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Women and the U.S. Senate: 2014

Electoral Outlook and Historical Comparison

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In 2014, 34 states will hold U.S. Senate elections. While candidates in only seven states will compete for open Senate seats due to term limits or retirements, at least three other races are deemed “toss-ups” about nine months before Election Day.¹ These races present opportunities for women to increase their representation in the Senate.

Just two months before the first state primary contests of 2014, 29 women (13D, 16R) from 18 states have put their names forward as candidates for the Senate. Four of those women are incumbents running for re-election: Mary Landrieu (D-LA); Susan Collins (R-Me); Kay Hagan (D-NC); and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH). Nine women are running for open seats in five states and another 16 women are running as challengers in 12 states. Women are running for both

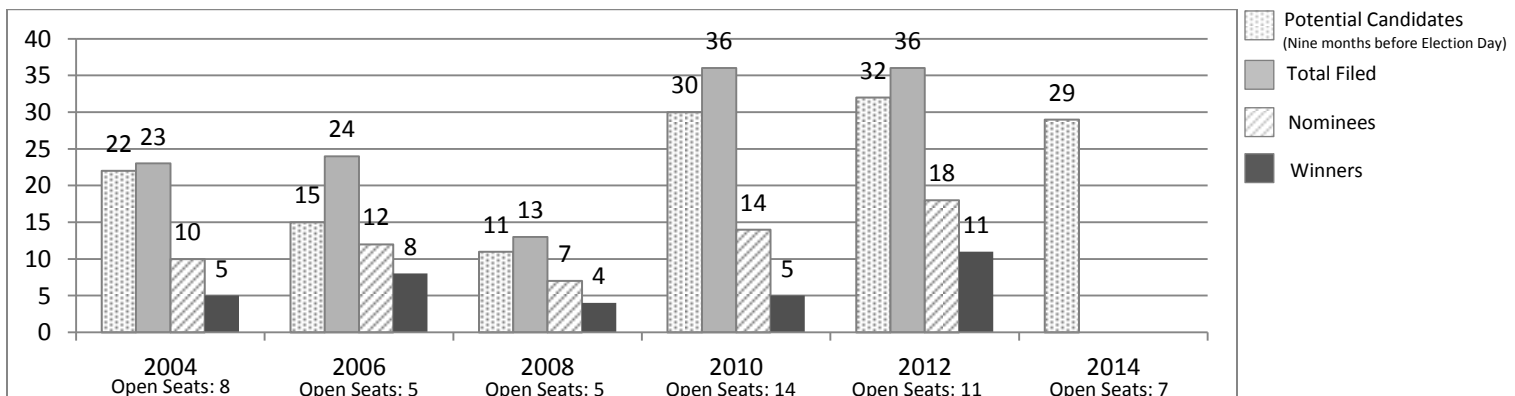
parties’ nominations, with the potential for woman vs. woman general election contests, in GA, ME, NC, NH, SC, TX, and WV. Sixteen current female senators are not up for re-election in 2014, ensuring that at least that many will serve in the 114th Congress.

Based on today’s numbers, there are no women running for the Senate in 16 of the 34 contests. Women are running in five of seven states with open seats, and in two (MI and KY) of three states with “toss-up” races. Filing deadlines have passed in only two states, leaving room for more women to put their names forward or other women to decide against running. For the latest data on women in the 2014 election, visit CAWP’s [Election Watch](#).

Making History?

At this rate, it does not appear that women this year will exceed the record number for women filing to run for the Senate (36).

Women Candidates and Winners, 2008-2014



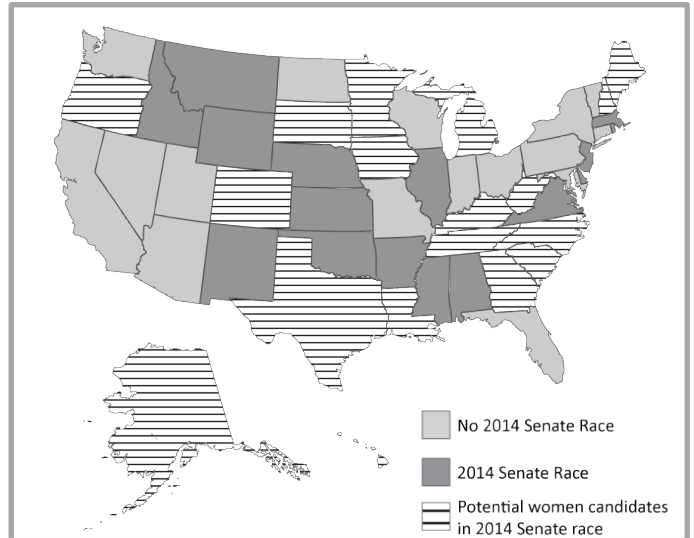
Source: [Women Candidates for Congress, 1974-2012](#), Center for American Women and Politics

To date, 44 women (29D, 15R) have served as U.S. Senators from 28 states. A record number of women – 20 (16D, 4R) – are currently serving in the U.S. Senate.

¹ See [The Cook Political Report, Senate Race Ratings](#)



2014 U.S. Senate Races



Based on the current pool of potential women candidates, history could be made in the following states in 2014:

- Six states could elect their first women to the Senate (CO, IA, KY, SC, TN, WV). Two of those races (in IA and WV) are for open seats, and the contest in KY is considered a “toss-up” between Senator Mitch McConnell (R) and Democrat Alison Lundergan Grimes.
- West Virginia is poised to hold an all-female general election contest for their open Senate seat, with Congresswoman Shelly Moore Capito (R) likely facing Secretary of State Natalie Tennant (D).
- Michigan could elect a second woman to the Senate if Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land continues to gain primary and general election support against Democratic choice Representative Gary Peters for Michigan’s open Senate seat. If Land is successful, Michigan will join the other five states that have had all-female Senate delegations.
- Hawaii could also have an all-female Senate delegation if Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa wins the Democratic primary against Senator Brian Schatz, appointed in 2012 to fill the remainder of Senator Inouye’s term. Recent polls show a tight race between the two Democrats. Hanabusa would also become the third woman of color ever elected to the Senate.
- Women of color are running for the U.S. Senate in HI, GA, SC, TN, and TX. Only one woman of color is running for an open seat (Steen Miles, D-GA). In all states but HI, these women would be the first women of color elected to the Senate from their states.

Finally, this year’s Senate contests feature multiple political daughters-turned-politicians. In Georgia, Democratic candidate Michelle Nunn is the daughter of former Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA). Kentucky Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes (D) is the daughter of Jerry Lundergan, a former Kentucky Democratic chairman and state representative, and Charlotte Lundergan, Kentucky’s Democratic National Committeewoman. In West Virginia, Congresswoman Shelly Moore Capito (R) follows in the footsteps of her father, Arch Alfred Moore, Jr., who was West Virginia’s governor.

Making a Difference

Policy Influence: Research shows that women make a difference in the policy processes, priorities, and decisions within legislative institutions.² A recent study showed women senators are more active proponents of social welfare and women’s rights and are more likely than their male colleagues to consider how policies will affect women.³ Moreover, and consistent with research to date, the women currently serving in the Senate argue they are more likely to favor collaboration over confrontation.⁴

Breaking the Gridlock: Women senators have demonstrated their ability to break congressional gridlock by working with their colleagues across the aisle. Most recently, Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) led a bipartisan group of 14 senators, including six women, who brokered a deal to end the government shutdown in October 2013.

Presidential Contenders: Sixteen U.S. Presidents have served in the U.S. Senate, including President Barack Obama. Senate service provides potential candidates with the policy credentials, name recognition, and political networks often required to wage a competitive bid for the presidency. It is no surprise that many of the women discussed as possible presidential contenders currently serve in the U.S. Senate.

Potential Women Candidates for the U.S. Senate, 2014

Candidate	State	Party	Status
Kathleen Tonn	AK	R	Challenger
Amy Stephens	CO	R	Challenger
Michelle Nunn	GA	D	Open Seat
Karen Handel	GA	R	Open Seat
Steen Miles	GA	D	Open Seat
Colleen Hanabusa	HI	D	Primary Challenger
Joni Ernst	IA	R	Open Seat
Alison Lundergan Grimes	KY	D	Challenger
Mary Landrieu	LA	D	Incumbent
Susan Collins	ME	R	Incumbent
Shenna Bellows	ME	D	Challenger
Terri Lynn Land	MI	R	Open Seat
Julianne Ortman	MN	R	Challenger
Jeanne Shaheen	NH	D	Incumbent
Karen Testerman	NH	R	Challenger
Heather Grant	NC	R	Challenger
Kay Hagan	NC	D	Incumbent
Jo Rae Perkins	OR	R	Challenger
Monica Wehby	OR	R	Challenger
Nancy Mace	SC	R	Primary Challenger
Joyce Dickerson	SC	D	Challenger
Annette Bosworth	SD	R	Open Seat
Brenda Lenard	TN	R	Primary Challenger
Linda Vega	TX	R	Primary Challenger
Kesha Rogers	TX	D	Challenger
Maxey Scherr	TX	D	Challenger
Sheirl Fletcher	WV	D	Open Seat
Natalie Tennant	WV	D	Open Seat
Shelley Moore Capito	WV	R	Open Seat

Source: Center for American Women and Politics

² See “The Impact of Women in Office,” Political Parity/CAWP Research Inventory

³ See Michelle Swers, *Women in the Club: Gender and Policy Making in the Senate* (University of Chicago Press)

⁴ See “The Senate Swears in a Historic 20 Female Senators,” ABC News