

## Analysis finds state's legislative redistricting has big impact on female lawmakers

Published: Monday, April 25, 2011, 11:24 AM Updated: Tuesday, April 26, 2011, 8:25 AM



**Matt Friedman/Statehouse Bureau**  
By



Tony Kurdzuk/The Star-Ledger

Assemblywoman Joan Quigley (D-Hudson) will not be seeking reelection because of a shift in legislative district boundaries.

**TRENTON** — Female lawmakers bore the brunt of recent legislative district redistricting process, according to a Rutgers University analysis released this morning.

"In a state where 28 percent of the current Legislature is female, women make up 70 percent of the legislators who will retire from the legislature as a result of redistricting," says Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Women and Politics. "The impact of the new map has been especially harsh on incumbent Democratic assemblywomen, with one quarter of them leaving the legislature."

Walsh said women have made progress in winning seats in the Legislature in recent years, but "that progress may now be slowed."

The number of women running for state Senate this year, however, is at record levels, with 23 seeking seats in the primaries. There are 50 women running in primaries for the state's 80 Assembly seats, down from a peak of 51 in 2007.

The study cites five women who are not seeking reelection because of the state's shifting legislative district boundaries: Denise Coyle (R-Somerset), Joan Quigley (D-Hudson), Caridad Rodriguez (D-Hudson), Joan Voss

(D-Bergen) and Elease Evans (D-Passaic).

Evans, however, announced she would retire from the Assembly two weeks before the commission that redrew the districts settled on a new map. In the same district, Assemblywoman Nellie Pou (D-Passaic) is running unopposed for the Democratic nomination for state Senate in a district she's expected to easily carry.

Three weeks ago, Democrats prevailed in the once-in-a-decade process to redraw the state's 40 legislative districts. The 11-member commission — made up of five Democrats, five Republicans and one independent tiebreaker — voted to adopt the Democratic map 6-5.

Of the 11 commissioners, three were women.

**Latest Statehouse coverage:**

© 2011 NJ.com. All rights reserved.