the Judicial Branch and its nearly 6,500 employees – elected judges, district attorneys, clerks of court, public defenders, magistrates, and judicial support staff – working to ensure North Carolina courts are running properly, hearing cases in a timely manner, and treating litigants fairly.

Chief Justice Beasley is an advocate for fair and accessible courts, using technology to expand accessibility through the eCourts system. This system has allowed for court services to be available remotely, which has removed barriers to access, especially for those living in rural communities and individuals who are victims of domestic violence.

In addition, Chief Justice Beasley is leading partnerships between school administrators, law enforcement, and the courts to keep young people out of the juvenile justice system. Chief Justice Beasley is committed to reducing interactions with the juvenile justice system, understanding that frequent interactions with juvenile court increases an individual's involvement in the criminal justice system as an adult.

Chief Justice Beasley acknowledges her important role and believes she is part of people's lives in a very impactful way. She says, **"As a judge, I am in a very special place to make tough decisions that affect people, families, and communities."**

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## VOTER REGISTRATION AND TURNOUT

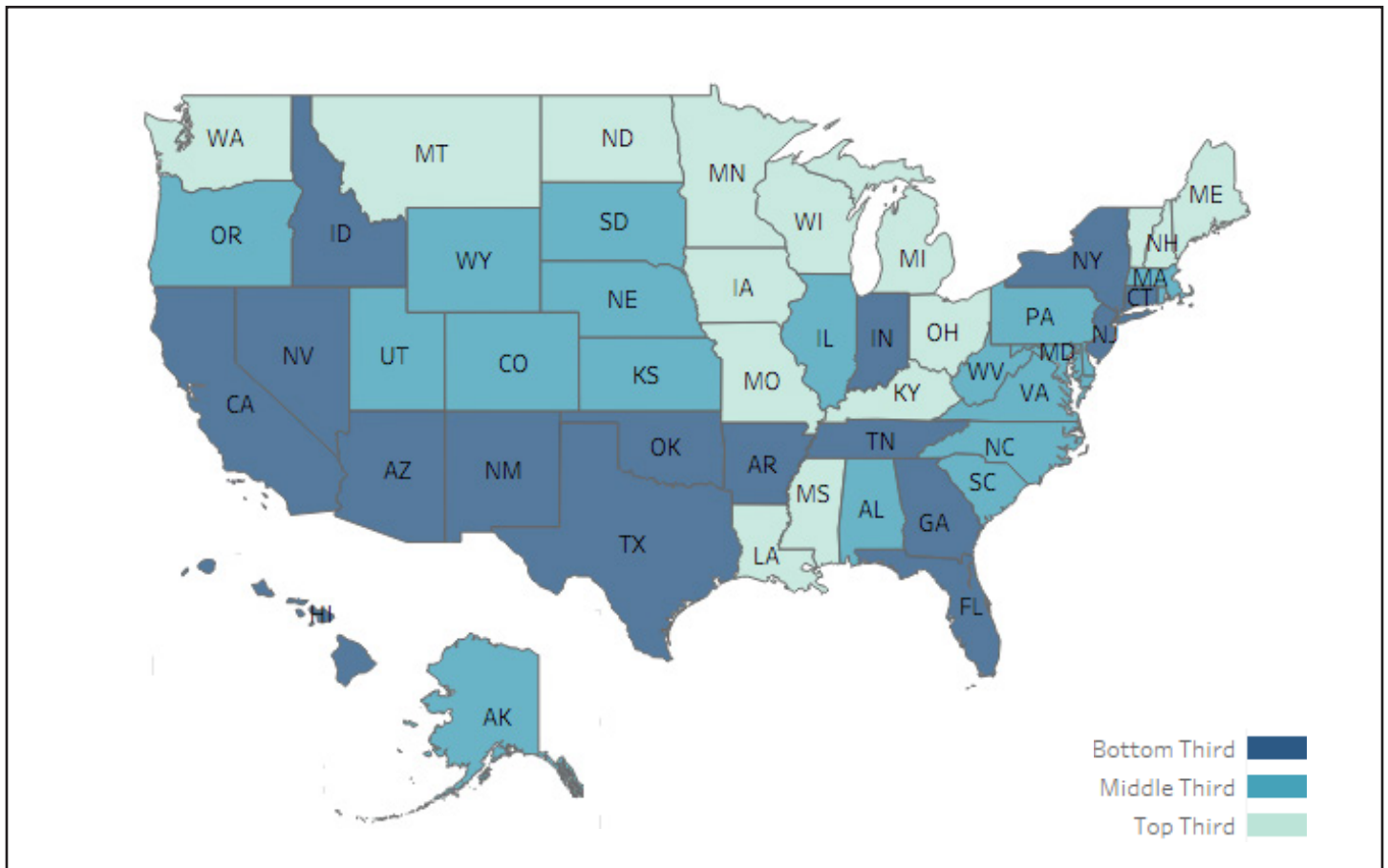
Voting is a critical way for women to express their concerns and ensure that their priorities are fully considered in public policy debates and decisions. By voting, women help to choose leaders who represent their interests and concerns. Yet, women did not always have the right to vote. **2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment.** The passage of the 19th amendment in 1919, ratified by the United State Congress in 1920, granted women the right to vote. **The 19th amendment, however, did not extend to women of color in the United States due to widespread inequality and racism (Southern Poverty Law Center 2019). It wasn't until the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 that all women were given the legal right to vote – which especially impacted Black women in the South as they were the most likely to face restrictions and barriers to voting prior to this (Jeunesse 2019).** Though this act was intended to remedy the practical exclusion of Black women from the right to vote granted by the 19th amendment, many still could not vote even though they were now legally allowed to (see Focus Box: Impact of Voter ID Laws & Gerrymandering). While all women gained the legal right to vote in 1965, **North Carolina did not officially ratify the 19th amendment until 1971** (National Park Services 2019).

Women today have a significant voice in deciding the outcomes of U.S. political elections. Continual national-level efforts have expanded opportunities for women to engage in political processes. Women's stronger voter turnout relative to men's in the United States reflects an ongoing worldwide effort to increase women's political engagement and participation. Nationally, women make up a majority of registered voters and since 1980 have voted at higher rates in presidential elections than men (CAWP 2020b).

- Nationally, **70.3 percent of women were registered to vote in the 2016 general election** and 58.1 percent voted, compared with 64.2 percent of men who registered to vote and 56 percent of men who cast their ballot.
- In North Carolina women register to vote at slightly lower levels than women nationally: **68.9 percent of women registered to vote for the 2016 general election.** Women in North Carolina, however, are slightly more likely to vote: 62.4 percent of women voted in the 2016 general election. In the 2018 midterm election, 64.4 percent of women in North Carolina registered to vote and 49.9 percent voted, compared with 63 and 50.6 percent, respectively, in the United States (Appendix Table 8).
- North Carolina falls in the middle third when it comes to voter registration and turnout nationally (Maps 2 and 3).
- Compared with women in neighboring states, **women in North Carolina had higher voter turnout in 2018 than women in Tennessee and South Carolina** (49.9 percent compared with 48.6 and 48.8 percent, respectively; Appendix Table 8). Women in North Carolina, however, vote at lower rates than women in Virginia (49.9 versus 52.2 percent).



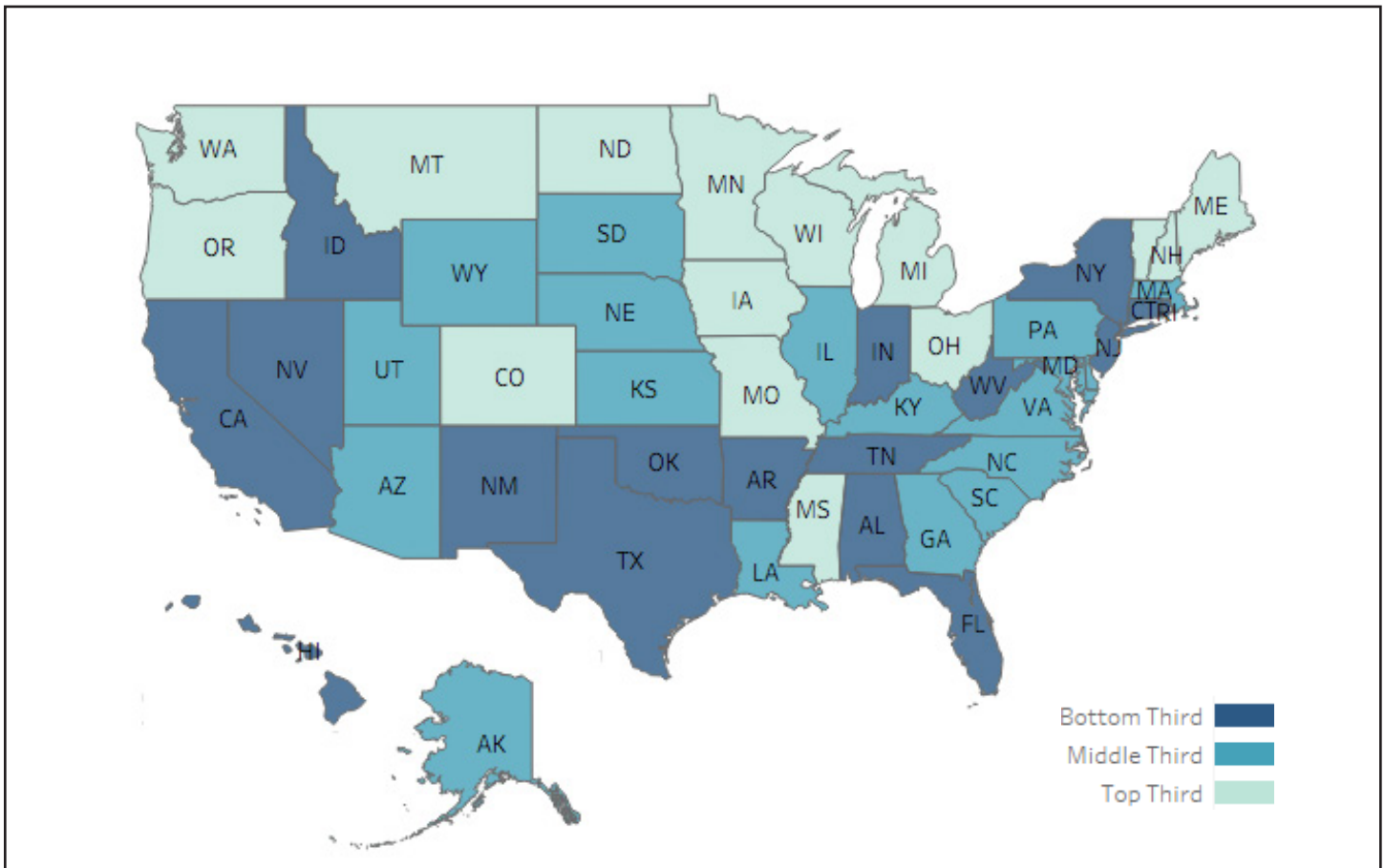
**Map 2: Women's Voter Registration, 2016 and 2018 Combined**



Note: Average percent of all women aged 18 and older who reported registering in the 2016 and 2018 elections.  
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 2017 and 2019. Compiled by the Institute for Women Policy Research.



**Map 3: Women's Voter Turnout, 2016 and 2018 Combined**



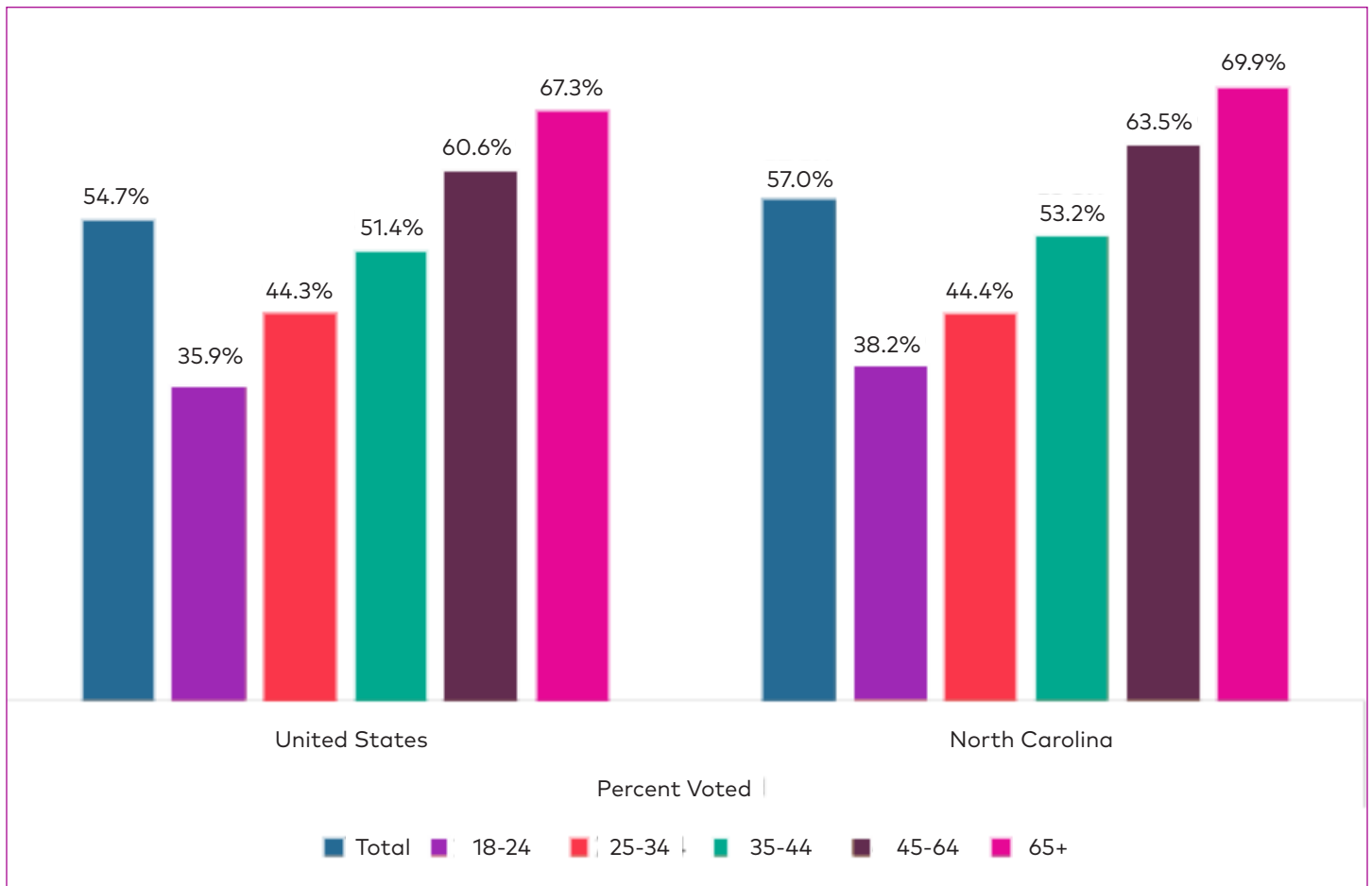
Note: Average percent of all women aged 18 and older who reported voting in the 2016 and 2018 elections.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 2017 and 2019. Compiled by the Institute for Women Policy Research.

Women's voting rates in the United States vary across the largest racial and ethnic groups. In 2016, White and Black women had the highest voting rates among the female population aged 18 and older, at 65.6 percent and 60.4 percent, respectively. Hispanic and Asian women had lower voter turnout rates at 35.1 percent and 33.6 percent, respectively (published rates from the U.S. Census Bureau are not available for Native American women; U.S. Department of Commerce 2017).

Voting rates in the United States and North Carolina vary across age group. The average voting turnout rates for 2016 and 2018 elections combined was the highest among those aged 65 and older and lowest for those age 18 to 24 in both the United States and North Carolina. People who are aged 65 and older had an average voter turnout rate of 69.9 percent in North Carolina and 67.3 percent in the United States. This is significantly higher than those aged 18 to 24, of whom only 38.9 percent in North Carolina and 35.9 percent in the United States voted (U.S. Department of Commerce 2017; 2019; Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Voter Turnout by Age for North Carolina and the United States, 2016 and 2018**



Note: These data are for the 2016 and 2018 elections combined. The data are not disaggregated by gender.  
 Source: U.S. Department of Commerce 2017; 2019.

In North Carolina, the share of women registered to vote varies by county:

- Women in Hertford County (55.8 percent), Robeson County (55.5 percent), Edgecombe County (55.3 percent), Scotland County (55.3 percent), and Washington County (54.7 percent) had the highest average voter registration rates for 2016 and 2018 (Table 2; Appendix Table 9).
- Anson County (47.5 percent), Madison County (50 percent), Camden County (50.7 percent), Currituck County (50.7 percent), and Graham County (51 percent) had the lowest average voter registration rates for 2016 and 2018 (Table 2; Appendix Table 9).

**Table 2. Best and Worst Counties on Women's Voter Registration, 2016 and 2018 Combined**

Highest Voter Registration Counties	
	Percent
HERTFORD	55.8%
ROBESON	55.5%
EDGECOMBE	55.3%
SCOTLAND	55.3%
WASHINGTON	54.7%
Lowest Voter Registration Counties	
	Percent
GRAHAM	51.0%
CURRITUCK	50.7%
CAMDEN	50.7%
MADISON	50.0%
ANSON	47.5%



Source: IWPR analysis of North Carolina State Board of Elections 2016 and 2018.

## FOCUS ON: IMPACT OF VOTER ID LAWS & GERRYMANDERING IN NORTH CAROLINA

While women represent a powerful force in the electorate, the continuous redrawing of state districts and the new wave of recently passed state voter identification laws have raised concerns that these laws will negatively impact the election process and prevent women and racial and ethnic minorities from participating.

State electoral districts are redrawn every ten years, determining which people will be represented by each politician (Tausanovitch 2019). Through this process, intentional gerrymandering — the purposeful manipulation of district lines by current politicians or political party to favor the political party redrawing the lines — may occur, impacting the political landscape of the state for the next decade. Gerrymandering affects everyone and weakens many citizens' political voices, skewing political power in favor of one party. Throughout history, women and minorities have favored various political parties: ranging from Republican, to Democrat, to independent progressive parties. For example, in 1854 women suffragists joined President Roosevelt in forming the new Progressive party. More recently, women and racial minorities are more likely to vote for the Democratic Party. Additionally, women in local and state government are three time more likely to be a Democrat (Chaturvedi 2016).

The 2010 election cycle – with Republican lawmakers assuming control of the North Carolina state assembly – set the stage for the recent phase of North Carolina's redistricting and gerrymandering. Republican lawmakers redrew both federal and state voting districts in North Carolina, concentrating all Black voters into one district (North Carolina State University 2019). In 2016, the federal court ruled the 2011 map unconstitutional and deemed it racially gerrymandering (Edwards and Henson 2018). Following this decision, the Republican-controlled general assembly redrew the districts along party-line votes in the state Senate (AP 2019). This map was also challenged in the courts in 2019 and the

judges have initially ruled that the evidence of partisan gerrymandering — where Republicans carved up districts to maximize the number of districts favoring their party — stating the 2016 map likely violated the state constitution (AP 2019).

Voting issues in North Carolina go well beyond gerrymandering. In 2013, North Carolina passed a restrictive voter ID law, which was struck down by the courts because it was found to target — and disenfranchise — African Americans (Edwards and Henson 2018). North Carolina is not alone, however. The movement for passing restrictive voter identification laws has increased in momentum since the passage of strict voter identification laws in Georgia and Indiana in 2005. These laws required voters to show identification at the polling place at which they vote (other states had previously requested, but not required such identification, starting with South Carolina in 1950; National Conference of State Legislatures 2014a). As of March 2020, a total of 37 states, including North Carolina, have passed voter identification laws, 35 of which are in force in 2020 (Underhill 2020). The degree of strictness of these laws vary across states (Underhill 2020). Some states require that voters must show government-issued photo identification to vote, while others are more lenient and accept non-photo identification such as a bank statement with name and address (Underhill 2020). In late 2019, however, a federal district court blocked North Carolina's voter photo ID requirement from taking effect (North Carolina State Board of Election 2020b).

**Studies focusing on the populations most likely to be affected by voter identification laws have shown that women — especially low-income, older, minority, married or divorced women who have changed their last name, and trans women — may be particularly affected by stringent voter identification laws** (Brennan Center for Justice 2006; Gaskins and Iyer 2012; Sobel 2014). **For example, women are more likely to be prevented from voting by laws that require them to show multiple forms of identification with the same name—such as a driver's license and birth certificate—since women who marry and divorce often change their names.** A 2006 national survey sponsored by the Brennan Center for Justice found that more than half of women with access to a birth certificate did not have one that reflected their current name, and only 66 percent of women with access to any proof of citizenship had documents reflecting their current name (Brennan Center for Justice 2006). The Brennan Center survey showed that 11 percent of the 987 randomly selected citizens of voting age did not have a photo ID. Women (and men) who are in low-wage jobs and struggle to make ends meet often lack the resources, like limited access to transportation and financial resources, needed to obtain a photo ID. Once time, travel, and the costs of documents — such as birth certificates and marriage licenses — are factored in, the cost associated with a “free ID card” can range from \$75 to \$175; when legal fees are included, the costs can be as high as \$1,500 (Sobel 2014). **These laws could make acquiring an identification card prohibitively expensive for women, who represent a greater share of those living in or near poverty** (IWPR 2015b). Younger women — especially those who are students living out of state during the school year — and older women may also be negatively impacted by these laws. For example, older women are less likely to have a valid identification card than younger eligible voters (Brennan Center for Social Justice 2006).







**Jo Nicholas**

President, League of Women Voters of North Carolina

**"Women have the power to make change happen by voting and staying involved,"** says Jo Nicholas.

After serving as President of the League of Women Voters of Moore County for ten years, Jo Nicholas became the President of the League of Women Voters of North Carolina in 2019. As President, Nicholas oversees local leagues and works to further the organization's mission of promoting political responsibility and building citizen participation in the democratic process through advocacy, education, and coalition building.

Nicholas works with the League's network of 1,900 members and the leaders of local leagues across the state to share knowledge and resources, register voters, and provide voters with election information through voter guides and candidate forums. Nicholas also works to ensure the issues of most importance to North Carolinians are represented at the League of Women Voters national office.

As part of her work, Nicholas gave a deposition against the North Carolina Voter ID laws that disproportionately create barriers to voting for women, young people, people of color, and working-class communities. Nicholas reports that, despite feeling nervous while giving the deposition, the voting restrictions and its impact on voters left her with an increased commitment to fight for voting rights for all North Carolinians.

Like most women across the country, in 2020 Nicholas celebrated the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment, which gave many women in the United States the right to vote. Referencing this milestone in American history, Nicholas emphasizes the importance of being vocal about our history when it comes to voting rights and access. She calls restrictions on voting rights "a tragic backwards step for democracy."

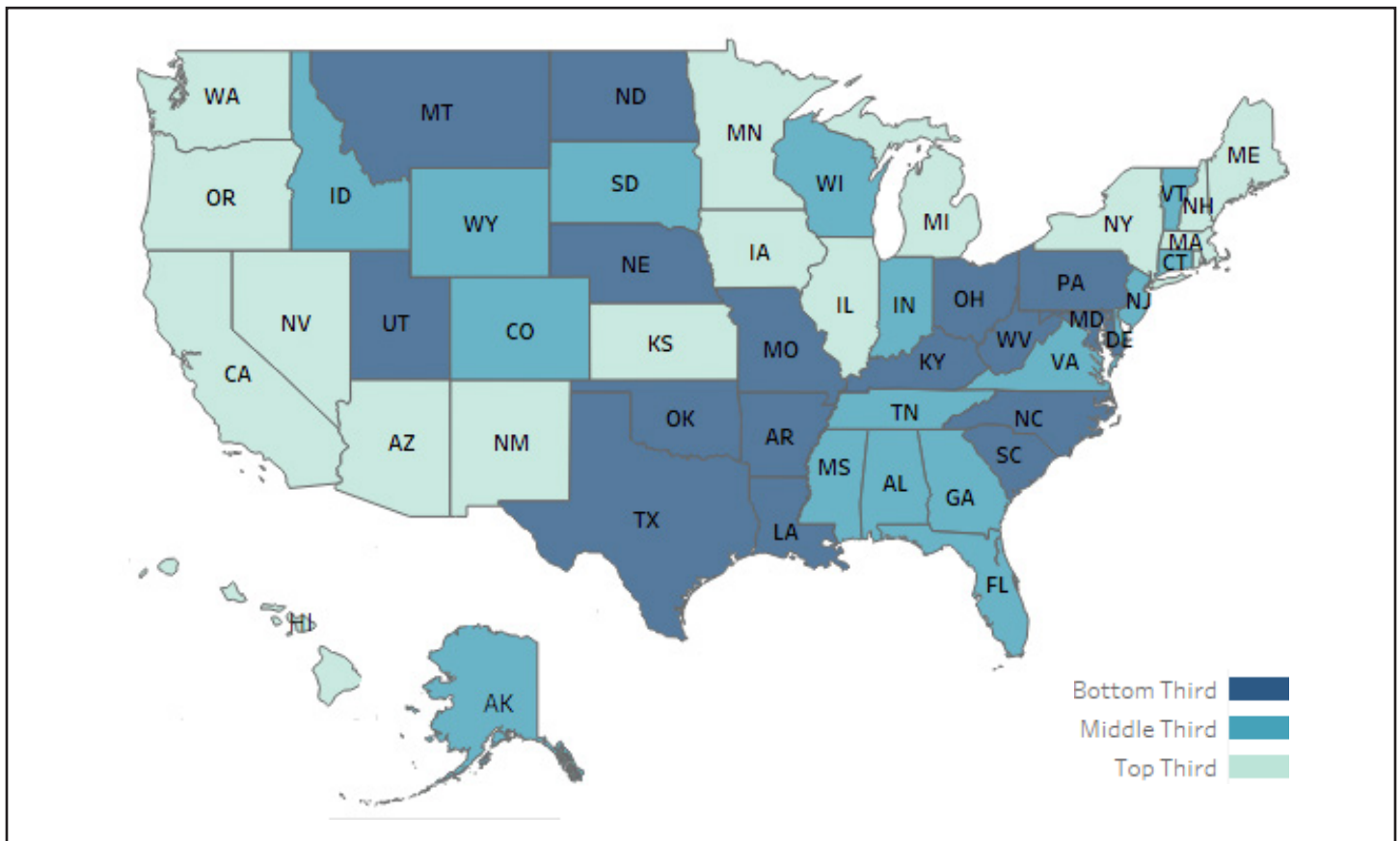
When asked what advice she would give women looking for ways to get involved, Nicholas recommended joining a local league, saying "reach out and you'll find your way."

## THE WOMEN IN ELECTED OFFICE INDEX

Although women have become increasingly active in U.S. politics, the majority of the political office holders at the state and federal levels are still male. The same trends hold for North Carolina. The share of women in elected office varies widely by state.

- For the Women in Elected Office Index, North Carolina ranks in the bottom third of states nationally (43rd out of 50; Map 4), with the largest share of women holding **statewide elected executive offices**<sup>1</sup> (33 percent; Appendix Table 2). These are often positions within the Council of State, such as Secretary of State or State Auditor.
- North Carolina lags significantly behind first ranked Nevada, where women's representation in each of the Index's components ranges from 48 percent at its lowest and 60 percent at its highest. North Carolina, however, does significantly better than Louisiana, ranked 50th, which has fewer than 20 percent of women in elected office in each of the components (Appendix Table 2).
- Compared with its neighbors, North Carolina falls below Tennessee (32nd) and Virginia (33rd) for women in elected office, but ranks above South Carolina (49th).

Map 4: Women in Elected Office, 2020



Note: Index of share state and national officials who are women, 2020.

Source: CAWP 2020a; CAWP 2020f; CAWP 2020g. Calculated by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

<sup>1</sup> These positions include, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State Comptroller, Chief State Education Official, Commissioner of Labor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Corporation Commissioner, Public Service Commissioner and more.

## ***Women in the U.S. Congress***

North Carolina has had a number of women represent the state at the federal level. North Carolina's Eva Clayton was the first African American to serve in the House of Representatives since George Henry White and was elected in 1898. She served for five terms. Kay Hagan and Elizabeth Dole were previously elected to the U.S. Senate representing North Carolina. Dole – a Salisbury native – served in the Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and George H.W. Bush presidential administrations before being elected to the U.S. Senate, serving from 2003-2009. Hagan, who previously served in the North Carolina state Senate from 1999-2009, served in the U.S. Senate from 2009-2015 (CAWP 2020d).

The 23.7 percent of seats (127 of 535) that women hold in the U.S. Congress in 2020 represents an all-time high. Women make up 23.2 percent of the U.S. House seats (101 of 435), and 26 women sit in the U.S. Senate.

- Only two women, Representative Alma Adams and Representative Virginia Foxx, represent North Carolina in the U.S. Congress. Sixteen states, however, do not have a female representative in the U.S. House of Representatives (Appendix Table 1).
- While women make up only 15.4 percent of North Carolina's representatives to the U.S. House, in eight states – Delaware, Iowa, Maine, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Washington, and Wyoming – women constitute at least half or more of the state's representatives. In Delaware and Wyoming women hold 100 percent of the seats.
- Thirty states, including North Carolina, currently have no female senators in the U.S. Senate. In six states, however, both senators are female: Arizona, California, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Washington. (Appendix Table 1).





### **Marikay Abuzaiter**

At-large Council Member, Greensboro City Council

Before being elected to City Council, Councilwoman Abuzaiter was a small business owner for over 20 years. Councilwoman Abuzaiter notes that her engagement in politics began in the 1990s in reaction to the city of Greensboro plans to open a new phase of the White Street Landfill. She explained that this expansion would have negatively impacted the living conditions, and even the health of residents, in certain communities.

Like most women, Councilwoman Abuzaiter got involved because she saw a need for change. She decided to take action by attending city council meetings regularly and eventually decided to join forces with other community members to protest this project.

After witnessing how the actions of the people resulted in the council's decision to permanently close

the landfill, Councilwoman Abuzaiter decided to run for an At-large Council seat in 2007. She lost her first race by 100 votes. She ran a second time in 2009 and lost by 500 votes. When the at-large seats were up for grabs again in 2011, Councilwoman Abuzaiter received calls from friends and supporters asking her to run a third time. In that moment, she realized something she never realized before, saying "in the time I had spent turf-cutting, knocking on doors, and fundraising, I built a community of supporters and volunteers who care deeply about me and believe in my vision."

When she ran the first time and lost, Councilwoman Abuzaiter remembers feeling disappointed, but when she ran the second time and lost, she was heartbroken. Councilwoman Abuzaiter did not plan to run a third race, but the overwhelming support she received gave her the courage to try one more time.

The morning after the 2011 election, Councilwoman Abuzaiter became one of the six women on the Greensboro City Council. Serving as Council Liaison to the Commission on the Status of Women, Councilwoman Abuzaiter describes helping to start the Guilford County Family Justice Center (FJC) as one of her proudest accomplishments. After four years of planning, the center is now run by a collaborative effort between the city, the county, and other community partners and provides safety and legal, social, and health services to people and families experiencing domestic violence or abuse. Councilwoman Abuzaiter reports that since the FJC opened five years ago, over 17,000 people entered its doors, 80 percent of whom have been female.

Councilwoman Abuzaiter defines success as the continuous effort to build trust and accountability with her constituents and has an open-door policy so residents can share any issues, challenges, and successes.

## Women in State Legislatures

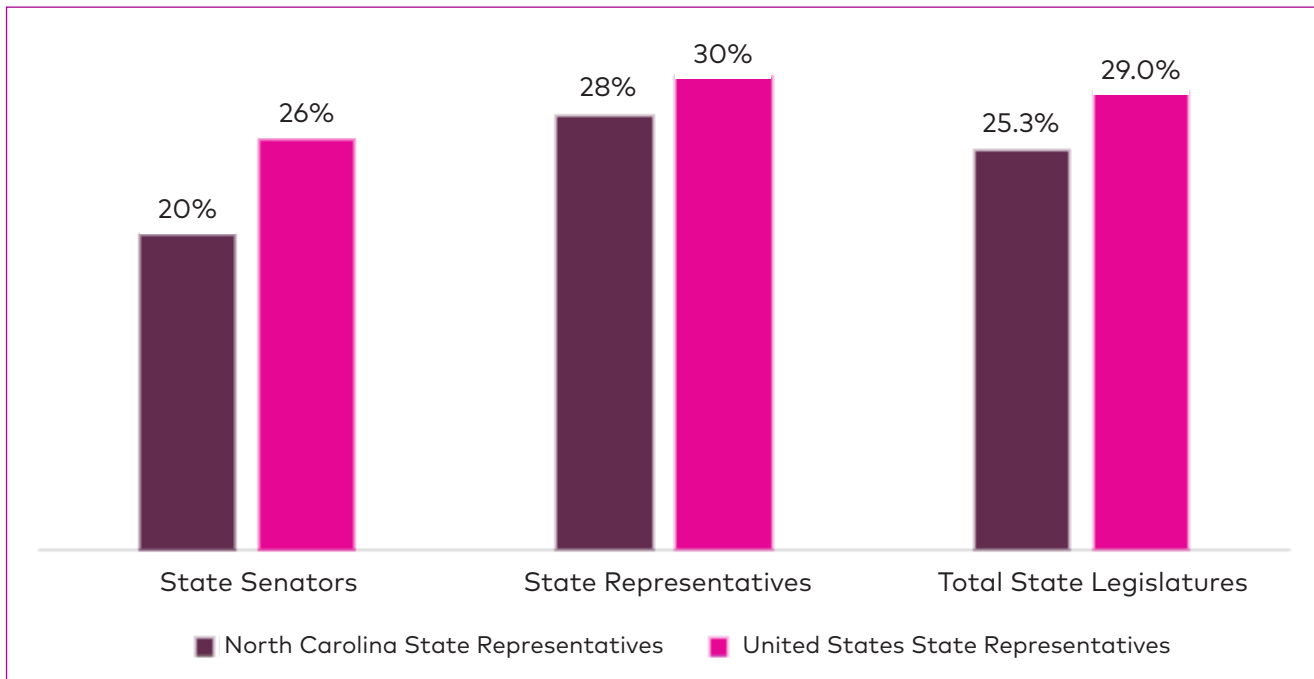
Women's representation in state legislatures is progressing. Nationally, women hold 2,144 of 7,383 (29 percent) seats in state legislatures: women make up 26.1 percent (515 of 1,972) of state Senate seats and 30.1 percent (1,629 and 5,411) of state House seats. **In North Carolina, women make up 25.3 percent of the North Carolina State Legislature.**

- In North Carolina, 20 percent of state Senate seats are held by women. Women hold **the largest share** of state Senate seats in Nevada (48 percent), Arizona (43 percent), Rhode Island (42 percent), and New Hampshire (42 percent). Women hold **the smallest share** in South Carolina (9 percent), West Virginia (9 percent), and Alabama (47 percent; Appendix 2).
- In North Carolina, women hold 27.5 percent of state House seats. Women hold the largest share of seats in the state House or assembly in Nevada (55 percent), Colorado (51 percent), Oregon (47 percent), and New Mexico (46 percent). Women hold the smallest share in Tennessee (12 percent), Wyoming (13 percent), Mississippi (14 percent), and West Virginia (15 percent; Appendix Table 2).
- Overall, women in North Carolina hold smaller shares of seats in both the state House and Senate when compared to the United States overall (Figure 2).

*Women make up 51 percent of the population in North Carolina. Because women represent such a large segment of our community, they should have a significant presence in our State Legislature, and believe me, women most certainly have what it takes to be legislators.*

**Valerie Foushee, North Carolina Senator, District 23**

**Figure 2: Share of Women in State Legislatures in North Carolina and the United States, 2020**



Notes: United States totals include North Carolina.  
Source: IWPR analysis of CAWP 2020f.

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## FOCUS ON: CAMPAIGNING-WHILE-FEMALE

"Campaigning-while-female" refers to the uniquely gendered experiences of many women running for elected office. These experiences are different from incidents of discrimination – such as receiving fewer party resources and support or fewer opportunities to participate in influential committees – but instead refer to sexist and inappropriate comments and behaviors (Baer and Hartmann 2014). These comments and behaviors can range from a focus on outward appearance, questioning of qualifications for office solely based on their gender, and questions and comments about a women's role as a wife and mother (Baer and Hartmann 2014). Many women candidates and elected officials have experienced the "double bind" of being seen as not fit for leadership if they conform to traditionally "female" characteristics of collaborative and warm, but are seen as too cold and distant when they conform to more traditionally "male" leadership norms (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018).

Campaigning-while-female is something that most female candidates and elected officials experience: one study found that approximately nine in ten (88 percent) women candidates and elected officials said that women's experiences differ from men's (Baer and Hartmann 2014). Campaigning-while-female was not only very apparent in the 2008 presidential elections with the treatment of both Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin (New York Magazine 2008), but was also present in the 2016 presidential election with the focus on Hillary Clinton's looks and attitude (Ms. Magazine 2016) and again in the 2020 primaries with sexist treatment of Elizabeth Warren (Forbes 2020). While sexist treatment is most commonly associated with media coverage, women also receive it from constituents, donors, peers and colleagues, and political party members and leaders, all of which can dissuade women from running for office. Some women are changing the paradigm and campaigning with younger children, which results in increased scrutiny about who is taking care of the children (New York Times 2018).

Campaigning-while-female is even more complex for women of color. Research has found that race impacts both how much donors decide to give a candidate and how much the candidate is able to fundraise. This means that donors typically delay giving the maximum amount allowed until the candidate has reached a particular fundraising threshold – in other words, until the woman of color has proven their candidacy is "viable" (Kramer 2018).

***Friends and colleagues who offered their support and expertise to me during the campaign were invaluable. My family support system was absolutely vital to maintain sanity through the highs and lows of running for office.***

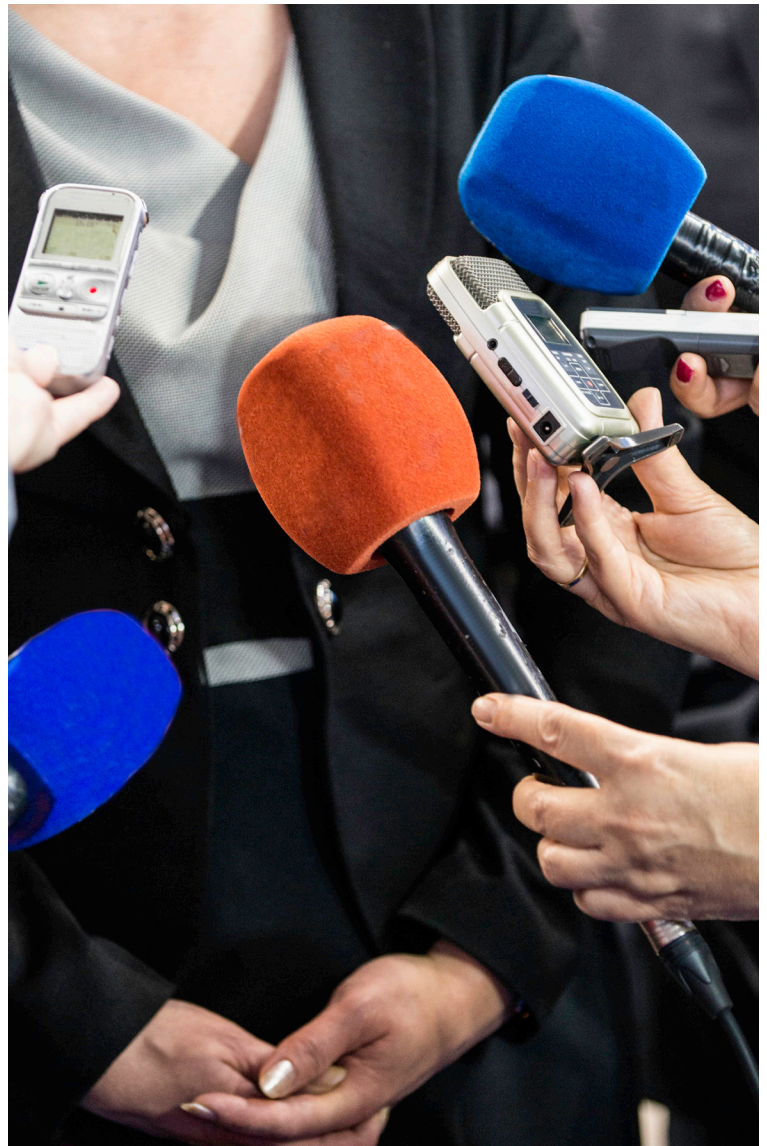
**Nida Allam, County Commissioner, Durham County Board of Commissioners**

### ***Women in Statewide Elected Executive Office & Appointed Officials***

Though progress has been made, women are still underrepresented when it comes to their shares of seats in statewide elected executive office. North Carolina has seen progress in the share of women appointed to its 247 state-level boards and commissions – such as the State Board of Community Colleges, State Board of Education, and State Board of Elections, among others – which are often the entry point for many women to elected offices at the local and state levels (McLennan 2018).

- In North Carolina, women hold 33.3 percent of the seats in statewide elected executive offices, such as Secretary of State, Governor, or State Auditor. Women hold three state council seats: Secretary of State (Elaine Marshall), State Auditor (Beth A. Wood), and Secretary of Labor (Cheri K. Berry).

- Compared with other states, North Carolina falls in the middle of the pack for the share of women in executive office. The share of women, however, varies widely by state: In fifteen states women hold at least half of statewide elected executive office positions, while eleven states have no women in their statewide elected executive offices (Appendix Table 2).
- As of July 2020, only nine states had female governors: Alabama, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, and South Dakota. In the majority of states, including North Carolina, the governor is male.
- In U.S. cities with populations of 30,000 or more, 300 (22 percent) of the cities had women mayors. Among the 100 largest cities in the United States, 27 had women mayors (CWAP 2019b).
- Women serve as mayors in seven North Carolina cities — Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh, Asheville, Chapel Hill, Salisbury, and Wake Forest (CAWP 2019b).
- As of 2018, women made up 40 percent of North Carolina’s district court judges, 18 percent of superior court judges, and 43 percent of justices in the North Carolina’s supreme court (McLennan 2019).
- In North Carolina, women hold five of the governor-appointed Cabinet Department seats: Department of Administration (Machelle Sanders), Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (Susi Hamilton), Department of Health and Human Services (Mandy K. Cohen, M.D), Office of State Human Resources (Barbara Gibson), Department of Information Technology (Tracy Doaks) and Chief of Staff (Kristi Jones).
- Between 2017 and 2020, out of the 2,395 appointments to boards and commissions, the Governor of North Carolina appointed 1,170 women (48.9 percent). This includes appointments to “power” boards and commissions – those that have policy-making authority (McLennan 2018) – including the Board of Transportation, Economic Development Partnership Board, Board of Review, Banking Commission, Parole Commission, and Utilities Commission. This is a significant increase from the previous administration, where women made up 37.1 percent of all those appointed to boards and commissions in 2016 (North Carolina Council for Women 2020).





**Paula Dance**  
Sheriff, Pitt County

Sheriff Dance made history in 2018 when she became the first African American female sheriff in both Pitt County and North Carolina. She began her 30-year career in law enforcement when she took a job as a clerk at her local sheriff's office in Martin County and rose through the ranks to become Major in the Pitt County Sheriff's Office, serving as third in command of the office for four years.

With so few women sheriffs as role models, Sheriff Dance did not plan to run for office. Sheriff Dance was motivated to run for office when she realized that her commitment to the community and her strong qualifications made her an ideal candidate for the role.

As Sheriff Dance puts it, no one can learn how to be a sheriff overnight. The functions a sheriff's office is responsible for range from maintaining order in the

courts, to approving concealed carry permits, to registering sex offenders, to preserving the well-being of inmates in the detention centers. Sheriff Dance says, "The building blocks that helped me get to where I am today started 30 years ago when I wore my first uniform and dedicated my profession to helping others."

In the first year since being elected, Sheriff Dance spearheaded several beneficial initiatives for Pitt County and its residents. To address the number of repeat inmates at detention centers, which she explains is mainly due to poverty and substance abuse, Sheriff Dance established the Sheriff's Heroin Addiction Recovery (SHARP) and the Women's Empowerment Addiction Recovery (WEAR) programs to address the root causes of repeat offending, the firsts of their kind in North Carolina. Through these initiatives, inmates are connected to educators, support specialists, faith-based groups, and a host of other resources to support them on their journeys to recovery and keep them from entering through what Sheriff Dance describes as a "revolving door" at detention centers.

Serving a unique position in North Carolina politics, Sheriff Dance often forgets that she holds the title of first African American female sheriff in the state. Sheriff Dance says, "It feels good to know that women can now see a female serving as chief law enforcement officer of their county. I hope that other women will come behind me."

***Our 81 percent of Black and Brown student body, including my own two children, will see someone who is accountable, who looks like them, speaks like them, and determinedly fights for them on the Board.***

**Alexandra Valladares, At-large Member, Durham Public School's Board of Education**



## ***Women of Color in Elected Office***

While women of color have made progress in running for office and gaining representation, they are still vastly underrepresented at every level of government.

- Nationally, women of color make up 9.9 percent (43 of 435 representative) of the U.S. House of Representatives (Appendix Table 3). One of the two women representing North Carolina in the U.S. House of Representatives is a Black female (Appendix Table 3).
- Four women of color serve in the United States Senate.
- North Carolina has yet to elect its first women of color to the U.S. Senate (Appendix Table 4).
- Black women make up 30.2 percent of the women elected to the North Carolina State Legislature, which constitutes 7.6 percent of the total seats (Appendix Table 5).
- Nationally, women of color make up 25.1 percent of women serving in state legislatures. Black women make up 14.3 percent of the women who are state legislators, and Hispanic women make up 5.9 percent of the women in state legislatures. Asian, Native American, Middle Eastern, and multiracial women each make up less than five percent of the women serving in a state legislative seat (Appendix Table 5).
- Women of color do not hold any of the statewide elected seats in North Carolina. However, Cheri L. Beasley was appointed by Governor Cooper as Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court in 2019 – making her the first Black woman to hold the office (North Carolina Judicial Branch 2019). She joined Associate Justice Anita Earls, elected in 2018, and helped to overturn North Carolina’s 2013 restricted voter ID law.
- Nationally, women of color make up only 18.1 percent of the statewide elected offices women hold. Black and Hispanic women each make up 6 percent of the statewide elected offices women hold, Asian women make up 3.6 percent of the such seats, and Native American and multiracial women each make up 1.2 percent of the statewide elected offices women hold (Appendix Table 6).
- In the nation’s 100 largest cities, 10 women of color serve as mayors – seven Black women, one Latina woman, and two Asian/Pacific Islander women (CAWP 2019b). This includes Vi Alexander Lyles, the mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina, who has been mayor since 2017 (CAWP 2019b).





**Dr. Brucie Ogletree Richardson**  
Chief Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe

**"The Chief's position doesn't necessarily have to be filled by a male. Women can hold the position and be role models as tribal leaders,"** says Chief of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Dr. Brucie Ogletree Richardson.

In 2014, Chief Dr. Richardson was elected as the Tribal Chief of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, becoming the first woman to hold that position. North Carolina has the largest American Indian population east of the Mississippi River and recognizes a total of eight tribes across the state. The Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe is the third-largest tribe in the state with about 4,000 enrolled members, primarily residing in Halifax, Warren, Nash, and Franklin Counties. As Chief, Dr. Richardson works to represent and promote the cultural and traditional heritage of the Tribe to its members and the public.

As a proud Haliwa-Saponi Indian woman, Chief Dr. Richardson concentrates her efforts on supporting the needs of members and creating economic opportunities to strengthen tribal self-sufficiency. Since becoming Chief, she's built the first housing units for tribal citizens, secured a more than half-million-dollar grant to support tribal schools, purchased prime property in the tribal community, and visited congressional leaders on Capitol Hill to discuss federal recognition efforts.

Chief Dr. Richardson's unique position in the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe helps normalize women's leadership roles in tribal affairs. She believes in getting more young women to consider the path she took and says, "I encourage women and girls to be civically and politically engaged in the community by being visible and participating in tribal, community, and church activities."

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## WOMEN'S INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Institutional resources dedicated to helping women succeed in the political arena and to promoting and prioritizing women's policy issues play a key role in connecting women constituents to policymakers. Resources include campaign training for women, state and county level women's commissions, women's Political Action Committees (PACs), women's state-wide commissions, and state chapters of the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC). These institutional resources serve to magnify the fundraising power and voices of women in government and increase the access of women, their families, and their communities to decision makers on the policy issues that matter most to them.

Campaign training for women provides valuable insight into running a successful campaign and strengthens the pipeline to higher office. One study found that nine in ten women who participated in a training before running found it extremely helpful; many also believed that campaign training should be expanded to be more women-centric so as to address the issue of "campaigning-while-female" and the additional challenges that women of color face as a result of racial bias (Baer and Hartmann 2014).

Political action committees (PACs) raise and spend money for the purpose of electing and defeating candidates. A women's PAC is often critical to supplying women candidates with the contributions needed to launch and run a successful campaign. The National Women's Political Caucus is a multi-partisan, grassroots organization dedicated to increasing the number of women who are elected or appointed into leadership positions (National Women's Political Caucus 2020).

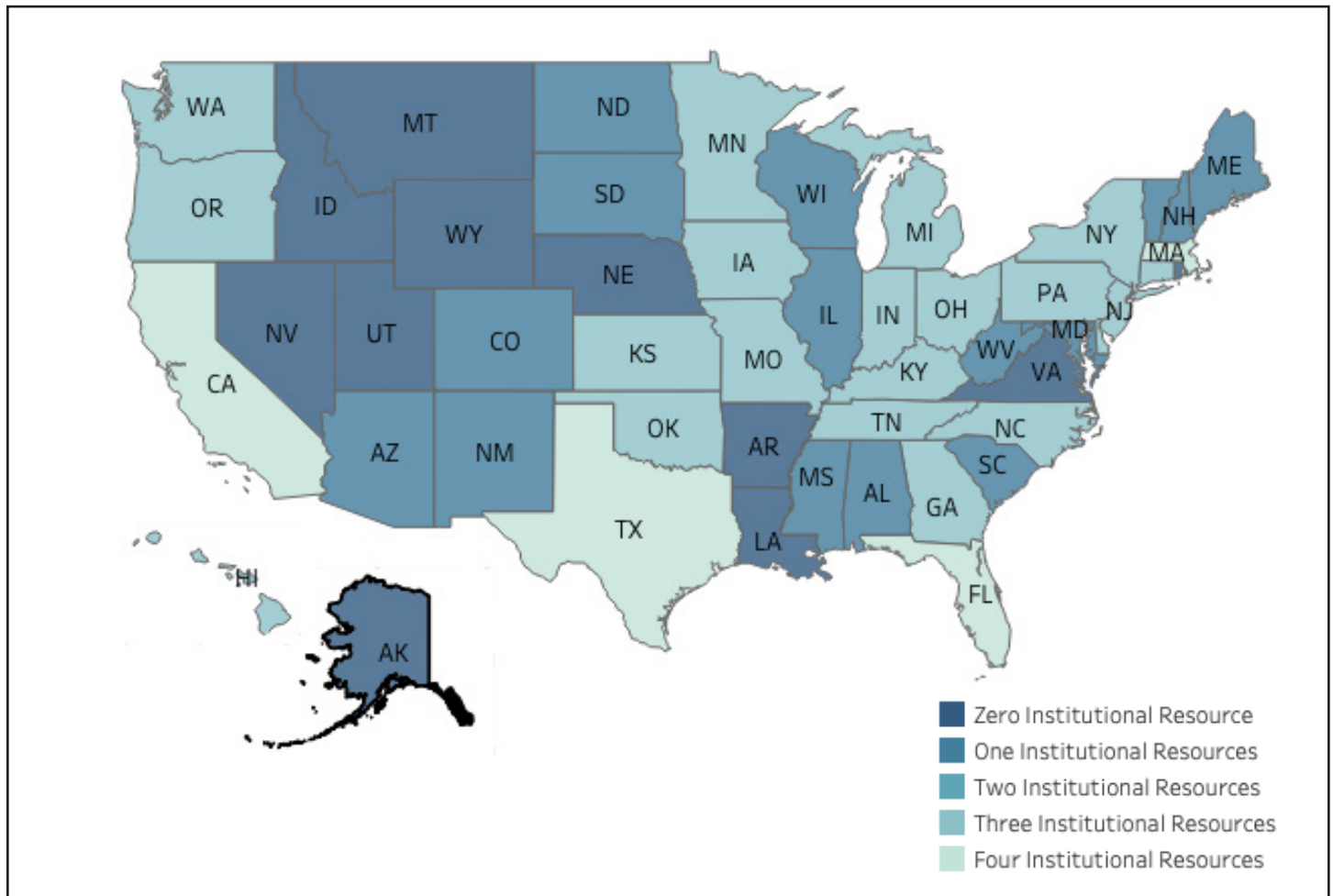
A commission for women is typically established by legislation or executive order and works to prioritize issues that may disproportionately affect women's lives (National Conference of State Legislatures 2019). There are five county-level women's commissions in North Carolina serving women in Mecklenburg, Durham, Greensboro, New Hanover, and Asheville/Buncombe counties. Wake County's Commission for Women – which had studied the wage gap and presented recommendations to the County commissioners to aggressively close the gap and increase training for women in high demand careers – dissolved in 2020. Maria Cervania, former women's commission member, successfully launched a winning campaign for a seat on the County Commission in Wake County. These activities show some of the vital ways that a women's commission can press for change and support women's political participation in each state.

- Forty-four states have state-level campaign trainings specifically for women, 34 states have women's PACs, 27 have women's commissions, and 12 have National Women's Political Caucuses (Appendix Table 7).
- North Carolina ties with 20 other states by having three of the four institutional resources. North Carolina has at least one women-focused campaign training, a women's PAC, and a women's commission (Appendix Table 7).
- Four states have all four of the institutional resources for women at the state level (Appendix Table 7). These states are all tied for first place.
- Only one state, Alaska, has no institutional resources for women (Appendix Table 7).

***You can't be what you can't see. When women see other women in power, it helps them believe that they can be next.***

**Sarah Preston, Executive Director, Lillian's List of North Carolina**

**Map 5: Women's Institutional Resources**



Note: Number of institutional resources for women in the state.

Source: CAWP 2019a, National Women's Political Caucus 2020, and National Conference of State Legislatures 2019. Calculated by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

*Women oftentimes feel less qualified to get involved in politics, but...a group of young women helped change the law in North Carolina. This is what happens when women come together to create change.*

**Dr. Whitney Manzo, Assistant Professor and Prelaw Advisor, Meredith College**

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## CONCLUSION

Although women have made significant progress in recent years in their overall political participation, obstacles to women's political participation persist at all levels. Women's lesser economic resources in North Carolina compared with men's (as shown in the Status of Women in North Carolina: Employment and Earnings), their greater caregiving responsibilities, their more limited access to important supports that would help them to run for office and succeed as office holders, and the greater scrutiny that women candidates seem to face from the public and the media all restrict women's political participation. Increasing women's voices at all levels – from voting, to participating in political campaigns, to running for local office – ensures that a wider range of issue related to women's economic security and health and wellness are raised and addressed.

As IWPR's calculations show, women's progress continues to move at a glacial pace, though North Carolina is predicted to reach parity in the state legislature before women reach parity in the U.S. Congress. It is crucial that policies that aim to increase women's political participation include an intersectional lens to ensure women of color also benefit. Additionally, policies should take into account the impact of the global pandemic on the ability to safely engage in the political process. Policies that would help increase women's political participation include:

- **Ensure that all women have equal access to a fair electoral process.** This includes implementing a fair system of drawing states' political maps – to combat gerrymandering – and eliminating unjust voter ID laws that disenfranchise vulnerable women. It also includes removing barriers to voting for immigrant women who face additional language barriers.
- **Prepare strategies to ensure safety for voters.** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important for North Carolina to take extra precautions to ensure the safety of voters, This includes increasing electronic voter registration, expanding the use of absentee ballots and mail-in voting – including ensuring North Carolina has the ability to process a higher volume of mail-in ballots – for those who cannot make it to the polls, and making voting day a paid holiday so those who are able to make it to the polls for the November 2020 elections have the time off work needed to wait in longer, socially distanced lines.
- **Recruit more women to run for office.** Asking and encouraging women to run for political office is a vital part of increasing women's representation in office at all levels. Expanding recruitment could include targeting women who are already leaders within their communities as well as ensuring that women who are in politics at the state and local levels are introduced to national networks.
- **Institute policies that will increase the number of women in elected office.** This could include instituting campaign finance reforms that help women overcome fundraising barriers; policies and practices that ensure political parties promote women within the party structure; and quotas to increase the number of women and women of color in elected office. The quota system is active in more than 120 countries around the world and in 2009 Iowa passed the Gender Balance law to help increase the number of women in political positions. While unpopular in most of the United States, quotas would play a critical role in increasing women's political participation at both federal and state levels.
- **Improve access to opportunities for both mentorship and sponsorship.** Mentoring programs often help women build their networks and gain valuable insight and understanding of their political party. Sponsorship goes beyond mentorship and includes more commitment from the sponsor—either in introducing women political candidates to moneyed connections, providing monetary supports, or putting women's names forward as viable candidates for elected office within a political party.

- **Expand programs that provide education and training for women.** Program expansion could include increased support for existing education and training programs for women running for elected office or developing new programs in areas that lack training programs. This includes outreach to and partnership with colleges and universities across North Carolina, which would expand access for younger women interested in running for office.
- **Expand resources that support women's involvement in the political process at all levels.** This could include expanding women's commissions to all counties across North Carolina to ensure greater focus on issues impacting women and families locally. Additionally, activities should include promoting and supporting organizations such as NextGen America, a diverse coalition of young people who help progressive candidates win elections, as many of these progressive candidates directly support policies that will address issues such as the gender wage gap, access to affordable childcare, and access to quality and affordable healthcare. Finally, resources should be allocated for outreach and partnership with colleges and universities to provide young women with opportunities for political engagement in roles such as volunteers and campaign managers, among others.
- **Address structural barriers that prevent women from running for office.** Lack of affordable child care and paid leave are some of the barriers that prevent women, especially mothers, from running for federal, state, and local offices. Proving affordable child care, universal pre-k, and paid leave will ensure that these women are able to care for their family while being involved in political campaigns.



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## APPENDIX I: METHODOLOGY

### *Calculating the Composite Index*

This Composite Index reflects four areas of political participation: voter registration; voter turnout; women in elected office, including state legislatures, statewide elected office, and positions in the U.S. Congress; and institutional resources available to women, including a commission for women, a campaign training for women, a women's PAC, and a state chapter of the National Women's Political Caucus.

To construct this Composite Index, each of the component indicators was standardized to remove the effects of different units of measurement for each state's score on the resulting Composite Index. Each component was standardized by subtracting the mean value for all 50 states from the observed value for a state and dividing the difference by the standard deviation for the United States as a whole. The standardized scores were then given different weights. Voter registration and voter turnout were each given a weight of 1.0. The indicator for women in elected office is itself a composite reflecting different levels of office-holding and was given a weight of 4.0 (in the first two series of reports, published in 1996 and 1998, this indicator was given a weight of 3.0, but since 2000 it has been weighted at 4.0). The last component indicator, women's institutional resources, is also a composite of scores indicating the presence or absence of each of four resources, and received a weight of 1.0. The resulting weighted, standardized values for each of the four component indicators were summed for each state to create a composite score. The states were then ranked from the highest to the lowest score.

To grade the states on this Composite Index, values for each of the components were set at desired levels to produce an "ideal score." Women's voter registration and voter turnout were each set at the value of the highest state for these components; each component of the composite index for women in elected office was set as if 50 percent of elected officials were women; and scores for institutional resources for women assumed that the ideal state had each of the four resources. Each state's score was then compared with the ideal score to determine its grade.

**WOMEN'S VOTER REGISTRATION:** This component indicator is the average percent (for the presidential and congressional elections of 2016 and 2018) of all women aged 18 and older (in the civilian noninstitutionalized population) who reported registering, including noncitizens who are ineligible. IWPR selected the larger population base for this indicator because the inability of noncitizens to register accurately reflects the lack of political voice for this population. Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 2017 and 2019, based on the Current Population Survey.

**WOMEN'S VOTER TURNOUT:** This component indicator is the average percent (for the presidential and congressional elections of 2016 and 2018) of all women aged 18 and older (in the civilian noninstitutionalized population) who reported voting, including noncitizens who are ineligible. IWPR selected the larger population base for this indicator because the lack of voting by noncitizens accurately reflects the lack of political voice for this population. Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 2017 and 2019, based on the Current Population Survey.

**WOMEN IN ELECTED OFFICE:** This index has four components and reflects office-holding at the state and national levels as of January 2020. For each state, the proportion of office-holders who are women was computed for four levels: state representatives; state senators; statewide elected executive officials and U.S. representatives; and U.S. senators and governors. The percent values were then converted to scores that ranged from 0 to 1 by dividing the observed value for each state by the highest value for all states. The scores were then weighted according to the degree of political influence of the position: state representatives were given a weight of 1.0, state senators were given a weight of 1.25, statewide executive elected officials (except governors) and U.S. representatives were

each given a weight of 1.5, and U.S. senators and state governors were each given a weight of 1.75. The resulting weighted scores for the four components were added to yield the total score on this index for each state. The highest score of any state for this office-holding index is 4.58. These scores were then used to rank the states on the indicator for women in elected office. Sources: Data were compiled by IWPR from the Center for American Women and Politics 2020a, 2020c, 2020f, and 2020g.

**WOMEN'S INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES:** This index measures the number of institutional resources for women available in the state from a maximum of four, including a commission for women (established by legislation or executive order), a campaign training program for women, a women's political action committee (PAC), and a state chapter of the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC). In order to score the states, each of the four components for this indicator was weighted equally at 0.5 points, for a total of 2.0 points. These scores were then used to rank the states on the indicator for resources available to women. In 2002 and 2004, the institutional resources indicator measured whether a state had a commission for women (established by legislation or executive order) and a legislative caucus for women (organized by women legislators in either or both houses of the state legislature). In earlier years (1996 and 1998) a third resource, a women's economic agenda project, was also included in this indicator. Sources: Data were compiled by IWPR from the Center for American Women and Politics 2019a, Political and Leadership Resources for Women database; the National Conference of State Legislatures 2019; and the National Women's Political Caucus 2020.





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## APPENDIX II: NORTH CAROLINA FEMALE LEADERS

For full profiles on each woman interviewed, please visit [www.councilforwomen.nc.gov](http://www.councilforwomen.nc.gov).

### **Elected Officials:**

Valerie P. Foushee, North Carolina Senator (D-District 23)

Sarah Stevens, House Speaker Pro Tempore- NC General Assembly (R-District 90)

Marikay Abuzuaiter, At-large Council Member

Nida Allam, Durham County Board of Commissioners

Alexandra Valladares, Durham Public School Board

Paula Dance, Pitt County Sheriff

Chief Dr. Brucie Ogletree Green Richardson of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe

### **Judges:**

Chief Justice Cheri Beasley, Supreme Court of North Carolina

Judge Robin Robinson, District Court Judge of 5th District

Associate Justice Anita Earls, Supreme Court of North Carolina

### **Organizations:**

Jo Nicholas, President of League of Women Voters in North Carolina

Sarah Preston, Executive Director of Lillian's List

Gloria De Los Santos, At-Large member of Durham Mayor's Council for Women, Director at ActionNC

Lyric Thompson, Senior Director of Policy and Advocacy at the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)

### **Academics:**

Dr. Whitney Manzo, Assistant Professor and Prelaw Advisor at Meredith College

### **Youth Leaders:**

Nyanna Sherrod, President of Rocky Mount Area Youth Council

Caroline Searcy, Historian of Wilson Area Youth Council

## APPENDIX TABLE III: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TABLES

Appendix Table 1. Women in the United States Congress, 2020

State	Number of U.S Senators Who Are Women	Proportion of U.S. Representatives Who are Women
Alabama	0	28.6%
Alaska	1	0.0%
Arizona	2	22.2%
Arkansas	0	0.0%
California	2	32.1%
Colorado	0	14.3%
Connecticut	0	40.0%
Delaware	0	100.0%
Florida	0	29.6%
Georgia	1	7.1%
Hawaii	1	50.0%
Idaho	0	0.0%
Illinois	1	22.2%
Indiana	0	22.2%
Iowa	1	50.0%
Kansas	0	25.0%
Kentucky	0	0.0%
Louisiana	0	0.0%
Maine	1	50.0%
Maryland	0	0.0%
Massachusetts	1	33.3%
Michigan	1	35.7%
Minnesota	2	37.5%
Mississippi	1	0.0%
Missouri	0	25.0%
Montana	0	0.0%
Nebraska	1	0.0%
Nevada	2	50.0%
New Hampshire	2	50.0%
New Jersey	0	16.7%
New Mexico	0	66.7%
New York	1	29.6%
North Carolina	0	15.4%
North Dakota	0	0.0%
Ohio	0	18.8%
Oklahoma	0	20.0%
Oregon	0	20.0%
Pennsylvania	0	22.2%

**Appendix Table 1, Continued**

State	Number of U.S Senators Who Are Women	Proportion of U.S. Representatives Who are Women
Rhode Island	0	0.0%
South Carolina	0	0.0%
South Dakota	0	0.0%
Tennessee	1	0.0%
Texas	0	16.7%
Utah	0	0.0%
Vermont	0	0.0%
Virginia	0	27.3%
Washington	2	50.0%
West Virginia	1	33.3%
Wisconsin	1	12.5%
Wyoming	0	100.0%
<b>United States</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23.2%</b>

Source: CAWP 2020a. Compiled by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research.

**Appendix Table 2. Women in State Government, 2020**

State	Proportion of State Senators Who Are Women	Proportion of State Representatives Who Are Women	Proportion of Statewide Elected Executive Offices Held By Women	Number of Governors Who Are Women
Alabama	11.4%	18.1%	11%	1
Alaska	30.0%	42.5%	0%	0
Arizona	43.3%	36.7%	50%	0
Arkansas	20.0%	26.0%	33%	0
California	35.0%	30.0%	43%	0
Colorado	34.3%	50.8%	50%	0
Connecticut	25.0%	33.8%	40%	0
Delaware	23.8%	24.4%	80%	0
Florida	30.0%	30.0%	75%	0
Georgia	26.8%	31.7%	8%	0
Hawaii	28.0%	33.3%	0%	0
Idaho	25.7%	35.7%	50%	0
Illinois	33.9%	37.3%	40%	0
Indiana	20.0%	28.0%	83%	0
Iowa	22.0%	33.0%	0%	1
Kansas	32.5%	26.4%	20%	1
Kentucky	10.5%	28.0%	33%	0
Louisiana	15.4%	19.0%	0%	0
Maine	34.3%	38.4%	N/A	1
Maryland	29.8%	41.1%	0%	0
Massachusetts	27.5%	27.5%	80%	0
Michigan	28.9%	38.2%	100%	1

## Appendix Table 2, Continued

State	Proportion of State Senators Who Are Women	Proportion of State Representatives Who Are Women	Proportion of Statewide Elected Executive Offices Held By Women	Number of Governors Who Are Women
Minnesota	23.9%	35.1%	50%	0
Mississippi	23.1%	13.9%	14%	0
Missouri	23.5%	24.5%	20%	0
Montana	26.0%	33.0%	20%	0
Nebraska	28.6%	28.6%	0%	0
Nevada	47.6%	54.8%	60%	0
New Hampshire	41.7%	33.5%	N/A	0
New Jersey	25.0%	33.8%	100%	0
New Mexico	21.4%	45.7%	33%	1
New York	30.2%	32.7%	67%	0
North Carolina	20.0%	27.5%	33%	0
North Dakota	23.4%	21.3%	25%	0
Ohio	24.2%	28.3%	0%	0
Oklahoma	18.8%	22.8%	40%	0
Oregon	30.0%	46.7%	75%	1
Pennsylvania	26.0%	26.1%	0%	0
Rhode Island	42.1%	34.7%	50%	1
South Carolina	8.7%	19.4%	29%	0
South Dakota	20.0%	27.1%	11%	1
Tennessee	24.2%	12.1%	N/A	0
Texas	29.0%	22.0%	13%	0
Utah	20.7%	26.7%	0%	0
Vermont	33.3%	41.3%	20%	0
Virginia	27.5%	30.0%	0%	0
Washington	38.8%	40.8%	38%	0
West Virginia	8.8%	15.0%	0%	0
Wisconsin	24.2%	28.3%	40%	0
Wyoming	20.0%	13.3%	50%	0
United States	26.0%	30.1%	27%	9

Notes: Nebraska has a unicameral legislature. Data on women in statewide executive offices do not include governorships. Main, New Hampshire, and Tennessee do not have statewide elected executive offices aside from the governorship. Sources: CAWP 2020f. Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

**Appendix Table 3. Women's Political Representation by Race and Ethnicity: Women in the U.S. House of Representatives, 2020**

State	Proportion Women	All Representatives	All Women	White Women	Hispanic Women	Black Women	Asian/Pacific Islander Women	Native American Women	Middle Eastern/North African	Multiracial Women
Alabama	28.6%	7	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Alaska	0.0%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arizona	22.2%	9	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arkansas	0.0%	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
California	32.1%	53	17	7	5	3	2	0	0	0
Colorado	14.3%	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Connecticut	40.0%	5	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Delaware	100.0%	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Florida	29.6%	27	8	4	1	2	1	0	0	0
Georgia	7.1%	14	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Hawaii	50.0%	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Idaho	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	22.2%	18	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Indiana	22.2%	9	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iowa	50.0%	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas	25.0%	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Kentucky	0.0%	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Louisiana	0.0%	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maine	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	0.0%	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Massachusetts	33.3%	9	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
Michigan	35.7%	14	5	3	0	1	0	0	1	0
Minnesota	37.5%	8	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
Mississippi	0.0%	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Missouri	25.0%	8	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montana	0.0%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	0.0%	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	50.0%	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Hampshire	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	16.7%	12	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	66.7%	3	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
New York	29.6%	27	8	4	2	1	1	0	0	0
North Carolina	15.4%	13	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
North Dakota	0.0%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio	18.8%	16	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
Oklahoma	20.0%	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oregon	20.0%	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pennsylvania	22.2%	18	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhode Island	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Appendix Table 3, Continued

State	Proportion Women	All Representatives	All Women	White Women	Hispanic Women	Black Women	Asian/Pacific Islander Women	Native American Women	Middle Eastern/North African	Multiracial Women
South Carolina	0.0%	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Dakota	0.0%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	0.0%	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Texas	16.7%	36	6	2	2	2	0	0	0	0
Utah	0.0%	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vermont	0.0%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Virginia	27.3%	11	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Washington	50.0%	10	5	3	1	0	1	0	0	0
West Virginia	33.3%	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wisconsin	12.5%	8	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Wyoming	100.0%	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
United States	23.2%	435	101	58	12	22	6	2	1	0

Source: CAWP 2020a. Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

**Appendix Table 4. Women’s Political Representation by Race and Ethnicity: Women in the U.S. Senate, 2020**

State	Proportion Women	All Representatives	All Women	White Women	Hispanic Women	Black Women	Asian/Pacific Islander Women	Native American Women	Middle Eastern/North African	Multiracial Women
Alabama	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alaska	0.0%	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arizona	100.0%	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arkansas	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
California	100.0%	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Colorado	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Connecticut	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Florida	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Georgia	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hawaii	50.0%	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Idaho	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Indiana	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iowa	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kentucky	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Louisiana	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maine	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Massachusetts	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minnesota	100.0%	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mississippi	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Missouri	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montana	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	100.0%	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
New Hampshire	100.0%	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New York	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Carolina	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Dakota	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oklahoma	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oregon	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pennsylvania	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhode Island	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Appendix Table 4, Continued**

State	Proportion Women	All Representatives	All Women	White Women	Hispanic Women	Black Women	Asian/Pacific Islander Women	Native American Women	Middle Eastern/North African	Multiracial Women
South Carolina	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Dakota	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Texas	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Utah	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vermont	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Virginia	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Washington	100.0%	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Virginia	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wisconsin	50.0%	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wyoming	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
United States	26.0%	100	26	22	1	0	2	0	0	1

Source: CAWP 2020a. Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.



**Appendix Table 5. Women's Political Representation by Race and Ethnicity: Women in State Legislatures, 2020**

State	Proportion of Women	All Elected Officials	All Women	White Women	Hispanic Women	Black Women	Asian/Pacific Islander Women	Native American Women	Middle Eastern/North African	Multiracial Women
Alabama	16.4%	140	23	8	0	15	0	0	0	0
Alaska	38.3%	60	23	20	0	2	0	1	0	0
Arizona	38.9%	90	35	23	7	1	0	1	0	3
Arkansas	24.4%	135	33	26	0	6	0	0	0	1
California	31.7%	120	38	16	17	4	1	0	0	0
Colorado	46.0%	100	46	32	8	5	0	0	0	0
Connecticut	32.1%	187	60	52	2	6	0	0	0	0
Delaware	24.2%	62	15	9	1	5	0	0	0	0
Florida	30.0%	160	48	26	8	13	0	0	1	0
Georgia	30.5%	236	72	33	1	36	1	0	1	0
Hawaii	31.6%	76	24	6	0	0	15	0	0	3
Idaho	31.4%	105	33	32	0	1	1	0	0	0
Illinois	36.2%	177	64	41	8	11	2	0	0	1
Indiana	25.3%	150	38	31	1	6	0	0	0	0
Iowa	29.3%	150	44	42	0	2	0	0	0	0
Kansas	27.9%	165	46	40	1	4	0	1	0	0
Kentucky	23.2%	138	32	30	0	1	1	0	0	0
Louisiana	15.3%	144	22	18	0	8	0	0	0	0
Maine	37.6%	186	70	69	0	1	0	0	0	0
Maryland	38.8%	188	73	40	1	25	3	0	2	1
Massachusetts	28.5%	200	57	49	1	3	2	0	0	0
Michigan	35.8%	148	53	37	1	11	2	0	0	1
Minnesota	31.3%	201	63	52	2	3	2	1	0	3
Mississippi	16.7%	174	29	15	0	13	0	1	0	0
Missouri	23.9%	197	47	40	0	8	0	0	0	0
Montana	30.7%	150	46	41	0	0	0	5	0	0
Nebraska	28.6%	49	14	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	52.4%	63	33	19	5	5	0	1	0	3
New Hampshire	34.2%	424	145	138	0	3	2	0	1	0
New Jersey	30.8%	120	37	18	8	11	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	35.7%	112	40	23	12	2	0	3	0	0
New York	32.4%	213	69	37	10	18	1	0	1	1
North Carolina	25.3%	170	43	30	0	13	0	0	0	0
North Dakota	22.0%	141	31	30	0	0	0	1	0	0
Ohio	27.3%	132	36	25	0	9	1	0	0	1
Oklahoma	21.5%	149	32	26	0	1	0	1	0	4
Oregon	42.2%	90	38	33	2	1	0	1	0	0
Pennsylvania	26.1%	253	66	57	0	8	1	0	0	0
Rhode Island	38.1%	113	43	35	4	1	0	0	0	2

## Appendix Table 5, Continued

State	Proportion of Women	All Elected Officials	All Women	White Women	Hispanic Women	Black Women	Asian/Pacific Islander Women	Native American Women	Middle Eastern/North African	Multiracial Women
South Carolina	16.5%	170	28	17	0	11	0	0	0	0
South Dakota	22.9%	105	24	23	0	0	0	3	0	0
Tennessee	15.2%	132	20	13	1	6	0	0	0	0
Texas	23.2%	181	42	18	14	9	1	0	0	0
Utah	25.0%	104	26	21	2	1	2	0	0	0
Vermont	40.0%	180	72	70	0	0	0	0	0	2
Virginia	29.3%	140	41	26	2	10	2	0	0	1
Washington	40.8%	147	60	45	3	2	7	1	0	1
West Virginia	13.4%	134	18	15	1	1	0	0	0	1
Wisconsin	27.3%	132	36	30	3	3	0	0	0	0
Wyoming	15.6%	90	14	11	0	1	0	2	0	0
United States	27.0%	7383	2142	1602	126	306	47	23	6	29

Source: CAWP 2020f. Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

**Appendix Table 6. Women’s Political Representation by Race and Ethnicity: Women in Statewide Elected Executive Office, 2020**

State	Proportion of Women	All Elected Officials (Excluding Governors)	All Women (Excluding Governors)	White Women	Hispanic Women	Black Women	Asian/Pacific Islander Women	Native American Women	Multiracial Women
Alabama	11.1%	9	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Alaska	0.0%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arizona	50.0%	10	5	2	1	1	1	0	0
Arkansas	33.3%	6	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
California	42.9%	7	3	1	0	0	2	0	0
Colorado	50.0%	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Connecticut	40.0%	5	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	80.0%	5	4	3	0	0	0	0	1
Florida	75.0%	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
Georgia	8.3%	12	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Hawaii	0.0%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	50.0%	6	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	40.0%	5	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
Indiana	83.3%	6	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
Iowa	0.0%	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas	20.0%	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kentucky	33.3%	6	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Louisiana	0.0%	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maine	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maryland	0.0%	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Massachusetts	80.0%	5	4	4	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	100.0%	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
Minnesota	50.0%	4	2	1	0	0	0	1	0
Mississippi	14.3%	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Missouri	20.0%	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Montana	20.0%	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	0.0%	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	60.0%	5	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
New Hampshire	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	100.0%	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
New Mexico	33.3%	6	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
New York	66.7%	3	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
North Carolina	33.3%	9	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
North Dakota	25.0%	12	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio	0.0%	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oklahoma	40.0%	10	4	4	0	0	0	0	0
Oregon	75.0%	4	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
Pennsylvania	0.0%	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhode Island	50.0%	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	0

## Appendix Table 6, Continued

State	Proportion of Women	All Elected Officials (Excluding Governors)	All Women (Excluding Governors)	White Women	Hispanic Women	Black Women	Asian/Pacific Islander Women	Native American Women	Multiracial Women
South Carolina	28.6%	7	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
South Dakota	11.1%	9	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Texas	12.5%	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Utah	0.0%	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vermont	20.0%	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Virginia	0.0%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Washington	37.5%	8	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
West Virginia	0.0%	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wisconsin	40.0%	5	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Wyoming	50.0%	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
United States	27.0%		83	68	5	5	3	1	1

Notes: Data on women in statewide elected executive offices does not include governorships. Maine, New Hampshire, and Tennessee do not have statewide elected executive offices aside from the governorship. Sources: Data from CAWP 2020c; 2020g. Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

**Appendix Table 7. Women's Institutional Resources, 2020**

State	Campaign Training for Women <sup>a</sup>	Women's PAC <sup>a</sup>	National Women's Political Caucus <sup>b</sup>	Women's Commission
Alabama	0	1	0	1
Alaska	0	0	0	0
Arizona	1	0	1	0
Arkansas	1	0	0	0
California	1	1	1	1
Colorado	1	1	0	0
Connecticut	1	1	0	1
Delaware	1	1	0	1
Dist. Of Columbia	0	0	0	1
Florida	1	1	1	1
Georgia	1	1	0	1
Hawaii	1	1	0	1
Idaho	0	1	0	0
Illinois	1	1	0	0
Indiana	1	1	0	1
Iowa	1	1	0	1
Kansas	1	1	1	0
Kentucky	1	1	0	1
Louisiana	1	0	0	0
Maine	1	0	0	1
Maryland	1	0	0	1
Massachusetts	1	1	1	1
Michigan	1	1	0	1
Minnesota	1	1	0	1
Mississippi	1	0	0	1
Missouri	1	1	1	0
Montana	0	1	0	0
Nebraska	0	1	0	0
Nevada	1	0	0	0
New Hampshire	1	1	0	0
New Jersey	1	1	1	0
New Mexico	1	0	0	1
New York	1	1	1	0
North Carolina	1	1	0	1
North Dakota	1	1	0	0
Ohio	1	1	1	0
Oklahoma	1	1	0	1
Oregon	1	1	0	1
Pennsylvania	1	1	0	1
Rhode Island	0	0	0	1
South Carolina	1	0	0	1

**Appendix Table 7, Continued**

State	Campaign Training for Women <sup>a</sup>	Women's PAC <sup>a</sup>	National Women's Political Caucus <sup>b</sup>	Women's Commission
South Dakota	1	1	0	0
Tennessee	1	1	1	0
Texas	1	1	1	1
Utah	1	0	0	0
Vermont	1	0	0	1
Virginia	1	0	0	0
Washington	1	1	1	0
West Virginia	1	0	0	1
Wisconsin	1	1	0	0
Wyoming	1	0	0	0

Source: aCAWP 2019a; bNational Women's Political Caucus 2020; cNational Conference of State Legislatures 2019. Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

**Appendix Table 8. Share of Women Registered to Vote and Voter Turnout, 2016 and 2018**

State	Percent Registered to Vote, 2016	Percent Voted, 2016	Percent Registered to Vote, 2018	Percent Voted, 2018
Alabama	70.1%	58.9%	69.0%	50.9%
Alaska	70.3%	62.0%	62.9%	50.2%
Arizona	62.2%	56.0%	62.5%	54.9%
Arkansas	66.9%	57.4%	56.5%	41.8%
California	55.2%	49.6%	53.8%	45.5%
Colorado	69.7%	65.9%	61.0%	54.9%
Connecticut	67.1%	60.4%	62.7%	48.2%
Delaware	70.1%	60.4%	64.8%	50.9%
Florida	61.7%	55.0%	57.3%	48.5%
Georgia	66.3%	58.4%	63.9%	54.7%
Hawaii	51.6%	45.0%	51.9%	42.4%
Idaho	65.4%	59.5%	58.2%	46.0%
Illinois	69.4%	60.6%	65.2%	50.9%
Indiana	66.5%	56.6%	61.8%	48.0%
Iowa	71.8%	63.9%	68.7%	56.2%
Kansas	70.1%	61.5%	68.8%	54.4%
Kentucky	70.3%	57.0%	74.5%	55.0%
Louisiana	73.2%	63.0%	67.5%	48.4%
Maine	80.7%	74.3%	78.8%	66.6%
Maryland	68.6%	61.3%	66.9%	49.5%
Massachusetts	67.9%	61.5%	62.4%	50.6%
Michigan	72.8%	64.5%	72.8%	59.1%
Minnesota	75.1%	67.1%	73.4%	62.1%
Mississippi	80.3%	69.1%	75.5%	55.7%
Missouri	75.1%	65.9%	72.3%	55.3%
Montana	73.7%	66.5%	71.9%	64.9%
Nebraska	74.3%	66.6%	64.8%	50.5%
Nevada	62.4%	55.0%	56.1%	43.2%
New Hampshire	75.4%	69.3%	66.7%	53.8%
New Jersey	63.0%	55.8%	61.5%	49.4%
New Mexico	62.7%	53.0%	60.5%	47.5%
New York	60.6%	52.7%	56.9%	45.5%
North Carolina	68.9%	62.4%	66.7%	49.9%
North Dakota	73.1%	63.2%	74.3%	63.8%
Ohio	71.7%	63.9%	70.4%	54.7%
Oklahoma	64.5%	54.4%	64.4%	48.9%
Oregon	67.7%	61.2%	71.2%	59.8%
Pennsylvania	71.7%	62.2%	65.7%	52.5%
Rhode Island	66.0%	58.1%	67.5%	49.9%
South Carolina	73.0%	63.4%	63.4%	48.8%
South Dakota	70.6%	60.0%	68.6%	52.7%

## Appendix Table 8, Continued

State	Percent Registered to Vote, 2016	Percent Voted, 2016	Percent Registered to Vote, 2018	Percent Voted, 2018
Tennessee	66.2%	53.5%	63.2%	48.6%
Texas	60.1%	49.6%	58.1%	44.7%
Utah	66.3%	59.0%	66.1%	56.8%
Vermont	72.8%	63.6%	68.0%	54.7%
Virginia	71.6%	65.3%	66.0%	52.2%
Washington	72.7%	65.7%	68.5%	58.2%
West Virginia	65.6%	52.5%	65.1%	43.8%
Wisconsin	76.5%	70.4%	71.6%	64.4%
Wyoming	70.3%	64.7%	62.9%	52.7%
United States	70.3%	58.1%	63.0%	50.6%

Note: Average percent of all women aged 18 and older who reported registering in the 2016 and 2018 elections.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 2017 and 2019. Compiled by the Institute for Women Policy Research.



**Appendix Table 9. North Carolina Women’s Voter Registration Statistics by County , 2016 and 2018**

<b>County</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Rank</b>
ALAMANCE	53.6%	23
ALEXANDER	51.0%	94
ALLEGHANY	51.6%	84
ANSON	47.5%	100
ASHE	52.1%	67
AVERY	52.6%	54
BEAUFORT	52.6%	53
BERTIE	53.9%	19
BLADEN	53.6%	24
BRUNSWICK	52.1%	68
BUNCOMBE	52.4%	62
BURKE	52.4%	61
CABARRUS	52.7%	50
CALDWELL	51.9%	74
CAMDEN	50.7%	98
CARTERET	51.6%	85
CASWELL	52.9%	46
CATAWBA	52.6%	55
CHATHAM	51.1%	93
CHEROKEE	52.7%	49
CHOWAN	54.5%	8
CLAY	51.6%	83
CLEVELAND	53.3%	32
COLUMBUS	54.0%	17
CRAVEN	53.4%	26
CUMBERLAND	52.2%	66
CURRITUCK	50.8%	97
DARE	51.5%	87
DAVIDSON	52.5%	59
DAVIE	52.3%	63
DUPLIN	53.1%	40
DURHAM	53.2%	34
EDGECOMBE	55.3%	3
FORSYTH	53.4%	29
FRANKLIN	51.2%	92
GASTON	53.0%	41
GATES	51.7%	78
GRAHAM	50.9%	96
GRANVILLE	51.7%	79
GREENE	53.3%	31
GUILFORD	54.5%	7
HALIFAX	54.6%	6

**Appendix Table 9, Continued**

<b>County</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Rank</b>
HARNETT	53.0%	43
HAYWOOD	53.2%	38
HENDERSON	53.2%	33
HERTFORD	55.8%	1
HOKE	54.5%	9
HYDE	51.8%	75
IREDELL	51.9%	73
JACKSON	51.4%	90
JOHNSTON	52.6%	51
JONES	52.5%	57
LEE	53.7%	22
LENOIR	54.4%	10
LINCOLN	51.4%	89
MACON	53.2%	37
MADISON	50.0%	99
MARTIN	54.3%	12
MCDOWELL	52.8%	48
MECKLENBURG	53.2%	36
MITCHELL	51.7%	76
MONTGOMERY	52.6%	52
MOORE	54.1%	15
NASH	54.0%	18
NEW HANOVER	51.3%	91
NORTHAMPTON	53.8%	20
ONSLOW	53.2%	35
ORANGE	51.7%	77
PAMLICO	52.0%	70
PASQUOTANK	53.1%	39
PENDER	51.6%	81
PERQUIMANS	52.9%	45
PERSON	53.4%	27
PITT	53.8%	21
POLK	53.4%	28
RANDOLPH	52.2%	65
RICHMOND	53.6%	25
ROBESON	55.5%	2
ROCKINGHAM	54.1%	16
ROWAN	52.4%	60
RUTHERFORD	52.3%	64
SAMPSON	54.1%	14
SCOTLAND	55.3%	4
STANLY	51.7%	80
STOKES	52.5%	56
SURRY	53.0%	42

**Appendix Table 9, Continued**

<b>County</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Rank</b>
SWAIN	52.5%	58
TRANSYLVANIA	52.0%	71
TYRRELL	52.8%	47
UNION	51.5%	88
VANCE	54.3%	11
WAKE	51.0%	95
WARREN	53.3%	30
WASHINGTON	54.7%	5
WATAUGA	52.0%	69
WAYNE	52.9%	44
WILKES	52.0%	72
WILSON	54.2%	13
YADKIN	51.6%	82
YANCEY	51.5%	86

Note: Data are the average of 2016 and 2018 election combined.

Source: North Carolina State Board of Election 2016 and 2018. Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

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