

For Immediate Release

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STATE COMMISSION PROMOTES AWARENESS
OF WOMEN'S ISSUES AT LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON

(Montpelier) – The Vermont Commission on Women welcomed back legislators at a Capitol Plaza Hotel luncheon today sponsored by the commission's Education and Research Foundation.

The group focused on progress that has been made since 1964, the year Governor Philip Hoff established the Commission. A report titled, "[Women in Leadership and Public Life 2015](#)" issued at the event featured a historical look at numbers of women lawmakers in Vermont. "Vermont is currently number 2 in the nation for the highest percentage of women serving in both chambers of the legislature. We were very narrowly beaten out again by Colorado, with 42%. Vermont has 41.1%, 9 Senators and 65 Representatives," said Cary Brown, the commission's executive director. "In the mid-sixties when our commission started, that total number was more like 12%. It matters, because democratically elected legislative bodies should reflect populations they represent. Additionally, when our girls and women see other women in office, they become more engaged politically." The report examines numbers of women in other sectors: business, law, the military, medicine and higher education and looks at the numbers of women serving on Vermont boards or commissions, where many Vermonters first learn about running and participating in public meetings and which is often a stepping stone to elected office. Currently, 32% of Vermont's 178 boards are gender balanced. Male dominated boards are more likely to offer members per diem reimbursements.

Remarks at the event also focused on the strength of the Commission in bringing together diverse groups to work on issues of interest to women. "We are building a vibrant network of people across the state who are working together to make Vermont a place where every woman and every girl is safe and healthy, is economically secure, and has full access to all of the rights, benefits and opportunities that our community has to offer," said Brown.

About VCW: The Vermont Commission on Women (VCW) is a non-partisan state government commission established in 1964 working to advance rights and opportunities for women and girls. Sixteen volunteer commissioners and representatives from organizations concerned with women's issues guide the VCW's public education, coalition building, and advocacy efforts. VCW offers many services to the public, including a toll-free information and referral service at [800-881-1561](tel:800-881-1561) and many publications, including the handbook [The Legal Rights of Women in Vermont](#) and the new report, [Women in Leadership and Public Life 2015](#).