

Women's Congressional Policy Institute 2020 Election Wrap-Up

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that in the same year we celebrated the centennial anniversary of women securing the right to vote we also recognized 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.

With the race in the 22nd District of New York still subject to a recount of votes, 147 women were sworn-in to serve in the 117th Congress. This is the largest number of women elected to Congress in our nation's history. This number includes 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. The number of women in Congress will decrease if Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-OH) is confirmed as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and Rep. Deb Haaland (D-NM) is confirmed as Secretary of the Interior.

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. She resigned her Senate seat on January 20.

Control of the Senate was hotly contested throughout the cycle and remained undecided until a pair of run-off elections in Georgia were held on January 5. The Democrat candidates won both seats in the run-off, securing 50 seats each for the Democrats and Republicans. With Vice President Harris serving as the tie-breaking vote, Democrats regained control of the chamber. As a result of Vice President Harris' resignation, 24 women serve in the Senate this Congress, including 16 Democrats and 8 Republicans; 26 women served in the Senate during the 116th Congress.

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. However, Sen. Martha McSally (R-AZ) lost her bid to Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ) and Sen. Kelly Loeffler (R-GA) was defeated by Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA) in the Georgia run-off election.

Newly elected Sen. Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) became the first woman to represent Wyoming in the Senate. She is a former Member of the House and Co-Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues.

For the first time since 1993, California no longer will be represented by two women in the Senate. 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 continue to be represented by two women Senators in the 117th Congress.

Three women of color currently serve in the Senate: Sens. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), 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, with 222 Democrats and 212 Republicans sworn into the 117th Congress. This includes a record-breaking 123 women (including the four Delegates) – 91 women Democrats and 32 women Republicans. However, the number is likely to change, pending the confirmation of Reps. Fudge and Haaland as Cabinet members. One hundred five women had served in the House by the end of the 116th Congress.

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) retired from Congress. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) also 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, 19 newly elected Republican women were sworn into Congress: 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), Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA), Maria Elvira Salazar (R-FL), Victoria Spartz (R-IN), Michelle Steel (R-CA), Claudia Tenney (R-NY), and Beth Van Duyne (R-TX).

A record 115 women from diverse racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds ran for the House this cycle. Fifty-five Black or African American, Latina or Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern/Northern African, and Native American women were elected in November, making the 117th Congress the most diverse in our nation's history. Stephanie Bice (R-OK), 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. Herrell and Leger Fernandez join Rep. Deb Haaland in making New Mexico the first state to be represented in the House exclusively by women of color. Rep. Bice is the first Iranian American elected to Congress. Rep. Bush is the first African American woman to represent Missouri in Congress. Rep. Strickland is the first African American to represent Washington in Congress; she and Reps. 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) – currently serve in the House. Reps. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) remain as the only two Muslim women serving in Congress.

Newly elected to the Senate

Sen. 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. Lummis served as State Treasurer and in both chambers of the Wyoming State Legislature.

Newly elected to the House of Representatives

Rep. Stephanie Bice (R-OK) defeated incumbent Rep. Kendra Horn (D-OK). She was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate in 2014, and 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. She is the first Iranian American elected to Congress.

Rep. 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. The restaurant and bar owner is an advocate for gun rights.

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

Rep. 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 a nonprofit that supports local law enforcement, first responders, and veterans.

Rep. 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 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. 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 State Senate. She most recently served as Lieutenant Governor.

Rep. 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. A small business owner, she and her husband purchased a commercial construction and renovation company.

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. 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. 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.

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

Rep. 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. Kim is a former congressional aide to Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA). In 2014, she became the first Korean American Republican elected to the State Assembly and is among the first Korean American women elected to Congress.

Rep. Nancy Mace (R-SC) defeated incumbent Rep. Joe Cunningham (D-SC). She previously served as a member of the South Carolina General Assembly. 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*. Rep. Mace is the recipient of the Taxpayer Hero Award from the South Carolina Club for Growth.

Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY) defeated incumbent Rep. Max Rose (D-NY). She was elected to the New York State Assembly in 2010; during her tenure in the State Assembly she served as Minority Whip. Rep. Malliotakis was 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. 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 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. 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. Mary Miller (R-IL) defeated Erika Weaver (D-IL) for the seat left vacant by the retirement of Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL). A former teacher and businesswoman, she 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. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA) defeated Rita Hart (D-IA) for the seat left open by the retirement of Rep. Dave Loebsack (D-IA), however Ms. Hart has filed a challenge with the House of Representatives seeking a recount throughout the District. A retired Lieutenant Colonel, Rep. Miller-Meeks served in the Army for 20 years, rising from the enlisted ranks to the officer corps as a nurse. After medical school, she practiced as an ophthalmologist and became the first female president of the Iowa Medical Society.

Rep. 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. 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. 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. 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 former 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. Michelle Steel (R-CA) defeated incumbent Rep. Harley Rouda (D-CA). Rep. Steel immigrated to the United States from South Korea as a young adult. She was elected to the California State Board of Equalization in 2006 and later to the Orange County Board of Supervisors, which she previously chaired. She is among the first Korean American women elected to Congress.

Rep. 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 is the first African American to represent Washington in Congress and among the first Korean American women elected to Congress.

Rep. Claudia Tenney (R-NY) defeated incumbent Rep. Anthony Brindisi (D-NY) in a close rematch from 2018. Rep. Tenney previously was elected to Congress in 2016. She served in the New York State Assembly from 2011-2017 and previously worked for the Consulate General of Yugoslavia.

Rep. 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. Van Duyne served as an official in the Department of Housing and Urban Development during the Trump Administration.

Rep. 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 previously served as a member of the Georgia State Senate and was the first African American woman to chair the Georgia Democratic Party. She is a self-described "fearless advocate for women and families," and has been recognized as one of 100 Most Influential Georgians.