



# Gender and Racial Composition of Connecticut State Boards and Commissions

February 2020

As an agency that focuses on civic engagement, I have been encouraged by the frequent public discourse about the value of diversity and inclusion. Everywhere you look there are discussions about diversity in business leadership, candidates for office, teachers in schools, and so many other examples. Personally, as a public official, I have always felt that our government works best when it reflects all of us. Diversity improves the quality of our services, make better policy decisions, and promotes the public trust between government and citizens.

There has been much attention in the private sector paid to the value of diversity on corporate boards. Research has shown that diversity on corporate boards generates a broader perspective that ultimately leads to better decision-making and bigger profits. Surely these are benefits that we would like to see for our government boards and commissions too.

For the past 27 years, Connecticut law (C.G.S. 4-9b) has required state boards, committees, commissions, and councils, which have at least one member appointed by the Governor or a member of the General Assembly, to report the gender and racial composition of their membership. The Secretary of the State produces this report as a way to measure progress towards toward diversity and provide transparency to the public. Of course, true integration of diverse perspectives cannot be shown through demographic data alone, but this report does provide a data set that can help us to measure our progress, or lack thereof.

The yardstick by which we measure our progress – and ultimately our success – is the [U. S. Census data profile of Connecticut](#). This is how we fare in that comparison today.

<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity Category</b>	<b>2018 Census Data<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2019 Connecticut Boards &amp; Commissions</b>
<b>White, not Hispanic</b>	66.5%	78.3%
<b>Black, not Hispanic</b>	12%	10.4%
<b>Hispanic (all races)</b>	16.5%	4%
<b>Asian</b>	4.9%	1.7%
<b>American Indian, Native Alaskan</b>	.6%	.2%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	.1%	.1%
<b>Two or more races</b>	2.4%	.8%

<b>Gender</b>	<b>2018 Census Data</b>	<b>2019 Connecticut Boards &amp; Commissions</b>
<b>Male</b>	48.8 %	57%
<b>Female</b>	51.2%	43%

Despite the mandatory statute that boards and commissions file a report with the Secretary of the State regarding their gender and racial composition many do not. This year, the Secretary distributed an online survey to 256 active entities and 160 participated; a response rate of 62%. For this report to be

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/CT> Sum total of categories is in excess of 100% and might be attributable to the data collection processed used by the US Census and should not be considered an error of this report.

accurate, it is critical that boards and commissions participate in our data collection. This continued to be an ongoing problem and we offer some initial suggestions for improvement at the conclusion. Lastly, detailed information of the responses to the online survey used are available on the Secretary of the State's website, [sots.ct.gov](https://sots.ct.gov), where you also find additional comparative analysis.

### **The path to appointment:**

The appointing authority is the specific individual who has the power to designate an individual to serve on the board or commission. Most often that means the Governor, the Speaker of the House, or the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. It may also include the House or Senate Majority Leader or House or Senate Minority Leader. Who has the power to make an appointment is specific to each board and commission, and often the qualifications of whom they can appoint are prescribed. For example, an appointing authority may be required to appoint someone who has a certain expertise or who lives in a certain region of the state. Those qualifications vary widely. However, don't be discouraged: with 489 vacancies reported among active commissions, there are plenty of opportunities to put your name in for consideration.

If you are interested in pursuing an appointment opportunity, you might start by contacting your State Representative or State Senator who often can be very helpful in assisting you in gathering information and generally navigating the application process. Likewise, professional associations or trade associations can also be helpful, especially if you are a member and/or if they have an ongoing legislative advocacy program.

And lastly, of course, you may always simply pitch your interest directly to the appointing authority. The Governor's office has an online application process to submit your resume which can be found by scrolling down to the bottom of this page <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor>

You can find contact information for legislative leadership at the General Assembly's website ([cga.ct.gov](https://cga.ct.gov)). Here are some links for contact information for each leader:

House Democrats: <http://www.housedems.ct.gov/leadership>

Senate Democrats: <http://www.senatedems.ct.gov/senators>

House Republicans: <https://www.cthousegop.com/leadership-team/>

Senate Republicans: <https://ctsenaterepublicans.com/senators/>

Throughout the years there have been several organized efforts to promote the appointment of women and people of color. The former Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, African-American Affairs Commission, and the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, made efforts to build "talent banks" of women and people of color interested in appointed positions. These commissions have since been reorganized and integrated into the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity, who has not sustained those programs. Hopefully new efforts will emerge.

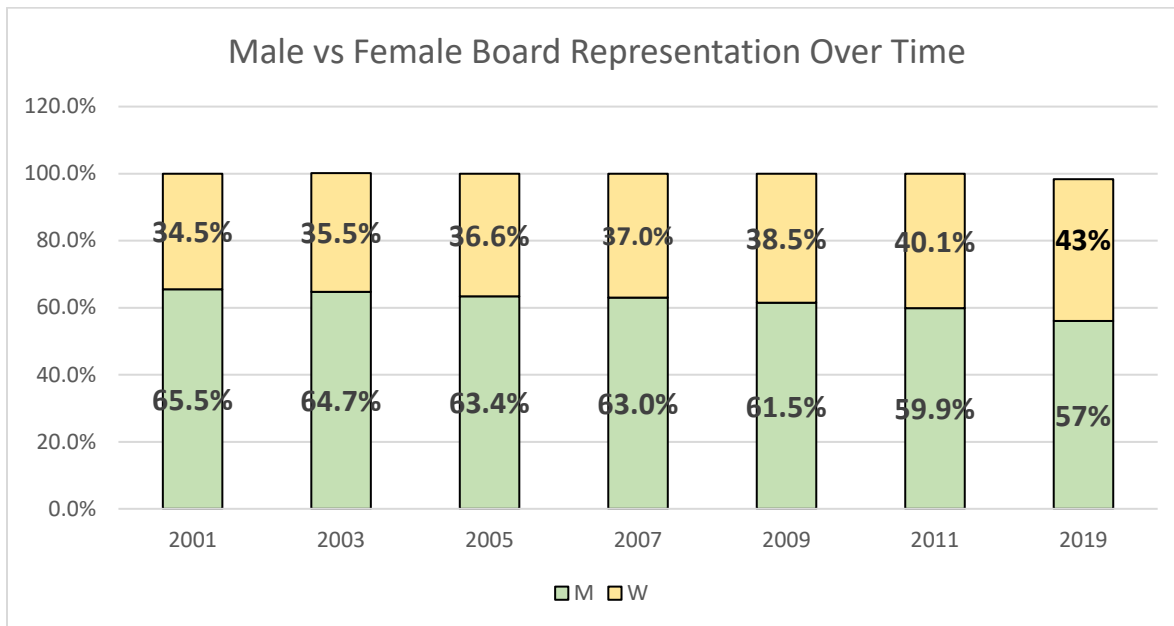
Keep in mind that this report is intended to disclose the current gender and racial composition of state Boards and Commissions, not to facilitate the appointment process. You may find information in our data tables about current vacancies, but it does not identify the corresponding vacancy's appointing

authority, nor does it include any statutorily prescribed qualifications, but it is enough to get you started. Good luck.

**Gender Representation:**

Although gender balance of appointees has not been fully achieved, it continues to steadily increase and is now at 43% the highest it’s ever been. However, despite the upward movement, progress has been slow. Over nearly 20 years the representation of women has increased less than 9%. If we continue at this pace it will take another twenty years or so to reach 50%.

Gender	2018 Census Data	2019 Connecticut Boards & Commissions
Male	48.8 %	57%
Female	51.2%	43%



Data collected in this year’s reports show that there is currently a total of 753 women serving on state boards and commissions, which is 43% of the total number of 1751 appointees. Using the gender category, we can then analyze the racial diversity of male and female appointees. White women are by far the majority of women appointees, representing 74% of all women appointees. Black women are a distant second with 14%, followed by Hispanic women with 5%. As a percentage of all appointees, white women represent 32.% of the total and all other racial categories shrink to single digits or fractions of a percent.

<b>Racial Diversity of 2019 Women Appointees</b>			
	<b>Total Number Currently Serving on Boards and Commission</b>	<b>% of Total Women Appointees</b>	<b>% of All Appointees Serving on Boards and Commissions</b>
White, not Hispanic	558	74.1%	31.9%
Black, not Hispanic	106	14.1%	6.1%
Hispanic (all races)	40	5.3%	2.3%
Asian	9	1.1%	0.5%
American Indian, Native Alaskan	3	0.4%	0.2%
Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	1	0.1%	0.1%
2+ races	8	1%	0.5%
Declined to answer	28	3.7%	1.6%

Of the 813 men serving on boards and commissions, 81.5% of them are white and, in fact, account for nearly ½ of all appointees. The next largest group is Black men who represent only 7.6% and Hispanic men are 3% and Asian men a mere 2.1%.

<b>Racial Diversity of 2019 Male Appointees</b>			
	<b>Total Number Currently Serving on Boards and Commission</b>	<b>% of Total Male Appointees</b>	<b>% of All Appointees Serving on Boards and Commissions</b>
White, not Hispanic	813	81.5%	46.4%
Black, not Hispanic	76	7.6%	4.3%
Hispanic (all races)	30	3%	1.7%
Asian	21	2.1%	1.2%
American Indian, Native Alaskan	0	0	0%
Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0%
2+ races	6	0.6%	0.3%
Declined to answer	52	5.2%	3%

Of the 160 entities completing this year’s report, there are 11 that consist of equal male-female membership. 59 have a majority female membership; 84 have mostly male membership. In addition, there are five boards that report being 100% female, and 17 that report to be 100% male. Most of the all-male board are associated with occupations that are not traditionally held by women, and also the State Elections Enforcement and the Victim Compensation Commission. We would encourage the appointing authorities to consider targeted recruitment efforts or efforts to achieve some measure of gender diversity on these boards.

<b>Members are 100% Female</b>	<b>Members are 100% Male (* indicates entirely white)</b>	<b>50/50 Male-Female</b>
Adoption Review Board	Building Code Training Council	Commission on Human Rights & Opportunities
Board of Examiners of Electrologists	State Elections Enforcement Commission	Connecticut Board of Veterinary Medicine
Liquor Control Commission <sup>2</sup>	Code Training and Education Board of Control*	Connecticut Food Policy Council
Long Island Sound Resource and Use Inventory and Blue Plan Advisory Committee	Connecticut Boxing Commission	Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation
RecycleCT Council <sup>3</sup>	Crane Operator Examining Board	Connecticut Greenways Council
	Electrical Work Examining Board*	Connecticut State Capitol Preservation & Restoration Commission
	Elevator Installation, Repair and Maintenance Work Examining Board*	Social and Emotional Learning And School Climate Advisory Collaborative
	Fire Protection Sprinkler Systems*	State Board of Examiners for Environmental Professionals
	Heating and Cooling board*	State Board of Naturopathic Examiners
	Home Inspection Licensing Board*	State Natural Heritage, Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Review Board
	Nuclear Energy Advisory Council*	Workers Compensation Commission
	School Building Projects Advisory Council*	
	Seafood Advisory Council*	
	State Board of Examiners for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors*	
	State Property Review Board*	
	Victim Compensation Commission*	
	Whiting Forensic Hospital Advisory Board	

**Racial & Ethnic Diversity:**

The current composition of state boards and commission significantly over represents the white (not Hispanic) category and which accounts for 78% of appointees. The 2018 Census data for Connecticut shows that only 66.5% of the population is categorized as “White, not Hispanic”. African American membership is currently at 10.3%, which is still shy of the 12% of the general population counted in the

<sup>2</sup> Liquor Control Commission reported only 1 member

<sup>3</sup> Recycle CT Council reported only 1 member

census. Hispanic members are only 3.9%, despite the census data shows that they represent 16.5% of the population.

	% and # of All 2019 Boards & Commissions Appointees		Connecticut 2018 Census Data <sup>4</sup>
	<i>Total Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<b>White, not Hispanic</b>	1371	78.3%	66.5%
<b>Black/African American, not Hispanic</b>	182	10.4%	12%
<b>Hispanic (all races)</b>	70	4%	16.5%
<b>Asian</b>	30	1.7%	4.9%
<b>American Indian, Native Alaskan</b>	3	.2%	0.6%
<b>Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander</b>	1	0.1%	0.1%
<b>2+ races</b>	14	.8%	2.4%
<b>Declined to answer</b>	80	4.6%	N/A

The following table represents how often a category of race or gender is represented on boards and commissions. For example, white men are included in 96% of boards/commissions. This should not be misinterpreted to mean that 96% of appointees are white male but rather that there is at least one white man on 96% of the boards/commissions.

Frequency of Representation of Race & Gender on Boards and Commissions									
		White <sup>5</sup>	Black <sup>6</sup>	Hispanic <sup>7</sup>	Asian	American Indian & Native Alaskan	Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	2+ races	Other <sup>8</sup>
2019	Male	153 (96%)	48 (30%)	23 (14%)	17 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (4%)	N/A
	Female	135 (85%)	52 (33%)	27 (17%)	4 (4%)	3 (2%)	1 (1%)	8 (5%)	N/A
	<b>Total</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>N/A</b>
2011	Male	161 (92%)	40 (23%)	18 (10%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	17 (10%)
	Female	144 (82%)	47 (27%)	21 (12%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9 (5%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>		<b>26</b>
2009	Male	194 (93%)	46 (22%)	21 (10%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13 (6%)
	Female	169 (81%)	53 (25%)	21 (10%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10 (5%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>		<b>23</b>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/CT> Sum total of categories is in excess of 100% and might be attributable to the data collection processed used by the US Census and should not be considered an error of this report.

<sup>5</sup> White, not Hispanic

<sup>6</sup> Black or African American, not Hispanic

<sup>7</sup> Hispanic, all races

<sup>8</sup> Previous reports included categories White, Black/African American, Hispanic and Other. 2019 report uses US Census Categories.

Overall, there has been increasing breadth of diversity within board and commission membership. When measuring total number of race and sex categories within commission membership we see a downward trend of entities with only 1, 2 or 3 categories and an upward trend of boards with 4 categories or more. Although the majority of entities still have only 1 or 2 categories the upward trend to increasing diversity is encouraging.

<b>Number/Percent of Race &amp; Sex Categories Reflected on Individual Reporting Bodies</b>						
	2019 Appointed Membership		2011 Appointed Membership		2009 Appointed Membership	
<b>Number of Race/Sex Categories Represented</b>	<b>Number of Reporting Bodies (160 total)</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number of Reporting Bodies (175 total)</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number of Reporting Bodies (209 total)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1	17	10.7%	24	13.7%	29	13.9%
2	66	41.5%	78	44.6%	94	45%
3	27	17%	40	22.8%	52	24.9%
4	20	12.6%	1	10.3%	19	9.1%
5	13	8.2%	10	5.7%	11	5.3%
6	10	6.3%	3	1.7%	2	1%
7	3	1.9%	1	0.6%	2	1%
8	3	1.9%	1	0.6%	0	0%

The under-representation of Hispanic members remains the most significant disparity gap between the membership of boards and commissions and the population of the general public. Currently, 3.9% of individuals serving are Hispanic. Among the general population, 16.5% are Hispanic, which makes for a disparity gap of -76%.

White members are overrepresented and have a +15.8% disparity surplus. The white population currently accounts for 77% of appointees to state board and commissions, which is a notable decline from the near 90% it used to represent between 1999 and 2009. Nonetheless, over the last two decades the population demographics of the state have changed significantly and the composition of state boards and commissions has been slow to reflect that fact. Of the 160 entities participating in the 2019 survey, 60 (37%) have only white members.

The table below demonstrates how the population, membership and disparity gap have changed throughout the last 20 years.



Historical Data of Relative Disparity <sup>9</sup> Between Representation of Board/Commission Members and State Population										
		White, Not Hispanic	Black/African American Hispanic	Hispanic, all races	Asian	American Indian, Native Alaskan	Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	2+ races	Other <sup>10</sup>	
2019	% Membership	77	10.2	3.9	1.7	.2	.1	.8	N/A	
	% CT Population	66.5	12	16.5	4.9	.6	.1	2.4	N/A	
	Disparity %	+15.8	-15	-76	-65	-66	0	-66	N/A	
2011	% Membership	83.9	9.5	3.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.9	
	% CT Population	71.2	9.4	13.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	
	Disparity %	+17.8	+1.1	-72.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-51.7	
2009	% Membership	87.5	8.1	2.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.7	
	% CT Population	73.8	9.3	12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4.8	
	Disparity %	+18.6	-12.9	-76.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-64.6	
2005	% Membership	89	6.7	3.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.2	
	% CT Population	75.8	9.1	10.6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4.4	
	Disparity %	+17.4	-26.4	-70.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-72.7	
1999	% Membership	89.4	6.6	2.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.3	
	% CT Population	80.2	8.6	8.5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.6	
	Disparity %	+11.5	-23.3	-68.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-50	

<sup>9</sup> Relative disparity measures the percentage by which the number of appointees from a given category falls short of their numbers in the state's general population. It is calculated by subtracting the percentage of appointees in

## Conclusion

Nearly 3 decades have passed since the General Assembly passed legislation to encourage the appointment of women and people of color to state boards and commissions, and while it's true that progress has been made, equity has not been realized. In a state as diverse as Connecticut, we can and should do better. Several states have similar statutes designed to encourage diversity in appointments. Some have requirements for diverse representation written into the statutes creating a particular board (IL), other states allow for additional appointments if a board does not reflect the diversity of the state population (KY), and another suggests that the appointing authority must give consideration to the suggestions of minority community organizations (RI). All of these should be considered in addition to the other recommendations listed below.

The goal of this report is to provide some transparency and accountability toward building a robustly diverse state government. It would be somewhat misleading, for example, to interpret this analysis as a report on any given administration. There are many different appointing authorities, and many appointees whose have termed appointments rather than coterminous with their appointing authority.

The completed data set of all responses can be found at the Secretary of the State's website (<https://portal.ct.gov/sots>). We encourage you to explore and analyze the information on your own, or even use it to identify what prospective board you are interested in serving on.

### **Recommendations:**

- Although we have seen progress toward diversity the slowness of its pace has been frustrating. We urge the appointing authorities to make diversity a higher priority. We encourage them to set aspirational goals, collaborate with other appointing authorities, and support efforts to revive a talent bank of interested citizens or other active recruitment efforts. The Office of the Secretary of the State, whose mission includes promoting civic education and engagement, would be a logical choice for such a talent bank.
- Efforts to recruit people of color to serve on state boards and commissions should be robust and ongoing. Even though it has been traditionally the role of partisan offices to recruit potential candidates for appointment, we suggest that there is ample opportunity to have nonpartisan outreach efforts to engage Connecticut residents, especially for people of color.
- Several of the all-male boards and commissions are related to occupations not traditionally held by women. However, of those 17 entities that are all male, more than half are also all white. Strategies to remedy this could include outreach to minority and women owned businesses or advocates, industry associations, trade unions, or trade schools, for example.
- Participation in this report is mandated by commissions and entities but there has never been 100% participation. This year 160 entities participated, out of the 256 who were asked. There were several efforts made by the Secretary of the State, Lt. Governor Bysiewicz, and OPM to improve the response rate. Other ways to report or collect this information should be

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the aggregate membership from their percentage representation in the state's general population, dividing the difference by their percentage representation in the state's general population, and multiplying by 100.

<sup>10</sup> Previous reports included categories White, Black/African American, Hispanic and Other. 2019 report uses US Census Categories.

considered, including recording demographic data as part of the appointee databases that are maintained by the Governor and legislative library, which could then be analyzed by the Secretary. Perhaps an orientation training for commission/board chairpersons could underscore the importance of participation as one of their leadership responsibilities.

- Finally, we strongly encourage a review of other states' diversity laws, which may be valuable to duplicate here or inspire new ideas.