



# Frances C. Axtell

## Quick Facts

**Birth:** June 12, 1866  
Rock Falls/Sterling, Illinois

**Death:** April 1, 1953  
Seattle, Washington

**Occupation:**

**Party Affiliation:** Republican

**Years served:** 1913-15

**Office:** Representative

**District:** 54 (Whatcom County)

## Personal:

- Wrote several articles on "What Women are Thinking and Doing"
- Married to Dr. William Axtell, an early Bellingham physician, who died in 1927
- 2 daughters

## Education:

- DePauw University PhD graduate, 1889

## Community Service:

- Active in civic affairs and club work in Bellingham

## Affiliations:

- Kappa Alpha Theta member
- University Presbyterian Church
- Woman's Century Club

## Awards:

## Legislative & State Service:

- One of two women first elected to the Washington State Legislature
- Focused on minimum wage legislation, public safety issues and worker's rights
- Promoted initiative, referendum and recall measures

**Committees:** (1913) Appropriations; Corporations other than Municipal and Railroads; Education; State University; Water and Water Rights other than Irrigation

**House Bills sponsored:****(1913 session)**

19-Amending section 2457, Remington & Ballinger's Code, defining the crime of adultery

Reported out of committee and died

20-Amending subdivision 3, section 2436, Remington & Ballinger's Code, relating to carnal knowledge of children

Reported out of committee and died

21-Changing the rule of evidence in cases of crime against morality and repealing section 2443, Remington & Ballinger's Code

Signed by Governor Lister

353-Relating to construction of a woman's building for the University of Washington

Never went to first reading

472-Relating to the appointment of members of the state board of control

Went to first reading

626-Relating to city health officers

Went to first reading

**Leadership, Positions & Appointments:**

- Ran unsuccessfully for the Republican nomination to the US Senate in 1916
- Vice-Chairman of the United States Employees' Compensation Commission in Washington, D.C. from 1917 to 1921. Appointed by President Wilson, she was the first woman named by any president for such a federal position. She assisted in fixing the minimum wage for women in mercantile establishments.
- Acting chairman of the Washington State La Follette-Wheeler campaign, 1924

**Sources:****Articles:**

- "Thinks Women Can Make Guns for Soldiers," *Seattle Times*, July 1, 1917
- Hughes, Agnes L, "Interesting Westerners," *Sunset, The Pacific Monthly*, November 1917, vol. 39, num. 5
- "World News About Women," *The Women Citizen*, November 1, 1924, vol. 9, num. 10, 22-23
- "Funeral Rites Set for Mrs. W.H. Axtell," *Seattle Daily Times*, April 2, 1953

**Books:**

- Binheim, Max and Charles A. Elvin. *Women of the West*. Publishers Press, Los Angeles, 1928