
Term Limits and the Representation of Women

Mary Hawkesworth and Katherine E. Kleeman

**Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey**

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Finally, we want to thank the legislators and activists who participated in the term limits conference and whose experiences are reported here. CAWP's research has shown why it is essential that women's voices be heard in the halls of government. The women who take on the tremendous challenge of serving in public office, and especially those who work to ensure that other women will follow them, can take pride in the difference they make, both in public policies and in the institutions where those policies are shaped.

Mary Hawkesworth
Katherine E. Kleeman

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Executive Summary

In the last decade of the 20th century, 18 states in the U.S. changed the rules of the political game in fundamental ways. By imposing a cap on the number of years that elected officials may serve in office, term limit legislation creates opportunities for women and people of color to increase their representation in public office.

To develop strategies to enable women to capitalize upon the political opportunities created by term limits, the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) drew upon the expertise of women elected officials in twelve states where term limits had gone into effect prior to 2000. In November 1999 women legislators from these states joined scholars and representatives of women's advocacy groups for a conference at the Eagleton Institute of Politics to explore means to maintain and enhance women's political representation.

Term Limits and the Representation of Women provides an overview of conference deliberations. The preliminary data on the gender impact of term limits indicates that although term limits create opportunities for women and minorities to move into state legislatures, the mere existence of an opportunity does not guarantee the achievement of a desired outcome. In the 1998 elections in 6 term-limited states, while women gained 7 senate seats opened by term limits, four more women in state houses vacated seats because of term limits than were elected to such seats. African American women and Latinas were particularly hard hit: of the 7 African American women forced out of state houses by term limits, only 1 was replaced by another African American woman; of the 5 Latinas forced out of office by term limits, only 2 were replaced by Latina legislators. In the 2000 elections in 11 term-limited states, 19 women senators were forced out by term limits, and 19 women won senate seats opened by term limits. In house races, 70 women lost their seats due to term limits, but only 65 women won seats opened by term limits.

Conference participants agreed that:

- Recruitment of viable women candidates to run for seats opened by term limits is key to increasing the numbers of women in state legislatures.
- Term limits do not discriminate on the basis of sex in the removal of public officials, but current political recruitment practices continue to advantage men.
- In the 1998 and 2000 elections, there were no women candidates running in primary elections for the majority of seats opened by term limits or for a very large proportion of seats vacated by women incumbents forced out by term limits.
- Neither the Democratic Party nor the Republican Party is making a major effort to identify women candidates, encourage women to run for open seats, or support women candidates in primary and general elections in term-limited states.
- If women are to preserve and increase their present numbers in state legislatures, there must be concerted efforts by activists, women's organizations, and political parties to recruit more women to open seats.
- Effective recruitment strategies must expand prevailing conceptions of who constitutes a viable candidate, paying heed to women's differing paths to political power.
- To eliminate subtle and blatant barriers to women's full participation in public leadership, additional efforts must be devoted to the development of training programs to groom women for public office and for leadership positions within the public sphere.

Introduction

Since 1990, twenty-two states have passed legislation limiting the number of years that elected representatives may serve in state legislatures. Although three state supreme courts have struck down term limits,¹ in 19 states term limits govern the political careers of 2,313 state legislators, 35% of the state legislators in the United States.

By imposing a cap on the number of years that elected officials may serve in office, term limits change the rules of the political game in fundamental ways. The vast majority (77.6%) of incumbent legislators are men. In principle, any change that weakens the staying power of incumbents could work to the collective advantage of women. By creating more open seats, term limits provide an opportunity for women and other under-represented groups to increase their numbers in state legislatures. Are women taking advantage of the opportunities created by term limits? Are institutions such as political parties and women's advocacy groups using this opportunity to achieve more gender and racial diversity in legislative bodies? If not, is it possible to identify strategies that would enable them to do so?

In November, 1999 the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) convened a meeting in New Brunswick, New Jersey to examine preliminary data on the impact of term limits on women's representation and to explore how women might capitalize upon the political opportunities created by term limits. To participate in the discussion, CAWP invited representatives from twelve states in which term limits have already become effective (Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Ohio, Oregon, and South Dakota). Democratic and Republican women legislators were joined by scholars and representatives of women's advocacy groups to review preliminary findings about women's representation and term limits. The goal of the gathering was not to debate the merits or desirability of term limits, but to analyze the effects of term limits upon the number of women serving in state legislatures and to consider strategies for ensuring that women increase their representation in state legislatures as term limits take hold.

¹According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and Washington enacted term limits legislation that was later voided by the states' highest courts. In November 2000, Nebraska once again passed term limit legislation, which will become effective in 2008.

Exploring the Consequences of Changing the Rules

How are term limits changing the practice of politics in state legislatures? To begin to answer this question, CAWP invited several researchers to share their insights about emerging trends in term-limited states. Gary Moncrief, Professor of Political Science at Boise State University in Idaho and an expert on state legislatures, Jennie Drage, Policy Associate at the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) whose specialization includes term limits, campaign finance reform, initiative and referendum, legislative ethics, and lobbying, Susan Carroll, Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University and Senior Research Associate at CAWP, and Krista Jenkins, a doctoral candidate in political science at Rutgers and graduate research assistant at CAWP provided an overview of discernible impacts of term limits. Their analyses suggest that term limits effect the internal operation of legislative institutions, the acquisition and use of political power, public policy, the composition of the legislature, and the recruitment of legislative candidates. While much more research must be done to assess the gender impact of such changes, analyses of emerging trends may help to identify questions relevant to the representation of women in term-limited states.

Term limits vary across the nineteen states in which they have been adopted, as do the characteristics of legislatures in those states. Term limits are likely to have very different impact in states with full-time legislatures, high salaries, and extensive staff support than they have in states with part-time legislatures, low-pay, and few staff resources. Table 1 classifies states on the basis of the type of legislature and the length of term-limit.

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Table 1
Type of Term Limit and Type of State Legislature

	Full Time	Transitional	Part Time
6-8 year limit	California* Michigan* Ohio	Arizona Colorado Florida Missouri* Nebraska* Oregon*	Arkansas* Idaho Maine Montana South Dakota
10-12 year limit		Nevada* Oklahoma*	Louisiana Utah Wyoming

In transitional states, legislators are in session 4-5 months each year, are comparatively well-paid and their offices are comparatively well-staffed.

*Indicates states with lifetime term limits.

Source: Gary Moncrief

The Internal Operation of Legislative Institutions

Legislatures with six-year term limits are experiencing critical shifts in decision-making power as the time for the cultivation of leadership is dramatically compressed. New mechanisms are being developed to groom newly-elected legislators for leadership. States such as Arkansas, California, Michigan, and Oregon have appointed first-year legislators to serve as committee chairs and vice-chairs in the lower chamber. To compensate for the high turnover in legislators in such short-periods of time, some state legislatures are increasing the training provided for new members, expanding orientation sessions, and developing policy briefings, committee chair apprenticeships, and other strategies to bring newcomers up to speed.

With power shifting towards newcomers, there is less deference to experienced members in term-limited states. Decision-making processes appear to be more open, as new members bring enthusiasm to the legislative process and some cynical veterans depart from the institution. Lack of knowledge of past proceedings, however, has generated the revival of some legislation that had been reviewed and dismissed in the past. There has also been an increase in the introduction of overlapping legislation.

There is evidence that legislative leadership is weakening as leaders are less able to control members. Incoming leaders need time to learn their new jobs and make staff and committee assignments, while lame-duck speakers are more likely to be ineffectual. Despite these problems, however, there is evidence that legislative leaders in term-limited states are taking more active roles such as introducing bills and helping others with their electoral races.

In addition to earlier jockeying for leadership positions, anecdotal evidence from some states indicates increased ideological conflict, decreasing collegiality, growing tension between the House and the Senate, and increased reliance on staff for technical advice and procedural guidance. In addition, governor's initiatives are more likely to move through the lower chamber without objection. State senates, with more veteran members still in place and a better grasp of parliamentary procedure, have gained power, which they have used to bottle up weak legislation forwarded from state houses, exercise more independence in the budget process, and offer more criticism of gubernatorial initiatives. Several states have also reported a growth in administrative problems as new lawmakers failed to understand fully their responsibilities for managing the institution.

Influence Over Legislation

There has been considerable debate over the effect of term limits on legislation. Proponents of term limits argue that term limits will weaken the influence of lobbyists and interest groups, as short-term legislators are held more accountable by the voters. Opponents of term limits, on the other hand, fear that lobbyists and interest groups will become more powerful as veteran legislators are forced out of office and legislatures suffer a resultant loss of institutional memory and political savvy. Some have argued that legislative staff will gain increasing influence as they become the repositories of institutional memory, while others have predicted that the executive branch will become more powerful as the expertise in the legislative branch diminishes.

Preliminary evidence from the twelve states with effective term limits suggests mixed developments. There is no empirical evidence that interest groups and lobbyists are either more or less influential now. But there does seem to be a general perception that lobbyists have to work harder because of all the new faces in the statehouse. Legislative staff members do not seem to feel more powerful; they simply feel more pressured. The one institution that most observers think has gained influence is the office of the governor.

Impact on Policy

The impact of term limits on public policy is complex and various. In some states, legislators forced out by term limits were willing to take risks on policy issues in their last term. In Michigan, for example, term-limited legislators passed comprehensive education reform. In other states, legislatures report a critical loss of expertise in several policy areas, particularly in areas where the subject matter is complex and technical. In at least one state, Maine, new legislators employed a variety of public outreach strategies to explain their agenda and generate new citizen support. There is no evidence of changes in "pork barrel" spending as a result of term limits.

Composition of the Legislature

Several states report that term limits have changed the kinds of people entering the legislature. Some report the election of more young people. In Maine, for example, a group of very young legislators, several of whom were still in college, was elected. Other states report the election of more people from the "fringes" of each party – more liberal Democrats

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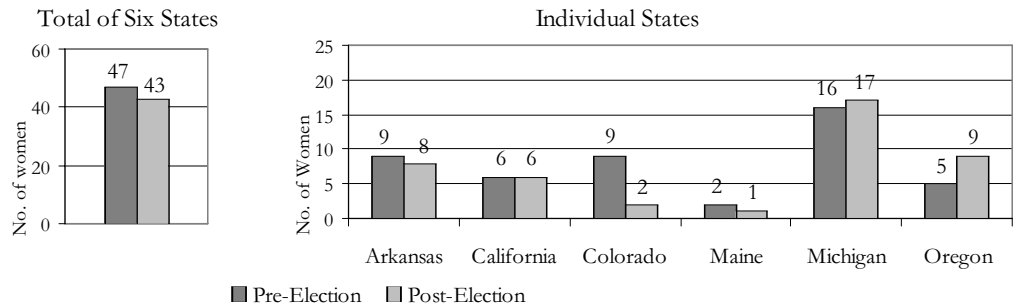
and more conservative Republicans. Thus, new legislators tend to be more ideological than their predecessors. More lawmakers seem to be promoting single-issue agendas.

Proponents of term limits have argued that term limits promote diversity: more women and people of color will be elected to the legislatures as incumbents – primarily white men – are forced out. With respect to diversity, however, the preliminary evidence is mixed.

House results

Contrary to optimistic predictions, the number of women serving in state house seats which became open because their incumbents were term-limited actually decreased following both the 1998 and 2000 elections. Across the six states which implemented term limits for state house races in 1998, 47 incumbent women were forced to leave office as a result of term limits while only 43 women won election to the house seats vacated by these women and other term-limited incumbents (Table 2).

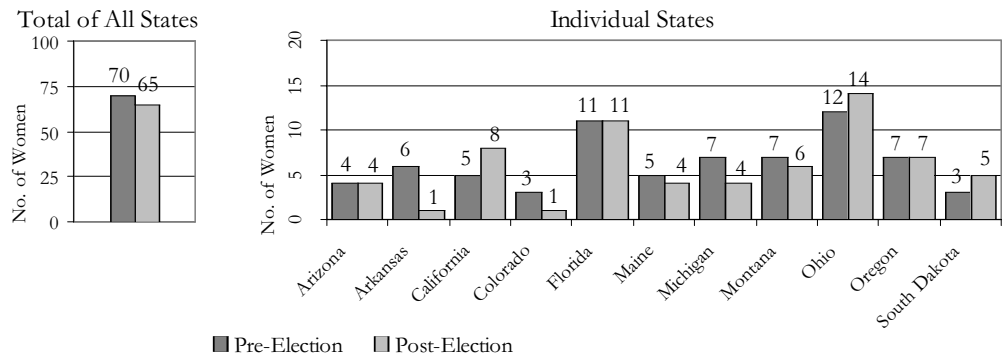
Table 2:
Numbers of Term-Limited State House Seats Represented by Women Before and After the 1998 Elections in Six States



Source: Susan Carroll and Krista Jenkins, "Unrealized Opportunity: Term Limits and the Representation of Women in State Legislatures," March 2001.

Similarly, across the 11 states in which term limits were in effect for house seats in 2000, 70 women who served in term-limited seats were forced to resign while only 65 new women were elected to seats which opened up as a result of term limits (Table 3). In both elections, then, the number of women who were forced to leave office because of term limits was greater than the number of women elected to seats vacated by term-limited incumbents.

Table 3:
Numbers of Term-Limited State House Seats Represented by Women Before and After the 2000 Elections in Eleven States



Source: Susan Carroll and Krista Jenkins, "Unrealized Opportunity: Term Limits and the Representation of Women in State Legislatures," March 2001.

The number of women of color serving in term-limited house seats also declined, while the number of African American and Latino men in such seats increased. Of the seven

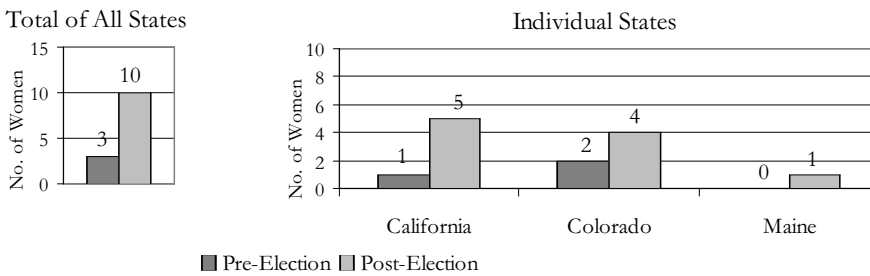
African American women who were forced out of office by term limits in 1998, only one was replaced by another African American woman; one was replaced by a white woman, and the remaining five were replaced by African American men. Of the five Latinas forced out of office by term limits, only two were replaced by Latinas; the other three were replaced by Latino men.

Despite the loss of term-limited seats, the total number of women serving in the lower houses of the six states which implemented term limits for house seats in 1998 remained the same, 145, before and after the 1998 elections. For the 11 states in which term limits were in effect for house seats in 2000, the total number of women state representatives actually increased following the 2000 elections from 265 to 270. Thus, women's victories against incumbents and in open seats not subject to term-limits off-set the loss of women in term-limited seats.

Senate results

The expectation that term limits would lead to increases in the number of women legislators finds some support at the state senate level, but only for the 1998, and not the 2000, elections. In contrast to the pattern of decreases in the number of women serving in term-limited seats found for house races in both elections, the number of women serving in senate seats where an incumbent was term-limited increased as a result of the 1998 elections (Table 4) and stayed the same as a result of the 2000 elections (Table 5) across the states in each election which implemented term limits for senate races. In 1998, three women were forced to give up their senate seats because of term limits, but 10 other women were elected to senate seats which were vacated because of term limits (Table 4). In 2000, 19 women had to step down from senate seats due to term limits, and 19 other women were elected to term-limited seats (Table 5).

Table 4:
Numbers of Term-Limited State Senate Seats
Represented by Women Before and After the 1998 Elections in Three States



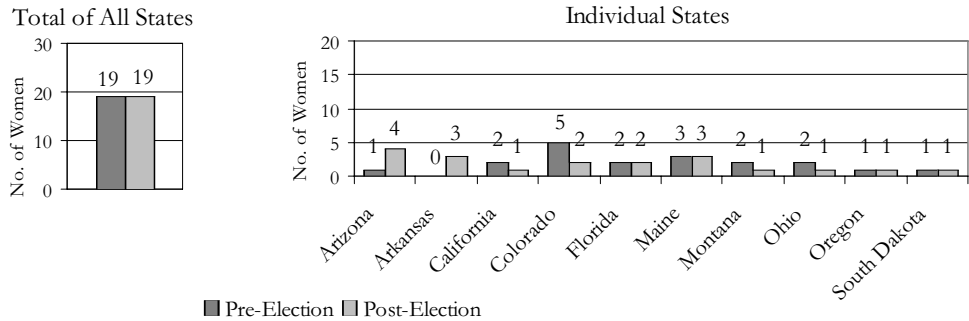
Source: Susan Carroll and Krista Jenkins, "Unrealized Opportunity: Term Limits and the Representation of Women in State Legislatures," March 2001.

In 1998 women made gains both overall and in term-limited seats in each of the three states that had implemented term limits for state senate seats (Table 4). In California only one woman senator was forced out by term limits and five new women were elected to seats that opened up because of term limits. In Colorado two women senators lost their seats because of term limits while four new women were elected in races for term-limited seats. Finally, in Maine the only senator forced out because of term limits was a man, and he was replaced by a woman. Thus, in each of these three states, there were overall increases in women's representation in senate seats due at least partially to gains women made as a result of term limits.

In 2000 the picture was decidedly more mixed. The overall number of women serving in state senates increased in only three states (Arizona, Arkansas, and Oregon). In five states (California, Colorado, Maine, Montana, and Ohio) the numbers of women senators decreased following the 2000 elections, and in two states (Florida and South Dakota) the

numbers stayed the same. Similarly, the number of women in term-limited senate seats increased in some states, remained the same in others, and decreased in still others (Table 5). In two states (Arkansas and Arizona), more women were elected to senate seats that were open because of term limits than were forced to vacate seats because of term limits.

Table 5:
Numbers of Term-Limited State Senate Seats Represented by Women Before and After the 2000 Elections in Ten States



Source: Susan Carroll and Krista Jenkins, "Unrealized Opportunity: Term Limits and the Representation of Women in State Legislatures," March 2001.

In four states (Florida, Maine, Oregon, and South Dakota), the numbers of women serving in term-limited senate seats was the same before and after the 2000 elections. Finally, in four states (California, Colorado, Montana, and Ohio), more women were forced out by term-limits than were elected in seats that were open because of term limits, resulting in decreases in the numbers of women serving in term-limited seats (Table 5). Thus, in only two of the 10 states, Arizona and Arkansas, were there overall increases in women's representation which were due at least in part to gains made by women in term-limited seats.

Table 6:
Proportions of Term-Limited State House Seats Where No Woman Candidate Ran in Either Party's Primary

State	1998	2000
	% of Term-Limited Seats With No Woman Candidate in Major Party Primaries ^a	% of Term-Limited Seats With No Woman Candidate in Major Party Primaries ^b
Arkansas	57.1	87.5
California	18.8	21.7
Colorado	38.9	70.0
Maine	90.9	56.3
Michigan	31.3	33.3
Oregon	38.1	20.0
Arizona		6.7
Florida		42.6
Montana		52.9
Ohio		41.9
South Dakota		40.0
All Term-limited States	42.5	43.6

^a Number of term-limited seats = 49 for Arkansas, 16 for California, 18 for Colorado, 11 for Maine, 64 for Michigan, 21 for Oregon, and 179 for all six states combined.

^b Number of term-limited seats = 24 for Arkansas, 23 for California, 10 for Colorado, 16 for Maine, 21 for Michigan, 15 for Oregon, 15 for Arizona, 54 for Florida, 34 for Montana, 43 for Ohio, 20 for South Dakota, and 275 for all 11 states combined.

Source: Susan Carroll and Krista Jenkins, "Unrealized Opportunity: Term Limits and the Representation of Women in State Legislatures," March 2001.

Parties and the Recruitment of Legislative Candidates

Term limits provide the opportunity for a more diverse legislature by increasing the number of open seats in any given election. Whether that opportunity is fulfilled or not depends on whether more women and minority candidates run for and win those open seats. It is clear that term limits enable parties (and others) to start their recruitment process much earlier. As a consequence of term limits, political parties and candidates know years in advance which seats will be open because the incumbent is term-limited; hence, targeted recruitments can begin much earlier. Are women candidates as likely as men to be recruited to run for office? Are women as likely as men to put themselves forward as candidates in term-limited races?

A review of the gender of candidates in primary elections in term-limited states may shed some light on this question. Table 6 indicates that in 1998 and 2000 in more than two-fifths of all races for house seats vacated because of term limits across all six states, no woman entered either the Republican or the Democratic primary.

Across the states where term limits were implemented, a woman entered the Democratic primary to try to win the seat of a term-limited Democratic incumbent in only 42.2 percent of the cases in 1998 (N=102) and 46.6 percent of the cases in 2000 (N=131). A woman entered the Republican primary to run for the seat previously held by a term-limited Republican incumbent in only 48.1 percent of the cases in 1998 (N=77) and 41.7 percent of the cases in 2000 (N=144).

Table 7:
Proportions of Term-Limited State House Seats Previously Held by Women Incumbents Where No Woman Ran in Major Party Primaries

State	1998	2000
	% of Term-Limited Women's Seats with No Woman Candidate in Major Party Primaries ^a	% of Term-Limited Women's Seats with No Woman Candidate in Major Party Primaries ^b
Arkansas	44.4	66.7
California	16.7	20.0
Colorado	55.6	66.7
Maine	100.0	80.0
Michigan	18.8	42.9
Oregon	20.0	0.0
Arizona		0.0
Florida		18.2
Montana		71.4
Ohio		58.3
South Dakota		33.3
All Term-limited States	34.0	41.4

^a Total number of term-limited seats previously held by women incumbents = 9 in Arkansas, 6 in California, 9 in Colorado, 2 in Maine, 16 in Michigan, 5 in Oregon, and 47 across all six states.

^b Total number of term-limited seats previously held by women incumbents = 6 in Arkansas, 5 in California, 3 in Colorado, 5 in Maine, 7 in Michigan, 7 in Oregon, 4 in Arizona, 11 in Florida, 7 in Montana, 12 in Ohio, 3 in South Dakota, and 70 across all 11 states.

Source: Susan Carroll and Krista Jenkins, "Unrealized Opportunity: Term Limits and the Representation of Women in State Legislatures," March 2001.

Term limits provide the opportunity for a more diverse legislature by increasing the number of open seats in any given election. Whether that opportunity is fulfilled or not depends on whether more women and minority candidates run for and win those open seats.

Table 7 indicates that in primary races for house seats which had previously been held by a term-limited woman incumbent, no woman candidate entered either party's primary in one-third of the races in 1998 and two-fifths of the races in 2000. For an even larger proportion of these house seats, all of the candidates in the primary of the retiring woman incumbent's party were men. For 48.1 percent of the house seats in 1998 (N=27) and 45.5 percent of the house seats in 2000 (N=44) previously held by Democratic women, no woman entered the

The absence of women candidates from primary contests raises important questions about party recruitment practices.

Democratic primary. For 40.0 percent of the house seats in 1998 (N=20) and 60.0 percent of the house seats in 2000 (N=25) previously held by Republican women, no woman ran in the Republican primary. Since in most cases a woman would have a better chance of winning the seat if she were of the same party as the retiring incumbent, the lack of women candidates in the primary of the incumbent's party certainly worked to depress the number of new women who were elected to replace women incumbents forced out by term limits.

Because there were so many races for house seats previously held by a term-limited woman incumbent where no woman entered the race in either party, many of the term-limited seats held by women before the elections were occupied by men following the election. Across all six states only 25.5 percent of the term-limited house seats in 1998 (N=47) and 29.0 percent of the term-limited house seats in 2000 (N=69) held by women before the election continued to be held by women following the election.

The absence of women candidates from primary contests raises important questions about party recruitment practices. Are women absent because the parties fail to recruit them, or worse, actively thwart them? Do women decline invitations from their parties to run? Or, in the absence of party recruitment efforts, are women less likely than men to put themselves forward as candidates?

To begin to answer such questions, more needs to be known about women candidates' decisions to run for office and the obstacles they face once they have decided to launch a campaign. Table 8 reports the results of one survey designed to investigate how men and women come to run for office. As Table 8 makes clear, men were more than three times more likely than women to be "self-starters," who threw their hats into the ring solely on their own decision. By contrast, women were more than twice as likely as men to have been persuaded to run.

Table 8
Whose Idea Was It To Run For Legislature?
Differences between male and female responses

	Men <i>(n=366)</i>	Women <i>(n=98)</i>
Self-starters	37.7%	11.2%
Encouraged	45.1%	52.0%
Persuaded	17.2%	6.7%

(total sample of non incumbent candidates=464)

Source: Gary Moncrief, Peverill Squire, Malcolm Jewell, Who Runs for the Legislature? (Prentice-Hall Inc., 2001.)

That women who run for office are more likely to have been actively recruited, indeed persuaded to run, does not in itself tell us if parties or other organizations are currently making those recruitment efforts in term-limited states. For insights into that question, the reports from women legislators in term limited states are enormously helpful.

Stories from the States

Conference participants² from each term-limited state relayed tales of frustration and of progress: frustration with the barriers that keep women from advancing and progress resulting from creative efforts by both individuals and organizations to identify, groom and support women as candidates for legislative seats and other public offices. They also presented examples of both short-term and long-term strategies taking shape to ensure that viable women candidates would be available as seats open up.

² To encourage the candid exchange of views, while protecting the political interests of the elected women participating in this discussion, CAWP promised to provide confidentiality in reporting the substance of the following discussion. For this reason, no names are attached to quotations emerging from the conference.

Both Democratic and Republican women expressed deep frustration about the absence of systematic efforts by their parties to identify potential women candidates, to encourage them to run for office and to support women candidates throughout their primary and general election campaigns. They also aired concerns about subtle and blatant barriers that confront women in each party. In many of the states where term limits have gone into effect, significant forces are deterring women's advancement. Participants spoke of party leaders who were indifferent, or even hostile, to women as candidates. They described behind-the-scenes decision making and power grabs, and "the anointment" by male leaders of their male successors. One person noted:

The recruitment that is happening now is the designation of successors by some of the most powerful, long-time reps who are going to be term-limited out, who have...obtained pledges from lobbyists for their successors. It is a very orchestrated and calculated role....They have already lined up tremendous amounts of money, and none of this has to do with women being recruited to run, of course.

Several participants noted the prevalence of false promises: party leaders would pay lip service to assisting women, but fail to make good on those promises. As one participant reported:

[Party leaders in my state] talk out of both sides of their mouth. They keep telling me repeatedly "I am going to come down and work with you to recruit women," and then they never show up.

Other participants added stories of practices far more damaging than false promises. A legislator reported that male colleagues in her state on both sides of the aisle keep "hit lists" of women to target for defeat because of actions they have taken on the House floor. In some states where Republican leadership holds strong pro-life views, pro-choice candidates – women in particular – are targeted for defeat in primaries by power brokers within their own party. Some also indicated that the line-up of political players was not changing radically, with many officials simply shifting from one political office to another as term limits forced them out. One person insisted, "Term limits have not removed anyone from the political process. They have merely stirred the pot." Yet some women find it harder to remain political players than do their male counterparts. As one legislator who had been term-limited out of office noted, women struggle to maintain their political livelihood after being forced out while their male counterparts were supported by a "good ol' boys network."

Pro-choice Republican women reported particular difficulties they confront because of their stances on reproductive rights. The national party's platform has long been strongly anti-abortion, and state parties and leaders are often cool, if not hostile, to pro-choice candidates, particularly women. The issue sometimes obscures or drowns out other important concerns that might unite Republicans.

Democratic women also noted that state party organizations are doing little to recruit women candidates, leaving that work to women's organizations and sporadic local efforts. They manifested particular concern over gender bias in party perceptions of "viable" candidates. When choosing the person perceived as the strongest Democratic candidate for a district, party operatives far too frequently consider male candidates only. They may pit the need to recruit African American and Latino candidates against the need to recruit women, as if there were no viable Latina and African American women candidates. Democratic women also indicated that although party leaders claim to remain neutral in primaries, many leaders in their states did back certain candidates covertly, and women were not the usual beneficiaries of such covert support.

Despite the persistent barriers confronting women candidates, some participants did identify examples of places and programs where women were being encouraged to step forward, offering hope that, with concerted effort, progress in women's recruitment might be possible.

In three states, the Republican Party has developed model training programs for women aspiring to political office. The Lincoln Series in Illinois, the Lugar Series in Indiana, and the

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Partisan Political Leadership Development

Republicans in three states – Indiana, Illinois, and New Jersey – have developed training programs to equip GOP women with the skills, contacts and resources needed to mount candidacies or seek high-level appointments. In each state, the program was organized by a core group of Republican women who identified a need and took the initiative. Each selects its participants from applicants who have already demonstrated leadership skills in the workplace or community. Each highlights prominent Republicans from the state, along with non-partisan experts such as journalists or community activists. All three programs provide intensive training over several months in specific political techniques, strategies and concepts.

The Richard G. Lugar Excellence in Public Service Series was the first of these programs, initiated in 1990 by a team of five Indiana women including two elected officials and three businesswomen. Their concept was:

a political leadership development program for fast-tracking and mainstreaming outstanding Hoosier women into positions of influence in the public arena. Up to 18 women are selected annually through an application and interview process to participate in the training.

Day-long classes, led by local, state and national Republican leaders, are held monthly for eight months. The program culminates with a three-day seminar in Washington, D.C. All sessions are designed to encourage, prepare and inspire class members to position themselves for key elected and appointed offices.

Between 1990 and 1999, 120 women ranging in age from 26 to 59 participated in the Lugar Series. Of these women, 32 have become candidates for office and others have been appointed to public service positions at local, state and national levels. Most have become active as leaders, staff members or volunteers in political campaigns.

Funding for the program has come primarily from women donors through individual contributions and an annual fundraising luncheon. Corporate contributions, minimal at first, have grown over the years. The contributions of "Corporate Partners" allowed the series to hire a full time executive director.

The series was named for Senator Richard G. Lugar, long a popular elected official in Indiana. Senator Lugar was enthusiastically involved in the series from the beginning and has met with each class.

A presentation about the Lugar Series at a 1993 meeting of the Republican National Committee inspired Illinois women to mobilize to establish **The Lincoln Series** in 1995. New Jersey women started a similar program, the **Christine Todd Whitman Series**, in 1998, honoring the state's first woman governor. Ohio followed suit in 2000 with the **JoAnn Davidson Series**, named for the former state House speaker.

Whitman Series in New Jersey groom Republican women for candidacies or appointments, teach them specific political skills and techniques, and provide extensive networking opportunities and contacts. Each program sets forth an expectation that participants will run for office, become active in public policy, or mentor other women after completing the program.

G.O.P. women also mentioned the importance of the National Federation of Republican Women. The Federation organizes campaign management schools to help Republican women run for office, and it provides a variety of training, support and networking activities at the state level.

Some governors have also contributed to the advancement of women by increasing the number of women's appointments. Governors make thousands of appointments to high-level positions and to boards and commissions, and these can be valuable both in themselves and as stepping stones to elective office. In some states, organized groups monitor gubernatorial appointments, identify "qualified" women who should be considered, and press for increased inclusion of women in all kinds of positions. The Sue Shear Institute in Missouri (named for a longtime state legislator), for example, has developed a "talent bank" to promote women's selection for appointive offices as one way to help women gain experience in government which can provide a foundation for subsequent electoral campaigns.

With respect to recruitment, Democratic women cited examples of crucial roles played by women within the party, women's organizations, community groups, and individual mentors. One woman described a "farm team" system operating in her Congressional district in which the local party made a concerted effort to recruit and train potential candidates at least three years before nominating them for elective offices. This strategy had proved particularly effective for recruitment of African American candidates.

The Democrats also discussed the critical opportunities afforded by reapportionment and redistricting for the recruitment of women to state legislatures. Noting that redistricting following the 2000 census "will have a very strong impact on minority seats and women's seats," Democratic women suggested that the party's primary focus will likely remain on locating "viable" candidates, and it will fall to women to ensure that women are considered viable, and as such eligible for nomination. Several women suggested that women could benefit greatly if "gender impact" were considered as one criterion among many considered by the party during the redistricting process. But the Democratic legislators suggested that the key to including gender impact in redistricting debates would be to have women legislators serve on the influential redistricting committees and participate in the deal-making while their votes are in demand.

Participants agreed that identifying large numbers of viable women candidates posed a substantial challenge in the short run. Developing a recruitment pool of women candidates is a time-consuming project. Particularly in recent years as election costs have increased and political cynicism has grown, many women who might be appealing candidates have been reluctant to run. Finding interested potential candidates and ensuring that they have the contacts, visibility and resources they need to win takes time and effort. According to conference participants, the challenge of identifying viable women candidates has been taken up by women's organizations and committed party women more often than by the parties themselves. In Michigan, for example, women undertook active efforts to identify, recruit and support women candidates to replace those being term-limited out. The Michigan Women's Political Caucus, with additional support from the Michigan Women's Campaign Fund, hired a former legislator to work on recruitment, and she identified as many as 60 potential candidates. Legislators being term-limited out were asked for their recommendations of potential candidates, and organizations around the state were asked for suggestions. While some of the candidates they recruited did win, some were discouraged by their parties from running, and others lost in primaries. From this experience, the Michigan women determined that they needed to target winnable seats for each party, begin developing potential candidates as much as three years in advance, and use a one-on-one process to recruit the strongest possible candidates.

Other states used different mechanisms to attract and support women candidates. Ohio Democrats turned to WEDO (Women Elected Democratic Officials), which started as a way to help women get to know local officials in preparation for statewide races, but developed into a recruitment tool. Party structures, such as Florida's Federation of Republican Women, recruited, trained and worked for women candidates. Democratic women and the Democrat Hispanic Caucus in Florida joined forces to find and support Latinas to run for the legislature in key districts.

In California, well-qualified Democratic women candidates — assemblywomen who had been term limited out of their seats — were ready to run for the state senate but needed support. Senator Dede Alpert, working with both male and female leaders, created the Democratic Women Leaders Fund, which raised more than \$350,000 to bring more women into California's senate, concentrating on the candidates in greatest need. Other candidates and women senators whose war chests were already full contributed some of their funds to the targeted candidates. As a result, California's senate emerged from the 1998 elections with 10 women members, the largest number ever. California Republican women developed the Seneca Network which, like the national WISH (Women in the House and Senate) List, provides bundled contributions for women candidates; unlike WISH List, however, the Seneca Network does not require a pro-choice stance as a criterion for funding.

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So the challenge is to break out of the box in terms of thinking about who would be a viable candidate, and to look in other kinds of places.

Like California, other states developed fundraising efforts targeting women candidates, sometimes within a party and sometimes across parties. Ohio's Hope Chest models itself on the national EMILY's (Early Money Is Like Yeast) List, which was founded to help elect women to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives by raising financial support for Democratic women. Oregon's WINPAC (Women's Investment Network) initially provided support for pro-choice newcomers to the state legislature, but later focused its efforts exclusively on Democratic women. To gain WINPAC support, candidates must also have developed a strong campaign plan and a sizable campaign organization.

In contrast to these collective strategies to recruit more women as candidates, significant efforts have also been made by individuals. As one Republican woman commented:

I make a solid commitment to a woman who says to me she wants to run. I will raise her the money, put on the fundraisers, do her literature, make sure she is connected to the right resources and that she knows who they are. Whether they are petition gatherers or the fundraisers or whatever it is, I get them what they need. I think it is very important for us to do this. You just have to transfer everything you know to that new person.

A Democrat from another state felt much the same, but expressed regret that efforts were not more concerted:

If we see that a person has the determination and wants to work hard and get elected, and has good qualifications as far as what it takes to understand the issues and run a good campaign, then we help them. But it is all one on one, and that is the unfortunate thing, because there is not a lot of public dialogue. If you happen to know someone else and they talk to you about a good candidate, then you hear about it. But otherwise, it is not in the newspapers, not in what you call the "buzz" of politics.

As voices from many states agreed, a longer term strategy of getting women to put themselves forward as candidates will be critically important. One stated the general agreement concisely:

The truth of the matter is that we aren't getting women to step forward. That is where we need to be much more aggressive. Women have about the same success rate at the polls as men, but we just aren't getting the women to come forward.

How can women be encouraged to put themselves forward as candidates for elective office? Some of the earliest research on women and politics suggested that forms of "countersocialization" were required to empower women to assume equal roles in public leadership. Towards that end, several universities across the United States have developed long-term capacity-building programs to assist women in linking their strengths to public policy needs by pursuing political careers. At Rutgers University, the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and several other universities around the country, leadership education programs have been established to groom women for participation in public leadership roles.

In a number of states women's advocacy groups are structuring opportunities to expose young women to political activities, hoping that they will be inspired to build political careers for themselves. In California, for example, the POWER Project (Profiles of Women Extraordinary and Republican) is reaching out to young women on college campuses to provide role models. At the same time, African American women in California are working through BWOPA (Black Women Organized for Political Action) to offset the possibility that there may soon be no African American women in that state's legislature. In addition to candidate recruitment and financial support, BWOPA is also developing long-term strategies, such as matching women with former legislators for mentoring. The group recognizes that they must go beyond the obvious prospects. As one California Democrat pointed out:

When you talk about grooming new leadership, there are a lot of women out there with leadership skills and talents who have been redirected to other areas — private sector and NGOs. So the challenge is to break out of the box in terms of thinking about who would be a viable candidate, and to look in other kinds of places.

Participants agreed that the search for potential candidates must extend beyond rank and file party activists. Issue involvement, for example, can motivate women to move into the electoral arena. A Democratic woman involved with advocacy for the poor gave an example:

Poverty is robustly bipartisan, and we are seeing a number of young women, young mothers, get very active and involved with this issue. I was very heartened to see one of our volunteers who has become engaged in this issue....She said to me a couple of weeks ago, "I think I'll run for the legislature in a couple of years, because I really think this is an important issue, and if we want changes, this is how we have to make it happen.

Table 9
Characteristics of Legislatures in All Term-Limited States in 2000

	Size		Pay	# of Constituents Per District	
	House/ Assembly	Senate		House/ Assembly	Senate
Arizona	60	30	\$24,000/year	73,801	147,602
Arkansas	100	35	\$12,500/year	25,098	71,708
California	80	40	\$99,000/year	398,478	796,956
Colorado	65	35	\$30,000/year	58,810	109,219
Florida	120	40	\$26,388/year	120,000	360,000
Idaho	70	35	\$14,760/year	16,989	33,979
Louisiana	105	39	\$16,800/year	41,434	111,553
Maine	151	35	\$10,500/year for first regular session; \$7,500/year for second regular session	8,234	35,523
Michigan	110	38	\$55,054/year	87,221	252,483
Missouri	163	34	\$29,080.20/year	32,875	157,609
Montana	100	50	\$59.67/legislative day	8,794	17,587
Nebraska		49	\$12,000/year		340,000
Nevada	42	21	\$130/day maximum of 60 days of session	38,171	76,341
Ohio	99	33	\$42,426.90/year	112,856	338,569
Oklahoma	101	48	\$38,400/year	32,682	68,769
Oregon	60	30	\$14,496/year	53,396	106,791
South Dakota	70	35	\$12,000/two-year term	10,463	20,926
Utah	75	29	\$100/calendar day	26,673	68,983
Wyoming	60	30	\$125/calendar day	8,023	16,047

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures

Issue advocacy can also provide a substantial political base for candidates who emerge from these ranks. The South Dakota Advocacy Network for Women was mentioned as one example of an organization that mobilized women across party lines around issues of mutual concern and subsequently endorsed and supported women candidates who shared those concerns.

Participants acknowledged that many factors may dissuade women from running for office. Many challenges to maintaining or increasing women's representation in legislatures are unrelated to term limits. The nature of the legislature itself can be a barrier to women considering candidacy. Being a legislator is often low paid and always time consuming, and the legislative calendar is incompatible with many kinds of careers and with family responsibilities (See Table 9).

Moreover, in large states, distance from the state capitol may make it difficult for women to assume responsibilities there in addition to those at home. The increasingly bitter political climate and the potential for intrusion into private life discourage many potential candidates from throwing their hats into the ring. Term limits may exacerbate these challenges, however, if incumbent women who have already overcome those barriers are forced out of office and persistent gender bias within political parties hinders the cultivation of career paths for women politicians comparable to those available to male politicians, and if insufficient efforts are made to recruit additional women to run for office in term-limited states.

What's Next: Following Up in Term-Limited States

Additional research on the effects of term limits on women's representation is certainly needed as term limits are implemented in more states over the next several years. Nevertheless, preliminary data suggest that effective recruitment of women candidates is critical to the maintenance and enhancement of women's representation in states with term limits.

In response to the clear need for mobilization to recruit women and minority candidates, each state delegation presented an action plan to enhance the recruitment of women within their state. The action plans reflected ideas shared by meeting participants in general sessions, as well as some innovative ideas generated by discussion among the members of the state delegation. Each of the actions plans addressed a range of key issues, including:

Candidate recruitment: In most of the states represented, much more can be done to recruit women candidates. Participants agreed that the tedious task of identifying and wooing potential candidates one by one remains a necessity, even where other kinds of efforts might be underway. One state suggested a bi-partisan strategic targeting project, identifying districts where legislative seats were almost certain to go to particular parties and seeking out women of the appropriate parties for those districts. Democratic and Republican women could work toward the shared goal of electing women in their own parties in targeted districts.

Some participants pointed out that candidate recruitment for state legislatures has too often focused on a narrow range of possibilities – local or county officeholders, attorneys, and businesswomen, for example. They recommended mining new veins of potential candidates: women's service organizations, African American sororities, non-college graduates, mothers of school-age children, senior citizens, neighborhood organizations. One person suggested a grassroots strategy – a recreational vehicle to roam her state, creating a training institute on wheels to recruit and educate new candidates.

Training programs: Indiana, Illinois, New Jersey, and Ohio training programs provided attractive models that held great appeal for women in the states where such programs have not yet been established. While the existing programs have been created by and for Republican women, Democrats were eager to test similar models, and some participants thought a bi-partisan approach might also work. Some states were ready not only to establish programs, but to name them after political pathbreakers such as Jeannette Rankin from Montana, the first woman in the U.S. House of Representatives, and Hattie Wyatt Caraway from Arkansas, the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate.

Preparing Women Legislators for Leadership Positions: Women in legislatures, like women in many traditionally male-dominant professions, often confront an uneven playing field. For women who have battled to gain a foothold in legislatures, it has often taken many years of hard work to convince male colleagues of their worthiness for leadership roles.

Term limits necessarily shorten the time available to “learn the ropes,” win the respect of male colleagues, and acquire positions of power within the party and within the legislature. As term limits press parties and legislatures to reconsider how they choose their leaders, however, they may also open new opportunities for women to move quickly into leadership positions. Newly-elected women legislators must be groomed to take advantage of the opportunities for leadership.

Links to organizations and programs: Many participants suggested that working through existing organizations or programs would be the most direct way to enhance the recruitment of women.. Californians offered the example of an annual bipartisan statewide Governor’s conference for women that typically attracted 2,000 women from every part of the state. They proposed arranging panel discussions on women running for office to present at that conference and possibly at conventions of statewide women’s organizations. Others suggested organizing workshops or receptions at meetings of officeholders, such as associations of county or municipal officials or school board members, as a means to seek out potential state legislative candidates. Women’s organizations, too, could be targeted and asked to present programs about the need for more women to run as well as more focused skill-building sessions. Some people also suggested that the Women’s Political Caucus or the Women’s Campaign Fund could play important roles by becoming more active in their states. Colorado Senator Gloria Tanner reported that the National Organization of Black Legislative Elective Women (NOBEL Women) is considering organizing a women’s leadership training program as a means to recruit more African American women for elective office.

Establishing new organizations: Some participants thought they needed new organizations or structures in their states. The Ohio women envisioned “Flo’s List” (Future Leaders of Ohio) as a mechanism for identifying potential candidates, especially women of color, and matching them with current elected officials who could serve as mentors.

Candidate funding: Early money is a necessity to ensure a candidate’s viability and visibility. Participants suggested efforts to enhance existing fundraising mechanisms or to develop new statewide women’s PACs to support legislative candidates.

Educating the next generation: Many participants were interested in encouraging young women’s interest in politics in the hope that they might some day become candidates and officeholders. Some hoped to find institutions in their states to become partners in CAWP’s NEW Leadership Development Network. Oregon already holds a young leader’s day at the state capitol, which could be expanded to include a special session for girls. The annual “Women’s History Week” celebrations could highlight political participation as an option for girls and young women. Organizations such as YMCA/YWCA and Girls State also offer valuable leadership programs, which might be enhanced to include more emphasis on the option of running for office.

Support systems: Because running for and serving in office present daunting challenges, many women who might consider a candidacy are hesitant. Therefore, participants suggested various support systems that might increase the comfort level for a potential candidate. One idea was a “rapid reaction team” that could be called into action as needed, whether to raise money, deal with the media, or quash rumors. Another suggestion was a “resting place” for women leaving office, a place for former officeholders to reflect back and plan ahead. One group spoke of a “WIT” group for women in transition, proposing the idea of linking women leaving office with those just entering office who might benefit from the veterans’ advice and support. Representatives of another state raised the idea of a mentoring network for women candidates, in part to ensure that party campaign teams would take women candidates seriously.

Representatives from all the states agreed that they would need to involve many others if they were to succeed in strengthening efforts to get women elected. As the meeting ended, participants pledged to go home and convene meetings, make contacts, and talk to others about how best to proceed, given the political culture and customs of their own states.

Newly-elected women legislators must be groomed to take advantage of the opportunities for leadership.

CAWP, too, made a commitment to action at the close of the meeting. The Center agreed to:

- serve as a clearinghouse and connector for state projects;
- establish a listserv so that meeting participants could continue to communicate with one another;
- place articles and information of interest on the CAWP web site;
- continue research on the effects of term limits on women's representation;
- convene a national conference of elected women in November, 2001, at which term limits and the political recruitment of women, along with other major issues related to women's status as officeholders and candidates, would be addressed in plenary sessions and workshops.

Conclusion

Although term limits create opportunities for women and minorities to move into state legislatures, the mere existence of an opportunity does not guarantee the achievement of a desired outcome. The preliminary research findings about the impact of term limits on women's representation caution against naive optimism. Term limits sweep out male and female incumbents indiscriminately. But current political recruitment practices continue to advantage men. If women are to preserve and increase their present numbers in state legislatures, there must be a concerted effort by activists, women's organizations, and political parties to recruit more women for open seats.

To date, the impact of term limits on the representation of women has not received much public attention. Many conference participants were intimately familiar with the emerging effects of term limits in their states, but, thinking those developments were local and idiosyncratic, they were not prepared to generalize from them. Coming together helped them to realize the need for concerted efforts in each state if women's hard-won representation in state legislatures is to be preserved and enhanced.

If women are to preserve and increase their present numbers in state legislatures, there must be a concerted effort by activists, women's organizations, and political parties to recruit more women for open seats.

University-Based Political Leadership Education Programs

Establishing educational or training programs is one way to expand the pool of future women candidates. A college or university setting can make a hospitable home for such a program, providing neutral ground on which non-partisan educational activities can take place. Some of these programs serve college women and teach them about the range of possibilities for political engagement, while others are aimed at women who are already established in careers and want to consider more active involvement in politics, possibly including running for office.

The Center for American Women and Politics

The Center for American Women and Politics has two models for programs to educate women for political participation: NEW Leadership, aimed at college women, and Ready to Run, targeting women in New Jersey who are considering running for office. While New Jersey is not a term-limited state, CAWP welcomes adaptation of its programs to serve the particular needs of other states.

Under the NEW Leadership (National Education for Women's Leadership) rubric, CAWP offers education programs designed to prepare young women for public leadership. The award-winning NEW Leadership New Jersey summer institute educates and empowers college women to participate actively in politics and public policy making. The six-part curriculum NEW Leadership curriculum includes:

1. Teaching about the diversity of women's historical and contemporary participation in politics and policymaking;
2. Connecting students with women leaders making a difference in the public sphere;
3. Helping students explore the demands of leadership in a diverse society;
4. Cultivating students' leadership skills;
5. Enabling students to practice leadership through action;
6. Engaging young women in the use of interactive technologies to build their political involvement.

With a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, CAWP established the NEW Leadership Development Network to train nine institutional partners in the program model so they can create similar programs in their own states or regions. NEW Leadership Development Network partners presented their first NEW Leadership programs in Summer 2000.

The Center for Women and Politics in Pennsylvania at Chatham College sponsored NEW Leadership Pennsylvania in June, 2000. The Carrie Chapman Catt Center at Iowa State University held NEW Leadership Midwest in August, 2000, bringing together students from Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska and North Dakota. The University of Texas at Dallas, held its initial series of weekend programs from September through November, 2000.

The 2000-2001 NEW Leadership Development Network partners attended the NEW Leadership Development Institute in June, 2000, in preparation of their inaugural programs, scheduled for 2001. In June, 2001, the Women and Politics Institute at American University will work with 13 consortium schools in the Washington DC area to host NEW Leadership DC, while the Center for Women and Democracy at the University of Washington in Seattle will host NEW Leadership for women in the Puget Sound region. Additionally, the Women's Leadership Institute at Bennett College will sponsor NEW Leadership North Carolina.

The newest NLDN partners, the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center at University of Oklahoma, the John Glenn Institute for Public Service and Public Policy at Ohio State University, and the Women's Resource Center at Washington State University, will attend NEW Leadership New Jersey in June, 2001 in anticipation of hosting their own regional programs in the summer of 2002.

A training manual has also been prepared to assist others who wish to adopt the model. For more information, contact

NEW Leadership Program Coordinator
CAWP, Eagleton Institute of Politics
191 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8557
Phone: (732) 932-9384 Fax: (732) 932-6778
www.newleadership.rutgers.edu

Ready to Run is a bipartisan initiative conceived in 1998 by CAWP and the Institute for Women's Leadership (a consortium at Douglass College). The goal is to increase the number of women officeholders in New Jersey by identifying and grooming potential candidates. The first all-day Ready to Run conference in December 1998 brought together almost 100 women from counties throughout the state. They heard and learned from a distinguished array of women elected officials, campaign activists, journalists and media consultants.

Responding to the participants' evaluations, the next event was a more narrowly focused meeting on the New Jersey county party system in May 1999. Additional small, focused workshops will be offered on topics suggested by conference participants. Annual day-long statewide conferences were organized for March, 2000 and 2001. Ready to Run has also developed mentorship opportunities to link candidates with women from their own parties who can offer guidance and support. For more information, contact:

Ready to Run
CAWP, Eagleton Institute of Politics
191 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8557
Phone: (732) 932-9384 Fax: (732) 932-6778
www.cawp.rutgers.edu

The Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life

The Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life at the University of Missouri-St. Louis was founded in 1996 "to assist women in developing the interest and skills necessary to succeed as full participants within government, serving in elected and appointed office as well as employed policy makers." The Institute is named for the late State Representative Sue Shear, who served for 26 years, longer than any other woman in Missouri's legislature. With a satellite office at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, the Institute also serves the western end of the state.

The Institute's goal is "to help women break down both the external and internal barriers to embracing the rights and responsibilities of a representative democracy." Toward this end, the Institute:

- collects data on women in public policymaking roles;
- maintains a talent bank of women interested in serving on boards and commissions and provides periodic training for women interested in effective board membership;
- hosts the 21st Century Leadership Training program, a one-week residential training program for Missouri college women;
- provides skill-building programs to facilitate the success of women in state, county and local governments;
- offers non-partisan training on campaign basics and organizing to help women overcome their reluctance to run for office, as well as advanced campaign training for women who have filed to run for office.

For more information, contact:

Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life
8001 Natural Bridge Road, JC Penney Building Room 201
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499
Phone: (314) 516-6623 Fax: (314) 516-6621
Kansas City telephone: (816) 235-1409
www.umsl.edu/~iwpl

The Women's Campaign School

The Women's Campaign School at Yale University teaches women the political skills, strategies and tactics to run a winning campaign. WCS is jointly sponsored by the Yale Law School and Women's Studies at Yale University. WCS, a nonprofit corporation, offers a unique non-partisan, non-issue based campaign training program. Classes are held on the Yale campus. Each year a 4 day comprehensive session is offered, designed to teach a wide range of campaign skills and introduce participants to professionals in the campaign and political arena. Training classes are designed for candidates as well as campaign staff. Classes are taught by seasoned campaign strategists and include the latest in campaign techniques. In addition each student is offered personal on-camera training, and a campaign manual. Graduates become part of a close-knit alumnae network. The school also runs special one-day workshops of various topics, including "Secrets of Successful Fund-raising", "Campaign Message and Strategy", and Politics: The Uncommon Career Choice", "Municipal Candidate Training" and "Public Speaking and Media Skills". For more information, contact:

The Women's Campaign School
PO Box 3307
New Haven, CT 06515-0407
Phone: (203) 734-7385 or 800-353-2878
Fax: (203) 734-7547
www.wcsyale.org
WCSyale@aol.com.

Appendix: Participants

Representative Carolyn S. Allen
Arizona House of Representatives

Mary Jo Arndt
President
National Federation of Republican Women

Commissioner Lyn Bankes
Wayne County Commission (Michigan)

Melissa A. Becker
Washington Director
WiLL

Representative Shirley Brown
Florida House of Representatives

Professor Susan Carroll
Senior Research Associate
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Representative Jo E. Carson
Arkansas House of Representatives

Kathleen Casey
Graduate Research Associate
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Cheryl K. Chapman
South Dakota Advocacy Network for Women

Representative Fran N. Coleman
Colorado House of Representatives

Professor Wartyna Davis
William Paterson College

Representative Rita D. Days
Missouri House of Representatives

Jennifer L. Drage
Policy Associate
National Conference of State Legislatures

Pepper English
Women's Campaign Fund

The Honorable Judith C. Foss
Former Maine State Representative

Kathleen Hale
Executive Director
National Women's Political Caucus

Professor Mary Hawkesworth
Director
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Professor Kerry L. Haynie
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Jodi Heintz
Director, NEW Leadership
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Erica M. Henri
Political Director
Women's Campaign Fund

Millie Herrera
Democratic Hispanic Caucus of Florida

Dina Hidalgo
Director of Personnel
California State Senate

Lieutenant Governor Carole Hillard
South Dakota

Jimmy D. Jackson
Office of Senator Dede Alpert (California)

Llenda Jackson-Leslie
Vice President, Communications
Michigan Women's Political Caucus

Tema Javerbaum
Research Associate
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Verna Jeffries
Secretary
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Krista Jenkins
Research Associate
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Carole Jean Jordan
National Committeewoman, Florida
Republican National Committee

Representative Deborah Kafoury
Oregon House of Representatives

Kathy Kleeman
Senior Program Associate
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

The Honorable Martha Hill Kreutz
Former Colorado State Representative

Janice Laurente
Intern
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Participants (continued)

Samantha L. Maltzman
Undergraduate Associate
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Professor Ruth B. Mandel
Director
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Representative Lynne Martinez
Michigan House of Representatives

Representative Emmy L. McClelland
Missouri House of Representatives

Professor Joan E. McLean
Ohio Wesleyan University

Holly J. Mitchell
Legislative Advocate
Western Center on Law & Poverty, Inc.

Professor Gary Moncrief
Department of Political Science
Boise State University

Gilda Morales
Information Services Coordinator
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Susan Nemeth
Director of Development
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Roselyn O'Connell
President
National Women's Political Caucus

Senator Lana Oleen
President, Women's Network
National Conference of State Legislatures
Kansas State Senate

Linda Phillips
Computer Services Coordinator
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Senator C. J. Prentiss
Ohio Senate

Representative Nancy L. Quarles
Michigan House of Representatives

The Honorable Jacqueline J. Roberts
Office of Sen. Blanche Lambert Lincoln
Former Arkansas State Representative

Professor Alan Rosenthal
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Florida House of Representatives

Senator Ruth Solomon
Arizona State Senate

Candy Straight
President
WISH List

Senator Gloria Travis Tanner
President
NOBEL/Women
Colorado State Senate

Erin Toomey
Project Assistant
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Representative Roberta L. Voss
Arizona House of Representatives

Debbie Walsh
Associate Director
Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Senator Mignon Waterman
Montana State Senate

Angela D. Wiederrich
Chief of Staff
Office of Assemblywoman Lynne Leach

The Honorable Harriett E. Woods
Harriett Woods Productions

Betsey Wright
Betsey Wright & Associates, Inc.

Representative Cindy Younkin
Montana House of Representatives