

**Preparedness Meets Opportunity:  
Women's Increased Representation  
in the New Jersey Legislature**

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Several studies on the descriptive representation of women in office have examined questions related to candidate emergence, often trying to explain why so few women run for office (e.g., Bledsoe and Herring 1990; Fox and Lawless 2004; Fulton et al. 2006; Lawless and Fox 2010; Sanbonmatsu, Carroll, and Walsh 2009). Another body of research has focused largely on how the political opportunities available to women affect their descriptive representation among elected officials, analyzing, for example, the effects of electoral arrangements, term limits, and quota systems (e.g., Carroll and Jenkins 2001; Dahlerup 2006; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Krook 2009; Rule and Zimmerman 1994). Far less often have the "supply" side and the "demand" side of women's political representation been investigated together in the same study in order to understand how they interact. Through a case study of women's representation in the legislature of one US state, New Jersey, we show not only that supply-side and demand-side factors are both important, but also that they can work together to produce a significant increase in the numbers of women serving in office.

This paper examines the factors that account for the rapid rise in the numbers of women legislators in New Jersey, focusing primarily on the time period from 2004 through 2011. Central to our analysis is the question of what it would take to bring about enduring change in a political system characterized by a strong, male-dominated party system like that found in New Jersey.

After providing an historical overview of the relationship between political parties and women's legislative representation, we turn to the post-2004 period, relying heavily on information from 21 in-depth interviews conducted with expert observers of New Jersey politics, several veteran women state legislators, several of the women legislators who entered office between 2007 and 2011, and the men who were the Republican and Democratic state party chairs during most of this period.<sup>1</sup> We characterize the increase during these years using the phrase,

“preparedness meets opportunity.” Women were better positioned than ever before to run for office when an extraordinary set of circumstances created an unusual number of legislative openings and a climate favorable to the nomination of women by the political parties. Also important was the presence of critical actors who helped women take advantage of the situation. Nevertheless, our analysis shows that male dominance of the party system and control over nominations have not been broken; the structures and culture that historically perpetuated male dominance persist despite women’s recent gains.

### **Overview of Women’s Officeholding Status**

Women remain far from parity among US public officials. At no level of state or national office do women constitute more than one-fourth of elected officials. As of mid-2012, women hold 16.8 percent of seats in the U.S. Congress, 12.0 percent of all governorships of the 50 states, and 23.7 percent of all seats in state legislatures nationally (CAWP 2012a).

New Jersey’s record in electing women to office is mediocre at best. On the positive side, New Jersey is one of only 26 states that have had women governors; Republican Christine Todd Whitman led the state from 1994-2001. Also, in 2010 New Jersey elected a woman, Republican Kim Guadagno, as the first occupant of the newly created position of lieutenant governor.<sup>2</sup> However, New Jersey has never elected a woman to the US Senate, and although five New Jersey women have served in the US House of Representatives since 1925, the last of them left office in 2003.

The representation of women in the NJ state legislature has improved notably over the past few years. As recently as 2004, New Jersey, with only 19, or 15.8 percent, women in its legislature, lagged far behind the national average, ranking 43<sup>rd</sup> among the 50 states for

representation of women in its legislative body. By 2009, five years later, the number and the proportion of women in the New Jersey legislature had almost doubled to 36 ( 30.0 percent), placing New Jersey 12<sup>th</sup> among the states and well above the national average. In 2012 New Jersey continues to be strongly positioned, ranking 10<sup>th</sup> among the states with 35, or 29.2 percent, of its legislative seats held by women (CAWP 2012b).

The numbers of women serving in elective offices have tended to increase only very incrementally in the US. A dramatic increase like the one that occurred in the New Jersey legislature from 2004 to 2009 is highly unusual,<sup>3</sup> and certainly merits research attention for any insight it might offer about the factors that can produce a sudden boost in representation. Also, political parties in New Jersey maintain stronger control over candidate nominations and elections than parties in most other states, and consequently, an analysis of this increase may provide insight as to how gains for women can occur in an electoral environment in which strong, male-dominated parties have great influence.

### **New Jersey's Distinctive Political System and Women's Place In It, 1920-65**

Each state in the US has its own distinctive political system and culture. One factor that distinguishes New Jersey from most other states is the strength of its county party system, which gives county party chairs and organizations an unusual level of control over the selection of state legislative candidates. This influence stems from institutional arrangements that historically characterized New Jersey's electoral system.

When women across the US were enfranchised in 1920 with the addition of the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution,<sup>4</sup> New Jersey women confronted a male-dominated political system governed by a state constitution adopted in 1844. The only elected

statewide official was a governor with weak powers, who was elected for one three-year term. The legislature was organized around the counties, with legislative electoral districts coterminous with county boundaries. The upper house, the Senate, consisted of 21 members, each representing one county. The lower house, the Assembly, had 60 members. Seats were distributed among the counties based on population, with some counties having multiple Assembly seats and others having only one. All candidates for the Senate and Assembly were nominated by their county parties but elected individually by popular vote of county residents.

This arrangement located the preponderance of political power in the counties. As Richard P. McCormick and Katheryne C. McCormick<sup>5</sup> explain:

Power was concentrated in county machines whose leaders—the bosses—lorded it over their fiefdoms. Because the county was the unit for nominating and electing county officials, assemblymen, and senators, the county organizations had large patronage resources, and their leaders exerted great influence on the state level.... In the final analysis, decisions on the makeup of legislative tickets—and whether women would find a place on them—were made by the bosses and their county organizations (1994, 10).

In the first few years after obtaining the right to vote, women gained some seats in the legislature. Because no one knew how many women would vote or which party they would support, party leaders made an initial effort to court women voters. Women had the greatest success in becoming candidates and winning election in the populous counties, especially Essex and Hudson, which had 12 and 11 seats, respectively, in the Assembly. In these counties, one or two women were often nominated as candidates, although they generally finished behind most of the party's male candidates in the number of popular votes received. For example, in 1920 the first two women elected to the New Jersey Assembly, Republicans Margaret Laird and Jennie Van Ness, finished tenth and eleventh in the vote in the then-heavily Republican Essex County (McCormick and McCormick, 12). By 1927, 15 percent of the seats in the 60-member assembly were held by women, a proportion not equaled for another five decades (McCormick and

McCormick, 13). However, once it became obvious that women did not vote in large numbers or as a bloc, leaders of both parties apparently had no incentive to nominate and support women candidates, and the numbers of women legislators declined and then remained small throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

Between 1921 and 1947, a total of 44 women served in the New Jersey Assembly—33 Republicans and 11 Democrats—some for no more than a single one-year term. During this period, the maximum number of assemblywomen serving simultaneously was nine (15 percent) and the minimum was two (3 percent) of 60 Assembly members. All but eight were from the four most populous of New Jersey's 21 counties (Essex, Hudson, Passaic, and Bergen) (McCormick and McCormick, 47). During this time period, no woman was elected to the more powerful State Senate, and only one woman, Mary T. Norton, served in Congress. The first Democratic woman in the US to be elected to Congress, Norton was very loyal to her party and to her Hudson County boss, Frank Hague.<sup>6</sup>

A new political era dawned in New Jersey in 1947 with the adoption of a new constitution that made some changes in the legislature. Terms of Assembly members increased to two years, terms of senators increased to four years, and salaries were raised substantially. Nevertheless, the county party organizations retained their influence over legislative nominations, and the constitutional changes did not have much effect on women's representation.

However, demographic changes in the 1950s and early 1960s resulted in a loss of Assembly seats for the two largest and most urbanized counties, Essex and Hudson, as New Jersey's population increased dramatically, especially in suburban areas. Essex County, historically a Republican stronghold, also became more competitive for the two parties as more

African Americans moved in and middle-class whites fled to the suburbs. With fewer seats to allocate, party leaders in these two powerful counties less often turned to women, and when women ran in a more competitive Essex County, they sometimes attracted too few votes to be elected. Since these counties had been the source of a sizable proportion of women legislators in the decades prior to the 1960s, women's representation fell, and a new nadir was reached in 1965 with only one woman elected to serve in the Assembly in 1966 (McCormick and McCormick, 30). The one bright spot that year was that Mildred Barry Hughes became the first woman elected to the New Jersey Senate.<sup>7</sup>

### **Stasis for Women Despite Weaker Parties, 1966-2000**

The late 1960s and early 1970s were notable for two developments. First, a new women's movement emerged nationally, giving rise to organizations and institutions such as the National Women's Political Caucus, with its New Jersey chapter, and the Center for American Women and Politics<sup>8</sup> at Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute of Politics, both of which over time became strong advocates for the increased representation of women in public office in New Jersey. Prior to the emergence of the new women's movement, there was no organization dedicated specifically to electing women to political office in the United States or New Jersey.

Second, the Supreme Court of the United States issued a landmark decision in *Reynolds v. Sims*, ruling that state legislative districts had to be approximately equal in population, which meant that New Jersey had to revamp its process for selecting legislators. In the aftermath of *Reynolds v. Sims*, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in 1972 that county lines must be disregarded in drawing the boundaries of legislative districts. Forty new legislative districts were drawn, many crossing county lines, with each electing one senator and two Assembly members,

thereby expanding the Assembly to 80 members.

Women were both harmed and helped by this new district system. On the one hand, the large, populous, northern counties, such as Essex and Hudson, no longer ran long slates of candidates that allowed the inclusion of a woman or two while also rewarding a number of men. The county system that had worked, even if inadequately, to provide some representation for women in the highly populated counties from the 1920s through the 1950s was no more. On the other hand, the new districting system created opportunities in other parts of New Jersey, and over the next couple of decades, assemblywomen became more dispersed across the state.

A series of developments in the 1970s and 1980s, including demographic changes as well as election and campaign finance reform, further weakened the political parties' grip on elections (see NJELEC 2009; Salmore and Salmore 1994, 94-108). Elections at all levels, but particularly those for governor and Congress, became more candidate-oriented and less dependent on the parties. Nevertheless, women's status in the state legislature remained largely unchanged. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, New Jersey ranked among the bottom fifteen states in the country, reaching a high of 16.7 percent women in its legislature in 1998.<sup>9</sup>

As McCormick and McCormick explained, "The district system reduced but did not eliminate the influence wielded by county party organizations over the nomination and election of legislative candidates" (1994, 33). Even a weakened party system posed obstacles for women. Writing in 1994, McCormick and McCormick, who had surveyed and interviewed assemblywomen, described the "new women" who became legislators in the post-1965 era:

Few of them were recruited to run by party leaders. Rather, with the support of family and friends, they actively sought the nomination when an Assembly seat became open. Usually they had to win contests against other aspirants in district caucuses or conventions or pass the scrutiny of screening committees. Some detected reluctance on the part of the leadership to accept women as candidates.... They saw the absence of women from powerful party positions as the major factor



inhibiting access to elective office, along with the high cost of conducting campaigns (1994, 39).

They concluded, “To the degree that the state’s political culture was defined by the powerful, male dominated party machines, the arrested development of women in politics can be attributed to that culture” (1994, 40). In particular, they pointed to the Democratic party which tended to nominate women in hopeless or marginal districts and which had a much lower election rate for women than did the Republican party.<sup>10</sup>

The paucity of opportunities for Democratic women also was obvious at higher levels of government. Four women were elected to and served in the US Congress from New Jersey during this era— Florence Price Dwyer (1957-73), Millicent Fenwick (1975-83), Helen Stevenson Meyner (1975-79), and Marge Roukema (1981-03)—and all but Meyner were Republicans. New Jersey’s first and only woman governor, Christine Todd Whitman (1994-2001), also was a Republican.

### **Preparedness Meets Opportunity, 2001-Present**

The new century witnessed a resurgence of party influence over state legislative elections brought on by court decisions and more campaign finance reform. In 1981 New Jersey had passed an Open Primary Law banning parties from making endorsements in primaries, thereby greatly weakening their role. However, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled the Open Primary Law unconstitutional following a 1989 US Supreme Court decision in *Eu v. San Francisco Democratic Central Committee* that overturned a similar law in California. Then a campaign finance law, passed in 1993, restricted the influence of special interest money from political action committees (PACs) but allowed the parties to receive very large contributions and spend unlimited amounts of money on candidates. As one analysis reported, “like Lazarus rising from

the dead, political parties in New Jersey were revived” (NJELEC 2009, 110). Political parties – not only the county party organizations, but also the state party committees and legislative campaign committees - were again involved in endorsing and funding primary candidates. And at a time when costs of campaigns were escalating, the parties now controlled the bulk of the money. A New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission report on the 2003 elections proclaimed that “political parties have become the dominant force in New Jersey’s electoral process and that the road to success for legislative candidates runs through these entities” (2004, 14). Although recent pay-to-play legislation, prohibiting campaign contributions by businesses who hold state contracts under certain circumstances, has curbed some of the flow of contributions to partisan entities, there is no question that political parties in New Jersey still have considerable say over the nomination and election of state legislators.

Interestingly, however, this contemporary resurgence of party influence has coincided with the dramatic rise in the proportion of women legislators taking New Jersey from 43<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states. What has enabled women to make these gains?

While women's representation in the New Jersey legislature jumped swiftly from 2004 to 2009, the foundation for women's electoral success was being laid well before this time period. As one expert observer explained, "It didn't happen overnight. It seemed to happen overnight, but there were just lots of things in play over a long period of time." For many years women's organizations had been working outside the parties to lay the groundwork for women’s gains, raising awareness of women’s underrepresentation and providing encouragement and training to ensure that women were in the political pipeline when electoral opportunities arose. Then, when an unusual number of state legislative seats did open up in the post-2004 period, women were motivated and positioned to take advantage of the openings. Critical actors also played an

important role in insuring that preparedness and opportunity would come together to produce gains in representation for women. The remainder of this paper examines the developments that led to dramatic increases in women's legislative representation in the period from 2004 to 2009.

### Preparedness: Raising Awareness and Applying Pressure

In order to challenge men's dominance of governing institutions, the paucity of women public officials must first be viewed as a problem in need of a solution. One expert observer whom we interviewed described women's underrepresentation in New Jersey as "an unknown problem" to the public. Noting the surprise she often encountered when she outlined statistics about women in office, she explained, "You have to point out that there is a problem. And if nobody knows there is a problem, then why are you even trying to have a solution?"

In New Jersey, women's organizations provided the necessary voice to identify and define the problem of women's inequitable representation at the legislative level and create greater awareness among the public, activists, and practitioners. Moreover, these groups applied pressure on political gatekeepers that helped to ensure women's political inclusion.

As mentioned earlier, the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) was established at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University in 1971 with a mission to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women's participation in politics and government and to enhance women's effective participation in political leadership positions. CAWP--the oldest and most influential center of its kind--has provided an enduring, nonpartisan, nationally renowned institution within the state dedicated to women's political advancement.

The Women's Political Caucus of New Jersey (WPC-NJ), a chapter of the National Women's Political Caucus, was founded in 1972 as a multi-partisan organization dedicated to

increasing the number of women in elected and appointed positions in government and promoting equal rights for women. WPC-NJ has advocated on issues important to women; sponsored candidate forums, education, and training programs; and recruited, trained, and provided financial support to women candidates via their political action committee. In recent years, WPC-NJ has joined with Women Advocating for Good Government (WAGG) to focus solely on the recruitment and advancement of women candidates.<sup>11</sup>

In 2003, Latinas United for Political Empowerment (LUPE) was established in New Jersey to empower Latina women to engage in the political process in order to affect public policy in the areas of child care, education, economic development and health. LUPE works to recruit and advance Latina candidates to run for office in the state and works collaboratively with CAWP to put on Elección Latina, an annual candidate training program targeted specifically at Latinas.

Finally, the Christine Todd Whitman Series, named after New Jersey's first and only woman governor, operated from 1998 to 2009 as a year-long political leadership training program for Republican women in New Jersey interested in running for office or assuming party leadership roles. As a partner of the national Excellence in Public Service Series for Republican women, the Whitman Series used a training-based model to motivate potential women candidates.

Legislators and expert observers credited institutions like CAWP, WPC-NJ, WAGG, LUPE, and the Whitman Series with raising awareness and political consciousness about the need for more women in public office and vocalizing a "constant refrain" that women need to be included in the political power structure of the state. These groups circulated research, issued press releases, and held events focusing on the dearth of women in office and the reasons why

more were needed. Although groups such as WPC-NJ and CAWP have existed for decades, their efforts within New Jersey intensified over time and the effects of their efforts have become more evident in recent years. As one expert observer explained, building public awareness and changing the political mind-set was a long-term process that took "close to a decade of solid pounding the doors and keeping that idea of women's political participation alive." She added, "You need to be in it for the long haul; otherwise, it's not going to happen."

Women's organizations also sought to use both public pressure and inside influence to get party leaders to support more women for state legislative and other elective offices. One example of public pressure was CAWP's issuance of county report cards and accompanying press releases in 2002, 2004, and 2006.<sup>12</sup> These report cards detailed the percentages of women at the local levels of office (mayor and freeholder<sup>13</sup>) in each county within the state, including a measure of each county's progress over time and a short comment on the county's efforts since the last report. Press coverage of the county report cards drew more public attention to women's underrepresentation in New Jersey government and pointed to county party chairs as at least partially responsible.

Women's groups sought to exert more informal, less public influence with party leaders, pressuring or encouraging leaders to consider women candidates when opportunities arose. Expert observers described the behind-the-scenes efforts of these groups to communicate with and encourage party chairs to support and endorse women candidates. For example, one expert observer referred to the leadership of the bipartisan WPC-NJ as "committed political women" with significant networks and influence, adding "these guys [party chairs] know who they [women's organization leaders] are." Through their personal relationships, representatives of these organizations were able, at the least, to be heard by party leadership and, at the most, to

provide direct input into the recruitment and endorsement process. Their efforts were bolstered where they could offer financial support and electoral viability, promising candidates and party chairs that their organizations would commit resources to help elect preferred candidates.

#### Preparedness: Building a Candidate Pool

A quarter of the women currently serving in the New Jersey legislature have been through CAWP's two-day Ready to Run™ campaign training program, developed to prepare New Jersey women to launch successful candidacies. This program, as well as others offered by the WPC-NJ and both political parties through the Republicans' Whitman Series and the Democrats' STEP-UP program, were credited by expert observers, party leaders, and legislators with providing the education, tools, and encouragement that women want and need to run for office.

As the most established and largest training program in the state, Ready to Run™ brings together women at varying levels of “readiness” to network, share experiences and insights, receive encouragement, and learn skills necessary to take next steps toward political leadership.<sup>14</sup> Started in 1998 and repeated in March of every year, CAWP's bipartisan program- with about 250 participants annually - has become part of the state's political culture and a model for other programs, including the annual STEP-UP training offered by the New Jersey Democratic State Committee since 2006. One expert observer suggested that Ready to Run™ was "creating this pressure out there of women who are showing up at county committee meetings or municipal committee meetings saying, 'I want to be interviewed. I want to screen for this council seat.'"

When asked how other states might replicate women's numerical progress in the legislature, one veteran legislator told us that having an institution like CAWP and a well-

established and well-respected program like Ready to Run™ would be an important first step. Ready to Run™ and other bipartisan and partisan training programs have helped produce a pool of women in New Jersey who are motivated to run for office, have acquired some basic skills and knowledge about how the system works, and have developed connections to resources and people who can assist them in running for office. By providing women with the motivation and confidence to become more active in politics and even run for office, Ready to Run™ and other candidate training programs have helped ensure that more women are ready to demand a place at the table.

In addition, expert observers cited women's increased success at the local level as another factor contributing to the pool of potential women candidates for state and national offices. In interviews, multiple expert observers pointed to officeholders at the municipal and county levels as a logical group from which candidates for the state legislature can be drawn. While statistics are not available over time for women officials at the municipal level, growth in the numbers of women serving in county office suggests that the pool of local women officials has clearly increased over the past 25 years. The number of women freeholders elected in New Jersey's 21 counties has doubled from 14-16 since the mid-to-late 1980s to 30 in 2012, although there were as many as 38 in 2006.<sup>15</sup> One expert observer explained that the rise of women local elected officials over the past two decades has meant that "when a party leader went to look for a candidate, [women] were obvious people to look at in terms of their ... previous experience, maybe having raised a little money, knowing what a campaign is like, [and] being vetted in a public setting." Among the 25 women who entered the legislature for the first time from 2005 to 2011, 18 previously served in local office.

Without a strong pool of women officials at the local level, opportunities to put women forward as potential candidates have been missed in the past. For example, a Democratic expert observer recalled the efforts of her party to recruit women to run in the 1991 elections in new state legislative districts created by the redistricting process that occurs every 10 years following the release of new US Census data. She described how hard it was to find women prepared to run and willing to commit to candidacy: "We had a short period of time [and] there wasn't an obvious group of people because there weren't as many women in local office at the time."

A final factor contributing to the growth of the pool of potential women candidates for the state legislature has been the commitment of both Democratic and Republican women in the legislature to ensuring that other women followed in their footsteps. Women state legislators have served as role models and mentors for other women throughout the state. At programs like Ready to Run™, women public officials have shared their stories, their advice, and their encouragement with potential candidates. They have mentored women serving on legislative staffs and as interns in their offices, and they have encouraged women of all ages, but especially younger women. Many of the women legislators have participated in programs aimed at college-age women, such as NEW Leadership™, offered by the Center for American Women and Politics. Others have focused on high school students: in 2010, Senator Barbara Buono launched a "Young Women's Leadership Program," a seminar for high school girls aimed at involving them in the political process and encouraging them to one day run for office.<sup>16</sup> In reaching out to other women, women legislators have helped to make politics in New Jersey feel more woman-friendly and accessible. As one legislator told us, "The challenge we have as women [is not only] to maintain our numbers, but also to bring others along." Another veteran legislator outlined her dedication to doing just that, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, explaining, "I often say if I haven't left



a few trouble makers behind, then everything I've done is almost to naught.... One of my goals in life is to make sure I've left some noisy, mouthy women behind me.”

By the early 2000's, candidate training, the increase in women officeholders at local levels, and mentoring by women legislators had fostered a political environment where women in New Jersey were increasingly prepared and motivated to run for office. Women's organizations and activists had also raised awareness about women's underrepresentation, and they had applied public pressure and developed personal relationships that allowed them to exercise more informal influence on party leaders. Nevertheless, it was not until an unusual number of political opportunities arose that these efforts paid off with actual increases in the number of women legislators.

### Opportunity

From 2004 to the present, New Jersey's political environment has presented a number of unique opportunities for women. More legislative seats than usual opened during this period due to a combination of corruption, deaths, and retirements.

From 2004 to 2011, 25 women (16 Democrats, 9 Republicans) entered the New Jersey legislature for the first time, and five women legislators (2 Democrats, 3 Republicans) moved from the Assembly to the Senate (Table 1). Challengers rarely win elections in New Jersey, both because most districts are more or less safe for one party and thus not truly competitive and because parties tend to control the nominating process. Not surprisingly, only a total of three women won office by challenging and defeating incumbents in the elections of 2005, 2007, and 2009. Republican Jennifer Beck managed to do so twice in a district that was quite competitive, first defeating a Democratic incumbent assemblyman in 2005 and then a Democratic woman

senator in 2007.<sup>17</sup> The other two situations are unusual. In 2005 Republican Amy Handlin defeated an incumbent of her own party who ran in a primary despite the Republican County Committee's refusal to back him for another term and their choice of Handlin.<sup>18</sup> And in a 2007 primary election, Democrat Cleopatra Tucker, the wife of a deceased assemblyman, defeated an incumbent assemblywoman who had been appointed to the seat formerly held by Tucker's husband.

Women more often entered the legislature in districts where there were open seats, as was the case for 25 of the 30 women who entered or advanced within the legislature from 2004 to 2011. Fourteen of the women who obtained open seats did so through elections, three of them in districts where incumbents decided not to seek re-election following allegations of corruption. A majority (eight) of the open seats that women won through elections were available because the incumbent sought or took another political position, with six of the incumbents vacating Assembly seats to run for the state Senate.

Most unusual is that women obtained the other 12 open seats through appointment to fill vacancies.<sup>19</sup> All 12 of these women were selected to fill vacancies by votes of county party committee members at special party conventions. Five were appointed to legislative seats through this process following resignations due to corruption or scandal, one succeeded her deceased husband, and six were appointed after their predecessors resigned or retired to take other positions.<sup>20</sup>

[Table 1 about here]

One expert observer summed up the pattern we see in these data very succinctly: women were able to enter the legislature in this period in unprecedented numbers “because people went off to jail, people died, and people retired and took other jobs.”

*Corruption*

New Jersey is no stranger to political corruption.<sup>21</sup> And as Barbara G. Salmore and Stephen A. Salmore have observed:

The moralistic strain in the political culture--never dominant but always present--sends the state into periodic fits of reformism. The first decade of the twenty-first century surely represents one of the more notable of these periods (2008, 257).

The most common cases of corruption among New Jersey legislators from 2004 to the present were tied to allegations of and/or convictions for bribery, fraud, and extortion where legislators abused their political power for financial gain. After each corruption scandal from 2004 on, women were selected as replacements for accused male legislators. As one veteran legislator explained:

We had,... particularly in the Democratic party, a number of men who were indicted and/or convicted and forced to leave their seats in the legislature. Most of those men were replaced by women.... [W]ith a little bit of humor, when people ask me how we moved up so fast, I tell them it is because so many of the guys got indicted.

Two powerful Democratic state senators opted not to run for re-election in 2007 because of corruption charges and were replaced by women who were strong party loyalists. State Senator Wayne Bryant, chair of the Senate budget and appropriations committee, was indicted and later convicted of using that position to channel state grants to the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey in return for a no-show job for which he collected a salary.<sup>22</sup> Party leaders recruited Dana Redd, a city councilwoman and vice chair of the Democratic State Committee, to run for his seat. Similarly, State Senator Sharpe James, who was vice-chair of the Senate budget and appropriations committee as well as mayor of Newark, chose not to run for re-election amidst corruption allegations, including specific charges that he sold city land and properties to his one-time mistress at extremely low costs.<sup>23</sup> Party leaders recruited Teresa Ruiz,

a former deputy chief of staff to the county executive and vice chair of her county's Democratic party, as their nominee for James's senate seat in the 2007 election. Ruiz ran on the party line and managed to win despite facing opposition from candidates representing competing factions of the party.

In yet another instance, Democratic State Senator Joe Coniglio decided not to seek re-election in 2007 due to allegations (and later conviction) of fraud and extortion made against him for steering state funding to Hackensack University Medical Center in exchange for a lucrative consulting position. When Assemblyman Robert Gordon decided to run for Coniglio's open Senate seat, Connie Wagner, a county freeholder and local councilwoman, was selected by her county chair and party committee to run for Gordon's vacated seat in the Assembly.<sup>24</sup>

In August 2007, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) arrested 12 people in New Jersey, including 11 public officials, on charges of bribery. Two Democratic state legislators, Assemblymen Mims Hackett Jr. and Alfred Steele, were among those arrested for taking money in exchange for influence in the allocation of public contracts.<sup>25</sup> Both men stepped down from the legislature within a week of their arrest, and both were replaced by female legislators, Elise Evans and Mila Jasey, through special conventions.

While 2007 was an unprecedented year of indictments of sitting legislators in New Jersey, women were also appointed in 2008 and 2009 following male legislators' ethical violations. In 2008, Democrat Annette Quijano was appointed to replace Assemblyman Neil Cohen upon his resignation for accusations and later indictment on charges of possessing and distributing child pornography.<sup>26</sup> In 2009, New Jersey made national news for a federal corruption sting 10 years in the making, with 44 individuals, including mayors, rabbis, and one state legislator charged with various counts of fraud, money laundering, and corruption.<sup>27</sup> The

state legislator, Republican Assemblyman Daniel Van Pelt, was accused of accepting a \$10,000 bribe from a cooperating witness who posed as a real estate developer in exchange for political favors.<sup>28</sup> County party leaders in District 9 quickly turned to a former mayor, DiAnne Gove, to fill his seat, appointing her to the Assembly in an August special convention. One interviewee pointed to the importance of corruption as a catalyst for party action in this case. She explained that a Republican party chair in Gove's district had sent 10 women to CAWP's Ready to Run™ program in the years before 2009, but had never promoted one of those women to run for the legislature. Although Gove was not among the women sent to Ready to Run™, in an environment where public distrust was high, the party chair finally saw the benefit of selecting a woman to fill a legislative seat.<sup>29</sup>

Several of the expert observers and legislators we interviewed echoed this view that corruption played an important role in opening up opportunities for women.<sup>30</sup> One expert observer explained the reason party leaders supported women for these seats: "It is very clear that the number of women increased when all the men... found caught up on corruption charges were removed from office and the party leaders were smart enough to realize that women have a much cleaner image." Another expert observer, a veteran legislator, noted that women are less likely to engage in unethical behavior while in office, and the public knows it; voters feel more comfortable with women at times when men have violated their trust.

Research on public perceptions of women candidates shows that voters do indeed view women as more honest and ethical than their male counterparts (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Dolan 2004; Taylor et al. 2008). In a political environment like New Jersey's, where men not only are viewed as more prone to corruption, but also have reinforced these perceptions through their behavior, political party leaders, who above all else are motivated by a desire to win, have

an incentive to select and support women candidates when incumbents have been charged with illegal or unethical behavior. Yet this electoral calculus, while beneficial to women in periods of widespread corruption, does not necessarily yield long-term or sustainable change in candidate selection processes that will foster women's advancement. As one expert observer asked, citing the "corruption era" in New Jersey as the motivating factor behind women's jump in legislative representation, "How do you duplicate that?"

### *Deaths*

As mentioned above, some of the electoral opportunities for women from 2004 to 2011 resulted from the unexpected deaths of spouses. Three female legislators were elected or appointed to their husbands' seats in the New Jersey state legislature after their deaths, either immediately or in subsequent election cycles.

Research at the congressional level has found that whether or not widows are selected to succeed their husbands depends on the political calculations and gatekeeping functions of party leaders (Gertzog 1980; 1995). Widows may be left untapped or ignored in some circumstances, while in other cases the deceased husband's party credentials, seniority, and strong electoral base can motivate party leaders to select widows to fill their vacant seats (Gertzog 1995; Solowej and Brunnell 2003). The level of political involvement of the widows also seems to have been influential in the New Jersey cases.

Nancy Muñoz, selected in 2009 immediately following her husband's death to finish his unexpired term, became the first widow to directly succeed her husband in the legislature, and was the only widow among the three to win near-immediate party support.<sup>31</sup> Muñoz played a significant role in her husband's campaigns and political work and shared many of his legislative

priorities as a health care professional.<sup>32</sup> The backing of her husband's former colleagues in the legislature and recognition among district party leaders that she was qualified for the job and would continue the work of her husband helped Muñoz emerge victorious over two opponents in a special election convention of Republican committee members in her district.<sup>33</sup>

The other two widows did not directly succeed their husbands, but rather followed a more circuitous route into office. After her husband's sudden death in May 2004, Sandra Cunningham made a bid for the Senate seat he held but was initially passed over. Instead, the Hudson County Democratic Organization chose Joseph Doria, the former speaker of the New Jersey Assembly and mayor of Bayonne. While Sandra Cunningham was well known in the community as both a political spouse and an activist in her own right, many speculated that her husband's contentious relationship with the county party organization spurred them to look elsewhere in filling his seat.<sup>34</sup> Three years later Cunningham, this time with the support of the Hudson County Democratic Organization, won a contested primary for that same Senate seat. Doria stepped down three months early to take a seat in the governor's cabinet, and Cunningham was selected by the party organization to fill out the remainder of his term before beginning her own four-year term.<sup>35</sup> While Senator Cunningham's path to office was more indirect than that of Assemblywoman Muñoz, her reputation and support in the community – bolstered by her husband's political positions – ultimately aided her own political success and put pressure on Democratic party leaders to support her.

The third widow to take office in this period, Cleopatra Tucker, faced an even more contentious political climate in the city of Newark when her husband, the city's longest serving councilman and speaker pro tempore in the State Assembly, died in October 2005. Although she put her name forward, Cleopatra Tucker, who had not been particularly active in the party, did

not receive the support of the Essex County Democratic Organization. When the seat came up for a district party convention vote again in January 2006 due to a quick resignation by the initial occupant, Tucker was again the challenger to a party-supported candidate, Oadline Truitt, who won the convention vote to fill the two-year Assembly term. However, Tucker did not give up, and in 2007, with the backing of a faction of elected officials and Democratic party leaders (Newark Mayor Corey Booker, Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo, and North Ward power broker Steve Aduato), she defeated Truitt and her incumbent running mate in the Democratic primary, thereby assuring her election to the Assembly in the heavily Democratic district.<sup>36</sup> Her ascension to office was thus aided by her family ties but also dependent upon the support of an insurgent faction of party leaders. Tucker was re-elected to the Assembly for a second term in 2009, this time with the support of the Essex County Democratic Organization and its chair, who recognized her popularity with her constituents.

These cases demonstrate how the death of spouses created opportunities for some women to enter the legislature in New Jersey, including women who might never have sought or held office otherwise. Each was initially motivated by a desire to complete the work her husband had begun and advance the policies he valued. One legislator told us, "I decided to run because... there were some things I thought that I needed to finish in terms of my husband's legacy." Similarly, another widow, on the day she took the oath of office, proclaimed, "I will bring the same principles and dedication to the legislature as my husband."

Nevertheless, each of the widows also took full advantage of the opportunity with which she was presented, winning re-election and expanding her legislative agenda to reflect her own priorities as well as those of her husband. While widows were traditionally viewed as temporary caretakers for their husbands' legislative seats, widows in today's politics – in New Jersey and



nationwide – often become political “careerists,” displaying independence from their husbands’ legacies (Solowej and Brunell 2003). One of the three NJ widows explained, “I think that when I first went [to the legislature] I wanted to finish some of the things that my husband had done. But I realized that I had my own legacy, and I am really proud of the work I’ve done.” Another told us, “Maybe initially some of my fellow Assembly people may have thought that I was, ‘the widow.’ But I’ve certainly proved to them that that is not all that I am.”

### *Critical Actors*

The number of women serving in the New Jersey legislature would have not have increased so dramatically without the extraordinary commitment and effort of particular individuals. Preparedness and opportunity alone may not have been sufficient. Critical actors were also necessary.

Sarah Childs and Mona Lena Krook have put forward the concept of “critical actors,” which they define as “those who act individually or collectively to bring about women-friendly policy change” (2009, 126-7). They see this concept as applicable to substantive representation of women. We would expand their conceptualization to encompass descriptive representation of women as well by including those who act individually or collectively *to bring more women into positions of power in politics*. Like Childs and Krook, we believe that men as well as women can be critical actors under this definition.

The individual commitment and actions of several people were critical in increasing the number of women in the New Jersey legislature. They include women and men; Republicans and Democrats; advocates, officeholders, and party leaders. In this section, we highlight only two individuals who exemplify the role of critical actors in New Jersey’s increase in women

legislators. Both are Democrats because the increase in women's numbers from 2004 through 2011 was largely on the Democratic side of the aisle. The first, Joe Cryan, was chair of the Democratic State Committee from 2006 to 2009 and vice-chair from 2002 to 2006. The second, whom we will call Critical Activist, formerly served in government positions and is active in several of the women's organizations in the state.<sup>37</sup>

Joe Cryan illustrates the difference that can be made by a well-positioned party leader with a strong commitment to bringing more women into office. Cryan's commitment was, in part, attributable to his female predecessor as Democratic state chair, Bonnie Watson Coleman.

As he explained, a woman in political office:

is a big milestone that people see.... I admit [that], growing up in a political family, I am a little hardened to it, and Bonnie really opened up my eyes... People do get inspired by other people doing great things.

Historically, state party chairs in New Jersey have not focused their attention on getting more women into office. But Cryan was different, as one expert observer explained:

He actually would be out there saying, "I want to get more women to run. I want more women." And he would say this publicly and repeatedly. And he would turn up at events all the time.

Under Cryan's leadership the state party initiated an annual, one-day campaign training workshop for women called STEP-UP. Several legislators we interviewed specifically mentioned this program as critical. As one explained, "the STEP-UP training and recruitment program" had as its goals, "trying to get more women interested in running for public office, but also preparing them for the journey ahead and teaching them the tools and techniques of campaigning, [and] also offering the resources of the state party."

Most significant, however, was Cryan's advocacy for women with county party chairs when vacancies occurred. In New Jersey's political structure, county party chairs often have more direct influence and power than the state chair over candidate selection and support.

However, as Democratic state party chair at a time when a Democrat was governor, Cryan was able to leverage the power of his role with the influence – especially financially – of Governor Jon Corzine. Cryan operated and advocated for women with the support of Corzine, who, according to Cryan, "was focused on getting more women to participate in the political process." He noted that there were "a lot of cases" where "people [legislators] wouldn't finish their term," and he and the governor felt that "we should utilize that opportunity to put more women into the process. And we used a lot of different hammers to do that." He continued, we "injected ourselves in a lot of places where our calls weren't particularly effective or welcome, but we made it very clear what we wanted." Although the ultimate decision on candidate selection rested with the county chairs and party organizations, the intervention of the state chair, with the resources of the state party and governor backing him up, had influence in some cases.<sup>38</sup>

Joe Cryan, by his own admission, often relied on input from another Critical Activist whom he first met when one of the women's organizations met with him as state chair to discuss getting more women into political positions. The Critical Activist described how their "relationship sort of blossomed" through continued interactions at political and party events. As she explained, her influence with Cryan stemmed both from the fact that "he got to know me personally" and also "because I am involved in all these [women's] groups." As a result of their relationship, Cryan even called the Critical Activist and asked whom she would recommend for a seat that opened up in the district where he is an assemblyman. She suggested a name and then urged two of the women's groups to publicly endorse the candidate. The resources and support that she could promise from women's organizations helped to persuade party leaders that her selected candidate would have the viability and backing necessary to win. She noted, "It's not that we [could] raise tons of money, but it was a commitment that we would go out there and do

it with her and for her. And it wasn't just that we would ourselves raise the money, but that we would tap our individual networks to try and do it." The woman who was suggested as a candidate by the Critical Activist was, in fact, nominated and now serves in the Assembly.

### **Looking Toward the Future**

The number of women in the New Jersey state legislature increased dramatically between 2004 and 2011. Are these gains sustainable? Can the rate of increase over the past few years be matched in the future? Or will the numbers of women in the legislature fall back?

There is some reason for optimism. The pool of women who are motivated to run for the state legislature, who have served in office at the local level, and/or who have attended candidate training sessions has never been larger. As former Republican state chair Tom Wilson suggested, "If you look at the pipeline, ... you've got plenty of women sitting in freeholder seats, you've got women who are serving as mayors, you've got plenty of women who are serving on town councils, and you've got plenty of women who have taken a much greater... role in the workings of government at every level in their state." Moreover, the organizational infrastructure to help encourage and support women who want to run for office has never been stronger. And more women are in leadership positions in the state legislature than ever before. Democrat Sheila Oliver is Speaker of the House while Democrat Loretta Weinberg is Senate Majority Leader, and she was preceded in the position by another woman, Barbara Buono. Six more women in the Senate, five Democrats and one Republican, and eight more women in the Assembly, four Democrats and four Republicans, occupy other leadership positions (CAWP 2012b). Most of these women leaders are actively involved in encouraging and mentoring other women to follow in their footsteps. So, on the supply side, the outlook for women's representation in the state

legislature is much better than ever.

The problem lies on the demand side, where the picture is less rosy. Despite women's electoral successes, the legislators and expert observers we interviewed repeatedly referred to an "old boys' club" that controls access to officeholding and political power in New Jersey. One legislator explained, "Even though people see the tide changing, you know the good old boys' network is still alive. It might not be as healthy as it once was, but it is still alive." Perhaps the best illustration of the power and exclusionary practices of the old boys' club is a female legislative leader's description of the process used to decide that she would be put forward for a leadership position. She explained, "I wasn't in the room by the way. I'm never in the back room. It was all these men, all these white males." She named several legislators and powerful county chairs as likely participants, adding, "I don't even know [who participated], but no women. Even though the deal was about me, I'm still not involved."

From 2004 to 2011, New Jersey's political party chairs and organizations varied in the degree to which they acted as a help or a hindrance toward women candidates. For the most part, party leaders appeared to recognize female candidates' electoral value in a time of men's moral missteps, and Democratic state chair Joe Cryan – with the influence and financial backing of Democratic Governor Jon Corzine – seemed to prioritize women's inclusion as an effort to strengthen the party. However, in periods where women candidates are viewed as less electorally valuable and/or when less inclusive leaders take the helm, parties may be less likely to put women forward as candidates. Former Republican state party chair Tom Wilson, while admitting that some county chairs are "dinosaurs," saw reason for optimism in some recent "turnover among the county party leadership to folks who are younger, who... come from a different place in life and have different life experiences and viewpoints as to the fundamental benefits and

equality issues that female candidates bring."

But others were less optimistic about women's prospects. Cryan worried that the numbers of women in the legislature might decline, noting that men had been chosen for the last few openings in the legislature on the Democratic side - openings not produced by deaths or allegations of corruption. Others interviewees noted that women legislators had been disproportionately affected in an adverse way by the recent redistricting process that occurs every decade. As a press release issued by the Center for American Women and Politics in April 2011 reported:

"In a state where 28% of the current legislature is female, women make up 57% of the legislators who will retire as a result of redistricting," says Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Women and Politics, a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. "The impact of the new map has been especially harsh on incumbent Democratic assemblywomen. We've expanded women's representation in the Garden State significantly in recent years, but that progress may now be slowed."<sup>39</sup>

And when asked if the mindset of the county chairs toward recruiting women had changed, one legislator observed:

The only way it has changed is they know that women are electable. So they'll support a woman... of their choosing. But if you're a maverick, if they sense that you may be a little too strong, a little too independent, that won't happen.

Based on a study of a broader range of American states, Kira Sanbonmatsu concludes that strong male-dominated political parties and greater party control over nominations have not been advantageous to women's state legislative candidacies (Sanbonmatsu 2006). Breaking male dominance in New Jersey politics and opening up more officeholding opportunities for women will require change that does not depend on the emergence of a climate temporarily favorable to women's candidacies like that between 2004 and 2009. Institutional change based on the infiltration and/or weakening of political party organizations is likely to be necessary. In 2012, only six of 42, or 14.3 percent, of county party chairs, both Republican and Democrat, are

women (CAWP 2012b). Clearly, more female county chairs, especially those committed to recruiting women candidates, are needed. In fact, more women are needed in party leadership positions at the municipal level as well. Cryan explained that as state chair he encouraged women to become municipal chairs, noting, "Besides county, being a municipal chair is when you start getting involved in the process.... That is how you really change the institution." Arguing for more balance in his party's infrastructure, Cryan added, "You have to create a culture, and the way you create the culture is to change the people who do it. That is why... it [is] really important to get those numbers [of female party chairs] up." Of course, as Cryan's tenure as state party chair illustrated, commitment to recruiting women as candidates is not limited solely to women, so male party chairs who share this commitment are also necessary to insure institutional change. As of yet, this type of change-oriented party leadership remains uncommon in New Jersey.

Despite the need for more women in party leadership, some interviewees expressed skepticism about the likelihood that many women would soon assume county chair positions. Explaining that "it is a hard job to recruit for" and that it is a "hard" and "ugly job in a lot of ways" that does not seem attractive to many women, Wilson, the former Republican state chair, observed:

If you are in an establishment county..., you've got the culture there to deal with, and the culture of the internal workings are pretty tight. ... You see... a pecking order... that requires you to sort of have a passion for the internal political workings and the political machinations of being a party leader versus being an elected official. And maybe it is a credit to women that they say, "Why do I want to waste my time mucking around in internal party politics when I can go make ordinances and laws and change stuff?"... [T]here may be a reason why women are not attracted to party leadership positions, but are more attracted to the governing positions where they can actually do something.

An alternative or perhaps supplemental strategy to infiltrating the party structures and changing their recruitment practices is to try to reduce their control over legislators, candidates,

and the nominating process. As one veteran legislator suggested, “[We need to not] invest so much authority in these county [party] chairs. There has to be another way.” A few individual women have succeeded in running against their party organizations, usually with the help of other powerful male power brokers, and some other legislators we interviewed described how developing and sustaining a supportive constituency apart from party organizations allowed them to push their own legislative agendas independent of the wishes of party leaders. One legislator argued that women in politics need to be “troublemakers.” She explained, “[Women] have to gain the ability not always to be good girls, but to pick our battles.” Each woman legislator who has challenged or circumvented the party organization has helped to loosen the tight grip with which party leaders control the workings of New Jersey politics.

However, significantly reducing the control of party leaders cannot be accomplished solely by working independently of them on an individual basis. Like the reforms of the 1990s that strengthened New Jersey’s party system, structural reforms would be necessary to lessen the concentration of power in the hands of county party chairs. While infiltrating political parties and/or working to reduce their control are two alternatives—not mutually exclusive—for breaking male dominance, neither is easily accomplished. New Jersey now has a sufficient pool of women who are prepared to run and serve. That is a significant and sustainable change in the state's political environment. However, the New Jersey case demonstrates that a rapid increase in the number of women in office is not likely to result from preparedness alone. Rather, preparedness and opportunity (aided by the efforts of critical actors) are both necessary conditions for women’s political advancement. While we have no crystal ball to predict the future, the political power structure in New Jersey may well provide too few opportunities - in the absence of major reform or crises such as political corruption or the death of incumbents - to move the abundant



supply of women through the pipeline into state legislative office in anything but incremental numbers in the years ahead.

<b>Table 1. Women who entered or advanced within the New Jersey legislature, 2005 to Present</b>					
<b>Office</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Officeholder</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Electoral Opportunity</b>
<b>Challengers</b>					
State Assembly	13	Amy Handlin	Republican	2006-Present	Defeated Republican incumbent Assemblyman Joseph Azzolina in Republican primary; won the support of the Monmouth County Republicans, who denied Azzolina organizational support for another term in the Assembly.
State Assembly	12	Jennifer Beck	Republican	2006-2008	Defeated Democratic incumbent Assemblyman Robert Lewis Morgan.
State Assembly	28	Cleopatra Tucker	Democrat	2008-Present	Defeated Democratic incumbent Assemblywoman Oadline Truitt (2006-2007) in Democratic primary; won seat held by deceased husband, Assemblyman Donald Tucker (1994-2005).
State Senate	12	Jennifer Beck*	Republican	2008-Present	Defeated Democratic incumbent Senator Ellen Karcher (2004-2008).
<b>Open Seats - Elected</b>					
State Assembly	23	Marcia A. Karrow	Republican	2006-2009	Filled seat of Republican Assemblywoman Connie Myers (1996-2005), who did not run for reelection.
State Assembly	37	Valerie Huttle	Democrat	2006-Present	Filled seat of Democratic Assemblywoman Loretta Weinberg after Weinberg won appointment to the State Senate. Selected as Democratic nominee for November 2005 election.
State Assembly	6	Pamela Rosen-Lampitt	Democrat	2006-Present	Filled seat of Democratic Assemblywoman Mary Previte (1998-2005), who did not run for re-election.
State Assembly	8	Dawn Addiego	Republican	2008-2010	Filled one of two open seats created by Republican Assemblyman Francis L. Bodine's decision to switch to the Democratic Party and Assemblyman Larry Chatzidakis' decision not to seek re-election.

State Assembly	4	Sandra Love	Democrat	2008-2010	Filled open seat of Democratic Assemblyman David Mayer, who decided not to run for re-election.
State Assembly	11	Mary Pat Angelini	Republican	2008-Present	Filled one of two open seats created by Republican Assemblyman Steve Corodemus' retirement and Republican Assemblyman Sean Kean's decision to run for the State Senate.
State Assembly	12	Caroline Casagrande	Republican	2008-Present	Filled open seat created by Republican Assemblywoman Jennifer Beck's move to the State Senate.
State Assembly	16	Denise Coyle	Republican	2008-Present	Filled the open seat of Republican Assemblyman Christopher Bateman, who decided to run for the State Senate.
State Assembly	33	Caridad Rodriguez	Democrat	2008-2011	Filled open seat created by Democratic Assemblyman Brian Stack's move to the State Senate. Resigned in May 2011.
State Assembly	29	L. Grace Spencer	Democrat	2008-Present	Filled open seat created by Democratic Assemblyman William D. Payne's move to the State Senate.
State Assembly	38	Connie Wagner	Democrat	2008-Present	Filled seat of Republican Senator Joseph Coniglio, who decided to end his re-election bid after being probed for corruption charges.
State Senate	29	M. Teresa Ruiz	Democrat	2007-Present	Filled seat of Democratic Senator Sharpe James, who decided not to seek re-election and was soon after indicted on federal corruption charges (July 2007).
State Senate	5	Dana Redd	Democrat	2008-2010	Filled seat of Democratic Senator Wayne Bryant, who decided not to seek re-election amidst allegations of federal corruption.
State Senate	14	Linda Greenstein*	Democrat	2010-Present	Filled seat of Republican Senator Bill Baroni, who resigned to take a new position as deputy executive director for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.
<b>Open Seats - Appointed</b>					
State Assembly	28	Evelyn Williams	Democrat	Dec. 2005-Jan. 2006	Selected by Democratic Party special convention upon the death of Assemblyman Donald Tucker. Resigned due to charges of shoplifting at a local discount store.
State Assembly	28	Oadline Truitt	Democrat	2006-2008	Selected by Democratic Party special convention upon the resignation of Assemblywoman Evelyn Williams (December 2005 – January 2006).
State Assembly	35	Elease Evans	Democrat	2007-2012	Selected by Democratic Party special convention upon the resignation of Assemblyman Alfred E. Steele after being charged in a September 2007 federal corruption/bribery sting.
State Assembly	27	Mila Jasey	Democrat	2007-Present	Selected by Democratic Party special convention upon the resignation of Assemblyman Mims Hackett, Jr. (D after being charged in the September 2007 federal corruption/bribery sting.

State Assembly	20	Annette Quijano	Democrat	2008-Present	Selected by Democratic Party special convention upon the resignation of Assemblyman Neil Cohen in July 2008 amidst allegations of accessing and distributing child pornography.
State Assembly	3	Celeste M. Riley	Democrat	2009-Present	Selected by Democratic Party special convention upon the resignation of Assemblyman Doug Fisher, who was appointed as Agriculture Secretary by the governor.
State Assembly	9	DiAnne Gove	Republican	2009-Present	Selected by Republican Party special convention upon the resignation of Assemblyman Daniel Van Pelt due to charges of fraud in a 44-person FBI sting.
State Assembly	21	Nancy Muñoz	Republican	2009-Present	Selected by Republican Party special convention upon the death of her husband, Assemblyman Eric Muñoz, in March 2009.
State Senate	37	Loretta Weinberg*	Democrat	2005-Present	Senate seat opened by Democrat Byron Baer's resignation for health reasons. Won court battle against primary opponent and Bergen County Democratic Organization over Democratic convention results and took office in November 2005 to fill the remainder of Baer's term; also won election in November 2005 for next full term.
State Senate	31	Sandra Cunningham	Democrat	2008-Present	Selected on October 23, 2007 by a Democratic Party special election convention to serve the remainder of the term of Democratic Senator Joseph Doria, who resigned to accept gubernatorial nomination as Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. Elected for full term in November 2007. Seat was held by deceased husband, Senator Glenn Cunningham.
State Senate	23	Marcia A. Karrow*	Republican	2010	Selected on January 24, 2009 by Republican Party special convention to fill the seat vacated by Senator Leonard Lance's election to the U.S. House of Representatives. Took office in February 2009 and filled the remainder of Lance's term until January 2010.
State Senate	8	Dawn Addiego*	Republican	2010-Present	Selected by Republican Party special convention upon the resignation of Senator Phil Haines, who was appointed to the New Jersey Superior Court

\*Moved from the State Assembly to the State Senate

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The semi-structured interviews, which were generally 20-30 minutes in duration, were conducted either in person or by telephone by one or both of the co-authors between May and August 2011. We interviewed seven people whom we considered to be expert observers. These included leaders of women's organizations and other politically informed individuals who were familiar with NJ politics and developments pertaining to women. In addition, we talked to four highly regarded, veteran women legislators, three Democrats and one Republican, who had served for many years and who witnessed the increase in women legislators. We also interviewed the Republican and Democratic state party chairs who served through the 2007 and 2009 election cycles because they had the "big picture" view on the role of the parties; they worked closely with the county party chairs, the party leadership in the legislature, and the governor, and were thus familiar with all aspects of party electoral development. Finally, we attempted interviews with all 16 of the women legislators who entered office between 2007 and 2009, the years with the largest increases. We were successful in interviewing eight of these women (two senators and six assemblywomen; five Democrats and three Republicans). The interviews were all confidential except for those with the two party chairs, which were conducted "on the record."

<sup>2</sup> New Jersey has no statewide elected officials except for governor and lieutenant governor.

<sup>3</sup> The most notable exception to this pattern was in 1992, the so-called "Year of the Woman," when women's representation in Congress jumped from 32 in the 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress (1991-92) to 54 in the 103<sup>rd</sup> (1993-94). See Center for American Women and Politics, "Women in the US Congress 2011." Fact Sheet. [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/levels\\_of\\_office/documents/cong.pdf](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/levels_of_office/documents/cong.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Some women were enfranchised and cast votes under the New Jersey constitution of 1776, which granted voting rights to "all inhabitants" who met the property requirement. Women were not explicitly mentioned, but nothing in the constitution restricted the franchise to males. However, the right to vote was taken away from New Jersey women in 1807 by an act of the all-male New Jersey legislature. As Irwin N. Gertzog has explained, women "were deprived of the vote largely because, as women, unable to hold public office and forbidden by the norms of the period from resorting to tactics fostering political mobilization, they could not protect themselves from a resourceful majority who wanted to reform the election process and believed that it was in their own interests to disenfranchise politically marginal groups" (1990, 57).

<sup>5</sup> The historical account in this paper relies heavily on the very excellent research of Richard McCormick and Katheryne McCormick (1994), and we are indebted to them for providing such a rich history of women candidates for the New Jersey Assembly.

<sup>6</sup> An advocate for labor and the working class, Norton served in the US House for 26 years from 1925 until 1951.

<sup>7</sup> Taking advantage of a second senate seat created in Union County for the 1965 election, the four-term assemblywoman also became the first Democrat elected to the senate from Union County in 75 years although she was defeated by a Republican just two years later ([http://www.thejointlibrary.org/archives/TheTimes/1995/1995-01-19/pg\\_0012.pdf](http://www.thejointlibrary.org/archives/TheTimes/1995/1995-01-19/pg_0012.pdf))

<sup>8</sup> Founded in 1971 at the Eagleton Institute of Politics as the Center for the American Woman and Politics, CAWP modified its name to the Center for American Women and Politics in 1999.

<sup>9</sup> Center for American Women and Politics, "State Fact Sheet-New Jersey." [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/resources/state\\_fact\\_sheets/NJ.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/resources/state_fact_sheets/NJ.php)

<sup>10</sup> Consistent with politics nationwide, New Jersey's political parties were not polarized around gender during this period, and the Republican party was arguably the more receptive to women both nationally and in New Jersey. Although women's political progress in the US in the most recent decades has been concentrated in the Democratic Party, the Republican Party of the early- to mid- twentieth century was both the party under which women won the right to vote and the first to endorse the Equal Rights Amendment (Wolbrecht 2000).

<sup>11</sup> WAGG is a bipartisan organization that was formed in the past decade and advocates explicitly for the election of more women to all levels of government in New Jersey.

<sup>12</sup> These county report cards and their accompanying press releases are available at [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/resources/new\\_jersey.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/resources/new_jersey.php).

<sup>13</sup> Lawmakers elected at the county level are called "freeholders" in New Jersey.

<sup>14</sup> More information on Ready to Run can be found at [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/education\\_training/ReadytoRun/index.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/education_training/ReadytoRun/index.php).

<sup>15</sup> Data were supplied by the Center for American Women and Politics.

<sup>16</sup> See [http://www.barbarabuono.com/news/releases/20100802\\_womensleadership](http://www.barbarabuono.com/news/releases/20100802_womensleadership).

<sup>17</sup> Robert Schwaneberg, "Beck Touted as Rising Republican Star," The Star Ledger, November 8, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Wally Edge, "The Joe Azzolina Story," PolitickerNJ, April 16, 2010, <http://www.politickernj.com/wallye/38445/joe-azzolina-story>.

<sup>19</sup> As of December 2011, 31 of the 119 sitting legislators in New Jersey had entered their current offices via special convention instead of popular election.

<sup>20</sup> Sandra Cunningham and Cleopatra Tucker did not immediately win the seats opened by the deaths of their husbands. However, both women subsequently filled those seats, with Tucker challenging the incumbent and Cunningham winning the seat after a retirement.

<sup>21</sup> More than 100 public officials in New Jersey were convicted on federal corruption charges between 2002 and 2007.

<sup>22</sup> Associated Press, "Jurors reach verdict in Sen. Wayne Bryant corruption trial," November 18, 2008, [http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2008/11/jurors\\_reach\\_verdict\\_in\\_sen\\_wa.html](http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2008/11/jurors_reach_verdict_in_sen_wa.html).

<sup>23</sup> Just over one year later, James was sentenced to 27 months in prison after being convicted by a federal jury on five counts of fraud. Associated Press, "Ex-Newark mayor Sharpe James leaves prison, receives hero's welcome," April 7, 2010, <http://www.thegrio.com/politics/ex-newark-mayor-james-leaves-prison-enters-halfway-house.php>.

<sup>24</sup> Wally Edge, "Three Voters," PolitickerNJ, September 20, 2007, <http://vip.politickernj.com/three-voters-11956>; Matt Friedman, "BCDO Taps Gordon for Senate, Wagner for Assembly," PolitickerNJ, September 16, 2007, <http://vip.politickernj.com/bcdo-taps-gordon-senate-wagner-assembly-11762>.

<sup>25</sup> Tom Hester, "Legislators, Mayors Arrested in New Jersey Bribery Sting," Associated Press, September 6, 2007, <http://www.nysun.com/national/legislators-mayors-arrested-in-new-jersey-bribery/62077/>; Robert D. McFadden and David W. Chen, "Lawmakers Accused in Bribery Sting Poised to Quit," New York Times, September 9, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/09/nyregion/09resign.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Susan K. Livio, "Dems Pick Attorney to Replace Assemblyman Neil Cohen," NJ.com, August 20, 2008, [http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2008/08/dems\\_pick\\_elizabeth\\_attorney\\_t.html](http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2008/08/dems_pick_elizabeth_attorney_t.html).

<sup>27</sup> Amir Efrati, Suzanne Sataline, and Dionne Searcey, "Jersey Mayors Stung in Graft Probe," Wall Street Journal, July 24, 2009, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124835404608875685.html>.

<sup>28</sup> Associated Press, "N.J. Assemblyman Daniel Van Pelt, charged in corruption sting, still in office, but not on website," July 29, 2009, [http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2009/07/nj\\_assemblyman\\_daniel\\_van\\_pelt.html](http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2009/07/nj_assemblyman_daniel_van_pelt.html).

<sup>29</sup> Assemblywoman Gove told reporters in 2009 that "getting the confidence of people back into the government is important." She added that women can bring a different perspective to government. "Long Beach Township Commissioner Dianne Gove replaces Daniel Van Pelt in 9th District." Press of Atlantic City, August 12, 2009, [http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/press/ocean/article\\_7452a49a-87a1-11de-95f9-001cc4c002e0.html](http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/press/ocean/article_7452a49a-87a1-11de-95f9-001cc4c002e0.html).

<sup>30</sup> There was one case where a woman, Oadline Truitt, was appointed to replace another woman, Evelyn Williams, who also had engaged in criminal behavior. However, her offense did not involve abuse of the powers of her office, and in fact, was at a completely different level than the offenses of the men described above. Williams was appointed in December 2005 to fill a vacancy created by the death of Assemblyman Donald Tucker. She resigned

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one month later after she was arrested for shoplifting in a local discount store. Williams is the only female legislator who resigned for ethical or criminal reasons from 2004 to 2011 in New Jersey

<sup>31</sup> Wally Edge, "Muñoz headed to Assembly," PolitickerNJ.com, April 28, 2009, <http://www.politickernj.com/wallye/29306/munoz-headed-assembly>.

<sup>32</sup> Assemblyman Eric Muñoz was a trauma surgeon and Assemblywoman Nancy Muñoz is a clinical nurse specialist.

<sup>33</sup> Max Pizarro, "Nancy Muñoz wins seat vacated by husband's death in 21st District special convention," PolitickerNJ.com, April 27, 2009, <http://www.politickernj.com/max/29299/nancy-munoz-wins-seat-vacated-husbands-death-23rd-district-special-convention>.

<sup>34</sup> Ronald Smothers, "Bayonne Mayor is Selected as an Interim State Senator," New York Times, June 10, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/10/nyregion/bayonne-mayor-is-selected-as-an-interim-state-senator.html>.

<sup>35</sup> Matt Friedman, "Cunningham is Sworn in," PolitickerNJ, November 8, 2007, <http://vip.politickernj.com/cunningham-sworn-13875>

<sup>36</sup> Kasi Addison, "Legislators on the outs as primary nears - Key Dems back challengers in 28<sup>th</sup>," The Star-Ledger, May 27, 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Cryan's interview was not confidential, but rather on the record, so we are able to use his real name. We cannot use the name of the Critical Activist because our interview with her was confidential, and we wish to quote from her interview.

<sup>38</sup> Even before Cryan's tenure, then-Senator and gubernatorial candidate Jon Corzine supported Loretta Weinberg's challenge to the Bergen County Democratic Organization. Assemblywoman Weinberg sought the state senate seat vacated by Byron Baer and took her case to the state Supreme Court, who found in her favor that party caucus ballots were left uncounted. There is no doubt that Weinberg, who was elected Majority Leader of the Senate in 2012, could also be characterized as a critical actor in getting more women into office in New Jersey. Her victory over a strong county party organization demonstrated an alternative route to political power in the state, and Weinberg has been a persistent and committed advocate on behalf of women throughout her two decades of service in the legislature.

<sup>39</sup> In fact, the overall number of women in the New Jersey legislature did appear to be headed for a decrease, from 34 to 33, following the 2011 elections. Women gained a seat in the Senate but lost two in the Assembly (CAWP 2011). However, two Republican women, Betty Lou DeCroce and Donna Simon, were appointed to fill vacancies created by the deaths of their husbands subsequent to the 2011 elections, bringing the number of women serving in 2012 in the Assembly to 24 and the number of women legislators overall to 35. Both women will have to run in special elections in November 2012 in order to continue to serve through 2014. With these additions, New Jersey moved up to 10<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states in the proportion of women in state legislative office (CAWP 2012c).