

November 20, 2017

Women Candidates in Election 2018

One Year From Election Day

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Has there been a “surge” of women running for office after election 2016? With one year until the 2018 elections, we took a look at the numbers of women candidates to assess the degree to which media narratives about, and anecdotal evidence of, women’s heightened political engagement have translated into bids for office. In comparing the numbers of women running this cycle with the number at this point in previous cycles, we find that there *are* more women running for office in 2018, but that the increases in candidacies vary by level of office.

- In the U.S. Senate, increases in the number of female incumbents and challengers of both parties account for the rise in women’s candidacies.
- In the U.S. House, the surge of women candidates is concentrated almost entirely among Democratic challengers.
- In contrast to the congressional level, the jump from the 2014 cycle in women’s candidacies at the statewide elected executive level, including governor and lieutenant governor, is mostly due to a rise in the number of female incumbents and women running for open seats. Republican women outnumber Democratic women as statewide elected executive candidates for all offices but governor, where there were more Democratic than Republican women running for open seats as of early November 2017.

Finally, despite the increase in the number of women running for office in 2018, women were still less than one-quarter of all potential candidates one year out from Election Day, with Republican women an even lower proportion of their party’s potential candidates than Democratic women.¹ This indicates that (1) the number of male candidates seeking office in 2018 may also be higher than in previous years, and (2) there remains work to do to recruit and support women’s candidacies.

All of the numbers presented here are as of November 6, 2017, exactly one year prior to election 2018. The dates of comparison for previous cycles are November 15, 2011, November 8, 2013, and November 9, 2015.² For the most recent updates on potential women candidates, see Election Watch: http://cawp.rutgers.edu/facts/elections/election_watch.

U.S. Senate

Table 1. Potential Women Candidates for U.S. Senate

	2018 Cycle	2016 Cycle	2014 Cycle	2012 Cycle
U.S. Senate	38 (25D, 13R)	19 (13D, 6R)	27 (10D, 17R)	28 (17D, 11R)
Incumbents	11 (10D, 1R)	3 (1D, 2R)	4 (3D, 1R)	7 (6D, 1R)
Challengers	13 (3D, 10R)	7 (7D, 0R)	9 (2D, 7R)	8 (3D, 5R)
Open Seat	5 (3D, 2R)	7 (5D, 2R)	9 (4D, 5R)	11 (6D, 5R)
Primary Challengers	9 (9D)	2 (0D, 2R)	5 (1D, 4R)	2 (2D, 5R)

NOTE: Numbers presented here are as of November 6, 2017, November 15, 2011, November 8, 2013, and November 9, 2015.

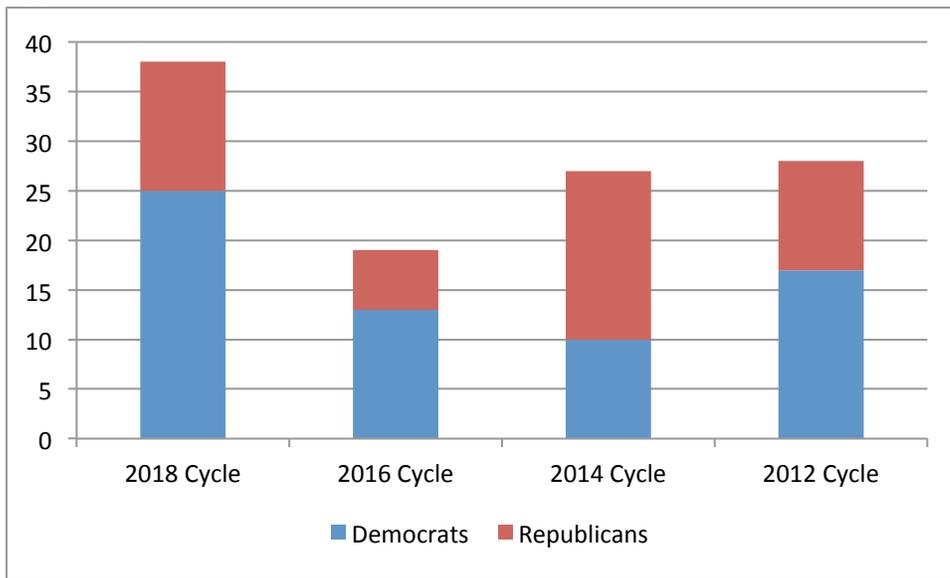
As of November 6, 2017, 38 (25D, 13R) women had been identified as potential candidates for the U.S. Senate. This is almost double the number of women Senate candidates at this time in 2015, and about ten more than in elections 2014 and 2012.

¹ Because CAWP does not verify all male potential candidates as we do for female candidates, the number of male candidates included in these calculations may be slightly inflated. Still, the gender disparities are stark enough that this overall finding of women’s underrepresentation would be unchanged.

² These numbers could go either up or down as more women decide to run, while some of those included here, e.g. those among multiple challengers in a single district, may decide not to run by the time filing deadlines arrive.

It is also two short of the record high number of women who filed for Senate seats in any one election year; 40 women ran in 2016.

Figure 1. Potential Women Candidates for the U.S. Senate



More incumbent women senators are up for re-election this year than in any of the past three elections; 11 (10D, 1R) incumbent women will be on the ballot in 2018. The number of women running for open seats is actually lower this year than in recent elections, while the number of challengers, including primary challengers, is up in 2017. As of early November, nine Democratic women were expected to challenge members of their party in Senate primary contests in 2018. Among the 13 women seeking the nomination to unseat an incumbent of an opposing party, 10 were Republicans and 3 were Democrats.

NOTE: Numbers presented here are as of November 6, 2017, November 15, 2011, November 8, 2013, and November 9, 2015.

Women were 22.2% of potential U.S. Senate candidates identified as of November 6, 2017; they were 32.5% of potential Democratic candidates and 13.8% of potential Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate.

Today, there are 21 (16D, 5R) women in the U.S. Senate. All of the 10 (6D, 4R) women not up for re-election this year are expected to remain in the 116th Congress.

U.S. House

Table 2. Potential Women Candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives

	2018 Cycle	2016 Cycle	2014 Cycle	2012 Cycle
U.S. House	354 (291D, 63R)	181 (121D, 60R)	156 (109D, 47R)	161 (100D, 61R)
Incumbents	73 (56D, 17R)	78 (56D, 22R)	74 (57D, 17R)	69 (45D, 24R)
Challengers	198 (184D, 14R)	57 (39D, 18R)	45 (27D, 18R)	37 (25D, 12R)
Open Seat	56 (34D, 22R)	36 (21D, 15R)	26 (17D, 9R)	38 (21D, 17R)
Primary Challengers	27 (17D, 10R)	10 (5D, 5R)	11 (8D, 3R)	17 (9D, 8R)

NOTE: Numbers presented here are as of November 6, 2017, November 15, 2011, November 8, 2013, and November 9, 2015.

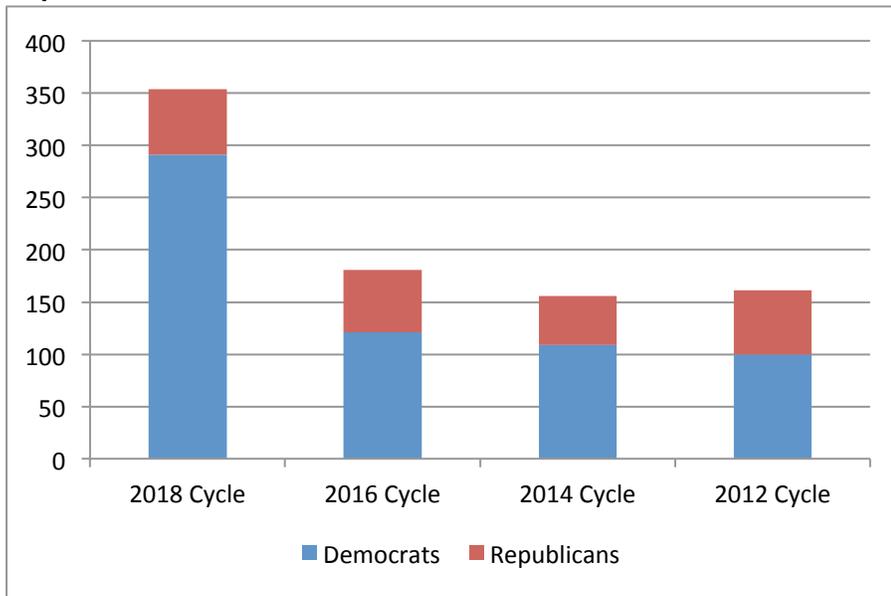
As of November 6, 2017, 354 (291D, 63R) women had been identified as potential candidates for the U.S. House. This is about double the number of women House candidates at this time in 2015, and more than double in elections 2014 and 2012. There are slightly fewer incumbent women House members up for re-election this year, with 11 (6D, 5R) congresswomen not running for re-election.³

The number of women running for open seats is higher this year than in recent elections, but the most significant jump in women candidates in the 2018 election is among challengers. There were 198 (184D, 14R) women candidates seeking to challenge an incumbent member of the opposing party as of the first week of November, almost four times the number of

³ Diane Black (R-TN), Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM), Colleen Hanabusa (D-HI), Kristi Noem (R-SD) are expected to run for governor. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Martha McSally (R-AZ), and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) are expected to run for the U.S. Senate. Lynn Jenkins (R-KS), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH), and Niki Tsongas (D-MA) are retiring.

women challengers being tracked at this time in 2015. This jump from 2015 is concentrated entirely among Democratic women challengers, whose numbers are up more than 400%. There are also more women challenging incumbents of their own parties (“primary challengers”) in the 2018 election (17D, 10R), though the partisan disparities are not as severe.

Figure 2. Potential Women Candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives



In November 2017, the number of Democratic women candidates, and even Democratic women challengers alone, was already more than the total number of Democratic women candidates who ran in 2016.

Women were 22.5% of potential U.S. House candidates identified as of November 6, 2017; they were 28.9% of potential Democratic candidates and 11.1% of potential Republican candidates for the U.S. House.

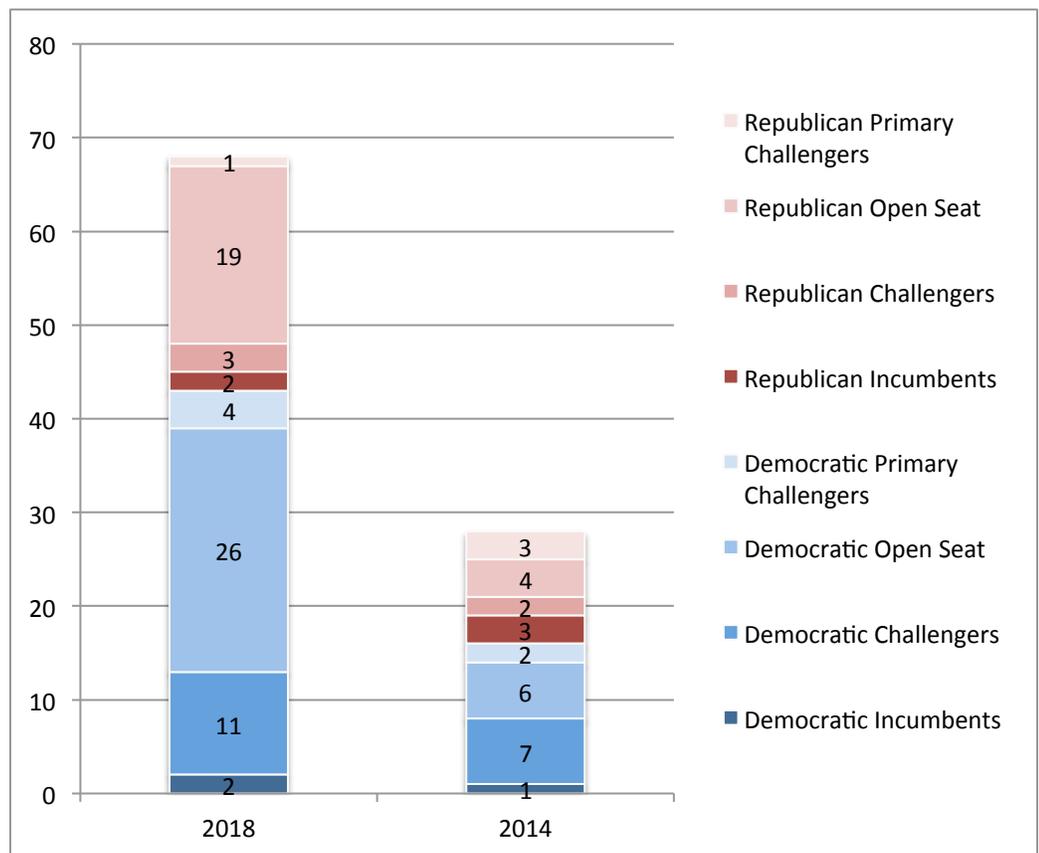
Today, there are 105 (78D, 27R) women in the U.S. House of Representatives.

NOTE: Numbers presented here are as of November 6, 2017, November 15, 2011, November 8, 2013, and November 9, 2015.

Governors & Lieutenant Governors

There will be 36 gubernatorial offices contested in the 2018 election, which matches the number of governors’ races in 2014. As of November 6, 2017, 68 (43D, 25R) women had been identified as potential candidates for governor, compared to 28 (16D, 12R) women at that point in the 2014 cycle. In 2014, the *final* number of women candidates for governor was 30 (16D, 14R). The record number of women gubernatorial candidates to file in one cycle is 34, which occurred in 1994. Perhaps most importantly, two-thirds of women candidates (26D, 19R) as of early November 2017 were running for open seats. Nineteen (11D, 3R) women were challengers, and four (2D, 2R) of the six current women governors will

Figure 3. Potential Women Candidates for Governor

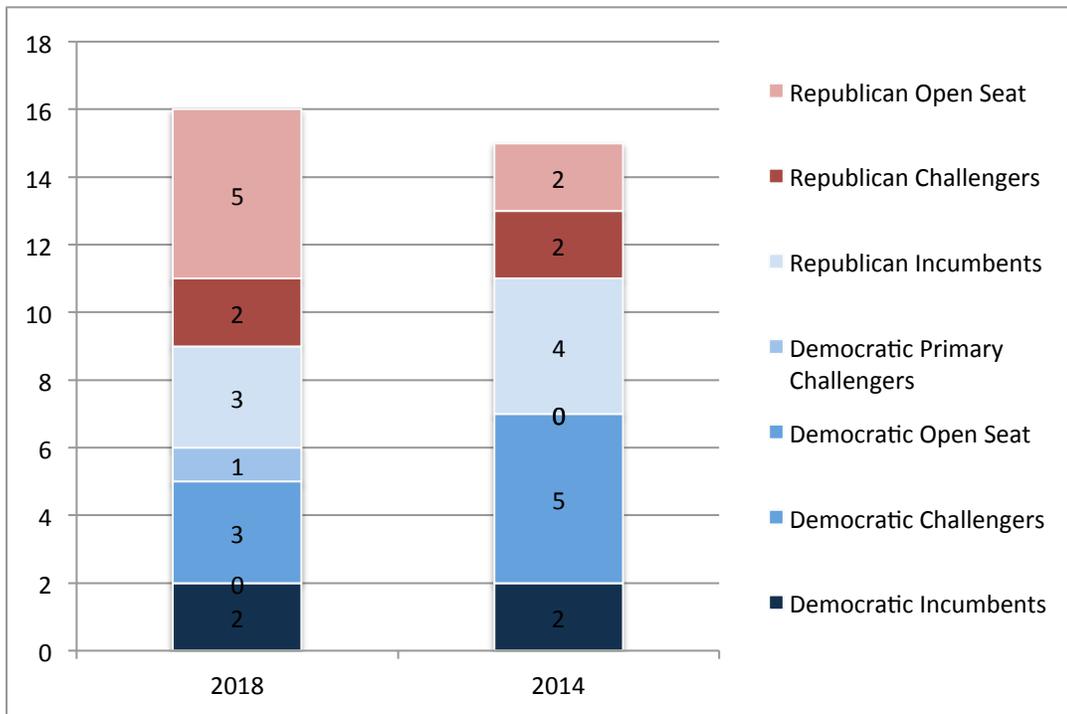


NOTE: Numbers presented here are as of November 6, 2017 and November 8, 2013.

be up for re-election. Two incumbent women – New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez (R) and Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin (R) – are term-limited.

Women were 24.3% of potential gubernatorial candidates identified as of November 6, 2017; they were 30.7% of potential Democratic candidates and 17.9% of potential Republican candidates for governor.

Figure 4. Potential Women Candidates for Lieutenant Governor



Sixteen (6D, 10R) women were potential candidates for lieutenant governor as of November 6, 2017. Eight (3D, 5R) of them are contesting open seats, three (1D, 2R) are challengers, and five (2D, 3R) are incumbents. In the 2014 cycle, a similar number of women were candidates for lieutenant governor (15), but nearly half were running as challengers. Because not all lieutenant governor nominations are determined by independent candidacies (gubernatorial candidates choose their running mates after nomination in many

NOTE: Numbers presented here are as of November 6, 2017 and November 8, 2013.

states), these numbers are less predictive of a final tally of women on the ballot for this office.

Women were 31.3% of potential candidates for lieutenant governor identified as of November 6, 2017; they were 30% of potential Democratic candidates and 32.3% of potential Republican candidates for lieutenant governor.

Today, there are 6 (2D, 4R) women governors and 12 (5D, 7R) women lieutenant governors. Sheila Oliver (D-NJ) will be sworn in as a 13th woman lieutenant governor in January 2018.

Other Statewide Elected Executive Offices

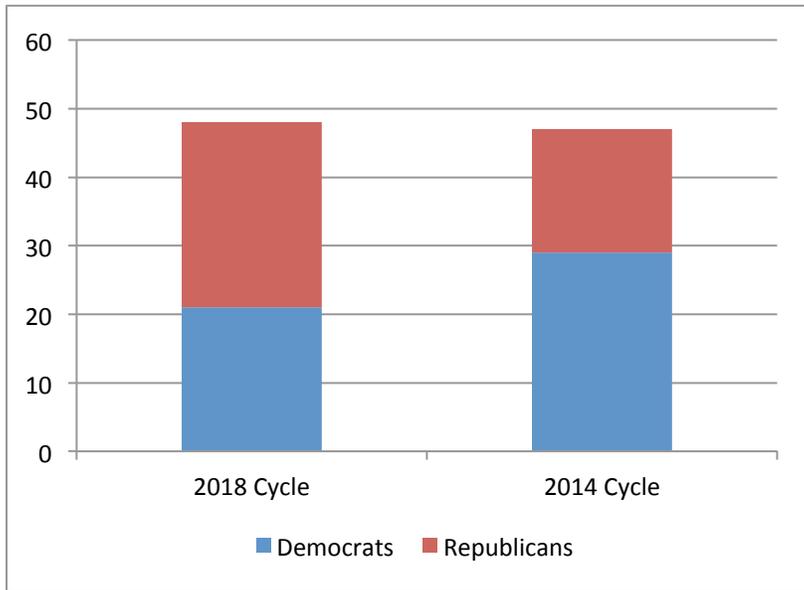
Table 3. Potential Women Candidates for the Statewide Elected Executive Offices

	2018 Cycle	2014 Cycle
Other Statewide Elected Executive Offices	48 (21D, 27R)	47 (29D, 18R)
Incumbents	29 (13D, 16R)	17 (8D, 9R)
Challengers	4 (2D, 2R)	12 (12D, 0R)
Open Seat	14 (5D, 9R)	17 (8D, 9R)
Primary Challengers	1 (1D)	0

NOTE: Numbers presented here are as of November 6, 2017 and November 8, 2013.

As of November 6, 2017, 48 (21D, 27R) women had been identified as potential candidates for the statewide elected executive offices other than governor or lieutenant governor. This is comparable to the number of women running for these offices at this time in 2013, when a similar number of statewide executive offices were being contested; in November 2013, 47 (29D, 18R) women were identified as potential candidates for statewide elected executive offices.

Figure 5. Potential Women Candidates for the Statewide Elected Executive Offices



Unlike at the congressional level, there were more women running for open seats than there were challengers for statewide elected executive office as of November 6, 2017; 14 (5D, 9R) women were running for open seats. Republican women candidates outnumbered Democratic women candidates among the 29 (13D, 16R) incumbents and among those women running for open seats. At the start of November 2017, there were only 5 (3D, 2R) women running as challengers for statewide elected executive posts.

Today, there are 75 (32D, 42R, 1NP) women who hold statewide elected executive offices.

NOTE: Numbers presented here are as of November 6, 2017 and November 8, 2013.

Stay Tuned

Forecasts for potential candidates change daily, as some individuals choose not to run while others throw their hat into the ring. Stay tuned to our Election Watch page throughout the election season for the latest lists of women candidates and summary counts by level of office, seat status, and party: http://cawp.rutgers.edu/facts/elections/election_watch.