

History of Women in the Massachusetts Legislature 1923 – 2015



**Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators
40th Anniversary Edition
1975 – 2015**

Women in the Massachusetts Legislature

INTRODUCTION

The history of women serving in the Massachusetts Legislature does not even span 100 years. Women gained the right to vote in 1920 after a hard-fought battle, and in 1923, Sylvia Donaldson and Susan Fitzgerald were the first two women elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives. In 1937, Sybil Holmes was the first woman elected to the Massachusetts Senate. As of 2015, only 190 women have served in the legislature compared to over 20,000 men.

In 1975, a group of female Representatives, led by Representative Lois Pines, formed the Caucus of Women Legislators. The Caucus is celebrating its 40th Anniversary this year and women comprise 25.5% of the 200-person legislature. The Caucus continues to build upon its mission to enhance the economic status and equality of women and to encourage and support women in all levels of government.

The Caucus believes in the importance of preserving the history of women in Massachusetts government. Using a list compiled by the Caucus in 2006, the Caucus updated the listing of women who have served in the Massachusetts General Court. We also utilized the State Library and online archives to create a comprehensive history of the Caucus. A very special thank you to the interns of the Caucus of Women Legislators for their assistance with this project.

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Important Dates for Women in Massachusetts Government

1923: Sylvia Donaldson and Susan Fitzgerald are the first women elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives

1925: Edith Nourse Rogers begins her term as the first woman elected to Congress from Massachusetts, she serves until 1960

1935: Representative Mary Livermore Norris Barrows (R-Melrose) is the first woman to chair a committee, the Committee on Pensions and Old Age Assistance

1937: Sybil Holmes (Brookline) is the first woman elected to the Massachusetts State Senate

1973: Senator Mary Fonseca (D-Fall River) is appointed as the first female Senate Majority Whip

1979: Representative Iris Holland (R-Longmeadow) is the first woman appointed to leadership within the House as House Minority Whip

1985: Representative Joan Menard (D-Somerset) is the first woman appointed Assistant House Majority Whip

1987: Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Murphy becomes the first woman elected to statewide office in Massachusetts

1989: Senator Mary Padula (R-Lunenburg) is the first Republican woman appointed to Senate leadership as Assistant Minority Whip

1996: Select Senate Committee to Study the Contribution of Women to the Government of the Commonwealth is released on March 8

1998: Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is established by the legislature

1999: Shannon O'Brien is elected as the first female Treasurer and Receiver General of Massachusetts

2001: Jane Swift is the first woman to step into the role as acting Governor

2006: Martha Coakley becomes the first female Attorney General

2007: Senator Therese Murray (D-Plymouth) becomes the first female Senate President

2010: Suzanne Bump is elected as the first female State Auditor

2013: Elizabeth Warren is sworn in as the first female federal Senator for Massachusetts

Title	First	Middle	Last	Party	Years Served	District Represented
Representative	Susan	W.	Fitzgerald	D	1923-1924	Twenty-second Suffolk (Resident of Jamaica Plain)
Representative	Sylvia	M.	Donaldson	R	1923-1930	Tenth Plymouth (Resident of Brockton)
Representative	Harriet	Russel	Hart	R	1925-1926	Thirteenth Essex (Resident of West Lynn)
Representative	Florence	Seaver	Slocomb	R	1927-1930	Nineteenth Worcester (Resident of Worcester)
Representative	Martha	N.	Brookings	R	1927-1930	Sixteenth Essex (Resident of Gloucester)
Representative	Marion	Cowan	Burrows	R	1929-1932	Eleventh Essex (Resident of Lynn)
Representative	Emma	E.	Brigham	R	1929-1936	Sixth Hampden (Resident of Springfield)
Representative	Mary	Livermore Norris	Barrows	R	1929-1938	Twenty-second Middlesex (Resident of Melrose)
Representative	Mollie		Sweetser	D	1933-1936	Eighteenth Middlesex (Resident of Reading)
Representative	Katherine	V.	Parker	D	1935-1936	Ninth Worcester (Resident of South Lancaster)
Representative	Katherine	A.	Foley	D	1935-1938	Third Essex (Resident of Lawrence)
Senator	Sybil		Holmes	R	1937-1938	Norfolk and Suffolk District (Resident of Brookline)
Representative	Susan	K.	Donovan	D	1939-1944	First Suffolk (Resident of East Boston)
Representative & Senator	Leslie	B.	Cutler	R	1939-1948 House; 1949-1968 Senate	Sixth Norfolk (Resident of Needham)
Representative	Catherine	E.	Falvey	D	1941-1944	Twenty-fourth Middlesex (Resident of Somerville)
Representative	Margaret	Jane	Spear	D	1941-1950	Fifth Middlesex (Resident of Newton)
Representative	Florence		Cook	D	1943-1946	Twelfth Suffolk (Resident of Roxbury)
Representative	Alice	F.	Schlapp	D	1943-1946	Fourth Essex (Resident of Methuen)
Representative	Fannie	M.	Buzzel	R	1945-1948	Tenth Middlesex (Resident of Hudson)
Representative	Martha		Ware	R	1951-1956	Fourth Plymouth (Resident of Abington)
Representative	Irene		Thresher	R	1951-1960	Fifth Middlesex (Resident of Newton)
Representative	Gladys		Crockett	R	1953-1954	Ninth Worcester (Resident of Upton)
Representative	Mary	B.	Newman	R	1953-1954, 1959-1970	Second Middlesex and Norfolk (Resident of Cambridge)
Senator	Mary	L.	Fonseca	D	1953-1984	Second Bristol (Resident of Fall River)
Representative	Elizabeth		Stanton	D	1953-1960	Third Worcester (Resident of Cedar)
Representative	Edna		Telford	D	1955-1960	Ninth Norfolk (Resident of Plainville)
Representative	Freyda	F.	Koplow	R	1955-1967	Tenth Norfolk (Resident of Brookline)
Representative	Bessie	I.	Murray	R	1957-1958	Eleventh Worcester (Resident of Northborough)
Representative	Beatrice	Keene	Corliss	R	1959-1964	Sixth Essex (Resident of Gloucester)
Representative	Julie		Gilligan	D	1961-1968	Ninth Essex District (Resident of Lynn)
Senator	Janet		Starr	D	1963-1968	Twenty-Third Middlesex (Resident of Belmont)
Representative	Katherine		Kane	D	1965-1968	Third Suffolk (Resident of Boston)
Representative	Eleanor		Campobasso	D	1965-1978	Tenth Middlesex (Resident of Arlington)

Representative	Marie	E.	Howe	D	1965-1988	Thirty-First Middlesex (Resident of Somerville)
Representative	Ann	Cole	Gannett	R	1969-1980	Fifty-Third Middlesex (Resident of Wayland)
Representative	Mary	E.	Fantasia	D	1971-1978	Eighth Middlesex (Resident of Somerville)
Representative	Barbara		Gray	R	1973-1996*(D) in Oct 1990	Fifty-Sixth Middlesex (Resident of Framingham)
Representative & Senator	Lois	G.	Pines	D	1973-1978 House; 1986-1998 Senate	Thirteenth Middlesex (Resident of Newton); Second Middlesex and Norfolk
Representative	Doris		Bunte	D	1973-1985	Ninth Suffolk (Resident of Roxbury)
Senator	Anna	P.	Buckley	D	1973-1988	First Plymouth (Resident of Brockton)
Representative	Iris		Holland	R	1973-1991	Second Hampden (Resident of Longmeadow)
Representative	Elaine		Noble	D	1975-1978	Sixth Suffolk (Resident of Boston)
Representative	Karen	A.	Swanson	D	1975-1978	Fourteenth Plymouth (Resident of Brockton)
Representative & Senator	Carol	C.	Amick	D	1975-1977 House; 1977-1989 Senate	Fifth Middlesex (Resident of Bedford)
Representative	Genevra	R.	Counihan	D	1975-1978	Fortieth Middlesex (Resident of Concord)
Representative	Mary	H.	Goode	D	1975-1978	Tenth Suffolk (Resident of Roxbury)
Representative	Elizabeth		Metayer	D	1975-1985	Fifth Norfolk (Resident of Braintree)
Representative	Caroline		Stouffer	D	1977-1978	First Plymouth (Resident of Hingham)
Senator	Sharon	M.	Pollard	D	1977-1982	Third Essex (Resident of Methuen)
Representative	Saundra		Graham	I	1977-1988	Fourth Middlesex (Resident of Cambridge)
Representative	Paula		Lewellen	R	1977-1978	Fifth Middlesex (Resident of Bedford)
Representative	Mary	Jeanette	Murray	R	1977-2001	Third Plymouth (Resident of Cohasset)
Representative	Deborah		Cochran	R	1979-1982	Eleventh Norfolk (Resident of Dedham)
Representative	Mary	Jane	Gibson	D	1979-1993	Twenty-Sixth Middlesex (Resident of Belmont)
Representative & Senator	Joan		Menard	D	1979-2000 House; 2001-2011 Senate	Fifth Bristol (Resident of Somerset); First Bristol and Plymouth
Senator	Patricia		McGovern	D	1980-1992	Second Essex and Middlesex (Resident of Lawrence)
Representative	Ellen	M.	Canavan	R	1981-1988	Thirteenth Norfolk (Resident of Needham)
Representative & Senator	Lucile	P.	Hicks	R	1981-1990 House; 1991-1996 Senate	Thirteenth Middlesex (Resident of Wayland); Fifth Middlesex
Representative	Susan	L.	Schur	R	1981-1995	Twelfth Middlesex (Resident of Newton)
Representative	Marie		Parente	D	1981-2006	Tenth Worcester (Resident of Milford)
Representative	Frances	F.	Alexander	D	1983-1991	Sixth Essex (Resident of Beverly)
Representative	Eleanor		Myerson	D	1983-1991	Eleventh Suffolk (Resident of Brookline)
Senator	Mary	L.	Padula	R	1983-1991	Second Worcester and Middlesex (Resident of Lunenburg)
Representative	Marilyn		Travinsky	D	1983-1991	Sixth Worcester (Resident of Southbridge)
Representative & Senator	Susan		Tucker	D	1983-1991 House; 1999-2011 Senate	Second Essex and Middlesex (Resident of Andover)
Representative	Barbara	P.	Hildt	D	1983-1993	First Essex (Resident of Amesbury)
Representative	Susan	N.	Rourke	R	1983-1993	Nineteenth Middlesex (Resident of Lowell)

Representative	Mary-Louise		Kehoe	D	1983-1995	Eleventh Norfolk (Resident of Dedham)
Senator	Linda	J.	Melconian	D	1983-Jan. 2005	Second Hampden and Hampshire (Resident of Springfield)
Representative	Patricia	G.	Fiero	D	1984-1991	Fifth Essex (Resident of Gloucester)
Representative	Augusta		Hornblower	R	1984-1994	First Middlesex (Resident of Groton)
Representative	Carmen		Buell	D	1985-1993	Second Franklin (Resident of Greenfield)
Representative	Suzanne		Bump	D	1985-1993	Fifth Norfolk (Resident of Braintree)
Representative	Mary	Jane	McKenna	R	1985-1993	First Worcester (Resident of Holden)
Representative	Jacqueline		Lewis	R	1985-1999	Eighth Plymouth (Resident of Bridgewater)
Representative	Gloria		Fox	D	1985-present	Seventh Suffolk (Resident of Boston)
Representative	Patricia	A.	Walrath	D	1985-2009	Third Middlesex (Resident of Stow)
Representative	Barbara		Gardner	D	1986-2001	Eighth Middlesex (Resident of Holliston)
Representative & Senator	Shannon		O'Brien	D	1987-1993 House; 1993-Jan. 1995 Senate	Second Hampshire (Resident of Easthampton); Second Hampden and Hampshire District
Representative	Carol		Cleven	R	1987-2002	Sixteenth Middlesex (Resident of Chelmsford)
Representative	Shirley		Owens-Hicks	D	1987-2006	Sixth Suffolk (Resident of Boston)
Representative	Lida		Harkins	D	1989-2011	Thirteenth Norfolk (Resident of Needham)
Representative	Nancy	Hasty	Evans	R	1990-1996	Thirteenth Middlesex (Resident of Wayland)
Representative	Mary		Rogeness	R	1991-2009	Second Hampden (Resident of Longmeadow)
Senator	Nancy		Sullivan	D	1991-1992	First Middlesex (Resident of Lowell)
Representative	Sally		Kerans	D	1991-1995	Thirteenth Essex (Resident of Danvers)
Representative	Susan	K.	Tracy	D	1991-1995	Nineteenth Suffolk (Resident of Brighton)
Senator	Jane	A.	Swift	R	1991-1996	Berkshire District (Resident of North Adams)
Representative	Marianne	W.	Brenton	R	1991-1997	Twenty-third Middlesex (Resident of Burlington)
Representative	Janet	W.	O'Brien	D	1991-1999	Fifth Plymouth (Resident of Hanover)
Representative & Senator	Pamela		Resor	D	1991-1999 House; 1999-2008 Senate	Fourteenth Middlesex (Resident of Acton); Middlesex and Worcester
Representative	Carol		Donovan	D	1991-2004	Thirtieth Middlesex (Resident of Woburn)
Representative & Senator	Patricia		Jehlen	D	1991-2005 House; fall 2005-present Senate	Thirtieth Middlesex; Second Middlesex (Resident of Somerville)
Representative	Barbara		Hyland	R	1992-2001	First Bristol (Resident of Foxborough)
Representative	Ellen		Story	D	1992-present	Third Hampshire (Resident of Amherst)
Representative	Althea		Garrison	R	1993-1995	Fifth Suffolk (Resident of Dorchester)
Representative	Karen		O'Donnell	D	1993-1995	Tenth Middlesex (Resident of Waltham)
Representative	Marsha		Platt	D	1993-1995	First Worcester (Resident of North Grafton)
Representative	Valerie		Barsom	R	1993-1996	Thirteenth Hampden (Resident of Springfield)
Representative	Donna	Fournier	Cuomo	R	1993-1999	Fourteenth Essex (Resident of North Andover)
Representative	Evelyn		Chesky	D	1993-2001	Fifth Hampden (Resident of Holyoke)

Representative	Nancy		Flavin	D	1993-2003	Second Hampshire (Resident of Easthampton)
Senator	Cheryl	A.	Jacques	D	1993-2004	Norfolk, Bristol, and Middlesex (Resident of Needham)
Representative	Mary	D.	Simmons	D	1993-2004	Fourth Worcester (Resident of Leominster)
Representative	Christine		Canavan	D	1993-2014	Tenth Plymouth (Resident of Brockton)
Senator	Therese		Murray	D	1993-2014	Plymouth and Barnstable (Resident of Plymouth)
Representative	Anne		Paulsen	D	1993-2006	Twenty-Fourth Middlesex (Resident of Belmont)
Representative & Senator	Marian		Walsh	D	1989-1992 House; 1993-2011 Senate	Tenth Suffolk; Norfolk and Suffolk (Resident of Boston)
Senator	Dianne		Wilkerson	D	1993-2008	Second Suffolk (Resident of Boston)
Representative	Linda		Teagan	D	1995-1996	First Plymouth (Resident of Manomet)
Representative	Charlotte	Golar	Richie	D	1995-1999	Fifth Suffolk (Resident of Boston)
Representative & Senator	Harriette		Chandler	D	1995-2000 House; 2001-present Senate	Thirteenth Worcester (Resident of Worcester); First Worcester
Representative	Cele	Ferner	Hahn	R	1995-2003	Fourth Hampden (Resident of Westfield)
Representative	Maryanne		Lewis	D	1995-2003	Eleventh Norfolk (Resident of Dedham)
Representative	Colleen		Garry	D	1995-present	Thirty-sixth Middlesex (Resident of Dracut)
Representative	Shirley		Gomes	R	1995-2006	Fourth Barnstable (Resident of Orleans)
Representative	Kay		Khan	D	1995-present	Eleventh Middlesex (Resident of Newton)
Representative	Harriett	L.	Stanley	D	1995-2012	Second Essex (Resident of West Newbury)
Representative	Geraldine		Creedon	D	1995-2012	Eleventh Plymouth (Resident of Brockton)
Representative	Rachel		Kaprielian	D	1995-2008	Twenty-Ninth Middlesex (Resident of Watertown)
Representative	Ruth		Provost	D	1997-2002	Second Plymouth (Resident of Sandwich)
Representative	Susan		Pope	R	1997-2006	Thirteenth Middlesex (Resident of Wayland)
Representative	Kathleen		Teahan	D	1997-2006	Seventh Plymouth (Resident of Whitman)
Representative	Alice		Wolf	D	1997-2012	Twenty-Fifth Middlesex (Resident of Cambridge)
Representative & Senator	Gale	D.	Candaras	D	1997-2006 House; 2007-2014 Senate	Twelfth Hampden; First Hampden and Hampshire (Resident of Wilbraham)
Senator	Susan		Fargo	D	1997-2012	Third Middlesex (Resident of Lincoln)
Representative	Elizabeth		Malia	D	1998-present	Eleventh Suffolk (Resident of Boston)
Representative	Nancy		Caffyn	R	1999-2001	Third Barnstable (Resident of Mashpee)
Representative	Ronny	M.	Sydney	D	1999-2001	Fifteenth Norfolk (Resident of Brookline)
Senator	Jo	Ann	Sprague	R	1999-2004	Norfolk, Bristol, and Plymouth (Resident of Walpole)
Representative	Ruth		Balser	D	1999-present	Twelfth Middlesex (Resident of Newton)
Senator	Cynthia	S.	Creem	D	1999-present	First Middlesex and Norfolk (Resident of Newton)
Representative	Kathi-Anne		Reinstein	D	1999-2014	Sixteenth Suffolk (Resident of Revere)
Representative	Cheryl	Coakley	Rivera	D	1999-2014	Tenth Hampden (Resident of Springfield)
Representative	Cory		Atkins	D	1999-present	Fourteenth Middlesex (Resident of Concord)

Representative	Elizabeth		Poirier	R	1999-present	Fourteenth Bristol (Resident of North Attleboro)
Representative & Senator	Karen		Spilka	D	2001-2004 House; 2005-present Senate	Seventh Middlesex (Resident of Ashland); Second Middlesex and Norfolk
Representative	Deborah		Blumer	D	2001-2006	Sixth Middlesex (Resident of Framingham)
Representative	Marie		St.Fleur	D	2001-2011 (special election)	Fifth Suffolk (Resident of Boston)
Representative	Patricia		Haddad	D	2001-present	Fifth Bristol (Resident of Somerset)
Representative	Karyn		Polito	R	2001-2011	Eleventh Worcester (Resident of Shrewsbury)
Representative & Senator	Anne		Gobi	D	2001-2014 House; 2015-present Senate	Fifth Worcester (Resident of Spencer); Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex District (Resident of Spencer)
Representative	Jennifer		Callahan	D	2003-2011	Eighteenth Worcester (Resident of Sutton)
Representative	Susan	Williams	Gifford	R	2003-present	Second Plymouth (Resident of Wareham)
Representative	Mary		Grant	D	2003-2011	Sixth Essex (Resident of Beverly)
Representative & Senator	Barbara		L'Italien	D	2003-2011 House (special election); 2015-Present Senate	Eighteenth Essex; Second Essex and Middlesex District (Resident of Andover)
Representative	Alice	Hanlon	Peisch	D	2003-present	Fourteenth Norfolk (Resident of Wellesley)
Representative	Joyce	L.	Spiliotis	D	2003-2013	Twelfth Essex (Resident of Peabody)
Representative & Senator	Jennifer		Flanagan	D	2005-2009 House; 2009-present Senate	Fourth Worcester; Worcester and Middlesex (Resident of Leominster)
Representative & Senator	Linda	Dorcena	Forry	D	2005-2013 House; 2013-present Senate	Twelfth Suffolk; First Suffolk (Resident of Boston)
Representative	Marty		Walz	D	2005-2013	Eighth Suffolk (Resident of Boston)
Representative	Virginia		Coppola	R	February 2006-December 2006 (special election)	First Bristol (Resident of Foxborough)
Representative	Denise		Provost	D	2006-present (special election)	Twenty-seventh Middlesex (Resident of Somerville)
Representative	Willie Mae		Allen	D	2007-2011	Sixth Suffolk (Resident of Mattapan)
Representative	Linda	Dean	Campbell	D	2007-Present	Fifteenth Essex (Resident of Methuen)
Representative	Sarah	K.	Peake	D	2007-Present	Fourth Barnstable (Resident of Provincetown)
Representative	Pam		Richardson	D	2007-2011	Sixth Middlesex (Resident of Framingham)
Representative	Rosemary		Sandlin	D	2007-2011	Third Hampden (Resident of Agawam)
Representative & Senator	Katherine		Clark	D	2009-2010 House; 2011-2013 Senate	Thirty-Second Middlesex; Middlesex & Essex (Resident of Melrose)
Representative	Lori		Ehrlich	D	2009-Present	Eighth Essex (Resident of Marblehead)
Representative	Jennifer		Benson	D	2009-Present	Thirty-Seventh Middlesex (Resident of Lunenburg)
Representative	Carolyn		Dykema	D	2009-Present	Eighth Middlesex (Resident of Holliston)
Representative	Ann-Margaret		Ferrante	D	2009-Present	Fifth Essex (Resident of Gloucester)
Representative	Danielle		Gregoire	D	2009-2010; 2013-Present	Fourth Middlesex (Resident of Marlborough)
Representative	Kate		Hogan	D	2009-Present	Third Middlesex (Resident of Stow)
Senator	Sonia		Chang-Diaz	D	2009-Present	Second Suffolk (Resident of Boston)
Representative	Denise		Andrews	D	2011-2014	Second Franklin (Resident of Orange)
Representative	Gailanne		Cariddi	D	2011-Present	First Berkshire (Resident of North Adams)
Representative	Kimberly		Ferguson	R	2011-Present	First Worcester (Resident of Holden)

Representative	Denise		Garlick	D	2011-Present	Thirteenth Norfolk (Resident of Needham)
Representative	Sheila		Harrington	R	2011-Present	First Middlesex (Resident of Groton)
Representative	Rhonda		Nyman	D	2011-2014	Fifth Plymouth (Resident of Hanover)
Representative	Shaunna		O'Connell	R	2011-Present	Third Bristol (Resident of Taunton)
Senator	Eileen		Donoghue	D	2011-Present	First Middlesex (Resident of Lowell)
Representative	Keiko		Orrall	R	2011-Present	Twelfth Bristol (Resident of Lakeville)
Representative	Tricia		Farley-Bouvier	D	2011-Present	Third Berkshire (Resident of Pittsfield)
Representative	Leah		Cole	R	2013-Present	Twelfth Essex (Resident of Peabody)
Representative	Marjorie		Decker	D	2013-Present	Twelfth Middlesex (Resident of Cambridge)
Representative	Diana		DiZoglio	D	2013-Present	Fourteenth Essex (Resident of Methuen)
Representative	Claire		Cronin	D	2013-Present	Eleventh Plymouth (Resident of Easton)
Representative	Carole		Fiola	D	2013-Present	Sixth Bristol (Resident of Fall River)
Representative	Mary		Keefe	D	2013-Present	Fifteenth Worcester (Resident of Worcester)
Senator	Joan		Lovely	D	2013-Present	Second Essex (Resident of Salem)
Senator	Kathleen		O'Connor Ives	D	2013-Present	First Essex (Resident of Newburyport)
Representative	RoseLee		Vincent	D	2014-Present	Sixteenth Suffolk (Resident of Revere)
Representative	Christine		Barber	D	2015-Present	Thirty-Fourth Middlesex (Resident of Somerville)
Representative	Kate		Campanale	R	2015-Present	Seventeenth Worcester (Resident of Leicester)
Representative	Michelle		DuBois	D	2015-Present	Tenth Plymouth (Resident of Brockton)
Representative	Susannah		Whipps Lee	R	2015-Present	Second Franklin (Resident of Athol)
Representative	Hannah		Kane	R	2015-Present	Eleventh Worcester (Resident of Shrewsbury)