



The Office Of State Treasurer
Denise L. Nappier

News

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**TREASURER NAPIER AND UCONN ANNOUNCE FORUM
ON WOMEN ON U.S. CORPORATE BOARDS
*EXPERTS TO DISCUSS BEST WAYS
TO INCREASE NUMBERS TO IMPROVE BOTTOM LINE***

HARTFORD, CT -- What would be the best way to increase the number of women on corporate boards of U.S. companies? How might that impact company performance, and potentially improve our economy? Is this an issue whose time has come – and should the Securities and Exchange Commission act?



Women in the Corporate Boardroom: A Business Imperative for American Companies will be an in-depth, one-night forum on **Wednesday, September 16** at the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts in

Hartford, presented by the Connecticut State Treasurer's Office and the University of Connecticut, in association with the Connecticut Forum.

In a thought-provoking and engaging discussion, moderated by **Mika Brzezinski**, co-host of MSNBC's Morning Joe, a panel of experts will express viewpoints informed by their own experiences and research, and respond to audience questions. The panel will address how increased representation of women on corporate boards impacts the bottom line and whether and how it can most quickly and most effectively be achieved.

Panelists will include **Afsaneh Bechloss**, CEO of The Rock Creek Group and former Treasurer and Chief Investment Officer of The World Bank, and **Aaron Dhir**, Professor of Law at Osgoode Hall Law School whose book on corporate governance and diversity, "Challenging Boardroom Homogeneity," was published this spring. Additional panelists will be named.



"Institutional investors like Connecticut have long insisted -- and there are studies to back us up -- that board diversity is positively correlated with long-term shareholder value," said Connecticut State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier. "This forum will highlight the issues and the evidence, and what is in the best interest of U.S. corporations and their shareholders."



“The expertise that will be shared at this forum further confirms what most of us should already know: The participation of women at every level of our economy, including the corporate boardroom, is good for our society as a whole,” said University of Connecticut President Susan Herbst. “UConn is proud to be part of a discussion that's so urgently needed as we prepare for the challenges of the 21st century.”

Evidence of the impact of women on corporate boards has been consistent for more than a decade. Yet, the numbers have barely budged. Some countries have taken steps to increase those numbers, but the United States has not. Among the research that will inform the conversation on September 16:

- ▶ Companies with the most women board directors, especially those with three or more women board directors, had better financial performance than those with the fewest women board directors, based on research from Catalyst.
- ▶ Companies with more women directors outperformed those with the least on three financial measures: return on equity (53 percent higher), return on sales (42 percent higher) and return on invested capital (66 percent higher).
- ▶ 37 developed and emerging nations have addressed the issue of the consistently low number of women on corporate boards.
- ▶ Gender diversity helps organizations leverage talent, increase innovation, and better reflect the marketplace.

At S&P 1500 companies, the percentage of women on boards is 15 percent. In the past seven years, that number has increased only 4 percent. At the largest companies, the S&P 500, the percentage is 19 percent, also up by 4 percent,

The U.S. is one of the few developed countries where the effort is being led primarily by the institutional investor community. This spring, Germany became the latest country to commit to improving the representation of women on corporate boards, passing a law that requires some of Europe’s biggest companies to give 30 percent of supervisory seats to women beginning next year. Norway was the first in Europe to legislate boardroom quotas, joined by Spain, France and Iceland, which all set their minimums at 40 percent.

The forum discussion will consider whether there is something unique about U.S. business culture that makes a regulatory requirement a non-starter, as well as whether awareness campaigns and peer pressure, or a mandate through law or regulation, might result in more women board members.

The **Connecticut Treasurer’s Office**, under the leadership of Treasurer Nappier, has been one of the leading institutional investors advocating increased presence of women on boards as a good business practice that can benefit fund investments.

Earlier this year nine large public pension funds, including Connecticut, called on the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to strengthen the disclosure of corporate board diversity. The funds urged the SEC to adopt a rule requiring corporate disclosure of board nominees’ gender, race, and ethnic diversity, as well as their mix of skills, experiences and

attributes. The nine funds collectively represent assets in excess of \$1.12 trillion in assets. The SEC has yet to respond.

The **UCONN School of Business** has had a longstanding commitment to gender diversity and promoting women's career advancement at all levels.

At the MBA level, it has an active chapter of the National Association of Women MBA's that hosts speakers and panel discussions on topics such as "Leading with Confidence" and "Using Business School to Catapult your Career." At the undergraduate level, the school's Office of Diversity Initiatives (ODI) has a focus on closing the gender gap of women and high school girls going into technical fields. In Stamford, the finance program is involved in "100 Women in Hedge Funds," and in the fall is hosting the third Women Entrepreneurs Event.

How To Register

Individuals interested in attending the forum can reserve tickets at www.business.uconn.edu/WICB. There is no charge to attend, but reservations must be made in advance.

More information about the September 16 forum in Hartford and the issue of women on corporate boards can be seen at <http://www.ott.ct.gov/womenonboards.html>.

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