

Women's Congressional Policy Institute
2020 Election Wrap-Up
(as of November 16, 10:15 a.m.)

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that in the same year we celebrate the centennial anniversary of women securing the right to vote we also recognize the unprecedented number of women who ran for Congress. According to the Center for American Women and Politics, nearly 650 women ran for seats in the House of Representatives and Senate in 2020, with more than 300 of these candidates making it through the primaries and into the general election.

Currently, 145 women have been elected to serve in the 117th Congress. Even with several House races still too close to call, this is the largest number of women elected to Congress in our nation's history. This number includes the 18 incumbent Senators who were not up for reelection this year, as well as the four Delegates to the House of Representatives reelected from American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Senate

In a historic first, Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA) was elected Vice President of the United States, making her the first woman, first African American, and first South Asian person to serve as Vice President and, thus, President of the Senate.

Heading into November 3, Republicans controlled the chamber, holding 53 seats to the Democrats' 47. With an already thin margin, Republicans defending 23 seats and Democrats defending only 12 seats, control of the Senate was hotly contested throughout the cycle. Currently, the Republicans hold 50 seats while Democrats hold 48. At least 24 women will serve in the Senate next year. Control of the Senate will be determined following the results of the Georgia run-off elections on January 5.

Incumbent Sens. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Susan Collins (R-ME), Joni Ernst (R-IA), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Tina Smith (D-MN) were successful in their reelection bids. Sen. Martha McSally (R-AZ) lost her bid to Sen.-elect Mark Kelly (D-AZ).

Sen. Kelly Loeffler (R-GA) was appointed by Gov. Brian Kemp (R) to fill the seat left vacant when Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-GA) retired in December 2019. She will face Rev. Raphael Warnock (D-GA) in the January run-off.

Sen.-elect Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) will be the first woman elected to the Senate from Wyoming when she is sworn next year. She is a former Member of the House and Co-Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues.

With Sen. Harris becoming the Vice President-elect, it remains to be seen whether California will continue to be represented by two women in the Senate; Sen. Dianne Feinstein was not up for reelection this cycle. However, Minnesota (Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Smith), Nevada (Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto and Jacky Rosen), New Hampshire (Sens. Shaheen and Maggie Hassan), and Washington (Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell) each will continue to be represented by two women Senators in the 117th Congress.

Three women of color will serve in the Senate next Congress: Sens. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Mazie Hirono (D-IL), and Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV). Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) are the only two members of the LGBTQ community in the Senate.

House of Representatives

Democrats maintained control of the House this election cycle. With several races still too close to call, 219 Democrats and 204 Republicans will be sworn into Congress in January. This includes a record-breaking 121 women (including the four Delegates) – 92 women Democrats and 29 women Republicans. However, with many races still too close to call, the number is expected to increase.

Currently, ten incumbent women retired, lost their races, or ran for another office. Reps. Susan Brooks (R-IN), Susan Davis (D-CA), Nita Lowey (D-NY), and Martha Roby (R-AL) will retire from Congress at the end of the year. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) retired after her unsuccessful presidential candidacy. Reps. Abby Finkenauer (D-IA), Kendra Horn (D-OK), Debbie Mucarsel-Powell (D-FL), Donna Shalala (D-FL), and Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM) lost their reelection bids.

In 2018, only one Republican woman – Rep. Carol Miller (R-WV) – was elected to Congress. However, so far this cycle, 17 newly elected Republican women will be sworn into Congress in January: Stephanie Bice (R-OK), Lauren Boebert (R-CO), Kat Cammack (R-FL), Michelle Fischbach (R-MN), Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA), Diana Harshbarger (R-TN), Yvette Herrell (R-NM), Ashley Hinson (R-IA), Young Kim (R-CA), Nancy Mace (R-SC), Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY), Lisa McClain (R-MI), Mary Miller (R-IL), Maria Elvira Salazar (R-FL), Victoria Spartz (R-IN), Michelle Steel (R-CA), and Beth Van Duyne (R-TX).

A record 115 women from diverse racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds ran for the House this cycle. At least 54 Black or African American, Latina or Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern/Northern African, and Native American women were elected, which will make the 117th Congress among the most diverse in our nation's history. Cori Bush (D-MO), Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-NM), Yvette Herrell (R-NM), Young Kim (R-CA), Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY), Maria Elvira Salazar (R-FL), Michelle Steel (R-CA), Marilyn Strickland (D-WA), and Nikema Williams (D-GA) were newly elected this cycle.

Reps.-elect Herrell and Leger Fernandez will join Rep. Deb Haaland to make New Mexico the first state to be represented in the House exclusively by women of color. Rep.-elect Bush will be the first African American woman to represent Missouri in Congress; Rep.-elect Strickland will be the first African American to represent Washington in Congress; she and Reps.-elect Kim and Steel are the first Korean American women to serve in Congress.

Two incumbent members of the LGBTQ community – Reps. Angie Craig (D-MN) and Sharice Davids (D-KS) – will serve in the House next year. Reps. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) will remain as the only two Muslim women serving in Congress.

Newly elected to the Senate

Sen.-elect Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) defeated Merav Ben-David (D-WY) for the seat left open by the retirement of Sen. Mike Enzi (R-WY). She served in the House of Representatives from 2009-2017; during that time she served as Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues. Prior to Congress, Sen.-elect Lummis served as State Treasurer and in both chambers of the Wyoming State Legislature.

Women newly elected to the House of Representatives

Rep.-elect Stephanie Bice (R-OK) defeated incumbent Rep. Kendra Horn (D-OK). She was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate in 2014, and has served as Assistant Majority Floor Leader and Finance Committee Chair. She previously worked for her family's technology company and later served as Vice President of Business Development for a boutique digital marketing company.

Rep.-elect Lauren Boebert (R-CO) defeated Diane Mitsch Bush (D-CO). She defeated incumbent Rep. Scott Tipton (R-CO) during the Republican primary and became the first primary challenger to defeat an incumbent in Colorado since 1948. She is the owner of Shooters Grill, which became known nationwide for allowing staff to openly carry firearms.

Rep.-elect Carolyn Bourdeaux (D-GA) defeated Rich McCormick (R-GA) for the seat left vacant by the retirement of Rep. Rob Woodall (R-GA). She is a former aide to Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR). Rep.-elect Bourdeaux was a professor at Georgia State University when she took a leave of absence to become the Director of the Georgia Senate Budget and Evaluation Office.

Rep.-elect Cori Bush (D-MO) defeated Anthony Rogers (R-MO) after defeating incumbent Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay (D-MO) during the primary. She is a nurse, pastor, and activist who became a community leader during the social unrest in Ferguson, Missouri following the death of Michael Brown in 2014. She will be the first African American woman to represent Missouri in Congress.

Rep.-elect Kathryn "Kat" Cammack (R-FL) defeated Adam Christensen (D-FL) for the seat left open by the retirement of Rep. Ted Yoho (R-FL). She is the former Deputy Chief of Staff to Rep. Yoho, and previously interned with Rep. Mike Coffman (R-CO). She is a small business owner and Co-Founder of "The Grit Foundation," a nonprofit that supports local law enforcement, first responders, and veterans.

Rep.-elect Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-NM) defeated Alexis Johnson (R-NM) for the seat left open by Rep. Ben Ray Lujan's (D-NM) decision to run for Senate. She is an attorney and breast cancer survivor who previously served as a White House Fellow during the Clinton Administration and as Vice Chair of the Advisory Council on National Historic Preservation during the Obama Administration.

Rep.-elect Michelle Fischbach (R-MN) defeated incumbent Rep. Collin Peterson (D-MN). The former member of the Paynesville City Council was elected to the Minnesota State Senate in 1996. During her tenure, she served as Minority Leader and became the first woman to serve as President of the Senate. She most recently served as Lieutenant Governor.

Rep.-elect Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) defeated Kevin Van Ausdal (D-GA) for the seat left vacant by the retirement of Rep. Tom Graves (R-GA). She grew up working in her family's business. In 2002, she and her husband purchased a commercial construction and renovation company. She is the National Director of Family America Project.

Rep. Yvette Herrell (R-NM) defeated incumbent Rep. Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM) in a rematch from 2018. She is a realtor who previously served in the New Mexico State House from 2011-2019. She has owned and operated several small businesses, and was awarded "Hero of the Year" by the New Mexico Business Coalition.

Rep.-elect Diana Harshbarger (R-TN) defeated Blair Walsingham (D-TN) for the seat left open by the retirement of Rep. Phil Roe (R-TN). The first in her family to graduate from college, she is a pharmacist and business owner. She is a member of the local Chamber of Commerce and a former board member of the International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists.

Rep.-elect Ashley Hinson (R-IA) defeated incumbent Rep. Abby Finkenauer (D-IA). She is a former award-winning broadcast journalist. She successfully ran for the Iowa State House of Representatives in 2016, becoming the first woman to represent the 67th District in the Iowa House. She is a member of the March of Dimes, the Young Parents Network, and the National Council on Youth Leadership.

Rep.-elect Sara Jacobs (D-CA) defeated Georgette Gómez (D-CA) for the seat left open by the retirement of Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA). She is the founder and chair of San Diego for Every Child: The Coalition to End Child Poverty. She previously served in the Department of State during the Obama Administration and was a policy advisor to Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign.

Rep.-elect Young Kim (R-CA) defeated incumbent Rep. Gil Cisneros (D-CA) in a rematch from the 2018 election cycle. She immigrated to the United States from Korea and began her career as a small business owner and financial analyst. Rep.-elect Kim is a former congressional aide to Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA). In 2014, she became the first Korean American Republican elected to the Assembly and is among the first Korean American women elected to Congress.

Rep.-elect Nancy Mace (R-SC) defeated incumbent Rep. Joe Cunningham (D-SC). She is a member of the South Carolina General Assembly, a position she has held since 2018. She is the first woman to graduate from The Citadel and is the author of *In the Company of Men: A Woman at The Citadel*. She is the recipient of the Taxpayer Hero Award from the South Carolina Club for Growth.

Rep.-elect Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY) defeated incumbent Rep. Max Rose (D-NY). She was elected to the New York State Assembly in 2010, and currently serves as Minority Whip. Rep.-elect Malliotakis is the only Republican woman and only Hispanic Republican elected official in New York City. She previously ran for mayor of New York City in 2017.

Rep.-elect Kathy Manning (D-NC) defeated Joseph Lee Haywood (R-NC) for the seat vacated by Rep. Mark Walker (R-NC). She was a partner at a major law firm for 15 years before she left to start her own small business. She has held several leadership positions in the nonprofit community, including serving as the first female chair of the board of the Jewish Federations of North America.

Rep.-elect Lisa McClain (R-MI) defeated Kimberly Bizon (D-MI) for the seat left vacant by Rep. Paul Mitchell (R-MI). She grew up in a farming community in Michigan. She is a self-described “conservative outsider” who has extensive experience in the corporate sector and is the co-founder of a Michigan-based financial services company.

Rep.-elect Mary Miller (R-IL) defeated Erika Weaver (D-IL) for the seat left vacant by the retirement of Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL). She is a teacher and businesswoman who decided to run for office to be a voice for families and businesses in Congress. She and her husband have run their family farm for 40 years.

Rep.-elect Marie Newman (D-IL) defeated Mike Fricilone (R-IL) after defeating incumbent Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL) in the primary election. She founded Team Up to Stop Bullying after her child experienced severe bullying in school. She attended President Obama’s White House Summit on Bullying in 2012 and 2013.

Rep.-elect Deborah Ross (D-NC) defeated Alan Swain (R-NC) for the seat left open by the retirement of Rep. George Holding (R-NC). The civil rights attorney previously practiced law for 25 years before becoming state director of the North Carolina ACLU. She was elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives in 2002, where she served as both Majority and Minority Whip.

Rep.-elect Maria Elvira Salazar (R-FL) defeated incumbent Rep. Donna Shalala (D-FL) in a rematch from 2018. She is an award-winning journalist whose parents immigrated to the United States from Cuba. During her career, she worked with networks, such as Univision, Telemundo, and CNN Español.

Rep.-elect Victoria Spartz (R-IN) defeated Christina Hale (D-IN) for the seat left open by the retirement of Rep. Susan Brooks (R-IN). She immigrated to the United States from Ukraine in 2000. She is the president of the Hamilton County Republican Women and previously served as chief financial officer for the Office for the Indiana Attorney General. She was elected to the Indiana State Senate in 2017.

Rep.-elect Michelle Steel (R-CA) defeated incumbent Rep. Harley Rouda (D-CA). Rep.-elect Steel immigrated to the United States from South Korea as a young adult. Seeing her mother fight a state tax bill inspired her to run for public office. She was elected to the California State Board of Equalization in 2006 and later was elected to the Orange County Board of Supervisors, which she currently chairs.

Rep.-elect Marilyn Strickland (D-WA) defeated Beth Doglio (D-WA) for the seat left open by the retirement of Rep. Denny Heck (D-WA). She served as mayor of Tacoma, Washington from 2010-2018. She previously served on the Tacoma City Council, and will be the first African American to represent Washington in Congress and the first Korean American woman elected to Congress.

Rep.-elect Beth Van Duyne (R-TX) defeated Candace Valenzuela (D-TX) for the seat left open by the retirement of Rep. Kenny Marchant (R-TX). She is the former mayor of Irving, Texas, the first woman to hold the position. Rep.-elect Van Duyne served as an official in the Department of Housing and Urban Development during the Trump Administration.

Rep.-elect Nikema Williams (D-GA) defeated Angela Stanton King (R-GA) for the seat left vacant by the death of Rep. John Lewis (D-GA). She is the first African American woman to chair the Georgia Democratic Party and a member of the Georgia State Senate. She is a self-described “fearless advocate for women and families,” and has been recognized as one of 100 Most Influential Georgians.