



Indiana Government Center South
402 W Washington St, Room W252
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Office: (317) 232-6720
Fax: (317) 232-7485

WOMEN IN THE INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY: 2009 STATUS REPORT

As a result of the election held November 4, 2008, women were elected to serve in 32 (21.3%) of the 150 seats in the 2009 Indiana General Assembly. This is a 3% increase of women who served in the 2008 legislative session; however, it is one legislator shy of the highest number of state legislative seats held by women in 1995-96.

Senate

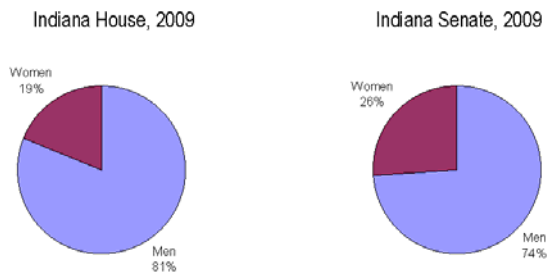
As a result of the general election held November 4, 2008, 13 (26%) women were elected. As a result, the number of women serving in the Indiana Senate increased by one person. Senator Jean Leising, District 42, who will replace Senator Robert Jackman, will serve her first term after a 12-year hiatus.

The current trend in Senate leadership shows women gaining ground. Currently, seven female senators serve in leadership positions. Senator Connie Lawson serves as Majority Floor Leader and is the second-ranking Republican in the Senate. Senator Vi Simpson was elected as Minority Leader and is the first female caucus head in the Indiana General

Assembly. The Republican leadership also includes Senator Sue Landske as the Assistant President Pro Tempore and Senator Teresa Lubbers as the Assistant Majority Floor Leader. The Democratic Caucus leadership also includes Senator Connie Sipes as Caucus Chair, Senator Earline Rogers as Whip and Senator Jean D. Breax as Assistant Caucus Chair. In addition to these legislative officials, Lt. Governor Becky Skillman presides over the Senate during session days with the constitutional ability to break ties.¹

House of Representatives

Women were elected to hold 19 (19%) of the 100 seats in the Indiana House of Representatives in the 2008 general election. This is a 3% increase over women elected in the 2006 general election. Four women will serve their first term in the Indiana House of Representatives starting in 2009. They are Rep. Jacqueline Clements, Rep. Cherrish Pryor, Rep. Gail Reiken and Rep. Mary Anne Sullivan.



	Democrat	Republican	Total
House	13	6	19
Senate	6	7	13
Legislature	19	13	32

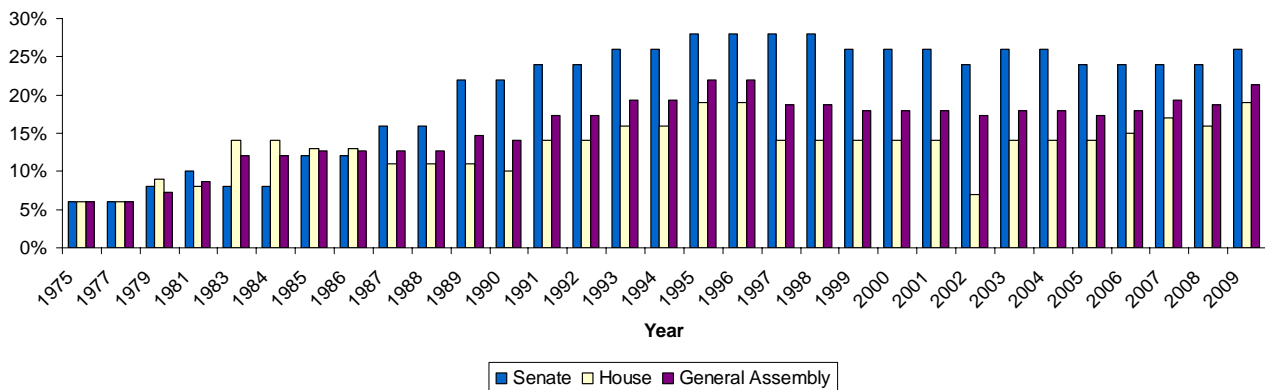
¹ Howey Politics Indiana, www.howeypolitics.com/2008/11/18/female-power-in-the-indiana-senate/, November 11, 2008

Women will also serve in leadership positions in the House of Representatives. Rep. Kathy Richardson serves as Minority Caucus Chair. Rep. Jackie Walorski serves as the Assistant Floor leader. Rep. Sheila Klinker is the Assistant Democratic Leader while Rep. Nancy Michael serves as the Assistant Democratic Whip.

Historical Note

In 1920, the Indiana Legislature ratified the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, granting women the right to vote. That same year, Julia D. Nelson, of Delaware County, became the first woman to serve in the General Assembly as a member of the House of Representatives.² In 1923, Elizabeth Rainey of Marion County was the first woman officially elected to her seat.³ In 1942, Arcada Stark Balz became the first woman elected to the Indiana Senate and served until 1946.⁴ In 1972, Julia Carson, the first African-American woman to serve in the Indiana General Assembly, was elected to the House of Representatives. On Jan. 4, 2006, state Rep. Phyllis Pond became the first female lawmaker to sit in the front row of the House of Representatives.⁵ Also in 2006, Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon became Indiana’s first female Hispanic state legislator.

Women Elected to Indiana General Assembly, Senate and House, 1975-2008⁶



For more information about the Indiana Commission for Women, please call (317) 232-6720 or (317) 233-6303 or email ICW at icw@dwd.in.gov.

² “A historic look back at the Statehouse”, *Indianapolis Star*, January 9, 2005

³ “Lawyers in the Legislature”, <http://www.in.gov/judiciary/citc/museum/law-leg/html/index.html>

⁴ Indiana Women’s History Association website, www.iwh.iupui.edu.

⁵ “Lawmaker is first lady of the front row: State Rep. Phyllis Pond’s 27 years include few foes but enough grit to defy her party on occasion.” Schneider, Mary Beth, *Indianapolis Star*, December 28, 2005

⁶ From Rutgers University Center for American Women and Politics, http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/resources/state_fact_sheets/IN.php