

Civic Engagement

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is a term that refers to the process of bettering communities.ⁱ This process may occur through political activity (e.g., voting, running for elected office) or non-political actions (e.g., volunteering). A comprehensive picture of the civic engagement of Missouri women is difficult to achieve because data on several areas of interest are difficult to obtain or are not collected comprehensively.

Voter Registration Ratio

Definition: Records from the Centralized Voter Registration Database were analyzed to provide data for this indicator. Unfortunately, these administrative records only document registrants' names and not their sex. Therefore, the sex of each registrant was inferred by comparing first names to a database of Medicaid recipients; names for which 66% or more Medicaid recipients were of one gender were assigned that gender. If the 66% threshold was not reached, the registrant was classified as "unknown" and removed from

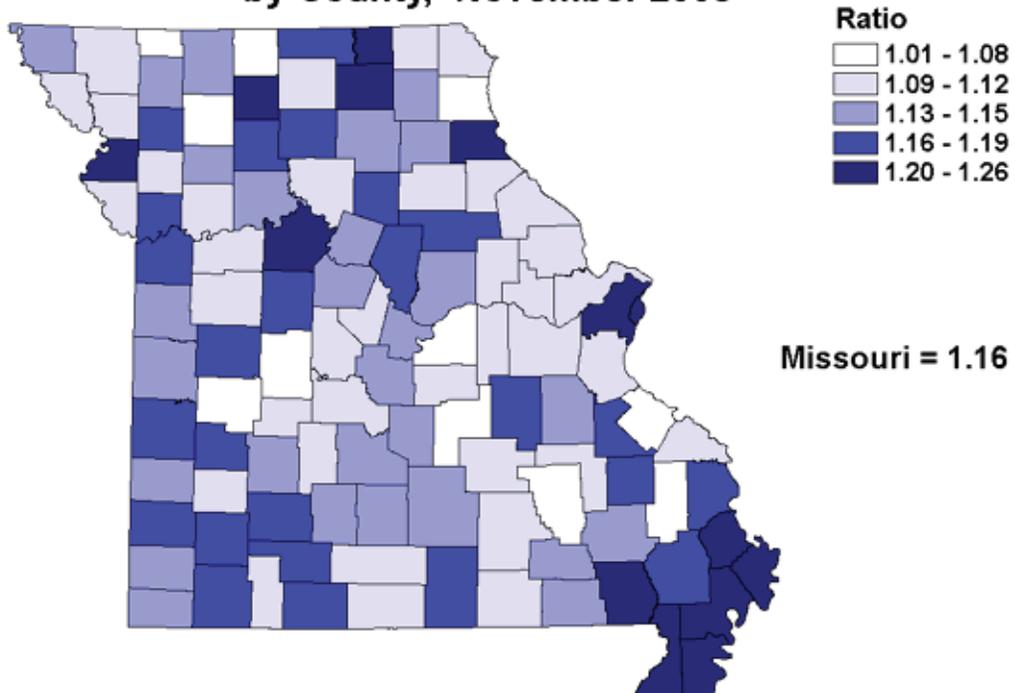
analysis. For each county, the number of females who were registered to vote in the November 2008 election was divided by the number of males registered to vote in that county.ⁱⁱ This creates a ratio of female to male registered voters.

Significance: Voter registration is a requirement in order to vote for elected officials at the local, state, and national levels. These elected officials are part of the governance structure that enact laws, protect citizens, and adjudicate offenses. Registered voters are also eligible to vote for legislative changes that affect state and/or local laws, and financial levies that can affect financial support for infrastructure.

Missouri Findings: In each county, women outnumber men as registered voters. Across the state, there are 116 female registered voters for every 100 male registered voters.

Regional Findings: Higher ratios of female:male registered voters were found in the southeastern part

**Registered Voters, Estimated Ratio of Women to Men
by County, November 2008**



Source: Missouri Secretary of State, Centralized Voter Registration Database, 2008
Map Prepared By: University of Missouri Extension, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED)
Map Generated On: 18, August 2011

of the state, the St. Louis metro area, and in a few counties across the northern half of Missouri. There did not appear to be a geographic pattern to the counties that reported relatively equal numbers of female and male registered voters (i.e., the lowest ratios), although these were all in rural counties.

Voter Turnout

Definition: Voting records from the November 2008 election were used to determine the percentage of women that voted among those women registered to vote in the election. Because this indicator uses the same data source as the Voter Registration Ratio, the same methods were used to determine which registrants were female or male.ⁱⁱⁱ

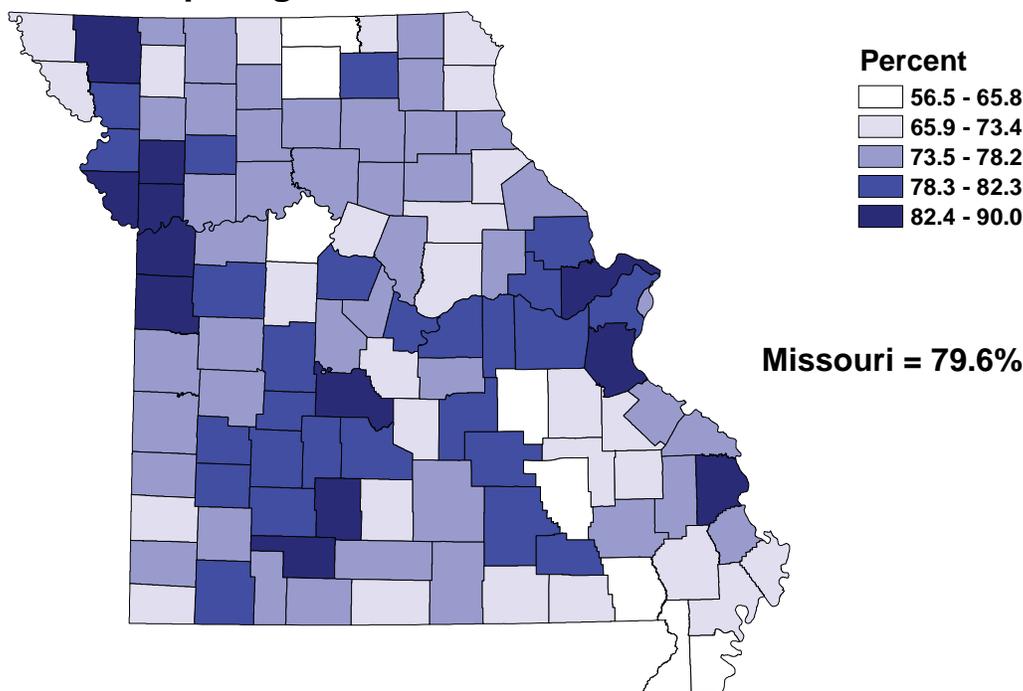
Significance: Women’s votes help to shape the political landscape and the legislation produced by it. Scholars and political analysts examine the “gender gap” in voting behavior, which is the differential way

women and men (may) form opinions over, value, and prioritize political issues. This gender gap affects how candidates and advocates frame their messages, as well as the issues on which they focus.

Missouri Findings: Without exception, women voters outnumbered men in every county in the state. Statewide, 79.6% of women who were registered to vote cast a ballot in the November 2008 election, compared to 77.2% of men.

Regional Findings: In the November 2008 election, higher percentages of women registrants voted in the Kansas City and St. Louis metro areas. Southeast Missouri (Bootheel) had the lowest percentage of women registrants who voted, despite having some of the highest ratios of female:male voters in the state. Reynolds county (southeast) had both a low female:male voter registration ratio as well as a low percentage of women registrants who voted.

Estimated Percent of Female Registered Voters Participating in November 2008 General Election



Source: Missouri Secretary of State, Centralized Voter Registration Database, 2008
 Map Prepared By: University of Missouri Extension, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED)A
 Map Generated On: 15, September 2011

Women outnumber men as registered voters, and at least 56% of female registered voters cast a ballot in November 2008.

Summary and policy implications: An analysis of registered voters who cast a ballot during elections can yield information to consider regarding local, regional, or statewide issues that differentially impact women and men, and the extent to which the gender gap may exist. It can also highlight locations where a base of registered voters exists, but who do not cast ballots. These conditions provide opportunities for voter education and advocacy work to mobilize these voters. It may also highlight areas in which women voters feel disenfranchised (lower turnout) or empowered (higher turnout).

Women Representing Missourians in National and State Legislatures

Definition: This indicator describes the number of women and men serving in the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, the Missouri Senate, and the Missouri House of Representatives.

Significance: Women's voices provide important contributions to the legislative dialogues at state and

national levels. The IWPR report last issued for Missouri in 2002 found that women accounted for only about a quarter of the state legislature and of the state's federal senators and representatives.

Missouri Findings: Little difference in the proportion of women in these elected offices has been found since the 2002 report. Overall, women now hold 23.7% of seats in the U.S. and Missouri Houses of Representatives and Senate. The lowest percentage of women is found in the Missouri Senate (17.6% of seats); women hold half (of two) U.S. Senate seats.

A closer inspection of the numbers of elected legislative officials provides a clearer picture of what progress women have made during the past generation. Compared to 1993-1994, 5 additional seats in the Missouri Senate are now held by women (6 of 34) in 2011, and women gained 4 additional seats in the Missouri House (40 of 163). Missouri elected a female U.S. Senator in 2008, and women now hold two of nine seats (22.2%) in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Disaggregating these data by political party, a greater proportion of women legislators at the state or national level belong to the Democratic Party, and a smaller proportion belong to the Republican Party.

Regional Findings: The two women who represent Missouri in the U.S. House of Representatives are from districts that fall primarily within the southern part of the state.

Legislative Offices, Disaggregated by Political Party and Sex, Spring 2011

Office	Democrat		Republican		Totals by Office		
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Number of Men	Number of Women	Percent Women
U.S. Senate	0	1	1	0	1	1	50.0%
U.S. House	3	0	4	2	7	2	22.2%
MO Senate	4	4	24	2	28	6	17.6%
MO House	34	22	88	18	122	40	24.7%
Totals by Political Party	41	27	117	22	207	49	23.7%
Percent Women	39.7%		15.8%				

Source: Missouri Secretary of State, 2011

In the state legislature, the six Missouri state senators are from districts in the St. Louis and Kansas City metro areas. The 40 Missouri state representatives are more geographically dispersed, but still have a high concentration in the St. Louis metro area. There are no women in either legislative body that represent northern Missouri or extreme southern Missouri.

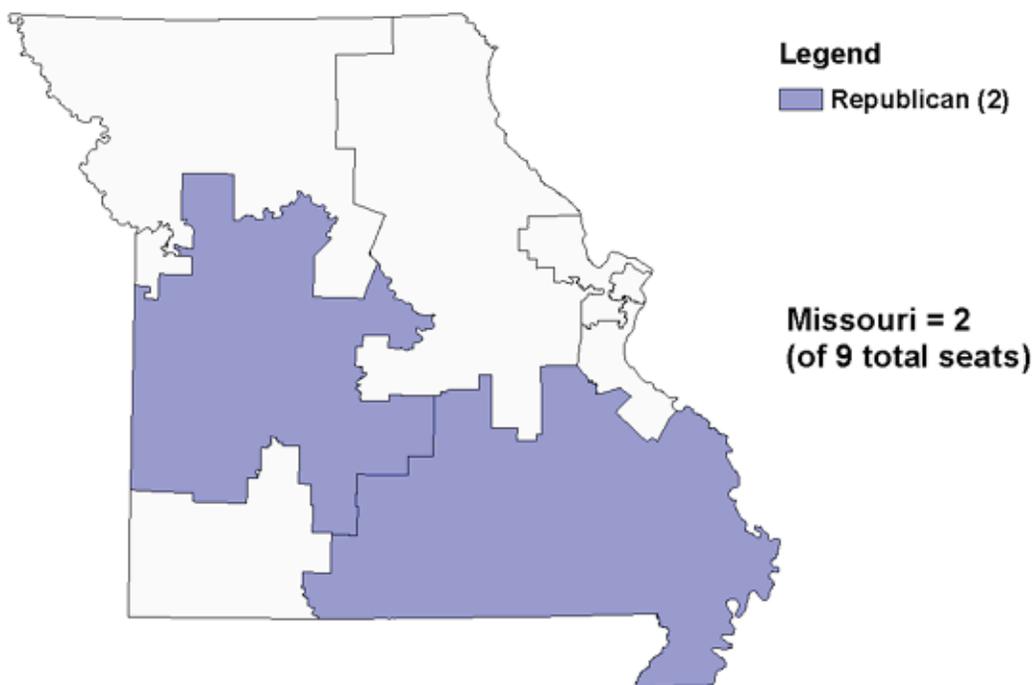
Missouri women are underrepresented in the U.S. and state legislatures, holding less than 25% of total legislative offices.

Policy Implications: Despite comprising approximately half of the adult population in Missouri, women hold less than one quarter of the seats that determine statewide and national legislative issues that affect Missourians. Not only do legislators affect what issues are brought forward and passed into law, they make important decisions regarding the allocation of economic resources for education, mental health resources, economic development, and programs that serve the underprivileged.

political party.^{iv} Not only does an increased presence of women in legislative bodies help to ensure that women are represented in the legislative process, women political candidates help to mobilize other women to vote and become more engaged in the political process. With a lack of women in the higher political offices at the state and national level, particularly in northern Missouri, southwest Missouri, and the Bootheel, women may be less motivated to participate in the voting process.

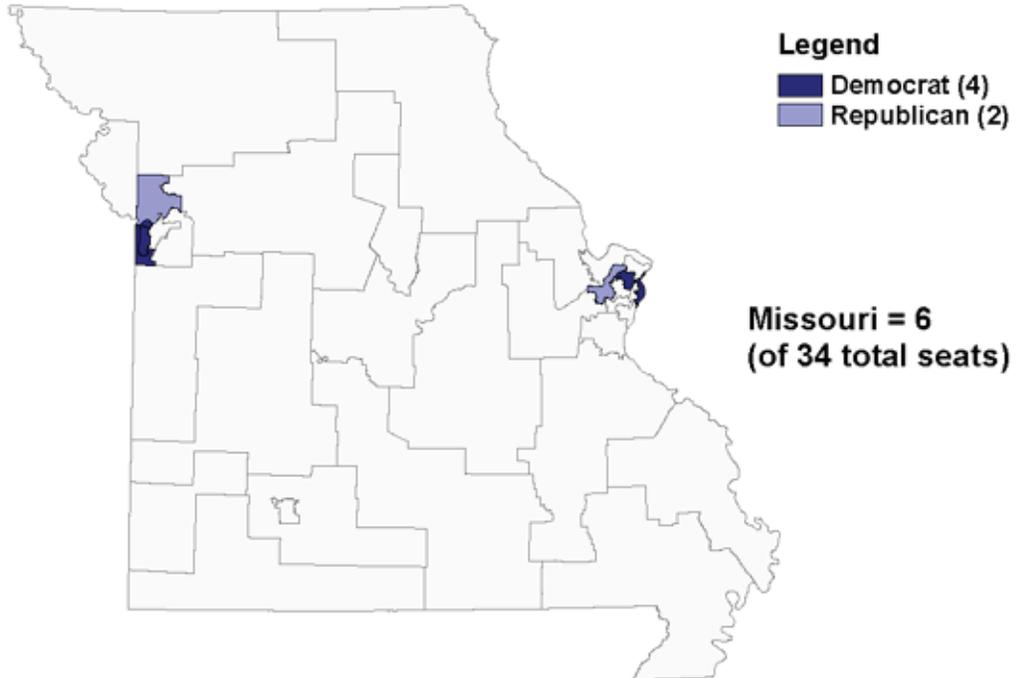
Research indicates that female candidates help to mobilize women voters in the candidate's

United States Representatives who are Women by US Representative District, 2011



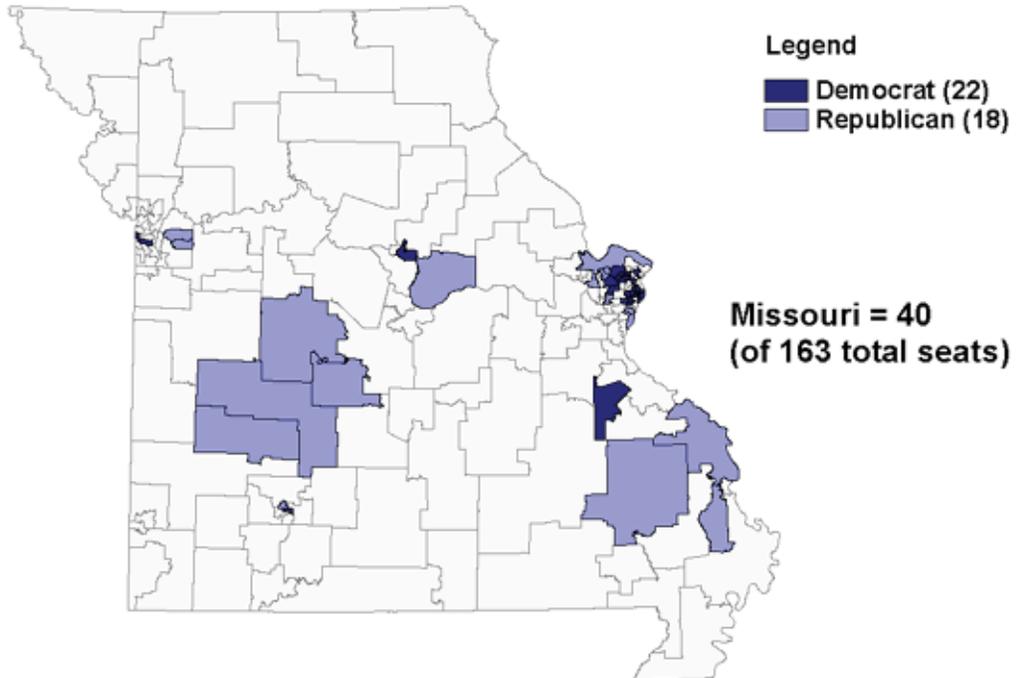
Source: United States House of Representatives, 112th Congress, March 2011
 Map Prepared By: University of Missouri Extension, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED)
 Map Generated On: 14, August 2011

Missouri State Senators Who are Women by Missouri Senate Districts, 2011



Source: Missouri Senate, 96th General Assembly Senate Roster, March 2011
 Map Prepared By: University of Missouri Extension, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED)A
 Map Generated On: 14, August 2011

Missouri State Representatives Who are Women by Missouri Representative District, 2011



Source: Missouri House of Representatives, 9th General Assembly Member Roster, March 2011
 Map Prepared By: University of Missouri Extension, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED)A
 Map Generated On: 18, August 2011

Women Elected as County Commissioners

Definition: The majority of Missouri's counties (110 of 114 counties) are governed by a county commission system. Each of these 110 counties has one presiding commissioner and two associate commissioners. This indicator reflects how many of those elected to these positions are women.

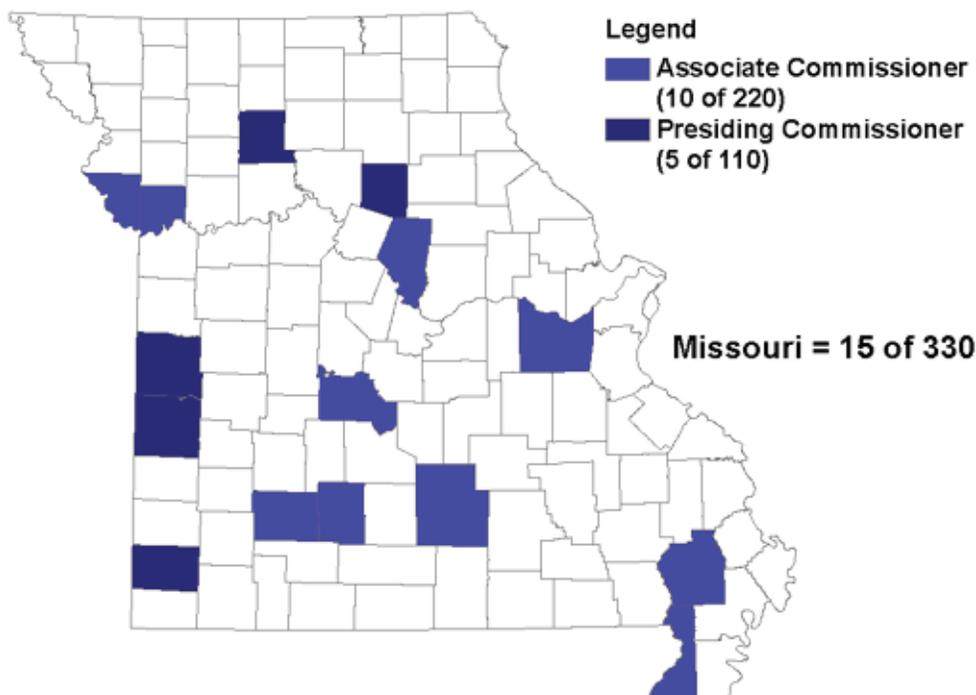
Significance: County commissioners are elected. County commissions are the governing body for the majority of Missouri's counties (110 of 114); Jackson, Jefferson, St. Charles and St. Louis Counties do not operate under this governance structure.

Findings: Of the 330 commissioners and associate

commissioners in the state of Missouri, 15 of these positions were held by women in the spring of 2011. This is down from 17 positions in 2008. Women account for the same proportion of Presiding Commissioners and Associate Commissioners (4.5% of each position).

Policy Implications: Less than 5% of the counties in Missouri that are governed by a county commission structure include women in the county governance leadership. County commissioners by state statute have a fiduciary responsibility for managing the county's funds, and represent the county on regional councils. These regional councils oversee economic and health planning, law enforcement assistance, and infrastructure development. Without more women who are elected as county commissioners, women's opportunities for leadership in these areas are quite limited.

Missouri Counties with a Female Commissioner, 2011



Source: Missouri Association of Counties, March 5, 2011
Map Prepared By: University of Missouri Extension, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED)A
Map Generated On: 18, August 2011

Women's Participation on Local School Boards

Definition: This indicator reports the number and proportion of local school board members who are female. The data were obtained from the Missouri School Board Association.

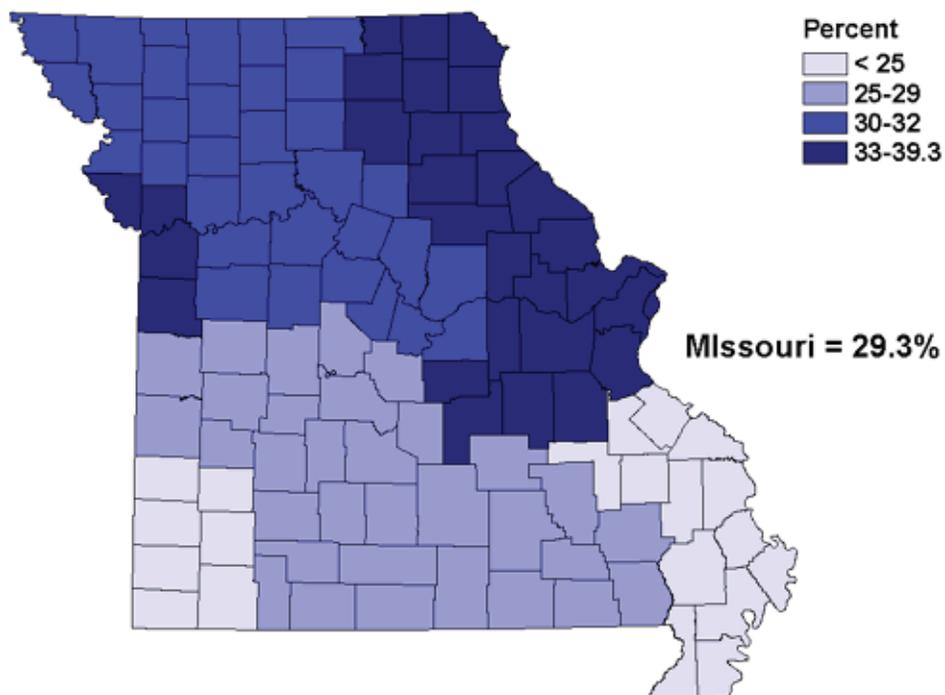
Significance: School board membership posts are elected positions. Each board is responsible for overseeing financial operations, policy, and personnel actions of the school district. Although these activities are usually initiated and recommended by school faculty and staff, they usually require the approval of the school board to be implemented.

Missouri Findings: As seen in the map, 29.3% of school board members across Missouri in the 2010-2011 academic year were women. This represents a

modest 1.2% increase from the 2005-2006 academic year.

Regional Findings: It should be noted that these data were reported in 17 multiple-county regions, and the proportion of female school board members in the counties within each region may have differed. As a result, the map appears to provide a more homogenous view than what may really exist within the individual counties or school districts. Despite this caveat, there were areas of the state in which the multiple-county regions reflected a consistent level of women's participation on school boards. The highest proportions of women school board members are seen in east central and northeast Missouri, as well as in the greater Kansas City area. Southern Missouri has the lowest proportion of female school board members, with women composing less than 25% of school boards in southeast and southwest Missouri.

Percent of Missouri School Board Members Who are Women, 2010-2011 Academic Year by Region



Source: Missouri School Board Association, April 2011
Map Prepared By: University of Missouri Extension, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED)A
Map Generated On: 18, August 2011

Policy Implications: Although women may be a majority presence as employees and volunteers in Missouri's elementary and secondary schools, women compose less than one third of the boards that oversee operations within the district. As a result, women have little authority over decisions that affect schools.

Although women have strong representation on Missouri's Supreme Court, fewer women hold seats in Missouri's Appellate Court.

Women's Participation in the Judiciary

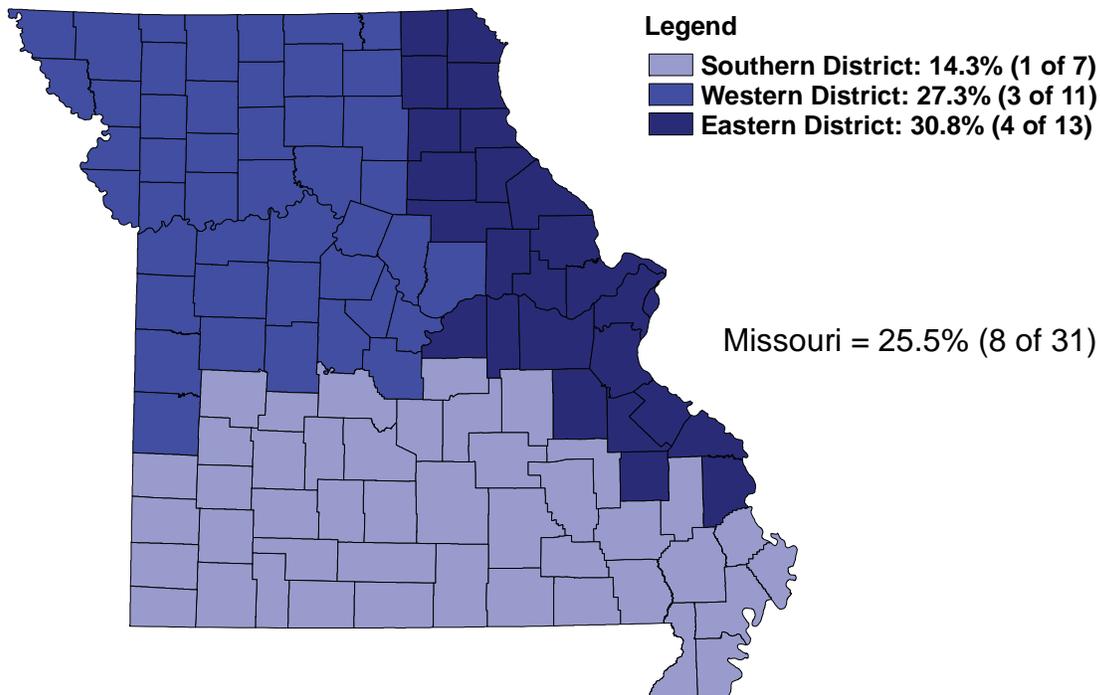
Definition: The Missouri Supreme Court consists of seven judges, each serving a 12-year term. A judge may seek multiple terms. Missouri's Appellate Court consists of 32 judges who serve in one of three districts.

Significance: Judges serving on Missouri's Supreme Court are responsible for adjudicating cases involving the

validity of United States or Missouri statutes, United States treaties, Missouri constitutional provisions, Missouri revenue laws, challenges to a statewide elected official's tenure, and imposition of the death penalty in Missouri.

Missouri's Appellate Courts oversee appeals to rulings made by the state's circuit courts, with the exception of cases that fall under one of the five areas under the Missouri Supreme Court's jurisdiction.

Women's Representation in Missouri's Court of Appeals by District, 2011



Source: Office of State Courts Administrator, April 2011
 Map Prepared By: University of Missouri Extension, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED)A
 Map Generated On: 15, August 2011

Judges who serve on Missouri’s Supreme Court or Appellate Court are appointed according to the Missouri Nonpartisan Court Plan; a judicial commission appoints judges based on merit and regardless of political affiliation. After a year in the appointment, judges must receive a majority vote in a judicial retention election that is part of the next general election.

Findings and Policy Implications: Women currently hold three of the seven seats (42.9%) on the Missouri Supreme Court. Eight of Missouri’s 32 Appellate Court seats (25%) are currently held by women. The largest proportion of female appellate judges are found in the Eastern District (30.8%) and the Western District (27.3%), which are the two districts in which the most appellate cases are heard. The Southern District only has one female appellate judge (14.3% of judges in the Southern District Court of Appeals).

Although women have strong representation on Missouri’s Supreme Court, women’s participation in adjudicating cases in Missouri’s Appellate Court is weaker. Women may help to craft Missouri’s policy, but there are proportionally fewer women involved in adjudicating criminal appeals.

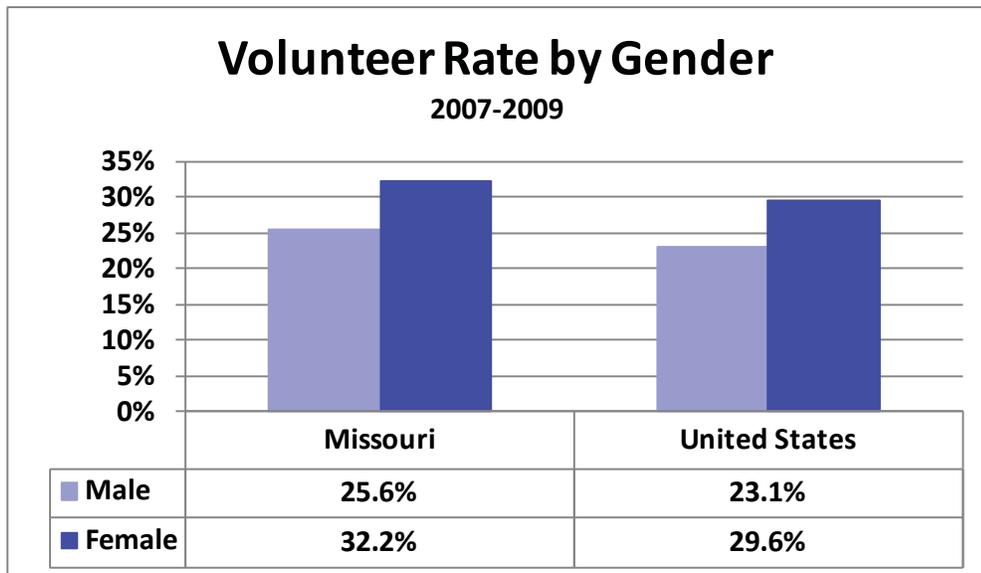
Volunteerism

Definition: Volunteers provide unpaid service to an organization.

Significance: Information on volunteerism and informal leadership is difficult to locate. Furthermore, there are no data sources that provide information about the number of people who volunteer at the county level or for the different regions within the state.

Missouri Findings: Educational attainment and employment are each associated with volunteerism. Among all adults, those with higher levels of education (i.e., at least some college) have higher rates of participation in volunteer activities, but volunteer fewer hours than those with less education (e.g., less

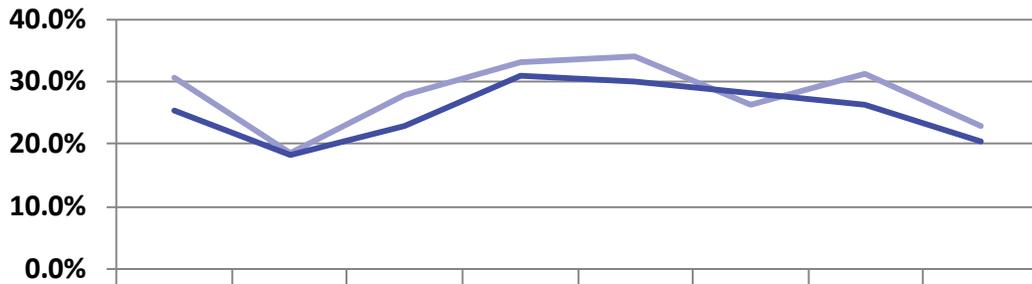
Missourians volunteer at a higher rate than the national average, and Missouri women volunteer at a higher rate than men.



Source: Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007-2009

Volunteer Rate by Age Group, All Volunteers

2007-2009



	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Missouri	30.9%	18.5%	28.0%	33.3%	34.2%	26.4%	31.5%	22.8%
United States	25.5%	18.4%	23.0%	31.1%	30.3%	28.3%	26.5%	20.5%

Source: Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007-2009

than a high school diploma).^v Those who were employed on a part-time basis had higher volunteer participation than full-time employees, those who were unemployed, or those who were not in the labor force.^{vi}

Women volunteer at a higher rate than men, and women age 35 or older were more likely to volunteer than were younger women.^{vii} These differences, however, largely may be due to women's decreased engagement in the work force over the life span, combined with longer life expectancies than men. Women, as primary caregivers of dependent children, are also more involved in children's schooling than are men; educational settings (24.0%) are second only to religious organizations (38.0%) as venues for volunteer activities.^{viii}

The Independent Sector calculates the dollar amount of volunteer time by adding 12% to the average hourly earnings of non-farm employees in production or non-supervisory positions. The 2009 estimate for volunteers in Missouri was \$18.57/hour, which was lower than the national average of \$20.85/hour in 2009.^{ix} Nonprofits use estimates of the value of a volunteer's time to leverage additional assets and funding for their work.

Policy Implications: Volunteering and community service are more common in areas with greater numbers of nonprofit organizations. Missouri's volunteer rate and the number of nonprofits are both higher than the national average.^x The state, however, is also characterized by high need, and has several areas where poverty and lack of employment opportunities may affect local volunteer rates as well as the need for volunteer services. It is difficult to examine these issues in more depth because local data do not exist.

Civic Engagement Conclusion

In the last decade, women have made great inroads in representation in all areas of public life; however, as the data in this report reveals, women do not have a proportional voice in Missouri's public decision-making bodies. Women are under-represented in many areas of civic and political involvement reviewed in this report.

As evidenced by Governor Nixon's (Missouri governor 2009-2013) record of appointing women to 42 percent of available board and commission seats, women are accepting non-paying community positions. Women often choose, however, not to accept or compete for paid political positions.

The lack of women seeking or elected to political positions is unfortunate for all women in Missouri as national research shows that regardless of party affiliation, female officeholders are more likely than male officeholders to support women's agendas.

It is important for women's advocacy organizations in Missouri to continue their work to break barriers that keep women from full participation in public life in Missouri.

WPA Policy Recommendations:

Appoint more women to state boards/commissions/committees.

Track and evaluate the significance of women's participation at the state level on public boards that have decision-making power to impact people's lives.

Strive toward gender-balanced legislation to ensure an equal number of women and men serve on all state boards, committees, and commissions.

Provide incentives for employers to make workplaces family-friendly by allowing flexible work schedules and work-at-home options so working parents have the freedom to participate in public life.

Make it easier for women to vote by instituting same day voter registration.

ⁱ Ehrlich, T. (2000). *Civic responsibility and higher education*. Westport, CT: Oryx.

ⁱⁱ November 2008; Missouri Secretary of State Office, Centralized Voter Registration Database. The percent of registrants classified as "unknown" ranged from 0.48% (Worth County) to 3.07% (St. Louis City); 1.68% of registered voters across the state were classified as "unknown."

ⁱⁱⁱ November 2008; Missouri Secretary of State Office, Centralized Voter Registration Database. The percent of voters classified as "unknown" ranged from 0.64% (Moniteau County) to 3.02% (St. Louis City); 1.69% of voters across the state were classified as "unknown."

^{iv} Reingold, B., & Harrell, J. (2010). The impact of descriptive representation on women's political engagement: Does party matter? *Political Research Quarterly*, 63, 280-294.

^v U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. American Time Use Survey. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from <http://www.bls.gov/tus/charts/volunteer.htm>

^{vi} U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Economic news release. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm>

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} Corporation for National and Community Service; <http://volunteeringinamerica.gov/MO>

^{ix} Value of volunteer time. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time

^x Corporation for National and Community Service; <http://volunteeringinamerica.gov/MO>