



League of Women Voters of Ohio  
[www.lwvohio.org](http://www.lwvohio.org)



## ***Women's Voices: Training the Next Gen of Women Leaders – Discussion Guide***

Thanks to the generous support of the Women's Fund of Central Ohio, in 2016 we launched a new project: "Women's Voices: Training the Next Generation of Women Leaders." LWV Ohio is working with several of our community-based local Leagues to host programs in area high schools, in which high school girls can meet and learn from elected women in their communities. This special project is geared toward League members who hold public office, asking them to share both the unique challenges that women officials face in politics and why women's voices are such a critical part of the process. The goal is to engage high school girls and help them to learn first-hand about the process of participating in elections.

The current political climate is driving a fierce need for open dialogue about gender politics, especially for teen girls who may be witnessing some of the biased political news coverage and behavior for the first time. 2016 will mark the first time a woman has been nominated for US President by one of the two major political parties, and her opponents as well as political pundits often exhibit gender bias in how they talk about that female candidate.

Our project seeks to step back from the partisan rhetoric and hone in on the gender politics at play.

### **A Woman President**

Why has it taken so long for a woman to be nominated for President by one of the two major parties?

What other historic women have run for President?

### **Women in Elected Office**

How many women are elected officeholders at other levels of government?

Has the number of women in office increased or decreased?

Are women of color well represented in elected office, and, if not, why?

How many states have never had an elected woman governor?

How many women elected officials are there in my local community?

### **Gender Politics**

Are women candidates treated differently by the media? How – give some examples (e.g., criticism of how they dress or their emotions)?

How can we call out gender bias when we see it?

### **Women's Electoral Influence**

Why are women's voices important in the political process?

Why are women such an important voting bloc?

**Data that may be helpful:**

## Historic Voter Participation Rates

- **Gender:** Women's voter turnout has surpassed men's in every presidential election since 1980.
- **Race & Ethnicity:** The 2012 election was the first presidential election since Reconstruction that African American turnout (66.2%) exceeded white turnout (64.1%). Turnout was lower among Latino (48.0%) and Asian American (47.3%) voters.
- **Age:** From 1972 to 2012, young voters age 18-29 turned out at rates 15-20 points lower than voters age 30 and up.
- **Socio-economic status:** Wealth continues to be a factor in voter participation. In the 2008 presidential election, only 41% of eligible voters earning less than \$15,000 voted compared to 78% of those making \$150,000 and up.

Source: FairVote "What Affects Voter Turnout Rates" available online at [www.fairvote.org/what\\_affects\\_voter\\_turnout\\_rates](http://www.fairvote.org/what_affects_voter_turnout_rates)

## Women in Elective Office

### WOMEN IN CONGRESS

- In 2016, women hold **104**, or **19.4%**, of the 535 seats in the 114th U.S. Congress –
- **20**, or **20.0%**, of the 100 seats in the Senate and
- **84**, or **19.3%**, of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives.

Source: Center for American Women in Politics, Factsheet: Women in Elective Office 2016, <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-elective-office-2016>

### WOMEN OF COLOR IN CONGRESS

- Of the **104** women serving in the 114th U.S. Congress, **33**, or **31.7%**, are women of color.
- There is 1 woman of color in the US **Senate** (Asian Pacific Islander).
- There are 32 women of color in the US **House**: 18 African American, 9 Latina, and 5 Asian Pacific Islander
- Women of color constitute **6.2%** of the total **535** members of Congress.

Source: Center for American Women in Politics, Factsheet: Women in of Color in Elective Office 2016, <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-color-elective-office-2016>

## Women in Elective Office

### WOMEN ELECTED TO STATE OFFICE

#### Statewide Elective Executive Offices:

- In 2015, **77** women hold statewide elective executive offices across the country; women hold **24.7%** of the 312 available positions.

#### State Legislatures:

- In 2016, **1,808**, or **24.5%**, of the 7,383 state legislators in the United States are women.
- Women hold **445**, or **22.6%**, of the 1,972 state senate seats and **1,363**, or **25.2%**, of the 5,411 state house seats.
- Since 1971, the number of women serving in state legislatures has more than quintupled.

Source: Center for American Women in Politics, Factsheet: Women in Elective Office 2016.  
<http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-elective-office-2016>

### WOMEN OF COLOR ELECTED TO STATE OFFICE

#### Statewide Executive Offices:

- Of the **77** women serving in statewide elective executive offices, **9**, or **11.7%**, are women of color. They include the first two women of color to serve as governors.
- Women of color constitute **2.9%** of the total **312** statewide elective executives.

#### State Legislatures:

- Women of color are **22.0%** of the **1,808** women state legislators serving nationwide.
- They constitute **5.4%** of the total **7,383** state legislators.

Source: Center for American Women in Politics, Factsheet: Women in of Color in Elective Office 2016.  
<http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-color-elective-office-2016>