



# 2024 MIDYEAR REPORT

## HOME STRETCH TO PARITY

The table is set for yet another giant leap forward for inclusive representation in November. And, your support means Close the Gap is preparing the women of 2026 ahead of the pack!

## CLASS OF 2024: ON TO NOVEMBER

17 members of the CTG Class of 2024 won their primary elections and are now the largest group of CTG women ever to head to the November runoff, including 71% women of color and 35% LGBTQ+ candidates.

We project that at least 55 women will serve after November's election!

### Advancing Class of 2024



Porsche Middleton  
AD 07



Rhodesia Ransom  
AD 13



Catherine Stefani  
AD 19



Jessica Self  
AD 22



Tara Sreekrishnan  
AD 26



Celeste Rodriguez  
AD 43



Christy Holstege  
AD 47



Jessica Caloza  
AD 52



Sade Elhawary  
AD 57



Clarissa Cervantes  
AD 58



Darshana Patel  
AD 76



Marisol Rubio  
SD 09



Lisa Middleton  
SD 19



Sasha Renée Pérez  
SD 25



Asm. Eloise Reyes\*  
SD 29



Asm. Sabrina Cervantes\*  
SD 23



Michelle Chambers  
SD 35

\* Close the Gap Class of 2016 winner running in 2024 target seat



Illustration by Chris Shary,  
for Capitol Weekly

## SUSANNAH DELANO NAMED TO CAPITOL WEEKLY'S TOP 100

E.D. Susannah Delano has been named to [Capitol Weekly's Top 100 list of influential political and policy leaders](#) for the second year in a row!

"The California Senate is assured of being majority female after this November, and the entire Legislature is on target to be so no later than 2028. If and when that happens, Susannah Delano will be one of the main reasons why. Delano is the executive director of Close the Gap, which recruits progressive women to run for office. Based on results from the March primaries, female candidates are all but guaranteed to fill 21 of the 40 Senate seats, the first such majority in California history. At least 30 percent of those women will have been recruited by Close the Gap." – *Capitol Weekly*



## REMEMBERING DELAINE EASTIN, CTG FOUNDING BOARD CHAIR (1947 - 2024)

We lift up the life and legacy of former State Superintendent of Public Instruction and Assemblymember Delaine Eastin. As our Founding Board Chair, Delaine signed Close the Gap's Articles of Association and gave her all to fire up our history-making campaign – at a time when gender parity in the Legislature was much closer to a dream than the near-reality it is today.

Delaine's dedication to equity and California's next generation have shaped Close the Gap since our founding, and she will continue to impact and inspire us forever.



Images: 1) Asm. Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (CTG Class of 2018), CTG Lead Recruiter Janet Cook, Hon. Delaine Eastin, and Assembly Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry; 2) Hon. Delaine Eastin & Hon. Christy Smith; Symposium; 3) Hon. Delaine Eastin & Kimberly Ellis; 4) author Tove Skutnabb Kangas & Hon. Delaine Eastin in Delaine's garden

“It is the ideal that women elected to high office will reach back and help the next generation of women leaders up the ladder. Delaine possessed that generous spirit, along with a remarkable eye for talent and a devotion to promoting women. Part cheerleader, part counselor, part Oxford Don, Delaine coached and connected women, delighting in their success and always offering to do more. She cared deeply that more doors were open for women and that more women went through them.”

— Close the Gap Founder, Mary Hughes



Close the Gap Founding Board Chair Delaine Eastin & Founder Mary Hughes in the '90s.

## MOMENTOUS MILESTONE: STATE SENATE HITTING PARITY IN 2024

This year, the California State Senate is all-but-guaranteed to achieve and surpass gender parity for the first time in history.

**We project a 53% female majority**, at least 30% of whom will be CTG Legislators!

Only three other states (Arizona, Colorado, and Nevada) have reached gender parity in at least one legislative chamber.

**THE BUZZ: FIRST IN PLAYBOOK** — Californians are likely to be represented by a female majority in the state Senate next year — a first for either chamber in the Golden State's 174-year history, according to a group that helps elect women legislators.

Close the Gap CA is projecting that the 40-member Senate will include 21 women, up from 18, an analysis exclusively shared with Playbook. About 90 percent of the female state senators would be Democratic women of color, with Latinas comprising the majority.

### The future is female in the California Senate

By DUSTIN GARDINER, ARIEL GANS and LARA KORTE | 03/19/2024 09:00 AM EDT



Toni Atkins, of San Diego, flanked by other members of the Legislative Women's Caucus discusses the groups efforts to strengthen women's reproductive rights at the Capitol in Sacramento, Calif., Thursday, Jan. 20, 2022 | Rich Pedroncelli/AP



## CLOSE THE GAP'S PROVEN METHOD @ WORK: CLASS OF 2026 ALREADY IN FORMATION!



In 2024, opportunity for progressive women abounds: we are just halfway through capitalizing on the Motherlode of open seat opportunities CTG has been targeting since the beginning. *Up next: 2026!*

CTG held our first Symposium event for prospective 2026 candidates in April, to be followed by a virtual session in September.

Symposiums provide women considering a legislative run with the access and insight they need to compete on a level playing field with the good ol' boys: powerful connections, workshops, political influencer "speed dating," and advice from all-star allies.

Note: Close the Gap is working far more districts than listed here for 2026 - we anticipate that **the number of open seats could double** as dominoes begin to fall!



### CTG IN THE PRESS

Given the historic milestones our work is driving, CTG has seen an unprecedented level of press in 2024! [Click here to see ALL press.](#)

[Recommended Listen \(28 min\): Susannah on KQED Political Breakdown podcast: Why Women Are Making Big Gains in the State Legislature](#)

*Image: Sen. Laphonza Butler (D-Calif.) attends a news conference at the US Capitol in Washington, DC, on Oct. 4, 2023. (Chip Somodevilla / Getty Images)*

Your support helps ensure that we have the resources it will take to recruit for the home stretch of the campaign for parity - **thank you!**