



Women in State Policy Leadership, 1998 - 2005
An Analysis of Slow and Uneven Progress

A Report of the  Center for Women in Government & Civil Society
University at Albany, State University of New York
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Highlights

- Across the country, women's share of the highest elected and appointed offices in state government increased only slightly between 1998 and 2005.
- In 40% of the states, women's overall share of top executive, legislative, and judicial posts, compared to their share of the population, actually fell, remained level, or increased by less than .01 percentage points in the eight-year period.
- Women achieved some progress within each branch of government. The largest gain for women, 5.7 percentage points, occurred among highest state court justices. By contrast, the percentage of women state legislators increased by less than one percentage point over the eight-year period.
- Between 1998 and 2005, the pattern of only one woman justice serving on the highest court of many states changed significantly. Women judges have now won election or appointment to two or more judicial leadership posts in over half the states.
- The gender gap in state policy leadership is greatest among state legislators. It is three times larger than the gender gap among top advisors in governors' offices, where the difference between the percentage of positions held by women and men is the smallest.
- In the United States today, eight women are governors; 15 women are lieutenant governors; and 15 women are chief justices of the state's highest court.

Acknowledgements

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Notes on Methodology

This report documents trends between 1998 and 2005 in the status of women in five major categories of policy leadership in state government: statewide elected officials; top advisors in governors' offices; department heads; state legislators; and state highest court justices.

Data Sources

Statewide elected officials: Women's Leadership Profile Compendium Report, 1998, Center for Women in Government & Civil Society; State Yellow Book, A Leadership Directory, Summer 2005; Women in Statewide Elective Executive Office 2005, Center for American Women and Politics (Nov. 2005).

Top advisors in governors' offices/department heads: Center for Women in Government & Civil Society Survey (data collected from February - May 1997); Center for Women in Government & Civil Society Survey (data collected from May - October 2004). Top advisors include policy-influencing titles such as chief of staff, legal advisor, and budget director. Department heads include heads of departments, agencies, offices, boards, commissions, and authorities. Only persons appointed by current governors are included.

State legislators: Women in State Legislatures 1998, Center for American Women and Politics, (Nov. 1998); Women in State Legislatures 2005, Center for American Women and Politics, (August 2005).

State highest court justices: Women's Leadership Profile Compendium Report, 1998, Center for Women in Government & Civil Society; 2005 data collected in October 2005 from official websites of highest state courts.

Definition of state-based representativeness ratios

The ratios measure the degree to which different groups are represented as appointed and elected state policy leaders. To calculate the representativeness ratio (rep. ratio) for women policy leaders in state government, the percentage of policy leader positions occupied by women across the executive, legislative, and judicial branches is divided by the percentage of women in the state's population (2000 Census data).

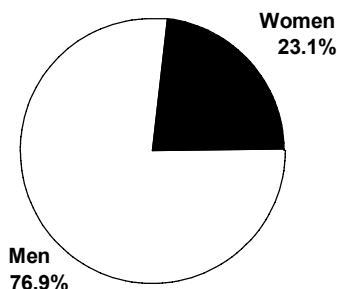
The value of rep. ratios ranges from 0 to 1. It is closer to 1 if the gender composition of policy leaders mirrors that of the general population. A value closer to 0 is indicative of the underrepresentation of women as state policy leaders relative to their share of the state's population.

National Trend Analysis

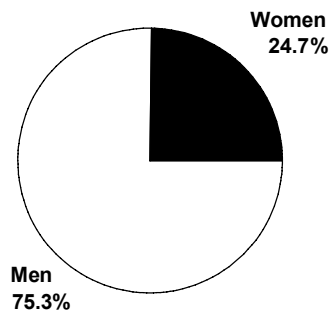
Women Remain Significantly Underrepresented in State Government Leadership Positions

Executive, Legislative, Judicial Posts Combined

State Government Leadership, 1998



State Government Leadership, 2005



Across the country, women's share of the highest elected and appointed offices in state government increased only slightly - 1.6 percentage points - over an eight-year period. These positions include: statewide elected officials; state legislators; highest court judges; department heads; and governor's office top advisors.

In 40% of the states, women's overall share of top executive, legislative, and judicial posts, compared to their share of the population, actually fell, remained level, or increased by less than .01 percentage points between 1998 and 2005.

The percentage of women state political leaders increased in 34 states, but in most of these states gains were relatively modest.

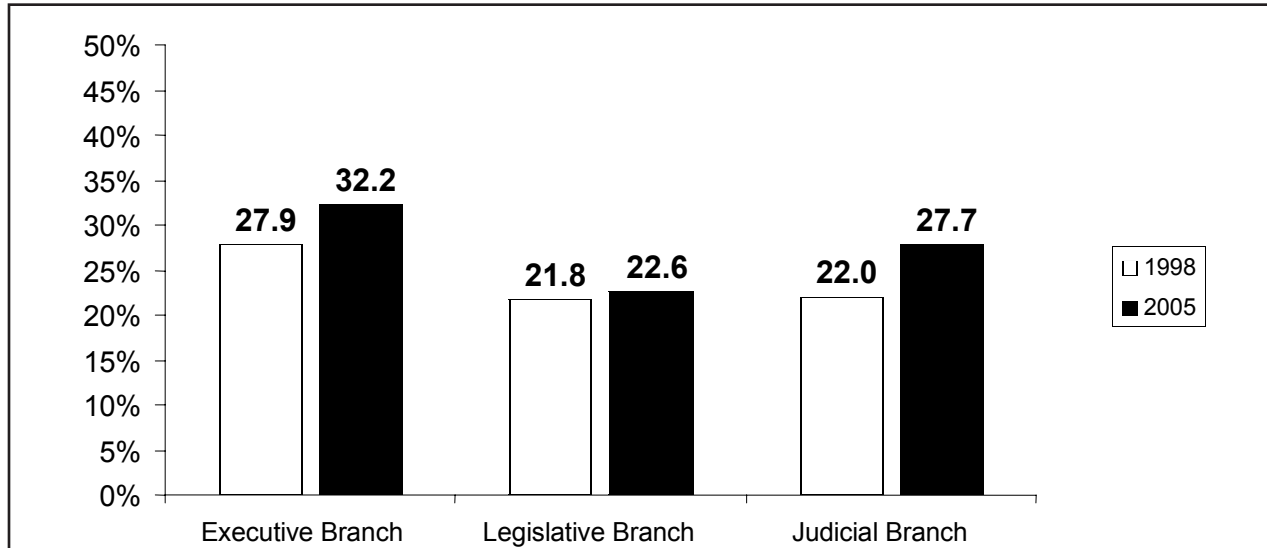
In every state, women's representation in the top ranks of political leadership in 2005 fell below expected levels of participation based on their percentage of the state's population. Women have achieved at least two-thirds of the leadership posts that would reflect their share of the population in only six states.



National Trend Analysis

Some Progress Achieved by Women within Each Branch of Government

Percentage of Women State Policy Leaders in the U.S., 1998 - 2005



Among the three branches of government, the largest gain for women, 5.7 percentage points, occurred in the leadership cohort of highest state court justices. By contrast, the percentage of women state legislators increased by less than one percentage point over the eight-year period.

Within the ranks of executive branch leadership, the sub-group of appointed department heads experienced the greatest advance - 6.1 percentage points. This group includes gubernatorial appointments to the chief executive position at the helm of departments, agencies, offices, boards, commissions, and authorities.

Policy Leaders by Gender, Branch of Government, and Position, 1998 - 2005

State Government	1998					2005				
	Total	Men		Women		Total	Men		Women	
	#	#	%	#	%	#	#	%	#	%
Executive Branch	2129	1536	72.1	593	27.9	2027	1374	67.8	653	32.2
Statewide Elected Officials	326	244	74.8	82	25.2	318	237	74.5	81	25.5
Department Heads	1275	974	76.4	301	23.6	1141	802	70.3	339	29.7
Governors' Office Top Advisors	528	318	60.2	210	39.8	568	335	59.0	233	41.0
Legislative Branch	7424	5807	78.2	1617	21.8	7382	5716	77.4	1666	22.6
Senators	1984	1618	81.6	366	18.4	1971	1568	79.6	403	20.4
Representatives	5440	4189	77.0	1251	23.0	5411	4148	76.7	1263	23.3
Judicial Branch	327	255	78.0	72	22.0	325	235	72.3	90	27.7
Chief Justices	50	40	80.0	10	20.0	50	35	70.0	15	30.0
Associate Justices	277	215	77.6	62	22.4	275	200	72.7	75	27.3
All Branches	9880	7598	76.9	2282	23.1	9734	7325	75.3	2409	24.7

National Snapshot, 2005

Tokenism Surpassed by Women Justices on Most Highest State Courts

Women Justices on Highest State Courts

No. of Women Justices per Court	No. of State Highest Courts	
	1998	2005
0	6	3
1	24	18
2	12	18
3	8	8
4	0	3

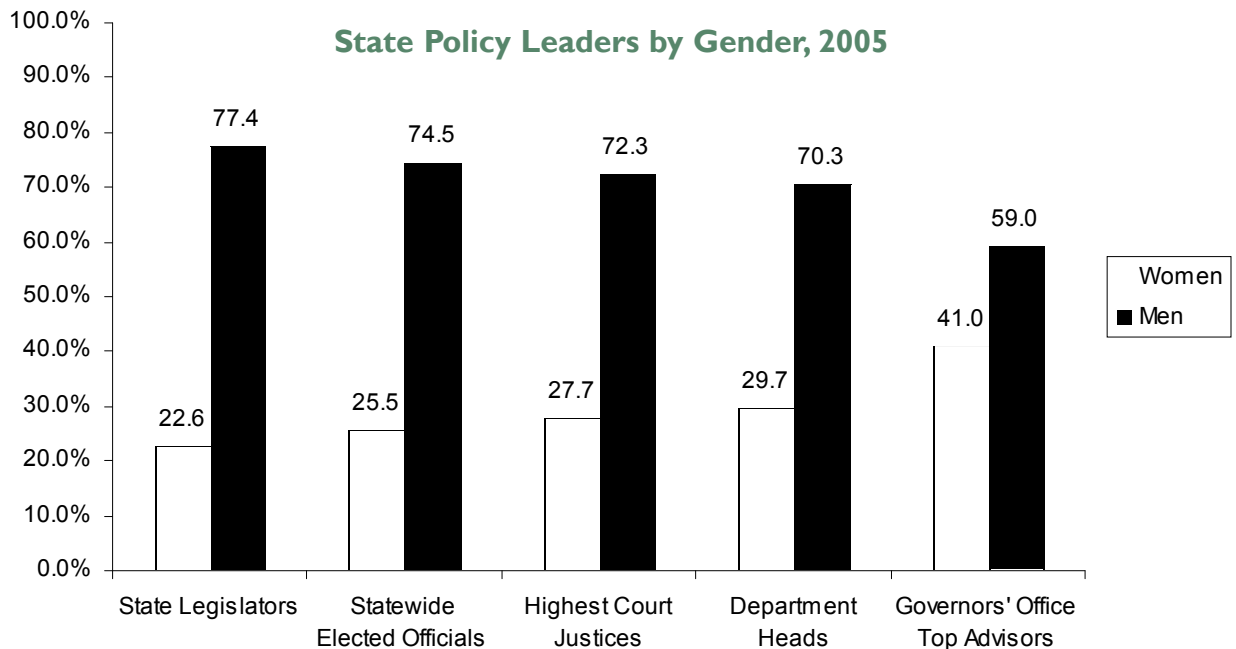
Women Justices in Judicial Branch Leadership

	1998	2005
Women Chief Justices	10	15
Women Associate Justices	62	75
Total Women Justices	72	90

Between 1998 and 2005, the pattern of only one woman justice serving on the highest court of many states changed significantly. Women judges have now won election or appointment to two or more judicial leadership posts in over half the states. Women serve as chief justice in 15 states. In three states-New York, Ohio, Washington-women hold four judicial seats. Indiana, Kentucky, and Oregon are the only states with no women judges on the highest court.

Gender Gap Persists in State Policy Leadership

The gender gap in state policy leadership is greatest among state legislators. It is three times larger than the gender gap among top advisors in governors' offices.





Ranking of States

Note: States are ranked on the basis of representativeness ratios, defined in Notes on Methodology, inside front cover. Representativeness ratios are rounded to two decimal places, whereas the calculation of the state ranking is based on numbers with more than two decimal places. Therefore, the states that appear to have identical representativeness ratios in the table are in fact different and are ranked according to their additional decimal numbers.

State Data on Total Women Policy Leaders in Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches Combined

State	2005 % Women Policy Leaders	% Women in Population	1998 Rep. Ratio	2005 Rep. Ratio	1998 Ranking	2005 Ranking
Alabama	17.1	51.7	0.17	0.33	50	44
Alaska	20.0	48.3	0.41	0.41	31	35
Arizona	38.6	50.1	0.66	0.77	5	1
Arkansas	16.6	51.2	0.36	0.32	40	45
California	29.7	50.2	0.50	0.59	21	12
Colorado	32.4	49.6	0.67	0.65	3	8
Connecticut	31.5	51.6	0.53	0.61	13	10
Delaware	34.3	51.4	0.56	0.67	11	6
Florida	27.7	51.2	0.44	0.54	26	21
Georgia	18.7	50.8	0.32	0.37	42	42
Hawaii	27.6	49.8	0.40	0.56	35	17
Idaho	27.1	49.9	0.56	0.54	12	19
Illinois	27.6	51.0	0.50	0.54	20	20
Indiana	22.0	51.0	0.44	0.43	27	33
Iowa	23.5	50.9	0.48	0.46	24	29
Kansas	33.3	50.6	0.57	0.66	10	7
Kentucky	13.8	51.1	0.23	0.27	49	49
Louisiana	19.3	51.6	0.28	0.37	45	39
Maine	23.9	51.3	0.50	0.46	18	27
Maryland	31.8	51.7	0.60	0.61	8	9
Massachusetts	28.0	51.8	0.46	0.54	25	22
Michigan	28.6	51.0	0.52	0.56	14	16
Minnesota	30.7	50.5	0.64	0.61	6	11
Mississippi	12.9	51.7	0.28	0.25	46	50
Missouri	23.7	51.4	0.44	0.46	28	28
Montana	25.4	50.2	0.51	0.51	15	23
Nebraska	28.0	50.7	0.51	0.55	16	18
Nevada	34.0	49.1	0.75	0.69	1	2
New Hampshire	29.7	50.8	0.61	0.59	7	15
New Jersey	19.2	51.5	0.48	0.37	23	41
New Mexico	34.0	50.8	0.50	0.67	17	5
New York	24.5	51.8	0.41	0.47	33	25
North Carolina	24.6	51.0	0.41	0.48	32	24
North Dakota	20.6	50.1	0.39	0.41	38	36
Ohio	22.8	51.4	0.44	0.44	29	30
Oklahoma	17.6	50.9	0.23	0.35	48	43
Oregon	29.7	50.4	0.59	0.59	9	13
Pennsylvania	15.8	51.7	0.28	0.31	43	47
Rhode Island	20.4	52.0	0.50	0.39	19	37
South Carolina	14.0	51.4	0.27	0.27	47	48
South Dakota	16.0	50.4	0.42	0.32	30	46
Tennessee	22.3	51.3	0.32	0.43	41	32
Texas	23.5	50.4	0.41	0.47	34	26
Utah	21.9	49.9	0.40	0.44	36	31
Vermont	35.0	51.0	0.66	0.69	4	3
Virginia	19.0	51.0	0.37	0.37	39	40
Washington	34.4	50.2	0.75	0.69	2	4
West Virginia	19.9	51.4	0.28	0.39	44	38
Wisconsin	29.8	50.6	0.49	0.59	22	14
Wyoming	20.6	49.7	0.39	0.41	37	34

State-by-State Listing of Policy Leaders (#s), 2005

State	Executive				Legislative				Judicial		State Government				
	Statewide Elected Officials		Department Heads		Governors' Office Top Advisors		State Legislators		Highest Court Justices		Three Branches Combined				
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	# Women	% Women	# Men	% Men	# Total
Alabama	5	5	6	17	5	6	15	125	2	7	33	17.1	160	82.9	193
Alaska	0	2	1	13	6	8	11	49	1	4	19	20.0	76	80.0	95
Arizona	3	8	7	14	19	12	30	60	2	3	61	38.6	97	61.4	158
Arkansas	0	7	8	36	1	5	22	113	2	5	33	16.6	166	83.4	199
California	0	8	9	24	6	9	37	83	2	4	54	29.7	128	70.3	182
Colorado	2	3	4	13	3	7	33	67	3	4	45	32.4	94	67.6	139
Connecticut	4	2	12	19	1	3	55	132	2	5	74	31.5	161	68.5	235
Delaware	2	4	5	11	5	5	21	41	1	4	34	34.3	65	65.7	99
Florida	1	4	7	13	8	6	39	121	2	5	57	27.7	149	72.3	206
Georgia	3	10	4	16	0	7	44	192	2	5	53	18.7	230	81.3	283
Hawaii	1	1	4	12	1	5	22	54	1	4	29	27.6	76	72.4	105
Idaho	1	6	4	11	3	5	29	76	1	4	38	27.1	102	72.9	140
Illinois	2	4	8	30	5	6	49	128	2	5	66	27.6	173	72.4	239
Indiana	3	4	15	27	5	9	25	125	0	5	48	22.0	170	78.0	218
Iowa	2	5	11	20	3	2	30	120	1	6	47	23.5	153	76.5	200
Kansas	3	3	5	14	5	5	53	112	3	4	69	33.3	138	66.7	207
Kentucky	1	6	3	9	3	7	17	121	0	7	24	13.8	150	86.2	174
Louisiana	1	6	2	6	3	7	25	119	3	4	34	19.3	142	80.7	176
Maine	0	1	4	12	3	5	43	143	2	5	52	23.9	166	76.1	218
Maryland	0	4	4	20	4	9	65	123	2	5	75	31.8	161	68.2	236
Massachusetts	1	5	6	6	6	5	50	150	3	4	66	28.0	170	72.0	236
Michigan	2	2	15	14	8	7	30	118	3	4	58	28.6	145	71.4	203
Minnesota	3	2	8	15	0	2	60	141	2	5	73	30.7	165	69.3	238
Mississippi	1	7	1	16	4	12	22	152	1	8	29	12.9	195	87.1	224
Missouri	3	3	3	9	5	5	42	155	2	5	55	23.7	177	76.3	232
Montana	1	5	4	13	5	8	37	113	2	5	49	25.4	144	74.6	193
Nebraska	2	9	8	22	7	3	12	37	1	6	30	28.0	77	72.0	107
Nevada	2	4	9	11	2	5	21	42	1	6	35	34.0	68	66.0	103
New Hampshire	0	2	4	17	1	1	129	295	1	4	135	29.7	319	70.3	454
New Jersey	0	1	8	25	3	8	19	101	3	4	33	19.2	139	80.8	172
New Mexico	3	4	12	15	3	8	35	77	2	3	55	34.0	107	66.0	162
New York	1	3	13	33	5	12	47	165	4	3	70	24.5	216	75.5	286
North Carolina	4	6	3	10	5	6	39	131	1	6	52	24.6	159	75.4	211
North Dakota	2	10	7	9	3	3	23	118	2	3	37	20.6	143	79.4	180
Ohio	2	4	4	23	7	10	26	106	4	3	43	22.8	146	77.2	189
Oklahoma	5	6	3	9	2	4	22	127	1	8	33	17.6	154	82.4	187
Oregon	1	5	9	16	9	11	25	65	0	7	44	29.7	104	70.3	148
Pennsylvania	1	4	5	22	9	9	33	220	1	6	49	15.8	261	84.2	310
Rhode Island	0	5	8	13	3	5	19	94	1	4	31	20.4	121	79.6	152
South Carolina	1	8	3	12	11	11	15	155	1	4	31	14.0	190	86.0	221
South Dakota	0	10	5	16	0	3	17	88	1	4	23	16.0	121	84.0	144
Tennessee	0	2	10	15	4	7	23	109	2	3	39	22.3	136	77.7	175
Texas	3	6	15	32	7	11	36	145	1	8	62	23.5	202	76.5	264
Utah	0	5	6	15	3	8	21	83	2	3	32	21.9	114	78.1	146
Vermont	1	5	9	10	4	3	60	120	2	3	76	35.0	141	65.0	217
Virginia	1	2	4	6	3	5	21	119	3	4	32	19.0	136	81.0	168
Washington	2	7	13	21	6	10	49	98	4	5	74	34.4	141	65.6	215
West Virginia	1	5	6	10	6	9	21	113	1	4	35	19.9	141	80.1	176
Wisconsin	3	3	10	15	6	12	34	98	3	4	56	29.8	132	70.2	188
Wyoming	1	4	5	15	7	4	13	77	1	4	27	20.6	104	79.4	131
Nation	81	237	339	802	233	335	1666	5716	90	235	2409	24.7	7325	75.3	9734

Additional Project Publications

- Saidel, Judith R., Tamika R. Black and Xiaolei Chen. "Exercising the Power of Appointment: An Analysis of Variation in Gubernatorial Appointments," *Government, Law and Policy Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Winter 2005), 42-45.
- Saidel, Judith R. and Loscocco, Karyn. "Agency Leaders, Gendered Institutions, and Representative Bureaucracy," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (March/April 2005), 158-170.
- Saidel, Judith R. *National and Individual State Women's Leadership Profiles*, Center for Women in Government & Civil Society, Fall 2004.
- Saidel, Judith R. *Appointed Policy Makers in State Government Five-Year Trend Analysis: Gender, Race and Ethnicity*, Center for Women in Government & Civil Society, Winter 2004.
- Saidel, Judith R. and Riccucci, Norma M. "Women State Agency Heads and Their Leadership," *Spectrum: The Journal of State Government*, Vol. 75, No. 1 (Winter 2002), 18-19.
- Riccucci, Norma M. and Saidel, Judith R. "The Demographics of Gubernatorial Appointees: Toward An Explanation of Variation," *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (2001), 11-22.
- Riccucci, Norma M. and Saidel, Judith R. "The Representativeness of State-Level Bureaucratic Leaders: A Missing Piece of the Representative Bureaucracy Puzzle," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 57, No. 5 (September/October 1997), 423-430.

About the Center

The Center for Women in Government & Civil Society is part of the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany, State University of New York. Through research, teaching, training, leadership development, networking, and public education, the Center works to:

- Strengthen women's public policy leadership;
- Broaden access of women and youth to policy knowledge, skills, and influence;
- Advance equity for women in the workplace;

- Enhance nonprofit management and leadership;
- Inform policy makers and policy activists on issues related to women, children and families.

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