



NOW IS THE TIME FOR WOMEN CANDIDATES!

Since the Women’s March in January 2017, women have focused their energy and resources and transformed a moment into a movement. This past year, women mobilized, marched, organized, and ran, yielding historic wins in the November 2017 election. Now, with 468 seats in Congress and 36 governorships up for grabs in 2018, not to mention more than 5,000 state and local positions, more women than ever are stepping up to prove that if you can march, you can run (for office).

At the Barbara Lee Family Foundation, we focus our efforts on producing research that gives women candidates, at all levels and from all political parties, the tools to run smart and succeed. **And, based on our latest data, all signs point to *this* being a great time for women candidates.**

The Barbara Lee Family Foundation launched its inaugural research project, *Keys to the Governor’s Office*, in 1998. Twenty years later, the number of women governors has more than doubled – but, still, only 39 women have ever served as a state’s governor. Today, women make up less than 20% of Congress, and just 25% of state legislatures.

The 2018 election is an unprecedented opportunity to narrow the gender gap and ensure that women have a seat at the table — and at the head of the table — now and for generations to come:

Women are running, or seriously considering running, for public office in record numbers.¹

- 80 for governor (49 Ds, 31 Rs)
- 47 for the U.S. Senate (30 Ds, 17 Rs)
- 387 for the U.S. House (311 Ds, 76 Rs)



The results of our latest research, *Opportunity Knocks*, support women’s instincts that now is the time to run and serve. **Indeed, it is an excellent time to be a woman running for office.**

- *Voters tend to associate certain character traits more heavily with women, which can be a good thing for women candidates.* For example, both Democratic and Republican women have an advantage on being perceived as honest by voters.
- *When party and gender are combined, women of both parties hold distinct advantages and disadvantages.* Democratic women amplify traditional Democratic advantages on healthcare and education, and Republican women are able to neutralize the disadvantage women generally receive when it comes to national security. Even in this moment of opportunity for “outsider” women candidates, women still need to prove they can get things done. It remains imperative for women to show they are strong leaders and can get results.
- *As Americans express frustration with the political status quo, the perception of women as “different” in a sea of male—mostly white—elected officials and candidates offers them a distinctive advantage in the eyes of voters.* Voters who see women as different from men when they serve as elected officials are more likely to support women candidates.

Visit www.barbaraleefoundation.org for more information about our latest research, as well as our *Keys to Elected Office: The Essential Guide for Women*, twenty years of research on women and politics, distilled into one indispensable guide.



¹ Numbers as of 1/8/18. Sourced from: http://cawp.rutgers.edu/facts/elections/election_watch