

STATUS OF WOMEN IN FEDERAL SERVICE

As FEW observes its 40th Anniversary, it is important that we discuss the status of women in Federal Service. Unfortunately, the number of minorities and women in the SES and upper management across the federal government has not reflected the diversity of the nation nor the diversity of the federal workforce as a whole. In 2003, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) evaluated data from 2000 on diversity in the SES and upper management ranks. At the time, the report showed 67% of senior executives were white males; 19 % were white females; and approximately 14% were minority males and females. According to GAO's testimony to Congress at a May 3, 2007 session on Diversity in the SES ranks, there were small improvements made over the past six years. As shown in the chart below, the improvements have been slow as the door to diversity seems to be narrowing even as the American workforce becomes more diverse and federal retirements continue to increase.

The introduction of the Senior Executive Diversity Assurance Act would address these issues. The legislation reestablishes the Senior Executive Resource Office, which was dissolved by OPM's reorganization in 2003. This office would be re-

sponsible for ensuring diversity within the SES through strategic partnerships, mentorship programs, and more stringent reporting requirements.

FEW was a part of this landmark legislation as FEW was invited to testify before Congress on the lack of diversity in the SES and upper management ranks. President Rhonda Trent testified on two occasions to identify problems and propose solutions. FEW's suggested solutions are to increase training dollars for women, to have a formal mentoring program, to offer more upward mobility programs, to offer more leadership opportunities, and to have a stronger Federal Women's Program (FWP) within the government.

While women have made significant progress in "shattering the glass ceiling," much work remains to be done. There are still job series and agencies where women and minorities are not well represented. Join FEW as we continue our work to enhance career opportunities for women in the federal government. Visit www.few.org for the latest information on the Senior Executive Diversity Assurance Act and other legislation impacting all federally employed women.

Advancement of Women into Upper Grades 1968 – 2007

Grade Group	1968	1984	1992	2002	2007
GS 1-6	47.2%	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	66.6%*
GS 9-12	14.5%	32.0%	39.2%	46.3%	48.1%*
GS 13	4.2%	13.5%	24.2%	34.5%	37.7%*
GS 14	3.8%	10.0%	19.2%	31.4%	36.2%*
GS 15	2.7%	8.5%	15.3%	26.4%	31.4%*
SES	1.5%	7.0%	13.1%	25.1%	28.6%*
All	34.0%	39.3%	43.4%	44.0%	43.9%*

Sources: OPM/Kay Coles James Article, July 2003

*OPM FedScope Employment Data Cube September 30, 2007 based on permanent employees.

More information is being provided in Workshop #326 – Merit Systems Protection Board's (MSPB's) Progress Report on Career Advancement Opportunities for Women.