

## 2010: Not Year of the Woman

By JENNIFER DePAUL, The Fiscal Times on Oct 13, 2010

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The ballots haven't even been cast for the Nov. 2 election but predictions of [sharp declines](#) (the first in 30 years) for female members of Congress are so strong that some women advocacy groups have already re-shifted their focus to 2012.

Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), is spearheading "The 2012 Project", a national, non-partisan campaign to encourage women to run for office in the next election cycle. "The 2012 Project will aggressively recruit successful career women who aren't "living and breathing politics." Walsh said one of their goals is to elect the first female doctor to Congress.

So what happened to women's prospects in 2010? Part of the explanation is that Democratic women in Congress outnumber their Republican counterparts in what is shaping up to be a favorable Republican year, putting more seats in jeopardy. Also, many of the women were elected in the last two election cycles, making them most vulnerable--and some were elected from districts labeled "not safe" for Democrats.

David Wasserman, who tracks House races for the Cook Political Report, said, "lots of pro-Democratic groups should have realized earlier on they need to play more defense than offense." He expects a drop of five to 10 women in Congress on Nov. 2.

The last major increase of women in elected office was in 1992, dubbed "Year of the Woman," when 24 new women were elected to Congress. Pundits have labeled 2010 as 'Year of the Republican Woman' because of the record number of Republican women who filed to run for the House and Senate, but many were defeated in the primaries.

Walsh and Wasserman said neither party have been making a concerted effort to recruit enough women. "It's not a good year for women's participation in Congress," Walsh said. "It underscores the need to inspire women around the country and cast a wider net to draw on to run for office."

Here's a quick glance of the female candidates in this year's elections.

Senate: There are 36 races and 14 women are candidates in 13 states.

House: A near record 138 women won their primaries and are either vying for re-election, fighting for an open seat or running as a challenger. Ten female incumbents are on the Cook Political Report list of most endangered House seats.

Governor: A record-tying 10 women are candidates for governor in eight states—and if a woman were to win, she would be the first female governor to be elected in any of those eight states.

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