
too few serving in elective office : Opinion Shop

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Will 2012 be another «year of the woman» as was 1992? There's a number of organizations working hard to make sure that qualified women run for office, among them [the 2012 Project](#) and [Emerge California](#).

We sometimes forget the need to elect more women to Congress and statehouses because we have so many powerful female legislators and policy makers from the Bay Area, says Mary Hughes, the director of the 2012 Project. She ticks off, in Washington, D.C.: Democratic Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer; U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Oakland; House Minority Leader (and first female Speaker of the House) Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco; U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Palo Alto; U.S. Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Hillsborough; Zoe Lofgren, D-San Jose; Lynn Woolsey, D-Petaluma; Ellen Tauscher, a former member of Congress and now under secretary of state for arms control and international security affairs; and, not to forget six women in the state Assembly and three in the state Senate.

Female representation in government is strong here, but that's not typical of the rest of the United States. Yet can you guess where California ranks as a state in terms of female representation in the statehouses?

California's Legislature has 27.5 percent female members, ranking 16th among state legislatures, according to the [Center for American Women and Politics](#). That's behind Colorado (home of cowboys, oil roughnecks and telecom engineers), which ranks No. 1, Vermont (2) Arizona (3); Hawaii (4) Minnesota (5) and Washington (6).

Even in first-ranked Colorado, women are only 41 percent of those elected to its legislature. We're a far

cry from parity. Women are, after all, the majority -- 51 percent of the U.S. population.

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