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**SC Women in Leadership Celebrates 5th Birthday**

*Releases Annual Report on Where Women Stand in Elected and Public Appointed Offices in S.C.*

**April 18, 2023 (Columbia, South Carolina)** – SC Women in Leadership (SC WIL) will be joined by the S.C. Women's Legislative Caucus and [SC WIL Founders](#) to celebrate their 5th birthday on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. on the south steps of the S.C. State House. At a press conference celebrating the occasion, SC WIL will release their [2022-23 Annual Report](#) outlining where women stand in elected and public appointed representation compared to their male counterparts in both South Carolina and the nation, how SC WIL is informing, connecting and engaging women in leadership, and ways citizens can become more [involved](#). The public and media are invited to attend the event and wear purple to show their support of parity in elective and appointive office in South Carolina.

SC WIL is a statewide multi-partisan organization working to increase the number of women in elected office and on public appointed boards and commissions in South Carolina. Despite gains for women elsewhere across the U.S., the 2022 election saw the total number of women in the S.C. State Legislature decrease, reversing a decade-long trend of increases. SC WIL is seeking out women across the state, asking them to run for elected office or seek positions on public appointed boards and commissions, and providing training, resources, and information to help them overcome real and perceived social and cultural barriers to leadership.

The problem for women isn't winning, it's deciding to run. When women run for political office, they are just as likely as men to be elected. But women are less likely to be asked to run and even when women are recruited, they often believe they aren't qualified enough. Experience shapes how legislators govern, and women's experiences undoubtedly are different from men's. Women need their experiences and their viewpoints to be understood – and incorporated into policy decisions.

"SC WIL aims to triple the number of women running for elected and appointed office over the next 18 months," says SC WIL CEO, Barbara Rackes. "To accomplish this, we need the help of women and men who believe South Carolina's government should represent all of its citizens. From the school board to the Governor's Mansion, we need more qualified women to run for elected office in the 2023 and 2024 election cycles."

"There are so many opportunities out there for women to serve in the 2,000 some elected seats available across the state, not to mention the thousands of public appointed boards and commissions at the local, county, and state level. Yet in the 2022 election cycle, only 276 women filed to run for elected office with 119 women winning their races," says S.C. Senator Katrina Shealy (R). "Women have the skills...don't doubt that...and SC WIL can help them find opportunities to serve, develop their skills, confidence, and knowhow."

In an era of unprecedented polarization, women in office have demonstrated the ability to identify common goals, collaborate, and work together on key issues to improve communities. Having more

women in leadership leads to more women-friendly policies, such as increasing paid family leave and prosecuting violence against women. On average, women bring more funding back to their home districts than their male colleagues. They focus more on family, children, and healthcare, prioritize minority needs, and take a rehabilitative approach to crime and punishment.

SC WIL trained and connected 850 women through their signature trainings and events in 2022, with 65% of participants indicating an increased willingness to lead as a result. To assist women in targeting the most winnable elected offices, they have developed an Opportunity Seats database. SC WIL also built and maintains the only multi-partisan registry of female candidates and list of women holding elective office in South Carolina. They also maintain the only statewide database of open positions on public appointed boards and commissions and actively recruit women to apply for open seats. SC WIL also connects and recognizes accomplished women in the public eye.

“Women are woefully underrepresented in government in our state. We rank 47th in the nation for the proportion of women in our state legislature,” says S.C. State Representative Beth Bernstein. “SC Women in Leadership is the only organization in South Carolina solely focused on helping women overcome the barriers that keep them from seeking and winning leadership positions at all levels in our government. The encouragement and training SC WIL provides is helping move us closer to a government that truly represents the women that make up 51% of our state’s population.”

View SC WIL’s 2022-23 Annual Report at [this link](#).

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### **About SC Women in Leadership**

*SC Women in Leadership (SC WIL) is a statewide multi-partisan group of women working together across differences to move South Carolina forward by informing, inspiring, and involving women in leadership. SC WIL’s work sharing information about, making connections to, and encouraging women’s engagement in local and state civic leadership is moving South Carolina forward socially, economically, educationally, and environmentally. SC WIL believes that as talented women with diverse and inclusive backgrounds step up to lead and to govern, gender and racial equality, as well as community equity can, at last, become a reality. SC WIL’s vision is for women to be represented at every level of leadership including elected officials, appointed government boards and commissions, and as active volunteers and advocates in the community. Visit [scwomenlead.net](http://scwomenlead.net) to see how SC WIL is working to fill the pipeline with women, increase fair voting, and reduce polarization.*

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