

YOUNG WOMEN AND POLITICS

Percentages of Young Women and Men Voting 1974-2008*

	Ages 20-24		Ages 25-29		All ages	
	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men
2008	49.5	42.4	51.8	42.6	60.4	55.7
2006	25.2	23.2	32.6	28.1	48.6	46.9
2004	45.4	39.2	48.6	40.0	60.1	56.3
2002	19.7	16.8	24.6	21.5	43.0	41.4
2000	37.2	31.3	43.3	37.5	56.2	53.1
1998	19.1	17.7	25.7	23.1	42.4	41.4
1996	36.1	30.7	43.7	36.5	55.5	52.8
1994	23.8	20.3	28.7	27.4	63.2	60.8
1992	47.2	42.1	52.8	46.8	62.3	60.2
1990	22.2	21.1	31.1	27.0	45.4	44.6
1988	39.7	35.8	46.0	41.2	58.3	56.4
1986	24.7	22.6	31.7	29.8	46.1	45.8
1984	44.6	41.0	53.3	48.2	60.8	59.0
1982	26.7	27.8	37.2	35.1	48.4	48.7
1980	43.9	40.4	52.4	50.0	59.4	59.1
1978	26.1	25.3	34.0	33.0	45.3	46.6
1976**	46.4	44.7	53.9	51.6	58.8	59.6
1974**	25.6	27.2	34.6	33.0	43.4	46.2

Percentages of First-Year College Students Who Consider It Essential or Very Important that They Influence the Political Structure⁺

	%		%	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
2008	19.8	25.6		
2006	20.5	25.5	1988	14.2
2004	17.0	22.3	1986	13.8
2002	17.0	22.8	1984	14.3
2000	15.3	20.4	1982	13.7
1998	15.3	20.3	1980	14.4
1996	16.8	21.3	1978	13.3
1994	19.1	22.8	1976	13.4
1992	20.6	24.2	1974	10.9
1990	20.3	24.3		16.8

(over)

* Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports. Percent of the voting-age population who reported they voted.

** Data collected for ages 21-24.

⁺ Source: *The American Freshman: National Norms*, Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA.

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Youngest Women to Serve⁺⁺

Governor

The youngest woman to serve as governor was 36-year-old Jane Swift (R), who was elected lieutenant governor of Massachusetts and became governor in 2001 when her predecessor stepped down to accept an ambassadorship.

The youngest woman elected governor in her own right is Sarah Palin (R-AK), who was born in 1964 and took office in 2006 at age 42.

U.S. Senate

Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), born in September, 1960, was 38 when she took office in January, 1999.

U.S. House of Representatives

The youngest woman to serve in the House was Representative Elizabeth Holtzman (D-NY). Born in August, 1941, she was 31 when she was sworn into office in January, 1973; she served until 1981.

Educating Young Women for Politics

National Education for Women's Leadership (NEW Leadership) is CAWP's initiative to empower young women to take on public leadership roles. Central to NEW Leadership is a model curriculum for young women's public leadership education that includes: learning about women's historical and current status in politics, connecting with women leaders, building leadership skills, understanding the politics of difference, using the Internet as a political tool, and developing leadership through practice. To learn more about NEW Leadership, visit www.newleadership.rutgers.edu.

⁺⁺ Source: CAWP National Information Bank.