

CRS Report for Congress

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Membership of the 107th Congress: A Profile

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Summary

This report presents a profile of the membership of the 107th Congress. Included is information on numbers of Members, party affiliation, average age and length of service, occupations, religious affiliation, military service, female and minority Members, and foreign-born Members.

Currently, in the House, there are 222 Republicans, 211 Democrats, and two Independents, one aligned with each party. The Senate has 50 Democrats, 49 Republicans, and one Independent who is aligned with the Democrats.

The average age of Representatives is 54.4; of Senators, 59.8. An overwhelming majority of Members have a college education. The dominant profession of Members continues to be law, followed by business.

Protestants collectively constitute the majority religious affiliation of Members. Roman Catholics account for the largest single religious denomination, and there are numerous other affiliations represented.

The average length of service in the House is nearly 9 years; in the Senate, nearly 11½ years.

A record number of women serve in the 107th Congress. There are 75 female Members: 62 in the House, 13 in the Senate. There are 21 Hispanic Members, all in the House, including two Delegates—one from Guam and the other from Puerto Rico. There are 39 black Members, all in the House, and including two Delegates. Eight Members are Asian or Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islanders, including the Delegate from Guam, who is also Hispanic. There are three Native Americans.

For background information on earlier Congresses, please refer to CRS Report RL30378, *Black Members of the United States Congress: 1789-2001*; CRS Report RL30261, *Women in the United States Congress: 1917-2001*; and CRS Report 97-398, *Asian Pacific Americans in the United States Congress*. This report will be revised at the commencement of the 108th Congress unless significant changes occur in the 107th Congress.

The 107th Congress: A Profile

Congress is composed of 540 individuals from the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa. This count assumes that no seat is temporarily vacant.¹ The following is a profile of the 107th Congress, which officially commenced on January 3, 2001.²

Party Breakdown

In the 107th Congress, the current party breakdown in the House is 222 Republicans, 211 Democrats, and two Independents, one aligned with each party. The Senate has 50 Democrats, 49 Republicans, and one Independent who is aligned with the Democrats.

Age³

The average age of the Members of the 107th Congress is 55, slightly older than the Members of the 106th Congress. The average age of Senators is 59.8, slightly older than Senators in the previous several Congresses. The average age of Representatives is 54.4, also slightly older than the last several Congresses.

Representatives must be at least 25 when they take office. The youngest Representative, and youngest Member of Congress, is Adam Putnam (R-FL), who is 27. The oldest Representative is Benjamin Gilman (R-NY), who is 79.

Senators must be at least 30 when they take office. The youngest Senator is Peter Fitzgerald (R-IL) who is 41, and three weeks younger than Blanche Lambert Lincoln (D-AR). The oldest Senator, and oldest Member of Congress, is Strom Thurmond (R-SC), who is 99.

¹ Note that since 1789, 11,644 individuals (not including Delegates) have served in Congress: 9,782 only in the House, 1,232 only in the Senate, and 630 in both houses.

² Information on the five Delegates is included only where indicated.

³ Julie R. Hirschfeld, "Congress of Relative Newcomers Poses Challenge to Bush, Leadership," *CQ Weekly*, vol. 59, January 20, 2001, p. 178.

Occupations

As has been true in previous Congresses, law and business are the dominant professions in the 107th Congress.⁴ Other professions include journalism, education, agriculture, law enforcement, and public service. A closer look at the prior occupations of Members of the 107th Congress also shows:

- nine medical doctors (including an ophthalmologist and a psychiatrist), three dentists, two veterinarians, an optometrist, three nurses, one pharmacist, and two psychologists;
- six ministers;
- 12 state Governors, nine state Lieutenant Governors, three state first ladies (one of whom was also the first lady of the United States), the head of the U.S. Veterans Administration, a state supreme court justice, and a federal judge;
- a president of the National Conference on State Legislatures and 275 former state legislators;
- 100 congressional staffers (including seven congressional pages and one Senate Watergate Committee staffer), 11 White House staffers or fellows, one former aide to the Secretary of Defense, and one former ambassador;
- five police officers (including a Capitol policeman), three sheriffs, two FBI agents, two probation officers, two CIA agents, a CIA analyst, a border patrol chief, and a volunteer fireman;
- two physicists, two chemists, a biomedical researcher, and a microbiologist;
- seven Peace Corps volunteers;
- an astronaut, an actor, a radio talk show host, a television sportscaster, a motivational speaker, a commercial airlines pilot, a fireworks company executive, a major league baseball player, two major league football players (one of whom was also a college football coach), a florist, a librarian, a winemaker, and a vineyard owner; and
- two auctioneers, a steelworker, an iron worker, two carpenters, a gospel singer, a river boat captain, a hotel bellhop, two jewelry makers, a taxicab driver, and a race track blacksmith.

⁴ Ibid, pp. 181-182; and “Some House Statistics,” *CQ Daily Monitor*, vol. 36, no. 174, November 9, 2000, p. 5.

Education⁵

As has been true in previous Congresses, the Members of the 107th Congress are well educated. At least 406 Members of the House and 97 Senators hold bachelor's degrees, 130 Members of the House and 19 Senators have master's degrees, 165 Members of the House and 53 Senators hold law degrees, 19 Members of the House and two Senators have doctoral degrees, and 12 Members of the House and three Senators hold medical degrees.⁶

In addition, there are two graduates of the U. S. Military Academy, one in the House and one in the Senate; one Senator who is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy; one Representative (a woman) who is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy; four Rhodes Scholars in the House and three in the Senate; and one Marshall Scholar in the House.

Congressional Service⁷

At the beginning of the 107th Congress, the average length of service of Representatives is nearly 9 years or four and a half terms, slightly longer than that of the 105th and 106th Congresses. Representatives are elected for 2-year terms. Representative John Dingell (D-MI) has the longest consecutive service of any Member of the 107th Congress (46 years). He is currently the dean of the House. His service began on December 13, 1955.⁸

At the beginning of the 107th Congress, the average length of service of Senators is nearly 11½ years, slightly less than two terms. Senators are elected for 6-year terms. Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC) has served longer (46 years) than any other Member of the Senate in history. His current service began on November 7, 1956. Previously he served in the Senate from December 24, 1954, to April 4, 1956. Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV) is the Democrat with the longest Senate service in history. His service began on January 3, 1959, and he is the Senate President pro tempore.

Religion⁹

Most Members of the 107th Congress cite a specific religious affiliation. Protestants such as Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, etc., collectively constitute the

⁵ Information includes Delegate. The education of the freshmen Members of the 107th Congress is from "Guide to the New Congress," *CQ Daily Monitor*, vol. 36, no. 174, November 9, 2000, pp. 16-37. Information on the other Members is from CRS files.

⁶ Seven Representatives, one Delegate, and one Senator have an M.D. degree; three Representatives have a D.D.S. (dental) degree; two Senators have a D.V.M. (doctor of veterinary medicine) degree; and one Representative has an O.D. (optometry) degree.

⁷ Note that 49 Senators in the 107th Congress have previously served in the House of Representatives.

⁸ Representative Philip M. Crane (R-IL), who has served in the House for 32 years, is the Republican in the 107th Congress with the longest continuous House service.

⁹ "Congress of Relative Newcomers ...," *CQ Weekly*, p. 181.

majority religious affiliation of Members. However, Roman Catholics account for the largest single religious denomination. Other affiliations, such as Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Christian Scientist, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon), make up the balance.

Female and Minority Members

A record number (75) of women serve in the 107th Congress: 62 in the House and 13 in the Senate. Of the 62 in the House, 44 are Democrats, including two Delegates, and 18 are Republicans. In the Senate, ten women are Democrats; three are Republicans.

There are 21 Hispanic Members in the 107th Congress, the same as the record number in the 106th Congress. All are Members of the House, and two are Delegates. Eighteen are Democrats, six are women.

There are 39 black Members of the 107th Congress, two less than the record number of 41 in the 104th Congress. The black Members, including two Delegates, serve in the House, and all but one are Democrats. Fifteen black women serve in the House, including two Delegates.

Eight Members are of Asian or Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander heritage. Six serve in the House and two in the Senate. One of the five House Members is a woman, and two are Delegates, one of whom (from Guam) is also Hispanic. All are Democrats.

There are three Native Americans, two are House Democrats, and the other a Senate Republican.

Foreign Born¹⁰

Currently, seven Members of the House were born outside the United States. Their places of birth include Cuba, Hungary, Taiwan, Japan, Mexico, and the Netherlands. No current Senators were born outside the United States, although a number of previous ones were.

Military Service¹¹

There are 129 (78 Republicans, 51 Democrats) Members of the House who have had some form of military service, including one woman. In the Senate, 38 Members have had some form of military service, 22 Republicans and 16 Democrats. This includes service in World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Kosovo, and during times of peace, as well as membership in the Reserves and the National Guard. One Senator is a former Secretary of the Navy. There has been a steady decline in the number of Members who have served in the military, which may be attributed in part to the end of selective service in 1973.

¹⁰ "Born Abroad," *CQ Daily Monitor*, vol. 36, no. 135, September 12, 2000, p.7.

¹¹ Information supplied by The Retired Officers Association's Government Relations Office, 201 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 (phone: 703-838-8173).