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## CHEERS AND JEERS

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### Election Victories: No Increase in Elected Women

By WeNews staff  
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(WOMENSENEWS)--

#### Cheers



Republican women gained three governorships, a U.S. Senate seat and eight seats in the House of Representatives in the midterms elections. Two newly-elected female GOP governors, Nikki Haley, South Carolina, and Susana Martinez, New Mexico, became the first female governors in their respective states, as well as the first female governors of color in the nation.



Terri Sewell also broke ground as the first African American woman in Alabama elected to the U.S. Congress. "I'm very encouraged," she said in a Nov. 4 conference call. "In Alabama, a very southern state, we have two women where we had none before." Alabama is currently represented in the House by seven men.

In Colorado, Amendment 62, the so-called "personhood" amendment, went down to defeat by a large margin, RH Reality Check reported Nov. 3. It would have outlawed abortion at every stage of gestation, as well as all forms of hormonal contraception. The amendment would have also made it difficult, if not impossible, for pregnant women to receive medical treatment if there was any chance of harming the pregnancy.



#### More News to Cheer This Week:

- Human rights activist Asma Jahangir was congratulated by the International Crisis Group in a press release Nov. 2 after she was elected the first female president of Pakistan's Supreme Court Bar Association, Reuters reported Oct. 29. The Supreme Court Bar Association is Pakistan's most influential forum for lawyers.
  - The conventional picture of China as a land of unwanted girls, many of them sent overseas for adoption, is being turned on its head as urbanization increases the cost of raising male heirs and erodes the advantage of having sons to work the fields and support parents in their dotage, the Financial Times reported Nov. 1.
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- Dilma Rousseff won the run-off election Oct. 31 to become Brazil's first female president, reported the BBC Nov. 1. Rousseff has said her top priorities are gender equality, improving the quality of education and fighting for the 20 million Brazilians living in poverty.
  - A study by the Center of Philanthropy at Indiana University found that in every income level, households headed by women are more likely to donate to charity in larger amounts and more often than those headed by men, reported The Record, a New Jersey newspaper, Nov. 1.
  - Margaret Thatcher tops the list of most influential women in a new survey of U.K. women,

reported the Guardian Nov. 1. The former prime minister received 31 percent of the votes while no supermodels or pop stars made the top 10. The survey indicates women regard intelligence and independence in their role models over appearance, according to the article.

- The new health care law may cover birth control as preventive care for women, reported NPR Oct. 31. Supporters say this will encourage effective family planning in the U.S., where almost half of all pregnancies are unplanned.

## Jeers



This election cycle may mark the first downturn of women's representation--or lack of growth--in 28 years, according to Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Women in Politics at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J. Currently, women hold 17 of 100 seats in the Senate and 73 of 435 seats in the House of Representatives. Following this election, women now have 16 secure Senate seats with incumbent Sen. Lisa Murkowski's election yet undetermined. Women have 69 House seats secured with five elections not yet called, though one candidate, Arizona Republican challenger Ruth McClung, is projected to lose.

Democratic women in Congress experienced significant defeats. All losing female incumbents in Congress, nine in the House and one in the Senate, were Democrats.

In addition, because of the change of the House leadership, Rep. Nancy Pelosi will lose her post as Speaker of the House, which had made her the highest-ranking elected woman in U.S. history.

Media attention was not kind to female candidates this election cycle, experts said in a Women's Campaign Forum teleconference Nov. 4. Jennifer Lawless, director of American University's Women and Politics Institute, based in Washington, D.C., said that in a year that saw gains by Republican women, the media focused on losing and fringe candidates, which could create the perception that female candidates are liabilities. Failed Virginia congressional candidate Krystal Ball talked about sexy photos taken of her and her ex-husband at a party that became widely circulated. "I became the third most Googled in the world," said Ball.

## More News to Jeer This Week:

- With the loss of key members of the House, the call to repeal "don't ask, don't tell" may founder, reported The Miami Herald Nov. 4. At least 10 Democrats on the Armed Services Committee were defeated in the election.
- With a number of anti-choice candidates winning and pro-choice candidates losing, the results are likely to undermine the political constituency for abortion rights. According to a Nov. 4 Agence France-Presse, at least 49 of the newcomers to the House are opposed to women having the right to choose to have an abortion, according to the New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights.
- An Iranian woman whose sentence of execution by stoning for adultery provoked a worldwide outcry will instead be hanged for the murder of her husband, a human rights group said, Reuters reported Nov. 2. But according to a Nov. 4 Reuters article, it appears she has not been executed and her sentencing has been suspended again.
- Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi dismissed calls Nov. 2 to resign over his involvement with an underage Moroccan runaway and even created a new uproar by claiming it was better to love beautiful girls than gays, the Associated Press reported Nov. 2.
- Saudi female activists expressed outrage and confusion on Nov. 2 at a new Islamic religious ruling, known as a fatwa, challenging a government initiative to allow women to work as cashiers in supermarkets and department stores, the Agence France-Presse reported Nov. 2. The fatwa said cashier jobs were not permissible because they resulted in the women mixing with unrelated men.

## Noted:

- Oklahoma on Nov. 2 approved a ballot measure blocking judges from considering Islamic or international law when making a ruling, Politico reported Nov. 3. Nearly 70 percent of voters in the state cast ballots approving the measure.
- Republican incumbent Sen. Lisa Murkowski has an unexpected chance of winning with a write-in campaign against Republican nominee Joe Miller, reported CNN Nov. 4. She would be the first U.S. senator to win on a write-in campaign since 1954, though it may take weeks to count and validate the write-in votes.

## AFP World Headlines

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- House races that currently hang in the balance include Arizona Democratic incumbent Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, Illinois Democratic incumbent Rep. Melissa Bean and Republican challenger Ann Marie Buerkle from New York. The Arizona race with Republican challenger Ruth McClung has not officially been called, but according to a Nov. 5 Arizona Daily Star article, she has most likely been defeated. In South Carolina, Republican challenger Renee Ellmers was declared the winner, but her opponent, Democrat incumbent Rep. Bobby Etheridge, is calling for a recount.

Results for Female Candidates in 2010 Midterm Elections:

Winning Governorships -

- Jan Brewer (R-Ariz.), Nikki Haley (R-S.C.), Susana Martinez (R-N.M.), Mary Fallin (R-Okla.)

Losing Governorships -

- Meg Whitman (R-Calif.), Leslie Petersen (D-Wyo.), Alex Sink (D-Fla.)

Wins in the U.S. Senate -

- Patty Murray (D-Wash.), Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.), Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.)

Losses in the U.S. Senate -

- Sharron Angle (R-Nev.), Christine O'Donnell (R-Del.), Linda McMahon (R-Conn.), Robin Carnahan (D-Mo.), Lisa Johnston (D-Kan.), Roxanne Conlin (D-Iowa), Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.), Elaine Marshall (D-N.C.)

U.S. House of Representatives Results -

- 14 Republican incumbents and 44 Democratic incumbents secured their seats for the next Congressional session.
- Six challengers, five Republicans and one Democrat, defeated incumbents.
- Five female candidates, three Democrats and two Republicans, won in races for an open seat.
- Nine incumbents, all Democrats, lost their seats in the House.
- 22 Republicans and 26 Democrats challenged incumbents and lost.
- Seven women, all Democrats, lost in their bid for an open House seat.

The Center for American Women and Politics has a full list of women candidates and their current status.



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