

MCW

leadership matters

TENNESSEE by the numbers

51.3%	18.2%	16.2%
population of women in Tennessee	representation in TN State Senate	representation in TN State House

Center for American Women and Politics



"The way to achieve your own success is to be willing to help somebody else get it first."

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION An American Problem

by April Goebeler

Many people believed the presidential election of 2016 signified that the "good ole' boys" had won, and their view of women prevailed. It felt personal, like a slap in the face. This view, however, is not honest.

An honest look at the political environment of the United States reveals that inequality between the sexes has been and remains prevalent. It cannot be solved by one election. The 2016 election was only a slap in the face in the sense that it failed to underscore how grossly underrepresented women are in all levels of government. The "good ole' boy" view of women in politics persists and is exacerbated by voters. Consider that only about 19% of all members of U.S. Congress are women. There are 21 women in the U.S. Senate; 16 Democrats and 5 Republicans. There are 83 females in the U.S. House of Representatives of which only about a quarter are Republican.

Although among women, Republicans are less represented than Democrats, proportional representation in government is not a partisan problem; it is an American problem.

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PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION *continued*

During the Women's March in January, a television news anchor made the comment that women in America are better off than women in Saudi Arabia or Pakistan. This got me thinking. Is this statement true? According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the answer is no.

The United States ranks 98th in proportional representation, putting it behind middle eastern countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. I don't believe the news anchor was trying to mislead his audience. I think Americans honestly do not realize the extent of the problem.

Locally, there are nine seats on Chattanooga's City Council. Only two seats are held by women, Dr. Carol Berz, District 6 and Demetrus Coonrod, District 9. In Hamilton County, there are nine County Commissioners. Only one is a woman: Sabrina Turner-Smedely. Except for a few women on the Hamilton County Department of Education School Board, almost every elected office in Hamilton County is held by a man. The statistics are dismal.

Why do we have this problem? This is partially due to American historical culture. Women did not have the right to serve on a jury until 1973, work while pregnant until 1987, refuse sex with their husbands until 1993, or pay the same for healthcare until 2010.

The problem also lies within ourselves. Women are everyday activists. At work, we fight for equal pay and to break glass ceilings while we disproportionately care for children, home, and elders at home. These issues are important, but we can't afford to ignore the issue of proportional representation any longer. Women make up 51% of the American population; we should represent 51% of American government.

Recently a friend asked me whether I would run for office. Immediately, I said, "No, I don't like public speaking." Let's push these excuses aside and make proportional representation in government the next big success story in Women's Liberation.

Mayor's Council for Women

In 2015, Mayor Andy Berke established the Mayor's Council for Women (MCW) to make policy recommendations about issues affecting women in Chattanooga and across the region. Co-chaired by State Representative JoAnne Favors and Chattanooga City Councilwoman Dr. Carol Berz, MCW was structured to ensure the participation of women from all walks of life and professions. The Council is made up of six working groups: Economic Opportunity, Education, Leadership, Health, History, and Justice. Chattanooga.gov/councilforwomen.



Leadership Matters is published quarterly by the **MCW Leadership Committee**. Contributors to this issue include Holly Ashley, Jenni Berz, Jessica Dumitru, April Goebeler, and committee chair, Jelena Butler. *Leadership Matters* is edited by Dominique Brandt.



Leadership Spotlight *by Jessica Dumitru*

Carla D. Leslie Recording Secretary, Local 15120 United Steelworkers

Carla D. Leslie has spent the last 27 years working at Pilgrim's Pride, which is a union plant. Leslie is passionate about her work with the 15120 United Steelworkers Union and is involved in its many organizations. She serves as the Recording Secretary of the Union, the chairperson for the Women of Steel, and trustee for the Chattanooga Area Labor Council. Through these organizations, Leslie helps feed the homeless in our community, works in homeless shelters with families and children, assists in nursing homes, volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House, participates in local breast cancer walks, and works phone banks for elected officials.

Leslie increased her civic involvement approximately ten years ago, when she noticed that although women made up a majority of the Pilgrim's Pride workforce, they were unrepresented within the Local Union. She took on the challenge of pushing the Local Union socially forward with grace and tenacity. She takes pride in the knowledge that she helps represent the women in her community, many of whom have stepped out of their comfort zone and are potentially making political enemies of their male colleagues. She feels strongly that it is time to make a difference in our community and that change is best effectuated when standing in solidarity with other women to build a stronger Chattanooga.

After finding the passion and strength to take on this challenge, Leslie now helps younger women walking in her footsteps, telling them that "through God and in God you can do all things. You can be a leader." She believes any woman can be a leader by putting her dreams together with the great minds of other women. **"Any goals and dreams that you have, you just have to do it and let no one say that you can't,"** said Leslie. "God says we are more than conquerors. We do it one day at a time, step-by-step, but we do it together as women in the community and abroad."



Leslie has personally been inspired and mentored by three women. First, Mary Lisa Wigfall, a lady at Leslie's church, Friendship Primitive Baptist, who is a strong and powerful woman of God. Second, former coworker Demetrus Coonrod, who recently overturned the incumbent for the District 7 City Council seat. Leslie takes pride in the fact that Coonrod came from Leslie's plant and exhibits the qualities of leadership and determination every day. Lastly, Diane Leslie who works at the Union Plant Bridgestone Local 1155L -- a strong, determined and bold woman who is teaching Leslie to "keep pushing as hard as you can."

Above all else, Leslie believes that there are not enough women in leadership in our community and wants to call on all women to step up and contribute, as they are able, in order to build a stronger Chattanooga: "We always were told that it was the man that needed to be in leadership, but times have changed. We as women - it's our time to shine, not letting anyone tell us that we can't. We are making a difference in leadership organizations and communities."

*"We have to keep it moving like a locomotive train—strong, hard and fast.
The women in our community still have a lot of things that we want to accomplish.
I know we can get it done with strong leadership. We will make an impact on Chattanooga
and the local union will be a part of that." -- Carla D. Leslie*

The Numbers Don't Lie Still Tapping on That Glass Ceiling

By Holly Ashley

After all these years, one would think women have gained their rightful place in the c-suites of corporate America; especially since hundreds of studies have proven gender-diversity positively impacts the bottom line and creates a more inclusive work environment for employees. Indeed, there have been some high-profile, female hires at Fortune 500 companies (hat tip to you, Safrat Catz of Oracle) and diversity initiatives are launched at companies in greater numbers now than ever before. But the numbers don't lie, and the latest Women in the Workplace 2016 report by McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org illustrates that tenacious old glass ceiling hasn't come down yet.

The 2016 report represents data from 130 companies and approximately 34,000 men and women. The following is an excerpt of key findings:

- Corporate America promotes men at **30% higher rates** than women during their early career stages.
- Entry-level women are significantly more likely than men to have spent **5+ years in the same role.**

- Women receive informal feedback less frequently than men - despite asking for it as often - and have less access to senior-level sponsors.
- Women are almost **THREE times** more likely than men to think their gender will make it harder to get a raise, promotion, or chance to get ahead.
- Women negotiate for promotions and raises as often as men but face more pushback when they do, receiving feedback that they are **"bossy," "too aggressive,"** or **"intimidating."**

GENDER REPRESENTATION IN THE CORPORATE PIPELINE IN 2016

WOMEN  MEN 

% OF EMPLOYEES BY LEVEL



It's not all bad news: According to an April 2017 Fortune article, four of the ten highest-paid U.S. CEOs were women last year. That milestone is sure to be celebrated, but there's still much work to be done to bring that glass ceiling down for everyone, especially women of color who are even more underrepresented. To learn about what companies can do to create greater leadership opportunities for women, visit womenintheworkplace.com.

Sources: "Women in the Workplace 2016" by McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org. 2016
"Four of the Ten Highest-Paid CEOs Are Now Women" by Madeline Farber, April 17 2017, Fortune.

MCW Leadership Committee meets at 8:30 a.m. on the first Friday of each month at Chattanooga City Hall (101 E. 11th Street). All are welcome to join!