



Image courtesy of the Member

Lucille Roybal-Allard

1941–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE 1993–
DEMOCRAT FROM CALIFORNIA

Following her family's tradition of public service, Lucille Roybal-Allard pioneered new political ground in 1992, becoming the first Mexican-American woman to be elected to the U.S. Congress. Running in a new congressional district, Roybal-Allard also was one of a handful of daughters who followed her father to Congress. Like her father, Edward Roybal, she serves on the Appropriations Committee and has chaired the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. She is the first Latina to hold both positions.

Lucille Roybal was one of three children born to Lucille Beserra and Edward Roybal in Los Angeles, California, on June 12, 1941. Edward Roybal served in the U.S. House of Representatives for 30 years, chairing the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) and rising to chair the Appropriations' Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government. Roybal-Allard graduated from California State University in Los Angeles in 1965 with a B.A. in speech therapy. She worked in alcohol and drug treatment programs in Los Angeles, as a public relations and fundraising executive for the United Way, and as the executive director of a national trade association for Hispanic certified public accountants in Washington, D.C. Lucille Roybal married Edward T. Allard III in 1981. Together they have four children: Ricardo, Lisa, Angela, and Guy Mark.

In 1987 Roybal-Allard followed her father into public office, winning a special election to fill a vacancy in the California Assembly, where she served until 1992. In the state legislature, Roybal-Allard advocated for women's rights and passed key legislation to protect victims of rape and domestic violence. She also was a proponent of environmental justice, successfully leading a campaign against the building of a commercial hazardous waste incinerator in her urban district. The battle led her to author several environmental bills that became law, including a measure requiring environmental impact reports. Roybal-Allard also worked to advance Hispanic entrepreneurship and has strived to provide economic and political control to local communities.¹

Following the 1990 Census, a new congressional district encompassing most of her assembly district was created. In 1992 Lucille Roybal-Allard ran for Congress in the new district, capitalizing on family name recognition and on her legislative record in the state assembly. She easily won the primary with 73 percent of the vote. In the general election, she defeated Republican Robert Guzman with 63 percent of the vote. Since her first campaign, Representative

Roybal-Allard has been re-elected nine times with margins higher than 70 percent.²

When Roybal-Allard was sworn into the House in January 1993, she was assigned to the Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs Committee (later renamed Financial Services) and the Small Business Committee. Starting in the 104th Congress (1995–1997), she took a post on the Budget Committee in exchange for her seat on the Small Business panel. In the 105th and 106th Congresses (1997–2001), Roybal-Allard served on the House Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People's Republic of China. She also has served on the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct. Roybal-Allard's reputation as a respected consensus builder won her the chairmanship of the California Democratic Congressional Delegation in 1997 and 1998. In assuming this position, she became the first woman to serve at the delegation's helm and the first Member to achieve this role through election rather than seniority.

Representing a district with one of the largest Hispanic populations in the nation (77.2 percent), Roybal-Allard followed in her father's footsteps in 1999 and 2000 when she became chair of the CHC. Under her leadership, the CHC played a major role in passing immigration reforms; increasing funding for Hispanic-Serving Institutions; and the partial restoration of food stamps, Social Security benefits, and Medicaid for legal immigrants.

Roybal-Allard gave up all her prior committee assignments in 1999 for a seat on the prestigious Appropriations Committee, where she remains. Roybal-Allard serves on two influential Appropriations subcommittees: Homeland Security; and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. From these panels, she oversees funding for the Department of Homeland Security, including Citizenship and Immigration Services and Customs Service; and the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

In Congress, Roybal-Allard concentrates on social and domestic legislation. Her legislative priorities include public health, immigration reform, reducing underage drinking, promoting maternal and child health, and making college affordable and accessible to all, including immigrant youth. She has also focused on promoting infrastructure and urban redevelopment. She works to meet

the needs of her constituents by bringing millions in federal dollars to her district for key priorities such as transportation, economic development, infrastructure, housing, public safety, health care, and education.

FOR FURTHER READING

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, "Lucille Roybal-Allard," <http://bioguide.congress.gov>.

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

California State Archives (Sacramento). *Papers*: Office files of Lucille Roybal-Allard, 1989–1990, one cubic foot. Includes chronological correspondence and schedules for appearances. *Papers*: Author's bill and correspondence files of Lucille Roybal-Allard, 1987–1988, four cubic feet. Includes chronological correspondence, invitations, and schedules.

NOTES

- 1 *Politics in America, 2004* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 2003); Associated Press Candidate Biography, 2004.
- 2 "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://history.house.gov/institution/election-statistics/election-statistics>.