

The Paradox of Women in Pennsylvania Politics: 2018

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Rebecca Felton, the first female US Senator, was appointed by the governor of Georgia, on Oct. 3, 1922, when she was 87 years old. She told her male peers in the Senate:

“When the women of the country come in and sit with you, though there may be but very few in the next few years, I pledge to you that you will get ability, you will get integrity of purpose, you will get exalted patriotism, and you will get unstinted usefulness.”

Unfortunately for Pennsylvanians, women in elected government offices are still very few; moreover, too often, no women at all serve in our elected governing bodies (including in the U.S. Senate or U.S. House) or elected executive positions (including at this time no women in any of the five state-wide elected executive positions).

- ❖ **women are 52% of the Pennsylvania state population**
- ❖ **Pennsylvania earned a grade of F on the 2017 Gender parity Index (GPI), placing 49th in the nation. Only Mississippi had a worse score than we did here in Pennsylvania.** The index measures each state’s progress on gender parity in government by scoring women’s representation in government at the national, state, and local levels. (Representation 20/20)
- ❖ **PA General Assembly** [Source: <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu>]
 - 7 of 50 senators are women (14%)
 - 42 of 203 representatives are women (21%)
 - this is an historic high- PA General Assembly is composed of 19% women
 - **2018 Midterm results: five new women win seats held by men in legislature**
- ❖ **PA General Assembly compared to other state legislatures** [Source: <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu>]
 - PA is ranked 39 out of the 50 states for its proportion of women state legislators
 - Arizona is #1, with its state legislature comprised of 40% women
 - Wyoming is #50, with its state legislature comprised of 11% women
 - of the 7,383 state legislative seats in the 50 states, women hold 1,875 (25%)
 - of the 1,972 state senate seats in the 50 states, women hold 450 (23%)
 - of the 5,411 state house seats women hold 1,425 (26%)
- ❖ **PA Statewide Executive Elective Offices** [Source: <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu>]
 - no woman has ever been elected governor in PA
 - 22 states have never elected a women governor
 - 6 of 50 governors are women
 - Catherine Baker Knoll is the only woman elected to serve as PA Lieutenant Governor (1989-1997)
 - Kathleen Kane is the only woman elected to serve as PA Attorney General (2013-2016)

- Grace McCalmont (1961-1964; 1969-1976), Catherine Baker Knoll (1989-1997), and Baber Hafer (1997-2005), were elected to serve as PA Treasurer
- Grace McCalmont (1965-1968) and Barbara Hafer (1989-1997) were elected to serve as PA Auditor General
- Genevieve Blatt was elected to serve as Secretary of Internal Affairs (1955-1967)

❖ **PA Courts** [Source: www.pacourts.us/]

- Supreme Court: 3 of the 7 justices are women (43%)
- Superior Court: 11 of the 14 justices are women (79%)
- Commonwealth Court: 6 of the 9 justices are women (67%)
- Courts of Common Pleas: women hold 32% of the 432 filled seats, with 25 vacancies
- Magisterial District Courts: women hold 26% of the 505 filled seats, with 7 vacancies

❖ **PA in the U.S. Congress** [Source: <http://womenincongress.house.gov>]

- PA has two seats in the United States Senate (there are 100 total seats)
- PA has 18 seats in the United States House of Representatives (435 total seats)
- seven women have represented PA in Congress; all of these women were in the House of Representatives; **in the 2018 Midterm elections, four women were elected to the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania**
- PA has never elected a woman to the US Senate
- Veronica Grace Boland (D) was appointed to her deceased husband's seat and served two months (1942-1943);
- Vera Dairr Buchanan (D) was appointed to her deceased husband's seat and then was reelected in her own right (1951-1955)
- Kathryn E. Granahan (D) was appointed to her deceased husband's seat and then was reelected in her own right (1956-1963)
- Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky (D) elected (1993-1995)
- Melissa Hart (R) elected (2001-2007)
- Kathleen A. Dahlkemper (D) elected (2009-2011); lost 2010 reelection bid
- Allyson Schwartz (D) (2005-2015)
- Susan Wild (D) (2019 –
- Mary Gay Scanlon (D) (2019 –
- Madeleine Dean (D) (2019 –
- Chrissy Houlahan (D) (2019 –

❖ **PA Congressional Representation compared to other states** [Source: <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu>]

- Vermont is the only state that has never elected a woman to Congress (either the House or the Senate)
- 5 states have never had a woman represent them in the U.S. House: Alaska, Iowa, Mississippi, North Dakota, and Vermont
- Pennsylvania is one of 19 states that have never had a woman represent them in the U.S. Senate: Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wyoming