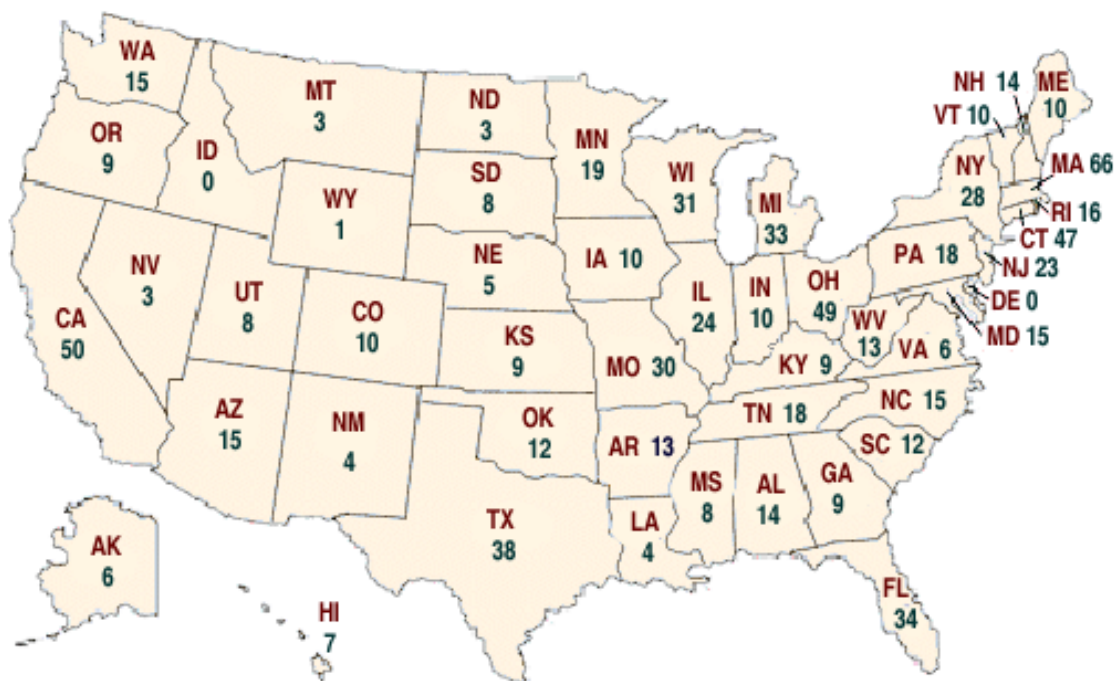


Young Elected Leaders are Few and Familiar

Who Are Young Elected Leaders Overall?

In 2002, the Eagleton study identified a total of 814 men and women age thirty-five and younger serving among all officials in Congress, statewide elective executive positions, state legislatures, and municipalities with over 30,000 population. YELs held approximately 4.8 percent of all these positions combined, constituting a minuscule proportion of public officials. They included six Members of Congress, two statewide elected officials, 321 state legislators, and 485 municipal officials (see map and chart below).

Young People Elected in Each State



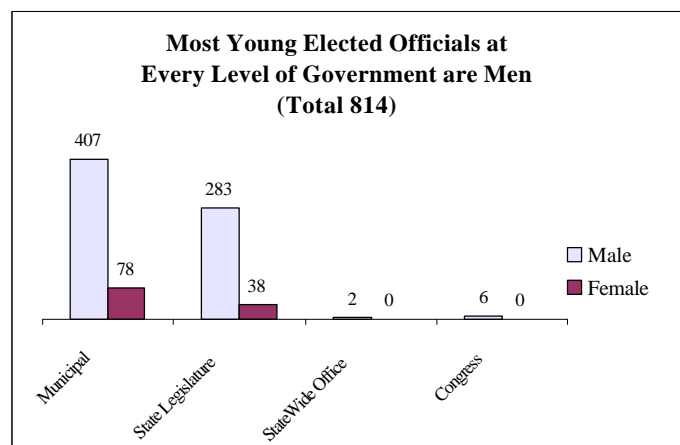
In 2002, Less than Five Percent of Elected Officials Were Age 35 or Younger

	<u>Total YELs</u>	<u>Total Number of Elected Officials</u>	<u>Percentage of Officials who are YELs</u>
Members of Congress	6	535	1.1
Statewide Elected Officials	2	316	0.6
State Legislators	321	7,382	4.3
Municipal Officials	485	8,790	5.5
Total	814	17,023	4.8

Young Elected Leaders: Population and Survey Respondents				
	Percentage of Entire Population of Young Elected Leaders, 2002		Percentage of Survey Respondents	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Members of Congress	0.7%	0	1	--
Statewide Elected Executives	0.2%	0	0	--
State Legislators	35%	5	31	4
Mayors/Councilmembers	50%	10	53	11
	Percentage of Entire Population of Young Elected Leaders, 2002		Percentage of Survey Respondents	
	n.a.		72%	
Ages 30-35 ¹	n.a.		28%	
Ages 20-29	n.a.		28%	
Democrats	43%		50%	
Republicans	33%		41%	
Other Parties/Elected Non-partisan	9%		9%	
Party Unknown/Unlisted	14%		1%	

Gender

As indicated on the graph, most young elected officials at every level of government are men. Both the population of young elected officials overall and the group that responded to our survey consisted of approximately 86 percent men and 14 percent women.



¹ Exact age information was not available for many YELs who did not respond to the survey.

Not only are young women underrepresented relative to young men; young women’s representation in elective office also lags behind the representation of women in elective office overall, as indicated on the chart below.

Young Women’s Representation Lags Behind that of Elected Women in General		
	Women / Officeholders Overall	Young Women/ Young Officeholders Overall
U.S. Congress	14%	0%
Statewide Elective Executive Offices	27%	0%
State Legislatures	23%	12%

Political Party Identification

Among the 700 YELs (86% of the total population) for whom party information was available, 352 are Democrats (50%), 271 are Republicans (39%), and 77 listed themselves as “Other” (11%, including Green and Progressive parties, non-partisans, and independents).

Who Are the Survey Respondents?

The survey was completed by 380 YELs, or 47 percent of the population of YELs in 2002. The respondents included two members of Congress, 134 state legislators, and 244 municipal officials. The gender breakdown among respondents was roughly proportionate to that of the overall population of YELs (86% men, 14% women). Most respondents (72.3%) were in the 30 - 35 age range. The remainder (27.7%) were 29 or younger, with the youngest respondent age 20. As a group, these young elected officials are wealthier than the general population. Fifty-one percent have annual family incomes of \$50,000 to just under \$100,000; 22 percent have family incomes in excess of \$100,000.

We compared the YELs with respondents in a national study of young people, which is referred to here as the Civic Engagement Study or CES. (See A Methodological Note on page 6.) In that group, of the 1552 respondents relatively evenly distributed across the 18-to-35 age range, there are 822 women (53%) and 730 men (47%). Compared with YELs, far fewer of these young people come from affluent families, with 31 percent in the range of \$50,000 to just under \$100,000 and only 8 percent with family incomes in excess of \$100,000.

Race, Ethnicity, and Religion

I believe that young people should be more active in government at all levels. I also think a diverse legislature is a better legislature and as an Asian American and environmental engineer, I believe that I can share my experiences and perspective with my colleagues.

Northeastern Republican Legislator

I did not think the [body I ran for] was diverse or accessible. There were no women, no minorities, and no one was under 40.... I felt powerless.

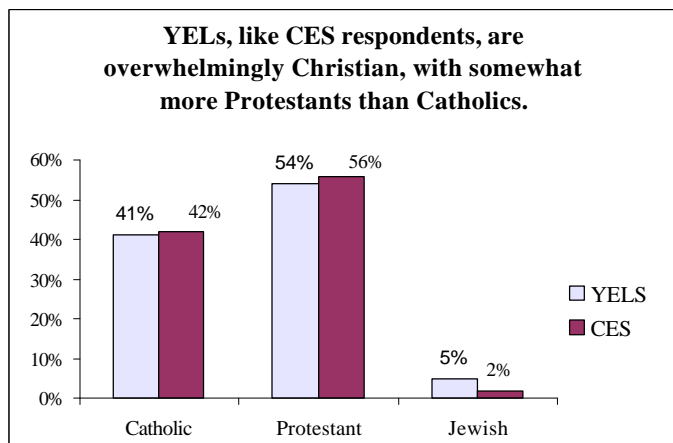
Southern Democratic Councilmember

As with gender, the racial and ethnic composition of survey respondents presents stark evidence that the next generation of elected leaders does not resemble America in all its early 21st century diversity. Young elected leaders are overwhelmingly Caucasian.

Young Elected Leaders are Overwhelmingly Caucasian	
<u>Race</u>	<u>Percent of respondents</u>
Caucasian	81
Black/African American	8
Asian/Pacific Islander	3
Mixed race	2
Native American	<1%
Other	5
Not applicable/don't know	1

Because people of varying races can also be Hispanic or Latino, race and Hispanic origin were asked as two separate questions. Eight percent of respondents said they were of Hispanic or Latino origin.

The vast majority of YELs are Christian, with 54 percent calling themselves Protestant and 41 percent Catholic; 5 percent are Jewish. This representation of religions is similar to that in the CES sample of young people.



Marital and Parental Status

Two-thirds of YELs are married (62%) or say they are “living as married/living with someone”(5%). Twenty-nine percent have never married. There is no appreciable difference in marital status (i.e. married/living as married) between male YELs (68%) and female YELs (63%).

Almost half of YELs (43%) are parents who, whether male or female, confront the common challenge of managing political, professional and domestic responsibilities.

I have tried to bring a new voice for young working families and neighborhoods to the table. It is a difficult task to juggle a growing family, career and life as an elected official. This is something that many of my colleagues and my predecessors do not have in common with me. Most have families with no children or grown children in the house, and some are even retired. It is important to maintain a voice that is experiencing the challenges of raising a young family today.

Western Democratic Councilmember

The toughest part about being a public official is balancing time. It seems there are an unlimited number of night and weekend meetings, dinners and other events....When push comes to shove, I view my primary job as an elected official as twofold—providing responsive constituent service, and being an effective legislator....I would like to attend more ceremonial events because they provide opportunities to keep my finger on the pulse of what’s going on. However, I simply can’t be two places at once, and I also need to take time at home with my wife, family and friends.

Mid-Atlantic Democratic Councilmember

The balance between family, career and public service is a constant juggling act. Any future decision not to maintain involvement would be based on a desire to spend more evenings with my wife and two small children.

New England Democratic Councilmember

Level of Education

The YELs themselves are a highly educated group of young citizens. Almost all respondents – 97 percent – attended college, with 62 percent attending public undergraduate institutions and 38 percent private. The majority of respondents had completed college, with substantial numbers continuing their education beyond the undergraduate level.

In general, YELs come from well educated families far more often than CES respondents.² For example, 22 percent of the young elected leaders report that their mothers went to graduate school, compared with 8 percent of the CES respondents.

Undergraduate Majors

As undergraduates, YELs chose majors across the spectrum of academic offerings. While they named more than two dozen fields, a group of five subject areas – political science, business, history, communications and economics—constituted almost three-quarters of YELs’ majors. The most popular major was political science/government; a little more than a third (36 percent) of YELs either majored in that field or had a double major that included it. Business-related fields – including accounting, marketing, finance, and management – ranked second in popularity, named by 19 percent of YELs. While a large number of YELs chose majors one might expect of people interested in politics and public affairs, the range of their responses also demonstrates that there is no single educational path to politics.

2 Since the CES study did not ask for father’s level of education, only the mother’s level of education is used here for comparison.

A Methodological Note

These findings are drawn from research about young elected officials conducted in 2002 by the Eagleton Institute of Politics as part of the Young Elected Leaders Project.

Between May 31 and September 30, 2002, the Institute conducted a national survey of elected officials who were age 35 and younger at that time. The survey included municipal officials who serve in cities with a population of 30,000 or greater, state legislators, state-wide elected officials, and officials who serve in the federal government. Eight hundred fourteen members of the target population were contacted by mail and asked to complete the survey either by mail or on-line. Three hundred ninety young elected leaders responded to the survey. Two hundred six respondents completed the survey by mail, and 184 completed the survey on-line. After the initial contact, four additional contacts were made with members of the population who had not responded to the survey to request that they do so. Respondents and non-respondents did not differ significantly on gender or party, two variables for which we had comparable data. The firm Schulman, Ronca, and Bucavalas, Inc. hosted and distributed the survey.

Comparisons between young elected leaders (YELs) and their peers who do not serve in elective office are based on data from a large, multi-phase study of civic engagement in America (.Keeter, Scott, Zukin, Cliff, Andolina, Molly, and Jenkins, Krista. (2002). *The Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Generational Portrait*. CIRCLE, The Center for Information and Research in Civic Learning and Engagement.) That study, referred to here as CES (civic engagement study) was designed to document civic attitudes and behavior and the distinct ways in which each generation approaches politics and public life. We compared the YELs with CES respondents aged 18 - 35.

The Young Elected Leaders Project is sponsored by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts.