

## WOMEN IN THE U.S. SENATE 1922 - 1998

Nine women serve in the United States Senate in the 105th Congress. The newest members, **Susan Collins** (R-ME) and **Mary Landrieu** (D-LA) were sworn in January 1997. Election winners in 1994 included: **Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA, first elected in 1992); **Kay Bailey Hutchison** (R-TX, first elected in 1993); and **Olympia Snowe** (R-ME, newly elected in 1994). The other women in the Senate are: **Barbara Mikulski** (D-MD, first elected in 1986); **Barbara Boxer** (D-CA), **Carol Moseley-Braun** (D-IL), and **Patty Murray** (D-WA), all elected in 1992.

To date, the number of women ever to serve in the Senate is twenty-six, including fifteen Democrats and eleven Republicans. Of these women, two were recently elected, twelve served for less than a year and did not complete full terms, six completed at least one full term, six have been elected since 1992 and so have not yet had time to complete full terms but expect to do so.

Two states (LA & ME) have sent three women to the Senate; five states (AL, CA, KS, NE, and SD) have been represented twice by women in the Senate; ten other states (AR, FL, GA, IL, MD, MN, ND, OR, TX and WA) have now sent one woman to the Senate each. California was the first state to send two women (**Boxer** and **Feinstein**) to the Senate simultaneously; Kansas is the second (**Kassebaum** and **Frahm**), and Maine is the third (**Collins** and **Snowe**).

The first woman to serve in the Senate was **Rebecca Latimer Felton** (D-GA); appointed in 1922, she served for one day. The first woman elected to the Senate was **Hattie Wyatt Caraway** (D-AR). She was appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the death of her husband, and was subsequently elected to complete his term; Caraway went on to be elected for two more terms. **Margaret Chase Smith** (R-ME) was the first woman elected to the Senate without having first been appointed to serve. Smith had first come to Congress when she was elected to fill her deceased husband's House seat; she then went on to be elected to the Senate in her own right. **Kassebaum** was the first woman to have been elected to the Senate without having previously filled an unexpired Congressional term; **Mikulski** is the first Democratic woman to do so. **Smith** was the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress; **Mikulski**, **Boxer** and **Snowe** did so subsequently. **Moseley-Braun**, who is African-American, is the first woman of color to serve in the Senate.

**Kassebaum** chaired the Senate's Labor and Human Resources Committee in the 104th Congress; she was the first woman ever to chair a major Senate committee. **Caraway** chaired the Senate Committee on Enrolled Bills during the 73rd-78th Congresses.

### ***First Entered Senate through Regular Elections (10)***

The 1996 newcomers, **Collins** and **Landrieu**, as well as **Snowe** in 1994, and three of the women elected in 1992 (**Boxer**, **Moseley-Braun** and **Murray**) and four other women (**Paula Hawkins** (R-FL), **Kassebaum**, **Mikulski**, and **Smith**) entered the Senate by winning regular general elections. **Smith** had first come to Congress when she was elected to fill her deceased husband's House seat; she then went on to be elected to the Senate in her own right.

### ***First Entered Senate through Succession to Unexpired Terms (16)***

Seven women followed their deceased husbands into the Senate; they are **Maryon Pittman Allen** (D-AL), **Jocelyn Birch Burdick** (D-ND), **Vera Cahalan Bushfield** (R-SD), **Hattie Wyatt Caraway** (D-AR), **Muriel Buck Humphrey** (D-MN), **Rose McConnell Long** (D-LA), and **Maurine Brown Neuberger** (D-OR). Nine women [**Hazel Hempel Abel** (R-NE), **Eva Kelly Bowring** (R-NE), **Elaine Schwartzburg Edwards** (D-LA), **Feinstein**, **Felton**, **Frahm**, **Dixie Bibb Graves** (D-AL), **Hutchison** and **Gladys Pyle** (R-SD)] served part or all of unexpired terms of senators other than their husbands, including four men who died and four who resigned. Two women held the same seat successively; **Abel** succeeded **Bowring**. Two of the women, **Edwards** and **Graves**, were appointed by their husbands, who were governors of their states at the time.

**Special Elections:** Five women joined the Senate as a result of winning special elections to fill unexpired terms: **Abel**, **Feinstein**, **Hutchison**, **Neuberger**, and **Pyle**. **Neuberger** was elected to fill the vacancy and for the ensuing full term. **Feinstein** completed the unexpired term of Pete Wilson, who resigned when he was elected governor of California; she defeated his appointed successor in a special election and then won re-election to a full term in 1994. **Hutchison** completed the unexpired term of Lloyd Bentsen, who resigned when he was appointed Secretary of the Treasury; she defeated his appointed successor in a special election, and then won a full term in 1994.

**Appointments:** Eleven women first entered the Senate as appointees. They are: **Allen**, **Bowring**, **Burdick**, **Bushfield**, **Caraway**, **Edwards**, **Felton**, **Frahm**, **Graves**, **Humphrey**, **Long**. **Caraway** went on to be elected in a special election and then in two general elections; **Long** was subsequently elected in a special election to complete the term.

A note to users of our fact sheets: Please credit the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University. Additional information from *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774 - 1989*, U.S. Government Printing Office, and *Women in the United States Congress*, Congressional Research Service.

**WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE**  
(listed in order of date first entered)

<u>Women Senators</u>	<u>Routes to Office</u>	<u>Dates Served</u>
Rebecca Latimer Felton (D-GA)	Educator, writer, lecturer, and reformer. Appointed to fill vacancy caused by death. Resigned when successor was elected.	11/21/22- 11/22/22
Hattie Wyatt Caraway (D-AR)	Appointed to fill vacancy caused by death of her husband; later elected to complete his term and subsequently to two full terms before losing bid for re-election. Chairwoman, committee on Enrolled Bills (73rd-78th Congresses).	12/8/31 - 1/2/45
Rose McConnell Long (D-LA)	Appointed and subsequently elected to fill vacancy caused by death of husband.	2/10/36 - 1/2/37
Dixie Bibb Graves (D-AL)	Civic leader and activist. Appointed by husband (who was governor) to fill vacancy caused by resignation. Resigned when a successor was appointed.	8/20/37 - 1/10/38
Gladys Pyle (R-SD)	State legislator and secretary of state; ran for governor in 1930. Elected to fill vacancy cause by death. Never sworn in because Congress was not in session.	11/9/38 - 1/3/39
Vera Cahalan Bushfield (R-SD)	Appointed to fill vacancy caused by death of her husband, but did not take seat because Congress was not in session; resigned when successor was elected.	10/6/48 - 12/27/48
Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME)	Businesswoman and congressional aide. Elected to House of Representatives to fill vacancy caused by death of husband; served 4 full House terms, then elected to 4 full terms in Senate; lost bid for re-election.	1/3/49 - 1/3/73
Eva Kelly Bowring (R-NE)	Rancher and party activist. Appointed to fill vacancy caused by death of Dwight Griswold; served until Hazel Hempel Abel was elected to complete term.	4/26/54 - 11/7/54
Hazel Hempel Abel (R-NE)	Educator, businesswoman, and party activist. Elected to fill vacancy caused by death of Dwight Griswold; resigned when successor was elected.	11/8/54 - 12/31/54
Maurine Brown Neuberger (D-OR)	Educator, state legislator, writer, and lecturer. Elected to fill vacancy caused by death of husband; simultaneously elected for ensuing full term.	11/8/60 - 1/3/67
Elaine Schwartzburg Edwards (D-LA)	Appointed by husband (who was governor) to fill vacancy caused by death; resigned when successor was appointed.	8/7/72 - 11/13/72
Muriel Buck Humphrey (D-MN)	Appointed to fill vacancy caused by death of her husband; resigned when successor was elected.	2/6/78 - 11/7/78
Maryon Pittman Allen (D-AL)	Journalist, educator, writer, and lecturer. Appointed to fill vacancy caused by death of her husband; lost bid for renomination and resigned when her successor was elected.	6/12/78 - 11/7/78
Nancy Landon Kassebaum (R-KS)	Maize School Board member, congressional aide, and radio station executive. Won general election, then appointed to fill vacancy caused by resignation of predecessor; won two subsequent terms in 1984 and 1990. Chaired Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources in 104th Congress. Retired.	12/23/78 - 1/7/97

Paula Hawkins (R-FL)	Businesswoman and public service commissioner. Won general election, then appointed to fill vacancy caused by resignation of predecessor; lost bid for re-election.	1/1/81 - 1/3/87
Barbara Ann Mikulski (D-MD)	U.S. Representative, social worker, and Baltimore city council member. Won general election after serving five terms in U.S. House of Representatives. Re-elected in 1992.	1/3/87 - present
Jocelyn Birch Burdick (D-ND)	Civic activist. Appointed to fill vacancy caused by death of her husband. Resigned when successor was chosen in special election.	9/16/92 - 12/14/92
Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)	San Francisco mayor and San Francisco Board of Supervisors member and president. Ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1990. Won special election to fill vacancy caused by resignation; seat had been filled temporarily by appointee. Won full term in 1994.	11/10/92 - present
Barbara Boxer (D-CA)	U.S. Representative, Marin County Board of Supervisors member and president, stock-broker, and journalist. Won open seat in general election after serving five terms in U.S. House of Representatives.	1/5/93 - present
Carol Moseley-Braun (D-IL)	Attorney, Cook County Recorder of Deeds, and state representative. Defeated incumbent in primary and went on to win open seat in general election.	1/5/93 - present
Patty Murray (D-WA)	State senator, citizen lobbyist. Won open seat in general election.	1/5/93 - present
Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX)	State treasurer, businesswoman, state representative, TV newscaster, attorney. Won special election to fill vacancy caused by resignation; seat had been filled temporarily by appointee. Won full term in 1994.	6/14/93 - present
Olympia Snowe (R-ME)	U.S. Representative, state senator and state representative, member of Auburn Board of Voter Registration. Won open seat in general election after serving eight terms in U.S. House.	1/4/95 - present
Sheila Frahm (R-KS)	Lieutenant governor and secretary of administration, state senator and senate majority leader, State Board of Education member and vice chair, Colby School Board member, farmer. Appointed to fill vacancy caused by resignation of predecessor, lost primary bid.	6/11/96 - 11/8/96
Susan Collins (R-ME)	Businesswoman, regional Small Business Administration Administrator, state cabinet member. Won open seat in general election.	1/7/97 - present
Mary Landrieu (D-LA)	State treasurer, state representative, unsuccessful candidate for governor in 1995. Won open seat in general election.	1/7/97 - present