

Women in politics: breaking barriers

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In increasing numbers, women are demanding a voice within the predominantly male arena of politics. Female leaders are taking both small steps and eminent strides towards acquiring political power, as they attain new heights as presidential leaders, congress women, and senate representatives.

Within the past decade, females have entered politics in groundbreaking numbers, with female Congress representatives steadily increasing. Pioneers like Shirley Chisholm, Margaret Smith and Bella Abzug paved the path for future female leaders hoping to gain political footing. The 2008 elections are a clear demonstration of the infiltration of females into the U. S. political system, with Hillary Clinton having been a front runner for the democratic nomination, and Sarah Palin currently running as McCain's vice presidential nominee. There has yet to have been a woman elected president or vice president in the U.

S., but the candidates of this year's election have brought a hope of the possibilities a waiting in the future. Palin and Clinton are accompanied by the likes of Nancy Pelosi, the first female speaker of the House of Representatives, and Condoleezza Rice, the secretary of state; all of whom demonstrate that gender does not have a bearing on an individual's ability to lead. Empowered women are not only penetrating the political world within the United States. On January 15th, 2006, Michelle Bachelet was elected President of Chile, making her the first woman to hold that position within the nation.

Referred to as the ‘compassionate protector,’ Bachelet continues to provide a representation for all Chilean women. In East Africa, Rwanda, the nation which was once known for its devastating genocide attacks that left 8 million dead, is now being acknowledged for its political advances. Rwanda’s the first country where women outnumber men in Parliament, as females have 55% of the lower chamber seats. Nations like Indonesia, Ireland, and the Philippines have all elected females as national leaders. Females, specifically in the U.

S., still have a long way before gender parity’s achieved within elective offices. The U. S. is the 69th nation in the world in percentage of woman whom hold rank in political office.

Even in the 20th century, female political leaders have to disprove the predisposed notions that only men are assertive and powerful enough to lead. Often, women are quoted saying that in order to gain political recognition, they must do their work not just as efficiently, but better than, their male counterparts. As was seen in the commentaries made by The Washington Post and The Oklahoma on Palin’s suit jackets and Clinton’s physique, females within politics are also still subdued to biases and sexism. In the words of New Hampshire