



WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?



BY Elena Gilbertson Hall, Gretchen Hinger, Andrew Robinson and Imani Sykes

At the beginning of the 2020 presidential primary season, six women were in the race for the Democratic nomination. Following Senator Elizabeth Warren’s decision to drop out of the contest on March 5, the two remaining Democratic frontrunners, as well as the Republican incumbent, are all white men. “It’s definitely scary to have a daughter growing up and knowing how a lot of people view women. It would be nice if it was a more even playing field,” small business owner Jessica Faulkner said. “I have a daughter, and I tell her, ‘Be the best that

you can be, and you’re just competing to be your best.’ That will get you further than most things.” Approximately one quarter of the current U.S. House of Representatives and Senate members are women, and no female has ever held the role of Chief Executive, according to the Pew Research Center. In addition to the low numbers of women in political office, numerous men in these positions of power have acted in ways that further degrade and oppress women. Over the course of his political career, President Donald Trump has referred to

women as “dogs”, “miss piggy” and “a nasty woman”, among other insults. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has been accused by eight women of inappropriate physical touch, according to Business Insider. High school media specialist Kathy Carroll feels these patterns of derogatory comments and actions towards women can be detrimental. “I think a lot of times things can be taken out of context for some individuals, but when it becomes a pattern for others, I think that’s very telling for who they are



TERASINA AZOR,
NURSE



JESSICA FAULKNER,
SMALL BUSINESS OWNER



ZAIDEH MUNAKIEB,
STAY-AT-HOME MOTHER



MELODY WENZEL,
PARALEGAL



MARTI BROWN,
LIBRARIAN



KATHY CARROLL,
HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA SPECIALIST

and their core beliefs,” Carroll said. “If it’s just an isolated incident, or even perhaps two, it’s OK, but when it’s a definite pattern that goes for years, I think that’s very telling, and therefore as a woman, I take offense.” While many women face challenges, for religious or ethnic minorities the hardships can be more severe. Stay-at-home mother Zaideh Munakieb, a Muslim immigrant from Indonesia, believes that discriminatory sentiments often originate with political leaders. “When leaders do something, it always gives an effect to the followers later,” Munakieb said. “If they said, ‘Oh Muslims are dangerous’ for example, it will affect me personally because when I’m walking down the street by myself, then I will (think), ‘Is there somebody that’s looking at me in a dirty way?’ or something like that. It affects my personal opinion (about) my security.” Along with exclusive political structures,

nurse Terasina Azor believes that the media plays a role in creating pressures for women to meet certain societal standards. “The media has a lot of control over how people perceive, or particularly women perceive, themselves, which it shouldn’t be,” Azor said. “You should be able to wear and do the kind of things whenever you want as long as it’s not hurting anybody else, but I do think sometimes the media and government sets a precedent over that.” Librarian Marti Brown is disappointed that women’s rights remain a necessary component of modern political dialogue. “I believe that women are equal to men. The fact that we’re still having to ask for equal rights in this day and age is just

ridiculous, and the way that we have to beg for autonomy over our own bodies is just ludicrous. It’s obscene,” Brown said. While some believe it is crucial to have women in power to resolve these issues, paralegal Melody Wenzel believes that a male politician that is aware of gender issues can help make similar progress. “I prefer Bernie Sanders (for President). I think Bernie would try to (improve women’s rights), but it all depends on the Senate and the House if he can get that accomplished,” Wenzel said. Azor feels a potential solution requires a complete redesign of power standards associated with today’s political climate. “I think we need (political leaders) to change the atmosphere. First of all, you can’t have men in power saying derogatory things about women or treating women differently than their male counterparts,” Azor said. “You have to start at the top and change the culture, and then it can trickle down.”

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