



#MARCH
to PARITY

Media Guide on Women in Politics

Olivia Pope, Claire Underwood, Selina Meyer, Alicia Florrick, Dr. Elizabeth Faulkner McCord. These political trailblazers from *Scandal*, *House of Cards*, *Veep*, *The Good Wife*, and *Madam Secretary*, respectively, are pounding the pavement on the [#MarchtoParity](#) from the state legislature to the Oval Office, presenting society with prominent and powerful female protagonists.

Women's leadership is nowhere near where it should be—on TV or in real life—but these fresh representations of women in powerful roles are opening up a world of political possibilities for women and girls. If "[cultural change](#) is often the dress rehearsal for political change," we're just starting to set the stage.

Movies and TV shows that feature prominent women leaders catalyze conversations about women in politics and may inspire women to pursue lives in public service. These media representations also show audiences that women belong in politics. These depictions should be ordinary, not extraordinary, explains screenwriter, director, and producer Shonda Rhimes, known for featuring women, people of color, and LGBTQ lead characters. Bucking the word "diversity," she [explains](#), "I call it 'normalizing.' I make TV look like the world looks." While there are certainly some women represented in politics, there aren't nearly enough in real life or on television for it to be normal, not novel.

Political Parity has prepared this media guide to elevate and honor leading women characters in feature films, documentaries, and on TV. We hope you'll gather your friends and family, get out some popcorn, and watch these women shake up Washington and the nation. Then consider going out to join them, and connect with us on Twitter using [#MarchtoParity](#)!

DOCUMENTARIES

Anita Hill: Speaking Truth to Power (77 MINS.)—2014

SYNOPSIS: In 1991, the entire country watched as one African-American female law professor sat before a Senate committee of 14 white men and in a clear, unwavering voice recounted the repeated acts of sexual harassment she had endured while working with US Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas. Anita Hill's graphic testimony was a turning point for gender equality in the United States and ignited a political firestorm about sexual misconduct and power in the workplace that resonates to this day. Against a backdrop of sex, politics, and race, *Anita: Speaking Truth to Power* reveals the story of a woman who has empowered millions to stand up for equality and justice. Directed by Academy Award®-winning filmmaker Freida Mock, the film celebrates Anita Hill's legacy and provides a rare glimpse into her private life and career.



Image: Open Source

Makers: Women in Politics (54 MINS.)—2014

SYNOPSIS: *Women in Politics* profiles pioneering women in public office. From the first woman elected to Congress in 1916 to a young woman running for the Detroit City Council in 2013, the documentary explores the obstacles and opportunities for American women in politics.



Image: Open Source

Madame Presidenta: Why Not U.S.? Vamos Meninas! (51 MINS.)—2014

SYNOPSIS: In January 2013, filmmaker Heather Arnet traveled to Brazil to explore the changing political and economic roles women are playing in that country's global leadership. She investigated: how did Brazil come to elect its first woman president, Dilma Rousseff, in 2010? What impact has her presidency had on global markets, women's rights, and opportunities? And what can American women and businesses learn from our Brazilian sisters and their passionate and successful surge towards economic prosperity and political leadership?

MADAME PRESIDENTA:
WHY NOT U.S.?

Image: Open Source

Geraldine Ferraro: Paving the Way (90 MINS.)—2013

SYNOPSIS: *Geraldine Ferraro: Paving the Way* explores the life of a trailblazing woman who made history in 1984 as the first female Vice Presidential nominee for a major party. The film profiles Ferraro's impoverished childhood, the struggles she endured growing up, and the professional and personal hurdles she faced and overcame to achieve what no woman had done before. The primary focus of the film is Ferraro's public service and political career from her work as a district attorney in Queens, NY to her service as a Congresswoman to the emotional night of her Vice Presidential nomination. Though the Mondale-Ferraro ticket was ultimately unsuccessful, the film explores how Ferraro's nomination and her conduct during the campaign changed the national perception of what was possible for women.



Image: Open Source

DOCUMENTARIES (Continued)

Raising Ms. President: Raising the Next Generation of Female Political Leaders (60 MINS.)—2013

SYNOPSIS: How can we reach gender parity in politics if we don't have enough women in the pipeline to run for office in the first place? *Raising Ms. President* explores questions concerning political ambition, why women don't run for office, the difference electing women makes, and how we can raise the next generation of female political leaders to create a stronger country—and world.

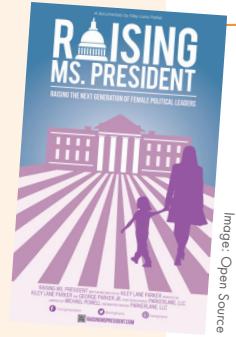


Image: Open Source

Free Angela and All Political Prisoners (101 MINS.)—2012

SYNOPSIS: Angela Davis joined the Communist Party, protested with the Black Panthers, and became a principal spokesperson for the burgeoning prison reform movement. As a result, she found herself fighting to keep her job at a public university, characterized by her detractors as a dangerous, subversive menace and by her supporters as bold advocate for social justice. On August 7, 1970, Angela was implicated in the politically motivated murder of a judge. What followed was a two-month chase, followed by one of the most sensationalized court cases of its time, which challenged America's perceptions of political freedom.



Image: Open Source

Miss Representation (85 MINS.)—2011

SYNOPSIS: This groundbreaking documentary explores the under-representation of women in positions of power and influence in America, and challenges media sexism. Fighting against a limited portrayal of what it means to be a strong woman, the documentary features a powerful cast of women in politics including Condoleezza Rice, Hillary Clinton, Dianne Feinstein, and Olympia Snowe.



Image: Open Source

Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority (56 MINS.)—2008

SYNOPSIS: In 1965, Patsy Takemoto Mink became the first woman of color in the United States Congress. Seven years later, she ran for the US presidency and was the driving force behind Title IX, the landmark legislation that transformed women's opportunities in higher education and athletics. A compelling portrait of an iconoclastic figure who is seldom spotlighted in history books, this film illuminates how Mink's courage to remain "ahead of the majority" in her beliefs enabled groundbreaking changes for the rights of the disenfranchised. A woman of the people as well as a pioneer, a patriot, and an outcast, Patsy Mink embodies the history, ideals, and spirit of America.



Image: Open Source

DOCUMENTARIES (Continued)

What's Your Point, Honey? (87 MINS.)—2008

SYNOPSIS: It's not a matter of if, but when, a woman will become president of the United States. Defining where women stand now and, more importantly, how what happens today shapes what will happen tomorrow, this movie takes a (sometimes whimsical) look at possible female leaders of the future.

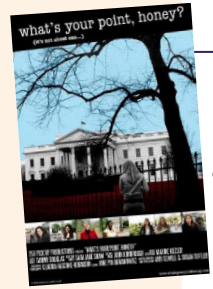


Image: Open Source

14 Women (79 MINS.)—2007

*Note: Directed by Mary Lambert, the older sister of U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas.

SYNOPSIS: When the historic 109th Congress convened in January 2005, the number of women in the Senate increased to an unprecedented 14. Their struggle to balance family and politics is chronicled in this heartwarming look at the most powerful women in America. A story of perseverance and poise, 14 Women is an inspiration.

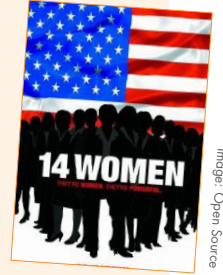


Image: Open Source

FILMS

Game Change (118 MINS.)—2012 (BIOGRAPHY, DRAMA, HISTORY)

SYNOPSIS: Game Change follows John McCain's (Ed Harris) 2008 presidential campaign, from his selection of Alaska Governor Sarah Palin (Julianne Moore) as his running mate to their ultimate defeat in the general election. Woody Harrelson portrays Steve Schmidt, McCain's senior campaign strategist.



Image Courtesy: HBO Films

Iron Jawed Angels (123 MINS.)—2004 (DRAMA, HISTORY)

SYNOPSIS: Defiant young activists, led by Alice Paul (Hillary Swank), take the women's suffrage movement by storm. Frustrated by the failure of the United States to adopt a constitutional amendment giving women the vote, suffragettes put their lives at risk to help American women win the right to vote.



Image: Open Source

The Contender (130 MINS.)—2000 (DRAMA, THRILLER)

SYNOPSIS: When the sitting Vice President dies, Senator Laine Hanson (Joan Allen) is chosen by the President to fill that role and becomes the first woman to hold that office. This choice meets opposition from members of both parties, in particular a powerful political adversary who will seemingly stop at nothing to undermine her. Hanson's confirmation hearings set off a firestorm of controversy as shocking secrets from her past are revealed, threatening her personal life and her political future.

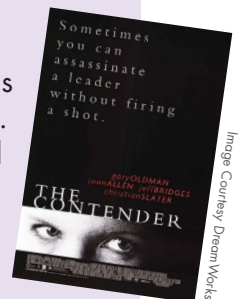


Image Courtesy: DreamWorks

TV SHOWS

Madam Secretary (2014 - PRESENT)

Dr. Elizabeth Faulkner McCord (Téa Leoni), a former CIA analyst, becomes the Secretary of State, targeting America's most critical threats while navigating the unique lifestyle that comes with such a high-powered position.



Image Courtesy CBS

House of Cards (2013 - PRESENT)

Congressman Frank Underwood (Kevin Spacey) relies on his wife, Claire Underwood (Robin Wright), to help him climb the rungs of political power all the way to the White House.



Image: Open Source

Scandal* (2012 - PRESENT)

Communications Director Olivia Pope (Kerry Washington) leaves the White House to start her own crisis management firm, only to discover she has not left the past behind.

*Note: We recommend the [episode](#) featuring Lisa Kudrow, who plays a Democratic presidential nominee and calls out sexism in the media.



Image Courtesy ABC

Veep (2012 - present)

Former Senator Selina Meyer (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) finds that being Vice President of the United States is nothing like she hoped and everything that everyone ever warned her about.



Image: Open Source

The Good Wife (2009 - present)

When top-notch litigator Alicia Florrick's (Juliana Margulies) husband, a former state's attorney, goes behind bars after a sex and corruption scandal, she resumes her career as a defense attorney and takes charge of her destiny. Four years later, her husband is out of prison and has won the gubernatorial election, and Alicia must balance her evolving career and family responsibilities with her new position as first lady of Illinois.

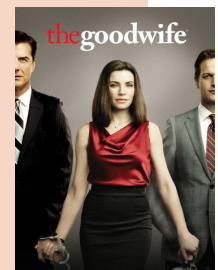


Image Courtesy ABC

Parks and Recreation (2009-2015)

Leslie Knope (Amy Poehler), a mid-level bureaucrat in an Indiana Parks and Recreation Department, hopes to beautify her town (and boost her own career) by helping local nurse Ann Perkins (Rashida Jones) turn an abandoned construction site into a community park. Yet what should be a fairly simple project is stymied at every turn by oafish bureaucrats, selfish neighbors, governmental red tape, and a myriad of other challenges. Knope rises to the task.



Image Courtesy NBC

TV SHOWS (Continued)

Political Animals (2012)

A divorced, former First Lady (Sigourney Weaver) is currently serving as the Secretary of State. She deals with running the State Department while trying to keep her family together.



Image: USA Network

State of Affairs (2014)

CIA analyst Charleston Tucker (Katherine Heigl) is in charge of President Constance Payton's (Alfre Woodard) daily press briefing, a list of the most urgent security issues and threats facing the nation. Charlie also has a personal connection to the president: she was engaged to Payton's son before his death in a terrorist attack. Watch Charlie navigate a complicated personal life and a challenging job.



Image: Courtesy: NBC

Commander in Chief (2005)

MacKenzie Allen (Geena Davis) becomes America's first woman president following the death of President Teddy Bridges.



Image: Open Source

The West Wing (1999 - 2006)

President Josiah Bartlet (Martin Sheen) and his staffers struggle to balance the needs of the country with the political realities of Washington, D.C., working through two presidential terms and the race that determines who will succeed Bartlet as the leader of the free world. While the series was not known to put women in powerful roles, this changed when CJ (Allison Janney) was promoted from Press Secretary to the President's Chief of Staff in Season 6.



Image: Open Source

Have a favorite film or TV series featuring a strong woman in politics that we forgot?

Tweet at [@PoliticalParity](https://twitter.com/PoliticalParity) with [#MarchtoParity](https://twitter.com/PoliticalParity) and let us know!

Resources on Women and Gender in the Media

Amy Poehler's Smart Girls, amysmartgirls.com, [@smrtrgrls](https://twitter.com/smrtrgrls)

Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, seejane.org, [@GDIGM](https://twitter.com/GDIGM)

International Women's Media Foundation, iwmf.org, [@IWMF](https://twitter.com/IWMF)

Ms. Magazine, msmagazine.com, [@msmagazine](https://twitter.com/msmagazine)

Name It. Change It., nameitchangeit.org, [@nameitchangeit](https://twitter.com/nameitchangeit)

Presidential Gender Watch 2016, presidentialgenderwatch.org,
[@GenderWatch2016](https://twitter.com/GenderWatch2016)

Rookie Mag, rookiemag.com, [@RookieMag](https://twitter.com/RookieMag)

The Representation Project, therepresentationproject.org,
[@RepresentPledge](https://twitter.com/RepresentPledge)

WAM!, womenactionmedia.org, [@womenactmedia](https://twitter.com/womenactmedia)

Women's Media Center, womensmediacenter.com, [@womensmediacntr](https://twitter.com/womensmediacntr)

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