





NCSL

WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE NETWORK

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

<div>President:</div> <div>  </div> <div> Dafna Michaelson Jenet Colorado </div>	<p>Sen. Dafna Michaelson Jenet is currently serving District 21 in Colorado and has been serving in public office since 2017. She currently serves as President Pro Tempore, Vice Chair of the Health & Human Services Committee, and as a member of the Senate Education Committee. She dedicates her efforts to helping underserved communities, prioritizing mental health, and strengthening education. She earned her bachelor's degree in music and drama from Yeshiva University and a master's degree from the University of Denver. She has co-founded the nonprofit Journey Institute to empower individuals through leadership and storytelling. With her background in non-profit leadership, she is passionate about creating policies that support families and uplift marginalized voices. As a published author she has written about resilience, community, and mental health advocacy. She continues to champion initiatives that foster inclusivity and opportunity for all Coloradans.</p>
<div>President Elect:</div> <div>  </div> <div> DeAnn Vaught Arkansas </div>	<p>Rep. DeAnn Vaught is currently representing Arkansas 87th district and has been serving for 10 years. She is the House Chair on the House Management Committee and serves on the House Rules Committee and the House Education Committee. She received her bachelor's degree from Southern Arkansas University and is a farmer in Horatio. She is actively involved in the Farm Bureau and Pork Producers. She is dedicated to policies that support agriculture, education, and economic growth. As a mother of three she understands the importance of strong schools and good opportunities for future generations.</p>
<div>Vice President:</div>	<p>Rep. Stephanie Kifowit represents the 84th Illinois house district and is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps. Beyond her</p>



Stephanie Kifowit
Illinois


distinguished military service in the United States Marines, Representative Kifowit is a proud alumna of Northern Illinois University, and a former City of Aurora Alderman. First sworn in in 2013, Representative Kifowit has consistently been a leader in ensuring that the state of Illinois has a balanced and responsible budget each year. During her tenure, she has passed legislation to lower Veteran suicide, reduce property taxes, and provide services for children, the disabled, and the elderly. Her current legislative roles include chairing both the Personnel & Pensions Committee and the Property Tax Subcommittee.

Past President:



Melissa Ballard
Utah

Rep. Melissa Ballard has served Utah's 20th District since 2019. Representative Ballard's service has included Chair of Higher Education Appropriations, Vice Chair Criminal Justice Appropriations, Founding Chair of the Higher Education and Corrections Council, Chair of Education and Mental Health Council, Chair of the Utah Marriage Commission. Founding Leader of Republican Women Lead PAC. Service on Utah legislative standing committees include Public Education, Transportation, Criminal and Law Enforcement, Business and Labor, Economic Development, and Social Services Appropriations. Nationally, service includes President of the Women's Legislative Network for NCSL, Vice Chair Children, Families and Human Services Standing Committee NCSL, Founding Board Member of the United States Hydrogen Alliance, Leadership Alliance for a More Perfect Union Founder's Council, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, and Green Hydrogen Coalition. In Utah, service includes the following Boards: Envision Utah, the Governor's Utah Education Commission, The Natural History Museum of Utah, Founding Chair of the SLCAP Advisory Board, and Founding Chair of the University of Utah School of Music Advisory Board. Representative Ballard's legislative experience has been in a variety of areas, including but not limited to, education funding transparency, improving government fiscal transparency, Medicaid, parental leave, planning for growth, energy production, early education, aligning workforce development with private and public higher education partners, aligning private with public mental and behavioral health organizations, planning for future transportation, simplifying government regulations,

	and support of the arts and museums. Work with the Department of Corrections has led to prison reform, including increasing access to education, inmate debt, and preparation for reentering into society upon release.
<p>At-Large Republican:</p>  <p>Becky Beard Montana</p>	<p>Sen. Becky Beard has served in the Montana Legislature since 2017 where she represents a predominantly rural constituency with a focus on agriculture, natural resources, and infrastructure. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Carroll College and has been the owner and partner of Beard Environmental & Technical Assistance since 1997. She was first elected to the House in 2017 where she served as Majority Whip and chaired the House Taxation Committee. In 2022 she was appointed to the Senate and now chairs the Revenue Interim Committee and the Forest Lands Taxation Advisory Committee. She has been involved with NCSL, participating in fiscal policy initiatives and national leadership programs. With years of legislative and leadership experience she remains committed to ensuring rural voices are heard in policymaking.</p>
<p>At-Large Democrat:</p>  <p>Melissa Romano Montana</p>	<p>Rep. Melissa Romano is a life long Montanan who was elected to represent House District 81 in 2023. She obtained her B.S. in Social Sciences and her Master of Science in Elementary Education both from the University of Bridgeport. Previously she taught in the Helena school district and has been an advocate for quality education. She has received the National Science Foundation's President Award for Mathematics and Science Teaching and was named Montana Teacher of the Year in 2018. She has served on the Taxation, Education, Agriculture, and Legislative Administration Committees. She prioritizes data-driven policy making and bipartisan solutions to support Montana's children and families. As a member of the Women's Legislative Network she advocates for gender equality and policies that empower women. She remains dedicated to ensuring strong education and opportunities for Montana's future generations.</p>
Eastern D	<p>Rep. Julie A. Casimiro has represented the 31st District in Rhode Island since 2016 and was named deputy majority leader in 2019. As a former marketing executive, she holds her bachelor's degree in marketing from Providence College. She has served as the first vice chair of the House Oversight Committee and chairs its Children and Families</p>



Julie A. Casimiro
Rhode Island

Subcommittee. She is a strong advocate for child welfare, and has championed legislation to protect children, improve healthcare access, and enhance consumer protections. She serves as the vice chair of the NCSL Standing Committee on Children, Families, and Human Services. With her new role on the WLN board she hopes to encourage more women to seek leadership roles and believes that this is a perfect way for women to help support other women.

Eastern



Laura Sibila
Vermont




Rep. Laura Sibila has served in the Vermont house of representatives as an Independent since 2014 where she represents rural districts with a focus on telecom, energy, climate change, and economic development. She received her B.S. in Business Administration and an A.S. in Hospitality Management from Champlin College. She is Vice Chair of the House Environment and Energy Committee and Co-Chair of both the House Rural Economic Development Working Group and the Vermont National Guard. She is also a member of the Veterans Affairs Caucus. As a Rodel Fellow, she is committed to bipartisan solutions and fostering resilient rural communities. Through her new role on the Women's Legislative Network Board, she sees opportunities to expand her efforts addressing rural infrastructure, climate change, and protecting democracy by connecting and empowering other women legislative leaders.

Southern R



Mindy McAlidon
Arkansas

Rep. Mindy McAlidon serves the 10th district in the Arkansas House of Representatives. She is a brand marketing strategist with an MBA in Marketing and International Business from Indiana University Bloomington and has a B.S. in Engineering, Economics, and Mathematics from Vanderbilt University. Her legislative work focuses on fiscal responsibility, small business issues, and protecting state employee pensions. She authored non-partisan legislation on pension protection, anti-semitism, and election security. She is a strong advocate for lower taxes and stronger families. She hopes to bring a balanced perspective to the Women's Legislative Network.

<p>Southern D</p>  <p>Carri Hicks Oklahoma</p>	<p>Sen. Carri Hicks is a born and raised Oklahoman and has served in the Oklahoma Senate since 2018. She earned her bachelor's degree in mass communications and political science, followed by a master's degree in leadership management from Oklahoma City University. After working in the nonprofit sector, she transitioned to teaching and earned her master's in early childhood education. She is a passionate advocate for education and has served as an adjunct professor at OCU. As a co-chair of the Oklahoma Women's Caucus she championed policies supporting maternal health, infant mortality reduction, and workplace equity for mothers. She advocates heavily for policies that support and uplift women and families in Oklahoma. As a new member of the WLN board she hopes to bring her experience and passion for women's health to a national stage.</p>
<p>Midwest R</p>  <p>Chris Cournoyer Iowa</p>	<p>Sen. Chris Cournoyer has been serving in the Iowa senate since 2019. She received her Bachelors of Arts in Computer Science from the University of Texas and worked as a senior consultant in technology before becoming a self-employed website designer. She serves many roles in her community including President of the Pleasant Valley Community School Board, reserve deputy for the Scott County Sheriff's Department, and a mentor for Iowa Girls Code. As a passionate advocate for STEM education and women's empowerment, she has held leadership positions in the Junior League of the Quad Cities and the Iowa Governor's STEM Council. As Assistant Majority Leader in the Iowa Senate, she has worked to empower women and foster collaboration across communities. She is looking forward to being on the WLN board to lead by example and demonstrate that great things can happen when women work together.</p>
<p>Midwest D</p> 	<p>Sen. Mattie Hunter was born and raised in Illinois and has served in the Illinois General Assembly since 2003, representing the 3rd District. She earned a bachelor's degree in government from Monmouth College, a master's degree in sociology from Jackson State University, and holds a Doctor of Humane Letters from Monmouth College. She holds a leadership position as Assistant Majority leader and serves as vice chair of the Executive Appointments and Public Health Committees. She is a licensed alcohol and drug counselor and prevention specialist. Using her expertise she has shaped policies to address substance abuse.</p>

<p>Mattie Hunter Illinois</p>	<p>Throughout her career, she has passed over 400 bills on issues ranging from health care access, youth employment, education, and environmental protection. She is a Lifetime Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration and has received numerous Legislator of the Year awards. She remains committed to public service through her work with many organizations including the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, and now as a board member for the Women's Legislative Network.</p>
<p>Western R</p>  <p>Ariel Defay Utah</p>	<p>Rep. Ariel Defay is serving as Utah's District 15 House Representative. She has dedicated her career to public service, entrepreneurship, and empowering women leaders. She has a B.A. in Political Science from Utah State University and an M.P.A. in Public Administration from Ohio University. As a small business owner, and former Senior Legislative Aide to the Republican majority in the Ohio House of Representatives, she holds extensive experience in policy and governance. She is passionate about increasing women's representation in politics. She has played a key role in founding organizations like Real Women Run and Republican Women Lead. Her legislative work focuses on education funding, safeguarding children in the age of AI, and supporting families. As a legislator and community member she strives to create an environment where women feel empowered and motivated to take on leadership roles.</p>
<p>Western D</p>  <p>Regina English Colorado</p>	<p>Rep. Dr. Regina English serves as the first Black woman to represent El Paso County in the Colorado General Assembly for House District 17. She is a trailblazer, advocate, and entrepreneur dedicated to uplifting communities and fostering equity. She serves as President of the Colorado Alliance of Black School Educators and has worked tirelessly to amplify the voices of Black Students and promote high quality education. She is the founder of YES MAAM and YESSIR, which are scholarship pageants which aim to mentor youth through leadership trainings, life skills, and community service. In 2016 she launched the Be You-Be U nonprofit that encourages self-improvement and excellence among young people. She has her doctorate in Management with a specialization in Organizational Leadership. She is a respected speaker, life coach, and community advocate and her service extends to numerous boards and committees focused on social justice, Black maternal health, and mental health. With her new role as a WLN board member she plans</p>

	to advocate for policies that promote women's rights, economic empowerment, and leadership development.
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