Black women’s next targets: Governorships and Senate seats

Bill Barrow

ATLANTA — Jennifer McClellan remembers her parents’ restricting life as Black Southerners enduring segregation and the trauma and terrors of the civil rights movement.

It showed her that government can be “a powerful force for improving people’s lives” but also “that oppression, and oppression.”

A generation later, despite her interest in public office, there was no obvious pathway for someone like her.

“There weren’t a lot of role models... examples of Black women,” in power, said McClellan in an interview. Now, she’s a 46-year-old delegate running for governor in Virginia: “We win a very different Virginia.”

McClellan’s candidacy alongside fellow primary candidate female Carri McCollum by demonstrating the rising political power of Black women. Long a foundation of Democratic victories, and more

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recently, as candidates and officeholders, from Vice President Kamala Harris to mayors in Atlanta, Chicago and San Francisco. McCollum and Carroll Foy, a 38-year-old former legislator, are trying to break another barrier by becoming the first Black woman to win a governor’s race.