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A Woman Vice President: Context from the Center for American Women and Politics

In last night's debate, former Vice President Joe Biden committed to selecting a woman as his running mate in the 2020 presidential election. Bernie Sanders, while noting the importance of choosing a progressive, also said that he would in all likelihood be choosing a woman vice president. [The Center for American Women and Politics](#) [CAWP], a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, highlights resources from its research about women and the executive for context in this moment of the 2020 presidential contest.

The woman selected as a running mate would be the third woman and the second Democratic woman to be a major-party nominee for vice president. On CAWP's [Women and the Presidency: History & Facts](#) page, find a timeline of major moments in presidential history from Victoria Woodhull's 1872 presidential bid to the record-breaking 2020 campaign, including Geraldine Ferraro becoming the first woman on a major-party presidential ticket in 1984.

[Women Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates: A Selected List](#) contains context and biographical information for the women who have run for president and vice president throughout American history.

"In a year in which six women vied for the presidency, four of whom are United States Senators, it shouldn't be surprising that the nominee would select a woman as his running mate," said CAWP Director Debbie Walsh. "The energy of women activists, candidates, and voters drove a Democratic wave in the 2018 elections; it would be foolish not to try and harness that energy in 2020."

For analysis of the motivation for and potential impact of Biden or Sanders selecting a woman running mate with historical context about previous women vice-presidential picks, read [A Woman Running Mate is Just a Start](#) by CAWP scholar Kelly Dittmar.

About CAWP

The [Center for American Women and Politics](#) (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is nationally recognized as the leading source of scholarly research and current data about women's political participation in the United States. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about the role of women in American politics, enhance women's influence in public life, and expand the diversity of women in politics and government. CAWP's education and outreach programs translate research findings into action, addressing women's under-representation in political leadership with effective, intersectional, and imaginative programs serving a variety of audiences. As the world has watched Americans considering female candidates for the nation's highest offices, CAWP's five decades of analyzing and interpreting women's participation in American politics have provided a foundation and context for the discussion.