



# 2025 MIDYEAR REPORT

## PATH TO PARITY: PROGRESS IS NEVER GUARANTEED

After over a decade of focused work, the gender gap in California's Legislature has narrowed decisively: a **net gain of only 1 seat for women** is all we need to achieve our founding goal of gender parity by 2028!

But with a volatile national and state political context and **8 women** incumbents exiting, winning in 2026 will take everything we've got.

State and local offices remain our best and last chance to hold the line on reproductive freedoms, public education, and economic opportunity for working people. Women's leadership is the prescription for an ailing democracy.

### ANNOUNCING: CLASS OF 2026



Annalisa Perea  
AD 31



Deborah Klein Lopez  
AD 42



Clarissa Cervantes  
AD 58



Fatima Iqbal-Zubair  
AD 65



Dr. Sara Deen  
AD 66



Ada Briceño  
AD 67



Jessie Lopez  
AD 68



Natalie Rogers  
SD 02



Brittany McKinley  
SD 24



Mara Elliott  
SD 40

There is now less than a year to go before the Primary Election on June 6, 2026, and **CTG has recruited 10 phenomenal women to run**, including 2 who identify as LGBTQ+. *We are busy recruiting in even more target districts in anticipation of additional open seat opportunities!*

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## POWER IN PARITY GALA: NOVEMBER 12 IN SAN FRANCISCO

You are invited to an inspiring night of impact to celebrate as we approach our founding goal. We are thrilled to announce the next phase of Close the Gap's growth during this very special evening! Join us as we unveil plans for expansion - you won't want to miss this biggest CTG event of the year.

*Further details coming soon.*

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO  
CLOSE THE GAP'S BIGGEST EVENT OF THE YEAR

## POWER IN PARITY

*Gala*

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12  
*in*  
SAN FRANCISCO

*Stay tuned for more details to follow*

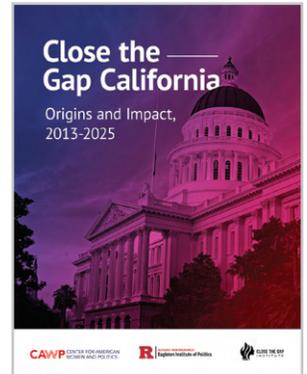
## RESEARCH SHOWS: WHAT WE DO WORKS!

On March 26, Team CTG was honored to join forces with members of the Women’s Caucus, Speaker Robert Rivas and distinguished allies to release a new report by the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University, the nation’s leading research institution on women in politics.



The report reveals how **CTG has cracked the code for recruiting more women to run for office and win**, resulting in a **more diverse and more effective California Legislature** that has **jumped from 19th to 4th in the nation for women’s representation** in under a decade. *Research findings confirm that our uniquely effective targeted recruitment model is ripe for replication in other states and levels of office!*

Read more at [CloseTheGapCA.org/Research](https://CloseTheGapCA.org/Research)



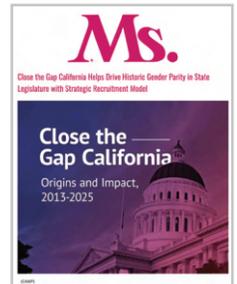
“I have witnessed firsthand what we all know to be true: when women lead, they get things done. In 2018, I was elected, and when I arrived here at the State Capitol, the number of women legislators was less than half of what it is today. Less than half... **that isn’t progress; that’s a revolution.**”

– **Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas at CTG Press Conference**



## CTG IN THE NEWS

The report’s findings were cited by luminary **U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer** in her *Los Angeles Times* op-ed, and our targeted recruitment strategy was held up as a model to achieve gender parity in politics in *Forbes* and *Ms.*!



## SUSANNAH NAMED IN CAPITOL WEEKLY TOP 100 - AGAIN!

For the *third* year in a row, **Executive Director Susannah Delano** has been selected as **one of Capitol Weekly’s Top 100** most influential leaders in California politics. Under Susannah’s fearless leadership, Close the Gap has consistently crushed our milestones to achieve parity in the California State Legislature by 2028, and we’re thrilled that Susannah and Close the Gap’s impact is being recognized... again!



Illustration by Chris Shary, for Capitol Weekly

## DON’T-MISS READ:

“The Golden State’s path to parity has not been serendipity or an inevitable result of California liberalism... The future will be defined by the strong, smart women who step up to run for every kind of political office - and by those who organize over the long term to help them win.”

– **Sen. Barbara Boxer cites Close the Gap in “Why California leads the way toward parity for women in elected office,” Los Angeles Times, April 2025**

Read more at [CloseTheGapCA.org/Press](https://CloseTheGapCA.org/Press)



# FOR THE FIRST TIME, CTG TAKES CENTER STAGE AT THE 2025 DEM PARTY CONVENTION

## CONVENTION FEATURED SPEAKER!



Executive Director Susannah Delano ignited the crowd from the convention main stage as a featured speaker at the State Convention in Anaheim in May. We were thrilled at the Party's recognition of CTG's leadership in fueling the historic surge of women in the State Legislature!

## PARTY FOR PARITY: OC EDITION!



Our Party For Parity in Orange County was a SMASH HIT! The growth of this groundbreaking joint event with our allies over the past two years truly warms our hearts and ignites our recruiting spirits. A special thank you to our generous event sponsors and partners listed below.

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

### Vanguard



### Renegade



### Catalyst



Jessica Speiser

Rose Kapolczynski  
& Jim Blomquist



Susan Sheu  
Recording Secretary, Los Angeles  
County Democratic Party

## THANK YOU TO OUR CO-HOSTS



RECRUIT.  
TRAIN.  
ELECT.



Your investment helps us recruit and prepare extraordinary women to run for office, ensuring the state's future is shaped by leaders who reflect and champion the communities they serve - *thank you!*



## FOR THE FIRST TIME, A CTG LEGISLATOR WILL LEAD THE CHAMBER: MONIQUE LIMÓN ELECTED NEXT SENATE PRO TEM!

Congratulations to Senator **Monique Limón** (CTG Class of 2016) on her historic election to be the next Senate President Pro Tem! In a decade, she has ascended from local school board member to the most powerful leadership position in the upper house of the Legislature in the fourth-largest economy in the world - the first mom to do so.

"It's so important to recognize that there are organizations that are very important to ensuring that women like me, who never saw themselves in public office, who didn't think state office was attainable, have organizations like Close the Gap that believe in them and that invest in the education and understanding of what this pathway might look like."

- Senate Pro Tem Elect Monique Limón at a 2022 Close the Gap event

## FOR THE FIRST TIME, A CTG WOMAN IN CONGRESS!

Former Assemblymember **Luz Rivas** (CTG Class of 2018) is now serving in the U.S. Congress as a member of the Progressive Caucus! *Nearly half* of all members of the 119th Congress are former state legislators. If we want more women who share our values serving at the national level, it's critical to keep building the pipeline.



## SACRAMENTO SYMPOSIUM: A LAUNCH PAD FOR GREATNESS



Close the Gap's work in the first half of 2025 served as a powerful springboard to prepare the women of 2026 ahead of the pack! Our latest Sacramento Symposium event for prospective 2026 candidates in March was packed with inspiration and focused preparation.

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.

Thanks to all who made Symposium sparkle!

## INLAND EMPIRE IMPACT

In May, Team CTG was in glorious Palm Springs for a planning retreat and reception!

Team members showed off their cooking skills, connected with local leaders, and got into the Palm Springs spirit with caftans galore. Did we mention we won an American Association of Political Consultants' auction to stay at "The Lucy House" once owned by Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz?



Thank you to our inspiring Reception speakers Councilmember **Grace Garner**, former Mayor **Lisa Middleton** (CTG Class of 2024) and Councilmember **Clarissa Cervantes** (CTG Class of 2026), as well as all of the community members who came out to connect with us in Palm Springs!

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### 1. SHARE THE GOOD NEWS ON OUR PROGRESS

We are currently inviting conversations with major institutions and individuals. If you can refer us to someone in your network who may be interested in hearing more or can make a sustaining gift, please reach out to Director of Development Diane Le at [diane@closethegapca.org](mailto:diane@closethegapca.org).

### 2. MAKE A GIFT

Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, Close the Gap is transforming the face of leadership in California. [Help us reach our 2025 goal by renewing your contribution today!](#) You can give online [here](#).

### 3. POWER IN PARITY GALA IN NOVEMBER

Get ready to celebrate: join us in San Francisco for our biggest event of the year! Close the Gap will announce our next big moves to expand as we approach the achievement of our founding goal in California. Stay tuned for further details.

If you prefer to donate by check, please mail it to our **NEW** address:

Close the Gap California  
1700 Tribute Road, Suite 201  
Sacramento, CA 95815



We're actively investigating how to ensure the parity we're building in California endures for the long term, and how the recruiting model we've deployed here might be adapted to accelerate similar progress beyond the California Legislature.