



A Historical View of Women in Utah's Top Political Roles

Setting the Stage

According to Better Days 2020, “The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of Utah women being the first in the nation to vote under an equal suffrage law. It also marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, extending women’s voting rights throughout the United States, and the 55th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, protecting voting rights of women and men of racial minorities.”¹ In honoring these anniversaries, this historical snapshot documents the women who have served in prominent elected positions within Utah since its statehood. The appendices were compiled by Rhoda Struhs and former Utah House Representative Beverly White, in collaboration with Better Days 2020. The state has a rich history of pioneer women leading, including Utah’s own Martha Hughes Cannon, the first woman in the country to serve as a state senator. This snapshot provides a brief overview of women in Utah who have served in statewide executive offices, Congress, and the state legislature.

Statewide Executive Office

Throughout Utah’s history, only two women have served in Utah’s five statewide executive offices, and both began their service in 1993.² The first, Jan Graham (D), was elected as Attorney General and served from 1993–2000.³ The second, Olene Walker (R), served as lieutenant governor to Mike Leavitt from 1993–2003, when he was nominated by the George W. Bush Administration to serve as the Secretary of the US Department of Health & Human Services. Walker was appointed as governor to serve until the end of Leavitt’s term, from 2003–2005. No woman has ever been on the ballot to run for Utah governor.

US Congress

Utah has six seats in its national delegation (two senators and four representatives). Most recently, Congresswoman Mia Love (R) was elected to the US House of Representatives, serving from 2015–2019. Prior to Congresswoman Love, only three Utah women had served in Congress: Rep. Enid Greene Waldholtz (Mickelson) (R) 1995–1997, Rep. Karen Shepherd (D) 1993–1995, and Rep.

Reva Z. Beck Bosone (D) 1949–1953. Utah has never elected a woman to serve in the US Senate.

State Legislature

Through the years, there have been 30 women who have served in the Utah Senate (22 Democrats, 8 Republicans) starting in 1897 with Martha Hughes Cannon (see Appendix A for a complete list). In the Utah House of Representatives, 165 women (90 Democrats, 75 Republicans) have served, beginning with Sarah Elizabeth Anderson in 1897 (see Appendix B for a complete list).

Conclusion

While advocating for suffrage, Susan B. Anthony stated, “There will never be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect law makers.”⁴ The women mentioned in this snapshot were and are those who did just that. We honor these persistent, brave, and remarkable women who have committed their lives to leading and serving in Utah’s top elected roles. We hope that highlighting these Utah public servants will help women today know they can and should be politically engaged in their communities. Utah needs more women to run and serve in elected office; this increase in female representation would further strengthen the impact of girls and women statewide. We echo the words of Susan B. Anthony from her last speech, pronouncing, “Failure is impossible!”⁵

¹ Better Days 2020. (n.d.). <https://www.betterdays2020.com/>

² Madsen, S. R., & Pierucci, D. C. (2017). The status of women in Utah politics: A 2017 update. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/briefs/14-status-of-women-in-utah-politics-2017.pdf>

³ Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP). (2020). State fact sheet—Utah. *Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers*.

<https://cawp.rutgers.edu/state-by-state>

⁴ Anthony, S. B. (1898, March). *The Phonographic Magazine* (p. 56).

⁵ Sherr, L. (1995). *Failure is impossible: Susan B. Anthony in her own words* (p. xviii).

Acknowledgements: This snapshot is possible through a partnership with Better Days 2020 and the support of HRCP and the Woodbury School of Business. Special thanks to Beverly White and Rhoda Struhs for their work in compiling this list.

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APPENDIX A
WOMEN IN THE UTAH SENATE THROUGHOUT UTAH'S HISTORY

Year	Name	Party
1897–1901	Cannon, Martha Hughes	D
1919–1923	Hayward, Elizabeth	D
1921–1925	Kinney, Antionette B.	R
1933–1937	Musser, Elise Furer	D
1935–1939	Stewart, Othellia E.	D
1937–1939	Lund, Cornelia	D
1939–1941, 1949–1951	Jensen, Cleo Lund	D
1941–1947	Erickson, Edna	D
1957–1959	Jack, Nellie	D
1977–1983, 1987–1991	Farley, Frances	D
1980–1981	Jensen, Vivian	D
1981–1987	Wayment, Dona	R
1991–1992	Shepherd, Karen	D
1991–1995	Baird, Delpha	R
1991–2003	Peterson, Millie	D
1999–2005	Julander, Paula	D
1999–2007	Evans, Beverly	R
1999–2007	Hale, Karen	D
2001–2003	Suazo, Alicia L.	D
2001–2009	Walker, Carlene	R
2003–2007	Arent, Patrice	D
2007–2018	Dayton, Margaret	R
2007–2015	Jones, Patricia	D
2008–	Mayne, Karen	D
2009–	Escamilla, Luz Robles	D
2009–2013	Morgan, Karen W.	D
2013–	Henderson, Deidre	R
2015–	Iwamoto, Jani	D
2015–	Millner, Ann	R
2019–	Riebe, Kathleen	D

APPENDIX B

WOMEN IN THE UTAH HOUSE THROUGHOUT UTAH'S HISTORY

Year	Name	Party
1897–1899	Anderson, Sarah Elizabeth	D
1897–1899	LaBarthe, Eurithe K.	D
1899–1901	Horne, Alice M.	D
1903–1905	Coulter, Mary Anna Clairra Geigus	R
1913–1913	Read, Edyth Ellerbeck	R
1913–1915	Cannon, Anne Wells	R
1913–1915	King, Ann Holden	R
1913–1915	Skolfield, Jane W. Manning	R
1915–1917	Wolstenholme, Lily C.	R
1915–1919	Hayward, Elizabeth A.	D
1917–1919	Allen, Daisy C.	D
1917–1921	Stratton Airey, Grace	D
1919–1921	Blakely, Delora W.	D
1919–1921, 1929–1931	Piercey, Anna T.	D
1921–1923	Clegg, Cloa	R
1921–1923	Davis, Mary Belle Thurman	R
1923–1925	Lyman, Amy Brown	R
1923–1927	Dunyon, Lillian F.	R
1923–1927	Graham, Mary McIntosh	R
1925–1929	Paxman, Achsa Eggertson	R
1925–1929	Smart, Julia	R
1927–1929, 1931–1933	Lowe, Mildred P.	R
1927–1929, 1931–1933	Tanner, Laura Woodland	R
1929–1931	Carlisle, Emily Stevenson McDonald	D
1929–1931	Cooper, Grace Avery	D
1929–1931	Jensen, Lucinda P.	R
1929–1931	Purser, Martha	D
1929–1931	Stewart, Otellia E.	D
1931–1933	Cahoon, Matilda W.	R
1933–1935	Ericksen, Edna	D
1933–1935	Harris Headman, Minnie V.	D
1933–1935	Lund, Cornelia	D
1933–1935	Rich, Mildred	D
1933–1936	Bosone, Reva Beck	D
1935–1937	Gibson, Rhoda	D

1935–1937	Maeser, Zelila M.	D
1935–1939	Aird, Emily D.	D
1935–1941	Jensen, Josephine	D
1937–1939	Johnson, Henrietta B.	D
1937–1941	Garff, Thelma	D
1937–1943	Jacob, Maud B.	D
1939–1949, 1953–1955, 1967–1974	Jack, Nellie	D
1941–1943	Bodell Skanchy, Elizabeth	D
1941–1943	McGean, Madge	D
1943–1944	Murdock, Jean Z.	D
1943–1945	Smith, Susan Alice	R
1943–1945, 1959–1971	Loveridge, Della L.	D
1944–1945	Burns, Emma May Copper	D
1944–1947	Roberts, Clara L. Jarvis	D
1945–1947	Bearnson, Margaret	D
1945–1947	Smith Hay, Francis B.	R
1947–1949	Christensen, Lois	R
1947–1949	Forsberg, Sophronia N.C.	R
1947–1949	Pyne, Ethel	R
1947–1949	Williams, Faye E.	R
1947–1951	Mitchell, Ivie	D
1949–1951	Cullimore, Odessa	D
1949–1959	Cazier, Edna	D
1951–1953	Anderson, Sunday C.	D
1951–1959, 1961–1967	Vance, Elizabeth	D
1953–1955	Lowe, Rozello	R
1957–1959	Abbott, Delila M.	R
1957–1959, 1961–1963	Griffin Woolsey, Nethella K.	D
1959–1963	Ballif, Algie E.	D
1961–1963	Fanning, Faye B.	D
1963–1967	Conover, Eva W.	D
1967–1972	Oberhansley Bernard, Milly	D
1967–1976	Mulhall, Alla	D
1969–1973	Marchant, Beatrice	D
1969–1979	Peterson, Georgia B.	R
1971–1971	Peterson, Sandra	D
1971–1973, 1975–1977	Nalder, Rebecca	D

1971–1973, 1975–1979	Carlisle, Vervene (Vee)	D
1971–1991	White, Beverly J.	D
1972–1973	Kimball, Margot	D
1973–1975	Acker, Rita Urie	D
1973–1977	Johnson, Mary Lorraine	D
1975–1977	Jarman, Beth S.	D
1975–1981	Atwood, Genevieve	R
1977–1979	Dorman–Ligh, Wyllis	D
1979–1980	Taylor, Lucille	D
1979–1981	Turner, Joan	R
1980–1987	Florez, Bobby	D
1981–1983	Brandt, Jo	D
1981–1983	Masur, Dorothea	R
1981–1986	Dahl, Donna M.	R
1981–1988	Walker, Olene	R
1982–1982	Pastore, Ched	D
1983–1985	Jensen, Vivian	D
1983–1985	Kanig, Lavinia	R
1983–1985	Shumway, Naomi	R
1983–1987	Merrill, Frances Hatch	R
1985–2003	Bradshaw, Afton	R
1987–1991	Nix, Pat	R
1987–1993	Milner, Joanne	D
1987–1993	Rose, Janet	D
1987–1998	Evans, Beverly Ann	R
1988–1991	Hales, Janette	R
1988–1997	Fox, Christine R.	R
1989–1991	Halverson, Dionne P.	D
1989–1993	Julander, Paula	D
1989–1995	Lyon, Nancy S.	R
1991–1993	Smedley, Ann T.	R
1991–1999	Larson, Patricia B.	D
1993–1995	Eubank, Sara	D
1993–1997	Jensen, Shirley V.	R
1993–1997	Smith, Karen B.	R
1993–2001	Carlson, Mary	D
1993–2001	Stephens, Nora	R
1993–2003	Buffmire, Judy Ann	D
1993–2005	Dillree, Marda	R

1994–2011	Allen, Sheryl L.	R
1995–1997	Gubler, Darlene	R
1995–1997	Lockman, Sue	R
1995–2001	Baca, Loretta	D
1996–2001	Koehn, Susan	R
1996–2007	Dayton, Margaret	R
1997–2001	Rowan, Tammy	R
1997–2003, 2009–2011	Beck, Trisha	D
1997–2003, 2011–	Arent, Patrice	D
1997–2005	Bryson, Katherine	R
1997–2005	Pace, Lorraine	R
1999–2009	Morgan, Karen	D
1999–2009, 2019–	Shurtliff, LaWanna "Lou"	D
1999–2012	Biskupski, Jackie	D
1999–2015	Lockhart, Rebecca	R
2001–	Moss, Carol Spackman	D
2001–2003	Beshear, Cindy	D
2001–2007	Jones, Patricia W.	D
2001–2007	Wallace, Peggy	R
2001–2013	Newbold, Merlynn T.	R
2003–2005	Love, Dana C.	R
2003–2007	Hardy, Ann W.	R
2003–2007	Lawrence, Susan	R
2003–2009	McGee, Rosalind J.	D
2005–2011	Fowlke, Lorie D.	R
2005–2012	Fisher, Julie	R
2005–2014	Fisher, Janice M.	D
2005–2015	Menlove, Ronda Rudd	R
2006–2014	Seelig, Jennifer M.	D
2007–2009	Andersen, Sylvia S.	R
2007–2011	Johnson, Christine	D
2008–2019	Chavez Houck, Rebecca	D
2009–	Duckworth, Susan	D
2009–2019	Edwards, Becky	R
2009–	Poulson, Marie H.	D
2009–2011	Black, Laura	D
2009–2013, 2017–	Watkins, Christine	D/R
2011–2012	Richardson, Holly	R

2013–2014	Layton, Dana	R
2013–	Romero, Angela	D
2015–	Coleman, Kim	R
2015–2016	DiCaro, Sophia M.	R
2015–	Hollins, Sandra	D
2017–	Kwan, Karen	D
2017–	Lisonbee, Karianne	R
2017–	Pulsipher, Susan K.	R
2017–	Weight, Elizabeth	D
2017–	Acton, Cheryl K.	R
2018–	Judkins, Marsha	R
2019–	Ballard, Melissa Garff	R
2019–	Dailey–Provost, Jennifer M.	D
2019–	Harrison, Suzanne	D
2019–	Pitcher, Stephanie	D
2020–	Pierucci, Candice	R