

Women in Congress: *Then and Now*

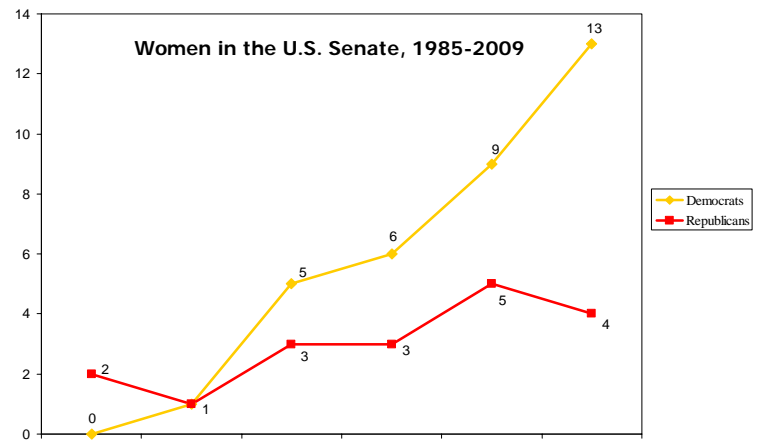
Since EMILY's List was created in 1985, the number of women in congress has more than tripled and the number of women holding important leadership positions has significantly increased. In 1985, there were two women serving in the U.S. Senate and 23 in the U.S. House. No woman served as a congressional committee chair and only one woman served in congressional leadership: Geraldine Ferraro (D-NY), then secretary of the House Democratic Caucus. Today, 24 years later, 17 women serve in the Senate and 73 in the House. Not only are five congressional committees now chaired by women and 11 women now serving in congressional leadership, but the most powerful position in congress—Speaker of the House—is held by a woman: Nancy Pelosi. Here is a brief summary of the progress that women in congress have made from 1985 to 2009.

(Source: Center for American Women in Politics)

Women in the U.S. Senate

1985: Two Republican women served in the U.S. Senate, including the first woman elected to the Senate in her own right, Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas. No Democratic woman had yet been elected to the Senate in her own right.

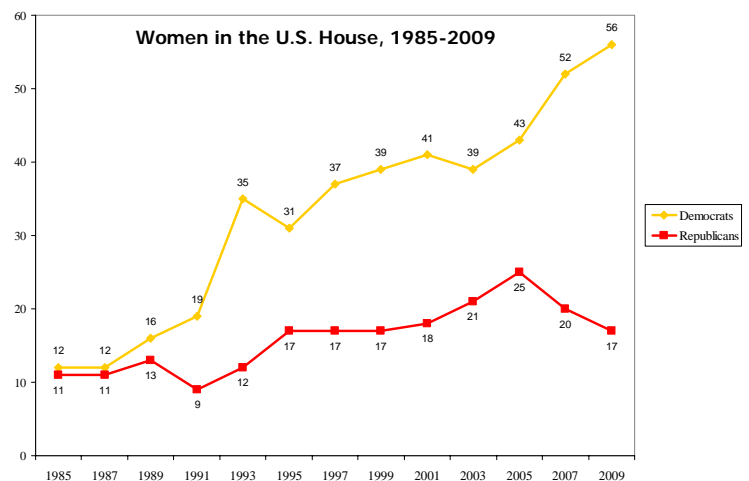
2009: 17 women serve in the U.S. Senate (13 Democrats and four Republicans).



Women in the U.S. House of Representatives

1985: 23 women (12 Democrats and 11 Republicans) served in the U.S. House.

2009: 73 women (56 Democrats and 17 Republicans) serve as congresswomen in the U.S. House. There are also three Democratic women delegates.



Women of color in the U.S. House of Representatives

1985: One woman of color served in the U.S. House.

2009: 21 women of color (20 Democrats and one Republican) serve in the U.S. House. In addition, two delegates in the U.S. House are women of color.

Women chairing Senate committees

1985: No woman had chaired a Senate committee since 1945, and no women were ranking minority members on committees.

2009: Two Democratic women chair Senate committees: California Senator Barbara Boxer, Committee on Environment and Public Works; and Louisiana Senator Mary Landrieu, Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee.

Women chairing House committees

1985: No woman had chaired a House committee since 1977, and no women served as ranking minority members on committees.

2009: Three Democratic women chair House committees: Rep. Zoe Lofgren (CA), Committee on Ethics; Rep. Louise Slaughter (NY), Committee on Rules; and Rep. Nydia Velazquez (NY), Committee on Small Business.

Women party leaders in the U.S. Senate

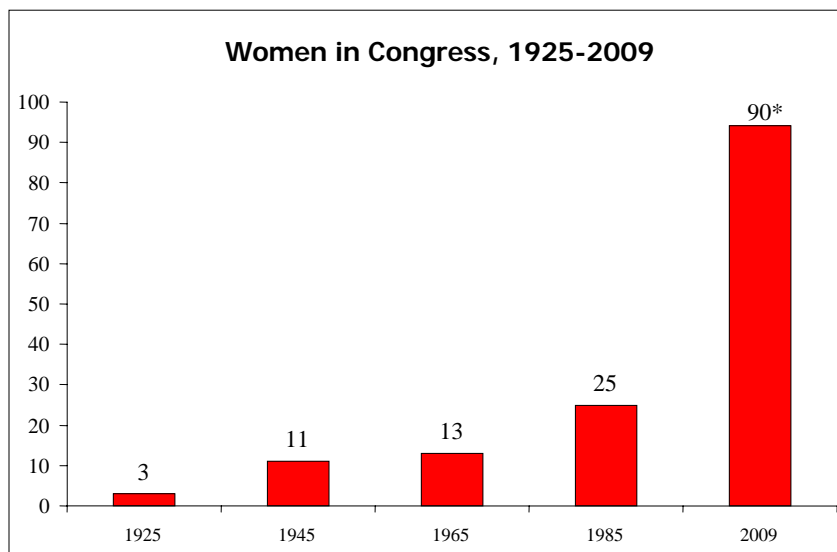
1985: No women held party leadership positions in the Senate.

2009: Four Democratic women hold party leadership positions in the Senate: Senator Barbara Boxer (CA), Democratic Chief Deputy Whip; Senator Blanche Lincoln (AR), Democratic Rural Outreach Chair; Senator Patty Murray (WA), Democratic Conference Secretary; and Senator Debbie Stabenow (MI), Democratic Steering Committee Chair.

Women party leaders in the U.S. House

1985 Two women (one Democrat and one Republican) held party leadership positions in the House.

2009 Seven women (six Democrats and one Republican) hold leadership positions in the House: Rep. Nancy Pelosi (CA), Speaker of the House; Rep. Rosa DeLauro (CT), Democratic Steering Committee Chair; Cathy McMorris Rogers (R-WA), Republican Conference Vice Chair; and Representatives Diana DeGette (CO), Jan Schakowsky (IL), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL), and Maxine Waters (CA), all serve as Democratic Chief Deputy Whips.



(* does not include congressional delegates)