

Candidate Profile

10 THINGS WE SEE IN CURRENT WOMEN LEGISLATORS

1. Teachers, community college professors, social workers and legislative staff are common occupations. Lawyers are less so, but well represented.
2. The majority of women legislators have served on a School Board, City Council, been a Mayor or County Supervisor prior to running for the Assembly, but not all. All of the current Democratic women in the State Senate previously served in the Assembly.
3. Activism in many forms is indicative of women who win: founding a non-profit, leading a community effort for change or being a voice for a point of view. Many women members were associated with an issue – education, mental health, workers rights, civil rights, clean government, open government and protecting children are representative. Some were involved in faith-based or social justice efforts.
4. Being media savvy is a plus – as a journalist, talk show host or as a spokeswoman for a community effort.
5. Executive and entrepreneurial experience is persuasive. Many members started small businesses or non-profits, led community based service clubs or volunteer efforts.
6. Roots matter. Most members have lived, worked and raised families or been part of the fabric of their districts for many years. Farmers, coaches, mentors, counselors and union activists are all descriptions women members give that tie them to their communities.
7. Look for the “karma” effect. Many members helped other elected officials advance, from being active on a Presidential campaign to supporting other women candidates before making the move themselves.
8. All sizes and shapes of family work for legislators. Single, married, partnered, parent, non-parent, grandparent and great-grandparent. All have served.
9. Public presentation and leadership. Speaking skill, personal appearance, media management and leadership skills like organization, delegation and timeliness are embedded in the professional and public experiences of women who win.
10. Like people! Women members tend to be positive, purposeful, optimistic, engaging and motivating. They enjoy interaction with the public and are risk-takers for the right cause.

5 THINGS WE'D LIKE TO SEE MORE OF

11. Social entrepreneur. Who is making positive change in the community, especially with regard to health, education and fighting poverty? We need her.
12. A bandleader. Who has the posse to make it happen? Women candidates need to start with a base of support – from an inner circle of experienced supporters to an outer circle of admirers who will volunteer and spread the word.
13. A moneymaker. Women who rise to the top of big companies or women who start successful small businesses have the drive, purposefulness and resilience that successful candidates must have. They understand the bottom line, literally and figuratively.
14. Thought leaders. Women who head non-profits, think tanks, foundations and community colleges manage budgets, balance competing interests and are generally strong policy advocates.
15. Those who understand what it means to serve. It is called public service for a reason. Corporate and non-profit board members, PTA Presidents, Chairs of the annual charity event, leaders of the Library bond campaign. Look for them.