

For Immediate Release

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**Women Scarce Among Top Compensated Executive Officers, ION Report Finds**  
*ION Calls On Shareholders to Use their Proxies to Promote Board Diversity*

(BOSTON, March 4) Women are consistently underrepresented among the ranks of the top compensated executive officers in the nation's largest public companies, according to the latest report by the InterOrganization Network ([www.IONwomen.org](http://www.IONwomen.org)). Seventy-two percent of 1161 companies in nine of the ten U.S. regions tracked by ION had no women among their top-compensated executive positions. Further, according to the report, the number of companies without women in the top compensated executive officer ranks exceeded the number of companies with no women executive officers, suggesting that even at the highest levels of corporate leadership the top-paying positions are still primarily filled by men. The 4<sup>th</sup> annual ION report, *"It's Time To Take Charge" A Status Report on Women Directors and Executive Officers of Public Companies in Ten Regions of the United States*, will be published this week.

This year's report also indicates that there has been little progress in electing women to the boards of America's largest public companies. For every gain reported, there seems to be a loss. Few companies have included enough women on their boards to fully benefit from true diversity.

Toni Wolfman, president of ION and Executive in Residence at the Women's Leadership Institute at Bentley College, commented, "Shareholder activists have proven time and time again that action gets results. We believe that gender diversity in corporate leadership will not occur until CEOs, board chairs, lead directors, nominating chairs and other board members feel pressure to call for change. Therefore, ION is calling on all shareholders to use their proxies to promote board diversity."

ION believes that shareholder activism – encouraging individual and institutional investors to exercise the power of their proxies – may accelerate the process of advancing more women to boards and executive suites. The report observes that there is mounting evidence that corporate leaders are beginning to listen to shareholders on a variety of governance issues including board diversity, and even the voices of small investors are being heard.

In January ION published *Where are the Women* a detailed "how-to" guide that suggests ways to communicate with companies and mutual funds on governance issues, including

board diversity. The guide can be downloaded from the ION website ([www.IONwomen.org](http://www.IONwomen.org).)

*“It’s Time To Take Charge” A Status Report on Women Directors and Executive Officers of Public Companies in Ten Regions of the United States* can be downloaded from the ION website ([www.IONwomen.org](http://www.IONwomen.org).)

**About ION:** ION is a national organization whose members comprise women’s business organizations throughout the United States. Each ION member tracks the numbers of women directors and executive officers of public companies in their respective region. ION now includes ten organizations, including: Board of Directors Network (GA); The Boston Club (MA); The Central Exchange (KA, MO); The Chicago Network (Chicago); Financial Women’s Network of NY (Metro NY); Forum for Women Entrepreneurs and Executives/University of California Davis (CA); The Forum of Executive Women (PA); INFORUM Center for Leadership (MI); Milwaukee Women Inc. (WI) and Women Executive Leadership (FL). ION receives financial support from KPMG LLP.