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Women in Congress: Historical Overview, Tables, and Discussion

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November 4, 2016

Congressional Research Service
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www.crs.gov
R43244

CRS REPORT
Prepared for Members and
Committees of Congress

Summary

A record 108 women currently serve in the 114th Congress: 88 in the House (including 4 Delegates; 65 Democrats and 23 Republicans) and 20 in the Senate (14 Democrats and 6 Republicans). This passed the previous record from the 113th Congress (101 women initially sworn in, and 1 House Member subsequently resigned and 3 were elected).

The first woman elected to Congress was Representative Jeannette Rankin (R-MT, 1917-1919, 1941-1943). The first woman to serve in the Senate was Rebecca Latimer Felton (D-GA). She was appointed in 1922 and served for only one day. Hattie Caraway (D-AR, 1931-1945) was the first Senator to succeed her husband and the first woman elected to a six-year Senate term.

A total of 313 women have been elected or appointed to Congress, 202 Democrats and 111 Republicans. Of these women,

- 267 (173 Democrats, 94 Republicans) women have been elected only in the House of Representatives, 1 each from Guam, Hawaii, the District of Columbia, and American Samoa and two from the U.S. Virgin Islands;
- 35 (21 Democrats, 14 Republicans) women have been elected or appointed only in the Senate;
- 11 (8 Democrats, 3 Republicans) women have been elected or appointed in both houses; and
- a total of 38 African American women have served in Congress (1 in the Senate, 37 in the House), including 20 serving in the 114th Congress. Eleven Hispanic women have been elected to the House; nine serve in the 114th Congress. Ten Asian Pacific American women have served in Congress (nine in the House, one in both the House and Senate), including seven in the 114th Congress.

In the 114th Congress, one woman chairs a House committee, one woman chairs a Senate standing committee, and one woman chairs a Senate select committee.

This report includes a discussion of the impact of women in Congress as well as historical information, including the number and percentage of women in Congress over time, means of entry to Congress, comparisons to international and state legislatures, records for tenure, firsts for women in Congress, women in leadership, and African American, Asian Pacific American, and Hispanic women in Congress. The report may reflect data at the beginning or end of each Congress, or changes during a Congress. See the notes throughout the report for information on the currency of the data.

For additional biographical information, including the names, committee assignments, dates of service, listings by Congress and state, and (for Representatives) congressional districts of the 313 women who have been elected or appointed to Congress, see CRS Report RL30261, *Women in Congress, 1917-2015: Biographical and Committee Assignment Information, and Listings by State and Congress*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted) .

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Introduction

Three hundred thirteen women have been elected or appointed to the U.S. Congress. Jeannette Rankin (R-MT), elected on November 9, 1916, to the 65th Congress (1917-1919), has the distinction of being the first woman to serve in Congress.

Since Rankin's election, 312 additional women have served in Congress, as detailed in **Table 1**.[1]

Table 1. Number of Women Members of Congress: 1917-Present

	Total Women	Senate Service Only	House Service Only (Representatives)	House Service Only (Delegates)	House Service Only (Subtotal)	Women who have Served in Both Chambers
Total	313[a]	35	261	6[a]	267[a]	11
Democrats	202	21	169	4	173	8
Republicans	111	14	92	2	94	3

Source: U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Historian and Office of Art and Archives, "Women in Congress," http://history.house.gov/Exhibition-and-Publications/WIC/Women-in-Congress.

Notes: The House and Senate totals each include one woman who was elected but never sworn in.

a. The total number of female Members of the House includes one Delegate to the House of Representatives from Hawaii prior to statehood, one from the District of Columbia, one from Guam, one from American Samoa, and two from the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In the 114th Congress, 108 women serve, as detailed in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Number of Women Members of the 114th Congress

	Total Women	Senators	Representatives	Delegates	House Subtotal (Representatives and Delegates)
Total	108	20 (20% of Senators)	84	4	88 (19.3% of voting Members) (20.0% of total Members)
Democrats	79	14	62	3	65
Republicans	29	6	22	1	23

Source: U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Historian and Office of Art and Archives, "Women in Congress," http://history.house.gov/Exhibition-and-Publications/WIC/Women-in-Congress.

[1] Throughout this report, House and Senate totals each include one woman elected but not sworn in or seated due to the House or Senate being out of session. Both women are included in various official congressional publications, including, for example, the *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress (*http://bioguide.congress.gov), "Women in Congress" (http://history.house.gov/Exhibition-and-Publications/WIC/Women-in-Congress) and "Senators of the United States 1789-present: a chronological list of senators since the First Congress in 1789," maintained by the Senate Historical Office (http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/chronlist.pdf).

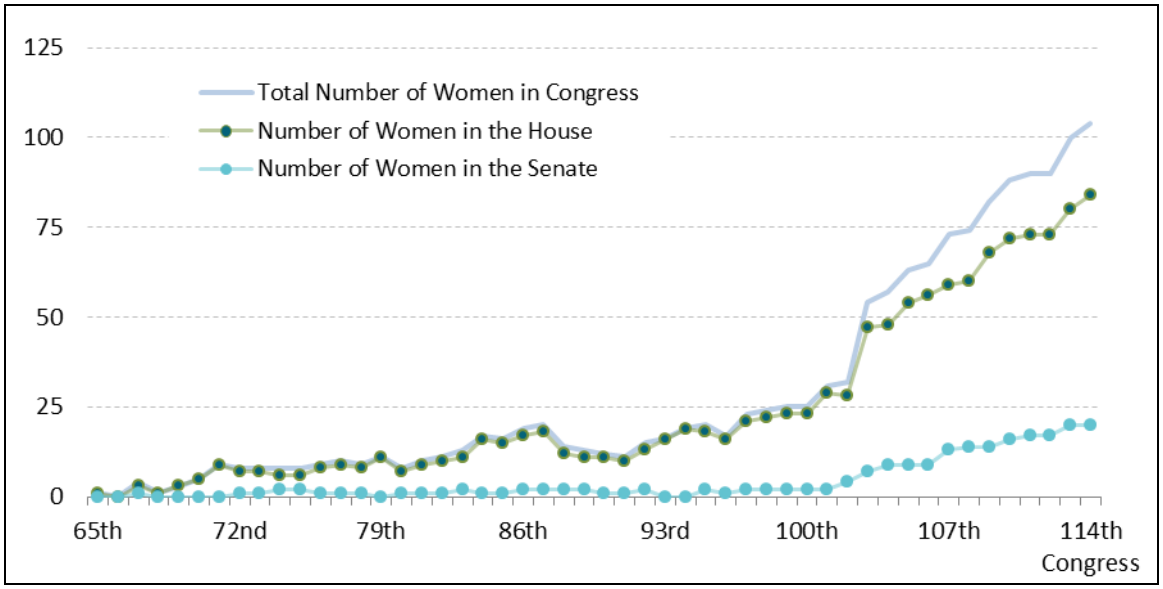
Notes: The 114th Congress began with 108 women Members in the House and Senate. Four of the women who serve in the House are Delegates, representing the District of Columbia, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa. Information in this table is current as of the date of the report.

This report includes a discussion of the impact of women in Congress as well as historical information, including the (1) number and percent of women in Congress over time; (2) means of entry to Congress; (3) comparisons to international and state legislatures; (4) records for tenure; (5) firsts for women in Congress; (6) women in leadership; and (7) African American, Asian Pacific, and Hispanic American women in Congress.

For additional biographical information, including the names, committee assignments, dates of service, listings by Congress and state, and (for Representatives) congressional districts of the women who have served in Congress, see CRS Report RL30261, *Women in Congress, 1917-2015: Biographical and Committee Assignment Information, and Listings by State and Congress*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted) .

Since the 65th Congress (1917-1918), the number of women serving in Congress has increased incrementally, and on a few occasions decreased. The largest increase occurred in the 103rd Congress (1993-1994), when the total number of women in the House and Senate serving at one time rose from 32 in the 102nd Congress to 54, an increase of nearly 69%. The 1992 election came to be known popularly as the "Year of the Woman" due to the large electoral increase of women in Congress.[2]

Figure 1. Number of Women by Congress: 1917-2015

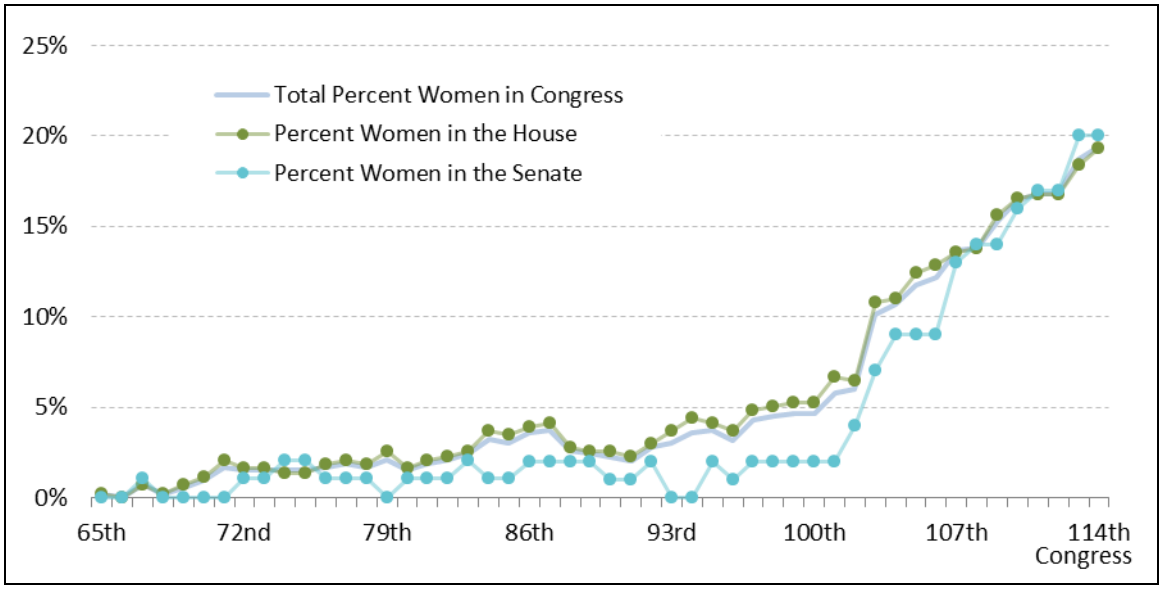


Source: "Women in the U.S. Congress 2015" fact sheet, Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University. Figure compiled by CRS.

Notes: Delegates are not included in the data. The factsheet indicates that "table for Congresses prior to the current one shows maximum number of women elected or appointed to serve in that Congress at one time. Some filled out unexpired terms and some were never sworn in." Data for the 114th Congress are for the beginning of the Congress.

[2] *The Year of the Woman: Myths and Realities*, ed. Elizabeth Adell Cook, Sue Thomas, and Clyde Wilcox (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994).

Figure 2. Percentage of Women by Congress: 1917-2015



Source: "Women in the U.S. Congress 2015" fact sheet, Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University. Figure compiled by CRS.

Notes: Delegates are not included in the data. The factsheet indicates that "table for Congresses prior to the current one shows maximum number of women elected or appointed to serve in that Congress at one time. Some filled out unexpired terms and some were never sworn in." Data for the 114th Congress are for the beginning of the Congress.

Table 3. Total Number of Women in Each Congress: 1917-2016

(Including Delegates and Members Who Served Only a Portion of the Congress)

Congress	Representatives	Delegates	House Subtotal (Delegates and Representatives)	Senate	Total without Delegates	Total with Delegates
65th (1917-1918)	1	0	1	0	1	1
66th (1919-1920)	0	0	0	0	0	0
67th (1921-1922)[a]	3	0	3	1	4	4
68th (1923-1924)	1	0	1	0	1	1
69th (1925-1926)[b]	3	0	3	0	3	3
70th (1927-1928)[c]	5	0	5	0	5	5
71st (1929-1930)	9	0	9	0	9	9
72nd (1931-1932)[d]	7	0	7	1	8	8
73rd (1933-1934)	7	0	7	1	8	8
74th (1935-1936)	6	0	6	2	8	8
75th (1937-1938)[e]	6	0	6	3	9	9
76th (1939-1940)[f]	8	0	8	1	9	9
77th (1941-1942)[b]	9	0	9	1	10	10
78th (1943-1944)[c]	8	0	8	1	9	9

Congress	Representatives	Delegates	House Subtotal (Delegates and Representatives)	Senate	Total without Delegates	Total with Delegates
79th (1945-1946)[b]	11	0	11	0	11	11
80th (1947-1948)[g]	7	0	7	1	8	8
81st (1949-1950)[c]	9	0	9	1	10	10
82nd (1951-1952)[b]	10	0	10	1	11	11
83rd (1953-1954)[h]	11	1	12	3	14	15
84th (1955-1956)[c]	16	1	17	1	17	18
85th (1957-1958)	15	0	15	1	16	16
86th (1959-1960)[i]	17	0	17	2	19	19
87th (1961-1962)[j]	18	0	18	2	20	20
88th (1963-1964)[c]	12	0	12	2	14	14
89th (1965-1966)	11	0	11	2	13	13
90th (1967-1968)	11	0	11	1	12	12
91st (1969-1970)	10	0	10	1	11	11
92nd (1971-1972)[k]	13	0	13	2	15	15
93rd (1973-1974) [b]	16	0	16	0	16	16
94th (1975-1976)	19	0	19	0	19	19
95th (1977-1978)[l]	18	0	18	3	21	21
96th (1979-1980)[m]	16	0	16	2	18	18
97th (1981-1982)[n]	21	0	21	2	23	23
98th (1983-1984)[c]	22	0	22	2	24	24
99th (1985-1986)[c]	23	0	23	2	25	25
100th (1987-1988)[o]	24	0	24	2	26	26
101st (1989-1990)[p]	29	0	29	2	31	31
102nd (1991-1992)[q]	29	1	30	4	33	34
103rd (1993-1994)[r]	47	1	48	7	54	55
104th (1995-1996)	49	1	50	9	58	59
105th (1997-1998)[s]	55	2	57	9	64	66
106th (1999-2000)	56	2	58	9	65	67
107th (2001-2002)[t]	60	2	62	14	74	76
108th (2003-2004)[c]	60	3	63	14	74	77
109th (2005-2006)[u]	68	3	71	14	82	85
110th (2007-2008)[v]	76	3	79	16	92	95
111th (2009-2010)[w]	76	3	79	17	93	96
112th (2011-2012)[x]	76	3	79	17	93	96
113th (2013-2014)[y]	81	3	84	20	101	104

Congress	Representatives	Delegates	House Subtotal (Delegates and Representatives)	Senate	Total without Delegates	Total with Delegates
114th (2015-2016)	84	4	88	20	104	108

Source: CRS summary, based on http://history.house.gov/Exhibition-and-Publications/WIC/Women-in-Congress/.

Notes: In Congresses with women Delegates, the House column includes three numbers: (1) the number of women Delegates, (2) the number of women Representatives, and (3) the total number of women in the House. The "Total House and Senate" column includes (1) the total number of women not including Delegates and (2) the total number of women including Delegates.

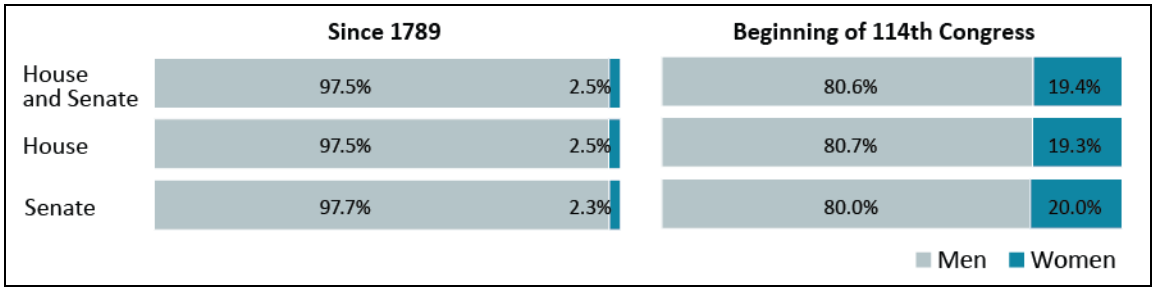
For simplification, Congresses are listed in two-year increments. Pursuant to the 20th Amendment to the Constitution, which was ratified January 23, 1933, "the terms of Senators and Representatives [shall end] at noon on the 3rd day of January." For specific dates, see "Dates of Sessions of the Congress, present-1789," at http://www.senate.gov/reference/Sessions/sessionDates.htm.

a. Includes two House Members who were elected to fill a vacancy and one Senator who was appointed to fill a vacancy.
b. Includes two House Members who were elected to fill a vacancy.
c. Includes one House Member who was elected to fill a vacancy.
d. Includes one House Member who was elected to fill a vacancy and one Senator who was appointed to fill a vacancy.
e. Includes one House Member who was elected to fill a vacancy but not sworn in, one Senator who was elected to fill a vacancy but not sworn in, and one Senator who was appointed to fill a vacancy.
f. Includes four House Members who were elected to fill a vacancy.
g. Includes one Senator who was appointed to fill a vacancy.
h. Includes one House Member who was elected to fill a vacancy, one Senator who was appointed to fill a vacancy, and one Senator who was elected to fill that vacancy.
i. Includes one House Member who died and one House Member elected to fill a vacancy.
j. Includes three House Members who were elected to fill a vacancy.
k. Includes one House Member who was elected to fill a vacancy and one Senator appointed to fill a vacancy.
l. Includes two Senators who were appointed to fill a vacancy.
m. Includes one House Member-elect whose seat was declared vacant due to an incapacitating illness, and one House member who was elected to fill a vacancy.
n. Includes three House Members who were elected to a vacancy.
o. Includes one House Member who died.
p. Includes four House Members who were elected to fill a vacancy.
q. Includes one House Member and one Senator elected to fill a vacancy and one Senator who was appointed to fill a vacancy.
r. Includes one Senator who was elected to fill a vacancy.
s. Includes one House Member who resigned and four House Members who were elected to fill a vacancy.
t. Includes one House Member who died and one House Member who was elected to fill a vacancy.
u. Includes three House Members who were elected to fill a vacancy.
v. Includes four House Members who died and four House Members who were elected to fill a vacancy.
w. Includes two House Members who resigned, one House Member who was elected to fill a vacancy, one Senator who resigned, and one Senator initially elected to the House and then appointed to the Senate.
x. Includes two House Members who resigned and four House Members who were elected to fill a vacancy.
y. Includes one House Member who resigned and three House Members who were elected to fill a vacancy.

Since 1789, women number

- 46 (2.34%) of the total 1,963 current and former Senators;
- 272 (2.50%) of the 10,880 current and former Representatives (including those who served in both chambers but not including Delegates); and
- 307 (2.52%) of the 12,174 total persons (not including Delegates).

Figure 3. Percentage of Total Members Since 1789 and in the 114th Congress



Source: Senate Historical Office, *Senators of the United States, 1789-present*, available at http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/chronlist.pdf; and, House of Representatives, *Total Members of the House and State Representation, 1789 to January 6, 2015*, http://history.house.gov/Institution/Total-Members/Total-Members/. This information is updated once per Congress.

Notes: The House and Senate totals each include one woman who was elected but never sworn in. Delegates are not included in the data. Numbers for the 114th Congress are for the beginning of the Congress.

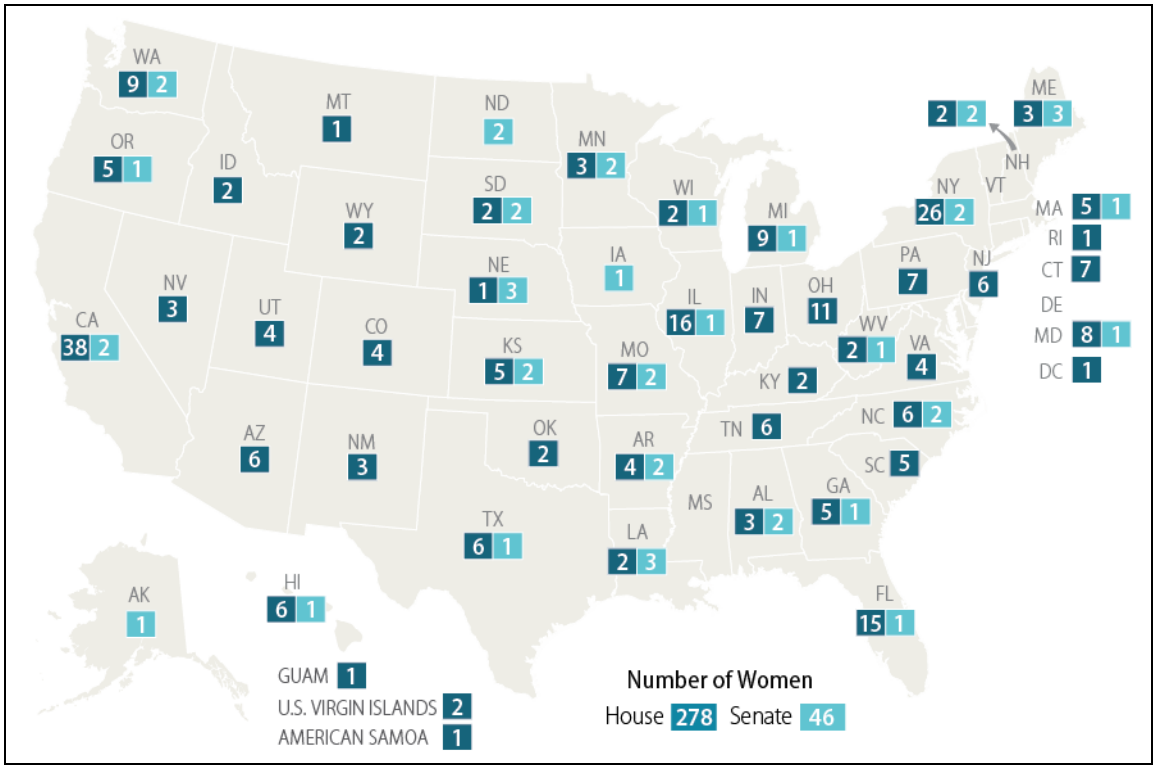
As seen in **Figure 4**, 47 states (all except Delaware, Mississippi, and Vermont), three territories (American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and the District of Columbia have been represented by a woman in Congress at some time since 1917.[3]

Five states (Ohio with 11, Florida with 15, Illinois with 16, New York with 26, and California with 38) have elected more than 10 women to the House of Representatives, and six states (Alaska, Delaware, Iowa, Mississippi, North Dakota, and Vermont) have elected none.

Thirteen states have been represented by one female Senator, 12 have sent two, and 3 states have sent three. Twenty-two states have never been represented by a female Senator.

[3] Totals include one woman from South Carolina (House) and one woman from South Dakota (Senate) elected but never sworn in due to the House or Senate being out of session.

Figure 4. Number of Women in the House and Senate by State, District, or Territory, 1917-Present



Source: CRS summary, based on House of Representatives, *Women in Congress*, available at http://history.house.gov/Exhibition-and-Publications/WIC/Women-in-Congress/. Numbers include Delegates and reflect the beginning of the 114th Congress. The eleven women who have served in both the House and Senate are counted in each tally. One woman from South Carolina (House) and one woman from South Dakota (Senate) was elected but never sworn in due to the House or Senate being out of session.

How Women Enter Congress

Pursuant to Article I, Section 2, clause 4 of the U.S. Constitution, all Representatives enter office through election, even those who enter after a seat becomes open during a Congress.[4] By contrast, the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution, which was ratified on April 8, 1913, gives state legislatures the option to empower governors to fill Senate vacancies by temporary appointment.[5]

[4] "[W]hen vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies." Article I, Section 2, clause 4 of the U.S. Constitution.

[5] Prior to the ratification of this amendment, Senators were chosen pursuant to Article I, Section 3, of the Constitution. For additional information, see *Direct Election of Senators*, available at http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Direct_Election_Senators.htm.

The 46 women who have served in the Senate entered initially through three different routes:

- 27 entered through regularly scheduled elections,
- 14 were appointed to unexpired terms, and
- 5 were elected by special election.[6]

As **Figure 5** shows, approximately 70% of all women who have served in the Senate initially entered Senate service by winning an election (regular or special). A little less than one-third (30%) of women entered the Senate initially through an appointment.

Of the 14 women who were appointed to the Senate, 4 served more than one year, with 3 of those women serving in more than one Congress. Half of the appointed female Senators subsequently did not seek election. Two were defeated for their party nomination, one was defeated in a general election, one was elected in a special election for the remainder of the term but was not a candidate for a full term, and three were elected to full terms.

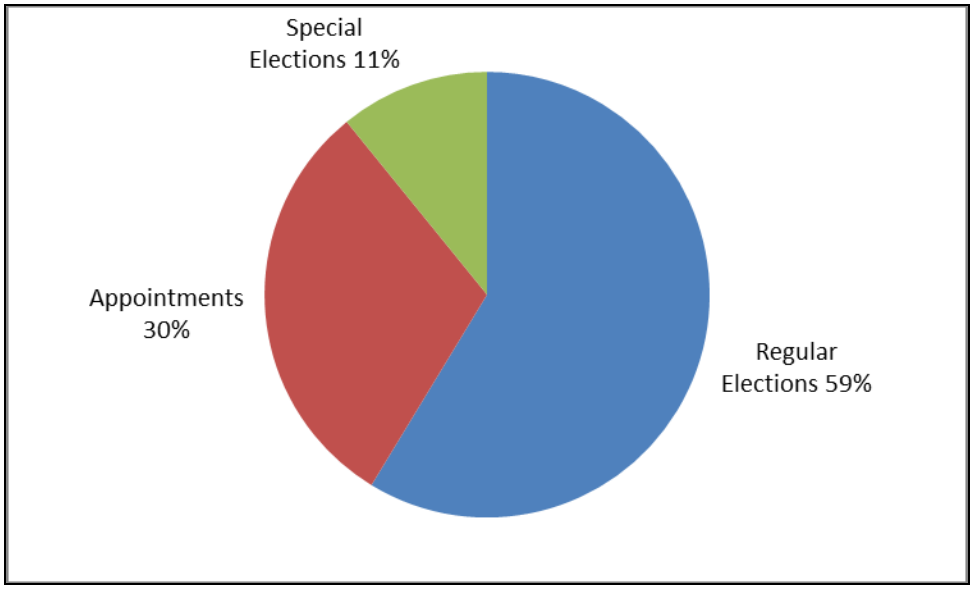
Since the ratification of the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1913, nine years prior to the first appointment of a woman to fill a Senate vacancy, 195 Senators have been appointed.[7] Of these appointees, 93% (181) have been men. While the initial entrance of 30.4% of female Senators was through appointment, 21.9% of the 827 male Senators sworn in since January 1, 1913, have been appointed.[8]

[6] This includes one woman who was elected but never sworn in.

[7] Source: "Appointed Senators" list available at http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/senators_appointed.htm.

[8] Total number of Senators since January 1, 1913, was derived from the Senate's "Senators of the United States 1789-present: a chronological list of senators since the First Congress in 1789," available at http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/chronlist.pdf. Senators are listed by date of initial service. The total number of new Senators was determined by rank as of the date of this report. Members who served non-consecutive terms are counted once.

Figure 5. Women's Initial Entrance to the Senate: Regular Elections, Special Elections, and Appointments to Unexpired Terms



Source: Figure compiled by CRS based on descriptions in the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress (http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp).

Women in Congress as Compared with Women in Other Legislative Bodies

International Perspective

The current total percentage of voting female representation in Congress (19.4%) is slightly lower than averages of female representation in other countries. As of February 1, 2015, women represented 22.1% of national legislative seats (both houses) across the entire world. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which maintains a database of worldwide female representation, ranked the United States 72nd worldwide. The Nordic countries (Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Denmark, and Norway) lead the world regionally with 41.5% female representation in national legislatures.[9] Rwanda, Andorra, and Bolivia have the only national legislatures in the world with a majority of women holding seats in the lower (or only) chamber.[10]

State-House Perspective

The percentage of women in Congress also is lower than the percentage of women holding seats in state legislatures. According to the Center for American Women and Politics, in 2015, of the

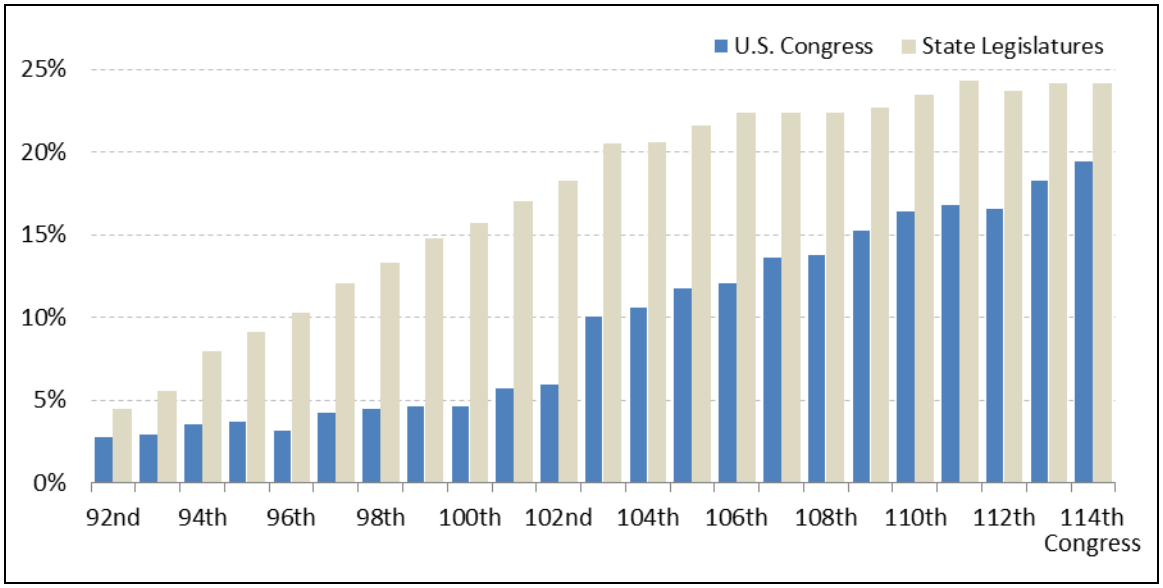
[9] Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in National Parliaments*, situation as of 1st February 2015, at http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm. See also the archive of historical data at http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world-arc.htm. This data will be updated once per Congress.

[10] For statistics on women serving in the national legislatures of 190 countries, see the IPU chart at http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm; see also, Frank C. Thames and Margaret S. Williams, *Contagious Representation: Women's Political Representation in Democracies around the World* (New York University Press: New York, 2013).

total 7,383 seats in state legislatures, women hold 1,786 (24.2%). The center also has calculated that "436, or 22.1%, of the 1,972 state senate seats and 1,350, or 24.9%, of the 5,411 state house seats" are held by women.[11] Across the 50 states, the total seats held by women range from 12.5% in Louisiana to 42.0% in Colorado.[12]

Since the beginning of the 92nd Congress (1971-1972), the first Congress for which comparative state legislature data are available,[13] the total percentage of women in state legislatures has eclipsed the percentage of women in Congress (see **Figure 6**). The greatest disparity between the percentages of female voting representation in state legislatures as compared with Congress occurred in the early 1990s, when women comprised 6.0% of the total Congress in the 102nd Congress (1991-1992), but 18.3% of state legislatures in 1991. The gap has since narrowed. In 2015, 19.4% of the total voting Members of Congress are women, as compared with 24.2% in state legislatures.

Figure 6. Women in Congress and State Legislatures: 1971-2015



Source: Data for women legislators as a percentage of total state legislators derived from Fact Sheet, "Women in State Legislatures 2015," Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University. Figures compiled by CRS.

Notes: Data include upper and lower chambers. Delegates are not included in the data. The fact sheet indicates that the "table for Congresses prior to the current one shows maximum number of women elected or appointed to serve in that Congress at one time. Some filled out unexpired terms and some were never sworn in." Data for the 114th Congress are for the beginning of the Congress.

[11] Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, *Women in State Legislatures 2015*, March 2015, at http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/levels_of_office/documents/stleg.pdf.

[12] Ibid.

[13] The Center for American Women and Politics provides data for state legislatures for odd-numbered years. Congressional data show the maximum number of women elected or appointed to serve in that Congress at one time during that Congress.

Assessing the Effect of Women in Congress

In the past three decades, scholars of Congress have published dozens of articles and books examining whether the growing number of elected women in Congress has affected the operations of the institution or its legislative outcomes. Common questions in the scholarly literature include is female legislative behavior distinct? Are women effective legislators in Congress? Has the larger cohort of women in Congress altered the policymaking process in substantial ways? This section provides a brief overview of the empirical analysis available to answer these questions.

Legislative Behavior

Numerous studies have demonstrated that the legislative behavior of female Members differs from their male counterparts. By virtue of their gender, some scholars argue, female Members of Congress "descriptively represent" a significant portion of the country's population, namely women.[14] But scholars have asked repeatedly whether such descriptive representation has also translated into "substantive representation."[15] In other words, are female Members of Congress more likely to address the interests or policy preferences of women?

Evidence shows that female Members are more likely to serve as policy entrepreneurs concerning issues often characterized as most important to women.[16] In particular, women are more likely to sponsor, co-sponsor, or assume other leadership roles on legislation dealing with "women's issues."[17] These roles may include leading committee and floor debate.[18] In an attempt to control for district-specific characteristics and effects, other researchers show that when female Members replace males in the same congressional district, these women sponsor more women's issues bills and speak more frequently on the House floor about women than the men who previously held their seat.[19] Recent scholarship also suggests that men in the Senate may engage in descriptive representation, particularly when the sponsorship and co-sponsorship of men's health legislation is analyzed.[20]

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[14] Hanna Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967). Pitkin offers four concepts of representation in her seminal work. Descriptive representation concerns the degree to which a representative resembles those individuals he or she represents.

[15] According to Pitkin, substantive representation concerns whether the representative advances the policy preferences or best interests of those individuals he or she represents.

[16] Policy entrepreneurs are individuals inside or outside government who work to implement or promote new policy ideas. See Michael Mintrom, "Policy Entrepreneurs and the Diffusion of Innovation," *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 41 (July 1997), p. 739.

[17] Studies characterize "women's issues" differently. The term often includes women's rights, economic status, health, and safety. Sometimes included are children's issues, education, social welfare, and the environment. In other studies, "women's issues" are explicitly defined in more feminist terms, such as policies that advocate pro-choice abortion positions. See Beth Reingold, "Women as Office Holders: Descriptive and Substantive Representation," paper presented at the Political Women and American Democracy Conference, University of Notre Dame, May 25-27, 2006, p. 6.

[18] Michele L. Swers, *The Difference Women Make: The Policy Impact of Women in Congress* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Katherine Cramer Walsh, "Enlarging Representation: Women Bring Marginalized Perspectives to Floor Debate in the House of Representatives," in *Women Transforming Congress*, ed. Cindy Simon Rosenthal (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), pp. 370-396.

[19] Jessica C. Gerrity, Tracy Osborn, and Jeannette Morehouse Mendez, "Women and Representation: A Different View of the District?" *Politics & Gender*, vol. 3 (June 2007), pp. 179-200.

[20] Jennifer Sacco, 2012, "Descriptive Representation of Men and Women in the 110th and 111th Congresses," Paper (continued...)

Female Members are more likely to speak on the House floor, giving proportionately more one-minute speeches than their male counterparts and speaking more often during policy debates. Even when district characteristics, ideology, and seniority of the Member were considered, gender still remained an important predictor of speech frequency on the House floor.[21] When speaking on the House floor, female Members of both parties more frequently talk about women and women's issues than their male co-partisans.[22]

Numerous studies have examined the roll call voting behavior of female Members. In earlier research, this literature consistently demonstrated that female legislators tend to vote more "liberally" than men.[23] However, more recent evidence examining longitudinal roll-call voting behavior suggests that such an ideological gender divide may be waning. Since the 108th Congress, Republican women's ideological voting patterns have exhibited no statistically significant difference in comparison to Republican men's voting scores. Democratic women have maintained slightly more liberal voting behaviors when compared with Democratic men.[24] Another study demonstrated that when a woman succeeds a man or a man succeeds a woman in a given congressional district, there is no change in ideological voting scores in that seat from one Congress to the next.[25] Furthermore, recent research examining roll call voting in both chambers revealed that gender minimally influences voting behavior, with the exception of female Republican Senators, who have historically voted more liberally than their male co-partisans in both chambers.[26]

Legislative Effectiveness

Using a variety of measures, scholars have attempted to determine the "effectiveness" of female legislators, particularly in comparison to male legislators. Based upon evidence which suggests that the path to election may be more difficult for women than men[27] and that women who run for

(...continued)

presented at the Western Political Science Association Annual Meeting. See http://wpsa.research.pdx.edu/meet/2012/sacco.pdf.

[21] For example, in the 109th Congress, women averaged 14.9 one-minute speeches whereas men averaged 6.5 speeches, a statistical difference at the .002 probability level. Kathryn Pearson and Logan Dancey, "Elevating Women's Voices in Congress: Speech Participation in the House of Representatives," *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 64 (December 2011), pp. 910-923.

[22] Kathryn Pearson and Logan Dancey, "Speaking for the Underrepresented in the House of Representatives: Voicing Women's Interests in a Partisan Era," *Politics & Gender*, vol. 7 (December 2011), pp. 493-519.

[23] For example, see Jocelyn Jones Evans, *Women, Partisanship and the Congress* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005); Michele L. Swers, "Are Women More Likely to Vote For Women's Issue Bills than Their Male Colleagues?" *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, vol. 23 (1995), pp. 435-448. All voting studies use DW-NOMINATE scores, which measure ideological voting behavior of Members of Congress over time on two dimensions. DW-NOMINATE scores are the most widely used measure of analyzing Congressional voting behavior longitudinally. For access to the data, see http://voteview.com/.

[24] Brian Frederick, "Are Female House Members Still More Liberal in a Polarized Era? The Conditional Nature of the Relationship Between Descriptive and Substantive Representation," *Congress & the Presidency*, vol. 36 (2009), pp. 181-202. See Figure 1 on page 185, in particular.

[25] Dennis Simon, "The Roll Call Behavior of Men and Women in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1937-2008," *Politics & Gender*, vol. 6 (June 2010), pp. 225-246.

[26] Brian Frederick, "Gender and Roll Call Voting Behavior in Congress: A Cross-Chamber Analysis," *The American Review of Politics*, vol. 34 (Spring 2013), pp. 1-20.

[27] See, for example, Jennifer Lawless and Kathyrn Pearson, "The Primary Reason for Women's Underrepresentation? Reevaluating the Conventional Wisdom," *Journal of Politics*, vol. 70 (2008), pp. 67-82.

Congress have greater political experience than their male challengers,[28] some researchers have theorized that women may outperform men in Congress. For example, while controlling for numerous other factors including district-level characteristics, an empirical model demonstrates that women deliver approximately 9% more federal spending to their districts than men. Women also sponsor approximately 3 more bills per Congress than men and cosponsor 26 more bills per Congress.[29]

Another study took a different view of effectiveness and examined the rate of sponsored bills that became law and the number of House floor amendments that were accepted to appropriations bills. After controlling for other key variables, the effect of gender on legislative effectiveness was not statistically significant, although the average success ratio (known as "hit-rate") for both measures was lower for female Members than their male counterparts.[30] When seniority and other institutional leadership positions were taken into account, no empirical difference in success ratios existed between men and women in the House.

Recent research suggests that female legislators may be more effective in some political and institutional situations. A study focused on the House concluded that women in the minority party are more successful in legislating than minority party men.[31] The collaborative approach espoused by many female legislators[32] may work to their advantage when women find themselves in the minority party. Typically, the willingness to compromise or build consensus significantly improves the likelihood of minority party legislative advancement.

Finally, legislative effectiveness may influence female Members of Congress in one important way. Data indicate that a gender dynamic affected by legislative effectiveness may influence voluntary retirement decisions of female Members in the House of Representatives. According to the evidence, women are 40% more likely than men to retire from the House when they cease to increase their legislative effectiveness. In short, when women reach a "career ceiling" in the House, they turn more frequently to retirement than their male counterparts.[33] This leads to average shorter tenures in Congress for women in comparison to men.

Impact of Women on Policy and Congress

While many scholars have focused on determining how female Members of Congress behave differently than their male counterparts, less attention has been focused on assessing the policy or institutional impact of increased numbers of women in Congress. However, some preliminary assessments have been made in this regard.

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[28] Kathryn Pearson and Eric McGhee, "Why Women Should Win More Often Than Men: Reassessing Gender Bias in U.S. House Elections," Unpublished manuscript, University of Minnesota.

[29] Sarah Anzia and Christopher Berry, "The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson Effect: Why Do Congresswomen Outperform Congressmen?" *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 55 (July 2011), pp. 478-493.

[30] Alana Jeydel and Andrew J. Taylor, "Are Women Legislators Less Effective? Evidence from the U.S. House in the 103rd-105th Congress," *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 56 (March 2003), pp. 19-27.

[31] Craig Volden, Alan Wiseman, and Dana Wittmer, "When Are Women More Effective Lawmakers Than Men?" *American Journal of Political Science*, April, 2013, pp. 326-341, available at http://www.batten.virginia.edu/content/faculty-research/publications/when-are-women-more-effective-lawmakers-men.

[32] Cindy Simon Rosenthal, *When Women Lead: Integrative Leadership in State Legislatures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[33] Members who reach a "career ceiling" have served a long tenure in the House but have not accrued positions of power, either in leadership or in committees. Jennifer L. Lawless and Sean M. Theriault, "Will She Stay or Will She Go? Career Ceilings and Women's Retirement from the U.S. Congress," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, vol. 30 (November 2005), pp. 581-596.

Several scholars have shown that women in Congress devote considerable time and resources to ensure that legislative provisions directly affecting women and families have prevailed in behind-the-scenes negotiations.[34] Other evidence suggests that female Members have affected the early stages of the policymaking process in committee negotiations. Increased numbers of women in Congress have likely improved chances for women to influence policy outcomes at both the subcommittee and committee levels.[35] Regardless of which party maintained the majority in Congress, one study concluded that female Members of Congress as a cohort have affected legislative outcomes in numerous instances.[36]

There is less scholarly evidence to support the hypothesis that the growing number of female Members has affected the institutional operations of Congress itself. At the state legislative level, research suggests that female committee chairs are more consensual, cooperative, and inclusive than their male colleagues.[37] However, an examination of Senate committee assignments found no evidence that increased numbers of female Senators resulted in women sitting on more powerful committees[38] and that lack of widespread female committee leadership in Congress thus far has prevented a comprehensive replication of this research at the federal level.

In short, the belief that a growing number of women in Congress would affect the institution in observable and substantive ways may be more complicated than originally theorized. One study that attempted to assess the impact of women in Congress cautiously concluded that while women may transform political institutions, they also may "be transformed by them and the larger political environment."[39] In other words, it may prove difficult for social scientists to measure the impact of increased numbers of elected female Members on Congress because a causal relationship could exist in both directions.

Female Election Firsts in Congress

- **First woman elected to Congress**. Representative Jeannette Rankin (R-MT, 1917-1919, 1941-1943).
- **First woman to serve in the Senate.** Rebecca Latimer Felton (D-GA) was appointed in 1922 to fill the unexpired term of a Senator who had died in office. In addition to being the first female Senator, Mrs. Felton holds two other Senate

[34] Debra Dodson, *The Impact of Women in Congress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Swers, *The Difference Women Make*.

[35] Noelle Norton, "Transforming Policy from the Inside: Participation in Committee," in *Women Transforming Congress*, ed. Cindy Simon Rosenthal (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), pp. 316-340. For specific examples concerning how women affected policies in committee, see pp. 332-337.

[36] Mary Hawkesworth, Kathleen Casey, Krista Jenkins, and Katherine Kleeman, *Legislating By and For Women: A Comparison of the 103rd and 104th Congresses*, Center for American Women and Politics, 2001, available at http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/research/topics/documents/CongReport103-104.pdf. The authors examine legislative case studies in the policy areas of crime, women's health, health care, health insurance reform, reproductive rights, and welfare reform. The findings were compiled from interviews with female Members who served in those two Congresses.

[37] Cindy Simon Rosenthal, "A View of Their Own: Women's Committee Leadership Styles and State Legislatures," *Policy Studies Journal*, vol. 25 (1997), pp. 585-600.

[38] A Committee Power Index (CPI) was used in the study. Laura W. Arnold and Barbara M. King, "Women, Committees, and Institutional Change in the Senate," in *Women Transforming Congress*, ed. Cindy Simon Rosenthal (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), pp. 284-315.

[39] Dodson, *The Impact of Women in Congress*, p. 249.

records. Her tenure in the Senate remains the shortest ever (one day), and, at the age of 87, she is the oldest person ever to begin Senate service.

- **First woman to succeed her spouse in the Senate and also the first female initially elected to a full six-year term.** Hattie Caraway (D-AR, 1931-1945) was first appointed in 1931 to fill the vacancy caused by the death of her husband, Thaddeus H. Caraway (D-AR, House, 1913-1921; Senate, 1921-1931), and then was subsequently elected to two six-year terms.
- **First woman elected to the Senate without having first been appointed to serve in that body and first woman to serve in both houses of Congress**. Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME) was elected to the Senate and served from January 3, 1949, until January 3, 1973. She had previously served in the House (June 3, 1940, to January 3, 1949).
- **First woman elected to the Senate without first having been elected to the House or having been elected or appointed to fill an unexpired Senate term.** Nancy Landon Kassebaum (R-KS, 1979-1997).
- **First woman elected Speaker of the House.** As Speaker of the House in the 110th and 111th Congresses (2007-2010), Nancy Pelosi held the highest position of leadership ever by a woman in the U.S. government.

Records for Length of Service

- **Longest total length of service by a woman in Congress.** Currently serving Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) holds this record (38 years and counting, 10 of which were spent in the House). On March 17, 2012, Senator Mikulski surpassed the record previously held by Edith Nourse Rogers (R-MA).
- **Longest length of service by a woman in the House.** Representative Rogers served in the House for 35 years, from June 25, 1925, until her death on September 10, 1960. Representative Rogers continues to hold the record for length of House service by a woman.
- **Longest length of service by a woman in the Senate.** Senator Mikulski also holds the record for length of Senate service by a woman (28 years and counting). In January 2011, she broke the service record previously held by Senator Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME), who served 24 years in the Senate and 8.6 years in the House.

Women Who Have Served In Both Houses

Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME) was the first of eleven women to serve in both houses of Congress, as well as the first woman elected to the Senate without first having been elected or appointed to fill a vacant Senate seat. Senator Smith was first elected to the House to fill the vacancy caused by the death of her husband (Clyde Smith, R-ME, 1937-1940), and she served from June 10, 1940, until January 3, 1949, when she began her Senate service. When Senator Smith left the Senate on January 3, 1973, she had served longer than any other woman.

Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Blanche Lambert Lincoln (D-AR), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), are the other women who have served in both houses. All but Lincoln and Snowe are Members of the 114th

Congress. Of these Members, Senators Lincoln and Cantwell were the only ones not still serving in the House when elected to the Senate, and Senator Gillibrand is the only one to have been appointed to the Senate while serving in the House.

Women Who Have Served in Party Leadership Positions[40]

A number of women in Congress, listed in**Table 4**, have held positions in their party's leadership.[41] Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) held the highest position of leadership ever held by a woman in the U.S. government. As Speaker of the House in the 110th and 111th Congresses, she was second in the line of succession for the presidency. In the 108th, 109th and 112th-114th Congresses, she was elected the House Democratic leader. Previously, Representative Pelosi was elected House Democratic whip, in the 107th Congress, on October 10, 2001, effective January 15, 2002. She was also the first woman nominated to be Speaker of the House. Senator Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME), chair of the Senate Republican Conference from 1967 to 1972, holds the Senate record for the highest, as well as first, leadership position held by a female Senator. The first woman Member to be elected to any party leadership position was Chase Going Woodhouse (D-CT), who served as House Democratic Caucus Secretary in the 81st Congress (1949-50).

Table 4. Selected Congressional Party Leadership Positions Held by Women

Position	Member	Congresses
Speaker of the House	Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)	110th-111th (2007-2010)
House Democratic Leader	Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)	108th-109th, 112th-114th (2003-2006, 2011-present)
House Democratic Whip	Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)	107th (2001-2002)
Chief Deputy Democratic Whip	Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)	114th (2015-present)
	Terri Sewell (D-AL)	113th – 114th (2013- present)
	Diana DeGette (D-CO)	112th - 114th (2011-present)
	Janice Schakowsky (D-IL)	112th - 114th (2011-present)
	Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)	112th - 114th (2011-present)
	Maxine Waters (D-CA)	106th -110th (1999-2008)
House Democratic Caucus Vice Chair	Barbara Kennelly (D-CT)	104th -105th (1995-1998)
	Mary Rose Oakar (D-OH)	100th (1987-1988)

[40] For additional information, refer to CRS Report RL30567, *Party Leaders in the United States Congress, 1789-2015*, by (name redacted) . Limited information on the leadership positions held by women in Congress can also be found in CRS Report RL30261, *Women in Congress, 1917-2015: Biographical and Committee Assignment Information, and Listings by State and Congress*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted) .

[41] U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Historian, "Women Elected to Party Leadership Positions, 1949–Present," http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Data/Women-Elected-to-Party-Leadership/.

Position	Member	Congresses
House Democratic Caucus Secretary[a]	Mary Rose Oakar (D-OH)	99th (1985-1986)
	Geraldine Ferraro (D-NY)	97th - 98th (1981-1984)
	Shirley Chisholm (D-NY)	95th - 96th (1977-80)
	Patsy Mink (D-HI)	94th (1975-76)
	Leonor Kretzer Sullivan (D-MO)	86th - 87th (1959-1962), 88th, 2nd session- 93rd (1964-1974)
	Edna Flannery Kelly (D-NY)	83rd- 84th (1953-1956), 88th, 1st session (1963)
	Chase Going Woodhouse (D-CT)	81st (1949-1950)
House Republican Conference Chair	Cathy McMorris Rogers (R-WA)	113th - 114th (2013-present)
	Deborah Pryce (R-OH)	108th - 109th (2003-2006)
House Republican Conference Vice Chair	Lynn Jenkins (R-KS)	113th - 114th (2013-present)
	Cathy McMorris Rogers (R-WA)	111th - 112th (2009-2012)
	Deborah Pryce (R-OH)	107th (2000-2002)
	Kay Granger (R-TX)	110th (2007-2008)
	Tillie Fowler (R-FL)	106th (1999-2000)
	Jennifer Dunn (R-WA)	105th (1997-1998)
	Susan Molinari (R-NY)	104th -105th (1995- Aug. 1997)
	Lynn Martin (R-IL)	99th -100th (1985-1988)
House Republican Conference Secretary	Virginia Foxx (R-NC)	113th - 114th (2013-present)
	Barbara Cubin (R-WY)	107th (2001-2002)
	Deborah Pryce (R-OH)	106th (1999-2000)
	Barbara Vucanovich (R-NV)	104th (1995-1996)
Senate Republican Conference Chair	Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME)	90th- 92nd (1967-1972)
Senate Republican Conference Vice Chair[b]	Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)	111th (2009-2010)
	Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX)	107th- 109th (2001-2006)
Senate Democratic Caucus Secretary	Patty Murray (D-WA)	110th-114th (2007-present)
	Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)	109th (2005-2006)
	Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)	104th - 108th (1995-2004)
Senate Chief Deputy Democratic Whip	Barbara Boxer (D-CA)	110th- 114th (2007-present)

Source: U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Historian, http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Data/Women-Elected-to-Party-Leadership/ and CRS Report RL30567, *Party Leaders in the United States Congress, 1789-2015*, by (name redacted) .

a. The title of this position changed from "Secretary" to "Vice Chair" with the 100th Congress.

b. This position was previously known as the Conference Secretary.

Women and Leadership of Congressional Committees

As chair of the Senate Enrolled Bills Committee (73rd-78th Congresses), Hattie Caraway was the first woman to chair any congressional committee. As chair of the House District of Columbia Committee (72nd-74th Congresses), Mary T. Norton was the first woman to chair a House committee.

In total:

- 17 women have chaired a House committee;
- 13 women have chaired a Senate committee;
- 1 female Senator has chaired two joint committees (related to her service on a standing committee); and
- 2 female Representatives have chaired a joint committee.[42]

In the 114th Congress, there are three committees led by women: one standing committee in the House, one standing committee in the Senate, and one select committee in the Senate:

Table 5. Committees Chaired by Women, 114th Congress

Committee	Chair
House Committee on House Administration	Candice Miller (R-MI)
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources	Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
Senate Select Committee on Aging	Susan Collins (R-ME)

Source: "Women Who Have Chaired Congressional Committees in the U.S. House, 1923-present" table of the *Women in Congress* website at http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Data/Women-Chairs-of-Congressional-Committees/; and the "Committee Assignments of the 114th Congress" website at http://www.senate.gov/general/committee_assignments/assignments.htm.

African American Women in Congress

Twenty African American women serve in the 114th Congress, including two delegates, a new record number. The previous record number was 18, including two delegates, serving at the end of the 113th Congress.

A total of 38 African American women have served in Congress.[43] The first was Representative Shirley Chisholm (D-NY, 1969-1983). Senator Carol Moseley-Braun (D-IL, 1993-1999) is the only African American woman to have served in the Senate. The African American women Members of the 114th Congress are listed in **Table 6**.

Table 6. African American Women in the 114th Congress

(All are House Members)

Alma Adams (D-NC)	Donna Edwards (D-MD)	Brenda Lawrence (D-MI)	Maxine Waters (D-CA)
Karen Bass (D-CA)	Marcia Fudge (D-OH)	Barbara Lee (D-CA)	Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ)
Joyce Beatty (D-OH)	Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)	Mia Love (R-UT)	Frederica Wilson (D-FL)
Corinne Brown (D-FL)	Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)	Gwen Moore (D-WI)	Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) [Delegate]

[42] Totals include standing, special, and select committees. Some women have chaired multiple committees. For additional information, refer to the "Women Who Have Chaired Congressional Committees in the U.S. House, 1923-present" table of the *Women in Congress* website at http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Data/Women-Chairs-of-Congressional-Committees/.

[43] For additional information, see U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Historian, *Black Americans in Congress*, at http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Black-Americans-in-Congress/.

Yvette Clarke (D-NY)	Robin Kelly (D-IL)	Terri Sewell (D-AL)	Stacey Plaskett (D-VI) [Delegate]

Source: U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Historian, http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Data/Women-of-Color-in-Congress/.

Asian Pacific American Women in Congress

Patsy Mink (D-HI), who served in the House from 1965 to 1977 and again from 1990 to 2002, was the first of 10 Asian Pacific American women to serve in Congress. Mazie Hirono (D-HI) is the first Asian Pacific American woman to serve in both the House and Senate.

Table 7. Asian Pacific American Women in the 114th Congress

(All House Members except for Senator Hirono)

Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI)	Judy Chu (D-CA)	Doris O. Matsui (D-CA)
	Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)	Grace Meng (D-NY)
	Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI)	Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-AS) [Delegate]

Source: U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Historian, http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Data/Women-of-Color-in-Congress/.

Hispanic Women in Congress

Eleven Hispanic women have served in Congress, all in the House, and nine of them serve in the 114th Congress. Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL, 1989-present) is the first Hispanic woman to serve in Congress.[44]

Table 8. Hispanic Women in the 114th Congress

(All are House Members)

Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM)	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)	Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
Jamie Herrera Beutler (R-WA)	Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)	Norma Torres (D-CA)
Grace Flores Napolitano (D-CA)	Linda Sánchez (D-CA)	Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)

Source: U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Historian, at http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Data/Women-of-Color-in-Congress/.

Note: Representatives Loretta Sanchez and Linda Sánchez are sisters. Linda Sánchez uses an accent in her last name; Loretta Sanchez does not.

[44] For additional information, see U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Historian, *Hispanic Americans in Congress* at http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/HAIC/Hispanic-Americans-in-Congress/.

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Acknowledgments

Linda Carter, Elli Ludwigson, and Cara Warner provided assistance. (name redacted), formerly Deputy Director and Senior Specialist, and (name redacted), formerly an Analyst on the Federal Judiciary, were former coauthors of this report.

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