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**Run, Baby, Win!
Fewer Five O'clock Shadows on the Ballot this November**

PITTSBURGH (May 19, 2006) – The percentage of winning female candidates trumped the percentage of winning male candidates in Allegheny County's 2006 primary election. Sixty four percent, or seven out of 11, of the women who ran in state and federal primary elections won their races versus 61 percent, or 41 out of 67, of male candidates (results exclude state committee member races).

In 2004, The Institute for Women's Policy research in their annual *The Status of Women in the States* study ranked Pennsylvania 47th out of the 50 states for women's political participation. Due to a focused non-partisan effort by the Women and Girls Foundation and several other non-profit groups and advocacy organizations, over the last two years, western Pennsylvania's poor ranking is history.

WGF-funded programs such as Run, Baby, Run, a women-only non-partisan workshop at the YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh that provided women with the training they needed to run for office, grew into an independently funded candidate support organization that ran bi-partisan candidates for the state house in the Allegheny County primary. That combined with other WGF funded efforts like the "Bring Your Kids to Vote" campaign that encouraged more women to go to the polls and to bring their children with them, and "Advocacy Training Camps" run by The Pennsylvania Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at Chatham College have all contributed to the increase in female political participation in Southwest Pennsylvania.

In 2004 only two women ran for state or federal office compared to 11 women this year. Of those 11 women, five ran for state house, three ran for U.S. Congress, two for Lieutenant Governor and one for state senate. The names that will appear on the ballot in November include Lisa Bennington (D), Catherine Baker Knoll (D), Melissa Hart (R), Diana Irely (R), Jane Clare Orie (R), Chelsa Wagner (D), and Eileen Watt (R). A strong bi-partisan showing of women running to represent Southwest Pennsylvania at all levels of state and federal government.

"There will be some new faces in the halls of government next year," said Heather Arnet, Executive Director of WGF, "This year we saw women of both parties supporting one another – opening their checkbooks, volunteering, and showing up at the polls. This primary has gotten us a step closer to recognizing the dynamic and capable population of women in this state."

"These strong results show that if women run they have a strong likelihood of winning. This should encourage more women to throw their hats into the ring the next time around." Arnet continued "It's all about filling the pipeline with women so that our government can become more representative of the voting and tax base of our state."

Through a combination of public advocacy, coalition building, and grantmaking, the Women and Girls Foundation seeds, supports, and strengthens efforts to achieve equity for women and girls in Southwest Pennsylvania.

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