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**4 percent of State Legislators Nationwide Bring Scientific Expertise to the Job;
More Women Healthcare Professionals are Serving in State Legislators than
Men**

New Brunswick, New Jersey (May 11, 2023) – Only four percent of state legislators across the nation bring scientific training and expertise to their job as elected officials and policymakers, according to [new data](#) released by the [Eagleton Science and Politics Program](#) at Rutgers University-New Brunswick.

The number of health care professionals, scientists, and engineers in state legislatures has increased since 2021, when Eagleton launched the first publicly accessible national database of elected state legislators with scientific, engineering and health care training. At that time, only three percent of state legislators across the nation fell into those career categories.

Today, 316 scientists (220 health care professionals, 74 scientists, and 22 engineers) serve in state houses across the country, compared to 228 in 2021 (197 health care professionals, 20 scientists, and 11 engineers).

Health care professionals are still the most represented science-related community in state legislatures. Registered Nurses are the most represented within that population (70), followed closely by physicians (65), public health experts (30), dentists (13), veterinarians (13), and pharmacists (12).

“As our nation continues to face public health, climate change, renewable energy infrastructure, and other science-based issues, it becomes apparent that the perspectives of scientists who hold elected office are invaluable,” said Anna Dulencin, director of the Eagleton Science and Politics Program.

The slight increase in representation of health care professionals, scientists, and engineers in state legislatures comes on the heels of our nation facing complex policy issues affecting science, technology, and energy, which underscores the importance of developing stronger communication and a better understanding between scientists and elected officials, Dulencin said.

“Addressing almost any issue – expansion of artificial intelligence, facial recognition usage and automated vehicles to wildfires, extreme weather events and the many ramifications of pandemics - requires policymakers at all levels of government to quickly make critical decisions that are informed by increasingly complex scientific data and understanding,” she said.

Notably, the 2023 data shows that there are more women (112) than men (108) who are healthcare professionals and serving in state legislators. There are still more men than women who are scientists or

engineers and serving in state legislators. A majority of the healthcare professionals and engineers are Republican, while most scientists are Democrats.

New Hampshire (20) Georgia (15) and Maryland (11) have the highest number of scientists, engineers and health care professionals in their state legislatures. New Jersey currently has eight, which includes three scientists, one engineer and four healthcare professionals in its state legislature.

This research was conducted in large part thanks to Dheeraj Goli, a graduate student researcher for the Eagleton Science and Politics Program who is pursuing a Master's degree in the computer science at Rutgers University.

[Access the online Scientists in Politics database.](#)

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The Eagleton Science and Politics Program

[The Eagleton Science and Politics Program](#) explores: how science, technology, and American politics intersect; the political systems that connect them; and how deeper understanding and clearer communication within and across these disciplines can benefit policymakers, scientists, and the larger public.

The Eagleton Institute of Politics

[The Eagleton Institute of Politics](#) at Rutgers University—New Brunswick studies how American politics and government work and change, analyzes how the democracy might improve, and promotes political participation and civic engagement. The Institute explores state and national politics through research, education, and public service, linking the study of politics with its day-to-day practice.

Rutgers—New Brunswick

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