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**DELEGATES AIM TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN RUNNING FOR ELECTION**

PHILADELPHIA- (Feb. 10, 2014) - One of Vision 2020's national goals is to increase the number of women in senior leadership positions. Across the country, Vision 2020 Delegates are working to address the lack of women in elected office by presenting bipartisan candidate training for women interested in running for office at all levels of government.

Pennsylvania Vision 2020 Delegate Dana Brown is holding her second Ready to Run 2014 seminar on Saturday, February 15. [Ready to Run Philadelphia](#) will be held at Drexel University's MacAlister Hall on Saturday, Feb 15, 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m. Brown held a similar event in Pittsburgh last month.

In Utah, Vision 2020 Delegates Sheryl Allen and Deedee Corradini helped begin Real Women Run in 2012. The program held a recent training session at Salt Lake Community College and will offer a program for declared candidates on March 22 at the University of Utah's Hinckley Institute of Politics.

In Iowa, Vision 2020 Delegate Maxine Lampe has worked with several Vision 2020 allied organizations, including AAUW, to develop a state-wide effort called 50-50 in 2020 to elect more women to office. On April 8-9, 50-50 in 2020 will hold a seminar in Des Moines for women interested in running for the Iowa legislature.

The year 2020 is significant because it will mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment that granted women the right to vote.

At all levels of government, women in elected positions are underrepresented. In Congress, women hold 18.5 % of the seats. Of the 7,383 state legislators across 50 states, only 24.2% are women. Five states have women governors. Women make up only 18% of mayors of U.S. cities with populations over 300,000.

"Our Delegates are doing exceptional work to educate and train women to pursue leadership roles," said Lynn Yeakel, Founder and Executive Director of Vision 2020. "Their work is giving women the confidence and knowledge necessary to fill positions that have been void of women for far too long. Vision 2020 is proud to collaborate with other organizations united in this shared goal of increasing women's civic engagement. It's important to our democracy that all voices are heard. "

The programs are non-partisan to gather the widest range of potential candidates. In Utah, for example, Allen is a former Republican state representative and Corradini is the former Democratic mayor of Salt Lake City.

“We give women the tools to run for office,” says Corradini. “We tell them, ‘Here’s how you do it – putting together a staff, hiring a campaign director, fundraising.’ ”

Real Women Run is producing results: 63% of its trained candidates have been elected in municipal elections and one of its 2012 participants is a 2014 candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives. Supported by many significant partners, including three universities, Real Women Run was among five national projects highlighted at the Vision 2020 Third National Congress in 2012 in Portland, OR. Its success has inspired a similar effort in Nebraska where a Real Women Run Conference was held last year in Lincoln.

Brown, Chatham University’s Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics, says that the handful of recognizable women in politics obscures the gender imbalance.

“Even though there are high profile women in politics today like Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin and Nancy Pelosi, the sad truth is that fewer than a quarter of state legislative offices are held by women,” says Brown. “Worse still, in our own backyard, only 17.8 percent of Pennsylvania’s General Assembly are women and we have never had a female Governor or U.S. Senator. The distance we must still travel to achieve parity in our government highlights the urgent need for more women to enter the political arena.”

Ready to Run Philadelphia will feature political communications specialist Chris Jahnke and fundraising expert Nancy Bocskor. PA state representative Kate Harper will present opening remarks.

In New Jersey, a Vision 2020 Ally – the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University – will hold a training program March 21-22 in New Brunswick. According to CAWP, which created the Ready to Run™ program 16 years ago, more than 2,200 New Jersey women have attended its programs. Over a quarter of Ready to Run alumnae have run for office, and of those who did run, 70% won their races. When Ready to Run was launched, New Jersey ranked 39th in the nation for women serving in its legislature. Today, the Garden State ranks 10th.

Vision 2020, a Center within Drexel University College of Medicine’s Institute for Women’s Health and Leadership, is a national coalition of organizations and individuals united in the commitment to achieve women’s economic and social equality. Its mission is to advance shared leadership among women and men to reach 50-50 by the year 2020, when the nation celebrates the centennial of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote. Vision 2020 is comprised of 81 Allied organizations representing over 20 million people, 135 Delegates across the country who work to advance the Vision 2020 mission and 12 National Advisors providing strategic guidance.