

CRS Report for Congress

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Freshmen in the House of Representatives and Senate by Political Party: 1913-2005

Mildred Amer
Specialist in American National Government
Government and Finance Division

Summary

Fifty freshmen were elected in November 2004 to the 109th Congress: 40 to the House and 9 to the Senate. The 103rd Congress freshmen class (elected in November 1992), which was composed of 110 new Representatives and 12 new Senators, represented the largest freshman class in more than five decades. Two years later, in 1994, the Republicans gained control of both the House and the Senate for the first time in some 40 years when 97 new Members (86 in the House, 11 in the Senate) were elected to the 104th Congress. This report will be updated after the November 2006 elections.

Analysis of Data

Table 1 shows, by party, the number of freshmen elected to the House in each election since 1912 and those elected to the Senate since 1914. These starting points were used because the size of the House stabilized at 435 in 1912 and direct election of Senators commenced in 1913.

Table 1 also demonstrates that there can be a rebound effect in which one party has a majority of freshmen at the beginning of a Congress and the other party recovers part or all of the loss within the next two elections.¹ Another pattern is a party shift occurring and prevailing over time. For example, the 72nd through 75th Congresses (1931-1938) established a Democratic dominance in the House that has since been overcome by the Republicans only four times, in 1947-1948 (80th Congress), 1953-1954 (83rd Congress), and since 1995 (104th and succeeding Congresses).

¹ In the House in the 63rd Congress, Democratic freshmen numbered 102, Republican 44. In the House in the 64th Congress, Republican freshmen numbered 93, Democrats 38. Thus, the total for the two Congresses was 140 new Democrats and 137 new Republicans. This pattern appears repeatedly in both the House and the Senate.

Moreover, the table shows instances in the House and Senate throughout the period of this study when one party has had a majority of freshmen, but that majority was insufficient for chamber control. See the Senate in the 107th Congress and both houses for the 76th, 78th, 105th, and 106th Congresses as examples.

Methodology Notes

The figures for the House from 1913 to 1953 were drawn from the lists of freshmen in *Congressional Directories*. Congressional Quarterly, Inc. publications (including the yearly *Almanacs* and *Weekly Reports*) and various *Congressional Directories* were used to verify data for Representatives in subsequent years. Included in the House numbers are freshmen who were elected in November to fill a vacancy and then sworn in prior to the convening of the next Congress, as well as Representatives elected between the November election and the opening day of the next Congress. Representatives elected to fill vacancies during the course of a Congress and Delegates are not counted.

The majority of data on Senators was obtained from *The Senate, Historical Statistics, 1789-1992*, by Senator Robert C. Byrd. Data for more recent years were obtained from *Congressional Directories* and various published accounts of congressional elections. Gubernatorial appointees, Senators elected in special elections not held in November, and Senators who were appointed in an election year and then subsequently elected, are not counted.

Returning former Members with interrupted service are also counted as freshmen. Footnoted are Congresses which included large numbers of these former Members. Those in which the number of such returnees was small have not been identified.

Table 1. Freshmen Members in the House of Representatives and Senate by Political Party: 1913-2005

Congress and Years	House Majority Party	House Freshmen				Senate Majority Party	Senate Freshmen			
		Democrat	Republican	Other	Total		Democrat	Republican	Other	Total
63 rd , 1913-1914	Democratic	102	44	7	153	-	-	-	-	-
64 th , 1915-1916	Democratic	38	93	4	135 ^a	Democratic	7	3	-	10
65 th , 1917-1918	Democratic	39	43	2	84	Democratic	8	10	-	18
66 th , 1919-1920	Republican	38	70	1	109	Republican	6	10	-	16
67 th , 1921-1922	Republican	28	97	1	126 ^b	Republican	4	13	-	17
68 th , 1923-1924	Republican	89	41	3	133 ^c	Republican	12	5	1	18
69 th , 1925-1926	Republican	21	58	1	80	Republican	3	9	-	12
70 th , 1927-1928	Republican	28	29	-	57	Republican	8	5	-	13
71 st , 1929-1930	Republican	24	59	-	83	Republican	1	9	-	10
72 nd , 1931-1932	Democratic	62	19	-	81	Republican	14	4	-	18
73 rd , 1933-1934	Democratic	134	27	4	165	Democratic	16	0	-	16
74 th , 1935-1936	Democratic	75	28	6	109	Democratic	13	0	-	13
75 th , 1937-1938	Democratic	75	15	4	94	Democratic	12	2	1	15
76 th , 1939-1940	Democratic	33	82	1	116	Democratic	5	8	-	13
77 th , 1941-1942	Democratic	46	26	1	73	Democratic	5	7	-	12
78 th , 1943-1944	Democratic	41	64	1	106	Democratic	3	10	-	13
79 th , 1945-1946	Democratic	62	21	-	83 ^d	Democratic	8	6	-	14
80 th , 1947-1948	Republican	35	73	-	108	Republican	4	15	-	19

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Congress and Years	House Majority Party	House Freshmen				Senate Majority Party	Senate Freshmen			
		Democrat	Republican	Other	Total		Democrat	Republican	Other	Total
81 st , 1949-1950	Democratic	104	14	-	118 ^e	Democratic	14	4	-	18
82 nd , 1951-1952	Democratic	21	51	1	73	Democratic	6	7	-	13
83 rd , 1953-1954	Republican	31	50	-	81	Republican	6	9	-	15
84 th , 1955-1956	Democratic	39	17	-	56	Democratic	7	7	-	14
85 th , 1957-1958	Democratic	24	22	-	46	Democratic	6	4	-	10
86 th , 1959-1960	Democratic	63	19	-	82	Democratic	15	3	-	18
87 th , 1961-1962	Democratic	19	44	-	63	Democratic	3	2	-	5
88 th , 1963-1964	Democratic	36	31	-	67	Democratic	8	2	-	10
89 th , 1965-1966	Democratic	71	20	-	91	Democratic	5	1	-	6
90 th , 1967-1968	Democratic	14	59	-	73	Democratic	2	5	-	7
91 st , 1969-1970	Democratic	20	19	-	39	Democratic	5	9	-	14
92 nd , 1971-1972	Democratic	33	23	-	56	Democratic	5	5	1	11
93 rd , 1973-1974	Democratic	27	41	1	69	Democratic	8	5	-	13
94 th , 1975-1976	Democratic	75	17	-	92	Democratic	8	2	-	10
95 th , 1977-1978	Democratic	47	20	-	67	Democratic	9	8	-	17
96 th , 1979-1980	Democratic	41	36	-	77	Democratic	9	11	-	20
97 th , 1981-1982	Democratic	22	52	-	74	Republican	2	16	-	18
98 th , 1983-1984	Democratic	57	24 ^f	-	81	Republican	2	3	-	5
99 th , 1985-1986	Democratic	12	31	-	43	Republican	5	2	-	7
100 th , 1987-1988	Democratic	27	23	-	50	Democratic	11	2	-	13
101 st , 1989-1990	Democratic	17	16	-	33	Democratic	5	5	-	10

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Congress and Years	House Majority Party	House Freshmen				Senate Majority Party	Senate Freshmen			
		Democrat	Republican	Other	Total		Democrat	Republican	Other	Total
102 nd , 1991-1992	Democratic	25	18	1	44	Democratic	1	3	-	4
103 rd , 1993-1994	Democratic	63	47	-	110	Democratic	7	5	-	12
104 th , 1995-1996	Republican	13	73	-	86	Republican	-	11	-	11
105 th , 1997-1998	Republican	42	32	-	74	Republican	6	9	-	15
106 th , 1999-2000	Republican	23	17	-	40	Republican	4	4	-	8
107 th , 2001-2002	Republican	13	28	-	41	Tie ^h	8 ⁱ	2	-	10
108 th , 2003-2004	Republican	21	33	-	54	Republican	2	8 ^j	-	10
109 th , 2005-2006	Republican	16	24	-	40	Republican	2	7		9
Grand Total		1986	1790	39	3815 ^g		300	277	3	579
Percent of Total		52.05%	46.92%	1.02%	100%		51.81%	47.84%	0.52%	100%

Sources: For House freshmen, various *Congressional Directories*, 1913-1951, Congressional Quarterly, Inc., and other published accounts of congressional elections from 1953-2004. For the House, the numbers are based on November election results and any special elections held between November and the convening of the next Congress. The numbers include former Members as well as Representatives simultaneously elected to fill a vacancy in an existing Congress and to their own seat in a new Congress. The numbers do not include special elections or appointments during the course of a Congress. For Senate freshmen, the source was Byrd, Senator Robert C. *The Senate, Historical Statistics, 1789-1992* (Washington: GPO, 1993), pp. 414-415. From 1993 forward, the sources were various *Congressional Directories* and various published accounts of congressional elections. The Senate numbers do not include gubernatorial appointments, special elections not held in November, or those Senators appointed earlier in an election year and then elected in November.

- a. Includes 19 former Members.
- b. Includes 18 former Members.
- c. Includes 26 former Members.
- d. Includes 16 former Members.
- e. Includes 22 former Members.
- f. Includes Member-elect who died before taking the oath of office.
- g. The numbers do not include Delegates.

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- h. As a result of the November 2000, election, the Senate had 50 Democrats and 50 Republicans at the beginning of the 107th Congress. However, a party switch by a Republican Senator in June 2000 shifted control of the Senate to the Democrats.
- i. Does not include Democratic Senator Jean Carnahan (D-MO), who was appointed in December 2000 to fill the vacancy caused by the posthumous election of her husband, Governor Mel Carnahan.
- j. Does not include Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski, who was appointed in December 2002 by her father to fill the vacancy caused by his election to be governor of Alaska.