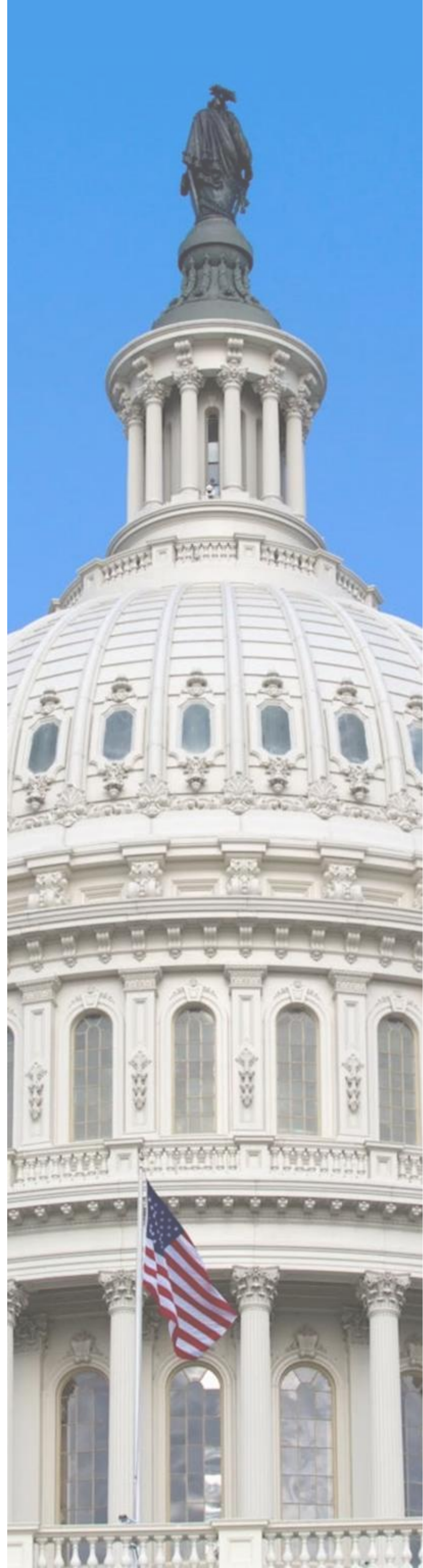


# Members of Congress by Age

Unpacking the generational shifts and demographic landscape defining the nation's legislative power.



When President Donald J. Trump entered office for a second non-consecutive term on January 20th of 2025, he became the oldest inaugurated president of all time at age 79, the second time he achieved the distinction. There's been much discussion recently about the president's age, with critics questioning whether the ravages of age are impacting the president's capacity for office. However, less of this discussion has focused on members of Congress by age, even though the legislative branch has similarly grown older.

For public affairs professionals, being aware of the age of Congress members helps them understand the level of experience, priorities and status among the legislative body to carry out an effective government relations strategy. Additionally, studying this data can help keep track of potentially departing members of Congress, along with engaging new, incoming members.

This blog explores various members of Congress by age, drilling into the numbers to provide insights into demographic trends among the legislative branch.

# Who Are the Oldest Members of Congress in 2026?

While a new crop of young Congresspeople was elected in 2024, Congress continues to be significantly older than the American public, which has a median age of 39.1 years old.

Let's look at the demographics of the two bodies of Congress to explore the oldest members of Congress.

## The Oldest Members of the House of Representatives

At 88 years old, Rep. Hal Rogers (R-Ky.) is the oldest member of the House of Representatives. Rogers has served in Congress since 1981, making him one of Kentucky's longest-serving members of Congress.

The next oldest members of Congress include:

- Del. Eleanor Holmes-Norton (D-D.C.) - 88 years old
- Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) - 87 years old
- Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) - 86 years old
- Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) - 85 years old
- Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.) - 85 years old

The oldest person to ever serve in the U.S. House of Representatives was Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC), who was 100 years old when he retired in January 2003 and died shortly after in June 2003.

With 44 members of the House of Representatives leaving office this year, due to retirement or running for a different office, the average age could shift in either direction as the 2026 midterms draw near.

# The Oldest Members of the Senate

At 92 years old, Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) is currently the oldest senator and the oldest member of Congress by age. First elected in 1980, Senator Grassley is the longest-serving Republican in Senate history, overtaking the record of Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) in 2023. Grassley is also the 6th-longest-running Senator of all time.

Previously, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) was the oldest senator before her death in September 2023.

The next oldest members of the Senate include:

- Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) - 84 years old
- Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) - 83 years old
- Sen. Jim Risch (R-ID) - 82 years old
- Sen. Angus King (I-ME) - 81 years old
- Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) - 81 years old

A total of nine members of the Senate are leaving office this year, which could impact the average age after the 2026 midterm elections.

# What is the Average Age of Congress?

According to LegiStorm data, **the average age of Congress is 61.5 years old**, factoring in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. The average age of Congress rose a half year over the 118th Congress, a small change but one that continues an increase from an average age of 57 since the 107th Congress in 2001.

To fully analyze this data, we'll need to break out the two bodies of Congress.

## Average Age of the Senate

The average age of the Senate increased to 65, compared to 64 in the previous 118th Congress. This marks a five-year rise in age from the 107th Congress in 2001. Senators are significantly older than their House colleagues, which aligns with historical patterns.

After the 118th Congress ushered in a group of younger, newly elected members of the Senate, it appears that the latest class grew back to the Senate average. Of the 11 incoming senators in the 119th Congress, the average age is 53.9, well below the average age of the Senate but higher than the average age of incoming senators in the 118th Congress.

## Average Age of the House of Representatives

The average age of the House of Representatives is 58, unchanged from the previous Congress. While the average age of Republican representatives stayed the same, Democrats saw a slight rise to an average age of 59.

In the House, the most populous age range is 50–59, making up 26.1% of the body. This is closely followed by 40–49-year-olds, who make up 21.5% of the House. However, older generations aren't far behind as a percentage of the House, with 70–79 year olds making up 16.9% and 60–64 year olds making up 15.1%, the largest demographic increase among the House of Representatives.

# The Average Age of Congress by Party

While both Democrats and Republicans contain several older Congress members, there are slight differences in the average age of Congress by party.

In the House of Representatives, Democrats are an average of two years older than House Republicans, with Democrats averaging 59 years old and Republicans averaging 57. However, there are signs that Democrats are beginning to skew younger, with the party seeing a 1% increase in representatives in the 30-39 age range and a nearly 3% rise in representatives in the 50-59 age range. House Republicans saw a similar, yet smaller increase among the 30-39 age range and a slight decrease among the 50-59 age range, dropping from 27.4% to 26.3%. Both parties saw rises for representatives aged 80 and up, although Democrats still hold a higher percentage overall, with 6.5% versus 4.1% among Republicans.

In the Senate, both parties had an average age of 64, with Republicans adding a year onto their average age compared with the previous Congress and Democrats remaining the same. Republicans saw the largest rise in those in the 70-79 range, jumping from 24.5 in the 118th Congress to 34.0 in the current Congress. In contrast, Democrats also saw a nearly 7% decrease in the 70-79 range, potentially signalling a trend of younger Senators elected to office. Furthermore, Democrats saw a 3X increase for those in the 40-49 age range, while Republicans had just over a 1% rise in the same range.

# Who Are the Youngest Members of Congress?

While the 119th Congress is the third-oldest of all time, many young newcomers were elected in the 2024 general election, along with subsequent special elections since then. This includes Addison McDowell (R-N.C.) and Brandon Gill (R-TX), both age 31, along with Yassamin Ansari (D-Arizona), elected at the age of 32 and currently the youngest woman in Congress.

**Rep. Maxwell Frost (D-Fla.) remains the youngest member of the 119th Congress at age 28.** Frost was elected in 2022 and is the first Gen Z member of Congress.

Not surprisingly, the list of youngest members of Congress tends to be newer arrivals in their first or second terms. The youngest members of Congress by age include:

Rep. Addison  
McDowell  
(R-N.C.) - 31 years old

Rep. Brandon Gill  
(R-Texas) - 31 years old

Rep. Yassamin  
Ansari  
(D-Arizona) - 33 years old

Rep. Abraham Hamadeh  
(R-Arizona) - 34 years old

Rep. Robert Bresnahan  
(R-Penn) - 35 years old

# The Age of Congress Over Time

There has been a notable trend of increasing age among members of the U.S. Congress over time. Historical data indicates that the age of members of Congress began to rise at least in the 107th Congress running from 2001 to 2003, when the average age stood at 57, 60 in the Senate and 54 in the House of Representatives. Each subsequent Congress has experienced a modest rise until the present.

Several factors contribute to this phenomenon, including incumbency advantages, which can result in longer-serving members, and the challenges faced by younger candidates in gaining electoral traction.

Additionally, as politics has become a more established career path, individuals may enter Congress later in life after building experience in other fields.

## Is There an Age Limit for Congress?

There is currently no constitutional age limit for serving in Congress. The absence of a maximum age limit reflects the principles of inclusivity, allowing individuals to contribute their wisdom and expertise regardless of their advanced years.

In recent years, there has been more discussion about the increasing age of Congress and the necessity of imposing age limits. According to a 2023 Pew Research report, 82% of Republicans and 76% of Democrats supported maximum limits on the age of Congress members.

However, enacting a maximum age limit would require a constitutional amendment, which would need a two-thirds vote in both the House and Senate, an unlikely scenario at the present moment.

# How Old Do You Have to Be to Run for Congress?

To run for the United States Congress, candidates must meet the constitutional age requirements outlined in Article I, Section 2 (for the House of Representatives) and Article I, Section 3 (for the Senate).

House of Representatives

## **Minimum age: 25 years old**

Prospective House members must be at least 25 years old to run for office.

Senate

## **Minimum age: 30 years old**

The age requirement for the Senate is at least 30 years old.

This framework ensures that candidates possess a level of maturity and experience deemed essential for effective legislative representation.

Beyond age, candidates must also meet other eligibility criteria, including citizenship and residency requirements, to participate in the democratic process and vie for a seat in Congress.

# Frequently Asked Questions About the Age of Congress

## Who is the youngest U.S. senator ever elected?

John Henry Eaton was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1818 at the age of 28, making him the youngest senator ever elected. Although Eaton was two years younger than the Senate's age minimum, he was able to serve with little controversy due to poorly kept birth records and the fact that he was never asked about his age.

## Who is the longest-serving woman in Congress?

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) is the longest-serving woman in Congress. First elected in 1982, Rep. Kaptur became the longest-serving woman in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2018 before breaking the record of Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) to become the longest-serving woman in Congress.

## How many senators are more than 80 years old?

Currently, six senators are older than 80: Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) - 92 years old, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) - 84 years old, Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) - 83 years old, Sen. Jim Risch (R-Idaho) - 82 years old, Sen. Angus King (I-ME) - 81 years old, and Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) - 81 years old.

## Who has served Congress the longest?

The late Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.) holds the distinction of being the longest-serving Congress member of all time, with more than 59 years in office. He served from 1955 until his death in 2015. He took over the seat from his father, who served 22 years himself and turned over the seat to his wife, Debbie Dingell. John Dingell is followed by: Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) - 57 years, Sen. Carl Hayden (D-Ariz.) - 56 years, Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) - 53 years, and Rep. Jamie Whitten (D-Mich.) - 53 years.

## Who had the longest term as Speaker of the House?

Rep. Samuel Rayburn (D-Texas) holds the record for the longest tenure as speaker at 17 years. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) was the top Democrat in the House for 20 years, but some of that time was in the minority.

## Who had the shortest term as Speaker of the House?

Thomas Pomeroy of New York served just one day as speaker from March 3, 1869 to March 4, 1869, claiming the record for the shortest speaker tenure of all time.

## Who is the longest-serving Republican Speaker of the House?

In 2006, Rep. Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) surpassed Rep. Joseph Cannon (R-Ill.) as the longest-serving Republican speaker, serving in the position for eight years before leaving Congress in 2007.


## How long has the average member of Congress been in office?

According to Legistorm data, the average length of service for Representatives in the 119th Congress is 12 years, a number that has held steadily since the 108th Congress of 2003.

# Understanding the Age of Congress in 2026

Understanding the age of Congress is important for developing relationships in Washington by understanding who wields power, which is typically attained through longevity. Studying the age of Congress also helps to identify potential departing members of Congress, as well as new members looking to make a name for themselves in Washington.

By utilizing [public affairs software](#) such as LegiStorm, public affairs professionals can track the age of Congress members, along with member committee assignments, sponsored legislation, voting history and more. This information can be invaluable for developing an effective government relations strategy that furthers your cause.

 **Please be advised:** This blog post relies on LegiStorm's data as of January 7, 2026; for the most current information, refer to [LegiStorm's platform](#).

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