



Fact Sheet

WOMEN IN THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE

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LEGISLATIVE SERVICE

Distinct Number of Women to Serve as Legislators in Nevada: 140

Assemblywomen: 119	Democrats: 86
Senators: 34	Republicans: 55
Served in both houses: 13	Nonpartisan: 1
	Changed party affiliation: 2 ¹

Appointed: 15

Replaced spouse: 5

Reelected²: 5

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): 2017 (17 Assemblywomen, 8 Senators)

Regular session with the most women in the Assembly: 1999 (18)

Regular session with the most women in the Senate: 2017 (8)

Longest Service:

Eileen Brookman (D-Clark), 8 regular and 2 special sessions (16 years in the Assembly)

Barbara Buckley (D-Clark), 8 regular and 10 special sessions (16 years in the Assembly), including 2 regular and 4 special sessions as Speaker of the Assembly

Maggie Carlton (D-Clark), 10 regular and 14 special sessions (20 years in both houses³)

Barbara K. Cegavske (R-Clark), 9 regular and 12 special sessions (18 years in both houses)

Vivian Freeman (D-Washoe), 8 regular and 3 special sessions (16 years in the Assembly)

Chris Giunchigliani (D-Clark), 8 regular and 6 special sessions (16 years in the Assembly)

Helen Herr (D-Clark), 10 regular and 5 special sessions (18 years in both houses)

Ann O'Connell (R-Clark), 10 regular and 5 special sessions (20 years in the Senate)

Dina Titus (D-Clark), 10 regular and 9 special sessions (20 years in the Senate)

Sue Wagner (R-Washoe), 8 regular and 3 special sessions (16 years in both houses), plus 2 sessions as Senate President and Lieutenant Governor

Valerie Wiener (D-Clark), 8 regular and 10 special sessions (16 years in the Senate, longest serving female native Nevadan)

Counties Represented by the Most Women: Clark (77), Washoe (31), Nye (10)

County Never Represented by a Woman: Douglas

¹ 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.

² Includes break in service

³ Anticipates completion of the 2016–2018 term

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
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
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
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 Gansert (R-Washoe), 2009 Marilyn Kirkpatrick (D-Clark), 2015
Assistant Minority Floor Leader	Barbara K. Cegavske (R-Clark), 1999 Heidi Gansert (R-Washoe), 2007 Teresa Benitez-Thompson (D-Washoe), 2015 Maggie Carlton (D-Clark), 2015

ASSEMBLY <i>(continued)</i>	
Minority Whip	Deanna Braunlin (R-Clark), 1997 Kathy Von Tobel (R-Clark), 2001 Sharron Angle (R-Washoe), 2003 Heidi Gansert (R-Washoe), 2005 Valerie Weber (R-Clark), 2005, 2007 Melissa Woodbury (R-Clark), 2017
Assistant Minority Whip	Barbara K. Cegavske (R-Clark), 1997

SENATE	
President	Lieutenant Governor Sue Wagner (R-Washoe), 1991, 1993 Lieutenant Governor Lorraine Hunt (R-Clark), 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005
Assistant Majority Leader ⁴	Valerie Wiener (D-Clark), 2011 Debbie Smith (D-Washoe), 2013
Majority Whip	Sue Lowden (R-Clark), 1993 Valerie Wiener (D-Clark), 2009 Patricia (Pat) Spearman (D-Clark), 2017 Joyce Woodhouse (D-Clark), 2017
Assistant Majority Whip	Sandra Tiffany (R-Clark), 2003, 2005 Sheila Leslie (D-Washoe), 2011
Minority Leader ⁴	Dina Titus (D-Clark), 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007
Assistant Minority Leader ⁴	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 Whip	Bernice Mathews (D-Washoe), 1999 Valerie Wiener (D-Clark), 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007 Barbara K. Cegavske (R-Clark), 2009
Caucus Policy Coordinator	Heidi S. Gansert (R-Washoe), 2017 Becky Harris (R-Clark), 2017

⁴ Titles vary between sessions—some sessions these positions are referred to as floor leaders.

LEGISLATIVE FIRSTS

First Woman Elected to Legislature: Sadie Hurst (R-Washoe), elected to Assembly in 1918

First Woman to Serve in Senate: Frances Friedhoff (D-Lyon), appointed to serve the remainder of 1935 Session

First Woman Elected to Senate: Helen Herr (D-Clark), 1966

First Woman Elected to Subsequent Term: Ethel McGuire (D-Nye), Assemblywoman, 1926–1930

First Assemblywoman Elected to Senate: Helen Herr (D-Clark), 1966

First Female Senate Minority Leader⁵: Dina Titus (D-Clark), 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007

First All-Female Leadership Team, Senate: Dina Titus (D-Clark), Minority Leader; Bernice Mathews (D-Washoe), Assistant Minority Leader; and Valerie Wiener (D-Clark), Minority Whip, 2001

First Woman to Serve in Leadership in Both Majority and Minority Parties, Senate: Valerie Wiener (D-Clark), Assistant Minority Leader, 1999; Assistant Minority Whip, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007; Majority Whip, 2009; and Assistant Majority Leader, 2011

First Woman to Serve in Leadership in Both Houses: Sandra Tiffany (R-Clark), Assembly Speaker pro Tempore, 1995; and Senate Assistant Majority Whip, 2003, 2005

First Woman to Chair a Legislative Committee: Ruth Averill (R-Nye), chaired two Assembly Committees in 1921: (1) Engrossment; and (2) State Library

First Committee in Each House With Female Majority: 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)

First Woman to Serve on the Money Committee in Each House: Maude Frazier (D-Clark), Assembly Ways and Means, 1955; and Diana Glomb (D-Washoe), Senate Finance, 1991

First Woman to Chair the Money Committee in Each House: Bernice Mathews (D-Washoe), Co-Chair, Senate Finance, 2009; and Debbie Smith (D-Washoe), Chair, Assembly Ways and Means, 2011

First General Election Race Between Two Female Candidates: 1922, Mineral County, Rita Millar (D) defeated Genevieve H. Sperling (R), Assembly

First Woman to Defeat a Male Incumbent: Alice S. Towle (R-Churchill), Assembly, 1922

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

LEGISLATIVE FIRSTS *(continued)*

First Female Legislator Who was a Native of Nevada: Ruth Averill (R-Nye), born September 19, 1897, in Virginia City; elected to Assembly, 1920

First African American Female Legislator Elected in Each House: Bernice Mathews (D-Washoe), Senate, 1994; and Dina Neal (D-Clark), Assembly, 2010

First Hispanic Female Legislators Elected in Each House: Teresa Benitez-Thompson (D-Washoe); Irene Bustamante Adams (D-Clark); Olivia Diaz (D-Clark); and Lucy Flores (D-Clark), Assembly, 2010

LEGISLATIVE FAMILIES

Two Generations: James H. Bilbray (D-Clark, 1980–1986), father of Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod (D-Clark, 2016–2018⁶)

Assemblyman A. J. McCarthy (R-Esmeralda, 1892–1894), father of Assemblywoman Rita Millar (D-Mineral, 1922–1924)

Senator Joseph M. Neal Jr. (D-Clark, 1972–2004), father of Assemblywoman Dina Neal (D-Clark, 2010–2018⁶)

Assemblywoman Genie Ohrenschall (D-Clark, 1996–2004), mother of Assemblyman James Ohrenschall (D-Clark, 2006–2018⁶)

Assemblyman Robert Pohl (SD⁷-Lander, 1902–1904, 1914–1916; I-Lander, 1920–1922), father of Assemblywoman Louise Hays (D-Nye, 1922–1924)

Assemblyman A. A. Towle (R-Churchill, 1928–1930), father of Assemblywoman Alice S. Towle (R-Churchill, 1922–1924)

Three Generations: Assemblyman Cranston Allen (D-Churchill, 1872–1874), father of Assemblyman Lemuel Allen (D-Churchill, 1874–1878, 1888–1902, 1908–1910), father of Assemblywoman Daisy Allen (D-Churchill, 1924–1926)

Assemblyman Wales Averill (R-Storey, 1874–1876), father of Assemblyman Mark Averill (R-Esmeralda, 1903), father of Assemblywoman Ruth Averill (R-Nye, 1921)

Four Generations: Senator William J. Bell (D-Humboldt, 1906–1914), father of Assemblywoman Hazel Bell Wines (D-Humboldt, 1934–1936), mother of Assemblywoman Gene Wines Segerblom (D-Clark, 1992–2000), mother of Senator Tick Segerblom (D-Clark, 2006–2012 Assembly; 2012–2020⁸ Senate)

Spouses Appointed to Fill Unexpired Terms: Assemblywoman Fronica E. Castle (R-Elko), appointed, 1954 Special Session, upon illness of husband, Assemblyman Douglas A. Castle (R-Elko, 1952–1954)

Senator Frances G. Friedhoff (D-Lyon), appointed, 1935–1936, upon resignation of husband, Senator George W. Friedhoff (D-Lyon, Assembly 1912–1916; Senate 1924–1935)

⁶ Anticipates completion of 2016-2018 term

⁷ Silver Democrat

⁸ Anticipates completion of 2016-2020 term

LEGISLATIVE FAMILIES (*continued*)

Assemblywoman Dawn Gibbons (R-Washoe), appointed, January through April 1991, upon call to active military duty of husband, Assemblyman James A. Gibbons (R-Washoe, 1988–1994); later elected (1998–2004)

Assemblywoman Marian I. Howard (R-Humboldt), appointed, 1977–1978, upon death of husband, Assemblyman Melvin B. Howard (R-Humboldt, 1960–1977)

Assemblywoman Geraldine B. Tyson (D-Clark), appointed, 1964, upon death of husband, Assemblyman L. E. Tyson (D-Clark, 1960–1963); later elected (1964–1970)

WOMEN IN STATE LEGISLATURES

FIRST AND LAST STATE TO ELECT WOMEN TO STATE LEGISLATURES*

First Women Elected to a State Legislature: Carrie Clyde Holly, Clara Cressingham, and Frances S. Klock (all Republicans), Colorado House of Representatives, 1894

First Woman Elected to a State Senate: Martha Hughes Cannon (Democrat), Utah, 1896

Last State to Elect Its First Female Legislator: Louisiana, 1936

By the end of the 19th century, 16 women legislators had served, all in Colorado, Idaho, and Utah. By the time the national women's suffrage was ratified in 1920, 69 women had served in 12 states, including Nevada.

FEMALE STATE LEGISLATORS 2017 STATISTICS**

Female Legislators as a Percentage of Total Legislators: 24.9 percent of all legislators in the United States and 29.6 percent of legislators in the western states

States With Highest Percentages of Female Legislators: Vermont (40.0), Nevada (39.7), Colorado (39.0), Arizona (38.9), Illinois (36.7), Washington (36.7), Maine (34.4), Oregon (33.3), Minnesota (32.3), and Maryland (31.9)

States With Lowest Percentages of Female Legislators: Wyoming (11.1), Oklahoma (12.8), West Virginia (13.4), South Carolina (13.5), Mississippi (13.8), Alabama (14.3), Louisiana (15.3), Kentucky (16.7), Tennessee (16.7), and North Dakota (18.4)

*Source: "Women State Legislators, 1895–1995: The First 100 Years," *State Legislatures*, November 1994.

**Source: "Women in State Legislatures 2017"; Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University; <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-state-legislature-2017>; March 24, 2017.