

For immediate release

REVISED

4/26/2011

Contact: Debbie Walsh

Director, CAWP

732-932-9384, x 227

walsh@rci.rutgers.edu

CHANGES IN LEGISLATIVE MAP ALTER PROSPECTS FOR WOMEN Disproportionate Number of NJ Women Legislators Must Step Aside Because of Shifted District Lines

Four incumbent New Jersey assemblywomen – one sixth of the women currently serving – will not run for reelection because of the redrawn state legislative map, and one other woman is retiring for unrelated reasons. At the same time, newly drawn district lines have opened doors for new women to run for the legislature in the June 7th primary. A current assemblywoman is favored to win the only open Senate seat. And if predictions for November prove accurate, one district could elect New Jersey's first all-woman legislative delegation.

"In a state where 28% of the current legislature is female, women make up 57% of the legislators who will retire as a result of redistricting," says Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Women and Politics, a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. "The impact of the new map has been especially harsh on incumbent Democratic assemblywomen. We've expanded women's representation in the Garden State significantly in recent years, but that progress may now be slowed."

A record 21 women (11 D, 10 R) are seeking State Senate seats in the primaries, while 50 women (27 D, 23 R) are running for the Assembly, down from the 2007 record of 51. The record total of 71 women running for the legislature is up from the previous high of 68 women primary candidates in 2007, the last time all seats in both houses were on the ballot. (See table below.)

Women are well represented in races for open seats, the best opportunities for newcomers to join the legislature. In all, 13 women are running in primaries for 10 open Assembly seats in 8 of the state's two-member districts. (In total, there are 13 open seats in 12 districts.) Assemblywoman Nellie Pou (D-35) is favored to win the only open State Senate seat, which is in a traditionally Democratic district.

Five current women lawmakers have announced their retirements. The four motivated by shifting boundaries are Denise Coyle (R-16), Joan Quigley (D-32), Caridad Rodriguez (D-33) and Joan Voss (D-38). Elease Evans (D-35) is also retiring.

The newly reshaped (and likely safe for the GOP) 11th legislative district could be represented by three women, since three Republican incumbents will be on the ticket there: Senator Jennifer Beck and Assemblywomen Mary Pat Angelini and Caroline Casagrande.

(continued on back)

Women Candidates in New Jersey Legislative Primaries

	2001	2007	2011
SENATE			
Total women	15 (9D, 6R)	17 (11D, 6R)	21 (11D, 10R)
Incumbents	4 (2D, 2R)	6 (5D, 1R)	10 (7D, 3R)
Challengers	10 (6D, 4R)	7 (2D, 5R)	10 (3D, 7R)
Running for open seats	1 (1D)	4 (4D)	1 (1D)
ASSEMBLY			
Total women	50 (27D, 23 R)	51 (35D, 16R)	50 (27D, 23R)
Incumbents	10 (8D, 2R)	17 (13D, 4R)	18 (11D, 7R)
Challengers	26 (12D, 14R)	12 (8D, 4R)	19 (8D, 11R)
Running for open seats	14 (7D, 7R)	22 (14D, 8R)	13 (8D, 5R)

Source: Center for American Women and Politics, 2011

About CAWP

The Center for American Women and Politics, a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey is a university-based research, education and public service center. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women's changing relationship to politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life. CAWP is a leading authority in its field and a respected bridge between the academic and political worlds.

-end-