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Kamala Harris Selected as Vice Presidential Running Mate by Joe Biden

Former Vice President Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee for President of the United States, has selected U.S. Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate in the 2020 elections. Harris joins Geraldine Ferraro and Sarah Palin in becoming the third woman in history tapped as the vice presidential pick, as well as the fourth woman, with Hillary Clinton, on a major-party presidential ticket. She is also the first woman of color to be selected as the running mate on a major-party presidential ticket, as well as the first multiracial woman, the first South Asian woman, and the first Black woman. No woman has yet ascended to the vice presidency.

In 2003, Kamala Harris was elected to the San Francisco District Attorney's office, and in 2011 she became California's Attorney General. She is the first, and only, Black woman to be elected statewide in California. In the 2016 election, Kamala Harris became the first woman of color elected to the Senate from California, as well as the first South Asian woman and only the second Black woman in the U.S. Senate.

"In 2019, the largest and most diverse class of women entered the U.S. House, and a woman took the Speaker's gavel. In 2020, the most diverse slate of candidates sought the presidency, and record numbers of women are again running for Congress," said CAWP Director Debbie Walsh. "Joe Biden's historic selection of Kamala Harris is another indicator that the future of American politics will not be business as usual."

In the 1984 election, Geraldine Ferraro, then a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from New York, was tapped by Walter Mondale as his running mate. Her [debate](#) with Vice President George H.W. Bush was a watershed moment in American politics and remains an object of study for both scholars and campaign strategists. Alaska Governor Sarah Palin was selected by John McCain as his running mate in the 2008 election, and [her speech at the Republican National Convention](#) that year introduced her to the nation and, through her candidacy, she offered a new model for conservative political women.

For more information about women who have run as vice presidential candidates, see our [Women Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates: A Selected List](#) page, and for additional historical context and analysis about women as candidates for federal executive office, head to CAWP's [Presidential Watch](#).

About CAWP

The [Center for American Women and Politics](#) (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is nationally recognized as the leading source of scholarly research and current data about women's political participation in the United States. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about the role of women in American politics, enhance

women's influence in public life, and expand the diversity of women in politics and government. CAWP's education and outreach programs translate research findings into action, addressing women's underrepresentation in political leadership with effective, intersectional, and imaginative programs serving a variety of audiences. As the world has watched Americans considering female candidates for the nation's highest offices, CAWP's five decades of analyzing and interpreting women's participation in American politics have provided a foundation and context for the discussion.