The Female Factor

This session will see 1,660 women legislators serving across the country. Women hold 22.5 percent of legislative seats in the 50 states, a ratio that has remained constant since the 1999 session. That percentage doesn’t seem particularly high considering that women make up 51 percent of the U.S. population. But just 35 years ago, they held only 4 percent of legislative seats. Women’s numbers have increased steadily over the years until seeming to peak in 1999.

California, Delaware and Vermont bumped Maine, Connecticut and Oregon off the list of states with the highest percentage of women legislators. New Jersey is no longer on the list of states with the lowest percentage of women legislators. It was replaced by West Virginia.

WHERE WOMEN SERVE

Source: The National Conference of State Legislatures, November 2004

WOMEN LAWMAKERS REACH A PLATEAU

Source: The National Conference of State Legislatures, November 2004

TOP 10

State | Percent Women
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Colorado | 34.0%
Maryland | 34.0
Delaware | 33.9
Arizona | 33.3
Nevada | 33.3
Vermont | 33.3
Washington | 33.3
Kansas | 32.1
New Mexico | 31.3
California | 30.8

BOTTOM 10

State | Percent Women
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South Carolina | 8.8%
Alabama | 10.0
Kentucky | 12.3
Mississippi | 12.6
Pennsylvania | 12.6
Virginia | 14.3
Wyoming | 14.4
Oklahoma | 14.8
Arkansas | 15.6
West Virginia | 15.7