

The 118th Congress Young Elected Leaders Report

The election of young leaders to serve in Capitol Hill increased slightly since the 117th Congress, but decreased since the 116th Congress

New Brunswick, New Jersey (April 26, 2023) – Only six candidates who are 35 years old or younger were newly elected to serve in Congress during the 2022 midterm election, according to [new data](#) released by the [Center for Youth Political Participation](#) at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. The 118th United States Congress has a total of 14 members who are 35 years old or younger, indicating that more work is needed in order to achieve representation among young elected officials in our nation’s capital.

Each year, the Center collects data on young elected leaders in Congress. Although the 118th Congress has more young elected young leaders than the 117th Congress (13), it has fewer newly elected young leaders (6) than the previous Congress (9). The young elected leader numbers in the 118th Congress pales in comparison to the 116th Congress, which had 18 young elected leaders. Fifteen of those leaders were elected during the 2018 midterm election which saw historically high turnout rates, especially among [young voters](#).

Despite the addition of six newly elected young leaders in Congress in 2022, the 118th Congress has one of the oldest average ages on record in U.S. history. The average age in the current Congress is 58.1 years old. The average age in the U.S. House of Representatives is 56.8 years-old, and in the U.S. Senate, it is 63.6 years-old. Only 3% of U.S. representatives and 1% of U.S. senators are 35 years-old or younger.

“Authentic representation really requires that the nation’s largest generations – Millennials and Generation Z – see themselves being represented in office. We have a responsibility then to equip young adults to run successfully for office and to lead.” said Dr. Elizabeth C. Matto, Director of the Center for Youth Political Participation and Research Professor at the Eagleton Institute of Politics.

Interestingly, the two youngest generations in Congress, Generation Z and Millennials, and the oldest generation, the Silent Generation, have the most minority group representation in their cohorts. There is only one member of Congress who is part of Generation Z; that member identifies as more than one ethnicity. Nearly 62 percent of Millennials in Congress are White, 15 percent are Black, 13 percent are Hispanic, 8 percent are more than one ethnicity, and 2 percent are Asian. Additionally, of the members of Congress in the Silent Generation, about 54.5 percent are White, 36.5 percent are Black, 4.5 percent are Hispanic, and 4.5 are Asian.

“The diversity of young elected leaders is particularly important given that they represent generations that are the most diverse in U.S. history,” said Brit Anlar, Lead Graduate Research Assistant for CYPP.

“The data show that while white representatives are still the most predominant in the Millennial generation, other racial/ethnic groups are increasing their representation in this generation.”

Of the 14 young elected leaders in the 118th Congress, nine are members of the Democratic Party, five are members of the Republican Party, six are women, and nine are men. These numbers demonstrate increasing parity between women and men’s representation among the youngest cohorts of representatives. Interestingly, Florida has the most elected young leaders in Congress than any other state (3).

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YOUNG ELECTED LEADERS PROJECT (YELP)

The [Young Elected Leaders Project](#) (YELP) is an initiative of the Center for Youth Political Participation, which is a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. Launched in 2002 with funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the YELP studies and works with young people who run for or hold public office. We provide unique insight into youth representation in U.S. political institutions and study young leaders’ experiences in public office.

CENTER FOR YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The [Center for Youth Political Participation](#) (CYPP) is a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. CYPP celebrates and supports political learning and engagement among young people through research, public service and education, driven by the potential impact of Gen Z on American democracy. Comprised of three programs; RU Ready, RU Voting and the Young Elected Leaders Project, the Center’s work encourages young adults to see themselves as part of the political process at all stages of life.

THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

The [Eagleton Institute of Politics](#) at Rutgers University—New Brunswick studies how American politics and government work and change, analyzes how the democracy might improve, and promotes political participation and civic engagement. The Institute explores state and national politics through research, education, and public service, linking the study of politics with its day-to-day practice.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-NEW BRUNSWICK

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