



January 27, 2017

Welcome to the Women Legislators' Lobby's (WiLL) January 2017 newsletter:

2016 Elections Update

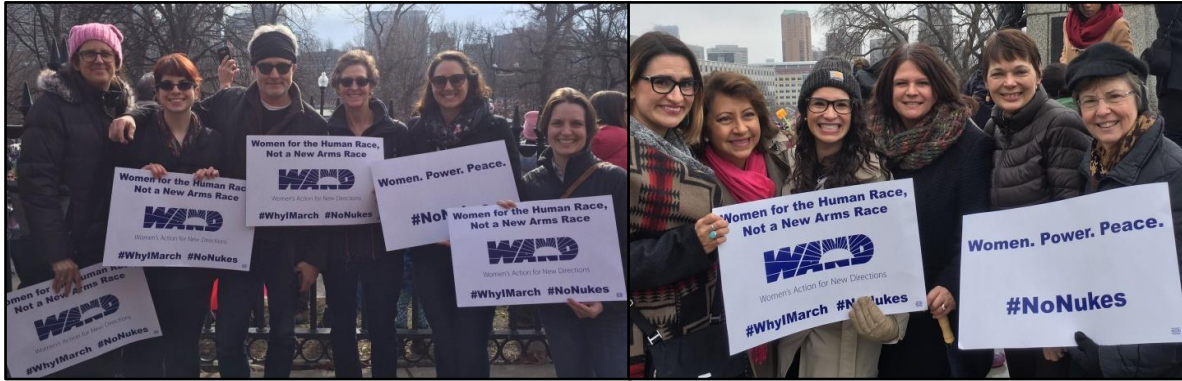
After the 2016 election, there was minimal growth in the number of women in legislative and leadership positions. Out of the 7,383 state legislators nationwide in 2017, only 1,832 (24.8%) are women, a very modest increase from 1,805 (24.5%) in 2016. Vermont has the highest representation of women legislators (40%), while Wyoming has the lowest (11.1%). While gender-based representation is slowly improving, diversity within legislatures and other leadership positions held by women remains very low. Only 397 women serving as state legislators nationwide are women of color. Although these numbers are daunting, women of color made some significant gains at both the state and federal level in the last election cycle:

- **Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth (IL)** is the first female Senator to have served in combat and the second Asian-American female Senator
- **Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (WA-7)** is the first Indian-American woman elected to Congress
- **U.S. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (NV)** is the first Latina woman elected to the United States Senate
- **Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy (FL-7)** is the first Vietnamese-American woman elected to Congress
- **State Representative Ilhan Omar (MN)** is the first Somali-American state legislator
- **Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester (DE-At-large)** is the first woman and first African-American elected to represent Delaware in Congress
- **U.S. Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA)** is the first Indian-American woman to serve in the United States Senate

Congratulations!

Congratulations to all of the women legislators who have been chosen for leadership positions in their chambers this session, including: Arizona **House Minority Leader Rebecca Rios**, Colorado House **Speaker Crisanta Duran**, Kansas **Senate President Susan Wagle**, Maine House **Speaker Sara Gideon**, Maryland House **Speaker Pro Tem Adrienne Jones**, Michigan **Senate President Pro Tem Tonya Schuitmaker**, Minnesota **Senate President Michelle Fischbach**, New Mexico **Senate President Pro Tem Mary Kay Papan**, Oregon House **Speaker Tina Kotek**, Rhode Island **Senate President M. Teresa Paiva Weed**, Tennessee House **Speaker Beth Harwell**, and Vermont House **Speaker Mitzi Johnson**. The full list of state legislative leaders can be found [here](#).

WiLL/WAND Participate in National Women's Marches



WiLL and WAND leaders participated and spoke at the national women's marches which took place around the country on January 21. Please take a look at our photos [here!](#)

December 2016 Communications Training in Washington, DC



On December 3-4, 2016, WAND held a training on communications skills in Washington, DC. The training was attended by 25 women legislators and activists from 19 states. The training focused on building and leveraging power, the impact of federal budgeting decisions on state budgets, tips and best practices for crafting op-eds, letters to the editor, and speeches, as well as guidance on TV interviews and public speeches. Participants also learned the best use of digital media tools, storytelling, how to work with the press, and how to craft a comprehensive communications plan.

On December 3 executive media trainer Dee Martin of the Policy Resolution Group and defense reporter Kristina Wong of *The Hill* sharing their experiences and advice with participants about how to engage with the media and build relationships with journalists.

WiLL/WAND would like to thank Land O'Lakes, Pfizer, PhRMA, Ferring Pharmaceuticals, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and Rebecca Kanninen for their support of the WiLL/WAND Communications Training in Washington, DC and also recognize WiLL's 2016 National Partners: Anytime Fitness, DraftKings, Fan Duel, Google, Inc., Land O'Lakes, PhRMA, POET, and Yum! Brands, Inc.

WiLL and WAND Call for Careful Scrutiny of Presidential Cabinet Nominees

On January 10, WAND hand delivered a letter signed by more than 130 state lawmakers across 31 states to Senate Majority and Minority Leaders Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer. The letter calls on them to oppose any Cabinet nominee who violates five important American values and norms. The five values highlighted in the letter included: putting diplomacy over military intervention, controlling and reducing nuclear weapon stockpiles, respecting and upholding civil liberties, avoiding conflicts of interest, and respecting the tradition of civilian leadership. Our hope is that the letter encourages them to consider these key principles when evaluating Trump's nominees because they are core to whether or not our members of Cabinet can effectively support and protect America's interests and safekeeping both at home and abroad. A video of the letter delivery featuring WAND's Nuclear Weapons Policy Director Erica Fein can be found [here](#). Click [here](#) to read the full version of the letter and see who signed.

Capitol Hill Update

Budget

Sen. John McCain introduced a \$618 billion base defense budget for FY2018.

- An additional \$60 billion was requested for the Overseas Contingency Operations account. The almost \$700 billion dollar price tag is \$100 billion more than the Obama administration projected.
- This plan includes adding 8,000 troops to the army annually, building 59 more navy ships over the next five years, and commissioning 73 more F-35 fighters for the Air Force.
- This is important because an inflated defense budget may further squeeze out other budget priorities in the annual budget expenditure. This will leave less room for other spending priorities such as education and infrastructure.
- A buildup of our armed forces also sends a signal to the world that we are more interested in war-making than in peace-building.

Nuclear Weapons

On January 24, Congressman Ted Lieu (CA-33) and Senator Ed Markey (MA) introduced the "Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2017." The bill would prohibit the President from launching nuclear weapons in a first strike without a declaration of war by Congress. Throughout the campaign, the public showed their concern over any President, especially President Trump, having the authority to launch nuclear weapons without protocols in place that check this power and prevent a rash or inappropriate decision to launch these very destructive weapons. Having no role for Congress in the decision is also seen by many as unconstitutional because it contradicts the idea of using Congress as the vehicle for any authorization of a formal use of force. [Please contact your Member of Congress and ask them to co-sponsor this bill!](#)

Join or Renew Your Membership in WiLL!

As you begin 2017, we invite you [to join the Women Legislators' Lobby \(WiLL\)](#) or [to renew your current membership in WiLL](#) and share our resources to support your effectiveness as a leader. The Women Legislators' Lobby (WiLL) is a national nonpartisan network of women state legislators who work together to influence federal policy and budget priorities. When women state legislators join WiLL, we strengthen our ability to make our voices heard. We become more informed and more effective. WiLL provides state legislators with valuable resources and services:

- WiLL shares timely materials with you about how critical state programs and services are affected by federal policy and budget decisions.
- WiLL provides simple, effective ways for you to influence federal decisions that will impact your constituents.
- WiLL offers highly-rated national conferences, policy briefings, communications trainings, and other professional development programs designed to help you become more effective in your leadership role.

Connect with WiLL

For the latest on WiLL events and news, be sure to follow [@WomenLegisLobby](#) on [Twitter](#) and friend WiLL on [Facebook](#).