

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT FOR THE 2016 REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION



25

**MOST INFLUENTIAL
WOMEN IN
STATE POLITICS**



PRESENTED BY



INTRODUCTION

IT IS OFTEN SAID that women have come a long way in politics. But they haven't advanced much lately.

After sharp gains in the 1980s, women today hold less than a quarter of the state legislative seats and statewide executive offices, and less than 30 percent of the state judgeships. Across the 50 states, there are six women governors.

Since the turn of the 21st century, according to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, women have held between 22.6 and 28 percent of such offices. In 2015, women held 24.7 percent of statewide executive offices. In state legislatures, women in 1999 held 22.4 percent of the seats nationwide. That number was just 24.3 percent in 2009, where it remains today.

Why has their progress stalled? It's not because women can't win elections, says Debbie Walsh, who directs the Rutgers center. She says most research shows that women win elections at about the same rate as men.

"The problem is that there aren't enough wom-



en running," she says.

While she says there are many reasons women don't run for office, we think one of the most interesting may be that women often look at America's partisan and combative political institutions and conclude that they're not the place to be if you want to make a difference in the world.

Of course, sometimes government can be a place that makes a difference.

In this special issue of CQ for the Republican National Convention, we tell the stories of 25 women in state government who have made a difference.

In our search for these 25 women, reporters and editors at CQ Roll Call considered a wide range of statewide office holders and leadership-level legislators. To call the final 25 the most influential women in state politics invites what ought to be a celebratory debate, one that might make more women decide that they, too, can make a difference in government.

— The Editors

CONTENTS

53	Stephanie Azar
54	Kimberly Yee
55	Toni Atkins
56	Kamala Harris
57	Felicia Marcus
58	Mary D. Nichols
59	Cynthia Coffman
60	Pam Bondi
61	Anitere Flores
62	Dana Young
63	Stacey Abrams
64	Rita Garman
65	Lisa Madigan
66	Janet T. Mills
67	Maura Healey
68	Tina Smith
69	Michele Fiore
70	Maggie Hassan
71	Susana Martinez
72	Mary Fallin
73	Kate Brown
74	Tina Kotek
75	Gina Raimondo
76	Nikki R. Haley
78	Christi Craddick



Fallin, a governor with plenty of Washington influence

WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES

ON THE COVER: TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: AARON LAVINSKY/STAR-TRIBUNE VIA AP; CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES; M. SPENCER GREEN/AP; JOSHUA LOTT/GETTY IMAGES; PAUL MORISI/GETTY IMAGES; KRIS CONNOR/GETTY IMAGES; MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER; RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP; KRIS CONNOR/GETTY IMAGES; BILL CLARK/CQ ROLL CALL; STEVE CANNON/AP; JON AUSTRIA/THE DAILY TIMES VIA AP; WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES; OFFICE OF CALIFORNIA SPEAKER; JOSH EDELSON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP; BILL CLARK/CQ ROLL CALL; THOMAS J. GONZALES/AP; JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES; KIRK TUCK; COURTESY FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; TOM WILLIAMS/CQ ROLL CALL; TROY R. BENNETT/BANGOR DAILY NEWS; BOB CHRISTIE/AP; STEVE CANNON/AP

ALABAMA

STEPHANIE AZAR

THE VETERAN ADMINISTRATOR HAS REVOLUTIONIZED MEDICAID SERVICES IN THE STATE **By Marissa Evans**

STEPHANIE AZAR says she is something of a budget hawk — every penny at the Alabama Medicaid agency has to be accounted for at all times.

As commissioner and general counsel for the program, Azar says that being able to defend every dollar that goes out of her doors makes it slightly easier when asking state lawmakers for money — especially in a deep red state that is skeptical of federal programs.

About 1 million low-income Alabama residents are beneficiaries of the insurance provided jointly by the state and federal governments. In fiscal 2015, the agency received \$685 million from the Alabama general fund — 39 percent of the state budget.

“If I don’t control and balance appropriately, in this political environment that can actually be jeopardized,” she said in an interview.

Azar has been part of Alabama Medicaid for 17 years, serving as general counsel before becoming commissioner in May 2012. She previously practiced estate planning and corporate law at a firm in Montgomery.

Aside from the political and daily managerial tasks, Azar is working on an overhaul to how the program cares for patients. And other states are watching.

On Feb. 9, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services approved a waiver that allows Alabama to create 11 regional care organizations to help Medicaid beneficiaries with primary care, behavioral health and specialty care. The state could receive up to \$748 million over the next five years if it meets benchmark goals. Azar says the waiver is “a huge milestone for the state of Alabama” and one of her greatest accomplishments so far.

Alabama’s managed care system is comprised of state-approved providers who offer health care services to Medicaid beneficiaries and are paid a fixed monthly fee per patient. The regional care organiza-

tions (RCO) will run the program instead of insurance companies.

“There are other states going to managed care but our RCO transformation is a provider-based, from the ground up, grassroots type of thing and it’s not being done anywhere else in the country,” Azar says.

Alabama’s health care landscape is unique; many beneficiaries suffer from obesity and related problems such as high blood pressure, and the state has an alarming infant mortality rate.

Tricia Brooks, a senior fellow at the

Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, says legislators don’t always appreciate the complexity of their Medicaid programs, leading to underfunding.

“When you’re implementing something new you still have to carry on what’s already happening while you do the transition, so it’s twice as much work maybe even more,” Brooks says. “When you’re with a small agency that is underfunded these kinds of sweeping changes can be very hard on the organization and the staff.” ■

A federal waiver allowing regional care organizations to provide Medicaid services was “a huge milestone for the state of Alabama.”



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Named general counsel for Alabama Medicaid in 2010 before her appointment as commissioner in 2012. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Practiced estate planning and corporate law at the Thorington and Gregory law firm in Montgomery, Ala. | **EDUCATION:** University of Alabama, B.A.; University of Alabama School of Law, J.D.

KIMBERLY YEE

INCOMING STATE SENATE MAJORITY LEADER IS A 'FAMILY VALUES, FISCAL CONSERVATIVE' **By Jonathan Miller**

WHEN **KIMBERLY YEE** ran for a full term in the Arizona House of Representatives in 2010, political consultants had a few suggestions on how to address her Chinese heritage.

One said she should use her husband's last name — Mar — which somehow seemed less Asian, even though he is also of Chinese descent. Another suggested she drop her last name altogether from campaign signs, which would simply read: "KIMBERLY." Yee was taken aback.

"I said, 'I'll find out on Election Day whether Arizonans are ready for their first Asian-American woman in the legislature,'" she said in an interview with CQ. The campaign signs had her full name.

It turns out Arizonans were ready, and the self-described "family values, fiscal conservative" Republican from Phoenix has since made her mark on a host of issues, including abortion and education, while also digging into the underbelly of state government. In her time in office, she's butted heads with the state's Republican governor, Doug Ducey, on appointees she felt were unqualified.

Yee is a rarity, both in Arizona and in the U.S. — a deeply conservative Asian-American politician. And the Republican National Committee has called her a "rising star." A run for higher office seems inevitable, and she said she'd be "interested when the time is right."

But before that, the mother of two boys under age 3 is poised for another Asian-American first: majority leader of the Arizona Senate, for which she is running unopposed in the fall.

"She's smart and she's determined," says Andy Biggs, the outgoing Republican Senate president who is running to replace retiring GOP Rep. Matt Salmon. "When she finds an issue she wants to work on, she's dedicated to it."

Yee is a staunch abortion opponent, and the first bill she sponsored, later signed by



"When she finds an issue she wants to work on, she's dedicated to it."

— Andy Biggs, Arizona Senate president

then-Gov. Jan Brewer in 2011, requires doctors to give all women in the state seeking abortions an ultrasound, while providing them the option to first see pictures of their ultrasound and hear the fetus' heartbeat. She also sponsored a 2012 bill that banned most abortions after 20 weeks — that law was struck down in federal court.

In 2014, Yee blocked a medical marijuana bill, prompting a veterans' group to lead a recall attempt on her seat. The effort ended when she agreed to work with advocates on the issue.

Yee prides herself on doing her homework, asking questions, on reading every bill that comes her way. It is this attention

to detail, she believes, that helped her turn back Ducey's pick to run the state lottery, Tony Bouie. When she dove into his background, Yee says she found all sorts of red flags.

"I made a call to the governor's office," she says, and told them: "You have given me a person with a questionable financial background, no government experience, no administrative experience." Bouie, who had been allowed to serve a year without Senate confirmation, resigned his office in January.

"She's principled yet strategic," says Biggs, who says one of her biggest strengths is bird-dogging matters that fly under most people's radar. ■

BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Elected to the Arizona House, 2010; communications director and legislative liaison for Arizona Office of State Treasurer, 2006-10. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Served as deputy cabinet secretary for the California office of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger; led the GOP Legislative District 10 committee, 2006-08. | **EDUCATION:** Pepperdine University, B.A.; Arizona State University, M.P.A.

TONI ATKINS

THE MOST POWERFUL WOMAN IN THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAS A GENUINE RAGS-TO-RICHES STORY **By Jonathan Miller**

JUST SECONDS after Toni Atkins was sworn in as California Assembly speaker in May 2014, she turned to the woman standing next to her, planted a kiss on her lips and said “thank you.”

That woman was her wife, Jennifer LeSar, and Atkins later admitted that images of the kiss “probably shocked a lot of people.” Less shocking is how Atkins, a coal miner’s daughter who grew up with a wood stove for cooking and an outhouse, rose to become the most powerful woman in California state government.

That power came with an expiration date. Because of term limits, Atkins, a Democrat who represents San Diego, had to vacate her speakership March 7, though she remains in the Assembly until December. She is now focused on a run for a state Senate seat that she is widely expected to win.

And she does not rule out a future run for governor, saying in an interview with CQ that when “opportunities come your way, you take them when you can.”

In her nearly two years on the job, Atkins, the first openly lesbian leader of the Assembly, has notched several accomplishments, including negotiating a voter-approved \$7.5 billion water bond, a tax credit benefiting low-income families, new medical marijuana laws and a bill that pushes renewable energy.

“She leads from a place of fairness and wants to bring as many people together as possible,” Kristin Olsen, the Assembly’s GOP leader, told the San Diego Union-Tribune last year.

Atkins says one of her objectives as speaker was to get buy-in from as many legislators as possible while giving committee chairs more responsibility.

But some observers have found fault with that style, pointing to some failed measures in 2015, including desperately needed transportation funding and a package on affordable housing, along with



a major climate bill component that would target a 50 percent reduction in petroleum use by 2030. “Atkins’ emphasis on empowerment meant she didn’t do enough” to lead her caucus, the Los Angeles Times wrote in a legislative scorecard last year.

Atkins dismisses that criticism, saying, “It’s going to be a little more contentious and it’s going to take a little longer, but it’s going to be worth it.” Still, she acknowledges that her status as a short-termer likely hamstrung her efforts to control her caucus. “People knew they could wait me out,” she says.

Atkins was born in Wythe County, Va., and grew up poor in a mountain town called Max Meadows before moving to Roanoke when she was 7. Her family had no health insurance and relied on free clinics. After graduating college, where she came out as a lesbian, Atkins moved to San Diego to help care for her twin sister’s newborn son.

It was there that she began work as di-

rector of a women’s clinic. Before she even started working at Womancare, she recalls being blocked from entering the building by abortion protesters. “It really just pissed me off,” she says.

She later went to work for Christine Kehoe, the first openly lesbian City Council member in San Diego history. When Kehoe decided to make a run at the state legislature, she convinced Atkins to run to replace her on the council. When Kehoe moved to the Senate, Atkins took her Assembly seat.

Atkins worries about the decline in women participating in state government — women make up only 25 percent of the California legislature. “I do think women need to be asked,” she says.

When it comes to how her sexual orientation plays out in the political realm, she thinks matters have improved dramatically in recent years. But she still feels the need to prove herself. “You have to be better than your opponent,” she says. “It’s not enough to be equal.” ■

BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Served on the San Diego City Council from 2000 to 2008. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Led the Womancare Health Center as director from 1987 to 1992, worked for San Diego City Councilmember Christine Kehoe from 1993 to 2000. | **EDUCATION:** Emory & Henry College, B.A., Political Science.

KAMALA HARRIS

ALLIES ATTRIBUTE THE SUCCESS OF THE U.S. SENATE CANDIDATE TO A MODEL WORK ETHIC **By Alex Roarty**

KAMALA HARRIS BROKE down barriers in California politics during a decades-long career in criminal justice. In 2016, she's on track to do so again — this time on the national stage.

A career that began in the Alameda County district attorney's office is now poised to take Harris — if things go right this November — to the United States Senate.

The Senate candidate will take on fellow Democrat Rep. Loretta Sanchez this fall after she finished first in California's June 7 "top two" primary by a wide margin, winning more than 40 percent of the vote in a 34-candidate field.

The daughter of a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, Harris identifies as both African-American and Asian-American. If she wins, she would be just the second African-American woman to serve in Congress' upper chamber.

But for Harris, being a pioneer would be nothing new. She was San Francisco's first female district attorney when elected in 2003.

In 2010, Harris was elected as the state's attorney general. She was the first woman, the first African-American and the first person of South Asian descent to hold the job, arguably the second-most prominent law enforcement position in the country.

"My mother had a saying — 'You may be the first to do many things, make sure you aren't the last,'" Harris tells CQ. "The truth is there is a lot more work to be done, and we need elected leaders who represent the diversity of our nation.

"We need to work to ensure the leaders reflect the people they are supposed to represent, and until we achieve that full representation, I think we should understand we are falling short of the ideals of this country," she says.

As California's top law enforcement official, Harris focused on privacy issues in the Silicon Valley-driven technology

industry and consumer protection. In 2012, she drew national attention for helping the state win a larger-than-expected settlement from big banks over home foreclosure abuses.

Allies of Harris attribute her success less to her star appeal than to a model work ethic.

"When it comes to being successful, for her, it's putting one foot in front of the other in a methodical manner," says Michael Trujillo, a veteran Democratic operative in California. "And checking the boxes of what she needs to do every day."

Harris' rise to the top of California politics hasn't been an entirely smooth one: She received criticism last year for spending lavishly out of her campaign account on pricey airfare, ground transportation and hotels.

Republicans have accused her of being ultra-liberal and overly hostile to business.

It isn't lost on the attorney general that she's running in the year the Republican Party nominated Donald Trump to be its presidential nominee. The New York billionaire ignited a firestorm of criticism this year with his accusation that Gonzalo Curiel, a federal judge overseeing a case against Trump University, is biased because of his Mexican heritage.

Harris says Trump's comments about Curiel make him "unfit for office" and "represent the worst of our politics."

"We live in a time where too many politicians are eager to use fear and hate to try to divide us," Harris says. "I firmly believe that our unity is our strength, and our diversity is our power." ■



BIOGRAPHY POLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS: First woman elected California's attorney general, 2010. **PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE:** Served as the first female San Francisco district attorney; worked in the Alameda County district attorney's office. **EDUCATION:** Howard University (Political Science and Economics); University of California Hastings College of the Law, J.D.

CALIFORNIA

FELICIA MARCUS

AMID SEVERE DROUGHT, AN ENVIRONMENTAL ATTORNEY WRESTLES WITH WATER ISSUES **By Joanna Anderson**

SOMEONE WHO LIKES to make enemies would be hard-pressed to find a more perfect job than running the agency that tells folks in parched California that they can't water their lawns.

But Felicia Marcus, who has that job, says she doesn't like to make enemies. She says she likes to listen.

As chairwoman of the California Water Resources Control Board, Marcus has the unenviable task of trying to please an array of competing interests in a state that has battled drought. She says she has tried to be "sensitive to what the legitimate interests were of the other people in the circle."

"I talk a lot," she adds. "But I'm actually a very good listener and I'm listening for what people really need rather than what they say they need." That skill, she says, "is part of the art" of her job.

The delicate nature of that art has brought scrutiny and some criticism of the drought response managed by her board. For example, a December report on the state's efforts from the Natural Resources Defense Council yielded mixed results, offering solid marks on urban water conservation but significantly lower marks for conservation in the agriculture sector.

Those findings were "a little disappointing," Marcus told the Los Angeles Times. "We've done more in the past two or three years than we have in the past two or three decades on water in California. It's nothing to sneeze at."

Many Californians were hopeful that the El Niño weather system would spur additional rainfall during the winter and spring. And it did, but not enough to make a big dent.

"We're grateful for every drop and every snowflake," Marcus tells CQ. "I really think that people are going to have a fair amount of drought memory, because this one has been so severe."

In a March interview, Marcus said she grew "intrigued by water issues and envi-

ronmental issues generally" while working for former U.S. Rep. Anthony Beilenson, D-Calif., in the late 1970s.

After earning a degree from Harvard in East Asian studies, Marcus says she spent a couple of years dipping her toe in domestic policy while weighing whether to pursue graduate work.

In Beilenson's office, she gravitated toward the environment. Citing the infamous Love Canal disaster, Marcus says "all of a

sudden environmental issues didn't seem so much like protecting people's backyards, but it was actually an issue of public health that affected people of all income levels, and I found that incredibly intriguing."

Soon, she says, it became clear that it "made sense to go to law school, because so much of environmental work is statutory." It "seemed like an important tool ... in the quiver to work on environmental issues." ■

"We've done more in the past two or three years than we have in the past two or three decades on water in California. It's nothing to sneeze at."



BIOGRAPHY POLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS: Served in the Clinton administration as regional administrator of the EPA's Region 9; led the Los Angeles Dept. of Public Works; executive vice president and COO for the Trust for Public Land; **PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE:** Appointed to the Water Resources Control Board by Gov. Jerry Brown in 2012; designated chairwoman in 2013. **EDUCATION:** Harvard University, AB, East Asian Studies; NYU Law School, J.D.

RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

CALIFORNIA

MARY D. NICHOLS

A MODEL PROGRAM FOR ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE IS LED BY A FORMER TOP OFFICIAL AT THE EPA **By Jeremy Dillon**

In 2006, the California Legislature charged the state with the Herculean task of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 to better the state's air quality while becoming a global leader in the fight against climate change.

That legislation touched almost every industry in California and its implementation fell to California Air Resources Board Chairwoman Mary D. Nichols, whose regulations to carry out the law have influenced national policies to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

"She is the right person, at the right time, in the right place," said Democratic California State Sen. Fran Pavley, who heads a committee overseeing implementation of the carbon reduction mandate.

Even her toughest industry opponents, who challenged the regulations in court, offered respect for her knowledge. "She doesn't always agree with the same solutions we might have in mind. But it's always good to have disagreements with someone you can respect," Allan Zaremberg, president of California's Chamber of Commerce,

told the Los Angeles Times in 2014.

Nichols, a Democrat who served as an assistant administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's air and radiation program in the Bill Clinton administration, joined the Air Resources Board in 2007 after then-Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed her to lead the state's implementation efforts. Schwarzenegger's successor, Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown, asked her to stay on as the agency's head.

The board has also put in place sweeping regulations for automobile emissions and fuel efficiency that became the model for national standards announced by the Obama administration in 2009.

"It's a really positive story we have to tell," she says about worries that the regulations would lead to changes that consumers wouldn't like. "I don't think you can sell something to people that they don't want to buy."

California's cap-and-trade program has become the standard for placing a price on carbon, a notion that environmental economists have pegged as the only real solution for the world to meet the ambitious carbon reduction targets set in the global agreements reached at the 2015 Paris climate conference.

Under the program, sources that emit at least 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents per year must buy carbon credits through a state-sponsored auction.

Affected industries pushed back against the regulations, arguing that increased electric prices would be passed on to customers.

"The great fear that is always promoted by opponents is that energy prices are going to go up, and it's going to be bad for businesses and consumers," Nichols says. "Well, in California, we have designed a cap-and-trade program, which has not caused energy prices to go up for energy consumers." ■

"She is the right person, at the right time, in the right place."

— Democratic California State Sen. Fran Pavley



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Served for a decade, starting in 1993, as California's secretary of resources. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Chairwoman of the California Air Resources board from 1979 until 1983, returning to the role in 2007; worked as EPA's assistant administrator for the air and radiation program from 1993-97. | **EDUCATION:** Cornell University; Yale Law School.

COLORADO

CYNTHIA COFFMAN

SHE OPPOSED THE STATE'S MARIJUANA LAW BUT NOW SHE ARGUES FOR IT IN COURT **By Elvina Nawaguna**

COLORADO ATTORNEY GENERAL Cynthia Coffman's firm belief in the sovereignty of states and her determination to defend it at all costs has placed her in some difficult positions.

Since becoming attorney general in 2014, Coffman, a Republican, has had to defend Colorado's recreational marijuana laws, which she opposed before they were approved by voters. Last year, she joined two dozen states in a lawsuit against the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan, leading to tensions with Colorado's Democratic governor who supports the plan.

Coffman is Colorado's 38th attorney general and only the second woman to hold the position in the state. She succeeded her term-limited boss, Attorney General

John Suthers, last year after a decade as his chief deputy.

"My heart is in the practice of law, so it made all the sense to me," Coffman said of her decision to run for the state's top law enforcement position. She easily defeated her Democratic opponent, Don Quick, in 2014.

When Coffman joined the lawsuit against President Barack Obama's signature rule aimed at controlling carbon emissions and combating human-caused climate change, she said she did not expect her actions would put the top two state officials in a dispute over who holds the ultimate authority in the state.

"The Clean Power Plan is — I hate to use the term overreach — the federal government has gone over Congress' authority,"

Coffman tells CQ in an interview. "When we see the federal government getting out of its lane and getting into ours, sometimes we have to push back."

The state's governor, John W. Hickenlooper, turned to the Colorado Supreme Court in November to settle the dispute over the legality of Coffman's actions. The Colorado high court in December refused to consider the governor's petition, saying Hickenlooper could use alternative remedies to deal with the issue.

Born in Lebanon, Mo., Coffman recalls watching her father use his position of influence as a lawyer to become a leader in their small community.

"He was part of people's lives, sometimes from cradle to grave," she says. "I idolized him, there's no question about that."

When Colorado was set to vote to legalize the sale of marijuana for recreational purposes in 2012, Coffman thought it was a bad idea. Now she finds herself defending the same law she once opposed.

"It touches so many aspects of public safety," Coffman says. "That said, the people voted for it and it's my job to help carry out the law."

She has had to defend Colorado against lawsuits from neighboring states, like Nebraska and Kansas, and from an anti-crime organization over the legalization of marijuana.

"We sometimes end up defending causes that we don't support, but that's our job," Coffman says.

Coffman, who is married to U.S. Rep. Mike Coffman, a Colorado Republican, denies rumors that she had eyes on a U.S. Senate seat. For now, she says, she has not made any further career plans, but anything she does will be in the legal field.

"I don't have children — for many people, children are a legacy — my career and what I do is what I can leave as a legacy," Coffman says. ■

"We sometimes end up defending causes that we don't support, but that's our job."



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Served as chief deputy attorney general for Colorado Attorney General John Suthers. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Worked as chief counsel for former Colorado Gov. Bill Owens; attorney for the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta. | **EDUCATION:** University of Missouri, Columbia; Georgia State University Law School.

FLORIDA

PAM BONDI

A CELEBRITY HERSELF, THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL WAS AN EARLY ENDORSER OF DONALD TRUMP **By Jonathan Miller**

WHEN SHE WAS an assistant state attorney, Pam Bondi says she was approached by TV producers with an offer to star in her own reality show, and over the years, has turned down multiple job offers from cable news, too.

Now Florida's attorney general, Bondi still gets plenty of media attention. Indeed, the 50-year-old Republican made national news on March 7 by endorsing Donald Trump for president the day before he won her state's primary. The win essentially knocked Florida GOP Sen. Marco Rubio out of the race.

"Donald and I have been friends for many years," she said at a rally that day in Tampa, where he called her "the most popular person in Florida, by far."

But the announcement renewed criticism in Florida that Bondi should have pursued charges against Trump University. The Miami Herald and other Florida news organizations have reported that Bondi decided in 2014 not to join a suit alleging fraud at the for-profit school — at about the same time that the Donald J. Trump Foundation contributed \$25,000 to a political committee controlled by Bondi.

Bondi has said there weren't sufficient grounds to join the suit. The New York Attorney General, Eric Schneiderman, accused the school of defrauding more than 5,000 people out of more than \$40 million with false promises to teach them Trump's real estate strategies.

The criticism didn't do much damage. She was easily re-elected later that year, and when Rubio decided to give up his seat in the Senate to run for the White House, Bondi was considered a possible contender for the seat. She passed on the chance.

"I turned down a lot of career opportunities because I love Tampa, I love Florida and I loved being a prosecutor," she says in an interview.

In 2011, she twisted lawmakers' arms to pass restrictions on the sale of prescription

drugs by so-called "pill mills." She cracked down on human trafficking and led an effort to get the state crime lab to process untested rape kits. She helped negotiate a settlement that netted Florida \$3.25 billion in the BP Deepwater Horizon spill.

She helped write guidelines for a controversial law backed by Gov. Rick Scott, a fellow Republican, that bans ex-felons from voting unless the governor and a clemency board reinstates them — only Kentucky and Iowa have similar standards. Bondi says critics' charges that the law specifically targets minorities are "unfounded."

On the national stage, she has fought for a law banning same-sex marriage and

against a ballot initiative that would have legalized medical marijuana.

She also spearheaded the lawsuit that challenged the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act, and has joined other attorneys general in fighting against Obama administration efforts on energy and environment mandates, as well as on immigration.

"The attorneys general are the last line of defense from these lawless actions coming out of Washington," she says.

She terms out of her current job in 2019, but says, "I would love to be attorney general for a third term. I really don't know what I'm going to do next." ■

"I turned down a lot of career opportunities because I love Tampa, I love Florida and I loved being a prosecutor."



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Spent 18 years as assistant state attorney for Florida's 13th Judicial District. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Elected as the state's 37th attorney general in 2010 and took office in January 2011. | **EDUCATION:** Stetson University College of Law, J.D.; University of Florida, B.S., Criminal Justice.

ANITERE FLORES

NOT WITHOUT CONTROVERSY, A STATE SENATOR IS FOCUSED ON IMPROVING EDUCATION **By Emily Wilkins**

WHEN FLORIDA State Sen. Anitere Flores is asked about her greatest accomplishments, she immediately turns to her work on education — the same issue her opponents turn to when attacking her.

Education is one of several areas where Flores has had an impact during her dozen years in the Florida Legislature. From the time she first won election as a state representative in 2004, Flores caught the attention of leaders in her party and was selected, as a freshman, to serve on the prestigious budget conference committee.

She's also been a rare conservative voice on behalf of environmental issues, thanks in part to her mother who worked with a beautification organization in Miami-Dade County, and who had her daughter picking up trash on beaches and painting over graffiti on walls. But her biggest focus has been on education for students from low-income families.

A first-generation college student who worked full-time as an undergrad at Florida International University, she sponsored successful legislation to fund scholarships for low-income students who are the first in their families to attend college. Elected to the state Senate in 2010, she also helped pass \$100 million in funding for public school infrastructure.

"Education is the golden ticket, the great equalizer," she says in an interview with CQ. "My priority is going to be to break down as many of those financial barriers as possible that students have to entering higher education."

Flores has long been involved with education without ever having been a teacher herself — and her role has gotten her into some hot water. After graduating law school, she was an education policy adviser to Gov. Jeb Bush. In the House, she chaired the appropriations and policy committee for preschool through high school.

But in 2013 — two years after she was

named president of Doral College, a non-accredited institution that works with charter schools to help their students earn associate degrees — she introduced a measure requiring school districts to pay private tutoring contractors roughly \$80 million in federal education money, according to the Tampa Bay Times.

That would have financially benefited Doral College's parent company, Academia, which also owns Mater Academy, a licensed tutoring firm in the state.

A fellow Republican, state Sen. Joe Negron, said Flores's actions were permitted as they would have also had a statewide impact rather than just on an individual company. But with Flores facing a tough race for re-election this fall, liberal advoca-

cy groups are crying foul. Occupy Democrats produced an ad deeming Flores the "queen of corruption."

Flores told the Miami Herald that the Occupy Democrats criticism amounted to "recycled and baseless attacks."

Flores isn't only known for her stances on education. She opposed a Republican-sponsored bill that would have reversed local fracking bans imposed by Florida cities. She voted against the measure with several other Republicans in committee, narrowly defeating the bill.

"This is something that would be bad for our local environment," she says. "Being pro-environment is not something that's partisan. We all have a commitment to protect the earth." ■

"My priority is going to be to break down as many of those financial barriers as possible that students have to entering higher education."



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Elected to the Florida House in 2004 and was deputy majority leader, 2008-10; Florida Senate majority whip, 2010-12. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** President of Doral College, 2011-15; current director of development at the ACE Foundation. | **EDUCATION:** Florida International University, B.A. (Political Science and International Relations); University of Florida Levin College of Law, J.D.

FLORIDA

DANA YOUNG

DESPITE A DEMOCRATIC UPBRINGING, A STATE LEGISLATOR EMBRACES CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES **By Elvina Nawaguna**

A CHANCE TO ATTEND President Ronald Reagan's State of the Union address in 1985 steered a congressional intern toward Republican politics, even though she came from a family that had been a force in the Florida Democratic Party for generations.

Struck by Reagan's ability to bring people together, "at that moment, I became a Republican," says Florida House Majority Leader Dana Young. Now, at 51, Young is an attorney and conservative power-broker — and she's seeking a seat in the state Senate.

Born and raised in Tallahassee, her grandfather, William Randolph Hodges, was president of that Senate. Her uncle, Democrat Gene Hodges, served in the Florida House. Her father, Don Duden, was assistant secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

She won her first race to represent Tampa in a bruising campaign against Democratic businesswoman Stacy Frank in 2010.

"That was an extremely contentious race. The Democratic Party had targeted that particular race as their No. 1 priority in Florida," Young says.

The two wrangled over hot-button issues, including Cuba, President Barack Obama's health care law and gay rights, which Young opposed. And she advocated strict immigration laws.

"When it comes to illegal immigration, we can't get tough enough," she said in a campaign video at the time. "We need the Arizona law here."

The "Arizona Law" is a controversial measure that gives law enforcement, in certain instances, powers to demand proof of legal immigration.

Young also infuriated the LGBT community with last-minute mailers taking aim at Frank for supporting same-sex marriage and adoption by gay couples.

She garnered 56 percent of the vote and



"She has the ability to be firm in her principles while still being able to find compromise with other members."

— Florida House Speaker Steve Crisafulli

then was re-elected twice, running unopposed each time.

Young moved into the leadership ranks and then Florida House Speaker Steve Crisafulli chose her as majority leader.

"She has the ability to be firm in her principles while still being able to find compromise with other members," he says.

Mark Pafford, the Democratic leader in the Florida House, says he disagrees with Young on many issues, but appreciates her willingness to talk with her colleagues across the aisle and help to create a collegial atmosphere.

This year, Young's turning her sights to the Florida Senate and this time has a Democratic opponent, newly announced

candidate Bob Buesing, a Tampa attorney. He has called her positions extreme and destructive.

"I want to send kids to school. She wants to make sure they get guns when they get there," he says in an interview.

Young has voted for open-carry gun laws on college campuses. In 2010, she touted her support for gun rights with flyers showing her aiming a rifle.

"There is ample proof that gun-free zones do not protect law-abiding citizens," Young says. "Instead, they are often seen as an invitation to those that would do us harm, because they know they could not be stopped by a law-abiding gun owner." ■

BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Elected to the state House in 2010. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Worked as an environmental attorney at Fowler White Boggs; interned for Democratic Rep. Don Fuqua in the 1980s; switched from Democrat to Republican after seeing President Ronald Reagan's State of the Union address in 1985 | **EDUCATION:** Florida State University, B.S. in Political Science; University of Virginia School of Law, J.D.

STACEY ABRAMS

THIS NOVELIST, ENTREPRENEUR AND STATE LEGISLATOR IS A RISING STAR AMONG DEMOCRATS **By Jonathan Miller**

THE TOP DEMOCRAT in the Georgia House of Representatives is a proud ex-bureaucrat who also loves the novel “Atlas Shrugged;” she works with Republicans but sometimes frustrates her Democratic colleagues; she grew up on food stamps and co-founded a beverage company for children; she has worked as a tax attorney and written several romantic suspense novels on the side.

That’s a lot of living. “I grew up in a family with an ethos that said, ‘If you have the capacity, you have the responsibility,’” says Stacey Abrams, the first woman to lead either party in the state’s General Assembly and the first African-American to lead in the House. “So far, I’ve been able to live that way,” she says.

That ethos has been catching the eye of many nationally. In 2014 she was named

Governing magazine’s “Public Official of the Year.” In 2012 she won the John F. Kennedy New Frontier Award for public officials under 40. There have been rumblings of a 2018 gubernatorial run.

But first she needs to lead a caucus that holds only 60 seats in a 180-member body. And she has a somewhat unorthodox approach. “The job that I have as minority leader is to lose well,” she explains. “I’m not going to win by numbers.”

Her election to the leadership role in 2011 seemed like a punishment, not a promotion. That year, eight Democrats decided to switch their party affiliation to Republican, leaving the GOP one vote shy of a supermajority.

She has opted to work with Republicans on several key issues, prompting some Democrats in the legislature to say Abrams

has spent too much time cozying up to Republicans.

The Senate minority whip, Vincent Fort, says Abrams “probably meets with Republican leadership more than Senate Democratic leadership.” Abrams dismisses his concerns, saying she holds regular meetings with her colleagues.

Abrams, 42, has a long-term vision to get more Democrats and minorities elected. She helped found a voter drive called the New Georgia Project to register 800,000 voters by 2020 — the next time voting districts are drawn. So far the results have been mixed, and the project is being investigated by the Georgia secretary of state for submitting fraudulent registration applications. Abrams says she is working to patch up past problems, without quite admitting mistakes. “We learned from our past efforts,” she says.

Abrams grew up the second of six children in Gulfport, Miss., the daughter of a shipbuilder father and a librarian mother. When Abrams was 15, the family moved to Georgia, where both her parents entered the seminary to become Methodist ministers.

As for listing the Ayn Rand novel “Atlas Shrugged,” as one of her favorites, an admittedly unusual choice for a Democrat, Abrams says that she rejects the author’s “selfishness theory,” but nevertheless says: “When we stop celebrating innovation and genius and thought and creativity ... then we run very real risks as humans.”

Her political ambitions (“We have these pesky elections”) seem to have interfered with her side-career as a published author: She has written seven romantic suspense novels under the pen name Selena Montgomery, but hasn’t had a book out since 2009.

She says she is currently working on a legal thriller about a Supreme Court clerk taking over for a justice in a coma. ■



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Deputy city attorney for the city of Atlanta, founder of the New Georgia Project, served as senior vice president of NOW Corporation | **HIGHLIGHTS:** First woman to lead either party in the Georgia General Assembly and first African-American to lead in the state House of Representatives. | **EDUCATION:** Spelman College, BA; University of Texas at Austin, M.P.A.; Yale University, J.D.

KRIS CONNOR/GETTY IMAGES

RITA GARMAN

THE STATE'S HIGHEST RANKING JUDGE HAS A NUMBER OF FIRSTS
IN HER LONG LEGAL CAREER **By Emily Wilkins**

AFTER GRADUATING in 1968 from the University of Iowa law school, Rita Garman faced the first challenge of her career: finding a firm that would hire a woman.

"They couldn't imagine a woman lawyer," she says.

"They said, 'What would we do with you? Nobody is going to talk to a woman,'"

she says in an interview with CQ.

Garman — or as she's referred to these days, the chief justice of the Illinois Supreme Court — has been described as a woman of many firsts.

In Vermillion County, she was the first woman assistant state's attorney and first female associate judge. In Illinois' Fifth District, she was the first female to serve as

a circuit judge and as presiding judge. She also was the first woman member of the Illinois Appellate Court, Fourth District.

Garman, 72, was the second woman on the state Supreme Court, but she was the first Republican and the first to serve in virtually every judicial role from associate judge to chief justice.

"She broke more barriers than probably anybody I know," says Robert Anderson, president of the Illinois Judges Association. "She was a trailblazer for women."

Under Garman's leadership, the Supreme Court has been united in a majority of its cases, says Kirk Jenkins, who chairs the appellate task force at the Sedgwick law firm and has attended every argument at the state's highest court since 2008.

"They put an enormous emphasis on unanimity and speaking with one voice as often as possible," Jenkins says.

The court even has spoken with one voice on more controversial cases, such as a 2015 decision to rule against state lawmakers and strike down a pension reform law that would reduce benefits for retirees.

Gov. Bruce Rauner, also a Republican, has criticized the court as part of a corrupt political system in which elected officials, including judges, weigh issues involving interests that donate to their campaigns.

When she ran in 2002, Garman received hundreds of donations, including two from law firms that helped represent retirees in the pension case, according to the Illinois State Board of Elections.

But Garman told Chicago Lawyer magazine after becoming chief justice in 2013 that she thought "politics plays no role in any of the issues that we have before us."

Garman says the best way to select judges should be an open debate, but she isn't a fan of having governors appoint them.

"I'd rather have it with the people than I would in some back room," she says. "I'd rather take my chances and let the electorate decide." ■

"She broke more barriers than probably anybody I know. She was a trailblazer for women."

— Robert Anderson, president of the Illinois Judges Association



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Served as the first woman member on the Illinois Appellate Court, Fourth District. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Circuit judge and presiding judge in Illinois' Fifth District; first woman assistant state's attorney and associate judge in Vermillion County. | **EDUCATION:** University of Illinois, B.A. in Economics; University of Iowa College of Law, J.D.

ILLINOIS

LISA MADIGAN

AN ATTORNEY GENERAL WHO HAS BEEN MENTIONED AS A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE PACKS A PUNCH **By Todd Ruger**

LISA MADIGAN OF ILLINOIS is the nation's longest-serving female state attorney general — and the Democrat has endured as the top legal officer in a state with deep budget troubles and a long-standing reputation for corruption.

There have been tough moves and political hardball during Madigan's 13 years in the role and plenty of criticism. She thwarted a 2004 casino deal in suburban Chicago over alleged mob links to the gaming license. She pressed a 2008 case to remove from office then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich, a Democrat who later was convicted of corruption charges.

In the past year, Madigan called for a federal civil rights probe into the Chicago police despite the objections of Rahm Emanuel, the city's mayor and former White House chief of staff to President Barack Obama. And Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner has accused her of teaming up with her politically powerful father, Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan, in a political and legal showdown over the state's budget.

Through it all, Madigan has built a track record of success as a proactive attorney general when it comes to consumer protections in her state and nationwide — a foundation to pursue the bigger political ambitions that many suspect are in her career plans.

"It probably can take me anywhere I want to be, but I have to be honest, being attorney general is a great job," Madigan says in an interview with CQ.

"I went to law school to help people. I've always wanted to be an advocate. Being attorney general has truly allowed me to be a voice for justice for the people of Illinois and oftentimes the country — and I love it," she says.

Yet for all of her office's achievements on the consumer protection front, she has taken some dings from the Chicago Tribune editorial board and other commentators



"Being attorney general has truly allowed me to be a voice for justice for the people of Illinois and oftentimes the country — and I love it."

for not doing enough to bust the state's political corruption.

Still, Madigan's job approval remains very high, says David Yepsen, director of a public policy institute at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

In a ranking of the state's most powerful politicians, Yepsen says, "she'd be right up there."

She surprised many by passing on a run for the Illinois governorship in 2014, not because she couldn't win but because

she said it would be a conflict of interest to serve while her father ran the state's legislature. Even as far back as 2008, The New York Times mentioned Madigan in a story about which woman could be the first in the White House.

"While the meat and potatoes work that the office does is obviously defending the state," Madigan says, "the affirmative work we do is very significant and, truth be told, it's some of the most important work we do on behalf of the people of the state." ■

BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Illinois Senate, 1999-2003. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Worked as a litigator at a Chicago law firm; teacher and community advocate; daughter of Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan; first woman elected attorney general in Illinois and senior-most female attorney general in the U.S. | **EDUCATION:** Georgetown University; Loyola University Chicago School of Law.

JANET T. MILLS

A DEMOCRAT SERVING IN A REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION RESISTS PRESSURE TO POLITICIZE STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT **By Emily Wilkins**

In high school, Janet T. Mills memorized a speech by Margaret Chase Smith, a Republican senator from Maine from 1949-73, denouncing McCarthyism.

Half a century later, the words have not left Maine's first female attorney general.

"Criticism is not only to be expected but sought, smears are not only to be expected but fought, honor is to be earned but not bought," she recites off the cuff in an interview with CQ.

"Those words stick with you," she adds.

During her time in office, Mills has fought both in support of other women and in opposing Maine Gov. Paul LePage, a tea party Republican who often comes under fire for his lewd remarks and policies that members of his own party have rebuked.

Mills, a Democrat who comes from a politically active family, began advocating for women in the 1970s as part of a group pushing state lawmakers to provide funding for battered women's shelters. The measure died in the appropriations process, but the experience led Mills to co-found the Maine

Women's Lobby and helped hire a lobbyist to support women's issues.

"We realized back in the late 70s that we needed a full-time presence in the legislature to get it through," she says.

Mills was elected as a district attorney in 1980, the first female district attorney in New England. She eventually ran for office and was elected to the House in 2002. Colleagues remember her not only as a confident and intelligent lawmaker, but an efficient multi-tasker who would sit in one committee hearing while listening via headphones to what was occurring in another.

"She would run up the stairs or down the stairs to weigh in when she thought something would be going south," says Dawn Hill, assistant Senate minority leader, who served in the House with Mills.

Mills has made headlines in battles with LePage. In one instance, Mills refused to represent the governor's office in challenging an Affordable Care Act provision to extend Medicaid to low-income 19- and 20-year-olds, saying there were no legal grounds on which to make the case. In retaliation, LePage hired outside counsel and refused to approve funding to hire prosecutors and equipment needed for the state police crime lab.

Mills says her door is always open to LePage and her office has represented the executive branch in the vast majority of cases. But she draws the line, she says, when the law runs contrary to his agenda.

"When his policy initiatives become legal issues that can't be supported, that's when I put my foot down," she says.

LePage's office did not respond to requests for an interview.

While she struggles with the governor now, Mills has been mentioned as a potential candidate to fill the role in 2018.

"After six years of our governor, people are already tired," says Hannah Pingree, a former House speaker. "People are looking for a more experienced governor." ■

"When [the governor's] policy initiatives become legal issues that can't be supported, that's when I put my foot down."



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Assistant attorney general and district attorney in Maine, 1976-95; private law practice, 1995-2008; member of the Maine House of Representatives, 2003-09; elected to two-year terms as attorney general in 2008, 2012 and 2014. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** First woman to be a district attorney in New England. | **EDUCATION:** University of Massachusetts, Boston, B.A.; University of Maine School of Law.

MASSACHUSETTS

MAURA HEALEY

THE NATION'S FIRST OPENLY GAY ATTORNEY GENERAL IS NOT AFRAID TO TAKE ON THE GUN LOBBY **By Marissa Evans**

MAURA HEALEY has one word to describe the gun lobby — ridiculous.

The Massachusetts attorney general says it's "ridiculous" that the National Rifle Association has so much control over gun rights debates, "ridiculous" that Congress won't allow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study gun violence as a public health issue and "ridiculous" that people who are a danger to themselves and others can get guns.

"This is a public health crisis in our country and we have a moral imperative

to address this issue," Healey says in an interview.

It's no surprise, then, that she's not popular with gun-rights advocates.

"She seems to be pushing the agenda of prior attorneys general, which is certainly not in favor of the civil rights of lawful gun owners," says Jim Wallace, executive director for Gun Owners Action League, a group focused on gun rights in Massachusetts.

But gun control is the kind of issue that Healey says drew her into politics in the first place: "It's just so important that if we're really going to be the people's law

firm that we really are making sure that we have reached out to communities that have been traditionally underserved so that they know who we are and that we're here to help them."

The captain of the Harvard women's basketball team, she then spent two years as a point guard for a professional women's basketball team in Austria and was a county prosecutor and a litigation partner at a Boston-area law firm before becoming an assistant attorney general. Her run for the top job in 2014 was her first campaign.

Noting that Massachusetts' gun sales doubled to 102,000 from 2006 to 2014, Healey's office in December sent notices to 350 gun dealers warning them to prepare for checks on their paperwork to make sure they weren't selling guns illegally.

She has shown she's comfortable working outside traditional legal venues, turning to social media to promote a transgender anti-discrimination bill with an #EveryoneWelcome hashtag and recruiting Caitlyn Jenner and other celebrities to back the measure in a YouTube video.

As the nation's first openly gay attorney general, she says Massachusetts needs to catch up with the 17 other states protecting transgender people from discrimination in public places like restaurants and malls.

"[Being gay] doesn't influence me but I am a person who believes civil rights should be on everybody's agenda," Healey says. "Ensuring we are a country where ... the words equal treatment under the law actually means something — I'm firmly committed to that."

An October Boston Globe profile called Healey "the one to watch in state politics in elections to come," though she has ruled out a run for governor in 2018, when Republican Charlie Baker is expected to seek re-election.

"I didn't view this or see this as a stepping stone," she told the Globe. "This is what I want to do. This is what I ran to do." ■



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Led Massachusetts attorney general's civil rights division, public protection and advocacy bureau and business and labor bureau. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** As a junior partner at the law firm Wilmer Hale, represented clients in a variety of sectors. | **EDUCATION:** Harvard University, B.A.; Northeastern University, J.D.

MINNESOTA

TINA SMITH

AFTER RISING FROM CHIEF OF STAFF TO LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, COULD GOVERNOR BE NEXT? **By Emily Wilkins**

TINA SMITH had never held an elective office when Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton asked her to be his running mate in 2014 — and that may have been to her advantage.

That's because before she was Dayton's lieutenant governor she was his chief of staff, a role in which she had the kind of relationship with the governor that assured she'd be more than a sidekick.

"It wasn't a surprise to any of us when he decided to turn to Tina Smith because there's no one he trusts more to get things done," says Ken Martin, chairman of Minnesota's Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party.

Smith insists it was a surprise to her. "I never thought about it," Smith says about running for lieutenant governor at Dayton's suggestion. "It never dawned on me. But the more I thought about it the more I realized it would make a lot of sense."

Now, folks in Minnesota say Dayton appears to be grooming Smith to be his successor when he steps down at the end of 2018.

"If Tina wants to run for governor, she would be considered a front-runner right off the bat," Martin says.

If she does run for governor her connection to Dayton could be either an advantage or a disadvantage.

"She rises or falls as he does," Roger Moe, a former state Senate leader and unsuccessful DFL candidate for both governor and lieutenant governor told the Minneapolis Star Tribune last fall. "That's the gamble she took with this."

Before going to work in government, Smith was a marketing manager for General Mills and later started her own consulting firm. She spent three years as vice president for external affairs for Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Even as she worked in the private sector, Smith, 58, was an active behind-the-scenes



"If Tina wants to run for governor, she would be considered a front-runner right off the bat."

— Ken Martin, chairman of Minnesota's Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party

political player, working on local and national campaigns. In 2006, she became chief of staff for Minneapolis Mayor R. T. Rybak before serving as an adviser on Dayton's campaign and becoming chief of staff after his election.

Rybak said Smith so impressed him with her negotiating skills that he called her the "Velvet Hammer."

As lieutenant governor, Smith says she has followed the advice of her mentor,

former Vice President Walter Mondale.

"He told me that if you are going to serve as a close adviser to the governor, you have to have excellent information and the same information that the governor has," she says. "Everyone on staff knows I'm invited to any meeting the governor is having and I get the same briefings and same information, and that makes a huge difference in our ability to be effective." ■

BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Chief of staff for Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Ryback and Gov. Mark Dayton. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Marketing professional for General Mills; started a marketing and communications firm; vice president for external affairs for Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. | **EDUCATION:** Stanford University, B.A.; Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College, MBA.

NEVADA

MICHELE FIORE

A UNIQUE MIX OF NEW YORK SASS, NEVADA TOUGHNESS, BLONDE AMBITION AND CHARM **By Jason Dick**

LAS VEGAS — “Does my firearm make my tukhus look big?” Nevada Assemblywoman Michele Fiore asks with a laugh as she removes her “very sleek Glock 43” from behind her back and puts it on her kitchen table.

Brooklyn-born Fiore grew up in a Democratic family and still identifies with some of that party’s issues, such as gay rights, even as she made a name for herself as a Republican in her adopted state of Nevada.

She’s done that with a canny cultivation of her image, particularly with her pin-up calendar, which shows off her guns and her gams in cheeky poses, like say, her in evening wear, hoisting an AR Pistol Extar EXP 556.

She leans libertarian. In addition to her pro-gay and pro-gun stances, she favors liberalizing marijuana laws and overhauling the justice system.

First elected to the Assembly in 2012, she was in her second term when she ran for the GOP nomination in Nevada’s 3rd Congressional District race, an open seat created when Republican Rep. Joe Heck ran for the Senate seat being vacated by Democrat Harry Reid. She came in third in a crowded GOP primary. In order to run for Congress, she did not run for re-election to the state Assembly.

So while Fiore will be without office soon, she is still a political pop star. She went from local curiosity to national figure with two high-caliber standoffs involving Nevada’s Bundy ranching clan.

The first one, in April 2014, was an armed confrontation between Bureau of Land Management officers and Cliven Bundy in Bunkerville, Nev., over unpaid grazing fees.

Fiore made headlines when she headed to the ranch to support the Bundys. The incident rekindled land use debates. The federal government owns 84.9 percent of the land in Nevada, an irritant to many ranchers.

At Bunkerville, the BLM stood down, but



“... you can’t govern at gunpoint and expect the American people not to point their guns back.”

the issue didn’t go away.

“Whether people agree with me or not ... you can’t govern at gunpoint and expect the American people not to point their guns back,” she says.

On Jan. 2, Bundy’s sons led an occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns, Ore., protesting the imprisonment of Oregon ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond — who were convicted of setting fires on public land.

Fiore, along with sympathetic lawmakers involved in the Coalition of Western States, or COWS, showed support for the Bundys and their supporters. The standoff dragged

into February, resulting in multiple arrests and one death. Fiore helped negotiate the surrender of the last holdouts.

Although she wasn’t the only emissary for the COWS cause, Fiore stood out. It can be hard to compete with a calendar girl who mixes New York sass and Nevada rough-hewn with blonde ambition and charm.

She made headlines in May when she doubled down on her tough talk toward the BLM and looks likely to keep talking, particularly through her radio show, “Walk the Talk with Michele Fiore.” She wouldn’t be the first to trade elective office for a microphone. ■

BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Self-employed publisher and filmmaker; previously owned a home health-care business. |

HIGHLIGHTS: Helped mediate the end of a standoff in February 2016 between federal agents and armed individuals who took over the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon; ran for Congress in Nevada’s 1st District in 2010.

MAGGIE HASSAN

A TENACIOUS GOVERNOR NOW AIMS FOR THE SENATE, WITH THE POTENTIAL TO GIVE DEMOCRATS CONTROL **By Sarah Chacko**

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S Democratic governor lost her first bid for the state Senate, but returned two years later and defeated the same incumbent.

As governor, she called a special legislative session to tackle Medicaid expansion for the poor. Lawmakers closed the session without a solution, but she kept discussions going until an agreement was reached.

And now Maggie Hassan is locked in a challenge, trying to unseat Republican Sen. Kelly Ayotte, who trails Hassan in favorability but holds single-digit leads in polls. The quirky politics of the state with the first-in-the-nation primary make the outcome nearly impossible to predict, since the hotly contested presidential race will undoubtedly impact the election.

Hassan, an attorney, was introduced to

public service in 1999 by the woman she wants to work with in the Senate, Jeanne Shaheen. Then-Gov. Shaheen appointed Hassan, who has a son with cerebral palsy, to be a citizen adviser for the Adequate Education and Education Financing Commission, a group created to review the equity of the state's education funding.

Impressed with her advocacy work, Democrats encouraged Hassan to run for the New Hampshire Senate against incumbent Republican Russell Prescott. Though she lost her first election in 2002, Hassan returned in 2004 for a victory. She was elected to three two-year terms, during which she served as assistant Democratic whip, president pro tempore and majority leader.

As chairwoman of the state Senate Committee on Commerce, Labor and Con-

sumer Protection, Hassan helped push legislation that requires insurance companies to provide coverage of evidence-based, medically necessary autism therapies.

Prescott returned to oust Hassan in 2010, as Republicans regained control of the legislature. But Hassan saw another opportunity in 2011, when Democratic Gov. John Lynch announced he wouldn't seek re-election.

Hassan beat Republican Ovide Lamontagne in the 2012 governor's race with 55 percent of the vote, marking the first time a Democrat succeeded a Democrat as governor in New Hampshire since 1855. She won again in 2014, by a smaller margin.

In her first term, Hassan negotiated a budget that included a \$62 million surplus and doubled the rainy day fund.

She pushed lawmakers to come up with a plan to give an additional 50,000 low-income residents access to Medicaid. After a special session produced no legislation, she spent the following months negotiating a compromise for a short-term program to use federal Medicaid money to subsidize private health insurance for adults earning less than 138 percent of the federal poverty level.

Hassan continues to push for funding to combat painkiller abuse and heroin addiction, which the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calls an epidemic. In 2014, she and four other New England governors forged an agreement to better monitor the prescription of opioid painkillers and expand access to addiction treatment.

Hassan aligns closely with Democrats on other social issues, such as gun control, abortion and same-sex marriage, but had notable disagreements with the party's position on hosting Syrian refugees. She was the first Democratic governor to support suspending the acceptance of refugees until there were assurances that the refugees had been properly vetted. ■



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Attorney at the firms of Palmer and Dodge, Pierce and Atwood, and Sullivan, Weinstein and McQuay; New Hampshire Senate, 2005-10, serving as both president pro tempore and majority leader. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Elected governor in 2012; vice chairwoman of the Democratic Governors Association in 2013. | **EDUCATION:** Brown University, B.A.; Northeastern University, J.D.

SUSANA MARTINEZ

A LATINA GOVERNOR WHO HAS RECEIVED CONFLICTING ASSESSMENTS FROM DONALD TRUMP **By Elvina Nawaguna**

The most prominent Latino woman in U.S. politics in May found herself joining a long list of public figures that have been in the cross-hairs of presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.

New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez made history in 2010 as the state's first female governor and the first Latina to hold that position in U.S. history.

Martinez has also been seen as a fast-rising star and what the Republican Party needs to boost its feeble appeal to women and Latinos.

But at a May rally in Albuquerque, N.M., Trump took shots at her for rising unemployment rates and numbers of food-stamp users in the state.

"She's not doing the job," Trump said after Martinez skipped his event. "Hey,

maybe I'll run for governor of New Mexico; I'll get this place going."

The feud dimmed chances Martinez will become America's next vice president, although Trump has since done a U-turn and said he would like her endorsement.

After all, Martinez, 57, has clout as chairwoman of the Republican Governors Association and could be instrumental in helping him fix his flailing relations with women and Latino voters.

Martinez's office did not respond to multiple emails and phone calls for this profile.

Martinez campaigned on being tough on illegal immigration, reforming education, cutting wasteful spending and balancing the state's budget. Right after taking office, she sold off the state's luxury jet, which on her website she deemed "the ultimate symbol of waste and excess."

In her first State of the State address in 2011, she promised transparency about the state's affairs.

"No more shell games," she said in her speech. "No more rosy projections."

In 2013, Time magazine named Martinez to its annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world, citing her reputation as a "reform-minded conservative Republican."

That same year, the governor sparked protests from teachers and unions when she enacted legislation to require half of a teacher's evaluation to be based on student achievement testing and to penalize educators for missing too many work days.

The New Mexico chapter of the American Federation of Teachers sued and in 2015 secured a temporary injunction against that policy, saying it was flawed and unfair.

Critics also say Martinez and her administration have failed the transparency promise she made. Her public information officers have gained notoriety among local and national media for stonewalling, ignoring phone calls, not responding to emails and refusing to give interviews.

Martinez is tough on reckless alcohol use, slashing the amount of workers' compensation for employers who get into workplace accidents while inebriated. She has also enacted tough drunk-driving laws, making it a second-degree felony to be convicted of eight or more DWIs.

The Latino population has become a major voting bloc, wielding a lot more power in the general elections, so either candidate is going to need someone like Martinez to get that vote, Javier Palomarez, president and CEO of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, tells CQ.

"I don't think her reputation is necessarily damaged long-term," Palomarez says. "The reality is that she is a very well-regarded leader within the party and otherwise." ■



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Prosecuted child abuse and child homicide cases for 25 years. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** New Mexico's first female governor and the first Latina governor in U.S. history; viewed as a potential running mate for Mitt Romney in 2012 and Donald Trump in 2016. | **EDUCATION:** University of Texas at El Paso, B.A.; University of Oklahoma College of Law, J.D.

OKLAHOMA

MARY FALLIN

THIS CONSERVATIVE GOVERNOR IS IN FIRM CONTROL OF HER STATE, BUT ALSO HAS A HAND IN NATIONAL AFFAIRS **By Ed Felker**

OKLAHOMA GOV. MARY FALLIN is no stranger to Washington insiders. She's a conservative who rose through Republican ranks to win two terms in the House after serving as the state's first female lieutenant governor, and then returned to the state to win election as its first female chief executive.

In addition to breaking the state's gender barriers, Fallin has become known among Republican governors who have consistently opposed President Barack Obama's policies, notably his signature Clean Power Plan to limit carbon emissions from power plants that has been put on hold by a federal appeals court.

Her conservative approach — and her experience in Congress — landed Fallin, 61, among Republicans to watch as a potential running mate for presumptive

GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump, especially after he appeared to praise her in April. She endorsed Trump in May and met with him in June.

While the public beyond Oklahoma may need an introduction to Fallin, now in her second four-year term, she brings notable GOP credentials: she was the first Republican woman to lead the National Governors Association and projects an anti-Washington stance that might dovetail with Trump's insurgent pitch to voters.

Fallin says of her at-times contentious dealings with Washington that she has been primarily looking out for her state.

"I'm one of these governors who believes in states' rights, believes that many times the federal government overreaches in their regulatory authority or in their policy, and that a lot of these things should

be reserved back to the states," she says.

She made headlines over the state's controversial death penalty method, which led to a 5-4 Supreme Court decision last year upholding the use of an alternative lethal drug that was challenged as cruel and unusual.

Fallin also was at the center of the abortion debate this year. She was presented a bill passed by the legislature that would make it a felony for a doctor to perform an abortion. Fallin in May vetoed the measure, citing vague language and the likelihood it would be struck down in court.

Though that move angered some abortion opponents, her staunch anti-Obama record has nonetheless earned applause from conservatives — and brickbats from liberals and environmental groups.

Fallin calls the Clean Power Plan a "politically charged war against utility consumers across the country," and via executive order was the first governor to heed the call by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell that states not comply.

Fallin has championed the use and production of fossil fuels, particularly oil and gas, a linchpin in the state's economy. She signed legislation in 2015 that barred towns and counties from restricting hydraulic fracturing of oil and gas wells — a move that solidified siting authority in the state's Corporation Commission.

Her early political backer, Oklahoma Republican Sen. James M. Inhofe says every governor in the state must have a firm grasp of energy issues. Fallin's long career in Oklahoma politics may have given her the most oil and gas knowledge of any state executive in the U.S., he adds.

"There's no hiding place for someone who's in the governor's seat," Inhofe says. "Mary is doing a very good job, but it's expected that she does. I've served with her in so many different capacities, and energy has been one of our closest issues to deal with, because it has such an effect on us." ■



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Chairwoman of the National Governors Association, 2013-14. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Elected to the Oklahoma House in 1990; lieutenant governor from 1995 to 2007; elected to the U.S. House in 2006; elected governor in 2010 and 2014. | **EDUCATION:** Oklahoma Baptist University; Oklahoma State University, B.S. Family Relations and Child Development; University of Central Oklahoma.

KATE BROWN

A QUARTER-CENTURY IN STATE GOVERNMENT MADE HER A GOOD FIT TO REPLACE A DISGRACED GOVERNOR **By Marissa Evans**

OREGON GOV. KATE BROWN says she had long aspired to run for the office she now holds.

She didn't think her moment would come just a month after her predecessor, John Kitzhaber, had been sworn into his fourth term.

Kitzhaber, a Democrat, was forced to resign over an investigation into whether his fiancée used her influence as de facto first lady in consideration of outside consulting work. Brown, then secretary of state and next in line to become governor under Oregon's constitution, had no time to prepare a legislative agenda as the legislature was in the middle of a session.

"The reality of someone coming into office like me ascending into the post is that I didn't get elected so I didn't have a mandate so to speak," Brown says in an interview. "The challenge is sort of capturing the issues that Oregonians feel strongly about and moving forward on those."

Brown is no stranger to the legislature, where she served for 17 years before being appointed secretary of state in 2008. One of Brown's 2015 legislative successes was a bill that registers Oregon residents to register to vote when getting their driver's license or identification card.

Brown also signed a package of so-called "Fair Shot" bills that overhaul law enforcement and employment laws. The new laws require employers to implement paid sick time and require police to provide profiling complaints to the governor's Law Enforcement Contacts Policy and Data Review Committee.

Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek says Brown's collaborative style helped the legislature finish the 2015 session strong despite Kitzhaber's departure.

"I don't think anyone can prepare for what happened earlier in the year, but there's no one better to step in," Kotek says. "She came in with a real clear understanding that people needed to restore



"I don't think anyone can prepare for what happened earlier in the year, but there's no one better to step in ..." — Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek

some confidence in our state government."

In 2016, Brown has a short legislative session alongside a campaign to run. She's being challenged by Republican Bud Pierce, an oncologist.

Her ascension to governor has also resonated with the LGBT community. Brown is the first governor in the U.S. who openly identifies as bisexual.

Alison Gash, an assistant professor of political science at the University of Oregon, says the state's tumultuous LGBT rights history makes Brown's governorship significant. She points to how the conservative Oregon Citizens Alliance put anti-LGBT policies at the forefront of voters' minds throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.

Oregon voters banned same-sex mar-

riage in 2004, but in 2007 — while Brown was the state Senate majority leader — the legislature created and passed domestic partner legislation giving LGBT residents the same rights and benefits as heterosexual married couples. A federal judge overturned the state's same-sex marriage ban in May 2014.

"It's because of that background and history that [Brown's] sexuality will not be showcased in campaigns or at least showcased by people who oppose her," Gash says.

"Because we have this ugly history and because to a degree we've gotten to the other side of it there really isn't an opportunity for her sexuality to be targeted in this. ... There's no room in Oregon for that to be any sort of campaign tactic." ■

BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Oregon House, 1991-97; Oregon Senate, 1997-2008; Oregon secretary of state, 2008-15; elected governor in 2015 after John Kitzhaber resigned. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** First openly bisexual person to serve as Oregon governor; first woman elected as Oregon Senate majority leader. | **EDUCATION:** University of Colorado-Boulder, B.A.; Lewis and Clark Northwestern School of Law, J.D.

TINA KOTEK

THE FIRST FEMALE HOUSE SPEAKER WHO IS OPENLY GAY TAKES MORE FLAK FOR BEING A POLITICIAN **By Jonathan Miller**

WHEN TINA KOTEK was a graduate student at the University of Washington in the mid 1990s, she applied for married student housing with the woman who was her partner. The school refused her application and Kotek filed a discrimination suit, which she lost.

But then, as president of the graduate student government, Kotek was able to get the university to change its rules and allow housing access for domestic partners.

“That was a big deal back then,” she says in an interview.

The incident sparked an interest in politics, and nearly two decades later Kotek was elected speaker of the Oregon House.

Yes, she’s the first openly gay woman in the country to rise to that position. But Kotek, 49, downplays the milestone.

“Being gay is less hard than being a politician,” she says. “People have worse comments about me as a politician than they do as being a lesbian.”

One of Kotek’s former Republican colleagues in the House, Tim Freeman, is now a commissioner in rural Douglas

County. He calls himself a “traditional family values guy” and does not hesitate to describe her as a “liberal urban Portland legislator.”

In 2011-12, when the House was evenly split, Freeman and Kotek were forced to work together as co-chairs of a state Ways and Means subcommittee that controlled about a third of Oregon’s budget.

And yet, despite their differences, he now considers Kotek an unexpected friend. “We’re honest with each other,” he says. “That sounds like no big deal, but when you’re in this kind of work, honesty is a very difficult thing to do.”

In the aftermath of the October shooting that left 10 dead at Umpqua Community College, which is in Freeman’s hometown of Roseburg, he said that one of the first phone calls he got was from Kotek.

“It was, ‘Hey, whatever you need, I got your back,’” he says. “And she was true to her word.” Still, if there was one word he could use to describe Kotek, he would say “driven.”

During a heated debate over raising the state’s top minimum wage to \$14.75 per hour earlier this year, House Republican Leader Mike McLane accused Kotek and other Democrats of freezing Republicans out of negotiations.

He repeatedly described their actions as “tantamount to an abuse of power,” and warned “they will reap what they sow.”

Not a single Republican in the legislature voted for the bill, which passed in March anyway. Kotek counts that as her proudest achievement.

When asked about the talk that she might run for governor or Congress, Kotek is not all that coy. “I just want to continue to do a good job as speaker. If that means other things ...” she trails off.

Still, she acknowledges, “We have a changing landscape here. ... Who knows, two years from now, I might not be doing any of this.” ■

“We have a changing landscape here. ... Who knows, two years from now, I might not be doing any of this.”



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Public policy advocate for Oregon Food Bank, 1998-2002; policy director for Children First for Oregon, 2003-06; elected to Oregon House in 2006; | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Elected House Democratic leader in 2011; elected House speaker in January 2013. | **EDUCATION:** University of Oregon, bachelor’s degree in Religious Studies; University of Washington, master’s degree in International Studies.

RHODE ISLAND

GINA RAIMONDO

EVEN IF YOU'RE ON FORTUNE'S LIST OF 50 GREAT LEADERS, THERE CAN STILL BE CONTROVERSY **By Emily Wilkins**

IT'S TRUE THAT GINA RAIMONDO is the first female governor of the state of Rhode Island, but that's not what she's most known for.

What landed Raimondo on Fortune's list of the world's 50 greatest leaders — which also includes Pope Francis and Amazon's Jeff Bezos — is the same as what left many retirees in her state fearful for their futures: an overhaul of the state's pension system.

In 2010, just before Raimondo was elected state treasurer, Rhode Island's struggling pension fund was on track to run out of assets, according to a state report.

"Fixing the pension system was one of the biggest problems Rhode Island faced," Raimondo, 44, says in an interview. "A big part of the reason we were not having enough money for public buses and playgrounds and libraries and after-school sports is because the pension liability was gobbling up an increasingly large percent of the budget."

The pension is still underfunded — at 59 percent of its obligations for teachers and 57 percent of its obligations for other state employees. That's up from 49 percent for both groups in 2010, according to the Employees' Retirement System of Rhode Island. At the current rate, the pension won't be 80 percent funded until after 2030, at which point the retirees' regular cost-of-living increase will return, according to the state treasurer's office.

And some retired employees have hired a former Securities and Exchange Commission attorney to ask the SEC, the Justice Department and the FBI to look into the pensions that were invested in hedge funds.

Investing part of a pension in hedge funds is not itself a bad thing, says Anthony Randazzo, a research director at the libertarian Reason Foundation. The potential issue is how close Raimondo, a former venture capital manager, is to fund owners.

During her runs for treasurer in 2010

and for governor in 2014, she received \$147,000 in campaign contributions from the securities and investment industry, according to the National Institute on Money in State Politics.

Despite the lingering controversy over pension funds and their investment strategy, Raimondo hasn't shied away from other tough issues, teaming up with legislators she's formed relationships with, says state Rep. Joseph McNamara, who also serves as chairman of the Rhode Island Democratic

Party.

In February, she signed legislation imposing a toll on large trucks driving through the state as part of a bigger plan to pay for infrastructure repairs. Last year, she worked with the legislature to restructure state Medicaid, trimming millions in costs.

"Her hallmark has been stepping up and presenting the case and insisting that if we don't make the difficult decisions now, things are only going to get worse," McNamara says. ■

"Her hallmark has been stepping up and presenting the case and insisting that if we don't make the difficult decisions now, things are only going to get worse." — State Rep. Joseph McNamara



BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Clerked for U.S. District Judge Kimba Wood; senior vice president at venture capital firm Village Ventures in Massachusetts; founded Point Judith Capital, a venture capital firm in Rhode Island. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Led overhaul of Rhode Island's pension system in 2011 as state treasurer. | **EDUCATION:** Harvard University, B.A. Economics; Oxford University, Rhodes Scholar; Yale Law School.

SOUTH CAROLINA

NIKKI R. HALEY

FEW GOVERNORS HAVE HAD TO WEATHER AS MANY TRAGIC EVENTS IN SUCH A SHORT TIME SPAN **By Jonathan Miller**

NIKKI R. HALEY was in a rut in 2015. A Republican elected in 2010 as part of a tea party wave, she was South Carolina's first female governor and the first minority in the position. But she had been the target of a 2012 ethics investigation — though she was later cleared. Observers considered her overly rehearsed, guarded and partisan.

Then things got hard. Haley, a wife to a National Guard captain and mother of two, faced a series of crises in 2015 that would have tested even the most battle-hardened governor.

"We got triple-punched in South Carolina," Haley says.

In April 2015, Walter Scott, an unarmed black man, was shot to death as he fled a North Charleston police officer. Video of the killing rocketed around the globe.

Then in June, a white supremacist, Dylann Roof, shot to death nine African-Americans in a Bible study class, according to authorities. In the aftermath, Haley called for the Confederate battle flag to be removed from the statehouse grounds in Columbia.

And in October, historic rains flooded wide swaths of South Carolina, killing 19 people and leaving an estimated \$12 billion in damage.

Any one of these challenges could have destroyed her governorship. Instead, Haley emerged from the fire to praise from both sides of the political aisle.

"I think the governor has shown tremendous leadership," state Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter, a Democrat and frequent critic, told the Associated Press in October. There were no riots in the aftermath of the Scott shooting (instead South Carolina became the first state in the country to require body cameras for law enforcement officers). There was no talk of the floods being Haley's Katrina after she took quick action to evacuate threatened areas and pushed for federal aid. She flashed rarely



seen emotion and tried to bring the state together after the church shooting.

When she took over the governor's office in the midst of the Great Recession, Haley made job creation a top priority. She can point to some success stories, including plans for new plants from automakers Daimler AG and Volvo. She touts the companies' promises to bring 5,300 jobs to the state, but they came with tens of millions in grants, tax breaks and incentives.

Now in the sixth year of her administration, Haley, at 44 the youngest governor in the U.S., reflected on those events and her bumpy rise to power, as well as her love of numbers and how she's become less buttoned-up in an interview with CQ.

"The reason you are guarded and disciplined is because you are responsible for leading a state and making good decisions and moving it forward," she says. But an event like the church shooting "shakes you to your core. And I am human like everybody else. I was heartbroken, and it

absolutely changed me."

South Carolina had flown the Confederate battle flag at the statehouse since 1961. Many believe that a long fight over the removal of the flag from the statehouse dome that ended in 2000 contributed to the downfall of two governors. But Haley believed she had a solution. "We told the public: 'This doesn't have to be about winners and losers,'" she says, and proposed that the flag be put in a museum. "It's a win-win situation for everybody."

Still, she had a hard time convincing some in the legislature, which had to approve the move. To help win passage, Haley told Republican lawmakers a story about her childhood, when the owner of a farm stand called in police while she and her father, a Sikh who wears a turban, shopped for fruit. She still drives by the stand, she says, and for her it remains a symbol of pain.

The message seemed to resonate with lawmakers, and the bill to take the flag down passed.

The third of four children, Nimrata Nikki Randhawa and her family cut an unusual figure in small-town, 1970s South Carolina. Her father, a biology professor, and mother, who had once been considered for a judgeship, moved from the Punjab region of India, and eventually settled in Bamberg, S.C., where Haley was born.

Haley worked her way up the political ladder in South Carolina, eventually rising to House majority whip, a subcommittee chair and a seat on the powerful Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee.

But all of that was taken away in 2009, during a bitter fight with party leaders over Haley's call for more on-the-record votes.

Haley may have lost her place in leadership, but the struggle raised her profile and inspired her to make a run for governor.

And she got the last laugh. In 2011, she signed a bill requiring recorded votes on most legislation.

"Some fights are worth it," she says. ■

BIOGRAPHY POLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS: Elected governor in 2010; re-elected in 2014 by the largest margin of victory for a South Carolina gubernatorial candidate in 24 years. | **PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE:** FCR Corp. accounting supervisor; Exotica International, chief financial officer; Wilbur Smith Associates, consultant. | **EDUCATION:** Clemson University, B.S., Accounting.

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TEXAS

CHRISTI CRADDICK

A MEMBER OF THE STATE RAILROAD COMMISSION HAS MORE POWER THAN ONE MIGHT ASSUME **By Jeremy Dillon**

REGULATING THE TEXAS oil and gas business is no small job, but the commission that does so doesn't need more help from the federal government, says Christi Craddick.

Craddick, a Republican member of that state panel misleadingly named the Texas Railroad Commission, has railed against federal intervention in the industry, which she says is best regulated by those closest to it on the ground.

"They don't use common sense when they write rules and regulations," the woman dubbed the "Texas Oil Queen" by USA Today says of the EPA.

During her time on the 125-year-old Texas Railroad Commission, Craddick has led an effort to update the agency's regulations with the latest science and best practices from the industry.

That effort has resulted in new well-integrity rules that mandate sturdier cement and new requirements for well-control measures and blowout preventers.

Still, environmental groups complain the commission is more a champion than regulator.

Cyrus Reed, conservation director of the Lone Star Sierra Club, says the commission has a tendency to elevate economics.

"Her basic approach is to implement the rules and consider new rules, but don't consider any emergency actions," Reed says. "It's not out of character for a number of commissioners of Texas. She's certainly in the mode of putting the concerns of the economy first."

Reed points to a recent commission decision regarding earthquakes resulting from fracking. It favored only modest change in regulations by requiring more seismicity studies for operations, despite pressure from the public and environmental advocates for more stringent rules.

Craddick counters that the decision was based on the best science available,



"She's certainly in the mode of putting the concerns of the economy first."

— Cyrus Reed, conservation director of the Lone Star Sierra Club

including research from local universities. She adds that misinformation on hydraulic fracturing is rampant. "We are a science-based organization first and foremost," she says.

She makes no apologies for wanting the industry to do well and help Texas thrive. She was, for example, a vocal supporter of Congress' recent move to lift a ban on crude oil exports.

Craddick joined the commission in 2012, winning her election to a six-year term with 56 percent of the vote.

Reed describes Craddick as "polished in her demeanor" as well as "someone who likes to be in control." Some say that makes

her a lot like her father, Tom Craddick, who was speaker of the Texas House from 2003-09. In unison with her push for transparency, the commissioner has a willingness to hear from all parties so long as it occurs in the proper venue.

Craddick has the political infrastructure in place to rise in Texas politics should she want to do so. Former commissioners have gone on to key positions in the state legislature, and Craddick could prove formidable with her own fundraising abilities and her father's political network.

As to her future, Craddick says her "priority is giving back to Texas for as long as they will have me." ■

BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Served on the Southern States Energy Board and the National Petroleum Council. | **HIGHLIGHTS:** Member of the State Bar of Texas and the University of Texas Liberal Arts Alumni Advisory Council. | **EDUCATION:** University of Texas at Austin, bachelor's and law degrees.