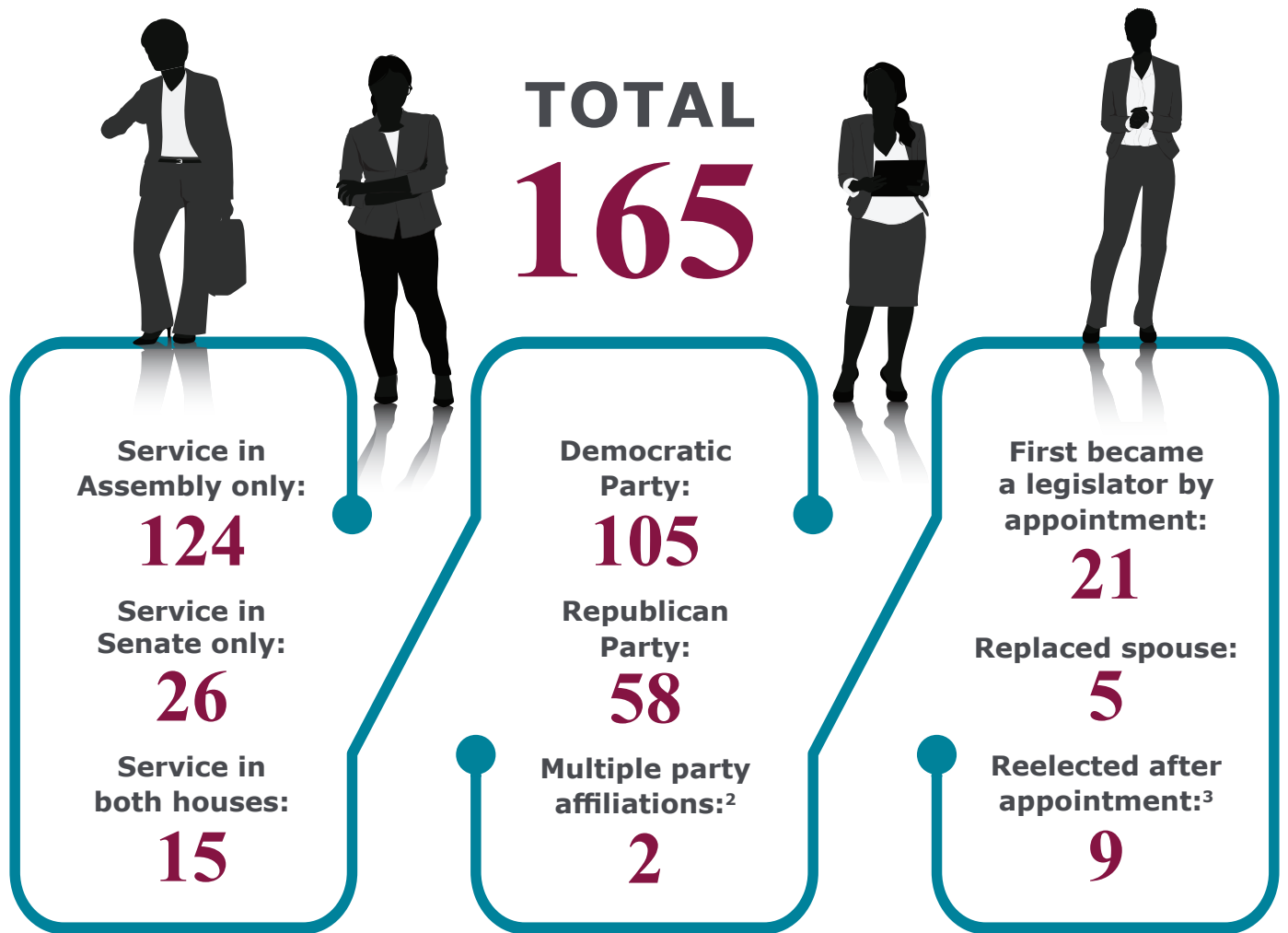


WOMEN IN THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE

In 2019, Nevada had the first female-majority state legislature in the nation, with women holding 52 percent of legislative seats.¹ In 2021, [Nevada again leads the nation](#) in the percentage of female state legislators—women hold 60 percent of seats in the Legislature overall, including 48 percent in the Senate and 67 percent in the Assembly.

DISTINCT NUMBER OF WOMEN TO SERVE AS NEVADA LEGISLATORS



¹ In this publication, numbers reflect 2019 legislative membership as of April 2019, after several legislative vacancies and appointments in December 2018 and March 2019.

² Jean Ford was first elected to the Assembly as a Republican and later was elected to the Senate as a Democrat. Patricia Farley was first elected to the Senate as a Republican and later, while still serving in the Senate, changed her party affiliation to Nonpartisan.

³ May include break in service.

2021 NEVADA LEGISLATURE

Women

Men

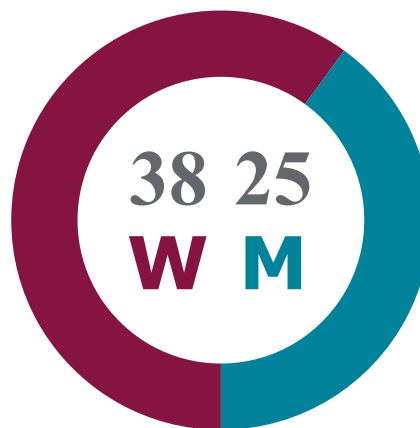
Assembly

Nevada Legislature Overall

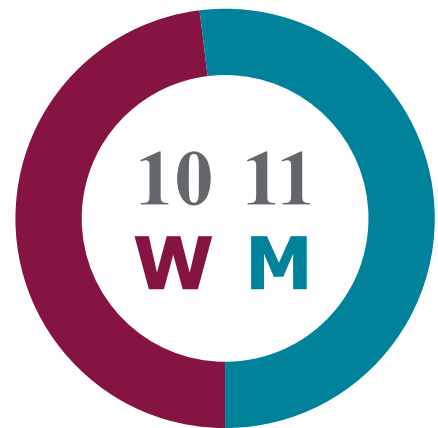
Senate



67% 33%



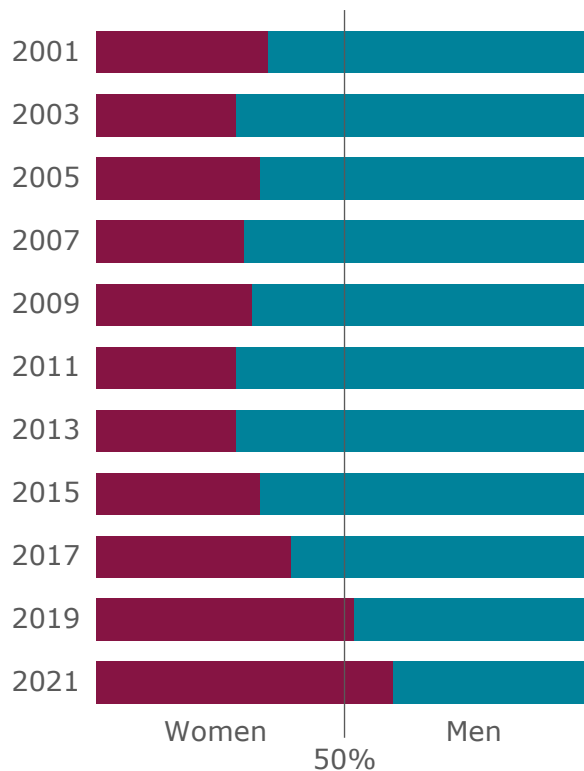
60% 40%



48% 52%

NUMBER OF FEMALE LEGISLATORS, 2001–2021

MEMBERSHIP BY GENDER
(BOTH HOUSES)



In the last 20 years, the number of women in the Nevada Legislature has ranged from 18 (2003, 2011, and 2013) to 38 (2021). From 2011 to 2021, female legislative membership has more than doubled.

NUMBER OF FEMALE LEGISLATORS

YEAR	SENATE	ASSEMBLY	TOTAL
2001	5	17	22
2003	7	11	18
2005	6	15	21
2007	6	13	19
2009	7	13	20
2011	6	12	18
2013	4	14	18
2015	5	16	21
2017	8	17	25
2019	10	23	33
2021	10	28	38

FAST FACTS: WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE

AFTER FIRST STATE ELECTION IN WHICH WOMEN VOTED (1916)

Regular sessions with no women:
1917, 1931, 1933, 1947

Number of regular sessions with only one woman:
8 (1961 was the last)

First regular session with more than one woman: **1923 (4)**

First regular session with women in both houses: **1935**

Regular session with the most women (both houses):
2021 (28 Assemblywomen, 10 Senators)

Regular session with the most women in the Assembly:
2021 (28)

Regular session with the most women in the Senate:
2019, 2021 (10)



BY COUNTY

Counties represented
by the most women:

- **Clark (99)**
- **Washoe (34)**
- **Nye (10)**

County never represented
by a woman: **Douglas**

WOMEN WITH THE LONGEST LEGISLATIVE SERVICE

24
YEARS

Maggie Carlton (D-Clark),
12 regular and 16 special sessions,
both houses⁴

20
YEARS

Ann O'Connell (R-Clark),
10 regular and 5 special sessions,
Senate

Dina Titus (D-Clark), 10 regular
and 9 special sessions, Senate

18
YEARS

Barbara K. Cegavske (R-Clark),
9 regular and 12 special sessions,
both houses

Helen Herr (D-Clark), 10 regular
and 5 special sessions, both houses

16
YEARS

Eileen Brookman (D-Clark),
8 regular and 2 special
sessions, Assembly

Barbara Buckley (D-Clark),
8 regular and 10 special sessions,
Assembly, including 2 regular
and 4 special sessions as Speaker

Vivian Freeman (D-Washoe), 8 regular and
3 special sessions, Assembly

Chris Giunchigliani (D-Clark), 8 regular and
6 special sessions, Assembly

Bernice Mathews, (D-Washoe), 8 regular
and 10 special sessions, Senate

Sue Wagner (R-Washoe), 8 regular and
3 special sessions, both houses, plus 2 sessions
as Senate President and Lieutenant Governor

Valerie Wiener (D-Clark), 8 regular and
10 special sessions, Senate; longest serving
Nevada-born female legislator

⁴ Anticipates completion of the 2020–2022 term.

WOMEN IN NEVADA LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP: ASSEMBLY

Speaker

Barbara Buckley
(D-Clark), 2007, 2009

Marilyn Kirkpatrick
(D-Clark), 2013

Speaker pro tempore

Louise Aloys Smith
(D-Pershing), 1951

Karen W. Hayes
(D-Clark), 1981

Myrna T. Williams
(D-Clark), 1989, 1991, 1993

Jan Evans
(D-Washoe), 1995, 1997, 1999

Sandra Tiffany
(R-Clark), 1995

Chris Giunchigliani
(D-Clark), 2005

Debbie Smith
(D-Washoe), 2011

Irene Bustamante Adams
(D-Clark), 2017

Majority floor leader

Barbara Buckley
(D-Clark), 2001, 2003, 2005

Teresa Benitez-Thompson
(D-Washoe), 2017, 2019, 2021

Assistant majority floor leader

Jan Evans
(D-Washoe), 1991

Jeannine Stroth
(R-Clark), 1995

Barbara Buckley
(D-Clark), 1997, 1999

Marilyn Kirkpatrick
(D-Clark), 2011

Daniele Monroe-Moreno
(D-Clark), 2019, 2021

Majority whip

Sheila Leslie
(D-Washoe), 2007, 2009

Assistant majority whip

Sandra Krenzer
(D-Clark), 1995

Sheila Leslie
(D-Washoe), 2001, 2003, 2005

Debbie Smith
(D-Washoe), 2007, 2009

Olivia Diaz
(D-Clark), 2013

Lucy Flores
(D-Clark), 2013

Jill Dickman
(R-Washoe), 2015 (North)

Victoria Seaman
(R-Clark), 2015 (South)

Ellen B. Spiegel
(D-Clark), 2017

Heidi Swank
(D-Clark), 2017, 2019

Sandra Jauregui
(D-Clark), 2021

Assistant majority whip for procedure

Genie Ohrenschall
(D-Clark), 2003, 2005

Chief deputy majority whip

Peggy Pierce
(D-Clark), 2011, 2013

Minority floor leader

Heidi SeEVERS Gansert
(R-Washoe), 2009

Marilyn Kirkpatrick
(D-Clark), 2015

Robin L. Titus, M.D.
(R-Churchill, Lyon), 2021

Assistant/Deputy minority floor leader

Barbara K. Cegavske
(R-Clark), 1999

Heidi SeEVERS Gansert
(R-Washoe), 2007

Teresa Benitez-Thompson
(D-Washoe), 2015

Maggie Carlton
(D-Clark), 2015

Jill Tolles
(R-Washoe), 2021 (North)

Minority whip

Deanna Braunlin
(R-Clark), 1997

Kathy Von Tobel
(R-Clark), 2001

Sharron Angle
(R-Washoe), 2003

Heidi SeEVERS Gansert
(R-Washoe), 2005

Valerie Weber
(R-Clark), 2005, 2007

Melissa Woodbury
(R-Clark), 2017

Lisa Krasner
(R-Washoe), 2019

Assistant/Deputy minority whip

Barbara K. Cegavske
(R-Clark), 1997

Robin L. Titus, M.D.
(R-Churchill, Lyon), 2019

Lisa Krasner
(R-Washoe), 2021 (North)

WOMEN IN NEVADA LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP: SENATE

President

Lieutenant Governor Sue Wagner (R), 1991, 1993

Lieutenant Governor Lorraine Hunt (R), 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005

Lieutenant Governor Kate Marshall (D), 2019, 2021

Majority leader⁵

Nicole J. Cannizzaro
(D-Clark), 2019 (part)⁶, 2021

Assistant majority leader⁵

Valerie Wiener
(D-Clark), 2011

Debbie Smith
(D-Washoe), 2013

Nicole J. Cannizzaro
(D-Clark), 2019 (part)⁶

Julia Ratti
(D-Washoe), 2019 (part)⁶,
2021

Chief majority whip

Joyce Woodhouse
(D-Clark), 2019

Patricia (Pat) Spearman
(D-Clark), 2021

Majority/Co-majority whip

Sue Lowden
(R-Clark), 1993

Valerie Wiener
(D-Clark), 2009

Patricia (Pat) Spearman
(D-Clark), 2017, 2019

Joyce Woodhouse
(D-Clark), 2017

Julia Ratti
(D-Washoe), 2019 (part)⁶

Yvanna D. Cancela
(D-Clark), 2019 (part)⁶

Marilyn Dondero Loop
(D-Clark), 2021

Assistant majority whip

Sandra Tiffany
(R-Clark), 2003, 2005

Sheila Leslie
(D-Washoe), 2011

Minority leader⁵

Dina Titus
(D-Clark), 1993, 1995,
1997, 1999, 2001, 2003,
2005, 2007

Assistant minority leader⁵

Sue Wagner
(R-Washoe), 1983

Valerie Wiener
(D-Clark), 1999

Bernice Mathews
(D-Washoe), 2001, 2003,
2005, 2007

Barbara K. Cegavske
(R-Clark), 2011

Debbie Smith
(D-Washoe), 2015

Minority/Co-minority whip

Bernice Mathews
(D-Washoe), 1999

Valerie Wiener
(D-Clark), 2001, 2003,
2005, 2007

Barbara K. Cegavske
(R-Clark), 2009

Heidi Seevers Gansert
(R-Washoe), 2019, 2021

Caucus policy coordinator

Heidi Seevers Gansert
(R-Washoe), 2017

Becky Harris
(R-Clark), 2017

⁵ Titles vary between sessions—for some sessions these positions are referred to as “floor leaders.”

⁶ Certain Senate leadership roles changed during the 2019 Session after Senator Kelvin D. Atkinson resigned on March 5, 2019.

WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE FIRSTS IN NEVADA

1ST



FIRST...

Woman elected to the Legislature:

Sadie Hurst (R-Washoe), elected to the Assembly in 1918

Woman to serve in the Senate:

Frances Friedhoff (D-Lyon), appointed to serve the remainder of the 1935 Session

Woman elected to the Senate:

Helen Herr (D-Clark), 1966

Woman elected to a subsequent term:

Ethel McGuire (D-Nye), 1926–1930, Assembly

Assemblywoman elected to the Senate:

Helen Herr (D-Clark), 1966

All-female leadership team:

Dina Titus (D-Clark), Minority Leader; **Bernice Mathews (D-Washoe)**, Assistant Minority Leader; and **Valerie Wiener (D-Clark)**, Minority Whip; Senate, 2001

Woman to serve in leadership in both houses:

Sandra Tiffany (R-Clark), Speaker Pro Tempore, 1995, Assembly; and Assistant Majority Whip, 2003, 2005, Senate

Woman to serve in leadership in both majority and minority parties in each house:

Valerie Wiener (D-Clark), Assistant Minority Leader, 1999; Assistant Minority Whip, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007; Majority Whip, 2009; and Assistant Majority Leader, 2011; Senate

Marilyn Kirkpatrick (D-Clark), Assistant Majority Floor Leader, 2011; Speaker, 2013; and Minority Floor Leader, 2015; Assembly

Woman to chair a legislative committee:

Ruth Averill (R-Nye), chaired two Assembly committees in 1921: (1) Engrossment; and (2) State Library

Committee with a female majority in each house:

Assembly Committee on the State Library, 1923 (but not chaired by a woman); and Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor, 1995 (also not chaired by a woman)

Woman to serve on the appropriations committee in each house:

Maude Frazier (D-Clark), Assembly Committee on Ways and Means, 1955

Diana Glomb (D-Washoe), Senate Committee on Finance, 1991



First female-majority
Assembly

and

First female-majority
Legislature (overall):

2019

WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE FIRSTS IN NEVADA (CONT'D)

1ST

FIRST...

Woman to chair the appropriations committee in each house:

Bernice Mathews (D-Washoe), Co-Chair, Senate Committee on Finance, 2009

Debbie Smith (D-Washoe), Chair, Assembly Committee on Ways and Means, 2011

Woman inducted into the Senate Hall of Fame:

Helen Herr, (D-Clark), 1993

Woman added to the Assembly Wall of Distinction:

Jan Evans (D-Washoe), 2005

General election race between two female candidates:

Rita Millar (D), defeated **Genevieve H. Sperling (R)**, Mineral County, Assembly, 1922

Woman to defeat a male incumbent:

Alice S. Towle (R-Churchill), Assembly, 1922

Nevada-born female legislator:

Ruth Averill (R-Nye), born September 19, 1897, in Virginia City; elected to Assembly, 1920

African American female legislator to be elected in each house:⁷

Bernice Mathews (D-Washoe), Senate, 1994
Dina Neal (D-Clark), Assembly, 2010

Asian American female legislator to be elected:⁷

Francis O. Allen (R-Clark), Assembly, 2004

Hispanic female legislator to be elected in each house:⁷

Teresa Benitez-Thompson (D-Washoe),
Irene Bustamante Adams (D-Clark),
Olivia Diaz (D-Clark), and
Lucy Flores (D-Clark), Assembly, 2010; and
Yvanna D. Cancela (D-Clark), Senate, 2018

Native American female legislator to be elected:⁷

Shea Backus (D-Clark), Assembly, 2019



⁷ Because data regarding legislators' race and ethnicity has not officially been collected, this information cannot be fully verified and is based on the best sources available.

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Connecting People to Policy