

Barriers and Bias

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

WHAT IS THE GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP?

Women are much less likely than men to be in leadership positions. In universities, businesses, courts, unions, and religious institutions, male leaders outnumber female leaders by wide margins. Our elected state representatives, for example, are far more likely to be men than women:

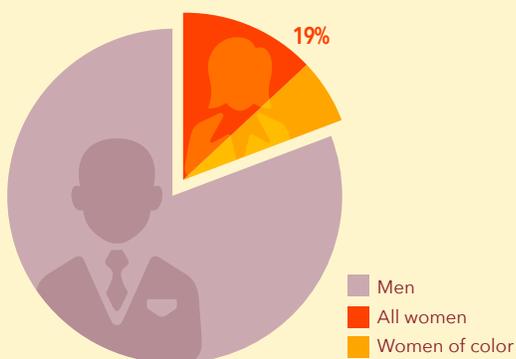
U.S. STATE LEGISLATORS ARE



75% MEN AND 25% WOMEN, INCLUDING 5% WOMEN OF COLOR.†

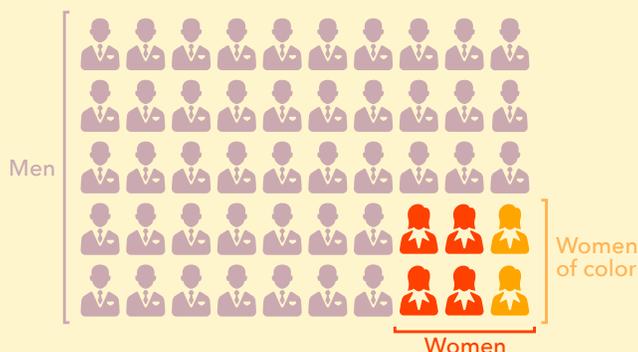
The gap is even worse in the U.S. Congress ...

U.S. CONGRESS IN 2016



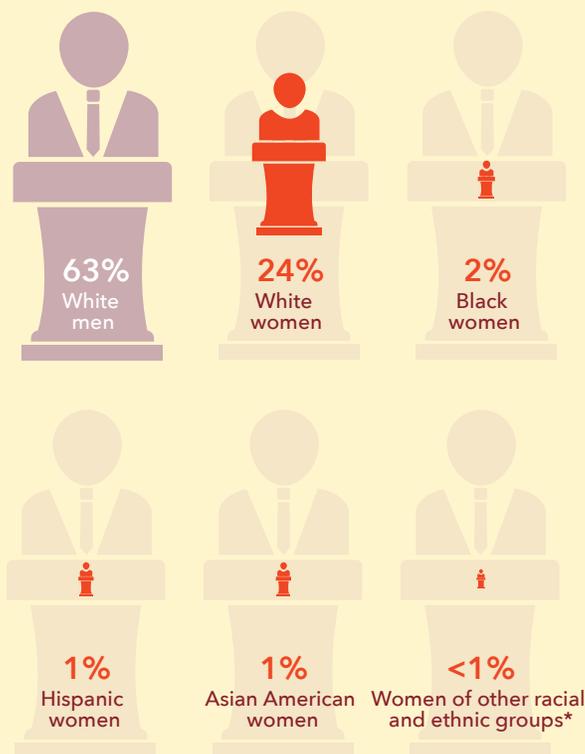
... and it's plain dismal among governors.

U.S. GOVERNORS IN 2016†



For women of color, leadership opportunities are particularly elusive.

EXECUTIVES BY RACE AND GENDER



*American Indian women, Hawaiian women, women of two or more races

†Source: Rutgers Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University

WHY IS THERE A GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP?

There is no lack of qualified women to fill leadership roles. Women earn the majority of university degrees at every level except for professional degrees, and more women are in the workforce today than ever before. There must be something inherent in the system that's working against them.

Blatant sex discrimination is still a problem, as data from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission show. But subtler problems like hostile work environments, negative stereotypes about women in leadership, and bias also keep women out of the top spots. Unconscious or **implicit bias** can cloud judgment in ways people are not fully aware of.



WHAT CAN I DO TO CLOSE THE GAP?

Individuals: Learn about your own subconscious biases by taking AAUW's brief Implicit Association Test on gender and leadership at www.aauw.org.

Employers: Promote flexibility and fair expectations for both men and women and enforce fair policies through tools like diversity training and blind résumé screening.

Policy makers: Support current legislation and regulations like the Paycheck Fairness Act, the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act, and salary transparency.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT HAVING MORE WOMEN LEADERS?



It's good for both men and women to challenge stereotypical ideas about gender roles. Just as the status quo is holding women back from leadership roles, it is holding men back from embracing caretaking and support roles.



It's good for families, whether they rely on women as the sole breadwinners or have a two-earner income.



It's good for business to draw on the creativity of a diverse staff and recognize the purchasing power of women.



It's good for the country, because the more diverse the pool, the more talented our leaders will be.

SOLUTIONS FROM AAUW PROGRAMS

Salary Negotiation

AAUW's Start Smart and Work Smart workshops

NCCWSL

Our annual leadership conference for college women