Who Governs? A Look at the Demographics of State Legislators

January 29, 2016

The webinar has not yet begun.
Audio will be available through the call-in information contained in your registration confirmation e-mail.

Moderator: Brian Weberg, director of legislative studies, National Conference of State Legislatures
Who Governs? A Look at the Demographics of State Legislatures

National Conference of State Legislatures

NOT AS DIVERSE AS THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, STATE LAWMAKERS ARE A VARIED LOT
Who Governs? A Look at the Demographics of State Legislators

Audio Information:
- Audio is now available through your computer's speakers

Or, you may login via telephone using the call-in information contained in your registration confirmation e-mail.
Today's Speakers

Karl Kurtz
President
Legis Matters

Scott Greenberger
Executive Editor
Stateline
Karl Kurtz is the president of Legis Matters and recently retired director of NCSL’s Trust for Representative Democracy, a public outreach and education program designed to promote civic engagement and counter public cynicism and distrust toward American democracy. He had worked for the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) since its founding in 1975.

Karl has written, consulted and lectured widely on American state legislatures, elections and public opinion. He is coauthor of Republic on Trial: The Case for Representative Democracy (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2003) and coeditor of Institutional Change in American Politics: The Case of Term Limits. He has provided advice and assistance in the development of democratic institutions to legislators and legislative staff throughout the world.

Before NCSL, Karl taught political science at the University of Georgia. He also worked on the staff of the United States Congress as a Congressional Fellow of the American Political Science Association.
Scott Greenberger

Scott S. Greenburger is the executive editor of Stateline, the daily news service of The Pew Charitable Trusts. Greenberger guides a team of veteran journalists who report on state politics and policy in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Before joining Pew, Greenberger was a staff writer at The Boston Globe, where he covered education, served as City Hall bureau chief, and was the primary policy reporter in the Globe’s State House bureau. He wrote extensively about city and state politics, budgets, health care, crime, housing, and economic development. Previously, Greenberger was a reporter at the Austin American-Statesman, where he covered a wide range of city and state issues and traveled with then-Texas Governor George W. Bush on the presidential campaign trail. He is also the co-author, with former Senator Tom Daschle, of The New York Times bestseller Critical: What We Can Do About the Health Care Crisis, published in 2008.
Who Governs
America’s State Legislators in 2015
Karl Kurtz, Legis Matters
Revised January 2016
Women and Minority Legislators Increase Over Time

- Women
- Blacks
- Hispanics
Representation of Women and Minorities Lags the General Population

- Women
- Blacks
- Hispanics
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Amer Ind/Alaska Nat

Legislators
Congress
U.S. Pop
Women Legislators Do Best in West and Northeast

National Average: 24%
Minority Legislators are Concentrated in the Southern Tier

Legislator National Average: 18%

Estimates based on percentages of valid data
Oldest and Youngest Legislatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Oldest</th>
<th>Five Youngest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NH 64</td>
<td>PR 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID 62</td>
<td>MI 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT 61</td>
<td>FL 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM 61</td>
<td>WI 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WY 59</td>
<td>OH 52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Averages
  • All state legislators: 56
  • U.S Adult Population: 47
  • Congress: 59

• Statistically significant
  • Senators two years older than House members
  • Term-limited legislatures three years younger than non-term-limited
  • Women two years older than men
Boomers Lead America’s Legislatures

Estimates based on percentages of valid data
Legislators are Better Educated than the General Public

Note: Missing data for legislators=23%
Protestant and Catholic Legislators Predominate but Most aren’t Saying

Religion

- Protestant: 42%
- Catholic: 38%
- Other Christian: 16%
- Non-Christian: 2%
- Unspecified/NA: 2%
Legislators’ Religions Mirror the U.S. Population
Legislators Represent Diverse Professions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Owner—13%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Other—11%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Real Estate—3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Insurance—2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislator</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant/Nonprofit/Professional</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Business, Law and Farming Have Declined Over Time

Changes in Selected Occupations of State Legislators

- Business
- Attorney
- Legislator
- Agriculture


Percentage values for each occupation over time.
Partisan Differences in Selected Occupations

- Attorney
- Agriculture
- Business
- Legislator

Dem
Rep
Descriptive Representation

• Should our legislators look like America?
• Does it make a difference?
• Representation is in the doing, not the belonging.
Unrepresentative:
The Demographics of State Legislatures
Female Legislators: After Progress, a Plateau
Women in State Legislatures

Nationwide, women hold just under 25 percent of state legislative seats.

Stateline data visualization | Source: 2015 survey by Stateline and the National Conference of State Legislatures
Women in State Legislatures

Nationwide, women hold just under 25 percent of state legislative seats.

Stateline.org data visualization | Source: 2015 survey by Stateline and the National Conference of State Legislatures
Minorities in State Legislatures

Stateline data visualization | Source: 2015 survey by Stateline and the National Conference of State Legislatures
Minorities in State Legislatures

Alabama

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minority</th>
<th>Legislature</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stateline data visualization | Source: 2015 survey by Stateline and the National Conference of State Legislatures
Minorities in State Legislatures

Stateline data visualization | Source: 2015 survey by Stateline and the National Conference of State Legislatures

 Seats Held By Minority Legislators

1% 78%
Occupations of State Legislators

Stateline.org data visualization | Source: 2015 survey by Stateline and the National Conference of State Legislatures
Educational Background of State Legislators

New York

Bachelor's or Advanced Degrees: 85.8% 34.5%
Advanced Degrees: 58.3% 14.9%
Bachelor's Degrees: 27.5% 19.6%
Less than Bachelor's: 1.9% 65.6%
N/A: 12.3%

Legislators with Bachelor's or Advanced Degrees

43.9% 93.4%
Educational Background of State Legislators

New Hampshire

- Bachelor's or Advanced Degrees: 49.1%
- Advanced Degrees: 29.6%
- Bachelor's Degrees: 19.4%
- Less than Bachelor's: 4.7%
- N/A: 46.2%

Legislature Statewide

- Bachelor's or Advanced Degrees: 35.0%
- Advanced Degrees: 13.3%
- Bachelor's Degrees: 21.7%
- Less than Bachelor's: 65.0%
- N/A: 46.2%

Legislators with Bachelor's or Advanced Degrees

- 43.9% to 93.4%
Educational Background of State Legislators

Legislators with Bachelor's or Advanced Degrees
43.9% - 93.4%

Stateline data visualization | Source: 2015 survey by Stateline and the National Conference of State Legislatures
Questions?

- To ask a question, type your question into the box on the right-hand side of your screen.
  - You will not be identified and only the presenters will see your question.
Questions after the webinar

- If you have any questions regarding this Webinar, please contact: Brian Weberg
  brian.weberg@ncsl.org

- This Webinar will be archived and will be available at the following link:

Thank you for participating!

For more information on this webinar or future webinars, email events@ncsl.org.