

Leadership Council for Women in National Security Garners Pledges from 15
Presidential Candidates to Seek Gender Parity
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#Aspiring

Fifteen presidential candidates have pledged to seek gender parity in their senior-level national security appointments on the campaign and in office, the newly formed Leadership Council for Women in National Security (LCWINS) said Tuesday. In response to a call from dozens of national security leaders, the candidates pledged to ensure diverse hiring pools, set hiring standards that take diversity into account, and not discriminate against applicants who have taken employment breaks or downshifts due to family obligations.

Presidential candidates Michael Bennet, Joe Biden, Cory Booker, Pete Buttigieg, Julian Castro, Kirsten Gillibrand, Kamala Harris, John Hickenlooper, Seth Moulton, Amy Klobuchar, Beto O'Rourke, Tim Ryan, Bernie Sanders, Eric Swalwell, and Elizabeth Warren have all taken the LCWINS gender parity pledge.

LCWINS, a new organization of women and men from both parties dedicated to advancing women's leadership in foreign policy and national security, urges all 2020 presidential candidates, from both major parties, to join in making this commitment.

"The research is clear: diverse teams produce stronger, more durable outcomes, and the national security workforce has fallen behind the private sector in the race for talent," said LCWINS co-founder and co-chair Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley. "This commitment by so many of our nation's most prominent political voices marks a much-needed shift in how we bring our nation's best talent into national security policymaking. We applaud that commitment, and encourage all the remaining presidential candidates, from both parties, to take the pledge as well."

"The #MeToo movement highlighted the degree to which women continue to face harassment, abuse and discrimination in the workplace," noted LCWINS co-founder and former Pentagon official Rosa Brooks, "Unfortunately, the national security workplace is no exception. While many talented young women continue to enter the field, many quickly hit a glass ceiling. At senior levels, progress toward gender balance in the field is stagnating, if not reversing. Women still make up only a minority of senior leaders in national security, but with this new initiative, we believe that's finally going to change."

"Our diplomacy should look like us," noted co-founder Ambassador Nina Hachigian

Co-founder and former White House official Julianne Smith said, "In recent years, women have made many important strides in national security. But they continue to be underrepresented in Congress, on the Sunday talk shows, the boardroom and the Situation Room. LCWINS aims to help women at various stages throughout their career tackle some of the unique challenges they face in the workplace."

"Research at the National Democratic Institute [shows](#) that women in politics are more likely than men to work across party lines and to promote citizen confidence in democratic institutions -- two outcomes that Americans say they want, and that American security policy sorely needs," noted co-founder and former State Department official Tamara Wittes.

At the senior level, America's national security institutions remain male-dominated. Women occupy only about a quarter of civilian senior executive and supervisory positions at the Defense Department, and fewer than ten percent of military general and flag officers are female. At the State Department, women make up 39% of senior executives, and in the intelligence community, only 30% of employees at senior pay levels are female. The statistics for women of color are far

worse.

LCWINS is a non-partisan coalition of senior national security professionals working to increase women's leadership in national security policymaking. LCWINS is committed to working in partnership with other organizations focusing on equity, diversity and inclusion in the national security workplace and working with others to increase diversity in policy overall.

WWW.LCWINS.ORG

To speak to LCWINS leadership, please contact Joanne Levine 917 375 4678.

Text of LCWINS Gender Equity Pledge, signed by fifteen presidential candidates:

Presidential Candidates pledge that, if elected, they will seek gender parity in their national security appointments. In practice, that means candidates promise that:

- a) Rigorous standards will be used to ensure diverse candidate pools for all senior positions;
- b) No senior positions will be filled until a genuinely diverse candidate pool was considered;
- c) Hiring recommendations will be evaluated based in part on whether they are contributing to diverse teams; and
- d) Candidates will not be viewed less favorably due to breaks in employment or past part-time work due to family obligations.