



Cornell University
ILR School

Cornell University ILR School
DigitalCommons@ILR

Federal Publications

Key Workplace Documents

2-17-2012

Representatives and Senators: Trends in Member Characteristics Since 1945

R. Eric Petersen

Congressional Research Service

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/key_workplace

DigitalCommons@ILR is celebrating its 10th anniversary!

Please share your [DigitalCommons@ILR story!](#)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Key Workplace Documents at DigitalCommons@ILR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Federal Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@ILR. For more information, please contact hlmdigital@cornell.edu.

Representatives and Senators: Trends in Member Characteristics Since 1945

Abstract

[Excerpt] This report provides profiles of Senators and Representatives in selected Congresses since 1945. It includes data based on Representatives and Senators serving on the first day of the 79th, 82nd, 87th, 92nd, 97th, 102nd, and 107th – 112th Congresses for several demographic characteristics, as well as the tenure of Member service in Congress. The characteristics discussed include age, including the oldest and youngest members of the House and Senate; congressional service tenure; sex; previous occupation; race and ethnicity; education; religion; and military service.

Following the written summaries of each characteristic, the report provides a number of tables that provide the detailed data by the category on which the summaries are based. All data tables appear in the “Member Characteristics Data Tables” section.

Keywords

Congress, profiles, demographics, characteristics

Comments

Suggested Citation

Petersen, R. E. (2012). *Representatives and Senators: Trends in member characteristics since 1945*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.



Representatives and Senators: Trends in Member Characteristics Since 1945

R. Eric Petersen, Coordinator
Specialist in American National Government

February 17, 2012

Congressional Research Service

7-5700

www.crs.gov

R42365

Summary

Questions about the characteristics of Members of Congress, including their age, education, previous occupations, and other descriptors, are of ongoing interest to Members, congressional staff, and constituents. Some of these questions may be asked in the context of representation, in efforts to evaluate the extent to which Members of Congress reflect their constituencies and the nation at large. In other instances, questions arise about how the characteristics of Members have changed over time, which may speak in part to the history of Congress.

This report provides profiles of Senators and Representatives in selected Congresses since 1945. It includes data based on Representatives and Senators serving on the first day of the 79th, 82nd, 87th, 92nd, 97th, 102nd, and 107th – 112th Congresses for several demographic characteristics, as well as the tenure of Member service in Congress. The characteristics discussed include age, including the oldest and youngest Members of the House and Senate; congressional service tenure; sex; previous occupation; race and ethnicity; education; religion; and military service.

Following the written summaries of each characteristic, the report provides a number of tables that provide the detailed data by the category on which the summaries are based. All data tables appear in the “Member Characteristics Data Tables” section.

In several categories, the report provides data on the U.S. population that may be comparable to data available on Members of Congress. A detailed discussion of the methods used to develop the data presented in the report, and efforts to provide comparison between Member characteristics and the American public, is provided in an **Appendix**.

The disclosure of details of a Member’s race, education, previous occupation, or other characteristics appears to be voluntary, and no official, authoritative source has collected Member characteristic data in a consistent manner over time. Member data provided in this report are based on commercially collected information, and academic sources. Comparative data on the U.S. population are taken from the Census Bureau, and are supplemented by private sources.

Members in 2011 are older, more likely to identify a religious affiliation, and include more women and members of racial and ethnic groups than Members in 1945. The data presented in this report suggest that since the 79th Congress, Members have had high levels of education, and worked in professional positions prior to coming to Congress. The number of Members who previously served in the military has risen and fallen, largely in tandem with the levels of service in the broader population.

Other Congressional Research Service reports also provide data and other information on the characteristics of Members. These include CRS Report R41647, *Membership of the 112th Congress: A Profile*; CRS Report R40086, *Membership of the 111th Congress: A Profile*; and CRS Report R41545, *Congressional Careers: Service Tenure and Patterns of Member Service, 1789-2011*. Due to differences in data collection or characterization, data in other studies on Member characteristics may differ from those presented in this report.

Contents

Characteristics of Representatives and Senators.....	4
Age	4
Congressional Service Tenure	5
Representatives.....	6
Senators	6
Sex	6
Representatives.....	8
Senators	8
Previous Occupation.....	8
Representatives.....	9
Senators	10
Race and Ethnicity.....	11
Representatives.....	11
Senators	12
Education.....	12
Religion	15
Representatives.....	16
Senators	17
Military Service.....	18
Concluding Observations.....	18
Member Characteristics Data Tables	19
Age	19
Congressional Service Tenure	20
Sex	20
Previous Occupation.....	22
Race/Ethnicity	23
Education.....	24
Religion	25
Military Service.....	30

Figures

Figure 1. Age of Representatives, Senators, and U.S. Population	4
Figure 2. Oldest and Youngest Representatives.....	5
Figure 3. Oldest and Youngest Senators	5
Figure 4. Tenure of Representatives and Senators.....	6
Figure 5. Women in the House and Senate, Selected Congresses Since 1945.....	7
Figure 6. Most Frequently Reported Occupations of Representatives, Selected Congresses Since 1945	10
Figure 7. Most Frequently Reported Occupations of Senators, Selected Congresses Since 1945	11
Figure 8. Race and Ethnicity of Representatives, Senators, and the U.S. Population	12

Figure 9. Four or More Years of College Completed by Representatives, Senators, and U.S. Population, Selected Congresses Since 1945 14

Figure 10. Religious Affiliation of Representatives, Senators, and U.S. Population..... 16

Figure 11. Christian Denominations Identified by Representatives, Senators, and the U.S. Population..... 17

Figure 12. Military Service by Representatives, Senators, and U.S. Population..... 18

Tables

Table 1. Congresses for Which Member Data Are Provided 2

Table 2. Age of Representatives, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945..... 19

Table 3. Age of Senators, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945 19

Table 4. Average Service Tenure of Representatives and Senators, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945 20

Table 5. Female and Male Representatives, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945 20

Table 6. Female and Male Senators, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945 21

Table 7. Most Frequently Reported Occupations of Representatives, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945..... 22

Table 8. Most Frequently Reported Occupations of Senators, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945 22

Table 9. Race and Ethnicity of Representatives, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945 23

Table 10. Race and Ethnicity of Senators, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945 24

Table 11. High School and Undergraduate Completion of Representatives, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945..... 24

Table 12. High School and Undergraduate Completion of Senators, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945..... 25

Table 13. Representatives Specifying a Religious Affiliation, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945 25

Table 14. Religious Affiliation of Representatives, Senators, and the U.S. Population 26

Table 15. Denominations of Christian Representatives, Senators, and the U.S. Population 27

Table 16. Religious Affiliation of Representatives, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945 27

Table 17. Denominations of Christian-Affiliated Representatives Since 1945 28

Table 18. Religious Affiliation of Senators, Selected Congresses Since 1945 29

Table 19. Denominations of Christian-Affiliated Senators Since 1945 29

Table 20. Military Service by Representatives, Senators, and U.S. Population Since 1945..... 30

Appendixes

Appendix. Developing Member Data..... 31

Contacts

Author Contact Information..... 36
Acknowledgments 36

Questions about the characteristics of Members of Congress, including their age, education, previous occupations, and other descriptors, are of ongoing interest to Members, congressional staff, and constituents. Some of these questions may be asked in the context of representation, in efforts to evaluate the extent to which Members of Congress reflect their constituencies and the nation at large. In other instances, questions arise about how the characteristics of Members have changed over time, which may speak in part to the history of Congress.

A challenge of discussing Member characteristics in a manner that allows comparison across the history of Congress is the identification of characteristics and reliable data on those characteristics that are collected in a consistent manner over time. No government entity has collected data on Members in a consistent manner for all Congresses. Congressional sources, including entries in the online *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*,¹ or the print versions of the biennial *Official Congressional Directory*,² are compiled by the House and Senate, based on information reported by Members. Some academic and journalistic sources³ provide data on a limited number of Member characteristics over a variety of time periods. While these sources provide some information, they do not report various descriptive characteristics for all Members or all Congresses in a consistent manner.⁴ Biographies created by Members for official or campaign purposes are another potential source; those are not readily retrievable for all Members in the Congresses for which this report provides data, and do not report various characteristics for all Members in a uniform manner.

Relying on commercial and academic sources that collected data over time, this report provides profiles of Senators and Representatives based on selected characteristics in selected Congresses since 1945. Based on Members in office on the first day of each of 12 Congresses, summarized in **Table 1**, the report provides data on the following characteristics:

- age, including the oldest and youngest Members of the House and Senate;
- congressional service tenure;
- sex;

¹ <http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp>.

² See, e.g., U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *2009-2010 Official Congressional Directory, 112th Congress, 112th Cong., 1st sess.*, S.Pub. 112-12 (Washington: GPO, 2011). Links to directories for the 104th-112th Congresses are available from the Government Printing Office (GPO) at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=CDIR>.

³ Michael J. Malbin, Norman J. Ornstein, and Thomas E. Mann, *Vital Statistics on Congress 2008* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008); Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, *Faith on the Hill: The Religious Composition of the 112th Congress*, January 5, 2011, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1846/religious-composition-112th-congress>; and Eric Lichtblau, "Economic Slide Took a Detour At Capitol Hill," *The New York Times*, December 27, 2011, p. 1; and Peter Whoriskey, "Growing Wealth Widens Distance Between Lawmakers and Constituents," *The Washington Post*, December 26, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/growing-wealth-widens-distance-between-lawmakers-and-constituents/2011/12/05/gIQAR7D6IP_story.html.

⁴ The Congressional Research Service has for several years produced profile reports covering individual Congresses, including CRS Report R41647, *Membership of the 112th Congress: A Profile*, by Jennifer E. Manning, and CRS Report R40086, *Membership of the 111th Congress: A Profile*, by Jennifer E. Manning. These reports are updated throughout the Congress, and may provide different information from that provided here, due in part to changes in membership from the first day of a Congress, or because those reports relied on sources and information about Members that are different from the sources and information used to develop this report. Reports addressing some Member characteristics in the 94th (1975-1976) 96th (1979-1980), and 99th-110th (1985-2008) Congresses are available to Congressional offices upon request.

- previous occupation;
- race and ethnicity;
- education;
- religion; and
- military service.

Specific Congresses were selected to provide detailed information on changes in Member characteristics in recent Congresses, and to compare those changes to previous Congresses. The five most recent Congresses (108th-112th Congresses) were collected to demonstrate contemporary Member characteristics. Data for the 82nd, 87th, 92nd, 97th, 102nd, and 107th Congresses are provided for comparison of Congresses at 10-year intervals from the beginning of the 112th Congress. The 79th Congress is included because it is the earliest for which readily comparable data are available.

Member Characteristics, 112th Congress

For detailed information on Member Characteristics in the 112th Congress, see CRS Report R41647, *Membership of the 112th Congress: A Profile*, by Jennifer E. Manning.

Table I. Congresses for Which Member Data Are Provided

Congress	Years	Congress	Years
112 th	2011-2012	102 nd	1991-1992
111 th	2009-2010	97 th	1981-1982
110 th	2007-2008	92 nd	1971-1972
109 th	2005-2006	87 th	1961-1962
108 th	2003-2004	82 nd	1951-1952
107 th	2001-2002	79 th	1945-1946

Source: CRS.

Data on Member characteristics provided in this report are drawn from two sources provided by non-congressional entities. The principal source of Member data in this report is the CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection (hereafter CQ Press), a subscription database that provides data on Members and a range of characteristics. The database does not contain information on Members who have served as Delegates⁵ or Resident Commissioner for Puerto Rico.⁶ The second source, from which data on new Members of the 112th Congress were taken, is CQ Roll Call's *Guide to the New Congress*.⁷

Data on congressional career service patterns are drawn from three sources. For the 79th through 104th Congresses, data were drawn from the *Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders*

⁵ There are currently five Delegates to Congress representing the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

⁶ For more information, see CRS Report RL31856, *Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico*, by R. Eric Petersen.

⁷ CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*, November 4, 2010.

*and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1996.*⁸ Data for the 105th through 111th Congresses were compiled from the *Congressional Directory*.⁹ Data for the 112th Congress were obtained from the Clerk of the House and CQ Press's *Guide to the New Congress*.¹⁰

For each characteristic category, a written summary is provided. In some categories, the report provides data on the U.S. population that may be comparable to data available on Members of Congress, as discussed in more detail below. Following the written summaries, the report provides a number of tables that provide the detailed data by the category on which the summaries are based. All data tables appear in the "Member Characteristics Data Tables" section.

A detailed discussion of the methods used to develop the data presented in the report, and efforts to provide comparison between Member characteristics and the American public, is provided in an **Appendix**. Due to differences in data collection or characterization, data in other studies on Member characteristics may differ from those presented in this report.

⁸ Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, and Carroll McKibbin. Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1996: Merged Data [computer file] 10th ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor: MI: Inter-university for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 1997.

⁹ U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 111th Congress*, S. Pub 111-14, 111th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2009); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 110th Congress*, S. Pub 110-13, 110th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2007); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 109th Congress*, S. Pub 109-12, 109th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2006); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 110th Congress*, S. Pub 108-18, 108th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2003); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 107th Congress*, S. Pub 107-20, 107th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2001); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 106th Congress*, S. Pub 106-21, 106th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 1999); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 105th Congress*, S. Pub 105-20, 105th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 1997).

¹⁰ U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Clerk, 112th Congress Members-Elect, available at http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/112-members-elect.pdf; CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*, November 4, 2010.

Characteristics of Representatives and Senators

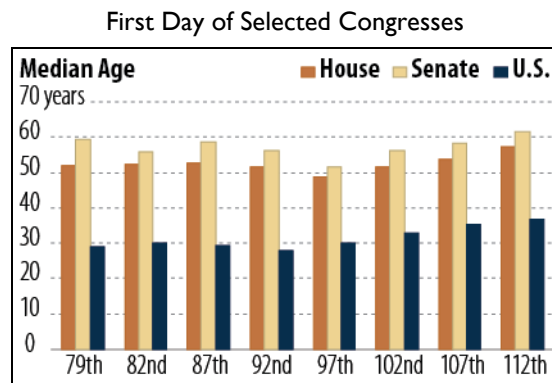
Age

In general, the ages of Members of Congress and the U.S. population have increased slowly since 1945. **Figure 1** provides the median ages of Representatives, Senators and the U.S. population in selected Congresses since 1945. Data tables with the mean and median ages of Members in selected Congresses are provided in the “Age” section, below.

The significant age difference between the U.S. population and Representatives and Senators is explained in part by the scope of people counted in the United States. Census data provide information for all U.S. residents of any age from birth until death. To hold office in the House, a Member must be at least 25 years old. A Senator must be at least 30 years of age. Median ages of Members of Congress are higher than in the U.S. population, since the congressional statistics are calculated on the basis of small numbers of adults in an age restricted group. The median age of the entire U.S. population was 30 years or less until the 102nd Congress.¹¹

In both the House and the Senate, between the 79th and 97th Congresses, the ages of Members fluctuated narrowly. The lowest average and median ages in the House and Senate were recorded in the 97th Congress, when the median age of Representatives was 49.0 years and of Senators 51.7. Thereafter, the median age of Congress began gradually increasing. The 111th Congress held record highs for both the House and the Senate with median ages of 57.3 years and 62.1 years respectively. In the 112th Congress, the median age of Representatives was essentially unchanged at 57.2 years, while the Senate median decreased at a slightly greater rate to 61.4 years. **Figure 2** and **Figure 3** provide lists of the oldest and youngest Representatives and Senators, respectively, for selected Congresses since 1945.

Figure 1. Age of Representatives, Senators, and U.S. Population



Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection; CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress*, 112th Congress; and CRS calculations.

¹¹ The Census Bureau generally reports the median, age of the U.S. population in its standard, widely distributed summaries. The median is middle value, or point at which half of the values (age, years of service, costs, etc.) in a list of numbers are higher and half are lower. This section discusses the median age of Members and the U.S. population for ease of comparability. Average and median ages of Representatives and Senators are provided in **Table 2** and **Table 3**, respectively.

Figure 2. Oldest and Youngest Representatives

First Day of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Representatives			
112th	Ralph M. Hall	87.67	Aaron Schock 29.60
111th	Ralph M. Hall	85.67	Aaron Schock 27.60
110th	Ralph M. Hall	83.67	Patrick T. McHenry 31.20
109th	Ralph M. Hall	81.67	Patrick T. McHenry 29.20
108th	Ralph M. Hall	79.67	Adam Putnam 28.43
107th	Benjamin Gilman	78.08	Adam Putnam 26.43
102nd	Sidney Yates	81.35	Jim Nussle 30.52
97th	Claude D. Pepper	80.33	John LeBoutillier 27.61
92nd	Emanuel Celler	82.66	Marvin Mathis 30.09
87th	Brent Spence	86.03	Ralph R. Harding 31.32
82nd	Robert Doughton	87.16	Patrick Hillings 27.87
79th	Joseph Mansfield	83.90	Marion T. Bennett 30.58

Source: Biographical Directory of the United States Congress; CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection; CQ Roll Call, Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress; and CRS calculations.

Figure 3. Oldest and Youngest Senators

First Day of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Senators			
112th	Frank R. Lautenberg	86.95	Mike Lee 39.58
111th	Robert C. Byrd	91.12	Mark Pryor 45.98
110th	Robert C. Byrd	89.12	John E. Sununu 42.31
109th	Robert C. Byrd	87.12	John E. Sununu 40.31
108th	Robert C. Byrd	85.12	John E. Sununu 38.31
107th	J. Strom Thurmond	98.08	Peter G. Fitzgerald 40.21
102nd	J. Strom Thurmond	88.08	Don Nickles 42.08
97th	John C. Stennis	79.43	Don Nickles 32.08
92nd	Allen J. Ellender	80.27	John V. Tunney 36.52
87th	Carl T. Hayden	83.25	Frank F. Church 36.44
82nd	Theodore F. Green	83.25	Russell Long 32.17
79th	Carter Glass	87.00	Joseph Ball 39.17

Source: Biographical Directory of the United States Congress; CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection; CQ Roll Call, Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress; and CRS calculations.

Congressional Service Tenure

At the commencement of the 112th Congress, the average number of years of House service for Representatives was 9.8, or just less than five terms.¹² The average number of years of Senate service for Senators was 11.4, slightly less than two full Senate terms. **Figure 4** and **Table 4** provide Member tenure in the House and Senate for selected Congresses since 1945.

Two underlying factors appear to influence variation over time in the average years of service for Members of Congresses: the decision of sitting Members whether or not to seek election to the next Congress, and the success rate of Members who seek election to the next Congress. In addition, short-term variation in average service is affected by the individual service tenures of Members who do not return for the following Congress.

Observed increases in the proportion of Members seeking re-election and decreases in the proportion of Members defeated for re-election conform with previous scholarly assessments of congressional history. During the early history of Congress, turnover in membership was frequent and resignations were commonplace. During the 20th century, congressional careers lengthened as turnover decreased as congressional service became more of a career.¹³

¹² Chamber service and total congressional service were recorded for each member of each Congress, as of the first day of Congress. Freshmen members in each house are counted as having no service (zero years), and changes in membership during a Congress were not taken into account. From these individual data, aggregate statistics were derived for each Congress.

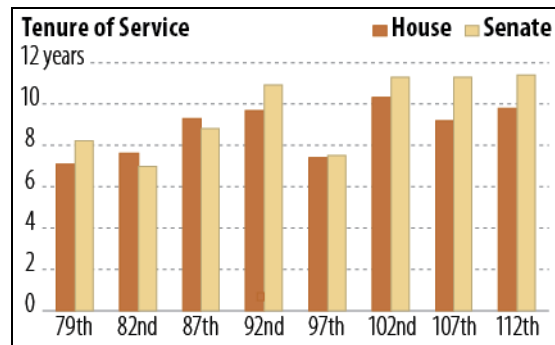
¹³ For detailed discussion of congressional career patterns since 1789, see CRS Report R41545, *Congressional Careers: Service Tenure and Patterns of Member Service, 1789-2011*, by Matthew Eric Glassman and Amber Hope (continued...)

Representatives

In general, the average length of service of Representatives increased during the second half of the 20th century and early 21st century, from an average of 7.1 and 7.6 years of service in the 79th and 82nd Congresses to an average of 9.2 and 9.8 years of service in the 107th and 112th Congresses. Within this general increase, however, exists substantial variation. For example, average service in the 97th Congress was only 7.4 years. Average service peaked at 10.3 years in the 102nd, 110th, and 111th Congresses.

Figure 4. Tenure of Representatives and Senators

Selected Congresses Since 1945



Source: CRS analysis of ICPSR and proprietary data. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, and Carroll McKibbin. *Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1996: Merged Data* [computer file] 10th ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor: MI: Inter-university for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 1997.

Senators

Similar to Representatives, the average years of service among Senators generally increased during the second half the 20th century and early 21st century, and also exhibited substantial variation across Congresses. Average service in the 79th and 82nd Congresses was 8.2 and 7.0 years respectively, and was 11.3 and 11.4 years in the 107th and 112th Congresses. The average period of service peaked at 13.4 years of service in the 111th Congress. The average Senate service of Senators has typically been greater in any given Congress than the average House service of Representatives, although this was not the case in the 82nd or 87th Congress.

Sex

Figure 5 provides the distribution of female Members of Congress for selected Congresses since 1945, the distribution of men and women in each chamber in the 112th Congress,¹⁴ and the U.S. population, based on the 2010 census. Data on the percentage of female and male Representatives and Senators in selected Congresses since 1945 are provided in the “Sex” section, below.

The first female to serve in the House, Jeanette Rankin of Montana, was elected to the 65th Congress (1917-1919). Although no women were elected to the 66th Congress (1919-1921), during which Congress proposed and the states ratified the 19th Amendment to the Constitution granting women the right to vote, women have served in the House in every Congress since.

(...continued)

Wilhelm.

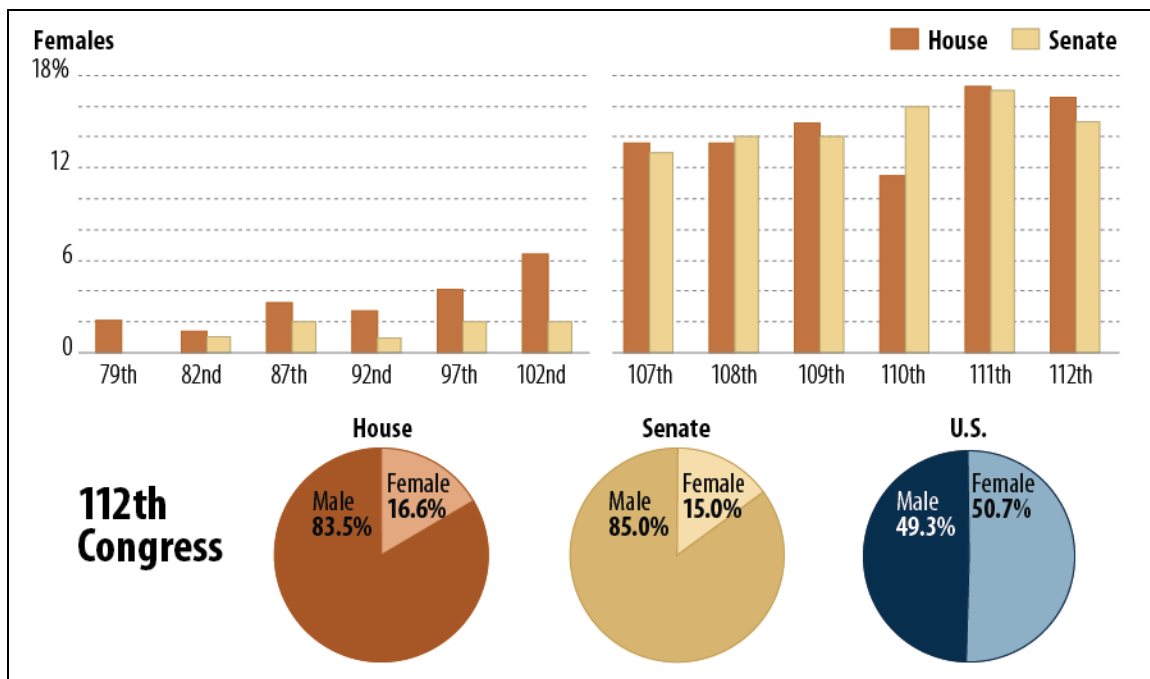
¹⁴ Additional information on the number of women in Congress is available in the historical data section of : <http://womenincongress.house.gov/>; and U.S. House, Committee on House Administration and Office of the Clerk, *Women in Congress, 1917-2006* (Washington, GPO: 2006); CRS Report RL30261, *Women in the United States Congress: 1917-2012*, by Jennifer E. Manning and Colleen J. Shogan; and Jennifer L. Lawless, *Men Rule: The Continued Under-Representation of Women in U.S. Politics* (Washington, DC: Women and Politics Institute, 2012).

In the Senate, the first female to serve was Rebecca Latimer Felton of Georgia, who was appointed to the Senate on October 3, 1922, following the death of Thomas E. Watson. Aged 87, she served for only 24 hours while the Senate was in session. The next female in the Senate, Hattie Caraway of Arkansas, was appointed on November 13, 1931, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of her husband, Thaddeus H. Caraway. She became the first woman elected to the Senate on January 12, 1932, when she won special election for the remainder of the term and was reelected to two additional terms, serving in the Senate for a total of 14 years. At least one female Senator has served in each Congress since then, with the exception of the 79th Congress, the 93rd Congress (1973-1974), and the 94th Congress (1975-1976).

According to the 2010 census, the total population is 50.8% female and 49.2% male.¹⁵ According to the Census Bureau, there have been more females than males in the United States since the 1950 census.¹⁶

Figure 5. Women in the House and Senate, Selected Congresses Since 1945

House and Senate, 112th Congress, and the U.S. Population, 2010



Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection; CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*; U.S. Census Bureau; and CRS calculations.

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, *Age and Sex Composition: 2010, 2010 Census Briefs*, Table 1. Population by Sex and Selected Age Groups: 2000 and 2010, issued May 2011. Available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-03.pdf>.

¹⁶ For a further historical comparison of gender composition, see U.S. Census Bureau, *Gender: 2000, Census 2000 Brief*, Figure 2. The Male-Female Ratio: 1900 to 2000, issued September 2001. Available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-9.pdf>.

Representatives

The percentage of female Representatives has fluctuated since the 79th Congress. The House was more than 95% male until the 102nd Congress. The percentage of women more than doubled between the 102nd and 107th Congresses, reaching 13.6%. This period represents the most rapid change in gender composition as a percentage of the House in its history. The percentage of female Representatives reached a high of 17.3% in the 111th Congress before falling slightly in the 112th Congress.

Senators

As in the House, the change in the gender composition was greatest from the 102nd to the 107th Congresses, growing from 2% to 13%. The number of female Senators has remained steady or grown ever since, and membership in the 111th and 112th Congresses has been approximately 17% female.

Previous Occupation

Representatives and Senators bring an array of work experiences with them to Congress. Careers in law and public service are common, but Members have also served as astronauts, entertainers, teachers, and practiced numerous trades.¹⁷ Representatives and Senators have generally similar occupational backgrounds. Most of the occupation data are categorized in the CQ Press data into one of 20 broad subcategories, including, among others:

- acting/entertainer;
- business or banking;
- journalism;
- law;
- public service/politics; and
- real estate.¹⁸

¹⁷ See, for example, David T. Canon, *Actors, Athletes, and Astronauts: Political Amateurs in the United States Congress* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); and Roger H. Davidson, Walter J. Oleszek, and Frances E. Lee, *Congress and its Members*, 13th ed. (Washington: Sage/CQ Press, 2012), pp. 111-112.

¹⁸ The complete list of pre-determined categories provided in the CQ Press search interface and codebook includes any occupation; acting/entertainer; aeronautics; agriculture; business or banking; clergy; congressional aide; construction/building trades; education; engineering; journalism; labor leader; law; law enforcement; medicine; military; misc.[ellaneous]; public service/ politics; real estate; and sports. It cannot be determined from available resources whether those categories have changed over time.

Voluntary categories, as they appear in the CQ Press database (with slight variations for spelling and punctuation), include acting/entertainer; actor; aeronautics; agriculture; agricultural news service owner; Air Force officer; airline pilot; Army officer; at-risk youth mentorship program founder; bank CEO; business [and/or] banking; campaign and congressional aide; clergy; computers/technology; congressional aide; construction/building trades; county [government] administrator; deputy county sheriff; education; engineering; hospital administrator; gubernatorial aide; journalism; labor leader; law; law enforcement; lobbyist; medicine; military; misc[ellaneous]; newspaper reporter; nonprofit community activism org[anization] founder; private school fundraiser; professor; public service/politics; real estate attorney; real estate; religious school fundraiser; religious youth camp director; sports; state party Hispanic outreach director; and university president.

These and other categories provide a relatively simple way to summarize professional experiences for thousands of diverse Members who have served in selected Congresses since 1945. It is important to note that the CQ Press data provide an overview of pre-congressional careers, but leave some questions unanswered.

The CQ Press data provide up to five occupational categories for each Member. This report provides data on the first—and in some cases, only—occupation provided. In the absence of additional information, however, it is unclear how or why these positions were listed, or why they were listed first when more than one occupation was provided. Finally, in some instances, the CQ Press data provide no information on occupation for some Members.

In addition, the CQ Press data do not provide detail about what facet of a profession a Member pursued, for how long, or whether he or she did so full-time or part-time. In some cases, CQ Press data identify a specific profession, such as Army officer or professor. These listings provide more detail than the broad categories noted above, but might also overlap with some other categories. As discussed above, a former congressional aide might also categorize his or her work as public service/politics. Due to the organization by CQ Press of Members' previously held elective office in a separate category outside the database, the extent of public service backgrounds as the previous occupation of Members may be significantly understated.¹⁹ In summary, it is important to note that this section provides an overview of Member occupation, but the source data do not necessarily reflect all of the occupations a Member may have pursued prior to their congressional service.

Representatives

Representatives have diverse occupational backgrounds. In total, the CQ Press data reveal that House Members held 38 different primary occupations in selected Congresses since 1945. As noted above, most of those reflect pre-determined categories; others reflect customized titles apparently provided by Members or their staffs. Although the prominence of individual occupations varies by Congress, in general, five occupations were most commonly reported in the selected Congresses. These include:

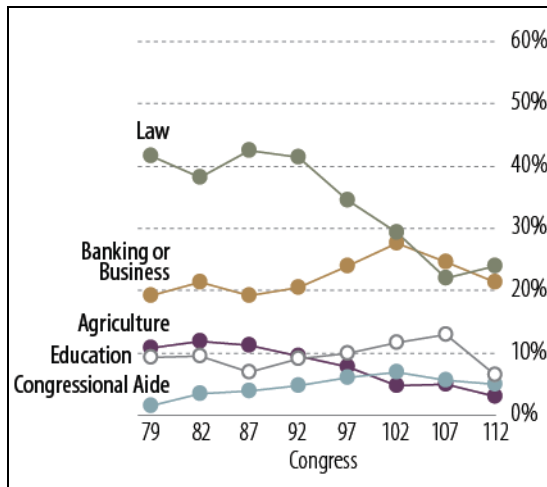
- agriculture;
- business or banking;
- congressional aide;
- education, and
- law.

Law was the most commonly cited profession over time. Legal experience has not uniformly dominated House Members' professional experience as might be expected, however. As **Figure 6** shows, lawyers dominated among House members between the 79th and 92nd Congresses. During that period, approximately 40% of Representatives reported having been part of the legal profession. Beginning in the 97th Congress, Representatives listing professional law backgrounds as a primary profession declined sharply, although the occupation continued to be the most

¹⁹ Detailed occupational information that includes the elective careers of Members of the 112th Congress is available in CRS Report R41647, *Membership of the 112th Congress: A Profile*, by Jennifer E. Manning.

common profession cited among Representatives; between 20% and 25% of Representatives identified law as their first occupation in selected Congresses since 1945. As the figure shows, as the proportion of House Members with legal experience was declined, those reporting occupations in banking or business rose.

Figure 6. Most Frequently Reported Occupations of Representatives, Selected Congresses Since 1945



Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*, <http://innovation.cq.com/newmember/2010elexnguide.pdf>, CRS calculations.

Members whose occupations were in banking or business slightly surpassed those with legal experience—each group included about 20% of House Members—between the 107th and 112th Congresses.

Finally, although careers as congressional aides (which could include a variety of job functions), in agriculture, and education were common overall, they were far less common than business or banking and law. **Table 7**, provides data on the five most frequently reported occupations of Representatives since 1945.

Senators

Senators in selected Congresses held various professional backgrounds. Senators’ occupations, however, have generally been confined to a narrower set of career backgrounds than House Members.

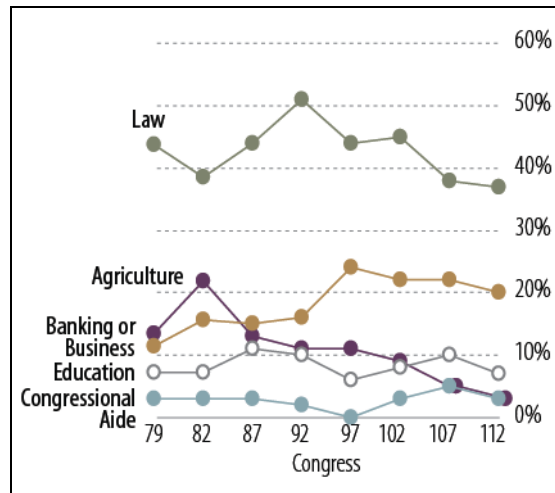
In total, Senators cited (or were identified as having) 21 different primary occupations over the Congresses studied—slightly more than half the 38 total occupations into which House Members were classified. Senators’ primary occupations generally included agriculture; business or banking; service as congressional aides; education; or law. Senators also cited “public service/politics” as their primary occupation; 1%-6% of Senators did so for the Congresses studied in this report.²⁰ These figures are similar to those for House Members, although prior service as congressional aides is slightly more common overall than occupations classified as “public service/politics.” **Table 8** below summarizes the five most frequently reported occupations for Senators since 1945.

²⁰ Due to the organization by CQ Press of Members’ previously held elective office in a separate category outside the database, the extent of Senator’s prior elected service in the House or elsewhere cannot be determined.

Law has dominated Senators' occupational experience. As shown, lawyers have occupied between one-third and half of Senate seats in each Congress studied since 1945. During the 92nd Congress, Members trained in the legal profession peaked, with slightly more than half of Senators (51%) identifying their previous occupations in law. Legal backgrounds were less commonly reported in the most succeeding Congresses. Law backgrounds, however, have been associated with at least 30% of Senators in every Congress studied.

Business and banking again appeared as the second-most-common occupation. In particular, between approximately 10% and 25% of Senators in the selected Congresses reported having practiced business or banking. Backgrounds in education or as congressional aides have also been common, but far less so than the other most commonly cited jobs. As with the House, Senators' prior professional experience in agriculture has declined steadily over time.

Figure 7. Most Frequently Reported Occupations of Senators, Selected Congresses Since 1945



Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*, <http://innovation.cq.com/newmember/2010elexnguide.pdf>, CRS calculations.

Race and Ethnicity

Figure 8 compares a distribution of Representatives and Senators by race at the beginning of the 112th Congress to the U.S. population in the 2010 census.

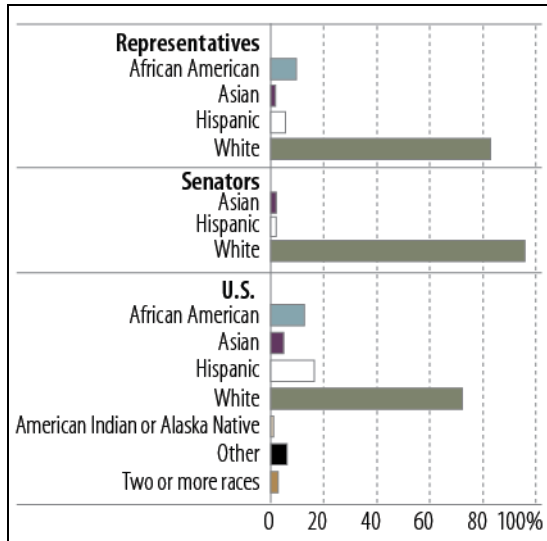
Representatives

Table 9, below, provides data on the race and ethnicity of Representatives in selected Congresses since 1945. The largest change in the racial composition of the House of Representatives occurred between the 102nd and 107th Congresses. For the selected Congresses, the House of Representatives was more than 95% white until the 97th Congress, and more than 90% white until the 107th Congress. The second largest group is African Americans, who comprised 0.5% of the House at the beginning of the 79th Congress, growing to 9.2% in the 109th and 110th Congresses, before dipping slightly in the 111th Congress and then growing to a high of 9.7% at the outset of the 112th Congress. This group is followed by the Representatives who have identified as Hispanic, who have grown from 0.2% of the Representatives at the beginning of the 79th Congress to 5.5% in the 111th and 112th Congresses. While the 79th Congress did not have any Asian American Representatives, this group represents 1.6% of the House in the 112th Congress. American Indian²¹ membership in the House has fluctuated between 0.0% and 0.2%.

²¹ American Indian is a term typically used by the Census Bureau and other governmental entities. The CQ Press data identify the same population as Native Americans.

Figure 8. Race and Ethnicity of Representatives, Senators, and the U.S. Population

House and Senate, 112th Congress, and the U.S. Population, 2010



Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection; CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*; U.S. Census Bureau; and CRS calculations.

2.9% “Two or more races.”²³ In the 2010 Census data, respondents who identified Hispanic origin also identified a racial category. These data are reported together in **Figure 8**. CQ Press identifies Hispanic Members in lieu of specific racial identification. As a consequence of these different data collection methods, direct comparisons of race and ethnicity between Representatives and Senators, and the U.S. population should be made with care.

Education

Since the 79th Congress, attendance and graduation rates among Representatives and Senators have increased at the high school, college, and graduate levels. Although these rates have also increased among the population at large, the average Member of Congress has a higher educational attainment level than the average American. In the 112th Congress, the majority of Representatives and Senators have completed high school, college, and some form of graduate

Senators

Membership of the Senate at the beginning of the 112th Congress was 96% white, 2% above the low of 94% for Congresses in this study. Senators identifying as Hispanic have ranged from 0% (97th, 102nd, 107th, and 108th Congresses) to a high of 3.1%²² of Senators at the outset of the 111th Congress. At the beginning of the 112th Congress, 2% of Senators identified as Hispanic. Senators identifying as Asian American have ranged between 0% of Senators in the 79th and 82nd Congresses, to 3% of Senators in the 97th Congress, with membership at the outset of the 112th Congress at 2%. No more than 1% of Senators in each of the Congresses examined identified as African American or Native American. **Table 10** provides data on the race and ethnicity of Senators in selected Congresses since 1945.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the U.S. population is 0.9% “American Indian or Alaska Native”; 4.8% “Asian”; 12.6% “Black or African American”; 16.3% “Hispanic”; 72.4% “White”; 6.2% “Some other race”; and

²² On the first day of the 111th Congress in the Senate, 98 Senators were present, and two seats were vacant.

²³ U.S. Census Bureau, *Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010, 2010 Census Briefs*, Table 1: Population by Hispanic Origin and by Race for the United States: 2000 and 2010, issued March 2011, available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf>. Percentages are provided by the Census Bureau to one decimal place, and do not equal 100% because census respondents identifying Hispanic origin may identify in any racial category.

school.²⁴ Today a majority of Americans aged 25 years or older have completed high school, but less than one-third have completed four years of college or attended graduate school.

Historically, most Members of Congress have held at least a high school diploma, and although most Americans today have completed high school, this was not always the case. During the 79th Congress, the average Member of Congress was more likely to have graduated from high school than the average American. Only 24.1% of American adults age 25 or older had completed four years of high school or more education during the years of the 79th Congress.²⁵ By contrast, high school completion rates were 75.7% for House Members and 85.4% for Senators serving in the 79th Congress.²⁶ The percentage of those with at least a high school diploma in the United States has since grown, reaching 85.3% in 2009.²⁷ High school graduation rates among Members of Congress, however, remain at a higher level. In the 112th Congress, at least 99.1% of Representatives had completed high school, and all Senators had completed high school.²⁸

²⁴ Data from CQ Press on Member education included Representatives with “Education Unknown” for all these Congresses. Due to this, the proportion of school attendance and completion rates may actually be higher than what is reported.

²⁵ The 1940 U.S. Census provides the best estimate for education levels in 1944-1945. Because respondents were asked about their highest level of education, this figure is the combined percentage of respondents who reported 4 years of high school, 1-3 years of college, and 4 or more years of college.

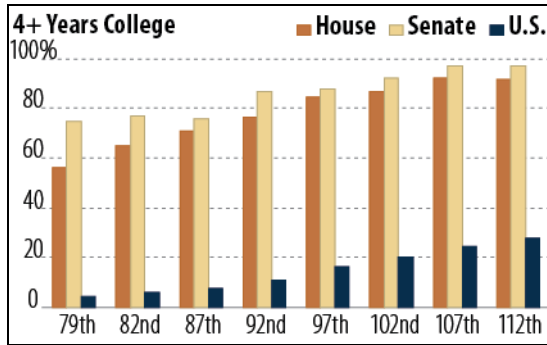
U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1944-1945* (Washington: GPO, 1945), pp. 228-229.

²⁶ CQ Press reports attendance and graduate rates instead of years of school. Based on this data, this figure includes Members who graduated high school and did not pursue further education, Members who attended some college, and Members who obtained a college degree. This includes Members who received associate’s degrees and Members who received bachelor’s degrees: this may inflate the proportion of high school graduates slightly, since some Members will be counted twice, if achieving an associate’s degree on the way to achieving a bachelor’s degree. In some instances, Members have earned undergraduate or graduate degrees while serving in Congress. In some instances, the CQ Press data were determined not to have been updated to reflect those changes. As a consequence some levels of educational attainment may be underreported in the CQ Press data.

²⁷ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, “Selected Social Characteristics in the United States: 2009,” http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-ds_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-_caller=geoselect&-format.

²⁸ In the 112th Congress, CQ Press lists one Representative with “Education Unknown.”

Figure 9. Four or More Years of College Completed by Representatives, Senators, and U.S. Population, Selected Congresses Since 1945



Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection; CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*; U.S. Census Bureau; and CRS calculations. U.S. data are based on Americans aged 25 years or older.

Historically, a majority of Representatives and Senators have also held a college degree. The percentage of college graduation rates has increased more markedly since the 79th Congress than high school graduation rates among Members. Members of Congress also have a higher rate of college attendance and postgraduate education compared to the American population aged 25 years or older. **Figure 9** compares the percentages of Representatives, Senators, and the U.S. population with four or more years of college education.²⁹ The percentage for each group has generally increased since 1945, though a much higher proportion of Senators and Representatives have attended four or more years of college than the U.S. population at large today. **Table 11** provides high school and undergraduate college completion data for Representatives in selected Congresses since 1945. **Table 12** provides the same data

over the same period for Senators.

During the 79th Congress, only 4.6% of American adults aged 25 years or older completed four or more years of college.³⁰ In the same time period, 56.3% of Representatives held a bachelor’s degree, and 75.0% of Senators held a bachelor’s degree. In addition to traditional four-year colleges and universities, Members of the 79th Congress also attended junior colleges, correspondence schools, art schools, normal (teacher training) schools, agricultural schools, seminary schools, and U.S. service academies.

The national average for four or more years of college completed grew to 27.9% in 2009.³¹ By the 112th Congress, however, 95.2% of Representatives, and 99% of Senators held a bachelor’s degree. Although traditional four-year colleges and universities are the most commonly attended institutions, some Members also attended U.S. service academies or community colleges, although CQ Press does not identify attendance by school. In the 112th Congress, 21 Representatives and 1 Senator held associate’s degrees. For 6 Representatives, this was the

²⁹ CQ Press provides the reported academic degrees earned by a Representative or Senator. Columns for Representatives and Senators represent the percent of Members with bachelor’s degrees, which typically take four years to earn. In some cases, however, a Representative or Senator could have earned a bachelor’s degree in less than four years. American population information came from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, which measures educational attainment as a percent of individuals over 25 who completed four or more years of college. These measures capture the same idea in many cases, but it is important to note that they are different measures, and may not be completely comparable.

³⁰ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1944-1945* (Washington: GPO, 1945), pp. 228-229.

³¹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, “Selected Social Characteristics in the United States: 2009,” http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-ds_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_-&-lang=en&-_caller=geoselect&-format=.

highest degree obtained, but the other Members with associate's degrees also received bachelor's degrees.

The greatest change in Member education since the 79th Congress has been the increased number of graduate degrees. During the 112th Congress, 72.6% of Representatives and 76.0% of Senators held graduate degrees.³² By contrast, only 15.6% of Representatives and 33.1% of Senators held graduate degrees in the 79th Congress. Both then and now, professional degrees are the most common type of advanced degree held among Representatives and Senators. During the 112th Congress, 40.4% of Representatives held professional degrees, and 53.0% of Senators held professional degrees. Only 28.5% of Representatives and 23.0% of Senators held master's degrees in the 112th Congress. Doctoral degrees are fairly rare among Members, with 3.7% of Representatives in the 112th Congress holding such a degree and no Senators.

Religion

Figure 10 provides a comparison of self-identified religious affiliation among the Representatives and Senators in the 112th Congress, and the U.S. adult population in 2008, the latest date for which inclusive data are available.³³ Data identifying the religious affiliations of Representatives, Senators and the U.S. population during the same periods are provided in **Table 14**.

In both chambers, the percentages of Members identifying an affiliation grew through the 102nd Congress, before decreasing in the 107th and 112th Congresses. There also have been increases in the number of Members providing information. For example, in the 79th Congress, CQ Press provided information for 32 Senators and 172 Representatives.³⁴ In the 112th Congress, information regarding religious affiliation was specified for 92 Senators and 404 Representatives. **Table 13** in the data section provides affiliation data for Representatives and Senators for selected Congresses since 1945.

Religious affiliation data show that Representatives and Senators identify a religious affiliation in higher proportions than that of the general public. Of those who are affiliated, Representatives and Senators identify themselves as Christian or Jewish³⁵ in greater proportions than those affiliated with those faiths in the U.S. population. Among Christian denominations, Representatives and Senators are affiliated with Catholic, Mormon, and orthodox churches in greater proportion than the U.S. population. In the 112th Congress, Representatives are affiliated

³² This includes master's degrees, doctoral degrees, and professional degrees. Generally, in contemporary times, graduate professional degrees are awarded at the completion of a course of study that prepares a student for a specific profession or career track. In the CQ Press data, these include the following: medical degrees (MD, DO), dental degrees (DMD, DDS), law degrees (LLB and JD), and Master's degrees in business administration (MBA) and public administration (MPA).

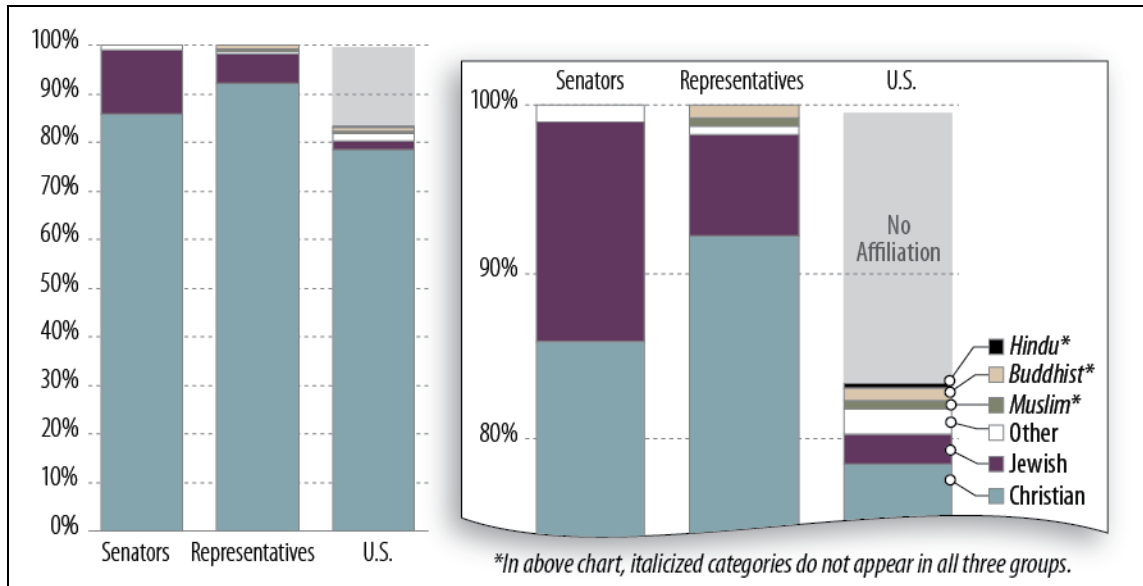
³³ Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*, Washington, DC, February 2008, p. 12, <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>.

³⁴ Comparing the level of affiliation across time may be problematic for a number of reasons. First, it cannot be determined from the CQ Press data whether the differences in levels of affiliation may be ascribed to the extent of affiliation; reluctance to discuss private matters, including religious affiliation during the early years covered by the data, or the potential political benefits of identifying an affiliation in later years; or differences in the way CQ Press collected its data over time.

³⁵ The CQ Press data did not identify Jewish Representatives and Senators among the various traditions or movements of that faith.

with Muslim and Buddhist faiths in approximate proportion to the U.S. population; there are no Muslim or Buddhist adherents in the Senate, nor Hindus in either chamber.

Figure 10. Religious Affiliation of Representatives, Senators, and U.S. Population
Members, 112th Congress, Public, 2008



Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection; and CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress* for Members of Congress; Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic* for the U.S. population; and CRS calculations.

Representatives

In each of the selected Congresses, most Representatives who specified a religious affiliation have identified Christianity or a Christian denomination.³⁶ The lowest level of Christian identification was 90.3% in the 102nd Congress; the highest, 97.7%, occurred in the 79th Congress.³⁷ Of those Representatives who specified a Christian faith, a majority have identified a Protestant denomination³⁸ since 1945. The Protestant majority peaked in the 82nd Congress, and has steadily declined, reaching its lowest level in the 111th Congress at 55.0%, before increasing slightly in the 112th Congress, to 56.1%. Representatives who identified an affiliation with Judaism ranged from a low of 0.6% in the 79th Congress, and peaked at 7.7% in the 102nd Congress. In the 112th Congress the level is 6.2%.

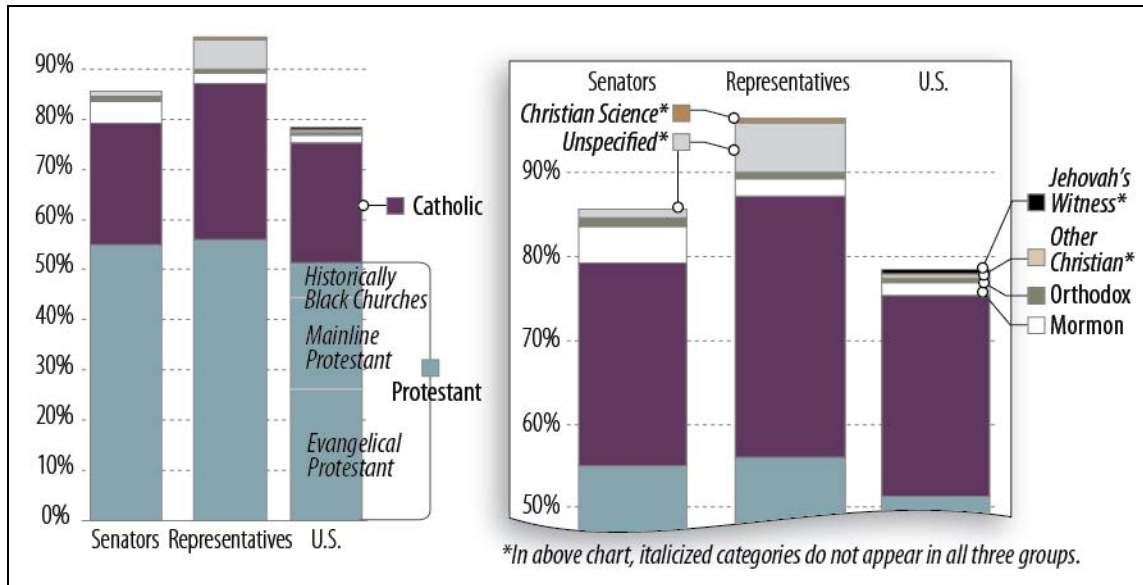
Table 16 provides affiliation data for Representatives in selected Congresses since 1945. **Table 17** provides data on Representatives who identified a Christian denomination.

³⁶ Christian responses identified in the CQ Press data include the following: Cases in which religion was identified as “Christian” without further specification; mainline and evangelical Protestant denominations, including historically Black churches, Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox, and other Christian.

³⁷ Aggregated religious affiliation data tables are available upon request.

³⁸ Protestant includes the following responses: Protestant responses without further specification, and any responses that identified a mainline or evangelical Protestant denomination, or historically Black churches. CQ Press data do not distinguish between Protestant churches in mainline or evangelical traditions.

Figure 11. Christian Denominations Identified by Representatives, Senators, and the U.S. Population
Members, 112th Congress, U.S. Public, 2008



Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection; and CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress* for Members of Congress; Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic* for the U.S. population; and CRS calculations. Member percentages are based on 404 Representatives and 91 Senators who specified affiliation with a Christian denomination or tradition.

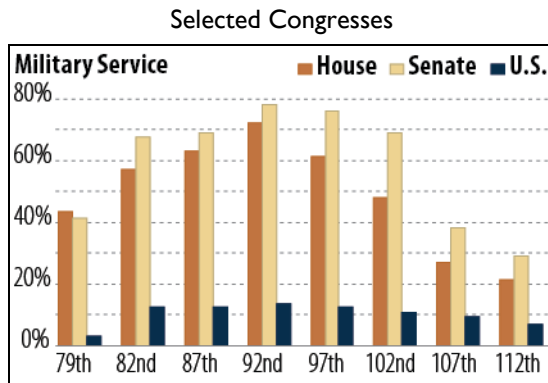
Senators

Among Senators who identified a religious affiliation, Christianity or a Christian denomination was identified by at least 85% of Senators in each of the selected Congresses. Senators who identified Judaism ranged from zero in the 79th Congress, increasing to a high of 14% in the 110th Congress before falling slightly in the 111th and 112th Congresses. In the 112th Congress, Senators who identified a Jewish affiliation comprised 13.2% of those who identified a religion.

Among Senators who identified themselves as Christians, a majority offered a Protestant denomination in each of the selected Congresses. The highest percentage of Protestant Senators occurred in the 82nd Congress at 88.3%. This level fell steadily through the 111th Congress, to 61.3%, before showing a slight upturn to 64.1% in the 112th Congress. **Table 18** provides affiliation data for Representatives in selected Congresses since 1945. **Table 19** provides data on Senators who identified a Christian denomination.

Military Service

Figure 12. Military Service by Representatives, Senators, and U.S. Population



Source: CQ Press U.S. Census Bureau, Susan B. Carter, Scott Sigmund Gartner, Michael R. Haines, et al., *Historical Statistics of the United States*.

Member military service grew gradually since World War II before peaking at 72% in the House and 78% in the Senate in the 92nd Congress. Thereafter, the total number of veterans declined to 18% in the House and 27.8% in the Senate in the 111th Congress. For the 112th Congress, the number of Members who have served in the military is up slightly in both chambers, with 21.4% of Representatives and 28.9% of Senators having previously served in the armed forces.³⁹

Table 20 provides data on the Representatives, Senators and members of the U.S. population who have served in the military.

Compared with the general population, Representatives and Senators have served in the military in greater proportions. For example, in the 79th Congress, 43.5% of Representatives and 41.4% of senators had served in the military, while only 3.3% of the adult U.S. population were veterans.⁴⁰ At the same time, the proportion of Members and the general public who have served fluctuates in tandem. The percentage of veteran Members increased from the 79th to the 92nd Congresses and then declined through the 111th Congress, in a manner similar to the trend seen within the general population.

Concluding Observations

A challenge to understanding an enduring institution like Congress is the broad scope of its activities, and the lack of consistent, reliable information about its various components over time. This report focuses on selected characteristics of Members that appear to be consistent over a period of six decades. Members in 2011 are older, more likely to identify a religious affiliation, and include more women and members of racial and ethnic groups than Members in 1945. The data suggest that since the 79th Congress, Members have had high levels of education, and worked in professional positions prior to coming to Congress. The number of Members who previously served in the military has risen and fallen, largely in tandem with the levels of service in the broader population.

These findings arguably provide a more robust understanding of the composition of Representatives and Senators over time than other studies that focus on the membership of individual Congresses. A consistent data source enables longitudinal analysis, but comparisons to

³⁹ Data identifying the service of Representatives and Senators by military branch are available upon request.

⁴⁰ Susan B. Carter, Scott Sigmund Gartner, Michael R. Haines, et al., *Historical Statistics of the United States*, vol. 5 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 5-408.

other profiles of Congress, which may rely on different data sources, characteristics of Members, or time periods, should be made with caution.

Member Characteristics Data Tables

Age

Table 2. Age of Representatives, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	Mean (Average)	Median
79 th	52.77	51.84
82 nd	52.61	52.17
87 th	52.80	52.65
92 nd	52.55	51.74
97 th	48.90	48.95
102 nd	52.95	51.73
107 th	53.87	53.89
108 th	54.48	54.95
109 th	55.55	56.22
110 th	56.38	56.59
111 th	56.94	57.26
112 th	56.65	57.17

Source: Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp>; CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress*, 112th Congress, CRS calculations.

Table 3. Age of Senators, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	Mean (Average)	Median
79 th	58.96	59.29
82 nd	57.22	55.91
87 th	58.16	58.83
92 nd	56.99	56.29
97 th	52.81	51.69
102 nd	57.36	56.36
107 th	59.30	58.43
108 th	59.92	59.35
109 th	60.85	60.98
110 th	62.24	62.76

Congress	Mean (Average)	Median
111 th	63.23	62.11
112 th	62.23	61.41

Source: Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp>; CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress*, 112th Congress, CRS calculations.

Congressional Service Tenure

Table 4. Average Service Tenure of Representatives and Senators, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	Average Years of Service	
	House	Senate
79 th	7.08	8.17
82 nd	7.60	7.03
87 th	9.26	8.85
92 nd	9.73	10.88
97 th	7.45	7.49
102 nd	10.34	11.26
107 th	9.22	11.27
108 th	9.27	11.76
109 th	10.10	12.31
110 th	10.25	13.06
111 th	10.29	13.37
112 th	9.77	11.36

Source: CRS analysis of ICPSR and proprietary data. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, and Carroll McKibbin. *Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1996: Merged Data* [computer file] 10th ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor: MI: Inter-university for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 1997.

Notes: Member service tenure data for the House and Senate since 1789 are available in CRS Report R41545, *Congressional Careers: Service Tenure and Patterns of Member Service, 1789-2011*, by Matthew Eric Glassman and Amber Hope Wilhelm.

Sex

Table 5. Female and Male Representatives, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	Female	Male
79 th	2.07%	97.93%
82 nd	1.38%	98.62%

Congress	Female	Male
87 th	3.20%	96.80%
92 nd	2.76%	97.24%
97 th	4.15%	95.85%
102 nd	6.44%	93.56%
107 th	13.59%	86.41%
108 th	13.56%	86.44%
109 th	14.98%	85.02%
110 th	11.49%	88.51%
111 th	17.28%	82.72%
112 th	16.55%	83.45%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress*, 112th Congress, CRS calculations.

Notes: Percentages are based on the number of Representatives who took seats on the first day of a new Congress. In the 87th Congress there were 437 Representatives due to the temporary expansion of House membership to provide representation to Alaska and Hawaii after their admission to the Union. On the first day of the 111th, 109th, 107th, and 97th Congresses, 434 of 435 Representatives were present. Additional information on the number of women in Congress is available in the historical data section of <http://womenincongress.house.gov/>; and U.S. House, Committee on House Administration and Office of the Clerk, *Women in Congress, 1917-2006* (Washington, GPO: 2006); and CRS Report RL30261, *Women in the United States Congress: 1917-2012*, by Jennifer E. Manning and Colleen J. Shogan.

Table 6. Female and Male Senators, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	Female	Male
79 th	0.00%	100.00%
82 nd	1.04%	98.96%
87 th	2.00%	98.00%
92 nd	1.00%	99.00%
97 th	2.00%	98.00%
102 nd	2.00%	98.00%
107 th	13.00%	87.00%
108 th	14.00%	86.00%
109 th	14.00%	86.00%
110 th	16.00%	84.00%
111 th	17.35%	82.65%
112 th	17.00%	83.00%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress*, 112th Congress, CRS calculations.

Notes: Percentages are based on the number of Senators who took seats on the first day of a new Congress. There were 96 seats in the Senate in the 79th and 82nd Congresses. Alaska and Hawaii became states in 1959 increasing the number of Senate seats to 100 in subsequent Congresses. On the first day of the 111th Congress, 98 Senators took the oath of office. Additional information on the number of women in Congress is available in the historical data section of <http://womenincongress.house.gov/>; and U.S. House, Committee on House

Administration and Office of the Clerk, *Women in Congress, 1917-2006* (Washington, GPO: 2006); and CRS Report RL30261, *Women in the United States Congress: 1917-2012*, by Jennifer E. Manning and Colleen J. Shogan.

Previous Occupation

Table 7. Most Frequently Reported Occupations of Representatives, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	Agriculture	Banking or Business	Congressional Aide	Education	Law
79 th	10.80%	19.31%	1.61%	9.20%	41.61%
82 nd	11.95%	21.40%	3.45%	9.43%	38.16%
87 th	11.21%	19.22%	3.89%	6.86%	42.56%
92 nd	9.43%	20.46%	4.83%	8.97%	41.38%
97 th	7.83%	23.96%	5.99%	9.91%	34.56%
102 nd	4.83%	27.59%	6.90%	11.72%	29.43%
107 th	5.07%	24.65%	5.53%	12.90%	22.12%
108 th	4.37%	22.07%	5.06%	11.49%	21.15%
109 th	3.67%	21.40%	5.76%	11.29%	21.20%
110 th	2.99%	20.23%	5.98%	11.03%	24.37%
111 th	2.53%	18.20%	4.84%	8.76%	22.12%
112 th	2.99%	21.38%	5.06%	6.44%	23.91%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*, CRS calculations.

Notes: Percentage of Representatives reporting the occupation as “Job 1” in that Congress. Percentages may understate the extent to which Representatives practiced an occupation, since some listed as many as five occupations. Further, CQ Press does not include Members’ prior elected service in state or local offices (which are common paths to congressional careers) in occupational data, which may lead to a significant understatement of the public service/politics category, and which could otherwise affect the most frequently reported pre-congressional occupations.

Table 8. Most Frequently Reported Occupations of Senators, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	Agriculture	Banking or Business	Congressional Aide	Education	Law
79 th	13.54%	11.46%	3.13%	7.29%	43.75%
82 nd	21.88%	15.63%	3.13%	7.29%	38.54%
87 th	13.00%	15.00%	3.00%	11.00%	44.00%
92 nd	11.00%	16.00%	2.00%	10.00%	51.00%
97 th	11.00%	24.00%	0.00%	6.00%	44.00%
102 nd	9.00%	22.00%	3.00%	8.00%	45.00%
107 th	5.00%	22.00%	5.00%	10.00%	38.00%
108 th	5.00%	21.00%	4.00%	7.00%	42.00%

Congress	Agriculture	Banking or Business	Congressional Aide	Education	Law
109 th	4.00%	23.00%	2.00%	7.00%	41.00%
110 th	5.00%	23.00%	2.00%	9.00%	41.00%
111 th	3.06%	19.39%	3.06%	9.18%	37.76%
112 th	3.00%	20.00%	3.00%	7.00%	37.00%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress*, 112th Congress, CRS calculations.

Notes: Percentage of Senators reporting the occupation as “Job 1” in that Congress. Percentages may understate the extent to which Representatives practiced an occupation, since some listed as many as five occupations. Further, CQ Press does not include Members’ prior elected service in state or local offices (which are common paths to congressional careers) in occupational data, which may lead to a significant understatement of the public service/politics category, and which could otherwise affect the most frequently report pre-congressional occupations. Percentages are based on the number of Senators who took seats on the first day of a new Congress. There were 96 seats in the Senate in the 79th and 82nd Congresses. Alaska and Hawaii became states in 1959 increasing the number of Senate seats to 100 in subsequent Congresses. On the first day of the 111th Congress, 98 Senators took the oath of office.

Race/Ethnicity

Table 9. Race and Ethnicity of Representatives, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	African American	Asian American	Hispanic	Native American	White
79 th	0.46%	0.00%	0.23%	0.00%	99.31%
82 nd	0.46%	0.00%	0.23%	0.00%	99.31%
87 th	0.92%	0.46%	0.23%	0.23%	98.17%
92 nd	2.76%	0.46%	1.15%	0.00%	95.63%
97 th	3.92%	0.69%	1.38%	0.00%	94.01%
102 nd	5.75%	0.69%	2.30%	0.23%	91.03%
107 th	8.29%	0.92%	4.38%	0.00%	86.41%
108 th	8.51%	0.69%	5.06%	0.23%	85.52%
109 th	9.22%	0.69%	5.30%	0.23%	84.56%
110 th	9.20%	1.15%	5.29%	0.23%	84.14%
111 th	8.99%	1.38%	5.53%	0.23%	83.87%
112 th	9.66%	1.61%	5.52%	0.23%	82.99%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress*, 112th Congress, CRS calculations.

Notes: Percentages are based on the number of Representatives who took seats on the first day of a new Congress. In the 87th Congress there were 437 Representatives due to the temporary expansion of House membership to provide representation to Alaska and Hawaii after their admission to the Union. On the first day of the 111th, 109th, 107th, and 97th Congresses, 434 of 435 Representatives were present. Additional information on the number of Members from various racial and ethnic groups is available from the following sources: U.S. House, *Black Americans in Congress, 1870-2007*, Office of the Clerk, Office of History and Preservation (Washington, GPO: 2008), <http://baic.house.gov/>; Hispanic Americans in Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/rr/>

hispanic/congress/; CRS Report RL30378, *African American Members of the United States Congress: 1870-2011*, by Jennifer E. Manning and Colleen J. Shogan; and CRS Report 97-398, *Asian Pacific Americans in the United States Congress*, by Lorraine H. Tong.

Table 10. Race and Ethnicity of Senators, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	African American	Asian American	Hispanic	Native American	White
79 th	0.00%	0.00%	1.04%	0.00%	98.96%
82 nd	0.00%	0.00%	1.04%	0.00%	98.96%
87 th	0.00%	1.00%	1.00%	0.00%	98.00%
92 nd	1.00%	2.00%	1.00%	0.00%	96.00%
97 th	0.00%	3.00%	0.00%	0.00%	97.00%
102 nd	0.00%	2.00%	0.00%	0.00%	98.00%
107 th	0.00%	2.00%	0.00%	1.00%	97.00%
108 th	0.00%	2.00%	0.00%	1.00%	97.00%
109 th	1.00%	2.00%	2.00%	0.00%	95.00%
110 th	1.00%	2.00%	3.00%	0.00%	94.00%
111 th	0.00%	2.04%	3.06%	0.00%	94.90%
112 th	0.00%	2.00%	2.00%	0.00%	96.00%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress*, 112th Congress, CRS calculations.

Notes: Percentages are based on the number of Senators who took seats on the first day of a new Congress. There were 96 seats in the Senate in the 79th and 82nd Congresses. Alaska and Hawaii became states in 1959, increasing the number of Senate seats to 100 in subsequent Congresses. On the first day of the 111th Congress, 98 Senators took the oath of office. Additional information on the number of Members from various racial and ethnic groups is available from the following sources: U.S. House, *Black Americans in Congress, 1870-2007*, Office of the Clerk, Office of History and Preservation (Washington, GPO: 2008), <http://baic.house.gov/>; Hispanic Americans in Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/congress/>; CRS Report RL30378, *African American Members of the United States Congress: 1870-2011*, by Jennifer E. Manning and Colleen J. Shogan; and CRS Report 97-398, *Asian Pacific Americans in the United States Congress*, by Lorraine H. Tong.

Education

Table 11. High School and Undergraduate Completion of Representatives, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	High School	College
79 th	97.93%	56.32%
82 nd	97.47%	65.06%
87 th	97.48%	70.94%
92 nd	97.70%	76.55%
97 th	97.01%	84.37%
102 nd	98.39%	86.67%

Congress	High School	College
107 th	99.08%	92.41%
108 th	99.08%	91.26%
109 th	99.08%	90.80%
110 th	99.08%	91.03%
111 th	99.54%	91.95%
112 th	99.08%	91.72%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress*, 112th Congress, CRS calculations.

Notes: College completion based on Member reports of finishing four or more years of education after high school.

Table 12. High School and Undergraduate Completion of Senators, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	High School	College
79 th	94.79%	75.00%
82 nd	94.79%	77.08%
87 th	97.00%	76.00%
92 nd	98.00%	87.00%
97 th	100.00%	88.00%
102 nd	100.00%	92.00%
107 th	100.00%	97.00%
108 th	100.00%	98.00%
109 th	100.00%	98.00%
110 th	100.00%	99.00%
111 th	100.00%	98.98%
112 th	100.00%	99.00%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress*, 112th Congress, CRS calculations.

Notes: College completion based on Member reports of finishing four or more years of education after high school. Percentages are based on the number of Senators who took seats on the first day of a new Congress. There were 96 seats in the Senate in the 79th and 82nd Congresses. Alaska and Hawaii became states in 1959, increasing the number of Senate seats to 100 in subsequent Congresses. On the first day of the 111th Congress, 98 Senators took the oath of office.

Religion

Table 13. Representatives Specifying a Religious Affiliation, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	Representatives	Senators
79 th	39.54%	33.68%

Congress	Representatives	Senators
82 nd	64.83%	65.98%
87 th	96.55%	99.00%
92 nd	97.70%	100.00%
97 th	99.08%	100.00%
102 nd	99.08%	99.00%
107 th	91.72%	96.00%
108 th	88.28%	93.00%
109 th	89.43%	92.00%
110 th	90.11%	93.00%
111 th	91.03%	90.72%
112 th	92.87%	92.00%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress*, 112th Congress, CRS calculations.

Table 14. Religious Affiliation of Representatives, Senators, and the U.S. Population
Members, 112th Congress, U.S. Population, 2008

Affiliation	Representatives	Senators	U.S.
Christian	92.06%	85.71%	78.50%
Jewish	6.20%	13.19%	1.70%
Muslim	0.50%	0.00%	0.60%
Buddhist	0.74%	0.00%	.70%
Other ^a	0.50%	1.10%	1.50%
Hindu	0.00%	0.00%	0.40%
No Affiliation	— ^b	— ^b	16.10%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection; and CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress*, 112th Congress for Members of Congress; Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*, Washington, DC, February 2008, p. 12, <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>, for the U.S. population; and CRS calculations.

Notes: Data for Members of Congress at the beginning of the 112th Congress (2011-2012). Percentages are based on 404 Representatives and 91 Senators who responded to CQ Press regarding a religious affiliation. U.S. population data are based on a 2008 sample of 35,000 respondents.

- a. Other religious affiliations reported in CQ Press data include Quaker; Unitarian; Unitarian Universalist; Universalist; Society of Friends; and some specific identification of participation in certain Quaker Annual Meetings. Other affiliations in the U.S. population data include Unitarian and other liberal faiths, New Age, and Native American religions.
- b. CQ Press did not provide information on the number of unaffiliated Members. Instead it provided a category called “not specified.” In the 112th Congress, 7.13% of Representatives, and 8.00% of Senators did not specify their religious affiliation, if any. See **Figure 10**.

Table 15. Denominations of Christian Representatives, Senators, and the U.S. Population

Members, 112th Congress, U.S. Population, 2008

Christians	Representatives ^a	Senators ^b	U.S.
Protestant	56.06%	54.95%	51.3%
Evangelical Protestant	–	–	26.3%
Mainline Protestant	–	–	18.1%
Historically Black Churches	–	–	6.9%
Catholic	31.02%	24.18%	23.9%
Christian Science	0.74%	0.00%	–
Mormon	2.23%	4.40%	1.7%
Jehovah's Witness	–	–	0.7%
Orthodox	0.74%	1.10%	0.6%
Unspecified	5.71%	1.10%	–
Other Christian	–	–	0.3%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection; and CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress for Members of Congress*; Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*, Washington, DC, February 2008, p. 12, <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>, for the U.S. population; and CRS calculations. For consistency and comparability, categories are based on those provided for the U.S. population by the Pew Forum. Researchers and adherents may identify affiliations, and faith practices differently.

Notes: Data for Members of Congress at the beginning of the 112th Congress (2011-2012). U.S. population data are based on a 2008 sample of 35,000 respondents.

- a. Percentages are based on 404 Representatives who specified affiliation with a Christian denomination or tradition.
- b. Percentages are based on 91 Senators who specified affiliation with a Christian denomination or tradition.

Table 16. Religious Affiliation of Representatives, at the Start of Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	Affiliated	Christian ^a	Jewish	Muslim	Buddhist	Other ^b
79 th	172	97.67%	0.58%	0.00%	0.00%	1.74%
82 nd	282	95.74%	1.77%	0.00%	0.00%	2.48%
87 th	420	95.71%	2.62%	0.00%	0.00%	1.67%
92 nd	425	95.76%	2.82%	0.00%	0.00%	1.41%
97 th	431	92.11%	6.03%	0.00%	0.00%	1.86%
102 nd	431	90.26%	7.66%	0.00%	0.00%	2.09%
107 th	399	92.98%	6.27%	0.00%	0.00%	0.75%
108 th	384	92.97%	6.25%	0.00%	0.00%	0.78%
109 th	389	93.06%	6.17%	0.00%	0.00%	0.77%
110 th	392	91.58%	7.14%	0.26%	0.51%	0.51%
111 th	396	90.91%	7.32%	0.51%	0.51%	0.76%

Congress	Affiliated	Christian ^a	Jewish	Muslim	Buddhist	Other ^b
112 th	404	92.06%	6.20%	0.50%	0.74%	0.50%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*, CRS calculations. For consistency and comparability, categories are based on those provided for the U.S. population by the Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*, Washington, DC, February 2008, p. 12, <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>. Researchers and adherents may identify affiliations, and faith practices differently.

- a. Christian responses identified in the CQ Press data include the following: Cases in which religion was identified as “Christian” without further specification; mainline and evangelical Protestant denominations, including historically Black churches, Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox, and other Christian.
- b. Other religious affiliations reported in the CQ Press data include Quaker; Unitarian; Unitarian Universalist; Universalist; Society of Friends; and some specific identification of participation in certain Quaker Annual Meetings.

Table 17. Denominations of Christian-Affiliated Representatives Since 1945

Congress	Christian Affiliation	Catholic ^b	Christian Science	Mormon ^c	Orthodox	Protestant	Not Specified ^d
79 th	168	17.26%	0.60%	0.00%	0.00%	77.38%	4.76%
82 nd	270	17.41%	0.37%	0.37	0.00%	79.26%	2.59%
87 th	402	21.64%	1.24%	1.00%	0.00%	74.63%	1.49%
92 nd	407	24.08%	0.74%	1.47%	1.23%	70.27%	2.21%
97 th	397	30.23%	0.50%	1.76%	1.01%	65.24%	1.26%
102 nd	389	30.08%	0.77%	2.31%	1.54%	64.27%	1.03%
107 th	371	31.54%	1.15%	2.07%	0.46%	52.87%	1.84%
108 th	357	31.65%	1.40%	2.52%	0.28%	61.34%	2.80%
109 th	362	33.15%	1.38%	2.49%	0.55%	58.84%	3.59%
110 th	359	33.43%	1.39%	2.51%	1.11%	56.55%	5.01%
111 th	360	35.56%	0.83%	2.22%	1.39%	55.00%	5.00%
112 th	371	33.69%	0.81%	2.43%	0.81%	56.06%	6.20%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*, CRS calculations. For consistency and comparability, categories are based on those provided for the U.S. population by the Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*, Washington, DC, February 2008, p. 12, <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>. Researchers, and adherents may identify affiliations, and faith practices differently.

- a. Christian responses identified in the CQ Press data include the following: Cases in which religion was identified as “Christian” without further specification; mainline and evangelical Protestant denominations, including historically Black churches, Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox, and other Christian.
- b. Includes “Catholic” responses without further specification, and “Roman Catholic” responses.
- c. Includes “Mormon” responses without further specification, and “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints;” and “Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints” responses.
- d. No Christian denomination specified.

Table 18. Religious Affiliation of Senators, Selected Congresses Since 1945

Congress	Affiliated	Christian ^a	Jewish	Muslim	Buddhist	Other ^b
79 th	31	96.88%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.13%
82 nd	64	93.75%	1.56%	0.00%	0.00%	4.69%
87 th	99	91.92%	1.01%	0.00%	0.00%	7.07%
92 nd	100	93.00%	2.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.00%
97 th	100	91.00%	6.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.00%
102 nd	99	88.89%	8.08%	0.00%	0.00%	3.03%
107 th	96	88.54%	10.42%	0.00%	0.00%	1.04%
108 th	93	87.10%	11.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.08%
109 th	92	86.96%	11.96%	0.00%	0.00%	1.09%
110 th	93	84.95%	13.98%	0.00%	0.00%	1.08%
111 th	91	85.23%	13.64%	0.00%	0.00%	1.14%
112 th	91	85.71%	13.19%	0.00%	0.00%	1.10%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*, CRS calculations. For consistency and comparability, categories are based on those provided for the U.S. population by the Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*, Washington, DC, February 2008, p. 12, <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>. Researchers, and adherents may identify affiliations, and faith practices differently.

- a. Christian responses identified in the CQ Press data include the following: Cases in which religion was identified as “Christian” without further specification; mainline and evangelical Protestant denominations, including historically Black churches, Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox, and other Christian.
- b. Other religious affiliations reported in the CQ Press data include Quaker; Unitarian; Unitarian Universalist; Universalist; Society of Friends; and some specific identification of participation in certain Quaker Annual Meetings.

Table 19. Denominations of Christian-Affiliated Senators Since 1945

Congress	Christian Affiliation ^a	Catholic ^b	Christian Science	Mormon ^c	Orthodox	Protestant	Not Specified ^d
79 th	31	3.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	83.87%	12.90%
82 nd	64	3.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	88.33%	3.33%
87 th	91	13.19%	0.00%	4.40%	0.00%	82.42%	0.00%
92 nd	93	11.83%	1.08%	4.30%	0.00%	81.72%	1.08%
97 th	91	17.58%	1.10%	4.40%	2.20%	73.63%	1.10%
102 nd	88	21.59%	0.00%	3.41%	1.14%	72.73%	1.14%
107 th	85	27.06%	0.00%	5.88%	2.35%	62.35%	2.35%
108 th	81	27.16%	0.00%	6.17%	2.47%	61.73%	2.47%
109 th	80	26.25%	0.00%	6.25%	2.50%	63.75%	1.25%
110 th	79	27.85%	0.00%	6.33%	1.27%	63.29%	1.27%
111 th	78	30.67%	0.00%	5.33%	1.33%	61.33%	1.33%
112 th	78	28.21%	0.00%	5.13%	1.28%	64.10%	1.28%

Source: CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*, CRS calculations. For consistency and comparability, categories are based on those provided for the U.S. population by the Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*, Washington, DC, February 2008, p. 12, <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>. Researchers, and adherents may identify affiliations, and faith practices differently.

- a. Christian responses identified in the CQ Press data include the following: Cases in which religion was identified as “Christian” without further specification; mainline and evangelical Protestant denominations, including historically Black churches, Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox, and other Christian.
- b. Includes Catholic responses without further specification, and Roman Catholic responses.
- c. Includes Mormon responses without further specification, and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints responses.
- d. No Christian denomination specified.

Military Service

Table 20. Military Service by Representatives, Senators, and U.S. Population Since 1945

Congress	Representatives	Senators	U.S.
79 th	21.30%	28.92%	7.10% ^a
82 nd	18.04%	27.78%	–
87 th	20.14%	29.00%	–
92 nd	21.48%	30.00%	–
97 th	22.99%	35.00%	–
102 nd	26.96%	38.00%	9.40% ^b
107 th	47.82%	69.00%	11.00% ^c
108 th	61.43%	76.00%	12.60% ^c
109 th	72.02%	78.00%	13.60% ^c
110 th	63.16%	69.00%	12.60% ^c
111 th	56.97%	67.71%	12.70% ^c
112 th	43.48%	41.43%	3.30% ^c

Source: Members, CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection, CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*; U.S. population, as noted; CRS calculations. – indicates no data.

- a. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, “Selected Social Characteristics in the United States: 2009,” http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-ds_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-_caller=geoselect&-format=.
- b. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *2000 Census of Population, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF-3), DP-2*, “Profile of Selected Social Characteristics, 2000,” http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/QTTTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U_DP2&-geo_id=01000US&-ds_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U&-_lang=en&-format=&-CONTEXT=qt.
- c. Susan B. Carter, Scott Sigmund Gartner, Michael R. Haines, et al., *Historical Statistics of the United States*, vol. 5 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 5-408.

Appendix. Developing Member Data

Beyond the basic information necessary to ascertain the qualifications for office of a U.S. Senator or Representative,⁴¹ the disclosure of details of a Member's race, education, previous occupation, or other characteristics appears to be voluntary, and has not been collected by congressional or other governmental authorities. This report provides data on Member characteristics and the tenure of Member service based on sources and methodologies described below.

Member Characteristics

Data on Member characteristics provided in this report are drawn from two non-congressional entities.⁴² The principal source of Member data in this report is the CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Congress Collection (hereafter CQ Press), a subscription database that provides data on Members and a range of characteristics according to the following variables: Congress; Representative or Senator; political party; state; age; religion; race/ethnicity; previous occupation; sex; and military service. CQ Press provides data on Representatives, Senators, and individuals who served as President and Vice President of the United States.⁴³ The database does not contain information on Members who have served as Delegates⁴⁴ or Resident Commissioner for Puerto Rico.⁴⁵

The second source, from which data on new Members of the 112th Congress were taken, is CQ Roll Call's *Guide to the New Congress*. The third, U.S. population data, is based on the results of decennial censuses conducted by the Bureau of the Census between 1940 and 2010, and other official government sources as appropriate. Data on religious affiliations of the U.S. population are taken from a private source, as discussed in the "Religion" section below.

Specific Congresses were selected to provide detailed information on changes in Member characteristics in recent Congresses, and to compare those changes to previous Congresses. The four most recent Congresses (108th-112th Congresses) were collected to demonstrate contemporary Member characteristics. Data for the 82nd, 87th, 92nd, 97th, 102nd, and 107th

⁴¹ Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution requires that a Member of the House of Representatives be at least 25 years old, a citizen of the United States for at least seven years, and a resident of the state from which they are elected at the time they are elected. Article I, Section 3 requires that a Senator be at least 30 years old, a citizen of the United States for at least nine years, and resident of the state from which they are elected at the time they are elected.

⁴² The compilation and distribution of information about members of national legislatures is carried out by non-governmental entities in at least two other countries, and relied on for official purposes by a government entity in the United Kingdom. In Canada, The Public Policy Forum, which describes itself as "an independent, not-for-profit organization," has produced a profile of Canadian Parliamentarians. See Jonathon Dignan, "(Less) Male, (Even Less) Educated, (Even Less) Experienced & (Even more) White," April 5, 2009, available at <http://www.ppforum.ca/publications/lessmale-even-less-educated-even-less-experienced-%0Beven-more-white>. In the United Kingdom, since 1945, Nuffield College, Oxford University has sponsored studies of British Parliamentarians chosen in general elections. See Dennis Kavanaugh and Philip Cowley, *The British General Election of 2010* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). The House of Commons Library publishes a report that relies in part on Nuffield data. See Feargal McGuiness, *Social Backgrounds of MPs*, United Kingdom House of Commons Library, London, December 10, 2010, <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/briefing-papers/SN01528>.

⁴³ Data on presidential and vice presidential service are excluded from consideration in this report.

⁴⁴ There are currently five Delegates to Congress representing the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

⁴⁵ For more information, see CRS Report RL31856, *Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico*, by R. Eric Petersen.

Congresses are provided for comparison of Congresses at 10-year intervals from the beginning of the 112th Congress. The CQ Press data provides information on Members beginning in the 79th Congress, making that Congress the earliest for which comparable data are available.

Data for all Representatives and Senators who served on the day Congress convened in the selected Congresses in the 79th-111th Congresses, and returning Members of the 112th Congress, were taken from CQ Press' database. Data for new Members of the 112th Congress were taken from CQ Roll Call's *Guide to the New Congress*.⁴⁶ CQ Press and CQ Roll Call are separate entities with different corporate ownership. Previously, the material that comprises the CQ Press data were gathered and maintained by Congressional Quarterly, Inc., through research and reporting capacities that now are a part of CQ Roll Call. Some of the data have been reported in various forms in products created by Congressional Quarterly, Inc., CQ Press, or CQ Roll Call.⁴⁷ Those products may also rely on data that are not included in the CQ Press data. Consequently, there may be differences between data reported here and information reported in some commercial products issued by CQ Press, CQ Roll Call and other sources of congressional information.

According to CQ Press, their Member biographical data are derived from a variety of primary sources, including reporting, surveys administered to congressional offices, and official sources. CQ Press reports that it "uses multiple sources to confirm this information, including obituaries and excerpts from major newspapers, as sources do not always agree on precise dates."⁴⁸ CQ Press does not indicate whether the data underlying their database have been collected in a consistent manner over time.

Data provided in this report include the number of Representatives and Senators entitled to take seats in the House or Senate, respectively, on the first day of a new Congress. In the 79th and 82nd Congresses, the Senate had 96 seats representing the 48 states admitted to the Union. Membership of the House has been fixed at 435 seats since 1911, except for a temporary enlargement to 437 in the 86th (1959-1960) and 87th (included in this report) Congresses to accommodate Representatives from Alaska and Hawaii upon their admission as states. The number of House seats reverted to 435 following the 1960 census and reapportionment. On the first day of a new Congress, some seats may be vacant due to the illness or death of a Member-elect, a contested election, or other reason. On the first day of the 111th Congress in the Senate, for example, 98 Senators were present, and two seats were vacant. In the House, 434 of 435 Representatives were present on the first day of the 97th, 107th, 109th, and 111th Congresses with one seat vacant in each instance. Percentages provided in figures and data tables below are based on the number of Members who were present on the first day of a Congress in each chamber.

Due to differences in data collection or characterization, data in other studies on Member characteristics may differ from those presented in this report.

⁴⁶ CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*, November 4, 2010.

⁴⁷ These products include *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1996* (Alexandria, VA: CQ Staff Directories, Inc., 1997), *CQ Weekly*, formerly known as *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*; the Congressional Quarterly, Inc. *Almanac* and *Congress and the Nation* series; biennial editions of *Politics in America: Members of Congress in Washington and at Home*, published by CQ Press; and others.

⁴⁸ CQ Press, "Codebook for CQ Congress Collection Data Exports" (Washington: CQ Press, 2011), unnumbered pages.

Congressional Service Tenure

Data on career service patterns are drawn from three sources. For the 79th through 104th Congresses, data were drawn from the *Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1996*.⁴⁹ Data for the 105th through 111th Congresses were compiled from the *Congressional Directory*.⁵⁰ Data for the 112th Congress were obtained from the Clerk of the House and CQ Press's *Guide to the New Congress*.⁵¹

Chamber service and total congressional service were recorded for each member of each Congress, as of the first day of Congress. From these individual data, aggregate statistics were derived for each Congress.⁵²

Comparing Members to the U.S. Population

Comparing the small number of Members of Congress (generally 435 Representatives and 100 Senators⁵³) to the population of the United States (131.7 million in 1940,⁵⁴ 308.7 million in 2010⁵⁵) poses some challenges. Such challenges result, in part, from differences in scale. Others arise as a consequence of the way information about Members of Congress or the U.S. population is collected, or how the information has been categorized over time. Since in some instances, described below, there may be no direct comparison between the types of data available describing characteristics of Representatives, Senators and the U.S. population, any comparison between Members and the broader American public is potentially subject to a wide range of

⁴⁹ Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, and Carroll McKibbin. *Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1996: Merged Data [computer file]* 10th ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor: MI: Inter-university for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 1997.

⁵⁰ U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 111th Congress*, S. Pub 111-14, 111th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2009); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 110th Congress*, S. Pub 110-13, 110th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2007); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 109th Congress*, S. Pub 109-12, 109th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2006); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 110th Congress*, S. Pub 108-18, 108th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2003); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 107th Congress*, S. Pub 107-20, 107th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2001); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 106th Congress*, S. Pub 106-21, 106th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 1999); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, *Official Congressional Directory, 105th Congress*, S. Pub 105-20, 105th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 1997).

⁵¹ U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Clerk, 112th Congress Members-Elect, available at http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/112-members-elect.pdf; CQ Roll Call, *Guide to the New Congress, 112th Congress*, November 4, 2010, available at <http://innovation.cq.com/newmember/2010elextguide.pdf>.

⁵² For detailed discussion of congressional career patterns since 1789, see CRS Report R41545, *Congressional Careers: Service Tenure and Patterns of Member Service, 1789-2011*, by Matthew Eric Glassman and Amber Hope Wilhelm.

⁵³ In the 79th and 82nd Congresses, the Senate had 96 Members representing the 48 states admitted to the Union. Membership of the House has been fixed at 435 since 1911, except for a temporary enlargement to 437 in the 86th and 87th Congresses to accommodate Representatives from Alaska and Hawaii upon their admission as states. House Membership reverted to 435 following the 1960 census and reapportionment.

⁵⁴ Susan B. Carter, Scott Sigmund Gartner, Michael R. Haines, et al., *Historical Statistics of the United States*, vol. 1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 1-36.

⁵⁵ <http://www.census.gov/>.

interpretations. Conclusions should be drawn from the data provided here with care. Issues that inform the understanding, utility, and comparability of the data presented in this report include the following:

Education

CQ Press data provide the academic degrees Members have earned (high school completion, undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees). The Census Bureau expresses educational attainment among the U.S. population as percentages of individuals aged 25 years and older who have completed four years of high school or four or more years of college. The Census Bureau also provides a measurement of the median years of schooling completed by the population aged 25 years and older.

Previous Occupation

Questions arise when comparing the occupation of Members to occupations pursued in the United States, but also when comparing the work of Members before they arrived in Congress.

With regard to the comparison of Members to constituents, is the proper comparison between the American public and Members in their roles as government officials, or to the work they did before taking office? In addition, Census and other government efforts to categorize work have changed to reflect the dynamic nature of work activity, which may limit or preclude comparison of occupations over time.

Questions regarding the most appropriate manner of identifying congressional work experience, coupled with changes in the collection of occupational data for the nation, may raise questions about the comparability of congressional and U.S. population data across time. Due to the diversity of employment in the U.S. population, and the challenges of comparing that data to CQ Press information on Members, comparisons between the occupations of Members and those of the U.S. population at large are not provided in this report.

Focusing on Member characteristics, what might previous occupations reveal about Members who have served in Congress for many years, or otherwise left other professions to pursue elective office prior to their congressional service? If the focus is on Members in their official capacities, in what ways might that work be categorized?

The CQ Press data provide previous occupations reported by individual Members, organized by broad category identified as “Previous Occupation.” Occupations previously practiced by Members might fit into one or more of the subcategories CQ Press identifies. For example, CQ Press provides previous occupational subcategories that include congressional aide, law enforcement, and military; each of these arguably could be included in another subcategory CQ Press provides, entitled “public service/politics.” In addition to that concern, the extent to which the public service/politics subcategory includes or excludes Members prior elected service in state or local offices (which are common paths to congressional careers) cannot be determined.

Race and Ethnicity

In the census data, race and ethnicity are currently based on self identification. CQ Press data, which are collected from a number of sources including self identification, reports only one

response for this category for Members; Members or other sources may identify more detailed racial or ethnic affiliations elsewhere. Over time, Congress has required the Census Bureau to deploy a broader array of categories in the decennial censuses, and to allow respondents to choose more than one category. These changes may raise questions about the comparability of congressional and U.S. population data, whether at a specific moment in time or across the span of the Congresses examined.

Religion

Comparing Member religious affiliation to that of the U.S. population poses a number of challenges for several reasons. First, there is no authoritative categorization of American religious practice that covers the period since 1945 in a consistent manner that includes consideration of all faiths, denominations, and traditions. This is due, in part, to the prohibition placed on the census Bureau from collecting religious affiliation data.⁵⁶ Second, the data that are available from private sources for the U.S. population are not readily comparable to the data CQ Press gathers on the religious affiliations of Members of Congress as they chose to identify themselves. CQ Press's Member information includes broad listings that do not identify different traditions within broader denominations. Another challenge is the lack of consistent information on the number of American observers of some religions, or the incomplete collection of data over time. Most efforts to categorize religious affiliation in the United States attempt to identify adherents within the mainline and evangelical traditions of Protestantism,⁵⁷ or affiliation with historically Black churches, but no such distinction is possible regarding Member affiliation, based on the CQ Press data. With regard to the U.S. population, it is possible to identify information on the number of Christian adherents in the United States since 1945, but it is more difficult to identify those who follow Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu faiths, or those who identify no religious affiliation. Some of this is explained in part by the preponderance of Americans who identify themselves as Christians or as members of Christian churches. As a consequence, it is only possible to compare religious adherents in the House and Senate in the 112th Congress, and the U.S. population in 2008. U.S. population data are based on the research of the Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ The Census Bureau is prohibited by law "from asking a question on religious affiliation on a mandatory basis." See <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/religion.htm>. For discussion on the challenges of tracking religious affiliation over time, see Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, *Religion in America*, 6th ed. (Boston: Prentice Hall, 2010); and Brian Streensland, Jerry Z. Park, and Mark D. Regnerus, et al., "The Measure of American Religion: Toward Improving the State of the Art," *Social Forces*, vol. 79, no. 1 (September 2000), pp. 291-318.

⁵⁷ Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnson, eds., *The Variety of American Evangelism* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

⁵⁸ Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*, February, 2008, at <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>.

Author Contact Information

R. Eric Petersen, Coordinator
Specialist in American National Government
epetersen@crs.loc.gov, 7-0643

Ida A. Brudnick
Specialist on the Congress

R. Sam Garrett
Specialist in American National Government

Matthew Eric Glassman
Analyst on the Congress

Jennifer E. Manning
Information Research Specialist

Jacob R. Straus
Analyst on the Congress

Jennifer D. Williams
Specialist in American National Government

Amber Hope Wilhelm
Graphics Specialist

Acknowledgments

Erin Hemlin, and Sarah Eckman, former CRS interns, collected data and coauthored sections of this report. Royce Crocker, Specialist in American National Government, and Audrey Celeste Crane-Hirsch, Information Research Specialist, provided data and technical assistance.