



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 20, 2022

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

California Partner Project

Dayanna M. Carlos

[press@calpartnersproject.org](mailto:press@calpartnersproject.org)

(559) 289-9885

**California's Unprecedented Leap to Advance Gender Diversity on Corporate Boards**

*The California Partners Project releases its fourth comprehensive report examining the impacts of SB 826 on California's public company boards. The report tracks corporate compliance with SB 826 and the nationwide ripple effect of California's law.*

**Sacramento, California** — The California Partners Project (CPP), co-founded by First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom, today released its fourth report tracking the implementation and impacts of California State [Senate Bill 826](#), a law requiring all public companies in California to have one to three women on their board of directors, depending on board size. **A summary of the SB 826 compliance data from the report series is available [here](#).** The law addresses the persistent underrepresentation of women on public company boards and is the subject of a recent adverse court ruling that is being appealed by the State of California.

"Corporations influence everything from income equality, communications, community health, the environment, and responses to calls for gender and racial equity. That's why it's imperative to have women's perspectives represented in the rooms where these decisions are made," **said California First Partner and CPP co-founder Jennifer Siebel Newsom.** "SB 826 is a highly effective tool for addressing gender discrimination. As a result, we've seen increased gender diversity on California boards, which has positively impacted companies' environmental, social, and governance outcomes, as well as their bottom lines. We are not rolling back the progress we've made."

Prior to the enactment of SB 826 in 2018, California's public companies lagged the national average in board gender diversity. **Now California, with 32% of seats held by women, is a world leader in gender diversity on public company boards, ahead of the United States as a whole and the European Union.**

CPP's data shows companies are overwhelmingly complying with the law, **nearly tripling the number of public company board seats held by women** – from 766 in 2018 to 2,055 today.

However, California cannot afford to lose momentum. There are still 296 public company board seats that need to be filled with women directors for California companies to be in full compliance with the law's gender requirement.

CPP's four-part report series highlights the perspectives and experiences of women directors, offers strategies for improving board diversity, and tracks corporate compliance with SB 826. The latest report shares new data analysis showing the correlation between board diversity and the financial performance of businesses in the state. Among the California companies studied, those with three or more women on their board had **29% higher revenue** in 2021 than those with fewer women board directors. Diverse boards of directors help companies see their blindspots, leading to better corporate governance and better business outcomes.

As CPP has tracked and spotlighted California's successes, it has also uncovered places where progress has fallen short – namely, the pernicious underrepresentation of women of color. **58% of California's public companies do not have any women of color on their board** and Latinas remain the most underrepresented group. **Latinas comprise 20% of California's population and hold only 1.5% of public company board seats.**

“A diverse board allows for increased innovation,” says **Zulema Garcia**, a member of the board of Skechers U.S.A., Inc., a footwear company headquartered in Manhattan Beach, California. “Latinas bring new and different perspectives that contribute to solving the new and different challenges faced by companies today. Such diversity contributes to better business results for all.”

Private companies also trail far behind their publicly traded counterparts – among the most well-funded private companies, **almost 40% still have no women board directors.**

To read the full report, please visit [www.calpartnersproject.org/thebigpicture](http://www.calpartnersproject.org/thebigpicture).

### **California Partners Project Resource Hub**

Visit our [Resource Hub](#) for an up-to-date list of the 231 California public companies with opportunities for women directors, and resources for companies seeking women board directors and for women interested in corporate board service.

###

## **About The California Partners Project**

The California Partners Project, in partnership with the people of California, champions gender equity across the state and ensures our state's media and technology industries are a force for good in the lives of children. Learn more at [www.calpartnersproject.org/](http://www.calpartnersproject.org/)