

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
TREY GRAYSON

NEWS RELEASE

RE: Kentucky Sees Slight Increase in the Diversity of its Elected Officials  
DATE: October 30, 2009  
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(Frankfort, KY) To close out the celebration of Kentucky's Civics Month, Secretary of State Trey Grayson released an updated report that showed Kentucky slightly increasing the diversity of its elected officials since 2008. However, the report, *United We Stand: Encouraging Diversity in Kentucky's Leaders*, also showed that Kentucky still lags behind in the overall number of minorities elected to office.

"Much like our previous reports, these statistics are a sobering reminder that our leadership in this state does not represent the diversity of our population," said Secretary Grayson. "It is my hope that this report will serve as a resource and encouragement to the wealth of potential great leaders in our state who would diversify the leadership in both elected and appointed positions."

Although the nation took an historic step forward in terms of diversity of elected officials by electing its first non-white president, Kentucky saw much more moderate gains. Kentucky saw a slight increase in diversity at the Mayoral and School Board Member levels with Mayors seeing an increase in two positions and School Board Members nearly doubling from 18 to 32 members. There was no change in the figures for State Senators, State Representatives, Court of Appeals, Circuit Court, and District Court.

Disappointingly, figures dropped in County Magistrates and Commissioners by one and in City Council Legislative Representatives by ten. Unfortunately, there is still a large dearth of diverse elected officials even at the local level. Twelve of the twenty-one elected official categories surveyed by the Office of the Secretary of State had no non-white representation.

Overall, diversity numbers increased from 136 in 2008 to 141 in 2009, a 3.68% increase. However, those numbers only represent 2.75% of the total elected officials surveyed.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, non-whites make up nearly 10% of Kentucky's population, but they are not similarly represented in elected offices. African Americans make up a large portion of the diversity of Kentucky leadership. Only a few other minority racial categorizations are represented in Kentucky leadership.

In addition to statistics about the progress of diversity in Kentucky leadership, the report provides a number of resources to help individuals position themselves to be effective leaders in their communities. It includes a database of racially diverse elected officials from across the Commonwealth.

The report features sections on Representatives Reginald Meeks and Darryl Owens; Georgia Powers, the first African-American elected to the Kentucky State Senate; David Tandy, President of the Louisville Metro Council, as well as profiles of other historic Kentucky leaders.

“We must take a more active approach in order to gain a more diverse set of leaders for our Commonwealth,” remarked Grayson. “In addition to simply spotlighting the need for more diversity in our leadership, this report should serve as a catalyst for individuals to become more involved in their communities and possibly run for elective office.”

One way to increase these numbers is by simply having diverse leaders run for office. With thousands of races on the ballot in 2010, Kentuckians have a wide variety of races from which to consider running. Interested candidates can begin filing on November 4, 2009.

The original report was thought to be the first of its kind in Kentucky. Grayson acknowledged the report highlights only a small sampling of the diverse leadership that exists in the Commonwealth. The statistical data from the report was from surveys conducted in each county.

The report can be accessed via the Office of the Secretary of State’s website at [www.sos.ky.gov/diversity..](http://www.sos.ky.gov/diversity..)

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