



Dear Running Start friends,

As a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that trains young women to run for political office, Running Start is dedicated to building a stronger pipeline of young women to one day seek elected office by training them in critical leadership skills and by introducing them to role models and mentors who show them that it's possible to run.

The results of the 2016 elections present new challenges for Running Start's work. "I worry about what this election means for women, especially women of color," Susannah Wellford, Running Start's president and founder said. "I've spent the past 17 years talking to young women about leading in politics. At Running Start, we acknowledge that misogyny and prejudice are out there, but that some of the biggest obstacles holding women back are internal, in that many women lack confidence or the desire to jump in."

Running Start works closely with women across party lines and ideologies and supports the right of young women to run, regardless of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. While some people feel that they can look past racism and misogyny because it doesn't affect them, the young women we serve often don't have that luxury.

One way Running Start tackles this issue is our #ILookLikeAPolitician campaign, which encourages young women to own their power. We ask young women to make public posts that declare that it doesn't matter what government has looked like in the past, that they can contribute by leading in politics. Earlier this month, we released [a teaser of a video](#) about #ILookLikeAPolitician as a preview of a longer video coming out in December. The full video will be our entry to this year's [Project for Awesome](#), a contest to raise money for charity. **We hope you will share the teaser now and also support us in the contest (to be held December 9th-10th) to help us win a grant to do more of this important work.**

Our vast network of Running Start supporters encompasses a diverse group of women and men, and we are happy to see how much the group has grown this week! We recently received [more than 150 generous donations](#) from brand new contributors whose help will enable us to train even more young women. Our supporters have been unanimous in pledging to keep up the fight to make politics an arena where women are respected and accepted as leaders. We are also heartened by some new firsts for women in politics, including:

1st Running Start alumna State Representative, Avery Bourne, Illinois

1st Latina Senator, Catherine Cortez Masto, Nevada.

1st Indian-American Senator and 2nd African-American female Senator, Kamala Harris, California.

1st Vietnamese-American Congresswoman, Stephanie Murphy, Florida.

1st Indian-American Congresswoman, Pramila Jayapal, Washington.

1st Congresswoman and 1st African-American Member of Congress from Delaware, Lisa Blunt Rochester, Delaware.

1st Muslim refugee and 1st Somali-American Muslim woman elected official, Ilhan Omar, Minnesota.

1st Democratic female combat veteran Senator, Tammy Duckworth, Illinois.

1st Female representative for Puerto Rico in Congress (called Resident Commissioner), Jenniffer Gonzalez, Puerto Rico.

1st Openly LGBT Governor, Kate Brown, Oregon

1st time all non-voting representatives in Congress are women:

Eleanor Holmes Norton, Washington, DC; Jenniffer Gonzalez, Puerto Rico; Aumua Amata Radewagen, American Samoa; Madeleine Bardallo, Guam; Stacey Plaskett, Virgin Islands.

Running Start is committed to showing young women how their voices can be heard by entering the public sphere as part of our nation's decision-making process. We know it can work—Amber Herrle, one of our alums, just wrote to us and said, "This election has strengthened my resolve to run, and four of my friends just texted me the same thing!"

- Susannah Wellford and the Running Start Team