



# **Why Women Matter**

**LESSONS ABOUT WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP FROM HOME & ABROAD**

## **Summit Materials**

**National Press Club, Washington, DC  
March 3, 2003**

**Crowne Plaza, San Francisco, CA  
March 6, 2003**

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*Find further information about The White House Project and our other research and programs online at:*

**[www.thewhitehouseproject.org](http://www.thewhitehouseproject.org)**

**The White House Project would like to thank the following for their contributions to this Briefing Book:**

*Ann Burroughs*  
*Georgia Duerst-Lahti, Beloit College*  
*Morgan Hanger & Erin Vilardi, WHP Interns*  
*Anat Maytal, former WHP Intern*  
*Karen O'Connor, Women & Politics Institute at American University*  
*Rob Richie and Steven Hill, Center for Voting & Democracy*  
*The Proteus Fund*  
*Women's E-News*

Briefing Book for "Why Women Matter" Summit  
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Edited by Shauna L. Shames  
Research Director, The White House Project

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**Helen French**, *Executive Assistant*  
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**Shauna Shames**, *Research Director*  
**Sonal Nalkur**, *Public Education Director*  
**Tanya Rodriguez**, *Finance Associate*  
**Bobbie Watkins**, *Fundraising Associate*  
**Elizabeth Chatalas**, *Programs*

### ***White House Project Interns 2002-2003***

Alanna Chan  
Sevan Basil  
Lorett Cisse  
Morgan Hanger  
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Anat Maytal  
Marlysha Myrthil  
Julie Nimmicht  
Janice Oh  
Sarah Phillips  
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**Bronznick & Jacoby**, Shifra Bronznick  
**Melissa Silverstein**  
**The Cosgrove Group**, Tom Cosgrove  
**Communications for Development and Social Change**, Ann Burroughs  
**The Farwell Group**, James P. Farwell

**Lake Snell Perry & Associates**, Celinda Lake  
**Laguens, Hamburger, Stone**, Dawn Laguens and Martin Hamburger  
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**PSG Consulting**, Page Gardner  
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# *Introduction*

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**By Marie C. Wilson  
President, The White House Project**

Despite its historical role of leadership in the women's movement, the United States ranks 58<sup>th</sup> among nations in its representation of women at the national level. We believe that the time has come to change the face of America's political leadership. To this end, The White House Project has launched a new initiative, *Why Women Matter: Lessons About Women's Political Leadership from Home and Abroad*. Our primary goal is to inspire a national movement to increase the number of women in politics in this country.

Our summits in Washington D.C. and San Francisco brought together international and domestic leaders, political experts and representatives from women's organizations. We looked at successful ideas and initiatives that have been used in other countries and at home to increase women's representation. These summits presented a unique opportunity for our nation's leaders and aspiring women leaders to collaborate with women who have successfully created change and opened the doors to political leadership for women in their own countries. In some cases, this has been accomplished through political mandates for inclusion, and in others, a groundswell of support for women candidates at the grassroots level. In all cases, there were valuable lessons for us to learn.

Consensus is building globally that women play pivotal roles as agents of change in their communities and societies. Increasingly, women collaborate within and across their borders to reach their full political and economic potential, irrespective of cultural differences. During the last ten years, many nations have recognized the power of women as a force for social change and have embraced mandates to include substantial numbers of women in government.

There is no doubt that democracy in the United States would be strengthened if it were to be more reflective of the demographics of this country and more representative of the majority. At present women comprise 52 percent of the nation's population, yet they are vastly under-represented in government. Only 14 positions in the 100 member Senate are held by women, and only 59 women serve in the 435 House of Representatives. Nationally, only 20 percent of all elected officials are women. Of the 50 state governors, six are women, and in our nation's history, only 23 women have served as governors. This is particularly significant since many men have launched successful bids for the presidency from the governor's office.

At the local level, representation of women has dropped dramatically. It is this pipeline that provides the most critical conduit for state and national representation. If we are to fuel this pipeline, we will need all the help we can get to reframe, reinvigorate and support local strategies to foster the entry of women into positions of leadership. If we are successful, we will inevitably change the face of government in the United States.

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*Why Women Matter* gathered together some of the best minds to think creatively about which strategies and initiatives, from home and abroad, will be most effective in advancing women's representation in this country. Our summits in Washington D.C. and San Francisco were set within a framework of key questions: Why is it important that women enter government and what happens when a significant number of women govern? What strategies were used by women in other countries to push for and maintain this critical mass? How can we do the same in the United States?

Without losing sight of our long-term goal of changing the face of government in this country, *Why Women Matter* provided all of us with the opportunity to achieve several key objectives. We strengthened and expanded collaboration among sister organizations. We began the creation of a network amongst ourselves, comprised of advocates for more representative democracy in our country and a corps of natural allies and supporters for women candidates. We believe that a drumbeat of support across the country will shift broad public perceptions about the capacity of women to lead. It is our hope that this drumbeat will motivate more women to become involved in politics and inspire more party activists and grassroots organizers to support them.

There is no dearth of women and men who have both the passion and the capacity to pursue a vision for truly representative government. The *Why Women Matter* summits offered a rare opportunity to gather this energy and expertise together, and to document and share the rich diversity of experience that has resulted in the inclusion of women in government the world over.

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*The White House Project has worked with several partners to create the Why Women Matter summits. The depth of the collective wisdom and expertise that our partners have so generously put at our disposal has been extraordinary. They have functioned in a way that we can best describe as the beginnings of a brain trust for this movement to which we are all committed. It is with gratitude and admiration that we list them. Further information on each along with their websites can be found in the "Summit Organizational Partners" section of this booklet:*

**WASHINGTON, DC**

*Center for Women's Global Leadership  
Council of Women World Leaders  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
UNIFEM  
Women's Environment & Development  
Organization  
Vital Voices  
The Washington Area Women's Fund*

**SAN FRANCISCO**

*The Women's Foundation of San Francisco  
The Women's Leadership Alliance  
The Susie Tompkins Buell Foundation.*

**The summits have been made possible through funding from  
The Ford Foundation  
The Susie Tompkins Buell Foundation  
The Levi Strauss Foundation, The May Foundation, Principal Financial Group**

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# *The White House Project: Overview*

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*The White House Project is a national, nonprofit, non-partisan organization dedicated to promoting women as leaders up to and including the Presidency. As a program of the Women's Leadership Fund, WHP works to (1) enhance public perceptions of women's capacity to lead; (2) change biases against women's leadership ability; and (3) foster the entry of women into positions of leadership.*

## **Research Initiatives**

The White House Project conducts groundbreaking research to examine the state of women's leadership. Our research answers questions including: are voters "tougher" on women candidates than men? Does the press cover female candidates differently than male candidates? and Do young women aspire to political life? Research allows us to go beyond defining the problem to determining real solutions. When women's voices *are* being heard, how can they be perceived as tough and effective? When men outnumber women 9 to 1 as guests on the Sunday morning political talk shows, how do we ensure that women are represented?

## **Youth Programs**

The White House Project is working hard to ensure that girls can *really* be anything they want to be. We teamed up with the Girl Scouts of America to create a new "Ms. President" patch that encourages girls to consider civic engagement. The Scholastic Art and Writing Contest done in conjunction with WHP provides a platform for students' expressions of women's leadership. WHP has also partnered with teen magazines like *CosmoGirl!* to inspire young women to see themselves as leaders and take action.

## **Reaching Out Across Sectors**

The White House Project hosts an annual meeting for top women to develop new strategies to foster women leaders of today and tomorrow. Participants grapple with challenges such as how to help women leaders be seen and heard; how to shift the balance of power – and ensure that women work side-by-side with men in all professions and at all levels; and how to encourage young women to pursue leadership positions.

## **Changing the Culture**

The White House Project believes that positive images of women leaders must become embedded in our collective national consciousness so that women's leadership becomes the "norm" in this country. We have held meetings with Hollywood executives, conducted presentations at the Sundance and Full Frame Film festivals, and collaborated with many media outlets to discuss the images of women leaders the public sees in popular culture. WHP also helped create Women's Leadership Through Sports, where junior WNBA players spent the day shadowing congressional staffers on Capitol Hill.

The White House Project's annual EPIC Awards – Enhancing Perceptions In Culture – honors outstanding individuals and organizations that promote positive images of strong women leaders in TV, movies, books, music, sports, and other pop culture venues. Some of last year's honorees included Parade Magazine, the National Visionary Leadership Project, and Lifetime Television.

*We know most people agree that the Presidency should be a career option for women. And The White House Project is recruiting the public to help us hurry history – and help put a woman at the top of the ticket!*

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# *Washington, D.C. Summit Schedule*

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**March 3, 2003**  
**National Press Club**  
**529 14th St NW, Washington, DC 20045**

## **SCHEDULE**

9:00-9:30 Coffee & Registration

9:35-9:45 Welcome: **Marie Wilson**, President, The White House Project

9:45-11:00 First panel

*Our first panel will address why women's presence in national and statewide legislatures is important, and what difference women have made around the world. National and international experts will share research and personal perspectives on the impact of women in legislative and executive roles.*

**Introduction:** **Laura Liswood**, Secretary General, Council of Women World Leaders

**Moderator:** **Judy Woodruff**, Anchor, *Inside Politics*, CNN

**Panelists:**

- ◆ Representative **Eleanor Holmes Norton**, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Washington, D.C.)
- ◆ **Debbie Walsh**, Director, Center for American Women and Politics
- ◆ **Christine Pintat**, former Officer in Charge of the Programme on the Status of Women, Inter-Parliamentary Union
- ◆ The Honorable **Marjorie Mowlam**, MP, Great Britain
- ◆ **Charlotte Bunch**, Executive Director, Center for Women's Global Leadership

11:00-11:15 Break

11:15-12:30 Second panel

*The focus of our second panel will be international examples and strategies for increasing women's political participation, and what the response was in various countries.*

**Introduction:** **June Zeitlin**, Executive Director, Women's Environment and Development Organization

**Moderator:** **Michel Martin**, Correspondent and Guest Anchor, *Nightline*, ABC News

**Panelists:**

- ◆ **Sheila Sisulu**, former Ambassador to U.S., South Africa

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- ◆ **Anita Gradin**, former European Union Commissioner, Sweden
- ◆ **Ranjana Kumari**, Director, Centre for Social Research, India
- ◆ **Pippa Norris**, Professor and author, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, United States
- ◆ **Yvette Roudy**, former Minister for Women's Rights, France

12:30-2:00 Lunch

**Welcome:** **Anne Mosle**, President, Washington Area Women's Foundation

**Keynote:** **Madeleine Albright**, former U.S. Secretary of State

2:00-2:15 Break

2:15-4 pm Roundtable Discussion of Strategies

*The Roundtable will feature national experts discussing strategies and current models for increasing women's political representation here in the United States.*

**Introduction:** **Beverly Neufeld**, Executive Director, The White House Project

**Moderator:** **Pat Mitchell**, President, PBS

**Panelists:**

- ◆ **Donna Brazile**, Political Strategist & Consultant
- ◆ **Linda DiVall**, President, American Viewpoint
- ◆ **Georgia Duerst-Lahti**, Political Science Chair, Beloit College
- ◆ **Donna Edwards**, Executive Director, ARCA Foundation
- ◆ **Heidi Hartmann**, Director, Institute for Women's Policy Research
- ◆ **Swanee Hunt**, Director, Women and Public Policy Program, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University
- ◆ **Celinda Lake**, President, Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates
- ◆ **Ruth Mandel**, Director, Eagleton Institute for Politics
- ◆ **Karen Narasaki**, President & Executive Director, National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
- ◆ **Rob Richie**, Executive Director, Center for Voting and Democracy
- ◆ **Eleanor Smeal**, President, Feminist Majority Foundation
- ◆ **Linda Tarr-Whelan**, Partner, Tarr-Whelan & Associates
- ◆ **Melanne Vermeer**, Chair, Vital Voices Global Partnership

4:00-5:00 Networking

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# *San Francisco Summit Schedule*

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March 6, 2003  
Crowne Plaza Union Square  
480 Sutter Street - San Francisco, CA

## SCHEDULE

- 9:00-9:30 Coffee and Registration
- 9:30-9:40 Welcome: Susie Tompkins Buell, Susie Tompkins Buell Foundation
- 9:45-10 Overview: How Women Matter: Marie C. Wilson, The White House Project
- 10-11:15 Panel of International Guests  
*Our international guests will focus on examples and strategies to increase women's representation in their countries and around the world.*
- Moderator:** **Kavita Ramdas**, Global Fund for Women  
**Panelists:** **Ranjana Kumari**, Centre for Social Research, India  
**Dr. Glaudine Mtshali**, South African Consul General, L.A.  
**Anita Gradin**, Former E.U. Commissioner, Sweden
- 11:15-12:30 Roundtable Discussion of Strategies  
*Political leaders, local activists and thinkers will focus on local and national strategies and their impact on increasing the number of women in elected office. They will also discuss how the local San Francisco strategies can be exported and used as part of a national dialogue.*
- Introduction:** **Patti Chang**, The Women's Foundation, San Francisco  
**Moderator:** **Eunice Azzani**, The Women's Foundation, San Francisco  
**Panelists:** **Andrea Dew**, Emerge  
**Belle Taylor-McGhee**, Department on the Status of Women & Women's Leadership Alliance  
**Sophie Maxwell**, San Francisco City and County Supervisor  
**Steven Hill**, Center for Voting and Democracy  
**Pat Dando**, Vice Mayor, San Jose CA  
Celinda Vasquez, Office of Senator Martha Escutia, Montebello, Senate District 30  
**Cathie Bennett Warner**, Lincoln Club of Northern California
- 12:45-2:00 Lunch  
**Keynote: Senator Sheila Kuehl**, Los Angeles, Senate District 23
- 2:00 Networking

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## ***Why Women Matter Summits: Speaker Biographies***

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**Madeleine Albright** was the first woman U.S. Secretary of State. She joined the staff of the National Security Council in 1978 and established herself as an expert in foreign affairs. Prior to serving as Secretary of State, Albright was the U.S. Delegate to the United Nations during the first Clinton Administration. (<http://www.who2.com/madelinealbright.html>)

**Eunice Azzani** is Managing Director in the San Francisco office of Korn/Ferry International. She serves on the boards of the Women's Foundation (chair), the City Club of San Francisco, Lifefprint, Planned Parenthood Golden Gate, the Needle Exchange Board for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, Women's Forum West, and the YMCA. (<http://www.kornferry.com>)

**Donna Brazile** is currently President of Brazile and Associates Political Consulting Firm and has been a fellow at the Institute of Politics at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. She served as Deputy Campaign manager for Jesse Jackson's 1984 presidential campaign and as Chief of Staff to D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton from 1990 through 1999. More recently, she served as campaign manager for former Vice President Al Gore's 2000 presidential campaign. ([www.washingtoncitypaper.com/lips/bios/brazilebio.html](http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/lips/bios/brazilebio.html))

**Susie Tompkins Buell** is the former co-owner and co-founder of Esprit de Corp. She is also the founder of the Susie Tompkins Buell Foundation which focuses its grant making on Bay Area programs that foster leadership training and the empowerment of girls and young women. She also co-founded *Women Count*, a national, non-partisan media program that challenged women to vote and become active participants in the political process. She serves on the boards of HILLPAC, Voters for Choice, and the San Francisco Art Institute.

**Charlotte Bunch** is founder and Executive Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University. She has been an activist, author, and organizer for three decades and was a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies. Bunch is currently a professor in the Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy at Rutgers. Her latest books are *Passionate Politics: Feminist Theory in Action* and *Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights*. ([www.goucher.edu/library/wilpf/s\\_charlotte.htm](http://www.goucher.edu/library/wilpf/s_charlotte.htm))

**Patti Chang** has been President and CEO of the Women's Foundation of San Francisco for nine years. She has also served as President of the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women and is now on the San Francisco Commission on the Environment. She is on the boards of Planned Parenthood Golden Gate, the International Museum of Women, the Women's Funding Network, and the International Rivers Network. ([http://www.twfusa.org/media\\_bio](http://www.twfusa.org/media_bio))

**Pat Dando** is Vice Mayor of San Jose, representing Council District 10. She was first elected to the San Jose City Council in 1995. Her work on the Council has focused on issues relating to women and children, public safety, fiscal reform, business and transportation. Related experience includes: chair of the committee to reinstate the six-period school day in San Jose, president and board member of the PTA at Henderson, Graystone & Leland High Schools, and cofounder of the Almaden Valley Youth Counseling Service. (<http://www.ci.san-jose.ca.us/council/dist10/bio.htm>)

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**Andrea Dew** is Executive Director of the Susie Tompkins Buell Foundation and serves as political advisor to Susie Tompkins Buell. Dew is a founder of Emerge which is dedicated to preparing Bay Area women for election to political office. She previously worked for Senators Bob Graham and Patrick Leahy, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, and as Finance Director for the Democratic National Committee's Women's Leadership Forum. (<http://www.emergeCA.org>)

**Linda DiVall** is President of American Viewpoint, a widely respected public opinion research firm. She has been a guest commentator on all major networks, and has worked as a consultant and analyst for CBS Election Night since 1988. Her firm's projects include the Republican Senate campaign of Jim Talent in Missouri, The Federation of American Hospitals, and Justice at Stake. (<http://www.amview.com/staff/divall.html>)

**Georgia Duerst-Lahti** is the Chair of Political Science at Beloit College and teaches American Politics and Gender Politics. She has twice served as Chair of Women's Studies Program and from 1993 to 1997 was Associate Dean of the College. Duerst-Lahti has also served as President of the Women's Caucus for Political Science. In 1995, she edited *Gender Power, Leadership and Governance*. (<http://www.beloit.edu/~academic/fac/profile/duerst-lahti.html>)

**Donna F. Edwards** is the Executive Director of the Arca Foundation. Previously, she was the executive director of the National Network to End Domestic Violence. Additionally, she serves on the boards of several nonprofit organizations, including the Proteus Fund, Green Corps and is a trustee of the Franklin Pierce Law Center. (<http://fdncenter.org/grantmaker/arca>)

**Anita Gradin**, the first Swedish commissioner to the EU, is a leader in the Swedish women's movement. Gradin was a member of the Swedish Parliament, a Cabinet Minister, Swedish Minister of Trade, Minister on Immigration and Gender Issues, and served as Ambassador to Austria and Slovenia. She is a former President of Socialists International Women and a former Vice Chair of the Swedish Federation of Social Democratic Women. (<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people/Gradin/gradin-con0.html>)

**Heidi Hartmann** is the founder and Director of the Institute for Women's Policy Research. Dr. Hartmann has delivered Congressional testimony on issues of comparable worth, family and medical leave, childcare, welfare reform and health care and lectures widely on public policy, feminist theory, and the political economy of gender. ([www.ipr.org/staff](http://www.ipr.org/staff))

**Steven Hill** is co-founder and Associate Director of the Center for Voting and Democracy. His commentaries and articles have appeared nationwide including: *Washington Post*; *Los Angeles Times*; the *Wall Street Journal*; *Ms. Magazine*; and, *On the Issues*. He is the author of *Fixing Elections: The Failure of America's Winner Take All Politics*, and co-author, with Rob Richie, of *Whose Vote Counts?* He was the campaign manager of the 2002 historic campaign that resulted in San Francisco adopting instant runoff voting to elect its local government. (<http://www.fairvote.org/>)

**Swanee Hunt** is Director of the Women and Public Policy Program at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. WAPPP supports research, organizes conferences and courses, strengthens the advocacy power of grassroots women, and mobilizes activists. In addition, Hunt is Initiative Chair for the Women Waging Peace Network and President of Hunt Alternatives. Prior to WAPPP, she served as Ambassador to Austria. ([www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/howeare/staff/huntbio.asp](http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/howeare/staff/huntbio.asp))

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**Sheila James Kuehl** is in her first legislative term in the California State Senate after six years in the State Assembly. During the 1997-98 session, she was the first woman in California history to be named Speaker pro Tempore. She is also the first openly gay or lesbian to be elected to the California Legislature. A former civil rights attorney and law professor, Kuehl represents the 23rd Senate District in Los Angeles County. In the Assembly, Kuehl authored seventy-three bills that have been signed into law. (<http://democrats.sen.ca.gov/senator/kuehl/>)

**Ranjana Kumari**, a leading force in the women's movement in India, is Founder and the Director of the Centre for Social Research. Kumari is Coordinator of both the Joint Action Front for Women and the South Asian Forum for Women in Politics. She is National General Secretary of Mahila Dakshata Samiti, an Indian women's organization; and served on the Task Force on Industrial Relations for The International Labor Organization; and Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Labor Government of India. She is the author of eight books on women including *Brides Are Not For Burning*. [www.csrindia.org/cv-R.K.html](http://www.csrindia.org/cv-R.K.html)

**Celinda Lake**, President of Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates, Inc., is a leading political strategist for the Democratic Party. An expert on electing women candidates, Lake's firm is known for its cutting edge research on women, the economy, health care, the environment and campaign finance reform. ([www.lakesnellperry.com/BIO/Celinda\\_Lake/celinda\\_lake.html](http://www.lakesnellperry.com/BIO/Celinda_Lake/celinda_lake.html))

**Laura Liswood** is Secretary General and co-founder of the Council of Women World Leaders. Located at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, the Council is composed of women presidents, prime ministers, and heads of government working to expand the understanding of leadership, and establish a network of resources for high-level women leaders. In 1998, Liswood also co-founded The White House Project. ([http://www.womenworldleaders.org/members/laura\\_liswood.htm](http://www.womenworldleaders.org/members/laura_liswood.htm))

**Ruth B. Mandel** is Director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University and serves as Board of Governors Professor of Politics. From 1971-1994, Mandel served as Director of Eagleton's Center for American Women and Politics, where she remains a Senior Scholar. Mandel writes and speaks widely on women and leadership, particularly on women as candidates. She also holds a presidential appointment as Vice Chair of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum ([www.cawp.rutgers.edu/About/mandelbio.html](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/About/mandelbio.html))

**Michel Martin**, an Emmy Award-winning correspondent and Guest Anchor for ABC's *Nightline*, spent more than a decade covering politics and policy for *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*. She has been with ABC News since September 1992, covering issues such as government budget battles, the embassy bombings in East Africa and the earthquakes in Turkey. Additionally, she has contributed to the ongoing *Nightline* series, "America in Black and White." ([www.abcnews.com](http://www.abcnews.com))

**Sophie Maxwell** ended her term as a member of the San Francisco City and County Board of Supervisors in January 2003. A long-time community activist and leader, she chairs the Bayview Project Area Committee and is a past President of the San Francisco League of Women Voters. She currently serves on the boards of Southeast Alliance for Justice, the Third Street Light Rail Advisory Committee, Southern Water Front Advisory Committee, and the Neighborhood Emergency Response Team. (<http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/bdsupvrs/supervisors/maxwell.htm>)

**Pat Mitchell** became the first woman president of The Public Broadcasting Service in February 2000. Mitchell has a varied and distinguished career in network and cable television, serving as a news reporter, anchor, talk show host, producer and executive. Documentaries produced under her direction have won

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more than one hundred major awards, including forty-one Emmys, seven Peabodys and thirty-five CableACEs. (<http://www.pbs.org/insidepbs/news/patmitchell.html>)

**Marjorie Mowlam** won a seat in Parliament as a member of the Labor Party and belonged to the its "shadow cabinet" from 1992-1997. She later became Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when Tony Blair became Prime Minister. Mowlam played a crucial role in the May 1998 Good Friday Peace Accord, earning worldwide respect for her contributions to the peace agreement between the Irish Republic and the province of Northern Ireland. (<http://www.iowalum.com/daa/mowlam.html>)

**Anne Mosle** is President of The Washington Area Women's Foundation. Mosle brings to WAWF more than 15 years of experience in the non-profit sector, including her roles as Senior Vice President and Senior Fellow at the Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA). At CPA, Mosle created the Eleanor Roosevelt Global Leadership Institute and the Women and the Economy Program. (<http://www.wawf.org>)

**Dr. Glaudine Mtshali** was appointed Consul-General of the Republic of South Africa in Los Angeles in August 2002. Previously, she was South Africa's Health Representative to the Americas. In South Africa, she was the Chief Director of National Health Programs. Prior to her appointment to government, she was the Medical Superintendent of Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto, South Africa, one of the largest hospitals in Africa. (<http://www.link2southafrica.com/mtshaliev.html>)

**Karen Narasaki** is President and Executive Director of the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC). Narasaki also serves on the Executive Committee of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and as the Chairperson of the Compliance/Enforcement Committee. She is also the Chairperson of the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans. She has also served on the Boards of many national Asian Pacific American Associations. ([www.napalc.org/about/staff](http://www.napalc.org/about/staff))

**Beverly Neufeld** is Executive Director of The White House Project. A lifelong advocate of women's and children's issues, she has been a leader at non-partisan organizations such as the League of Women Voters, and has worked for U.S. Representative Nita Lowey and the DCCC. Under her guidance, WHP has conducted forums with women leaders in the business and political worlds to increase the visibility of women as leaders and to help women leaders connect and share strategies. ([www.thewhitehouseproject.org/about\\_us](http://www.thewhitehouseproject.org/about_us))

**Pippa Norris** is the McGuire Lecturer in Comparative Politics at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. She has published thirty books comparing women and politics, elections and public opinion, and political communications. Her most recent ones, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press, are *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Political Change Worldwide* (May 2003, with Ron Inglehart) and *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behavior* (August 2003) ([www.pippanorris.com](http://www.pippanorris.com)).

**Eleanor Holmes Norton** is now in her seventh term as the Congresswoman for the District of Columbia. Named by President Jimmy Carter as the first woman to chair the EEOC, she came to Congress as a national figure who had been a civil rights and feminist leader, tenured professor of law, and board member of three Fortune 500 companies. ([www.norton.house.gov](http://www.norton.house.gov))

**Christine Pintat** is the former Assistant Secretary General and Officer in Charge of the Programme on the Status of Women at the Inter-Parliamentary Union. She did extensive research on women's participation in political and parliamentary life. She was also the officer in charge of Inter-Parliamentary Process for Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean, International Humanitarian Law, and the Cyprus Issue.

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[www.idea.int/women/parl/ch6a.htm](http://www.idea.int/women/parl/ch6a.htm))

**Kavita N. Ramdas** has been President and CEO of the Global Fund for Women since 1996. Recent awards include: "Choosing to Lead" award at the National Women's Leadership Summit; the "2002 Woman of the Year" by the Santa Clara Women and Law Society; and the Women's Funding Network 1999 award for "Changing the Face of Philanthropy." Before joining the Global Fund, she spent eight years working as a program officer at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. (<http://www.globalfundforwomen.org>)

**Rob Richie** is Executive Director of the Center for Voting and Democracy, a non-profit organization that researches and advocates election reforms that promote voter turnout, accountable governance and fair representation – primarily proportional representation voting systems. Ritchie is an expert on both international and domestic electoral systems and has directed the Center since its founding in 1992. ([http://www.fairvote.org/about\\_us/richie.htm](http://www.fairvote.org/about_us/richie.htm))

**Yvette Roudy** is the former Minister for Women's Rights in France. Her dedication to civic affairs and bioethics eventually led to her role as National Secretary for Action Feminine in 1977. She was subsequently elected to the European Parliament in 1979 and has held several elected posts in France. As the Minister for Women's Rights from 1981-1986, she fought for the adoption of laws empowering women in French politics. ([www.frenchculture.org/books/tours/cv/roudy.html](http://www.frenchculture.org/books/tours/cv/roudy.html))

**Sheila Sisulu** is the current Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Program and the former Ambassador from South Africa to the United States. Sisulu was previously Consul General in New York, working on special projects including youth, health, AIDS and early childhood education. She also helped establish a Youth Commission in the Office of the Deputy President. She currently leads the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. (<http://www.gwu.edu/~media/pressreleases/05-01-00-Ambassador.html>)

**Eleanor Smeal**, President of the Feminist Majority Foundation, is one of the nation's foremost feminist leaders. Trained as a political scientist, Smeal was the first to identify the "gender gap," the difference in the way women and men vote, popularizing its usage in election and polling analyses to enhance women's voting clout. She thrice served as President of the National Organization for Women from 1977-1982 and 1985-1987. (<http://www.feminist.org/welcome/esbio.html>)

**Linda Tarr-Whelan**, managing partner of Tarr-Whelan Associates, Inc., was previously President/CEO of the Center for Policy Alternatives. As Ambassador in the Clinton Administration, she served as the US Representative to the UN Commission on the Status of Women and was also appointed to the President's Advisory Committee on Trade Policy and Negotiation (ACT-PN). (<http://www.tarr-whelanassociates.com/partners.html>)

**Belle Taylor-McGhee** is Executive Director of the Department on the Status of Women for City and County of San Francisco. She recently served as the Executive Director of the California Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (CARAL). Prior to her work with CARAL, she worked as the Director of Communications for NARAL in Washington, D.C. She currently co-chairs the Women's Leadership Alliance. ([http://www.sfgov.org/site/cosw\\_index.asp](http://www.sfgov.org/site/cosw_index.asp)).

**Celinda Vasquez** is a spokeswoman from the office of State Senator Martha M. Escutia, who was first elected to the California Legislature in November 1992 to represent the 50<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in

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southeast Los Angeles. In 1998, Ms. Escutia was elected to represent the 30<sup>th</sup> Senate District in the California Senate. (<http://democrats.sen.ca.gov/senator/escutia/>)

**Melanne Vermeer** is Chair of Vital Voices Global Partnership, which promotes women's roles in building strong democracies globally. She served both as Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady during the Clinton Administration, and helped establish the President's Interagency Council on Women. Previously, she was Executive Vice President of People for the American Way. (<http://www.vitalvoices.org/about/vermeer>)

**Debbie Walsh** is the Director of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University. Her current projects include examining the impact of term limits and redistricting on women's representation in state legislatures; designing an initiative to identify and recruit women candidates in New Jersey; and encouraging African American women to seek elective office. ([www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cawp/About/walshbio.html](http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cawp/About/walshbio.html))

**Cathie Bennett Warner** is Director of Public Strategies, Inc., and part of the leadership of the Lincoln Club of Northern California, an association of 300 business and civic leaders throughout the Bay Area. Through its PAC, the Lincoln Club offers financial support and political training to recruit Republicans to run for office. Ms. Warner is also part of the New Century Leadership Circle, and a former Board Member of Professional Businesswomen of Northern California. (<http://www.pstrategies.com/>)

**Marie Wilson** is Co-Founder and President of The White House Project/Women's Leadership Fund. An advocate of women's leadership for over thirty years, she is the force behind Take Our Daughters to Work Day and is currently in her seventeenth year as President of the Ms. Foundation for Women. She was a U.S. Government Delegate to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women. Recent awards include honors from The Network of Women's Funds and from Women in Philanthropy. ([http://www.thewhitehouseproject.org/about\\_us](http://www.thewhitehouseproject.org/about_us))

**Judy Woodruff**, a long term veteran of broadcast journalism, joined CNN in 1993 and anchors *Inside Politics with Judy Woodruff*. She is also a founding co-chair of the International Women's Media Foundation, dedicated to promoting and encouraging women in communication worldwide. She serves on the boards of The Freedom Forum in Arlington, VA; The John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships at Stanford University; the Carnegie Corporation of New York; and the Urban Institute. ([http://www.cnn.com/CNN/anchors\\_reporters/woodruff.judy.html](http://www.cnn.com/CNN/anchors_reporters/woodruff.judy.html))

**June Zeitlin** is the Executive Director of Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). Prior to joining WEDO, Zeitlin was the Program Officer for Women's Rights and Opportunities at the Ford Foundation, and Director of Governance and Civil Society Unit. Zeitlin is also directing a new project on Gender and Institutional Change. (<http://www.wedo.org>)



## *Summit Partner Organizations*

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### ***CENTER FOR WOMEN'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP***

The Center for Women's Global Leadership develops and facilitates women's global leadership toward women's human rights and social justice worldwide. The Center's programs promote the leadership of women and advance feminist perspectives in policy-making processes in local, national, and international arenas. Since 1990, the Center has fostered women's leadership in the area of human rights through women's global leadership institutes, strategic planning activities, international mobilization campaigns, United Nations monitoring, human rights education endeavors, publications, and a resource center. The Center for Women's Global Leadership works from a human rights perspective with an emphasis on violence against women, sexual and reproductive health, and socio-economic well being, by focusing on the areas of *Policy and Advocacy* and *Leadership Development and Human Rights Education*.

<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/>

### ***COUNCIL ON WOMEN WORLD LEADERS***

Established in 1997 by Former Icelandic President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir and The White House Project co-founder, Laura Liswood, the Council of Women World Leaders is a network of current and former women heads of state and government. An outgrowth of the Women's Leadership Project, the 28-member Council seeks to promote good governance and enhance the experience of democracy globally by increasing the number, efficacy, and visibility of women who lead at the highest levels in their countries. In 2002, the Council created a new organization, The International Assembly of Women Ministers (IAWM), which is dedicated to advancing democracy and excellence in governance throughout the world by promoting ministerial level exchange on global issues, developing cross-ministerial solutions to issues, providing a platform for women leaders, increasing their visibility both nationally and internationally, and identifying and addressing the particular challenges facing women in leadership positions.

<http://www.womenworldleaders.org/>

### ***THE FEMINIST MAJORITY FOUNDATION***

The Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF), which was founded in 1987, is a cutting edge organization dedicated to women's equality, reproductive health, and non-violence. In all spheres, FMF utilizes research and action to empower women economically, socially, and politically. Their organization believes that feminists - both women and men, girls and boys - are the majority, but this majority must be empowered. Led by [FMF President Eleanor Smeal](#), their research and action programs focus on advancing the legal, social and political equality of women with men, countering the backlash to women's advancement, and recruiting and training young feminists to encourage future leadership for the feminist movement in the United States. To carry out these aims, FMF engages in research and public policy development, public education programs, grassroots organizing projects, leadership training and development programs, and participates in and organizes forums on issues of women's equality and empowerment. FMF's sister organization, the Feminist Majority, engages in lobbying and other direct political action, pursuing equality between women and men through legislative avenues.

<http://www.feminist.org/>

### ***SUSIE TOMPKINS BUELL FOUNDATION***

The Susie Tompkins Buell Foundation, formerly The Esprit Foundation established in 1990, supports a variety of organizations which target at-risk youth, AIDS awareness and direct care, women's issues and the environment. The Susie Tompkins Buell Foundation has preserved its predecessors

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original mission and areas of funding, including a “women and girls lens,” screens organizations for their inclusion of women and girls, not only as recipient of services but also for their representation on boards and staff. Today the Susie Tompkins Buell Foundation carries on the original spirit of innovation and social responsibility in its grant making interests and practices. The Foundation has recently reorganized its areas of grant making to more narrowly focus on organizations and programs dedicated to the empowerment and development of girls and women.

3 Embarcadero Center, Suite 2290 San Francisco, CA 94111

### **UNIFEM**

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) works to promote women's empowerment, rights and gender equality worldwide. UNIFEM believes that responsible governance based on democracy and respect for human rights requires women's leadership in decision-making and the accountability of public institutions to women. Bringing a gender perspective to constitutional, electoral, legislative, judicial and policy processes helps strengthen the rule of law and ensure gender justice. For the past 10 years, UNIFEM has also been strengthening its assistance to women in conflict situations, when women's exclusion from politics is even more pronounced, and supporting their participation in the peace and reconstruction processes. Their work is guided by international humanitarian and human rights standards and the landmark October 2000 Security Council Resolution 1325, the first to give political legitimacy to women's struggle for a seat at the negotiating table.

<http://www.unifem.undp.org/>

### **VITAL VOICES**

Vital Voices is a global partnership to support women's progress in building democracies, strong economies and peace. Their work focuses on three critical areas: expanding women's roles in politics and civil society; increasing women's successful entrepreneurship; fighting human trafficking and other human rights abuses. Vital Voices is guided by a group of women leaders from every region of the world who work to address the most pressing issues facing women in their countries. To carry out its mission, Vital Voices created the *Global Leadership Institute*, a collaboration with Georgetown University, in Washington, D.C., which provides emerging women leaders with the skills and resources they need to participate in all sectors of their society. Since the *Global Leadership Institute* opened its doors in 2001, over one hundred women from eleven countries in diverse regions of the world have received valuable leadership training.

<http://www.vitalvoices.org/>

### **THE WASHINGTON AREA WOMEN'S FOUNDATION**

The Washington Area Women's Foundation (WAWF) was formed in 1997 as a women's philanthropic organization dedicated to the improvement of the lives of women and girls in the Washington Metropolitan Area. Founded on the belief that the well-being of this country is directly related to the economic status of all women in its towns and communities, the Foundation's mission is "to foster a powerful wave of philanthropy to improve the lives of all women and girls in the Washington Metropolitan Area." Towards this effort, WAWF supports local organizations working to help women and girls achieve economic independence and fulfilled lives. WAWF envisions a world in which women and girls of all backgrounds are thriving and contributing at their full potential to the health and economic vibrancy of Washington's diverse communities. They are committed to the possibility of a new spirit of giving that reflects the many faces of philanthropy and invests strategically, wisely, and respectfully to ensure that women and girls have equal opportunities to participate fully in society.

<http://www.wawf.org/>

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### ***WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION***

The Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) is an international advocacy organization that seeks to increase the power of women worldwide as policymakers in all governments, institutions and other decision-making forums to achieve economic and social justice, and a healthy and peaceful planet. Established in 1990 by former U.S. Congresswoman Bella Abzug, and veteran feminist activist and journalist, Mim Kelber, WEDO brings together women of diverse backgrounds from all regions of the world to share experiences and expertise and to take action on common agendas in the United Nations and other international policymaking forums. WEDO has also mobilized the participation of women from around the world to establish the Women's Caucus, a strong advocacy mechanism for advancing women's perspectives at United Nations and other inter-governmental forums. Additionally, WEDO's Gender and Governance Program seeks to raise awareness about women's under-representation in decision-making positions and ways in which women make a difference when represented in critical numbers; and to develop information resources and tools to help women's advocacy efforts.

<http://www.wedo.org/>

### ***THE WOMEN'S FOUNDATION, SAN FRANCISCO***

The Women's Foundation, based in San Francisco, was created in 1979, in response to the inequity of funding directed towards women and girls, throughout the United States. At that time, less than 1% of philanthropic dollars in the entire country went to programs aimed towards specifically addressing the needs of women and girls. The Women's Foundation supports organizations that serve low-income women and girls throughout California, primarily the 50 counties in northern and central California, and, more recently, the Mexico side of the US/Mexico border. The foundation funds programs for preventing violence against women and girls, girls' leadership, health, and economic justice. The Women's Foundation targets programs that promote and protect the human rights of women and girls in the civil, political, economic, and social arenas. In addition to grant making, The Women's Foundation develops collaborations between individuals, organizations and institutions, who can combine their efforts towards creating the changes necessary to achieving gender equality and social justice. The Women's Foundation serves as a voice and advocate for the needs of women and girls; provides funding resources and tools; and convenes for dialogue and collaboration.

<http://www.twfusa.org/>

### ***WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE***

The Women's Foundation is one of the co-founders of the Women's Leadership Alliance of San Francisco, a working collective of 14 visionary and active women's organizations, pooling their efforts to promote common objectives. This group of determined women set out to distinguish which particular issues they considered to be the highest priority and highest profile issues effecting women, not only in the workplace, but also in our community and society. After deciding on the pertinent issues, The Women's Leadership Alliance sponsored a series of gatherings and lectures around these topics, choosing lecturers and voices that could bring informed and essential information to a wider number of women and men. Topics have included in-depth discussions on efforts to preserve and enhance social security, and efforts to pass the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on the state and then national level. Each of the involved women's organizations brings their unique strengths and expertise to the forum, representing various interests that cross diverse spectrums of our society including politics and policy-making, education, finance, the law, professional women and female business owners, human rights activists, philanthropists, and more.

[http://www.twfusa.org/partnerships\\_wla.html](http://www.twfusa.org/partnerships_wla.html)

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## Summit Postscript

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### HIGHLIGHTS & QUOTES FROM THE D.C. SUMMIT

- ◆ *“When women run and govern they have to be seen for their agendas, not for their hair, hemlines, and husbands.”*
- ◆ *“When there’s not enough women in politics, the women who are there always need to prove they are man enough for the job. We need women there who can represent themselves and us.”*
- ◆ *“Young women have a much more difficult time getting into politics. They have to be invited in. Men self-identify; young women have to be invited in.”*
- ◆ *“As we go through this conference, we need to remember what Elizabeth Cady Stanton said, which is, ‘It’s a wonderf the Republic has done as well as it has, when it’s only used half its resources.’ We think the Republic can do better.”*  
– **Marie C. Wilson, President, The White House Project**
  
- ◆ *“If women are not there helping to change the world, then the change will not be the kind that we want to see.”*
- ◆ *“Why is the burden of proof on women to prove that we matter still? To prove that we can ‘do the job’? Why do we have so few men here as part of this important discussion?”*
- ◆ *“Numerical strength of women in politics is in itself not sufficient. We also need gender sensitivity, and to align with the men who are gender sensitive.”*
- ◆ *“Women will change politics more than politics will change women. We can affirm both specific identities, of being women while at the same time the professional role of women as politicians.”*
- ◆ *“Women tend to break with many of the formalities of political life – they bring ordinary life to politics. People feel women are cleaner, more honest than the men.”*  
– **Christine Pintat, former Assistant Secretary General and Officer in Charge of the Programme on the Status of Women at the Inter-Parliamentary Union**
  
- ◆ *“Just imagine what the world could be like if all women and girls reached their full potential.”*  
– **Anne Mosle, President, Washington Area Women’s Foundation**
  
- ◆ *“It is important for women to not just be in **office**, but **in power**. We must be in power before we can be said to be equal.”*  
– **Marjorie Mowlam, British MP**
  
- ◆ *On women and war: “The idea is that if women were part of the discussions now, we would be facing different alternatives than those we have now.”*
- ◆ *“Women tend to have a way of working that opens the process to more stakeholders.”*
- ◆ *“Women will change the way the political world thinks about things – like women on the International Criminal Court – finally made rape a war crime!”*  
– **Charlotte Bunch, Executive Director, Center for Women’s Global Leadership at Rutgers University**
  
- ◆ *“Now, are we really prepared to explain Why Women Matter? Is it not slightly preposterous to ask such a question? We here do know that women matter. It is just too bad, some people still ignore it. Just think if women were to stop giving birth to children: the world would be doomed*

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*to disappear. Just think if women were to stop working: the world economy would collapse. The real question is: since women matter, why are they not in places where important decisions are taken? Why are they not in National and International Assemblies, in financial boards, in other places of power? This question is an important question. It is a political one, and must be studied as such.”*

- ◆ *“We have to keep in mind that voters are our best supporters. They like to see women in office. They say it. They prove it when they vote. They do appreciate women in politics. Women bring something new, something fresh, something that the political world needs. Their language is different, clear. They know everyday life problems. They know how to listen. How to explain. Their ego is of quite reasonable dimension. People have confidence in them. They may even be better than male politicians. And they must stick to their difference. People like them that way.”*
- ◆ *“The way women behave in politics is different than the men. In the French Parliament, the Financial Department found that when they sent women off on missions around the country, it cost MUCH LESS than the men they usually sent on the missions! Women didn’t demand such expensive hotels or buy lots of drinks on the state’s account. The women spent less money than the men, and worked harder. Women worry more, are more anxious than men – they know that if they make a mistake, they will not be forgiven. And women are in the late-night sessions of Parliament more, according to their proportion in Parliament – it is 80% men, 20% women approx. now, but at 2-3 am in the late-night sessions, there are half men and half women in the chamber.”*

– **Yvette Roudy, author and former Member of French Parliament**

- ◆ *“Men are scared to bring women into the process, because they know that women will change the entire course of history of the country.”*
- ◆ *“Only women can produce alternatives to war.”*
  - **Ranjana Kumari, Director, Centre for Social Research in India**
- ◆ *“Would men gather to ask, ‘Why Do Men Matter?’ No! Although, they probably should. It would take them to a place where they could identify what was **missing** in the world without the contributions of women. But why? Why give up power without a struggle? A historically underrepresented group must always think more cleverly and more strategically than the group in power.”*

– **Laura Liswood, Secretary General, Council of Women World Leaders**

- ◆ *“Women act as mirrors of society at its best.”*
- ◆ *“What is the functional reason for having more women? Not just pride for having another vagina in the room! Watch out for pride, for the sin of pride. We need a major functional reason to have more women in office – that reason is to multiply change for other women! And the last thing they should be is full of pride – once women get in, they should be full of the cares of other women.”*
- ◆ *“Women in office will bring the experience of being a woman to office.”*
  - **Eleanor Holmes Norton, Member of U.S. Congress**

# *Women in Politics: National Statistics*

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## **SNAPSHOTS OF CURRENT POLITICAL LEADERSHIP**

- Women currently hold 14 Senate seats (14 percent) and 59 seats in the House of Representatives (13.6 percent), not including three non-voting women delegates to the House from Washington D.C., Guam, and the Virgin Islands. In total, 73 of the 535 members of Congress (both houses) are women (13.6 percent overall).<sup>1</sup>
- The U.S. ranks 58th in the world in terms of women's representation in national legislatures or parliaments, when looking just at the House of Representatives and comparing to the lower or single houses of parliaments around the world. This ranking is as of February 2003 and has been declining over the past year; the U.S. ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in October 2001.<sup>2</sup>
- Although there are only 14 women Senators in 2003, some of these women represent the three most populous states in the Union (i.e. California, New York, and Texas). Calculated by population, a woman Senator represents 1/3 of the people in the U.S.
- In 2001, for the first time in American history, a majority of states, 27, had at least one woman U.S. Representative.
- There have been 23 women governors in American history, including those serving now. Only 6 (12 percent), of our current governors are women (7 if you include the woman Governor of Puerto Rico) and just 14 of the mayors of America's largest 100 cities are women (14 percent).<sup>3</sup>
- According to a Deloitte & Touche study, 79 percent of Americans agree completely or somewhat with the statement, "If women are to be truly accepted as leaders in this country, nothing is more important than seeing women in high political office."
- Of the nearly 600 people who have served in the President's cabinet or as cabinet-level officers since Washington's term, only 29 (or approx. 5 percent) have been women. The first woman to serve was Francis Perkins, Secretary of Labor under Franklin D. Roosevelt.

## **WOMEN & THE PATH TO PRESIDENCY**

- A recent Gallup poll found that 93 percent of Americans said they would vote for a qualified woman for president; they also found that given a choice between a male and a female presidential candidate, 42 percent chose a male.
- 4 of the last 5 Presidents were first Governors (80 percent).<sup>4</sup>
- All of the last 5 Vice Presidents have had Congressional experience (House or Senate).
- Of the last 10 Vice Presidents, 8 were first in Congress or the Senate.<sup>5</sup>
- 8 of the last 10 Presidents have had military experience (80 percent).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov), [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov), and [www.cawp.rutgers.edu](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Center for the American Woman in Politics (CAWP): [www.cawp.rutgers.edu](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu).

<sup>4</sup> George W. Bush (TX), Bill Clinton (AK), Ronald Reagan (CA), and Jimmy Carter (GA). George Bush Senior is only one without Gubernatorial experience.

<sup>5</sup> The 2 who did not have Congressional experience (Rockefeller and Agnew) were both Governors.

<sup>6</sup> George W. Bush (National Guard), George Bush Sr. (Navy), Jimmy Carter (Navy), Gerald Ford (Navy), Richard Nixon (Navy), Lyndon Johnson (Navy), John F. Kennedy (Navy), and Dwight Eisenhower (General in Army).

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## *Research Overview*

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### **Do Women in Local, State, and National Legislative Bodies Matter? A Definitive Yes Proves Three Decades of Research By Political Scientists**

**By Karen O'Connor**  
**Director, Women & Politics Institute, American University\***

Political theorist Hannah Pitkin asserts that political representation “means acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them.”<sup>i</sup> Political scientist Jane Mansbridge goes farther to note that descriptive representation enhances substantive representation.<sup>ii</sup> Some male legislators may seek to advance women’s interests, and others may argue that all issues are women’s issues. But, a large and important body of research by political scientists indicates that **the presence of women in legislative bodies makes a significant difference not only in what gets discussed, but also in what kinds of legislation are advanced.**

When Elizabeth Dole entered the Republican presidential primary for the 2000 election, her presence forced the other candidates to deal with issues of concern to women voters. Similarly, former U.S. Senator Carol Moseley-Braun’s entrance into the race for the Democratic presidential nomination for 2004 already is being hailed because, as a woman, she will force the rest of the Democratic candidates to address women’s issues seriously. It is one thing for all of the announced male candidates to appear together on the stage at NARAL Pro-Choice America’s *Roe v. Wade* 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner to voice their support for reproductive rights; it is another when they are forced to deal with women’s issues on a daily basis on the campaign trail.<sup>iii</sup> A women’s presence in the race will do that in a way no ardently feminist man could.

The same phenomenon holds true in legislative bodies (as well as the courts). Simply put, more than three decades of rigorous scholarly inquiry leave no doubt that women in politics in general and women in elective office, in particular, make a difference in the lives of all women. They help “enact better policy for women,”<sup>iv</sup> as well as affect the legislative bodies in which they serve.<sup>v</sup>

#### **THE IMPACT OF WOMEN IN STATE AND LOCAL LEGISLATURES**

Much of the early research on the impact of woman legislators was confined to analyses of state and local legislatures simply because there were insufficient numbers of women in the U.S. House or Senate to allow for any kind of exacting quantitative analysis. Research conducted at the state and local level, however, ultimately provided testable hypotheses to examine the impact of women in the House of Representatives. Among the key findings about the impact of women legislators in state and local governments are:

*\*The Women & Politics Institute is dedicated to advancing the study and discussion of women and politics, promoting opportunities for women in politics, and training young women to become political leaders.*  
<http://www.american.edu/oconnor/wandp/>

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## **On the Issues**

- Women conceptualize problems differently and are more likely to offer new solutions.<sup>vi</sup>
- Non-feminist women are more likely than non-feminist male colleagues to work on legislation affecting women.<sup>vii</sup>
- Women legislators of both parties are more likely to advance “women’s issues,” define women’s issues more broadly than men, put them at the top of their legislative agendas, and to take a leadership role in those issue areas.<sup>viii</sup> This results in bills dealing with children, education, and health care becoming legislative priorities.<sup>ix</sup>
- Women are more likely to view crime as a societal, rather than individual problem.<sup>x</sup>
- Women legislators are more likely to make certain that their policy positions are translated into new programs to help women.<sup>xi</sup>

## **Working for Their Constituents**

- Women legislators receive more constituent casework requests than their male colleagues and are three times more likely to agree that they would do more if they had more staff.<sup>xii</sup>
- Women not only are more responsive to constituent requests, they are more likely to be persistent in their follow through to get a favorable resolution for their constituents.<sup>xiii</sup>
- Women legislators believe that they need to help other women transcend barriers to success.<sup>xiv</sup>

## **In the Legislative Body**

- Women view themselves as more prepared, more diligent, and more organized.<sup>xv</sup>
- Women emphasize a “hands on” approach emphasizing collegiality and collaboration instead of a hierarchical “command” approach.<sup>xvi</sup>
- Women rely on a wider range of individuals in formulating policy creating more sensitive and thoughtful policy making.<sup>xvii</sup>
- Women who meet as a caucus are more likely to work on bills dealing with women’s rights.<sup>xviii</sup>
- First term women sponsor less legislation than their male counterparts, while more senior women offer more than their male counterparts.<sup>xix</sup>
- Women committee chairs use their positions to facilitate interaction among committee members rather than to control and direct the debate. This affects the behavior of witnesses and other committee members.<sup>xx</sup>
- In general, women-sponsored legislation has a slightly higher rate of passage.<sup>xxi</sup> Particularly, women’s priority bills on women’s issues become law at a higher pass rate than men’s.<sup>xxii</sup>
- When women are less than 15 percent of the legislative body, their status constrains their behavior.<sup>xxiii</sup>
- States with the lowest percentage of women in their legislatures pass the lowest number of women’s bills.<sup>xxiv</sup>
- Men believe that women in the legislative body help sensitize them to women’s issues.<sup>xxv</sup>

## **WOMEN IN CONGRESS: WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

The findings of the researchers noted above provide conclusive proof of the impact that women have as state and local legislators. Of course, given the smaller number of women in Congress until recently, many of their local and state-based studies cannot yet be replicated, particularly in the U.S. Senate. Still, all of the quantitative studies of women in the House of Representatives have reached the same conclusions about women in that body. As the late Congresswoman Patsy Mink (D-HI) noted: “I always felt that we [women] were serving a dual role in Congress, representing our own districts and, at the same time, having a voice to the concerns of the total population of women in the country.”<sup>xxvi</sup> It is clear that the vast majority of women in the Congress feel this way. This sentiment is underscored by quantitative studies of women in Congress by political scientists who have found that:

### **On the Issues**

- Women get women’s issues on the agenda.<sup>xxvii</sup>
- Women widen the range of policy solutions proposed and frame the policy debate in different terms.<sup>xxviii</sup>
- Congresswomen give more attention and support to women’s issues than Congressmen, regardless of their party affiliation or ideology.<sup>xxix</sup>
- Overwhelmingly, women members introduce most women’s legislation.<sup>xxx</sup>
- Women are more likely than men to co-sponsor legislation dealing with women’s issues.<sup>xxxi</sup>

### **Women in the Institution**

- Use the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues to champion women’s issues.<sup>xxxii</sup>
- Without Caucus initiatives, many women’s policies would not have been enacted.<sup>xxxiii</sup>
- Strategic positions by women legislators make the difference in drafting legislation and on the floor.<sup>xxxiv</sup>
- Women use their positions on committees to advance legislation benefiting women.<sup>xxxv</sup>
- Since 1992, women in the Senate have received less valuable committee assignments.<sup>xxxvi</sup>
- Women continue to be overlooked for committee chairmanships.<sup>xxxvii</sup>
- Women use conference committee assignments to advance and protect women’s policy issues.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Thirty years of methodologically sophisticated social science research proves women make a difference. The question now should be how to get more women elected to these positions.

# *International Overview*

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## **STATISTICS ON WOMEN IN POLITICS INTERNATIONALLY**

- Citizens of more than 32 other countries have had a woman as either President or Prime Minister. These countries include Britain, Canada, India, Ireland, Israel, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Turkey, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Panama, Latvia, and Finland.
- Until 1997, only 42 countries had ever had a woman preside over a House of Parliament, and only 78 women had served in this capacity. Today, 25 women preside over one of the Houses of the 180 existing parliaments. These women constitute 10.4 percent of the total number of Presiding Officers of Parliament or of one of its houses.
- Currently, women constitute 14.6 percent of national parliaments (see <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>). With women comprising 14 percent of Congress, we are below the international average.
- The world's first woman speaker of Parliament was elected in 1927 in Austria, while the world's first woman Prime Minister was elected in 1961 in Sri Lanka.

## **STRATEGIES FOR EQUALITY USED IN OTHER NATIONS**

- According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, known as International IDEA, proportional representation is the most advantageous system for women. They say that the 10 highest-ranking countries in terms of women's representation all use proportional representation systems.
- Party-established quotas, as in Norway and South Africa, are another way to bolster women's representation. The Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) website reports that the countries with the highest number of seats in Parliament have political parties with self-imposed quotas. For instance, women represent 45.5 percent of Parliament in Sweden, 37.5 percent in Denmark, and 36.4 percent in Norway. (Note that these two strategies are not mutually exclusive. These countries could also have proportional representation systems.)
- System-wide quotas or reservation of seats for women candidates exist in many nations. In addition to France's 50 percent law, Argentina requires that 30 percent of all candidates must be women. India and Egypt have similar laws that reserve seats for women as opposed to requiring a certain percentage of women on the ballot. In India, 33 percent of seats in local municipal bodies are reserved for women, and in Egypt, 30 legislative seats are reserved for women according to presidential decree.

- Like Argentina, a host of Latin American countries require parties to reserve candidacies for women. These countries include the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Panama, Costa Rica, and Peru.
- Other countries that reserve a certain percentage of seats for women are Bangladesh, India, Tanzania, Eritrea, and Uganda.

## **INITIAL RESULTS OF GREATER INCLUSION OF WOMEN**

- South Africa's experience shows how increases in women's participation can result in different policies. Abortion was legalized in 1996; a bill recognizing the equal power of women in marriage passed in 1998; and an initiative to reduce domestic violence was approved in 1998. Similarly, in Norway, the increased presence of women is credited with bringing about publicly sponsored childcare, paid parental leave, and improved pensions for unpaid caretakers.

## **THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITMENT TO WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION**

- In Beijing in 1995, 189 governments committed themselves to “take measures to ensure women’s equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making” and “to increase women’s capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership” as part of the Fourth World Conference on Women.
- In fact, the primary action pledged was to “establish the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees...including *inter alia* setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all governmental and public administration positions.”

**For more information, please visit:**

**Inter-Parliamentary Union: [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)**

**WEDO: [www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org)**

**International IDEA: [www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int)**

**UNIFEM: [www.unifem.undp.org](http://www.unifem.undp.org)**

**CEDAW Coalition: [www.womenstreaty.org](http://www.womenstreaty.org)**

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## *Women in Politics: Country Rankings*

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From The Inter-Parliamentary Union, as of March 3, 2003. This chart is updated monthly on the IPU's website: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

*\* Figures correspond to the number of seats currently filled in Parliament*

*\*\* South Africa: the figures on the distribution of seats do not include the 36 special rotating delegates appointed on an ad hoc basis, and the percentages given are therefore calculated on the basis of the 54 permanent seats*

*\*\*\* Democratic Republic of East Timor: The purpose of elections held on 30 August 2001 was to elect members of the Constituent Assembly of East Timor. This body became the National Parliament on 20 May 2002, the date on which the country became independent, without any new elections.*

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## *Strategies for Equality: Initiatives from a Selection of Countries*

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*The United States currently ranks 58<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of the percentage of our national government that is women – and our ranking number is falling fast. We are being left behind as many other countries begin to experiment by taking positive steps to increase women’s political representation. In this section we offer a selection of countries that are employing innovative strategies to bring more women into the political sphere. This is by no means an exhaustive list of all the countries that have taken positive steps to increase women’s political participation within their borders but it is a comprehensive sample. The countries are in order of their placement in the IPU rankings:*

**#1: SWEDEN** – Sweden was among the first countries in Europe to give women the vote and adopt quotas. It continues to lead the world in the percentage of women in its Parliament and Cabinet. In 1994 the Social Democratic Women initiated the idea of so-called "sandwich nomination lists," which means that every second name on the party's nomination list must be a woman. Since the general election in 1994, the largest political Party, the Social Democrats, and later other political parties systematically alternated between women and men on their lists of the candidates for the elections and the EU-Parliament. The most important political work in Parliament is done by its standing committees and altogether, more than 40 percent of these committee seats are held by women. Women are most represented on committees dealing with foreign affairs, justice, defense, and social insurance. In addition, from 1994 to 2002, the speaker of Parliament was also a woman, Birgitta Dahl.

**#4: FINLAND** – Finland was the first European country to grant women the franchise and the right to be candidates in general elections when it passed a parliamentary act in October 1906. But it was only in 1966 that women’s presence in Parliament began to significantly improve, with women as 30 members of Parliament and as all three Speakers of Parliament for the first time. The Speaker of Parliament was Riitta Uosukainen while Sirkka-Liisa Anttila served as the First Deputy Speaker and Kerttu Tornqvist as the Second Deputy Speaker. There has never been a special women’s party in Parliament, but after the 1991 elections female politicians set up the Network of Women in Finland’s Parliament to serve as a medium for connection and collaboration. It brings together women parliamentarians across all political parties to discuss political issues concerning women including promoting equality, advancing the implementation of women’s rights, and making women more active in the drafting of parliamentary bills. After the 1999 elections, women were appointed to lead 8 of the 18 existing ministries, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Labour. In the 2000 presidential elections, 4 out of the 7 candidates were women.

**#10: ARGENTINA** – A law is in effect to ensure that 30 percent of Congress is women. Today, Elisa Carrio, the leader of the opposition group Alternative for a Republic of Equals, is running against interim President Peronist Eduardo Duhalde in the April presidential elections. Argentina is the only Latin American country to have had a woman president, Isabel Peron, in 1974.

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**#12: SOUTH AFRICA** – In South Africa today women represent nearly 30 percent of the national public representatives compared to the previous apartheid government where women represented only 3 percent of the parliament. The increase in women's political participation is the result of two main factors: (1) the work of the women in the African National Congress (ANC) who have been active for decades in the struggle for national liberation/social emancipation, and (2) policies and affirmative action mechanisms adopted by the ANC party. Of the 117 women in Parliament, 89 are from the ANC.

***South Africa: An In-Depth Look, by Ann Burroughs***

South Africa has made dramatic strides in the number of women who hold political office. Before democratic elections in 1994, South Africa ranked 141<sup>st</sup> in the world in the number of women in parliament: it is now 12<sup>th</sup>. The women of South Africa have permanently changed the political landscape and transformed government.

South African women's political struggle dates back to 1913 when women first participated in resistance campaigns. However, it was in the 1980s, when the struggle against apartheid was at its most intense that women emerged as a powerful force in national and community politics. Under the banner of the United Democratic Front, organizations – civics – emerged in townships across the country and strong regional women's organizations were formed. Women organized around issues of high rent, inadequate services and corruption, and participated in consumer boycotts and pressed for the improvement of working conditions. The exiled Women's Division of the African National Congress (ANC), played a major role in mobilizing the international anti-apartheid movement. In the 1980s women began including demands for equal representation in leadership and decision-making, and debates began about the relationship between women's struggles and the broader struggle against apartheid.

In 1992, the Women's National Coalition was formed and brought together women of all races from over sixty national organizations and all political parties. The ANC Women's League initiated the coalition to guarantee equality/women's rights in the new constitution. The Coalition surveyed over three million women and encouraged them to prepare for the country's first democratic election. The resulting Woman's Charter of Effective Equality was instrumental in emphasizing women's concerns during multi-party negotiations for a democratic South Africa.

South Africa's constitution now guarantees the equality of women and mandates an independent Commission on Gender Equality to monitor government policy.

The ANC government has pushed for these protections. The Office on the Status of Women is located in the President's Office. South Africa has instituted a gender budget process, which provides a framework for allocating government resources to women's empowerment and development. In 1994, the ANC established a thirty percent quota for women on its parliamentary lists and ensured that they were not relegated to the tail end of the lists. In 1994, twenty five percent of all parliamentarians were women, and by the 1999 election, this increased to thirty percent. Most of these women have deep roots in 80s activism, and many were seasoned community leaders. Their influence on social policy has been extraordinary. Almost half the Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers are women. Many hold portfolios traditionally held by men, for example, Finance, Defense, Minerals and Energy, and Foreign Affairs. The positions of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House as well as the Leader of the Senate have been held by women.

The combination of proportional representation and quotas that mandate an equitable share of seats for women has been a successful formula for increasing women's participation in national government. In only 9 years, South Africa has reached the critical mass of 30 percent recommended by the Beijing Platform of Action. This represents a deep commitment by the government and the people of South Africa to the principles of democracy and an understanding that for a government to be effective, it must reflect the demographics of the country, and for a democracy to be truly viable, it must represent the interests of all its citizens.

**#15: SPAIN** – In 1931 Spain became one of the first southern European states to enfranchise women. In 1982, the Socialist party PSOE won the elections and gained a majority in both chambers of the Parliament. The party proposed a suggested quota of 25 percent in 1987 that resulted in increasing women's representation in the party offices and the proportion of women party members from about 16 percent to 21.1 percent in 1991. In 1996, the PSOE adopted a quota of 40 to 60 percent for equal representation of both sexes in party committees and electoral lists. Introducing the quota system also affected the 1989 general elections by giving women over 10 percent representation in both chambers of the Spanish Parliament for the first time. The next initiative is to change Spain's electoral law to ensure parity democracy not only in the Socialist party but also in all political parties.

**#33: PAKISTAN** – Provisions were in place to require reserved seats for women in the national and local legislatures, but these expired after the 1988 election and have not been renewed. The most recent provision for women was the reservation of 20 seats in the National Assembly (about 10 percent) and 5 percent reservation in the Provincial Assemblies, filled indirectly through the vote of already-elected members. There are no reserved seats for women in the Senate. In local government, there are provisions for reserved seats for women filled through indirect elections by already-elected members. A new system of local government was introduced in 2000 that calls for a reservation of 1/3 seats for women, giving women an important role in the local governments. In that same year, more than 900 women stood for election for 600 seats. But women parliamentarians still confront the obstacles of domestic responsibilities, financial difficulties, and their dependence on their male counterparts and party leadership in order to remain in power.

**#49: UNITED KINGDOM** – Confronted by the first drop in the number of women elected to the House of Commons in 20 years, British lawmakers passed in January 2002 a bill to reinstate a previously banned election procedure that favors women candidates for office. The bill, which is awaiting the approval of the Queen to become law, would allow Britain's political parties to mandate women-only so-called "shortlists" – the list of candidates for the House of Commons put forth to party members in the British equivalent of primary elections. A brief experiment with shortlists in the mid-90s helped elect a record 120 women to the Commons in 1997, an overnight doubling of the 60 women MP's from five years earlier. Another plan still on the table is "twinning," in which two districts combine to select a pair of candidates, one male and one female. The Conservative Party is still against the shortlists, proposing instead to create training programs for women considering public office and to use polling data to try to persuade local officials to back promising women candidates. The Labor party announced on January 30, 2003 that it would drop its original goal of having 50-50 representation after the next election, aiming for 35 percent women instead.

**#55: MEXICO** – On November 22, 1996, Mexico adopted an addendum to its Federal Code of Electoral Institutions that established quotas to promote the participation of women in political decision-making. The federal election legislation called on political parties to limit the participation of candidates of the same gender. Subsequently, two main political parties established quotas to ensure that at least 30 percent of their candidates were women, and one established a preferential option to select women. On the state level, the Congress of the State of



San Luis Potosi adopted an electoral law that states that the political parties must ensure the registration of an equal number of candidates of each sex. The Congress of the State of Sonora amended its electoral code to require that no more than 80 percent of the candidates could be of the same sex.

**#59: IRELAND** – Although the percentage of women in politics in Ireland is currently low, a group of Irish women have formed the National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWCi) to address this problem. Recently, NWCi published a report. Below are excerpts from their book:

***“Irish Politics, Jobs for the Boys:  
Recommendations on Increasing the Number of Women in Decision-Making.”***

From Preface:

Whether electoral or appointed, the overwhelming number of those in positions of decision-making in Ireland is male. With women making up 50 per cent of the Irish population, the figures in this research show an evident deep and systematic inequality. They are proof of a failure by successive Governments to end discrimination against women in political and decision-making positions. It is little wonder that for many girls and women a career in politics or public life is still seen as ‘not got us’ rather as ‘jobs for the boys.’

... Progress on parity democracy for women in Ireland is simply not happening. Proactive measures must now be taken to deliver parity participation for women in all decision-making positions. The face of Irish political life will change and those who benefit from the present system will resist such change. Those committed to genuine equality must now offer support and plan in partnership with women for the development of equality in decision-making between women and men.

NWCi believes that Government is obliged to deliver on its equality commitments by raising awareness about the benefits and importance of gender equality in public life and decision-making bodies. Women want and have a right to more gender balanced public representation. They want the barriers to their participation and selection to be removed-whether these barriers are structural (lack of childcare, times of meetings) or attitudinal. The Government, political parties and public bodies must examine their own structures and see how they can proactively increase the numbers of women candidates and women seat/post holders.

... The NWCi is calling on Government, political parties, and public bodies to move now to show their genuine commitment to ending discrimination against women in this field so that the forthcoming local and European elections will show a positive change for women. We hope that, if this action is taken now, it will in turn produce more positive outcomes for women in the next General election. We also demand the introduction of mechanisms, supported by legislation where necessary, for 60:40 gender balance for nominations to the State boards.

For our part, NWCi will continue to monitor women’s position in our society. If resourced adequately, we will develop a women’s talent bank to support Government and public bodies in finding numerous women of skill who are available for public office. We will also continue to support women at local level to move into positions of leadership and decision-making throughout Ireland. We are also committed to seeing a diversity of amongst the women elected and selected to decision-making positions-women from all and no political backgrounds, women from every social class, ethnic background, ability, sexual orientation, family status, religion, and age.

*Grainne Healy  
Chairwoman, National Women’s Council of Ireland*

**#65: FRANCE** – France is the first country in the world to legislate that for the majority of elections there must be as many women candidates as men. In June 1999, a constitutional amendment was passed requiring 50 percent of representatives to be women in all elected assemblies in each succeeding election. A law was passed mandating “obligation of results” with 50 percent of women in local elections in 2001 and in the National Assembly in 2002, and assigning monetary consequences for noncompliance. The move for parity was initiated in 1992 with the publication of the book, *Au Pouvoir Citoyennes: Liberté, Egalité, Parité* (Women Citizens to Power: Liberty, Equality, Parity) by Françoise Gaspard, Claude Servan-Schreiber and Anne Le Gall. However, the law has not been as effective as hoped because in certain parliamentary races, the law actually does not require parity but instead reduces state subsidies to parties with fewer than 50 percent women candidates. So far, the larger, richer parties have been more willing to pay penalties than have half their candidates be women.

### ***France: The Parity Movement***

In 1993, “The Manifesto of the 577 for a Parity-Democracy” appeared in the newspaper, *Le Monde* symbolizing all the deputies of the French National Assembly. After France participated in the creation of the Athens Charter in Greece in 1992, there was a push for parity in all levels of government. Quickly, women’s organizations, such as Women for Parity and collectives of various groups, began working to create awareness and implement national policy change. Several seminars from 1994 onward about the debate over gender parity allowed for feminist perspectives and masculine perspectives to discuss the depth of its implementation. Notably, the French public opinion polls continued to show a steady increase in accepting parity into law throughout the political and academic debate.

In 1996 a new Manifesto was published in the newspaper, *L’Express*. Written by 10 different women from various political parties, the new Manifesto signified the changes the parity issue had undergone, by relaxing their insistence of guaranteed equal representation within the written law. The Commission for Parity between Men and Women in Public Life, a subcommittee of the Observatoire de la Parité set up by Alain Juppe, former right wing Prime Minister, concluded in the December 1996 report how the concept of parity had been watered down, manipulated, a co-opted in just little over four years. But, the political compromise over the gender parity continued.

Former Socialist Prime Minister Jospin pushed heavily for parity law through inclusionist constitutional language, but his Proposition for Amendment of Article 3 of the Constitution became the subject of debate. The language of Article 3 of the Constitution went back and forth between the National Assembly and the Senate, finally ratifying in June of 2000.

But election results faired mixed results. The March 2000 municipal elections showed higher percentages of women elected to council after parity. In the 2002 national elections the major parties deliberately ignored the spirit of gender parity, preferring to pay a fine rather than obey the law. As a result, the percentage of women in parliament increased only by 1.2 percent from 10.9 percent to 12.1 percent.

In response to the lack of participation on gender parity laws by national parties, several organizations, together with Françoise Gaspard, a prominent leader of the parity movement, are submitting a set of recommendations to the National Assembly on enforcement of the gender parity law.

**#87: INDIA** – India created the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI), which suggested increasing women’s representation at the grassroots levels first by using a policy of reservation of seats for women through the local panchayat (village council) level. This was applied with the adoption of the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Indian Constitution in 1993. For women in parliament, the proposition of a quota amendment was proposed in 1995 but to date, the amendment has not been passed. It was reintroduced in 1997 but met with opposition over the issue of overlapping quotas for women in general and those of lower castes. Many did not feel comfortable giving elite women special privileges through guaranteed parliamentary seats.

**#89: BRAZIL** – The Brazilian Federal Government regulated the 1996 municipal elections by establishing that political parties should have a minimum of 20 percent women. The National Council on the Rights of Women (CNDM) created in 1997 released a document called “Strategies of Equality,” which proposed for the first time in Brazil, an integrated set of public policies and initiatives toward the consolidation of full citizenship for women. For the 1998 elections, a minimum of 30 percent female candidates was required for political parties and coalitions. In the 2000 municipal elections, women won only 11.5 percent of seats on city councils in 5,500 municipalities and only five of the 26 capital states’ mayoral races. However, the number of women mayors countrywide has increased 85 percent in the last three elections, from 171 mayors in 1992 to 317 in 2000. Roseana Sarney (from Maranhão state) is Brazil’s only female governor and was a presidential contender in the last elections.

**#110: SRI LANKA** – Sri Lanka ranks among the lowest countries in South Asia in terms of women represented with 4.4 percent. However, as of March 2002, women were promised they would have a quarter of seats in Parliament set aside, in addition to similar quotas in all local government councils, which have been included in the government’s draft constitution, which is awaiting approval by Parliament. Sri Lanka has a woman president, Chandrika Kumaratunga, whose mother, Sirima Bandaranaike, was the country’s as well as the world’s first woman prime minister. Quotas are generally accepted as a short-term solution, the idea being that at the same time the political parties and government commit to gender sensitizing and training the public to realize the importance of women’s participation. A major obstacle for women is the social and cultural value system of Sri Lanka and many other Asian countries, where women and girls are restricted to the private sphere of the household and are barred from being active in the public arena, including political activity.

**#(Unknown): AFGHANISTAN** – 160 seats or 11 percent of the LoyaJjirga were set aside for women at the national gathering to determine the next stage of the Afghan government. Prominent women in the government includes Dr. Sima Samar, head of the country’s Human Rights Commission, Habiba Sorabi, Women’s Affairs Minister, Mahboba Hoqooqmal, Junior Minister of State for Women’s Affairs, and Suhaila Seddiqi, Public Health Minister. In the recent competition for the Presidency at the Loya Jirga, Dr. Massouda Jalal, a female pediatrician with the World Food Program, came in second behind Hamid Karzai, ahead of two other men. The focus of women in Afghanistan now is on raising external funds for the Women’s Affairs Ministry and fostering grassroots efforts to educate women and improve their lifestyles.

## *Introduction: U.S. Initiatives & Strategies*

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**With the percentage of women in Congress steady at 14 percent, our progress in advancing women in politics in the U.S. seems to have hit a plateau.** Ten years ago we celebrated the “Year of the Woman in Politics,” when the percentage of women in Congress nearly doubled, and we went from two women Senators to six. However, last year we went from 60 women in the House of Representatives to 59, with a gain of only one woman Senator and only one woman Governor. As Georgia Duerst-Lahti wrote about the most recent elections, “The most prominent facet of gender and election 2002 is the fact that when it is over, men will still overwhelmingly rule.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

**Worried about the implications of this virtual halt in our march toward equality, The White House Project organized the Why Women Matter Summit to learn from the progress women had made internationally and on local and state levels in our own country.** We wanted to know why are women at the national level in the U.S. stuck at 14 percent while the legislatures of some countries and some U.S. states are up past 30 percent? Why are we 58<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of women’s representation in national politics when we lead so many countries on other measures?

As is the case in many countries, in the U.S. there are both structural and cultural barriers to women’s entry into politics. Culturally, the world of politics has long been considered a male domain, and is still very much an “old-boys network.” Women are considered wives and mothers first, a set of assumptions that often limits their political participation. Women’s continuing need to balance work with family responsibilities has often meant that they could not be full-time political candidates. Additionally, women have often found it more difficult to raise money for their political campaigns than have men, who have traditionally had greater access to both financial resources and the networks that can provide them. Even when women do decide to run and are able to raise the money, they face heightened media scrutiny and voters’ discriminatory doubts about their leadership abilities.<sup>xi</sup>

On the structural side, some suggest that there is an institutionalized disadvantage for women in politics in this country. Rob Richie and Steven Hill of the Center for Voting and Democracy point to the U.S.’s “winner-take-all” electoral system as a major barrier to women’s increased political advancement. In the U.S. we have a “Single Member District” system, where whichever candidate wins a majority or plurality of votes becomes the only representative for that district. By contrast, many other democracies use some variation of proportional representation, where there is more than one seat per district and multiple representatives can be elected to represent the full diversity of the voters in that district. Richie and Hill note that “many established democracies have rejected our ‘winner-take-all’ system in favor of proportional representation because of the underrepresentation of women and other problems resulting from giving 100 percent of the power to candidates that win only 51 percent of the vote... It is high time to seriously address why 52 percent of the population only has 14 percent of the representation.”<sup>xii</sup>

Many other countries, including those that use proportional representational systems, have also taken positive steps to ensure an increase in women in politics. Pippa Norris defines three types

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of steps being taken worldwide: (1) **rhetorical strategies** “articulated in leadership speeches, party guidelines, or official party platforms, aim to change the party ethos by affirming the need for social balance in the slate of candidates;” (2) **recruitment and training programs** (what Norris calls “affirmative action programs”) “aim to encourage applicants by providing training sessions, advisory group targets, financial assistance, as well as systemic monitoring of the outcome;” and (3) **positive discrimination strategies**, which “set mandatory group quotas for the selection of candidates from certain social or political groups.”<sup>xliii</sup> While quotas, the third type, are not a realistic goal for this country, we should push strongly for more of the first two types here.

Above all, we wanted to use this Summit to convince the American public that we are behind. The U.S. may like to think of itself as a leader, but we are 58<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of women in politics, and falling fast. We are behind countries including Rwanda, Vietnam, Poland, Cuba, and far behind Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark. This political reality will not change without political will, sharp political thinking, and strategic action. *Why Women Matter* was an opportunity to jump-start this process. In bringing together international and domestic leaders and experts to share current research about the difference women make and to debate the viability of various initiatives, this conference created a unique opportunity for collaboration. If we are to improve, we must take seriously the recommendations that came out of this conference, and the suggestions offered in this Briefing Book.

The good news is that already, all over the country, groups are forming to work toward increasing women’s political participation. Each state or local project detailed in this Briefing Book is the result of hundreds of hours of work put in by dedicated grassroots leaders and activists. Their enthusiasm is contagious, and their dedication inspiring. We hope to learn from them and from our international guests at this summit, and we will use the lessons they bring to form a national movement to advance women in politics in the United States. Let us agree, as they did in France, “it is not democracy without women,” and let us march onwards to equality!

## ***Overview: A Selection of Possible Strategies to Increase Women’s Political Representation***

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**A. Recruitment, Training, and Women in Politics Advocacy Groups** – See also the following Local & Statewide Projects List for examples of these groups (pages 43-51)

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**B. Proportional Representation** – One idea for changing our electoral systems to include more women and other outsiders is to use Proportional Representation. Read the following description of Proportional (Full) Representation and the accompanying article in this book (pages 52-53)

**C. Instant Runoff Voting** – Allows you to vote for a second and, sometimes, a third choice candidate when you vote for your first choice. If your first choice one is not in the top two, your vote then goes to your second or third choice that you chose. Encourages third-party candidates and other non-mainstream candidates to get involved, as their candidacies are thus more viable -- used now in San Francisco. See the following description in this book (page 54).

**D. Public Funding of Campaigns & Clean Money Initiatives** – Increases women candidates' chances of getting the money they need to run successful campaigns. See the following description in this book (page 57).

**E. CEDAW** – The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, an International Treaty that the U.S. has still not ratified. Some cities, such as San Francisco, have incorporated CEDAW into their City Charter. A coalition of groups in New York is working to do the same. See the following articles and descriptions for more information on CEDAW (pages 58-61).

**F. Allowing candidates to use money they raise from their campaigns for living expenses** – A change, recently approved by the Federal Election Commission, will allow candidates to campaign as a paying job rather than having to give up income in order to be a candidate. This will benefit “outsider” candidates of all types, including women. Supporters of this new measure believe it will “level the playing field by making it easier for candidates who were not wealthy to run for office,” according to the *New York Times*, November 26, 2002 (article by Katharine Seelye, Section A, page 22).

**G. Vice-Presidential Candidates** – Having each party’s Presidential candidates to commit to running a woman as VP and to having a cabinet that reflects America.

## *A. Recruitment & Training Programs: Overview*

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Across the nation, political groups are training, preparing and enhancing women candidates, leaders and campaign staffs in an effort to bring a greater number of progressive women to politics. By providing effective campaign strategies and long-term political career training at national and local levels, these organizations are increasing the amount of qualified and well-equipped candidates in every stage of women's political careers.

Local groups often situate training around the community, specifically interested in increasing the number of qualified women in local politics and creating campaign teams prepared to support them within their own neighborhoods. National organizations provide both community-based initiatives and general agendas to be employed in all areas. Training, both nationally and locally, can range from a few days to several weekends and cover a series of topics in depth. Seminars focus on campaign strategies for managing staff, recruiting volunteers and contributors. Research tactics spotlight how to use older techniques and modern technology while press plans include generating media coverage and preparing for public appearances. Often there are "how to" seminars from organizing support to on-camera training in order to put ideas to practice. Plenary sessions, intimate workshops and simulated campaign settings are some of the methods used to prepare women for political effectiveness.

Training programs are needed to create political networks, mentor programs, share practical skills and first hand knowledge, and create a pool of skilled supporters. Women don't often identify as political candidates in the strength that men do, making recruitment and development a necessary means of enhancing women in political life. These measures enable more women access to political office and provide candidates and their staffs with the tools to successfully campaign to victory.

RECRUITMENT & TRAINING PROGRAMS NATIONWIDE INCLUDE: (partial list)

- *CAWP's NEW Leadership Development Network*
- *EARLY Women*
- *Emerge: Women Leaders for a Democratic Future*
- *EMILY'S List*
- *Feminist Majority Foundation's Feminist Leadership Institute*
- *Girls' Pipeline to Power*
- *Girls' State and Girls' Nation*
- *Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership*
- *Iowa Women & Public Policy*
- *LATINA*
- *Lincoln Club*
- *Mills College Institute for Civic Leadership*
- *Minnesota League of Women Voters' LOTT Program*
- *Minnesota Women's Campaign Fund*
- *National Federation for Republican Women*
- *National Foundation for Women Legislators*
- *National Women's Political Caucus Girls' Leadership Training Program*
- *N.E.W. Leadership, National Education for Women's Leadership, Oklahoma*
- *Public Leadership Education Network*
- *The Florida "W" Project*
- *The Leadership Institute*
- *WISH List's America's WISH Campaign Schools*
- *Women's Campaign Fund*
- *Women's Campaign School at Yale University*
- *YWCA Institute for Public Leadership*

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## *Strategies and Initiatives in the United States*

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### ***A, Continued: LOCAL & STATEWIDE PROJECTS TO INCREASE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION FOR WOMEN IN INDIVIDUAL STATES***

*Across the nation, women are forming training networks and groups to promote greater inclusion of women in local, statewide, and national politics. We have been fortunate to meet with many of the leaders of these groups and see firsthand their enthusiasm and commitment to advancing women's leadership. They remind us that any good national movement has a strong basis in local and state activism. While we know many other groups exist, here is some background on and contact information for the groups we have been able to catalogue.*

#### **ALABAMA WOMEN'S INITIATIVE & THE GREENBOOK**

##### **Birmingham, Alabama**

Contact Person: Gail Barber, Executive Director

Email: [info@alabamawomen.org](mailto:info@alabamawomen.org) or [ALWomen@hotmail.com](mailto:ALWomen@hotmail.com)

Website: [www.alabamawomen.org](http://www.alabamawomen.org)

PO Box 59323, Birmingham, AL 35259-9323

Tel: (205) 991-3221

Two years ago, a committed group of civic-minded women in Birmingham gathered together to create the Alabama Women's Initiative. The Initiative published the first-ever report on the "Status of Women in Leadership in Alabama," which has increasingly gained recognition within Alabama as the "greenbook" for its distinctive green cover. The greenbook has been a phenomenal success not just for the depth of research and the high quality of writing it contains, but also because of the strategy the women are using to promote it. The women of the Initiative are taking the greenbook around to church groups, book clubs, middle and high schools, gardening clubs, Rotary clubs, business forums, and all sorts of other gatherings. They have had astounding success in convincing people of the need for more women in politics in Alabama, though not yet successful in recruiting and running candidates. Already there is such high demand for the greenbook that they have had to take it into a second printing. Some sections of the greenbook are excerpted on the following page.

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***The Status of Women in Leadership in Alabama: By The Alabama Women's Initiative***

**From Introduction:** “Alabama is blessed with gifted people and natural abundance. Why, then, do so many of our people remain mired in poverty? One reason is Alabama’s neglect of a major resource: women. As this report will demonstrate there is a significant correlation between a society’s economic condition and the status of women citizens. Research also links children’s health and school performance to the *mother’s* economic and educational level. According to the World Bank, the world’s leading authority on the relationship between gender and economics, ‘... evidence from countries around the world demonstrates that societies with large, persistent gender inequalities pay the price of more poverty, malnutrition, illness and other deprivations.’ This conclusion is hardly surprising considering the role of women as caregivers and community builders. What may be surprising is the research confirming the particular qualities that a coherent women’s voice tends to bring to public leadership. As we shall see, these leadership qualities have a direct bearing on the decisions made by leadership about the quality of life in any community” (page 4).

**From The Role of Gender and Race:** “There is no doubt that the double bind of gender and racial discrimination has hindered the advancement of color in leadership positions. Attention must be given to the impact of race if we are to move ahead. Women have been divided along racial lines long enough. The evidence available about women in Alabama should be sufficient cause for everyone to sit up and take notice... This report grew from the premise that by working together, the women of Alabama have a unique opportunity to make things better for all of us” (page 4).

**From A Comprehensive Report on the Status of Women in Alabama:** “This report explores the status of women in leadership in Alabama and its relationship to quality-of-life standards for all Alabama citizens – men, women, and children. From the available statistics and research, the conclusion is inescapable – Alabama is paying a high price for the absence of women’s voices in our leadership” (pages 4-5).

“This report does the following:

- Reviews major studies of quality of life in America, ranging from the 2000 Census and Kids Count data to reports prepared by national institutes concerned about the welfare of American women and families.
- Examines the status of women in both private and nonprofit sectors.
- Considers the research and literature about the contributions a coherent female voice can make to the quality of leadership.
- Looks at what this means for Alabama and at what can be done to begin the process of positive change for all our citizens” (page 5).

**From Conclusion:** “Research studies support the conclusion that a coherent female voice brings important characteristics to leadership – both in substance and in process. Research further confirms that these important contributions become effective when a sufficient number of women – at least a significant minority – sit at the decision-making table. But women have a difficult time getting to the table – not by failure of ability – but by outmoded systems and stereotypes. If we are to bring to bear the contributions that women can make to solving the problems facing Alabama, the time has come for us to assume our places at the table – in government, in business and in nonprofits. We owe it to our families, our children, our community, and – by no means least of all – to ourselves” (page 38).

## **CALIFORNIA - THE FARM TEAM**

### **Northern California**

Contact Person: Kacy Hutchison, The Lincoln Club of Northern California

Email: [kacy@thelincolnclub.com](mailto:kacy@thelincolnclub.com)

#### ***Building a Diverse GOP Farm Team: By The Lincoln Club of Northern California***

The Lincoln Club of Northern California is a broad-based association of nearly 300 business, financial, and civic leaders throughout the Greater Bay Area whose purpose is to provide a forum for the consideration of important political issues confronting Northern California at the local, state, and national level. Through its PACs, the Lincoln Club offers financial support and political training to encourage quality Republicans to run for office at all levels of government.

The Lincoln Club believes the future of the Republican Party in the Bay Area begins with winning nonpartisan local-level campaigns and has adopted a political plan to provide a roadmap of how Republicans can regain their strength in California.

The cornerstone of the Lincoln Club's efforts is the recruitment and promotion of potential GOP rising stars to run for important local-level offices. Over time, these individuals will have the necessary skills and clout to rise through the ranks and lead our party back to competitiveness in the Bay Area. It is a strategy we call the "Farm Team" approach to party-building. Contests for city council, school board, county supervisor, sheriff and district attorney have a tremendous political and public policy impact that molds and hones the talents of fresh faces – and makes it possible for young and bold Republicans to rise through the ranks and eventually wrest more partisan offices from the Democrats.

Everyone knows the axiom that good representatives must "fit their districts". The diversity of any strong political party must be reflected in the diversity of the people it seeks to represent. Refocusing GOP strength in the Bay Area must seek to make the Republican Party reflect the region's diversity. As we reshape the Republican image, a promise must be made by the GOP community to elect much greater numbers of women and minorities to public office.

The Lincoln Club aims to help the party recruit more women to run for office so that Republicans will have more women role models within their communities and the Party. Serving as a local official offers credibility as a policymaker and community leader. Republican local leaders who have real records of accomplishment – and who also happen to be women or minorities – would then become the backbone of a competitive, resurgent and inclusive Republican Party for the Bay Area.

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## FLORIDA - PROJECT "W"

### Miami, Florida

Contact Person: Paula Xanthopoulou

Email: [paula@withoutboundaries.com](mailto:paula@withoutboundaries.com)

Website: <http://www.withoutboundaries.com/FLWProject.html>

PO Box 531198, Miami, FL 33153

Tel: (305) 576-6105

Fax: (305) 576-6106

Cell: (305) 710-4764

### ***"When Women Run, Women Win, With Women's Help!"***

"The Florida "W" Project's (FWP) primary purpose shall be to engage, mobilize, and activate progressive women -- through education, empowerment and effective leadership -- to participate in the electoral process and elect like-minded women at all levels of government based on a platform of issues in order to achieve parity.

"Born out of a collaboration of Florida Women's Consortium partners, the FWP will continue to ally itself with that organization and others in the spirit of multi-cultural and intergenerational coalition-building amongst women throughout the state with an emphasis on critical mass.

"The above shall be achieved through connecting, coordinating, and collaborating with extant organizations, projects, and women leaders – never re-inventing the wheel or establishing new or separate programs when relative programs already exist, or can be created in partnership with affiliate members.

"The bottom line goal of the Florida "W" Project is to create a real power base for women toward equal representation, the end of discrimination on the basis of gender, and a better quality of life for women and their families." (FWP By-laws – Article II, Purpose and Goals)

**"Our overarching organizational objective** is a statewide strategy/infrastructure that puts the advancement of progressive women in government first – embracing all related resources as partners in creating a universe of more supported/successful candidates on all levels. **For the first time**, county databases have been created to link women running for county commissions, school boards and municipal office with FWP partners (organizations, other groups, individuals). 'Kitchen Cabinets' are being developed county-by-county to forward progressive women in government on an ongoing basis. **For the first time**, information on Congressional and State Legislative electoral activity is posted and on a single website ([www.withoutboundaries.com](http://www.withoutboundaries.com)), with one-stop shopping for candidates seeking endorsement by women's political organizations & PACs. Trainings for candidates & managers by allied organizations are listed and coordinated. **For the first time**, a broad coalition of women is being empowered by the realization that political power is there for the taking if we get better organized, make a real commitment to filling the pipeline with like-minded women, and operate strategically."

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## **ILLINOIS WOMEN'S INSTITUTE FOR LEADERSHIP**

### **Chicago, Illinois**

Contact Person: Loretta Durbin, IWIL President

Email: [durbinl@gasi98.com](mailto:durbinl@gasi98.com)

Website: <http://www.il-democrats.org/IWIL/index.html>

IWIL, PO Box 1149, Springfield, IL 62705

Tel: (217) 525-8434

The Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership (IWIL) exists to encourage and train women to become effective leaders in Illinois government and the Democratic Party. It was organized after discussions that took place during the 1999 Democratic National Convention. The Board of Directors reflects the diversity of Illinois both ethnically and geographically. They come from Chicago and Carbondale and cities in-between and they include leaders from the Asian, Latino and African-American communities. Some of them are elected officials and some are in-the-trenches Democrats – but all demonstrate a commitment to the philosophy and ideals of the Democratic Party. Current officers are President Loretta Durbin, First Vice President Margaret Blackshere, Second Vice President Barbara Brown, Treasurer Billie Paige and Secretary Amalia Rioja. During the past year the Board of Directors and other supporters have worked to raise the necessary funds and develop a program curriculum that will be followed during the six monthly sessions. In the fall of 2001 applications were made available on the website and distributed throughout the state and over 50 women applied for the training.

## **IOWA - THE IOWA WOMEN & PUBLIC POLICY GROUP & THE CATT CENTER AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Iowa Women in Public Policy

Contact Person: Leann Brunnette, Director

PO Box 71142, Des Moines, IA 50325

Tel: (515) 440-2623, (515) 221-350

The Iowa Women in Public Policy group is a bipartisan effort to increase women's representation in all areas of public office. Leann Brunnette, who will be coming to D.C. for the Why Women Matter Summit, leads the group. They have worked hard for the past two years to raise public awareness and fill the public policy pipeline with women. Specifically, they have speakers, including Christine Todd Whitman and Claudia Kennedy; they have an Annual Golf event, and this year they saw 69 women file to run for the state legislature – a **60 percent increase** over 2000! Also, last year they hosted a unique public workshop to give women training to run successful campaigns for public office, where they had presentations by elected officials, campaign staff members, and political experts.

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## **IOWA - CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT CENTER**

### **Iowa State University**

E-mail: [cattcntr@iastate.edu](mailto:cattcntr@iastate.edu)

309 Catt Hall, Ames, IA 50011-1305

Tel: (515) 294-3181, Fax: (515) 294-3741

The Carrie Chapman Catt Center is housed at Iowa State University, and is run by Professor Dianne Bystrom. Founded in 1992, the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics provides leadership development and educational opportunities for women and men interested in politics, public policy and administration, and public service through programs blending the resources and scholarship of the academic environment with the actual experiences of individuals in the public and private sectors.

## **MINNESOTA WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN FUND**

### **Minnesota**

Website: <http://www.mnwomenscampaignfund.org/>

In a novel approach, the Minnesota Women's Campaign Fund (MWCF) argue in an amicus brief to the state Supreme Court that the state's redistricting plan disproportionately affect women legislator's ability to run for re-election. The MWCF cleverly used the state's Human Rights policy that outlaws gender discrimination to say that the state's plan for redistricting would harm women running for office. After examining the MWCF's brief, the Special Redistricting Panel worked hard to not create districts that would disproportionately pair women incumbents in the House or Senate against other incumbents.

Additionally, the MWCF also released a new research report, similar to the greenbook but not as far-reaching, showing that women legislators make state government work better for all Minnesotans. "New research by the Minnesota Women's Campaign Fund shows Minnesota women legislators sponsor, advocate and vote for public policy that not only improves women's lives, but also *enhances the way government works*." The full report is up on their website, listed above. They are currently doing public presentations on this research.

## **NEW JERSEY - CAWP's "NEW Leadership Development Network"**

### **Center for American Women and Politics**

### **Rutgers, State University of New Jersey**

Contact Person: Debbie Walsh, Director, CAWP

191 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8557

Tel: (732) 932-9384

Fax: (732) 932-6778

NEW Leadership is a national program with programs in many states, sponsored by the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University to educate, empower and encourage college women to become politically active and to take on leadership roles. The NEW Leadership summer institute is an intensive six-day residential program each summer. During the summer, institute students meet women officeholders, campaign staffers, and community activists, and develop leadership skills through workshops and hands-on projects.

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Once the residential institute ends, NEW Leadership continues through ongoing leadership experiences and workshops hosted by CAWP.

Since the NEW Leadership summer institute began in 1991, a number of institutions have expressed interest in sponsoring the program in their state or region. The Development Network (NLDN) is an initiative by CAWP to encourage and support political leadership education programming for women at colleges and universities across the United States.

*NLDN partners are committed to:*

Strengthening networks with political women in their state; working with established women to educate, inspire, and empower the next generation of women leaders; building a national network dedicated to increasing public leadership education opportunities for college women; developing lasting partnerships with other institutions interested in women's political leadership education.

The NEW Leadership Development Network is building bridges between women leaders in the educational and political worlds. The Development Network partners are helping to fulfill the mission of NEW Leadership by adding their own expertise and making the program's benefits available to college women across the country. If you are interested in becoming a Partner in the Development Network contact Sasha Patterson by phone: (732) 932-9384, ext 248 or email: [Sasha516@hotmail.com](mailto:Sasha516@hotmail.com)

*Development Network Partners:*

- NEW Leadership Pennsylvania, Center for Women in Politics in PA, Chatham College (1999)
- NEW Leadership Midwest, Carrie Chapman Catt Center, Iowa State University (1999)
- GOLD Leadership Program, School of Social Sciences at University of Texas, Dallas (1999)
- NEW Leadership Puget Sound, Center for Women & Democracy, University of Washington (2000)
- NEW Leadership DC, Women & Politics Institute, American University, Washington DC (2000)
- Washington State University (2001)
- Ohio State University (2001), The Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma (2001)

**OHIO – “LATINA,” A NEW GROUP FOR LATINA WOMEN  
Cleveland, Ohio**

From article in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 12/6/02

President: Miriam Gonzalez Lugo

Email: [latinaevent@hotmail.com](mailto:latinaevent@hotmail.com)

Tel : (440) 686-0053

A group of Latina women in Cleveland have started the group LATINA – Leading and Advocating Together in New Arenas – to seek more impact and influence for Latinas in the area. They had their inaugural meeting in the City Club of Cleveland on December 5 of last year, and over 100 Latinas participated. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* article on the event stated: “Group leaders announced a scholarship fund for Latina youth and plans to help Latina businesswomen through networking and mentoring. They also expressed a desire to shape public policy – especially where it affects their children.”

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## **PITTSBURGH: THE PITTSBURGH COLLABORATIVE**

### **Pittsburgh, PA**

Contact Person: Judie Donaldson, Cecilia Griffin Golden, Allyson Lowe, or Ann Burroughs

Emails: Judie Donaldson: [j.e.donaldson@worldnet.att.net](mailto:j.e.donaldson@worldnet.att.net)

Cecilia Griffin Golden: [cgolden@ywcaph.org](mailto:cgolden@ywcaph.org)

Allyson Lowe: [alowe@chatham.edu](mailto:alowe@chatham.edu)

Ann Burroughs: [ingeni2003@yahoo.com](mailto:ingeni2003@yahoo.com)

### ***Brief Summary of The Pittsburgh Collaborative***

**The Pittsburgh Collaborative** was established in January 2003 with the goals of: 1) strengthening women's role in politics within Pittsburgh and 2) establishing a plan of action that includes working with local, national and international groups to strengthen visibility and share information and strategies at all levels. The Pittsburgh Collaborative will be working in collaboration with the White House Project to achieve these goals.

This active collaborative is poised and ready to take action about the lack of women in public leadership. We have an opportunity to make a difference locally and nationally by establishing a national model. It will strive to support the mission "to advance women as leaders." Locally, the Pittsburgh collaborative will achieve these goals through presenting the data and research obtained at local and national levels, public education campaigns and forums to heighten women's visibility and measures to influence popular culture. Our strategies are designed to foster both immediate and enduring changes. It should be commonplace and normal in the eyes of the public and media for women to be public leaders in politics, business, academia, the military, and all other sectors.

The common factor that has dominated the Pittsburgh collaborative from the beginning has been the immediate understanding that this will only work as a collaborative if one shares all one's resources with one another, such as projects, programs, contacts etc., in other words, the ability to trust without fear. This has enabled the Pittsburgh group to forge ahead and accomplish a great deal in a very short amount of time. It could become a national model for the promotion of political leadership among women. The decision to involve community from the beginning was most important and helpful. It has resulted in creating a collaborative group of women leaders from diverse areas. The ongoing support that can continue in a milieu of this magnitude is the ideal time to establish a committee whose goal is to host a national conference in 2004.

*Michele Griffith,  
on behalf of The Pittsburgh Collaborative*

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## **SAN FRANCISCO - CITY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

### **San Francisco, California**

Contact Person: Belle Taylor-McGhee, Executive Director of Department on the Status of Women and Co-Chair of the San Francisco Women's Alliance

Website: <http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/cosw>

45 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 130, San Francisco, CA 94102

Tel: (415) 252-2570

Rather than waiting for the U.S. to ratify CEDAW, the COSW and the Women's Alliance in San Francisco have gone ahead on their own. San Francisco voted to adopt CEDAW in 1998 after delegates attended the 1995 U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and saw how CEDAW was being used around the world. Patti Chang, who was head of the COSW at the time CEDAW was adopted, said recently in a Women's E-News article, "After the Beijing conference we decided to take a local-to-national strategy rather than waiting for the treaty to be adopted by the Senate and filter down to a local level." Since its adoption, city departments have begun incorporating CEDAW's recommendations into hiring practices and budgets relating to services ranging from juvenile rehabilitation to domestic violence to public transportation. The current head of COSW, Belle Taylor-McGhee, says that this represents a "pro-active approach to gender equity, as opposed to waiting for lawsuits to happen." The idea to implement CEDAW in San Francisco apparently also came from Krishanti Dharmaraj of WILD.

## **SAN FRANCISCO - EMERGE: WOMEN LEADERS FOR A DEMOCRATIC FUTURE**

### **San Francisco, California**

Contact Person: Andrea Dew, Founder

Email: [contact@emergeCA.org](mailto:contact@emergeCA.org)

Website: <http://www.emergeCA.org>

PO Box 26548, San Francisco, CA 94126-6548

Fax: (415) 362-7384

Emerge is a political leadership training program for Democratic women age 21 and older in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Emerge mission is to identify, educate, and inspire Democratic women who want to pursue elective office at the state and local level in California. Emerge is dedicated to making a long-term investment in these future leaders by developing their political and media skills; expanding their knowledge of local issues; and connecting them with mentors. Participants meet one weekend a month for nine months, covering the areas of: campaigns & elections, fundraising, public speaking, networking, coalition-building, media skills, legislative process, and public policy. Participants also will discuss case studies of political leaders and meet women who hold high political office in California.

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## ***B. What is Proportional Representation?***

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### **FULL REPRESENTATION WILL GET MORE WOMEN ELECTED**

**By the Center for Voting & Democracy**

[www.fairvote.org](http://www.fairvote.org)

Research worldwide shows that the number one predictor of **women's success** in national legislative elections is the presence of full “proportional” representation (PR) voting systems. Countries that use PR exclusively elect a much higher share of women to their legislatures than countries that use “winner take all.” Women do significantly better in the PR elections in countries that use a mix of PR and winner-take-all.

Full representation (also called “proportional representation,” or just “PR”) is the principle that any group of like-minded voters should win legislative seats in proportion to its share of the popular vote. Full representation allows both the majority and the minority to win its fair share of representation, whereas the “winner take all” principle awards 100 percent of the representation to the group with the most votes, even if they receive less than a majority.

PR is designed to ensure that all voters are able to elect their own representative, and to guarantee that all city, state, and federal legislatures accurately reflect the variety and strength of all the political perspectives present in the electorate. To achieve these aims, full representation voting systems use multi-seat districts instead of single-seat districts. Several candidates are elected in each district, and all seats are made equal to the same number of votes. For example, in a ten-seat district, a party winning 60 percent of the votes receives 6 of the 10 district seats, a party winning 20 percent of the vote wins 2 seats, and so on. This method opens up the political system to more political perspectives, creates more competition, and gives voters more choices and makes more votes count. In fact, it creates multi-party/multi-choice democracy.

Our current “winner take all” system first was adopted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when only white men of property could vote. Today it is outdated for the diverse, pluralistic, multi-partisan, multi-racial/ethnic 21<sup>st</sup> century world we have become. The more modern full representation systems were devised more recently to correct for the defects of the antiquated “winner takes all” system. Most of the established democracies in the world today now use a full representation system.

**The 1996 U.N. Beijing Conference on Women** approved a platform plank urging all governments to “review the differential impact of electoral systems on the political representation of women in elected bodies and consider, where appropriate, the adjustment or reform of those systems.” To implement the U.N. commitment, we need election procedures that allow equal opportunity for women voters and candidates. These procedures are PR voting methods in multi-seat districts, or a combination of one-seat and multi-seat PR election systems.

#### **THREE FULL REPRESENTATION METHODS:**

1) **List System:** The most widely used voting system in democracies – gives **women** and racial minorities fair representation in many legislatures. Representatives are elected from multi-seat districts in proportion to the number of votes each party or slate receives. If there are 10 legislative seats and a party

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receives 30 percent of the popular vote, that party receives 30 percent (3) of the seats. It is party-based, but some variations allow voting directly for some candidates.

2) **Choice Voting:** Allows voters to rank candidates in their order of choice, 1, 2, 3, etc. If a voter's first choice doesn't win, their vote counts for their second choice, then third choice, and so on. This keeps constituencies from splitting their vote among competing candidates, or having to settle for the "lesser of two evils." It has been used for major American city elections – including city council elections in New York during its “golden age” in the 1930s and 1940s. **Women, gays and people of color** have been elected in high proportions in local elections in Cambridge, MA, with choice voting.

3) **Cumulative Voting:** Allows voters to cast more than one vote for their preferred candidate. In a five-person race, the voter may put all votes on one candidate or disperse five votes in any way she chooses. Highlighted by law professor Lani Guinier and used in such localities as Amarillo, TX, and Peoria, IL, cumulative voting has been used successfully as a remedy in many voting rights cases and has resulted in **women of all colors being elected**. A candidate-based system, it is considered “semi-proportional” because it is possible to split the vote, but still provides greater access to fair representation.

**IMPLEMENTATION** of any full representation voting system at local, state and congressional levels only requires revision of laws – not a change to the U.S. Constitution. In Congress, representatives such as Mel Watt (D-NC), Eva M. Clayton (D-NC), Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH), and Barbara Lee (D-CA) have backed legislation to modify the 1967 federal law mandating single seat districts for the U.S. House in order to allow states to elect their House delegations from multi-seat districts if they wish to do so. Currently, **HR 415** promotes full representation. *Many states and local governments could be elected by full representation right now.*

**NEXT STEPS: We recommend you read and discuss books in a local group such as the following:**

- *Lift Every Voice*, Lani Guinier, Simon & Shuster, 1998
- *United States Electoral Systems: Their Impact on Women and Minorities*, Wilma Rule and J. Zimmerman, Praeger, 1992
- *Whose Vote Counts*, Rob Richie and Steven Hill, Beacon Press, 2001
- *Fixing Elections: The Failure of America's Winner-Take-All Politics*, Steven Hill, Routledge, 2002
- *Real Choices, New Voices*, Douglas Amy, Columbia University Press, 1993

## ***C. What is Instant Runoff Voting?***

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**By Rob Richie, Center for Voting & Democracy**

Spurred by the memory of Ralph Nader spoiling Al Gore's election, by other third party threats to major party incumbents and by expensive runoff contests, instant runoff voting (IRV) has moved to the top of major parties' reform agenda in several states. IRV is a win-win solution to the debate over third party candidates, as it both ensures winners have full majority support and permits voters to support third party candidates without forfeiting their opportunity to choose between the major party candidates. It decreases campaign finance demands and increases incentives for positive campaigning and coalition building when replacing runoffs. States could implement IRV right now for all federal elections, including the presidential race, without changing federal law or the Constitution.

Long used for national elections in Ireland and Australia, IRV simulates a series of runoff elections, but in one efficient trip to the polls. People vote for their favorite candidate, but they also indicate their "runoff" choices by ranking candidates on their ballot: first, second and third. If a candidate receives a majority of first choices, she or he wins. If not, the weak candidates are eliminated, and a runoff round of counting occurs. In this round your ballot counts for your top-ranked candidate still in the runoff. The eliminated candidate is no longer a "spoiler" because the votes of that candidate's supporters go to their runoff choice. Rounds of counting continue until there is a majority winner.

Backed by the National Organization for Women, California Secretary of State Kevin Shelley, the San Francisco Democratic Party and San Francisco Labor Council, IRV was adopted voters in San Francisco for elections to the city's major office, including the 2003 mayoral race. Utah Republicans nominate their congressional candidates with IRV, and overseas voters in Louisiana cast IRV ballots. Supporters of IRV for statewide elections include Presidential candidate and former Vermont Governor Howard Dean, the Alaska Republican Party, Maine State Senate President Beverly Daggett and Vermont state chapters of the League of Women Voters, Common Cause and the Grange.

**For more information, please contact: The Center for Voting and Democracy**

6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 901  
Takoma Park, MD 20912 (301) 270-4616  
www.fairvote.org, or email [info@fairvote.org](mailto:info@fairvote.org)

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## **Related Article:**

# ***“American Women Have a Long Way To Go”***

### ***An In-Depth Look at Two Strategies***

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**By Steven Hill and Rob Richie, Center for Voting & Democracy**

*Version of this article appeared in papers in Providence, RI, Syracuse, NY, Amarillo, TX, and elsewhere around the country. See more about this topic at [www.fairvote.org/op\\_ed](http://www.fairvote.org/op_ed) and [www.fairvote.org/women/](http://www.fairvote.org/women/)*

It has been over ten years since the "Year of the Woman" nearly doubled the number of women in Congress. But it has been slim pickings ever since. In the 2002 elections, the number of women in both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate stayed constant despite openings created by the 2001-2002 redistricting. The IPU finds that the U.S. ranks 58<sup>th</sup> in the world in its percent of women elected to its national legislature. Women now hold 14 percent of Congress, a lower percentage than such nations as Mexico, South Africa or Seychelles. In 1998, less than half of our states elected women to the U.S. House. Sweden leads the pack with 45 percent women in its national legislature, followed by Denmark, Finland, Norway and the Netherlands, all at least three times higher than the U.S. Congress. American women also fare poorly in executive offices. Forty-four of 50 states have male governors, and 24 of our largest 25 cities have male mayors.

Given American women's success in many areas, why has politics proven such hostile terrain? Some propose that it's women's own reluctance to sacrifice their traditional home lives. Swanee Hunt, director of Harvard University's Women and Public Policy Program, suggests that many women don't think politics is a reasonable option because they don't want to give up being mothers and wives. One recent survey revealed also that women also don't necessarily vote for other women. Both male and female voters still prefer a man to a woman for powerful offices such as governor, attorney general, and president.

While discriminatory attitudes play a large role, they don't explain why women do so much better in some nations than others. The key lies in incentives that are created by the rules for how elections are conducted. A virtual laboratory is provided by nations that use both full representation (also called “proportional representation”) voting systems and U.S.-style "winner take all" voting systems to elect their national legislatures. We can observe the same voters, the same attitudes, expressing themselves through two different voting systems. Unlike our single-seat, “highest vote-getter wins” method, full representation systems use multi-seat districts where a political party or grouping of voters may need only 5 percent of the popular vote to win their fair share of representation.

For example, in Germany, Italy and New Zealand, women are 2-3 times more likely to be elected in seats chosen by full representation than by “winner takes all.” Sweden, Finland, Norway, and the Netherlands, the world's leaders, all use full representation. In Scotland and Wales recently, women won 39 percent of seats in their first full representation elections.

In fact, comparative research has shown that the leading predictor of women's success in national elections, when tested against all other variables, is use of full representation. Most importantly, women are more likely to run when voters have more than one representative and when the major parties face

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more competitive pressure to nominate women. In addition, when a majority of votes is needed, as in the U.S.-style single seat "winner take all" elections, a small number of discriminatory "swing" voters can deny women candidates the margin they need for election.

Electing more women to legislatures is not only a matter of fairness. Practically speaking, the presence of women in legislatures makes a measurable difference in the types of legislation that are proposed and passed into law. Although outnumbered 8-1 over the last two decades, women in Congress were successful in gaining legislation that had been long overlooked by men, including gender equity in the workplace and in education, child support legislation, and laws for prevention of violence against women. It was Congresswomen who ensured that the offensive behavior of U.S. Senators Bob Packwood and Brock Adams were not swept under the "good old boy" carpet.

Instant runoff voting (IRV) is another voting method that holds promise for women. With IRV, voters not only get to pick the candidate they like, but they also gain the option of ranking a second choice, i.e. a runoff choice, and even a third choice, 1, 2, 3. If your first choice does not win, you haven't lost your vote; it goes to your second/runoff choice. Having the opportunity to rank more than one candidate liberates voters from the straitjacket of picking the "lesser of two evils" or worrying about spoiler candidacies. With IRV, the 100,000 Ralph Nader voters in Florida during the 2000 presidential election would have had the option of ranking a second/runoff choice. Thousands of them would have chosen Al Gore, resulting in Al Gore picking up those votes and winning Florida and the presidency. Also with IRV, third party candidates like Nader would be able to participate in elections without the tag of spoiler hung around their necks, as well as the accompanying exclusion from debates and media coverage.

IRV requires winners to receive a majority of votes to win and therefore is not as beneficial for women as full representation for increasing their numbers in legislatures. But IRV frees voters to rank female candidates who are challenging conventional wisdom in high-profile executive office elections. Furthermore, IRV's ranked ballots promote coalition building and provide incentives for positive campaigning because winning candidates may need the second-choice rankings of other candidates. These incentives can benefit the less adversarial and more consensus-building style of at least some women politicians. In Ireland the last two presidents (including current United Nations commissioner Mary Robinson, who would have lost under plurality rules) have been women elected by IRV, and women in Australia's parliament hold 25 percent of seats.

Most established democracies have rejected our 18<sup>th</sup> century "winner take all" system in favor of more modern methods like full representation and instant runoff voting because of the underrepresentation of women and other problems resulting from our two hundred year old practices. Implementation of these fair election systems in the United States at local, state and national levels does not require revising the Constitution. Changes in applicable local, state and federal laws will do. It is high time to seriously address why 52 percent of the population only has 13 percent of the representation.

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*Steven Hill is senior policy analyst with the Center for Voting and Democracy ([www.fairvote.org](http://www.fairvote.org)) and author of "Fixing Elections: The Failure of America's Winner-Take-All Politics" ([www.FixingElections.com](http://www.FixingElections.com)). Rob Richie is the Center's executive director. Contact the Center at 301-270-4616, 6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 610, Takoma Park, MD 20912.*

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## ***D. Public Funding of Campaigns & Clean Money Initiatives***

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**By the Piper Fund, a project of The Proteus Fund**

**Public Financing systems provide qualifying candidates who agree to limit their spending and reject contributions from private sources with a set amount of public funds to run for office.** It is a model reform for both federal and state races, and versions have already passed in Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, Arizona, and North Carolina. In addition to these state-level systems, there are numerous counties and cities, including New York, that have passed similar ordinances.

The most comprehensive public financing systems are often referred to as Clean Money/Clean Elections systems, embodied in the programs of Arizona and Maine. While elements of each plan vary according to local circumstances, participating candidates generally receive public financing for the primary and general election and they qualify by raising a high number of small (e.g., \$5) qualifying contributions from individual voters in their districts or states. If a non-participating opponent spends more than the basic public financing grant, there are additional funds available up to a certain amount through matching mechanisms.

**Political campaign contributors are overwhelmingly male, white and conservative and the trend hasn't changed in the past 20 years.** 75

percent of contributors are men and 90 percent are white. Conservatives far outnumber liberals. Despite the work of Emily's List and the pressures on candidates and parties to recruit more contributors, donors in 2000 were just as concentrated among white affluent businessmen as they were in 1972. (Paper released at Campaign Finance Institute by political scientists including James Campbell)

**Public Financing of Elections in Arizona suggests a new path.** In Arizona, nine out of eleven statewide officeholders won their elections using public financing including Governor Janet Napolitano, the first Democratic governor elected in 20 years. 62 percent of women candidates, 57 percent of Latino candidates and 100 percent of African American candidates in Arizona ran as Clean Election candidates.

After collecting 4,000 \$5 contributions, Napolitano received a total of \$2.3 million in public funding to run her campaign against former *Contract with America* Congress member Matt Salmon. She received matching funding to get her message out in response to major in-state fundraising stops by President Bush and Vice President Cheney.

In states like Arizona, there is a palpable change in the way Clean Elections reforms are perceived. Leaders from the environmental, interfaith, labor, Latino, LGBT, and women's communities view public financing as a critical tool in their candidate recruitment and voter engagement work.

**For more information contact the Piper Fund at 413-256-0349 [www.proteusfund.org](http://www.proteusfund.org)**

*While money may be the mother's milk of modern elections, it has soured the view of too many. A 2002 CBS News poll found that 72 percent of Americans think that "many public officials make or change policy decisions as a direct result of money they receive from major campaign contributors." Is it a surprise that voter turnout suffers? In the 2002 mid-term elections, only 39.3 percent of eligible citizens chose to vote.*

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## ***E. How Can CEDAW Be Used to Increase Women's Political Power? Two Local Initiatives***

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### **1.) U.N. WOMEN'S TREATY MOLDS SAN FRANCISCO GOVERNMENT**

*Article from Women's E-News, Reprinted with Permission*

**By  
Rebecca Vesely**

**SAN FRANCISCO (WOMENSENEWS)**--While the U.S. Senate considers ratifying a landmark international treaty on women's rights, San Francisco has been quietly implementing the treaty's protocols on gender equity--with surprising results.

The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations plans to vote on the controversial treaty Thursday, the first time in eight years that the document will go before a vote. The committee's chairman, Delaware Democratic Sen. Joseph Biden, has said he wants to move the treaty through committee to a full Senate vote this summer.

The treaty, known as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, or CEDAW, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and signed by President Jimmy Carter in 1980. However, the pact has yet to be ratified by the U.S. Senate.

San Francisco voted to adopt the treaty in 1998 after delegates attended the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and saw how it was being used around the world. Other U.S. cities and states have adopted referendums supporting the treaty, but San Francisco is the only place in the country where its provisions are influencing local policy.

"After the Beijing conference we decided to take a local-to-national strategy rather than waiting for the treaty to be adopted by the Senate and filter down to the local level," says Patricia Chang, president and chief executive officer of the city's Women's Foundation. Chang was president of the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women at the time the treaty was adopted.

With an initial budget of \$100,000, a task force began reviewing city departments and addressing policies preventing women from getting adequate social services and from advancing to leading positions within city government. The task force will disband at the end of this year--its work apparently completed. City departments have begun incorporating its recommendations into hiring practices and budgets relating to services ranging from juvenile rehabilitation programs to public transportation.

"San Francisco is a model and a pioneer in how the United States can use the treaty to provide equal rights for women," says Sarah Albert, co-chair of the Working Group on the Ratification of CEDAW, which is lobbying for treaty ratification by the Senate. "It says to the rest of the country that this is not some wild U.N. treaty that came in from outer space. This is relevant."

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### ***Profound Changes in Countries That Support Treaty***

Adopted by 170 countries worldwide, CEDAW does not supersede local laws. Instead, it provides a framework for governments to examine the existing rights of women and girls in areas including employment opportunities, education, health care and equal protection under the law.

In countries that have adopted the treaty, the results have been profound. Women in China are now guaranteed joint ownership of marital property and equal inheritance. The Tanzanian Supreme Court invalidated a law barring women from inheriting clan property after that country adopted the treaty. And the Australian government cited treaty obligations in passing national legislation against sexual harassment in the workplace.

While changes in San Francisco are not as dramatic--most are not evident and few residents are even aware that the city adopted the treaty--they do highlight inequities that activists say women still face in the United States. For instance, the task force found that the city's Juvenile Probation Department was not providing services crucial to young women such as safe housing, domestic violence and sexual assault counseling, parenting skills and pregnancy prevention.

"Girls' needs were considered something extra," says Chang. "By changing the standard from boys to both boys and girls we were able to move to more of a true notion of equity in city services."

Opponents of CEDAW in the Senate, such as North Carolina Republican Sen. Jesse Helms, have argued that the treaty would spur frivolous lawsuits. But San Francisco officials say that by addressing gender inequality early on, legal action can be avoided.

"It's a proactive approach to gender equity, as opposed to waiting for lawsuits to happen," says Belle Taylor-McGhee, executive director for the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, which oversees the ordinance's implementation in the city. "This process highlights the fact that unless there is a way to deal with these issues, they won't get dealt with."

### ***'It's Not About Looking at Quotas. It's Saying, "What Is Our Response?"'***

A review of the city's Department of Public Works, for instance, found that women often did not feel safe while waiting at bus stops or walking city streets at night because the stops were not well lit and city lights were spaced far apart. By simply adding more lights, women felt safer commuting to and from work in the early morning and night hours, Chang says.

Some San Francisco women, however, say they don't notice a difference in lighting at the stops, and even those that are well lit can't always prevent crime. Rebecca Etherington-Smith learned this in February, when a man slashed her face and throat with a knife while she waited for a bus alone in the early morning hours in the North Beach section of the city. The 30-year-old suffered two deep gashes, as long as 5 inches, each requiring 30 stitches. A man with a history of mental illness--who had no connection to the victim--was later arrested and charged with attempted murder.

Krishanti Dharmaraj, executive director of the Women's Institute for Leadership Development for Human Rights, who came up with the idea to implement CEDAW in San Francisco, says that changes for city residents are subtle, but important. As one of the most expensive cities to live in the country, San Francisco is now addressing whether women have access to affordable housing. The city's rent-control



board, which classified residents into groups of either women or minorities, is now keeping data on women minorities. The board has also promoted qualified women to leadership roles.

"It's not about looking at quotas or saying the entire city is biased against women. It's saying, 'What is the norm? What is our response?'" Dharmaraj says. "Making populations visible is one key component."

### ***City Effort Will Make a More of a Difference When Others Follow Suit***

A stickier issue is equity in employment practices, such as hiring and promoting women into high levels in city departments and providing equal pay. Sonia Melara, a member of San Francisco's CEDAW task force and executive director of Arriba Juntos, a local group that provides employment services to low-income workers, says the ordinance provides a framework to evaluate hiring practices. One issue that kept coming up among both male and female city workers was that family obligations--such as child care, pregnancy or caring for an elderly relative--prevented them from taking a job or getting promoted. For instance, some employees at the Department of Public Works punch in at 6 a.m., but if day care doesn't start until 8 a.m., single parents--men or women--often don't apply for those jobs.

"Family issues kept coming up in every department," Melara says. "Employers have to realize that to hold onto good employees they need to be more flexible in meeting individual needs."

Another problem, Melara says, is that women still tend to make up the majority of low-wage workers in government, often filling positions such as secretaries, while few women hold higher paying jobs as managers or, say, environmental engineers. However, low turnover in local government and a hiring freeze due to the economic downturn means that changes in these practices may not be seen for years. "In government, it takes 10 times longer to accept and implement changes than in the private sector," Melara says.

Officials say that real change will come when municipalities around San Francisco adopt similar practices in gender equity. For example, when girls from surrounding counties are arrested in San Francisco on prostitution charges and then released to their home counties, gender-specific services are often not available to them there. As a result, they often end up back on San Francisco streets.

The San Francisco ordinance is catching the eye of other municipalities in California, however. Officials from Los Angeles, San Diego and Santa Cruz are consulting with the city and considering using the model to review local policies.

### ***Senators Downplay Impact of Treaty on U.S. Women***

San Francisco is rarely discussed in national debates about CEDAW. Biden and California Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer recently wrote an editorial for the San Francisco Chronicle urging support for the treaty, but downplayed its potential to help American women. "Ratification of the treaty would not impose a single new requirement in our laws--because our Constitution and gender-discrimination laws already comply with the treaty requirements," the two senators wrote. "But U.S. participation could advance the lives of millions of women elsewhere."

Albert, from the national coalition, says that without treaty ratification the United States cannot claim moral leadership on human rights and cannot attend periodic United Nations conferences on the treaty. But Chang says that San Francisco is proof that the treaty could help American women as well. "Downplaying the national significance is a political strategy to get it passed through the Senate," Chang says. "But the treaty could be instrumental to women here to question issues like access to health care, social services and employment equity."

## 2.) **NEW YORK COALITION MOBILIZES FOR CEDAW LOCALLY:**

**THE NEW YORK CITY HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE** is a campaign to use two important international human rights treaties-CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) and CERD (the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination)-to strengthen the City's commitment to ensuring human rights for all. Local adoption of these treaties can pro-actively address race and sex discrimination, both human rights violations under international law, by requiring the City to review its policies and take action to change those that have discriminatory effects. The campaign is run by a growing coalition of social justice and human rights organizations and advocates in New York City. Urban Justice Center Human Rights Project, Amnesty International USA Women's Program, and NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund coordinate the coalition's activities. For more information on the campaign, contact us at 212-633-4285 or [cedawcerdnyc@yahoo.com](mailto:cedawcerdnyc@yahoo.com).

*The declarations of CEDAW do not supercede domestic law, therefore allowing local needs and constraints to be woven into its implementation. From a political perspective, local ratification of CEDAW goes beyond changing public policy to helping determine who legislates, by affecting hiring practices and appointments and providing equal pay. Implementation could also create a legal basis for change within the nomination and candidacy process of political parties. Further, at the national level, with Senate ratification, the United States can finally have legitimate global influence through the CEDAW Committee and aid in allowing women to become full political contributors.*

### ***WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP CEDAW***

***Check out [www.womenstreaty.org](http://www.womenstreaty.org) for further information and steps you can take!***

# *Conclusion: More Women in Political Leadership – Strategies for the Coming Decade*

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By  
Georgia Duerst-Lahti, for The White House Project  
Professor of Political Science and Women's Studies  
Beloit College

## **TOWARD A MASS “CLICK”**

For more women to achieve leadership posts in politics, the attentive public and policy makers must first acknowledge the U.S. democracy is not an optimal democracy. Old fashioned consciousness raising is in order because not having women leaders is so ordinary, so “natural.”

Current efforts like those of The White House Project directed toward cultural representations of women leaders which “denaturalize” the reaction that women are oddities are essential. Also certainly, spotlighting women leaders from other nations as this conference does will contribute to awareness, both that the U.S. lags the world and that other ways of conducting democracy exist. Because American pride tends to blind us to the merits of other ways of running democratic systems, strategies must always appear to be “made in the U.S.A.” Pride can be a tool for women’s advancement, however.

## ***One Agreement by Opinion Leaders***

If we are to claim that we have the best democracy in the world, then we must have women leaders—in rough proportion to our presence—across U.S. politics. To be successful, **a coalition of women from across the political spectrum must engage**, and women from each point of the spectrum must work to persuade “their” men. To achieve the coalition, we can borrow from the French approach and seek agreement on only one point:

***Democracy without women is not democracy.***

Women leaders from across the political spectrum, then, must first achieve agreement on this one point. A summit of such women is probably necessary. The negotiating skills of diplomats may be required to reach this accord, but it is an essential first step. Once agreement over the single principle is established, a deliberate public awareness campaign can ensue.

## ***Moving the Message to the Mass Public***

In addition to the White House Project’s work to raise public awareness, we would ideally have a national advertising campaign. Nationally, the best advertising talent should develop an ad campaign modeled after the NFL United Way approach. Ideas should center around the need for the U.S. to strengthen its democracy. This effort will operate in conjunction with state and local efforts. The points:

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- “We are 58 places away from the best in the world.”
- Democracy without women is not democracy.
- The majority needs leadership parity in democracies.
- Balance is the goal because women matter in important ways.

## **LONG TERM REFORM**

Leading experts on democratic institutions, James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, insist that in good democracies, institutions must ensure that no one group is permanently disadvantaged as women seem to be in the U.S. system presently. They focus upon processes and practices as well as on the form of institutions. For political leaders in democracies, no process is more important than its elections. In the U.S. democracy, the most common election process of the single-member district, winner-takes-all plurality system hurts women. It creates an institutionalized disadvantage.

### ***Other Options: Made in America***

The common electoral process is hardly the only system operating in the U.S., and even for congressional elections, it has not always been the way representatives were elected. Prior to a 1967 law, some states had other ways of electing members of the House such as multimember districts and cumulative voting. A constitutional amendment established the current way of electing U.S. senators, a fact that inspires the possibility of potential reforms. Further, other electoral arrangements are frequently used at the local level and primary elections diverge widely in their processes. To overcome the institutionalized disadvantage of electoral processes at the national level, women need to remember, and remind policy makers, that the U.S. democracy already has other options.

### ***Let States Innovate***

With a few exceptions, states determine electoral processes. Congress and the president should eliminate barriers that stand in the way of better democracy, such as laws requiring the current process for election House members. They also should encourage states and localities to innovate, to become laboratories for better democracy, through competitive grants that fund changes in voting processes. For example, innovations might include urging political parties to adopt instant runoffs in primary elections, a process made easy with certain voting machines, and a process that carries the incentive of yielding more competitive candidates for the general election. A grant to fund new voting equipment would encourage more city level experimentation with alternative systems, which then provides experience to be deployed elsewhere.

## **PLACES TO BEGIN**

Several strategies for improvement exist that can serve as a beginning for a better democracy. The White House Project is already moving toward this goal in many ways, including working on culture change and connecting women leaders across sectors. Ideally, efforts will occur simultaneously and on several fronts. Additional places to begin are:

### ***Commission on Women & Better Democracy***

At the national level, reformers who seek more women leaders can take a page from the revival of the women's movement and establish a national commission to study options and make recommendations in a report to the president. President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women can serve as a model, though this commission should go through states, or perhaps the National Governor's Association (NGA), rather than the presidency. The commission should be comprised of cross section of experts and activists concerned about (women and) a better democracy. Upon completion, the report could be widely disseminated and the NGA would host a series of annual conferences attended by delegates from each state. These conferences can be directed by a short term advisory council and an interagency working committee of federal stake holders, in conjunction with nongovernmental organizations. These entities would also serve as a clearing house for information and innovations that emerge. States might create governor's commissions on women and democracy, or turn to the existing state commissions on the status of women. Each could be urged to adopt the project of electoral and other innovations within their respective states. Like the earlier president's commission, states would not be mandated to make change; rather, the conferences would serve as a basis for information exchange. State-level changes would be "home grown."

### ***State Initiatives***

States vary greatly and the best way to proceed must be determined by those who know why women matter in each state. Likely, formal and informal processes will coexist and proceed simultaneously. Although formal entities such as the governor's commission described above will take time to institute, determined volunteers can initiate informal efforts any time. Regardless of the state, each state would be wise to identify and employ existing women's infrastructures, such as the commission on the status of women, Breast Cancer Awareness networks, Women In Government organizations, and long standing business and professional women's groups. In addition, each state should seek out grassroots organizations that believe women leaders matter. These might include garden clubs, homemaker organizations, book clubs, nonprofit social welfare organizations, farm women groups, and so on. In short, **each state should analyze its sources of support for women leaders, and then pursue those sources.** State resources to develop women leaders include two other important resources: political parties and institutions of higher education.

### ***Political Parties***

Women in each political party are essential to making change. State and local political parties also are key ingredients to every state's potential infrastructure for advancing women political leaders. In *The Missing Majority*, David Niven has studied the conditions under which female candidates do and do not emerge at the county party level. His findings should be widely disseminated. Parties have strategic reasons for promoting women.

Political parties now recognize the importance of women as voters, and have devised strategies to woo them. Parties need to develop strategies for systematically recruiting and supporting women as candidates too. History teaches us that women expanded their party influence, in Jo Freeman's words, "one room at a time." Women leaders in political parties must again develop

their own strategies for increasing the number of their women who hold office. The strategies must attend to the state and local party organizations as well as to the national party, and the strategies must be implemented throughout the organizations. Such strategies should become part of the agenda of state party conventions and party outreach efforts. Such activity also is one element of state-level innovations, and might reasonably include a move toward reformed voting systems for party primaries, such as instant run offs. Most importantly, women need to work with their party's men to gain agreement that democracy without women—without them—is not democracy. If one party aggressively pursues women leaders, others will lose if they do not.

### ***Use Non-Governmental Institutional Resources***

Since the revival of the women's movement, many women have moved into positions of influence in corporations and social, cultural, and educational institutions. As a result, women now control or influence decisions about the use of such institution's resources. These resources should be harnessed in the effort to identify, create, and support more women political leaders.

Women's networks or women's caucuses of professional and trade associations, including the biennial conference of female state legislators, should be enlisted in the effort. They should be urged to sponsor training sessions for women as candidates, in government management, as community activists, along with more general leadership training. Institutions of higher education exist in every state and are ideal sites to work collaboratively with innovations and initiatives from states, political parties, state commissions, or NGOs. It is time for women in higher education and other organizations to use extant institutional resources to advance women.

### **SUMMARY**

We can learn from U.S. history and from women's advances elsewhere as we craft strategies to get more women into positions of U.S. public leadership. To do so we must: change the culture of leadership, as The White House Project has been doing; recognize the U.S. democracy is shamefully weak for women; create a broad coalition of women opinion leaders who agree that democracy without women is not democracy; develop a public awareness advertising campaign about the need for a better democracy; establish a commission on (women and) better democracy, with state delegations, to find "made in American" reforms; establish a clearing house for information and innovations toward a better democracy; provide incentives and remove barriers to state-level innovations; revitalize political party efforts to identify and support its own women leaders and candidates; and enlist women with influence in other institutions to use resources to foster more women leaders.

***Women Matter.*** *We need to take stronger leadership roles in U.S. politics. The strategies will not be easy to implement, but they offer a starting point for long term goal of more women leaders. Courage, effort, and desire are needed. With these, as Rosie the Riveter proclaimed, "We can." Let us begin.*

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<sup>4</sup>"Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes,'" *Journal of Politics* 61 (1999): 628-57.

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- <sup>iii</sup>Research by political scientists, for example, has found that when Justice Sandra Day O'Connor took her place on the U.S. Supreme Court, all of the other justices' support of claims of sex discrimination rose significantly. Her presence in the room as the justices deliberated cases apparently made them more cognizant of, and less likely to sanction sex discrimination. Karen O'Connor and Jeffrey A. Segal, "The Supreme Court's Reaction to its First Female Member," *Women & Politics* 10 (1990): 95-104. Similarly Elaine Martin and Barry Pyle find that feminist judges are more likely to adopt a pro-woman position, which holds true for Democratic and Republican judges. "Gender and Racial Diversification of State Supreme Courts," *Women & Politics* 24 (2002): 35-52.
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- <sup>v</sup>Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); and, Georgia Duerst-Lahti, "Knowing Congress as a Gendered Institution," in Cindy Simon Rosenthal, ed. *Women Transforming Congress* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002).
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- <sup>xv</sup>Beck, "Acting as Women" and Thomas, "Why Gender Matters."
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