

## 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 Schwartzenburg 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.



