



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Stefanik, Ritchie, Intschert Announce Formation of 'Upstate Women's Leadership Council'

PATTY RITCHIE May 7, 2015

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### **Effort Seen As a Way to Help Women Succeed, Inspire Future Leaders**

Rep. Elise Stefanik, State Senator Patty Ritchie and Jefferson County District Attorney Cindy Intschert, joined by other local leaders, today announced formation of the "Upstate Women's Leadership Council."

The nonpartisan, non-political group is aimed at increasing opportunities for women's personal and professional advancement and inspiring a next generation of leaders across Northern and Central New York.

“Today, more and more women are stepping up to the plate, in academics, business, medicine and public service,” said Senator Ritchie. “The Upstate Women’s Leadership Council’s aim is to help these women and others find success in their chosen fields, and inspire women of every age—but especially young women—to reach for higher goals and become our next generation’s leaders,” Senator Ritchie said.

“I am proud to join Senator Ritchie and District Attorney Intschert in this important effort,” said Congresswoman Stefanik. “The Upstate Women’s Leadership Council will serve as a bridge to help women advance and succeed in fields across the spectrum. Northern and Central New York will benefit greatly by increasing opportunities for women to advance and I am proud to be a part of this important initiative to cultivate our next generation of women leaders.”

“The Upstate Women’s Leadership Council represents a wonderful opportunity for women who have already learned so much from others to share their knowledge to benefit other local women who are seeking to make a difference,” said District Attorney Intschert. “I’m excited to be part of this initiative, and am looking forward to working alongside other local leaders to promote leadership and success amongst women.”

A first goal of the Council is to host a conference this summer, and to create mentoring opportunities for to support and encourage women on their individual career paths.

Women comprise 51 percent of New York’s population and workforce—slightly more than the national average. They earn 60 percent of undergraduate and Master’s degrees.

Nearly 400 women currently serve in public office in Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties, about one-fourth of current office holders.

Congresswoman Stefanik is the youngest women ever elected to the United States Congress. She is serving her first term representing New York’s sprawling 21<sup>st</sup> District.

In the State Legislature, Senator Ritchie has been a leader in helping increase opportunities for women.

Citing statistics that women nationally earn just 78 cents for every dollar paid to men doing the exact same work, Senator Ritchie helped push for the recent adoption of legislation that puts teeth in federal and state laws guaranteeing equal pay for equal work, as well as other bills that would increase workplace protections against gender discrimination.

She serves as a member of the Governor’s Task Force that’s looking for ways to boost state support for businesses that are primarily owned by women.

Senator Ritchie also is the architect of New York's new "Young Farmers" program, which seeks to boost the ranks of next-generation farmers and preserve the future of family farming in the state. The percentage of family farms that are run by women—now around 15 percent—has nearly tripled over the past 30 years.