

# RECENT REVIEWS

## *From Suffrage to the Senate: America's Political Women An Encyclopedia of Leaders, Causes & Issues*

***“From Suffrage to the Senate: America's Political Women an Encyclopedia of Leaders, Causes and Issues*** (2013, 978-1-61925-010-9, \$225) is a two-volume set now in its third edition. Published by **Grey House Publishing** and written by **Suzanne O'Dea**, this new edition is updated and expanded to include the results of the 2012 election. The number of entries has grown 11% and now total 937. While more than two-thirds are biographies there are also articles covering organizations, social issues, and legislation directly related to women.

According to **Ms. O'Dea** the criteria used in selecting topics has remained constant through all three editions. An examination of this version reveals her being true to her world. Entries feature the “people, laws, court cases and organizations that establish or alter women's relationships to their families, their communities and their government.” **Ms. O'Dea** provides a historical perspective, as she includes pioneers of women's political involvement like **Sojourner Truth**, **Elizabeth Cady Staton**, and the **Grimke** sisters as well as contemporary political figures ranging from **Hilary Clinton** to **Sarah Palin**. In addition, there are articles covering topics from the Colonial “Daughters of Liberty” to Women in the Abolitionist Movement to the Equal Right Amendment to the National center for Lesbian Rights.

The articles are brief but substantive and linked by “see also” reference. A major value-added feature is the appendix of primary sources that include 35 documents gathered in categories like women's rights, political parties, and agendas, racism, and discrimination, presidential appointees, and women in the military. Other appendices include tables of facts and statistics and a 27 page chronology running from 1638, when the General Court of Massachusetts Bay banned **Anne Hutchinson** for challenging ministerial authority, to 2013, when the Pentagon lifted its ban on women serving in combat. However, there is one weakness here. The references listed for each entry are limited. The citing of additional resource would be of value to those doing more involved research.

The third edition of ***From Suffrage to the Senate***... is a worthy successor to prior editions. It should appeal to libraries of all types where there is need for a reference work that offers a thorough overview as well as useful background information on American Politics. Buyers of the two-volume set get free online access at <http://gold.greyhouse.com>

-AGAINST THE GRAIN

“The third edition of the two-volume encyclopedia (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., CH, May'o7, 44-4817) comprises 937 entries on individuals, organizations, court cases, legislation, and special issues. Entries are arranged alphabetically, and appendixes include a selection of primary documents as well as facts, statistics, and a chronology about American women in politics. The preface indicates that release of this third edition was timed to include the 2012 elections. About 100 new entries are featured all together, though entries on newcomers, such as Elizabeth Warren, are very brief. *From Suffrage to the Senate* is a fascinating flip through, and editor O'Dea includes many lesser-known women worthy of

### **Grey House Publishing**

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discovery. However, the era of the expensive printed reference work as passed, and comparable information can be found easily online. The advantage of this work is that it provides users with a strong sense of women's advances in American Politics over time. That contextualization can be difficult to obtain from an online search. However, given its price, this resource can be recommended only for those libraries that still rely heavily on print reference works. Lengthy bibliography and index. Summing up: Optional. Lower-level undergraduates and general readers"

-CHOICE

"The third edition of this reference includes the significant strides women have made in the political realm over the last six years. More than 900 topics of key figures and events are presented, with over 100 new entries added, ranging from Sarah Palin to the Lily Ledbetter Act. In the introductory discussion, O'Dea presents what she feels are the key topics on the role of women in American Politics. The Encyclopedic entries are organized alphabetically and vary from a short paragraph to multiple pages of information. Citations and see also references are included, providing readers with a grounded basis to beginning their research. Balance has been maintained to reflect differing points of view, ethnicities, and political ideologies.

Beyond the encyclopedic entries, the reader is provided a thorough bibliography and a chronology of significant events from 1638 through early 2013. The two appendixes include tables of statistics and 35 historical primary documents. This resource also provides a lengthy and helpful index that lists alternate names to further aid the user in easily locating information. This two-volume set is recommended for high-school and public libraries."

-Booklist

"O'Dea did an excellent job updating the 2007 previous edition of this work... allows researchers to obtain background information on a number of leaders, causes and issues that shaped and continue to shape women's roles in American politics. A wonderful addition to reference collections."

- Library Journal

"Recommended for high schools studying the role of women in our society."

-Gale.com

"The particular value of *From Suffrage to the Senate* is the pulling together of often discrete shards of information into a whole...an engaging tool that would be useful in high school, public, and academic libraries looking for an overview of the political history of women in the US."

-Booklist

"...a well-researched, skillfully organized reference on American women's influence on public life. Recommended for all public and academic libraries."

-Library Journal

"...This book is an excellent reference source on women leaders, causes, and issues and is highly recommended."

-ARBA

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“...a remarkable job of organizing a voluminous amount of reference material into a work that will be useful for research on individual women and broader women’s issues. Even when writing about sensitive issues such as abortion...remains evenhanded and objective in this worthwhile purchase.”

*-Voice of Youth Advocates*

“...Most usefully, links from subject and biographical entries now lead to relevant documents in the appendix. Although much of the information in these volumes is available elsewhere, this encyclopedia does a very good job of bringing it together. Summing Up: Recommended. Lower-/upper-level undergraduates and general readers.”

*-Choice*

“The editor is very even handed in describing controversial subjects. In an effort to present the information without prejudice, she elected to use the vocabulary chosen by a group to describe itself and its positions on issues. Overall, this set would be an excellent addition to the library shelves as a compendium of American women’s involvement in politics.”

*-Library Media Connection*

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