Permanent Interests

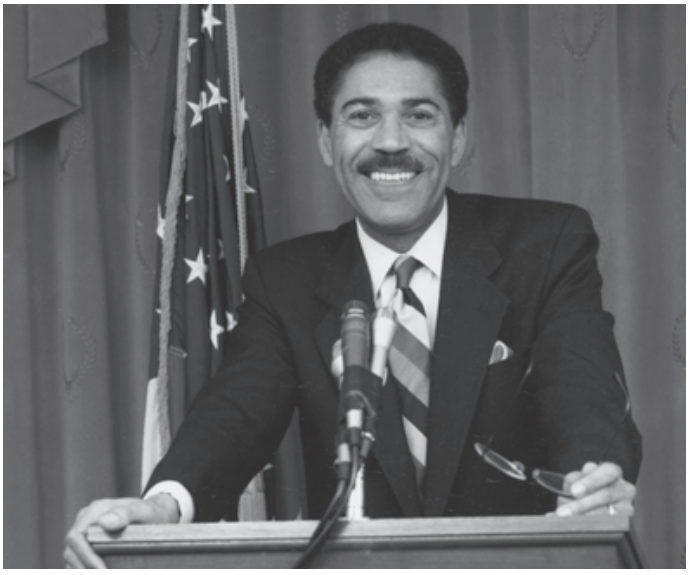
1965–1990

On the evening of Friday, January 22, 1971, President Richard M. Nixon presented his second annual State of the Union Address to a packed audience in the chamber of the U.S. House of Representatives. Members of both houses of Congress, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Supreme Court Justices, and Cabinet secretaries gathered to hear Nixon call for "a New American Revolution—a peaceful revolution in which power was turned back toward the people—in which government at all levels was refreshed and renewed, and made truly responsive." Absent from the Capitol that night were the 12 Black Members of the House (Edward W. Brooke, a Black Senator from Massachusetts did attend). Led by Louis Stokes of Ohio and William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr. of Missouri, the Black Representatives boycotted the speech because, as they explained, the President had "consistently refused" to meet with them to discuss the White House's legislative agenda. On several occasions during the previous year, Black Members had tried to sit down with the President, but the administration repeatedly rebuffed their requests. To the Black Members, Nixon's refusal was symptomatic of the administration's lack of interest in the issues facing Black Americans. "Your consistent refusal to hear the pleas and concerns of 'black Americans' dictates our decision to be absent," the Members explained in a letter to the President.[1]

In 1970, groundbreaking New York first-term Member Shirley Chisholm campaigned for future California Member Ronald V. Dellums. Their role in the creation of the Congressional Black Caucus was one of their lasting impacts on the institution.

Bob Fitch photography archive, © Stanford University Libraries

The boycott worked. Following substantial media coverage, Nixon agreed to meet with the group of Black Members, who first organized in 1969 as the Democratic Select Committee but soon renamed themselves the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). On March 25, all 13 members of the caucus—12 Representatives and Walter E. Fauntroy, who had recently won a March election to become the Delegate from Washington, DC—met with Nixon at the White House. The Members explained that they were there not just as the representatives of their districts, but as representatives of Black Americans everywhere. "Even though we think first of those we were directly elected to serve, we cannot, in good conscience think only of them—for what affects one black community, one urban community, affects all." The Black Members of Congress and, they suggested, African Americans across the country, were intent on expanding and ensuring the rights and protections that the civil rights movement had won only years earlier in the 1960s. "Our people are no longer asking for equality as a rhetorical promise. They are demanding from a national administration, and from elected officials without regard to party affiliation, the only kind of equality that ultimately has any real meaning—equality of results." The group presented Nixon with a list of 61 policy proposals, including an expansion of affirmative action, a public works program, the protection of federal social welfare programs, more federal support for minority-owned businesses, criminal justice reforms, and increased aid to Africa.[2]



A founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr. of Missouri helped shape the organization's legislative direction.

Image courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

In the days following the meeting at the White House, Ethel Payne, a groundbreaking Black journalist, took stock of what she saw as a new era of Black congressional influence. The Black Members who attended the meeting, Payne wrote, "carry with them the hopes and aspirations of the estimated 25 million blacks in the country and they have now become the voice for that segment of the population." "It was clear," Payne continued, "that the establishment was rocked, not so much by the rhetoric of the statement, but at the evidence of the rising tide of determination expressed by the 13."[3]

In the ensuing two decades, the Black Members of Congress profiled in this section strived to realize the potential that Ethel Payne had recognized in the boycott. From 1965 to 1990, the number and influence of African Americans in Congress increased significantly. Black Representatives worked to win seats on powerful committees, and some attained roles in Democratic leadership. While important ideological and political differences existed among the Black men and women elected in this period, by and large they shared similar legislative goals. These Members often led legislative efforts to end civil and human rights abuses abroad. They sought to leverage the power of the federal government to alleviate social ills. And, most significantly, they worked tirelessly to expand and protect the civil, economic, and political rights won by Black Americans in the 1960s. Navigating national and international economic and political transformations, Black Members in the 1970s and 1980s led efforts to desegregate America's schools, bolster voting rights, guarantee equal employment, and improve fair housing laws.

Shortly after the boycott in 1971, Bill Clay spoke about a new era he saw developing on Capitol Hill: what he called a "new black politics of confrontation." The lesson Congress needed to heed was clear; he said that "what is good for minorities is good for the nation." The CBC was at the helm of this transformation. Its members wanted to build on the civil rights movement's legislative foundations as they confronted new political and economic challenges. "We have no permanent friends, no permanent enemies," Clay said, "just permanent interests."[4]

A NATION TRANSFORMED

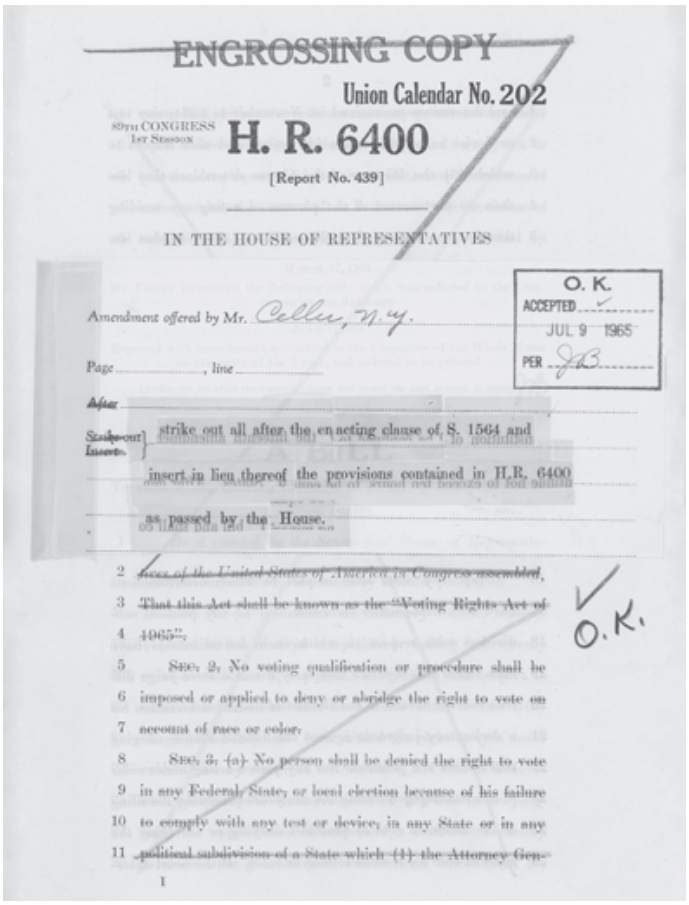
The passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965 were moments of triumph for the long Black freedom movement. These were era-defining laws, some of the most remarkable and transformative pieces of legislation to come out of the United States Congress.

The Civil Rights Act prohibited racial discrimination in public accommodations and state and federal services and banned racial and sex discrimination in employment. In nearly all aspects of American life—housing being the one glaring exception—racial discrimination had been declared illegal and punishable by law. New educational and employment opportunities, along with a growing economy and expanded government benefits, helped cut African-American poverty rates dramatically. The Black middle class almost doubled in size over the next quarter century.[5]

The Voting Rights Act was similarly momentous. Accompanied by the Twenty-fourth Amendment, which outlawed poll taxes in federal elections, the law banned voting discrimination and gave the federal government tools to enforce the prohibition. The effect on American politics was immediate. The number of Black voters increased exponentially, and the number of Black elected officials in the South skyrocketed from 72 in 1965 to more than 1,500 just a decade later. Nor did this era see gains only in the South. Across the country, a confluence of factors—the reforms of the Voting Rights Act, the Supreme Court's "one person one vote" rulings, and the concentration of African-American voters in cities—led to a fourfold increase in the number of Black Members of Congress, from six in the 90th Congress (1967–1969) to 24 in the 101st Congress (1989–1991).[6]

Nevertheless, while the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act went some ways towards finally providing the benefits of full citizenship to African Americans, the Black Members of Congress discussed in this section recognized there was still much work to do. Indeed, there remained a chasm between the promise of the legislation and the reality of persistent racial disparities and racial oppression.

The civil unrest that swept through American cities in the late 1960s and early 1970s placed the slow progress of Black freedom in stark relief. After a confrontation with police in August 1965, looting, arson, and violence broke out in Watts, a Los Angeles, California, neighborhood in Augustus F. "Gus" Hawkins's congressional district. Nearly two years later, violence and looting erupted in Detroit, Michigan, which was represented by Charles C. Diggs Jr. and John Conyers Jr. At one point, Conyers climbed atop a car with a bullhorn to address a crowd of hundreds, but the crowd soon became angry at the presence of nearby police and began to throw objects at both Conyers and the officers. Conyers was unhurt, but later his second-floor district office was burned down, likely unintentionally, after someone firebombed the store underneath.[7]



ENGROSSING COPY

Union Calendar No. 202

89TH CONGRESS 1st Session

H. R. 6400

[Report No. 439]

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

O. K. ACCEPTED JUL 9 1965 PER

Amendment offered by Mr. Celler, N.Y.

Page ..., line ...

After ...

Strike out / Insert: strike out all after the enacting clause of S. 1564 and insert in lieu thereof the provisions contained in H.R. 6400 as passed by the House.

Acts of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

That this Act shall be known as the "Voting Rights Act of 1965".

SEC. 2. No voting qualification or procedure shall be imposed or applied to deny or abridge the right to vote on account of race or color.

SEC. 3. (a) No person shall be denied the right to vote in any Federal, State, or local election because of his failure to comply with any test or device, in any State or in any political subdivision of a State which (1) the Attorney Gen-

1

O.K.

Signed into law on August 6, 1965, the Voting Rights Act protected the right of all citizens to vote and made methods used to obstruct voter registration, such as poll taxes and literacy tests, illegal.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

As violence continued in Detroit, President Lyndon B. Johnson created the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to investigate the unrest in America's cities. Among the members of the Commission was first-term Massachusetts Senator Edward Brooke, the first Black U.S. Senator since 1881. The Kerner Commission, named after its chairman, former Illinois Governor Otto Kerner Jr., released its final report in 1968, laying out in frank terms how anti-Black racism shaped American society and created the conditions for the unrest. "Our Nation," the commission memorably reported, "is moving towards two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal."[8]

The challenges Black lawmakers faced only intensified during the 1970s as the economic growth that defined much of the previous two and a half decades had come to a halt. The defining economic feature of the period was stagflation, the combination of high unemployment and high inflation. Even as the national economy improved, lost

Created in response to civil unrest throughout the United States, the Kerner Commission studied causes of the violence and provided recommendations to prevent future challenges. The first meeting convened on July 31, 1967. Standing, left to right: Ohio Representative William Moore McCulloch; Oklahoma Senator Fred Roy Harris; Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey; Kentucky commissioner of commerce Katherine Graham Peden; Atlanta, Georgia, chief of police Herbert Jenkins; Massachusetts Senator Edward W. Brooke; and diplomat Cyrus Vance. Seated, left to right: Illinois governor and commission chair Otto Kerner; President Lyndon B. Johnson; New York mayor and commission vice chair John Vliet Lindsay; and United Steelworkers president I.W. Abel.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

jobs and White flight from America's urban neighborhoods combined to wreak financial havoc on American cities.[9]

These developments ensured that, for many African Americans, the inequality described by the Kerner Commission continued in the succeeding decades. In 1980, civil unrest, violence, and looting broke out in the Liberty City neighborhood of Miami, Florida. Louis Stokes recognized the same characteristics in the Miami upheaval as he had seen in the unrest of the late 1960s. "The long hot summer of 1967 and the conditions that brought it on are fuming again. Miami was not unique," he said. "The same thing could happen in Washington, DC, Cleveland, New York, or any other major urban area." The federal government, Stokes insisted, was not doing enough. "The poor, the unemployed, the disadvantaged, minorities, and the downtrodden have all but been forgotten by the Nation." Poverty, limited access to health care, poor housing, crime, violence, addiction, high rates of incarceration, educational inequities, and over-policing remained all too common in urban Black neighborhoods in the decades after the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act.[10]

As Black Members of Congress responded to the effects of the growing urban crises in their districts, they did so while navigating a changing political terrain. Among both Republicans and Democrats, it became common in the 1970s and 1980s to argue that federal deficits were too large, taxes were too high, regulations were too burdensome, and the federal government was too big, and in general, a lag on the economy. As families and jobs moved out of the cities, political power and federal priorities turned further away from urban and social investment.[11]

Confronting these political and economic headwinds, Black Members of Congress were some of the most determined defenders of the social safety net and government involvement in the economy. The policies and ideas that came under attack—welfare and other social services, contested desegregation measures such as affirmative action and busing, and the general belief that government and the federal budget should be used to help the most vulnerable Americans—had been embraced by Black Members and their constituents, who were often from the communities most affected by the social, economic, and cultural changes of the era.

Although the Black lawmakers who served between 1966 and 1990 composed only a small share of the House and were almost entirely absent from the Senate, they searched for creative ways to employ the levers of power on Capitol Hill to improve the lives of Black Americans and other often overlooked groups across the country. Black Members in this period vowed to be, in the words of Ronald V. Dellums of California, "the conscience of Congress."[12]

PRECONGRESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

For many lawmakers in this generation, the civil disobedience demonstrations of the civil rights movement served as proving grounds for their future in electoral politics. Some were nationally prominent movement activists. John Lewis of Georgia, who was elected to the House in 1986, had cofounded and led the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He was a pillar of the movement: staging sit-ins in segregated stores, participating in the Freedom Rides of 1961, and helping to organize the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. In March 1965, Lewis led a peaceful protest march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, where he and many others were attacked by state troopers in one of the era's galvanizing moments. Andrew Young of Georgia, elected in 1972, was a principal aide to Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., serving as executive director and executive vice president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). King also tapped

a young Washington, DC, minister, Walter Fauntroy, to serve as director of the city's SCLC bureau. As the SCLC's congressional lobbyist, Fauntroy honed his coalition-building skills and was elected the District of Columbia's Delegate in the House in 1971.[13]

Other Members played important roles in the civil rights movement at the local level. Bill Clay, a Representative from St. Louis, Missouri, who was elected in 1968, helped found a local youth chapter of the NAACP and, in 1963, spent 105 days in jail after leading a picket against a bank that refused to hire Black employees. Major R. Owens, a New York Representative, was the chairman of the Brooklyn branch of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) between 1964 and 1966. As a member of CORE, Owens helped lead a series of rent strikes and initiated a voter registration drive inspired by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Charles A. Hayes of Illinois was another lawmaker who rose from the activist ranks. As an official in the powerful United Packinghouse Workers Union District 1 in Chicago, he participated in civil rights demonstrations in his city and provided financial and moral support to the southern civil rights movement. Other Black Members aided the civil rights movement as lawyers. Representative George W. Crockett Jr. of Michigan spent years working as a lawyer fighting for fair employment and volunteered his services to activists in Mississippi in 1964. Louis Stokes was a lawyer for the local Cleveland branch of the NAACP and led a successful court challenge to the state redistricting plan that ultimately created the majority-Black district which would elect him to the House in 1968.[14]

The Members profiled in this section were at the vanguard of the growth of electoral representation for Black Americans in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. In fact, of the 35 African Americans who entered Congress during this period, 30 held prior positions in government. Thirteen of these Members served as state legislators. Of these, a few held leadership roles in their respective chambers, including Barbara Jordan, who served as president pro tempore of the Texas senate, and Harold E. Ford, the majority whip of the Tennessee house of representatives.

Experience in local and municipal elective office also typified this post-1965 cohort. Eleven Members profiled in this section served in municipal positions, including as city councilor, county commissioner, borough president, and recorder judge. Multiple members held high-ranking state or territorial positions: Edward Brooke was the attorney general of Massachusetts; Mervyn M. Dymally served as lieutenant governor of California; and Melvin H. Evans was elected governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands.[15]

BUILDING "AUDACIOUS POWER" ON CAPITOL HILL

While the civil rights movement was the transformative experience for many Members, lawmakers elected in this era were also influenced by a different and, at times, competing political culture. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, many African Americans had begun to question the usefulness of the push for integration and the nonviolent, civil disobedience methods of the civil rights movement. "Black Power" began to compete with the previous decade's "Freedom Now" philosophy.

Black Power had different meanings among its supporters, yet advocates shared a common set of beliefs, including racial and cultural pride, community self-improvement, Black institutional control, international perspectives, and the right of Black self-determination. "When black people lack a majority, Black Power means proper representation and the sharing of control," wrote two of the movement's most influential thinkers. "It means the creation of power bases, of strength, from which black people can press to change local or nation-wide patterns of oppression—instead of from weakness."[16]

The phrase "Black Power"—and the movement behind it—was controversial from the moment SNCC

Baton-wielding Alabama state troopers wade into a crowd of peaceful civil rights demonstrators led by Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee chair John Lewis (on ground left center, in light coat) on March 7, 1965, in Selma, Alabama. Images of the violent event, later known as "Bloody Sunday," shocked millions of Americans and built momentum for the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

This 1965 picture of civil rights leaders includes, from left to right, activist Bayard Rustin, future Representative Andrew Young of Georgia, Representative William Fitts Ryan of New York, activist James Farmer, and future Representative John Lewis of Georgia. Farmer lost a 1968 House race to Shirley Chisholm in a newly created majority-Black district in Brooklyn, New York.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

leader Stokely Carmichael demanded it at a Greenwood, Mississippi, rally in June 1966. John Lewis, who resigned from SNCC in July 1966, viewed Carmichael's provocative rhetoric as divisive, saying it created tensions "both within the movement itself and between the races. It drove people apart rather than brought them together."[17]

The struggle for greater political power was one area in which the interests of the civil rights movement and the Black Power movement aligned. Protecting and expanding voting rights was central to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. At a speech following the March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in March 1965, Martin Luther King Jr. explained that the "denial of the right to vote" was the "very origin, the root cause, of racial segregation in the Southland." "Let us march on the ballot boxes," he continued, "until we send to our city councils, state legislatures, and the United States Congress, men who will not fear to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God." Black Members of this era were both participants and beneficiaries of the struggle to expand Black political power in the 1960s. And as these men and women entered Congress, they brought with them ideas, strategies, and goals developed by both the civil rights and Black Power movements.[18]

Speaking on the House Floor on March 29, 1966, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. of New York outlined what he called his "Black Position." In many ways Powell anticipated the balance between civil rights and Black Power that would influence future Black congressional politics. In this speech, Powell called on "Black leadership" to "differentiate between and work within the two-pronged thrust of the black revolution: economic self-sufficiency and political power." Powell wanted Black Americans to develop their own institutions. "We must turn inwardly toward our homes, our churches, our families, our children, our colleges, our neighborhoods, our businesses, and our communities," he said. But he also recognized the need for Black political integration into the existing establishment. "As chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, I control all labor and education legislation. This is legislative power." "Black people," Powell wrote, "must seek audacious power." A year later, in 1966, Powell, attempting to harness the popularity of the Black Power movement, held a Black Power conference in the Rayburn House Office Building, but nothing came of any larger Powell-led movement.[19]

Following Powell's lead, several of the newly elected Black Members of Congress adopted the rhetoric and practices of the Black Power movement. Often these lawmakers defined Black Power in expansive terms. During a speech at Howard University shortly after she took office, Shirley Chisholm of New York echoed the message in Powell's "Black Position" thesis. "Consolidating and using our power and our efforts to move up and we want the world to know that it is 'black power' because we have learned what other groups have been learning and doing for a long time," explained the first Black woman elected to Congress. "Until we can organize to create black unity with an economic base. Until we can develop a plan for action to achieve the goals to make us totally independent and not have to look to the man in order to live, we are not liberated." Bill Clay was quick to distance himself from Black nationalists who argued for racial separation, but he also explained that "Black Power is a combination of black pride and black politics. I've devoted my life to this and to the causes of freedom."[20]

It was a tragic coda to the Black freedom movement of the 1960s that Black politicians gained political power in American cities at the moment that public and private disinvestment devasted the economic base of many city neighborhoods. Those same difficult circumstances, however, helped set the direction and tone of Black politics, encouraging lawmakers to blend ideas of Black institutional control, pride, and self-reliance with their other objectives of full American citizenship. It shaped their approach to their place in Congress as well.

THE RISE OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

While they had many common concerns, it was not foreordained that Black legislators would seek to form an alliance. When Charles Diggs entered the House of Representatives in 1955, he joined William L. Dawson of Illinois and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. to form the largest delegation of African Americans on Capitol Hill since Reconstruction. But "in Congress, there was little, if any communication between Dawson and Powell," Diggs noted. "Their styles were different. In terms of exercise between them, there was not any."[21]

As the number of African Americans serving in Congress grew, however, a long-desired movement to form a more unified organization among Black legislators coalesced. Frustrated that Black Representatives lacked a forum to discuss common concerns and issues, Diggs proposed the organization of the Democratic Select Committee (DSC) at the opening of the 91st Congress (1969–1971). He maintained that the DSC would fill a significant void by fostering the exchange of information among the nine African Americans serving in Congress at the time, as well as between Black Representatives and House leadership. "The sooner we get organized for group action, the more effective we can become," Diggs remarked.[22]

Newcomers Bill Clay, Louis Stokes, and Shirley Chisholm embraced the idea. In his 1992 history of Black congressional representation, Clay wrote that the three first-year Members saw the organization as a way to empower Black lawmakers to "seize the moment, to fight for justice, to raise issues too long ignored and too little debated." Representatives Clay and Stokes also formed a fast and enduring friendship, which boosted momentum to craft a permanent issues caucus on the Hill, one that could speak even for those beyond their district boundaries. "The thrust of our elections was that many black people around America who had formerly been unrepresented, now felt that the nine black members of the House owed them the obligation of also affording them representation in the House," Stokes explained. Clay also observed that he, Chisholm, and Stokes "considered ourselves, along with other black representatives, to have a mandate to speak forcefully and loudly in behalf of equitable treatment of minorities by government."[23]

By the late 1960s, Black groups within larger institutions, such as labor unions, churches, and professional associations, had become increasingly common; Black caucuses already existed in the California and New York state legislatures. In her memoir *Unbought and Unbossed*, Shirley Chisholm expressed a common sentiment at the time that unified Black political action was a necessity. "There is no longer any alternative for black Americans but to unite and fight together for their own advancement as a group," she said.[24]

In its early years, the DSC was loosely organized and targeted a wide range of issues. In September 1969, the group testified before the Senate against the confirmation of Clement F. Haynsworth Jr. to the Supreme Court because, they said, his "record on civil rights clearly demonstrates his infidelity to the principles of racial equality." In part due to the efforts of Edward Brooke, who was the first Republican to publicly oppose President Richard Nixon's nominee, the Senate rejected Haynsworth's confirmation. Then, in December 1969, the group expanded its scope and led an unofficial investigation and hearing on the murders of Illinois Black Panther Party members Fred Hampton and

Louis Stokes of Ohio chaired three committees during his 30-year House career and was one of the founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Mark Clark by local police officers in Chicago. The group also participated in hearings, attended by White Members of Congress, that investigated an incident in which police shot into a dorm at Jackson State College, a historically Black college in Mississippi, killing two and wounding 15.[25]

With the opening of the 92nd Congress (1971–1973), the number of Black Members of Congress rose to 12. The DSC met on February 2, 1971, and accepted a recommendation put forth by Clay to create a formal nonpartisan caucus for African-American Members. Charles B. Rangel of New York, who had narrowly defeated Adam Clayton Powell Jr. in 1970, thought of a new name for the group: the Congressional Black Caucus. The CBC elected Diggs, the veteran legislator from Detroit, as its first chair, only days after the lawmakers had garnered national attention by boycotting Nixon's State of the Union Address. Bill Clay saw the creation of the CBC as a chance for Black Members to finally have sustained influence in the legislative process, thereby ensuring that Washington addressed their constituents' many material needs. "Our mission was clear," he remembered years later. "We had to parlay massive voting potential into concrete economic results."[26]

Like their predecessors in the nineteenth century, African-American Members of Congress who served after 1965 perceived themselves as representatives for Black America. In the CBC's 1971 meeting with President Nixon, Representative Diggs said, "Our concerns and obligations as members of Congress do not stop at the boundaries of our districts, our concerns are national and international in scope. We are petitioned daily by citizens living hundreds of miles from our districts who look on us as Congressmen-at-large for black people and poor people in the United States." The CBC faced formidable challenges, including its small enrollment and an initial lack of seniority among its Members in the House. Despite these limits, the caucus sought to fulfill its role as Congressmen-at-large for all Black Americans. The CBC collected and disseminated information on the policy preferences of African Americans, assisted individual Black Americans with a range of requests by providing casework services, and spoke on behalf of special interest groups within Black communities.[27]

On March 25, 1971, two months after 12 Black House Members boycotted his State of the Union Address, President Richard M. Nixon met with the Congressional Black Caucus. In attendance at the meeting were Augustus F. "Gus" Hawkins, Bill Clay, Ronald Dellums, presidential counselor Robert Finch, U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development George Romney, Ralph H. Metcalfe, George W. Collins of Illinois, Robert N.C. Nix Sr., presidential senior assistant Clark MacGregor, John Conyers Jr., Louis Stokes, Charles B. Rangel, presidential assistant Donald Henry Rumsfeld, U.S. Secretary of Labor James Hodgson, Parren J. Mitchell, Shirley Chisholm, Charles C. Diggs Jr., and Walter E. Fauntroy.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

Its claims to represent every Black American were part of the CBC's attempt to fill the leadership vacuum in the Black freedom movement created by the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Yet there was no consensus among Black Members on how the CBC would lead. Representative Diggs, who had broad ambitions for the caucus, called for the creation of a National Black Political Convention, to be held in Gary, Indiana, in early March 1972. Black activists and politicians across the ideological divide called for a mass meeting of African Americans to create a unified message in anticipation of the upcoming presidential election. Ultimately, however, the CBC declined to sponsor the event for fear it would lead to future obligations in which the caucus would not have direct oversight.[28]

The CBC faced similar challenges during Shirley Chisholm's contemporaneous run for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1972, splitting on whether to endorse her candidacy and disagreeing about the general direction of Black leadership in Congress. The only woman among the CBC's founders, Chisholm felt that her gender, in addition to her willingness to form coalitions with liberal Whites, Hispanics, and women of all races and ethnicities, irritated her CBC colleagues. Eager to strengthen their position in the Democratic Caucus and committed to individual political alliances that could be compromised by supporting Chisholm's quest for the nomination, many CBC members were not willing to back her. While a few Black Members cautiously supported her campaign early on, only Ron Dellums and Parren J. Mitchell of Maryland officially endorsed Chisholm for President.[29]

When Louis Stokes succeeded Diggs as CBC chair in 1972, he pushed members of the CBC to concentrate

their time as lawmakers on increasing their effectiveness and influence in Congress. "We had to analyze what our resources were, what we should be doing, and how best to do it," he explained. "And our conclusion was this: if we were to be effective, if we were going to make the meaningful contribution to minority citizens in this country, then it must be as legislators. This is the area in which we possess expertise—and it is within the halls of Congress that we must make this expertise felt." For Stokes, the importance of the CBC was that it could "give a black perspective" on legislation. Stokes encouraged members to shape major legislation touching on a variety of issues—from communications regulations to health care to economic development—in ways that would specifically help Black Americans.[30]

Stokes also made room for larger reform efforts, and the CBC continued to express a collective vision of the Black political agenda. In 1972, the CBC issued a "Black Declaration of Independence" that included a "Black Bill of Rights" intended to "create a society which is truly founded upon the principles of freedom, justice and full equality." The CBC's demands, meant to influence the Democratic Party platform and presidential nominee selection process, encompassed issues ranging from national health insurance to a guaranteed annual income system and federal contracts for Black-owned businesses to increased foreign aid to Africa.[31]

Beginning in 1975, the caucus offered its own legislative agenda every year for the next five years, the cornerstone of which was the passage and enforcement of full employment legislation. The caucus also looked to make better use of institutional knowledge and power to help advance its preferred legislation. It reorganized staff to aid Members in passing bills and worked to place Members on key committees. The CBC pointed to the passage of the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1975 as proof of its new influence in Congress.[32]

During this period, the CBC also confronted questions about its identity and core values. In 1975, Fortney Hillman "Pete" Stark Jr., a White Member representing a congressional district in Oakland, California, with a substantial African-American population, asked to join the all-Black caucus. After intense deliberation, the group rejected Stark's application. "The caucus symbolizes black political development in this country," CBC chair Charles Rangel explained. "We feel that maintaining this symbolism is critical at this juncture in our development." The CBC retained its unwritten rule restricting membership to

The Congressional Black Caucus poses for a photograph after an August 1974 meeting with President Gerald R. Ford. Standing from left to right: Ronald Dellums, Robert Nix, John Conyers, Shirley Chisholm, Andrew Young, presidential assistant Stan Scott, Ralph Metcalfe, Walter Fauntroy, Barbara Jordan, Louis Stokes, Charles Diggs. Seated left to right: Gus Hawkins, Cardiss Collins, Charles Rangel, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Bill Clay, and Parren Mitchell.

Image courtesy of Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University

African-American legislators, but 13 years later briefly allowed White Members to join as nonvoting associates. In 1988, 41 White Representatives joined the CBC when the caucus instituted its new policy.[33]

Although the CBC's membership was overwhelmingly Democratic, the group sought to be bipartisan. Edward Brooke, the only Black Republican in Congress in the CBC's early years, did not join the caucus. But Melvin Evans, who served as a Republican Delegate from the U.S. Virgin Islands, did so for his one term in the House from 1979 to 1981. After Evans's election, CBC chair Parren Mitchell welcomed him into the caucus, explaining that the CBC "cannot afford to be partisan about this. Black people have problems in common—housing, education, jobs, and all the rest—whether they are Republicans or Democrat."[34]

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Black Members regularly criticized what Shirley Chisholm called the "petrified, sanctified system of seniority" embraced by their party's leaders, which enabled White southern Democrats to control many of the House's important committees. In challenging the prevailing Democratic committee practices, Black Members found common cause with other reform-minded, often ideologically liberal, lawmakers seeking to overturn the committee system that rewarded the long tenure of southern Democrats who opposed their policy goals. Together, they animated the reform movement

Louis Stokes, George Collins, Charles Diggs, and Shirley Chisholm gather at a May 24, 1971, Congressional Black Caucus meeting to discuss the Nixon Administration's response to the caucus's policy recommendations.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

that decentralized power in the House. In 1970, Shirley Chisholm, then in her first term in Congress, was a member of a Democratic Caucus committee, chaired by Julia Butler Hansen of Washington, that recommended implementing reforms to allow committee chairs to be chosen without regard to the seniority ladder. These early committee reforms, while significant, did not threaten many established committee chairs, who were confident that they would not be challenged by public votes in the caucus.[35]

Black Members also worked independently of the Democratic Party to topple entrenched committee chairs. Since the mid-1960s, home rule—the right of the residents of Washington, DC, to elect their own local government—had been a top priority of civil rights activists and civic reformers in the majority-Black city. But the longtime chair of the Committee on the District of Columbia, John Lanneau McMillan of South Carolina, was a segregationist and an ardent opponent of home rule. In 1972, the District of Columbia's Delegate to the House, Democrat Walter Fauntroy, supported a primary campaign against McMillan, working behind the scenes to quietly assist McMillan's Democratic challengers. White lawmaker John Wilson Jenrette Jr. ultimately defeated McMillan in the primary before losing to the Republican candidate in the general election. McMillan's defeat was a victory for Fauntroy and home rule supporters. Charles Diggs, a supporter of home rule, became the DC committee chair, and he ensured that like-minded committee members became subcommittee chairs. Fauntroy's campaign did more than elevate another Black Member of Congress to a committee chair. The very next year, Diggs, in his new role, shepherded the passage of a bill conferring partial self-government on the District. Thanks to his efforts, and for the first time in almost a century, the people of this now majority-Black city were able to elect their own mayor and city council.[36]

In this and other instances, Black Members and other reform-minded lawmakers succeeded in ending the reign of southern conservative chairs and swept through a series of significant changes to House committees. These reforms gave the CBC even more leverage to advocate for the placement of Black Members on important committees. As part of a major reform package agreed to in 1974, control of the Democratic Party's committee assignment process was given to the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, which was chaired by the party leader. The CBC used the opportunity to pressure House leaders, including Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma, to place African-American lawmakers on prominent committees. As a result, each of the most significant House committees included at least one African-American Member on its roster during the 94th Congress (1975–1977), a level of Black prominence without precedent in House history.[37]

Between 1971 and 1975, Black Members eclipsed long-standing barriers on several elite House committees: Appropriations, which originates all federal spending bills; Ways and Means, with power over taxation and revenue measures; and Rules, which reviews and structures bills passed by various committees in preparation for debate by the full House. In 1971, Louis Stokes won a seat on the Appropriations Committee, becoming the first of five African-American Members to serve on the panel (the first Black woman, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke of California, joined the committee in 1975). The first African-American lawmaker to lead an Appropriations subcommittee was Representative Julian C. Dixon of California, who chaired the District of Columbia Subcommittee beginning in the 97th Congress (1981–1983). Stokes, too, would later chair an Appropriations subcommittee. In 1975, at the beginning of the 94th Congress, Charles Rangel became the first African-American legislator on the Ways and Means Committee; a few months later, in September 1975, Harold E. Ford of Tennessee joined Rangel on the committee. Rangel eventually became chair of Ways and Means in 2007. A Black woman would not be appointed to Ways and Means until Stephanie Tubbs Jones of Ohio broke that barrier in 2003. Andrew Young became the first African-American Member on the Rules Committee in 1975, and

two years later, Shirley Chisholm became the first Black woman to serve on the panel. In 1971, Ralph H. Metcalfe of Illinois became the first Black Member on the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee. Ten years later, in 1981, Cardiss Collins became the first Black woman to join the panel, which by then had been renamed the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Once they took their seats on powerful committees, Black Members took advantage of their relatively safe districts to climb the seniority ladder. Incumbency success rates for Members of Congress rose throughout the twentieth century for the entire congressional population. Since the 1970s, incumbency rates have remained consistently at 95 percent or greater. While the career longevity of all Members of Congress has increased, the tenure of African-American legislators has exceeded the norm.[38]

The average length of service for African-American Members elected between 1964 and 2004 reached 10.1 years—higher than the 8.65-year average for the entire congressional population during that time span. Of the Black Members who entered Congress after 1965, Charles Rangel had the longest span of service: nearly 46 years when he retired at the end of the 114th Congress (2015–2017). In the history of African Americans in Congress, Rangel ranked second only to John Conyers, a Member for nearly 53 years when he resigned in December 2017. During this era, John Lewis (33 years), Bill Clay (32 years), Edolphus Towns (30 years), and Louis Stokes (30 years) also accumulated three decades of service.[39]

Seniority boosted the influence of Black Representatives and the CBC. Having won a place in the House by challenging entrenched lawmakers, Black Members discovered virtue in longevity. "When I first came to Congress, I was opposed to the seniority system," District of Columbia Delegate Walter Fauntroy remarked in 1987. But, as he said, "The longer I am here, the better I like it." Seniority was essential to defending Black gains. "We don't really think that racism in this country has so diminished that given the opportunity to vote on individuals based on their experience and ability that we could overcome that without the assistance of the seniority system," Representative Rangel acknowledged.[40]

By the 99th Congress (1985–1987), African Americans chaired an unparalleled five standing committees, two select committees, and 15 subcommittees. For the CBC this meant its members had influence at key points in the legislative process. "We don't have to go hat in hand begging anybody," Representative Clay observed. "In fact, it's just the reverse. Now a lot of people have to come hat in hand (to us) asking for favors."[41]

During this era, Black Members also made history by seeking and attaining posts in Democratic Party leadership. John Conyers made the first effort to win a leadership seat by challenging then Majority Leader Carl Albert for the Speakership in 1971. Conyers lost the Democratic Caucus vote 220 to 20 in what was widely described as a symbolic undertaking. But African-American Members made inroads in other leadership posts during this era. Barbara Jordan, Ralph Metcalfe, and Harold Ford, for instance, were early appointees to the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, which set the party's legislative agenda in addition to parceling out committee assignments. Shirley Chisholm held the position of Democratic Caucus secretary in the 95th and 96th Congresses (1977–1981). In 1983, Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts chose Representative Charles Rangel as a deputy majority whip, and John Lewis later served as chief deputy whip. After winning the position of Democratic Caucus chair in December 1988, William H. Gray III made history six months later when his colleagues elected him Majority Whip. Gray was the third-ranking Democrat in the House and the first African American to hold the post.[42]

After defeating incumbent Adam Clayton Powell Jr. in 1970, Charles Rangel began an historic 46-year career representing a New York House district.

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More women joined the first Black Congresswoman, Shirley Chisholm, on Capitol Hill during the early 1970s. To Chisholm's right are Cardiss Collins and Yvonne Burke.

Image courtesy of Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University

"TO FIGHT DOUBLY HARD"

In November 1968, Shirley Chisholm became the first Black woman elected to Congress. In the period covered in this section, four more women—Cardiss Collins, Barbara Jordan, Yvonne Burke, and Katie Hall of Indiana—won election to the House of Representatives.

Black women had sought congressional office for decades before Chisholm won her election. In the 1930s and 1940s, Layle Lane, a teacher and union activist, ran for Congress in New York City three times on the Socialist Party ticket. Then, in 1944, Sara Pelham Speaks, a Harlem-based lawyer, ran as the Republican candidate against Adam Clayton Powell Jr. in his first successful campaign. Twenty years later, in 1964, Brenetta Howell, a journalist and activist, ran against Thomas Joseph O'Brien for a Chicago House seat.[43]

In the 1960s, several Black women ran for Congress in southern districts. In Alabama, Amelia Boynton, a voting rights activist, ran against incumbent Kenneth Allison Roberts in the Democratic primary. Boynton gained national prominence a year later for her activism during the Selma voting rights campaign. In 1965, Sarah E. Small, a member of the civil rights organization CORE and a local chapter of SCLC, ran in a special election for a North Carolina seat eventually won by Walter Beaman Jones Sr. By the late 1960s, more and more women were running for Congress. In 1968, when Chisholm notched her historic victory, future Representative Eva M. Clayton ran unsuccessfully for an eastern North Carolina seat in the U.S. House, and Janet Roberts Jennings, a teacher and former campaign staffer for Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen of Illinois, ran unsuccessfully as the Republican opponent against longtime Chicago Representative William Dawson.[44]

The five women profiled in this section were trailblazers, working to pass significant legislation and rising through the ranks of party and House leadership. Several gained influential committee positions: Chisholm on Rules, Burke on Appropriations, and Jordan on Judiciary. Yvonne Burke also chaired the Select Committee on the House Beauty Shop, while Cardiss Collins became the first Black woman to chair a subcommittee when she headed the Manpower and Housing Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations in 1977. Collins later rose to ranking minority member of the same committee, then renamed the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight. Both Burke and Collins also were elected to terms as chair of the CBC.

This ascent paralleled Black women's movement into Democratic Party leadership. In 1975, Cardiss Collins won appointment as Democratic whip-at-large, and in 1977, Shirley Chisholm was elected secretary of the Democratic Caucus. Barbara Jordan, who was one of the most widely respected Members of the House during her tenure, served on the powerful Democratic Steering and Policy Committee.

While Burke and Collins both led the CBC, Chisholm and Jordan, among the best-known Members of Congress in their day, approached their work with the caucus differently. Neither Chisholm nor Jordan believed that the caucus was the most important vehicle for their success as politicians and legislators. From the beginning of her career, Jordan demonstrated her independence from the CBC. Before she was sworn in, the CBC, as part of its effort to place Black Members on important House committees, advocated for Jordan to be put on the Armed Services Committee. While Jordan did not oppose this assignment, she preferred a seat on Judiciary. The Texas Representative reached out to former President Lyndon B. Johnson, and his eventual recommendation on her behalf got Jordan placed on her preferred committee. Additionally, sexism and the professional jealousy of some male CBC members made the caucus an occasionally uninviting space for Black women members. Chisholm recalled seeing "the unhappy looks on the other members' faces" because of the publicity she received for being the first Black woman in Congress. The reactions of some of her male colleagues caused Chisholm to avoid the press sometimes, "in order to stay more in the background," she said.[45]

All five women were active lawmakers and worked to build on the legislative victories won by the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Both Collins and Burke pushed for legislation that mandated racial minority- and women-owned businesses receive set-asides from federally funded projects. Jordan sponsored legislation denying federal funding to law enforcement agencies that practiced employment discrimination. And Indiana Representative Katie Hall successfully shepherded through Congress the law creating Martin Luther King Jr. Day, legislation that had stalled in Congress for 15 years.[46]

Though they represented different parts of the country, their common experiences as Black women shaped their legislative priorities. Often, these Members focused on legislation directly aimed at concerns of women, and more specifically, Black women, who rarely had legislators working on their behalf. In 1973, Chisholm, Burke, Jordan, and Collins wrote to Caspar W. Weinberger, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, criticizing federal guidelines on a contraceptive medicine that could leave women infertile. Citing the cases of two Black teenagers who received the drug from an Office of Economic Opportunity-funded clinic in Alabama, the lawmakers argued the language in the guidelines left women of color and poor women especially at risk. Several of the women lawmakers took the lead in advocating for bills that would expand the coverage of federal social aid legislation to better support women. Chisholm worked to successfully amend the Depression-era Fair Labor Standards Act to provide a minimum wage to domestic workers, who were predominantly women of color. Jordan, taking over an initiative begun by former Michigan Representative Martha Wright Griffiths, sponsored legislation to allow women who did not have a direct source of income—what the legislation called homemakers—to receive Social Security benefits. Burke proposed similar legislation and sponsored a bill to fund job training facilities for "displaced homemakers," who had lost income provided by a spouse because of divorce, death, or job loss.[47]

During the 1970s, Black women made up a higher percentage of Black Members of Congress than White women did among all White Members, yet the number of Black women in Congress in this era remained miniscule. And between 1985, following Katie Hall's defeat for re-election, and 1991, the only Black woman in Congress was Cardiss Collins. Early in her congressional career, Shirley Chisholm acknowledged her unique position as a Black woman in Congress and how difficult it was to reach such a position. "My rise has been constantly fighting," she explained. "And I have had to fight doubly hard because I am a woman. I am a very different sort of person than usually emerges on the political scene."[48]

LEGISLATIVE INTERESTS

With a few exceptions, the Black Members covered in this section represented majority- or near-majority-Black congressional districts in urban areas experiencing population and job loss and a corresponding turn of political power and federal priorities away from urban and social investment. In the face of these challenges, they shared a commitment to advancing voting rights; improving access to housing, education, and economic opportunity; defending human rights abroad; and opening access to better health care. Working creatively and determinedly, Black Members shaped some of the era's most significant legislation.

Following her husband's death, Cardiss Collins embarked on a more than two-decade career in the House.

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In 1976, Barbara Jordan, a captivating public speaker, became the first woman and the first African American to deliver a keynote address at a Democratic National Convention.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Voting Rights

Voting rights—which Barbara Jordan once referred to as the "frontispiece" of the civil rights movement—continued as a legislative pillar for African-American Members of Congress in the 1970s and 1980s. Because the 1965 Voting Rights Act included several sections that required periodic legislative renewal, Black lawmakers worked to extend the protections outlined in the original law. The first amendments to the law came in 1970, but amendments made in 1975 and 1982 were of particular importance.

The 1975 extension, which passed the House 341 to 70, was signed into law on August 6, the tenth anniversary of the first Voting Rights Act. It continued several key provisions established by the original act, including "preclearance," which prevented states with a history of discriminatory voting practices from altering their election procedures without approval from the courts or the U.S. Department of Justice.[49]

The 1975 act also expanded preclearance coverage to include counties in the North and West. And it was extended beyond African-American voters to protect "language minorities," including Spanish speakers, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. The law required bilingual elections in areas where there were large numbers of voters whose English literacy was below the national average.[50]

African-American Members played a prominent part during debate on the 1975 extension. Representative Jordan, whose Houston district had a large Latino population, sponsored an amendment to expand the definition of literacy tests to include election registration materials printed only in English in areas with large non-English-speaking populations. "The voting rights act may have overcome blatant discriminatory practices," Jordan said, testifying before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Constitutional Rights. But, she added, "it has yet to overcome subtle discriminatory practices." Charles Rangel agreed that the law remained essential to preserving democratic government in the South. "Malevolent local government must not be exposed to any temptation to take back the political rights and powers that have so recently come to southern blacks," he said. Andrew Young pointed to the seven southern states covered by the original 1965 act, highlighting vastly improved voter registration rates and an increase in the number of elected Black officials in the South. "The remarkable effect of this act is that it has a preventative effect," Young observed. "There are some reports that the threat of suing examiners has a deterrent effect—that local registrars began to register black voters so that federal examiners would be kept out."[51]

Seven years later, the 1982 Voting Rights Act extension provided another victory for the civil rights movement and multiracial democracy. During debate in the House, several Black Members of Congress spoke in support of the bill. Representative Clay explained what was at stake for the country: "Are we willing to continue our forward momentum in America's bold and noble attempt to achieve a free and just democratic society? Or, will we embrace the politics of reversal and retreat; the super rich against the wretchedly poor, the tremendously strong against the miserably weak?"[52]

Examples from American history helped drive these legislative efforts. Black lawmakers during this era had studied the White supremacist overthrow of Reconstruction and the ensuing rollback of the political, civil, and social rights that African Americans had won in the years immediately following the Civil War. The negation of Black freedom had happened once, and it could happen again. Walter Fauntroy made exactly this connection at a hearing for the Voting Rights Act of 1982, explaining that "without the extension of it [the Voting Rights Act] we may have a repeat of the post-reconstruction period of 100 years ago, which would see large numbers of blacks and other

minorities denied full participation in the electoral process, as well as representation in bodies like this."[53]

The 1982 bill extended the Voting Rights Act's major provisions for 25 years. It also established a procedure by which jurisdictions that maintained a clean voting rights record for at least a decade could petition a panel of judges to be removed from the preclearance list. The bilingual election materials requirements established in the 1975 act were also extended for another decade. Mickey Leland, who succeeded Representative Jordan in her Houston district, addressed the House in Spanish to make a point about the need for extending those provisions. "Many of you cannot understand me," Leland said in Spanish. "And even though you cannot understand me when I speak Spanish maybe you can begin to understand the hypocrisy of our political system which excludes the participation of Hispanic-Americans only for having a different culture and speaking a different language."[54]

The Voting Rights Act of 1982 also ensured that certain voting rights violations could be proven as the result of changes to local regulations, even if the intent to discriminate could not be established. That section of the bill overturned the 1980 Supreme Court decision in *Mobile v. Bolden* requiring prosecutors to prove that a jurisdiction intended to discriminate when it changed its voting regulations. This legislative instrument provided the basis for the creation of majority-Black districts following the 1990 Census, particularly in southern states, paving the way for the expansion of African-American representation in Congress.[55]

Fair Housing

For most if not all Black legislators, the advance of voting rights legislation took place against an inhospitable economic backdrop. Between 1940 and 1980, roughly 5 million African Americans moved from the rural South to the urban North. As African Americans moved to cities, many White families decamped to America's booming suburbs. Racial animus against African-American families played a significant role in the decision of White urban dwellers to leave. White flight, as the phenomenon was called, often left cities less populated and with less tax revenue. This process quickened as African Americans increased their local political power and as court-mandated school desegregation finally occurred in the late 1960s. Discriminatory housing practices kept many Black families out of the suburbs, while real estate practices such as redlining—the practice of denying financial services, including mortgages and insurance, to buyers based on their racial or ethnic background—severely undervalued the housing supply in predominantly Black city neighborhoods. Deindustrialization, the effects of economic recession, and the federal government's disinvestment all helped create an "urban crisis" that had its most severe impacts on Black Americans. As Martin Luther King Jr. put it in 1967, "the suburbs are white nooses around the black necks of cities." While appearing to surface after the riots, the hollowing out of city life was well advanced by the time this cohort was elected to Congress.[56]

Black Americans' long-standing demand for access to housing surged to the forefront of a national discussion on urban policy, particularly after violence erupted in majority-Black neighborhoods in cities such as Los Angeles, Detroit, and Newark, New Jersey, in the mid-1960s. In his 1966 State of the Union Address, President Johnson recommended "outlawing discrimination in the sale and rental of housing." Although House Democrats failed to pass a fair housing bill in the summer of 1967, the House did pass a narrow civil rights bill on August 15, 1967. The law established federal protections for civil rights workers and federal penalties for anyone who forcibly interfered with their civil and political rights.[57]

When the Senate finally began to debate the legislation in February 1968, Senator Edward Brooke joined with Senator Walter F. Mondale of Minnesota to draft an amendment designed to prohibit discrimination in the sale or rental of 91 percent of all housing in the nation. On the Senate Floor, Brooke described how segregated neighborhoods, typically far from employment opportunities, placed severe financial burdens on African-American communities. Black families, he noted, often paid similar prices as those in White neighborhoods without similar investments in the quality of housing, social services, and schools. Brooke added that he could "testify from personal experience, having lived in the ghetto," that these limitations have a significant "psychological impact" on the majority of African Americans searching for a home. "In the hierarchy of American values there can be no higher standard than equal justice for each individual," Brooke declared. "By that standard, who could question the right of every American to compete on equal terms for adequate housing for his family?" A compromise bill, which reduced the amount of housing covered, passed the Senate and returned to the House on March 11, 1968.[58]

Before the Senate's housing bill could be debated by the full House, it needed to make it past the Rules Committee and its chair, William Meyers Colmer, a Democrat from Mississippi. Since the 1950s, the Rules Committee and its southern chairmen had blocked civil rights initiatives. Colmer sought to keep the Senate housing bill off the floor by sending the civil rights legislation passed by the House in 1967 to a conference committee to be reconciled with the Senate's version that included the fair housing provision. House supporters of the Senate's bill wanted that legislation to be sent directly to a vote on the House Floor because they feared a conference committee would revise or simply stall the fair housing legislation. On April 4—the day before the Rules Committee was scheduled to vote on whether to direct the bill to the House Floor or send it to conference—Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was campaigning in support of striking sanitation workers. The Rules Committee postponed its vote. A violent weekend ensued in cities across the nation, leaving 46 people dead, thousands injured, and millions of dollars in property damage. Washington, DC, suffered extensive damage, and federal troops patrolled the Capitol when the Rules Committee met the following week. Unexpectedly, but no doubt sensing the gravity of the moment, a majority of the committee defied Colmer and voted to send the bill to the floor.[59]

In 1975, Edward Brooke's impassioned support of the need to extend the landmark 1965 Voting Rights Act by seven years helped ensure the measure's success.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Less than a week later, the House approved the Senate bill by a vote of 250 to 172, and President Johnson signed it into law on April 11, 1968. The measure extended federal penalties for civil rights infractions, protected civil rights workers, and outlawed discrimination by race, creed, national origin, or sex in the sale and rental of roughly 80 percent of U.S. housing by 1970. The enforcement mechanism of the fair housing provision, however, proved relatively weak because it required private individuals or advocacy groups to file suit when claiming to have suffered housing discrimination. Meanwhile, working and middle-class White families continued to flee to the suburbs, leaving cities less populated, poorer, and with smaller tax bases to address their many needs.[60]

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Black Members worked to improve the enforcement of the act. Because complaints proceeded through private civil action—rather than through government reconciliation processes—fair housing lawsuits were expensive and time consuming. The Fair Housing Act, Shirley Chisholm argued on the House Floor in 1980, "has remained a statement of goals, rather than an active force against discrimination in the housing market." For Chisholm, John Conyers, and other Black Members of Congress, housing discrimination was a fundamental cause of persistent racial inequality. Conyers explained to his colleagues that "there is no way that we can enjoy any of our other rights as long as racial discrimination in housing is as flagrant as it is." In 1988, after many years of trying, Congress amended the Fair Housing Act to allow administrative judges in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to hear discriminatory housing lawsuits.[61]

School Desegregation

Given that residential location generally determined a child's school placement, segregated housing markets and educational segregation went hand in hand. As Black legislators fought to end real estate practices that promoted segregation, they debated their position on busing, the policy of transporting students beyond their neighborhood school to aid the desegregation of America's educational system. Busing was one of the most controversial domestic issues of the early 1970s. By and large, courts set busing policy, but it was a political fight that played out at all levels of government. In the House of Representatives, a coalition of Republicans and Democrats—including many Members from northern districts who had supported civil rights legislation in the 1960s—worked to end busing.

In 1972, for example, opponents of busing successfully passed an education bill that restricted federal funds available to districts that bused students to integrate their schools. While the House and Senate passed several other bills limiting federal funding for busing, opponents never successfully banned the practice outright. In 1974, the Supreme Court banned busing across school jurisdictions, from cities to suburbs, for instance. Without metropolitan busing plans, White flight out of America's cities meant that by the 1980s urban schools were overwhelmingly Black and suburban schools were overwhelmingly White. As a result, busing no longer held the same political salience for many White families.[62]

Not all Black Americans supported busing initiatives. Some Black policymakers and educators argued that busing Black children to majority-White schools would decrease the employment opportunities for Black teachers and Black school administrators. In Atlanta, Georgia, the local NAACP created a desegregation plan with the city that, according to one historian, "minimized pupil desegregation" through busing while expanding employment opportunities for Black educators and administrators. For other African Americans, busing to White schools seemed to imply that Black children could only succeed around White children. Instead, these Black opponents of busing argued that money should be invested in schools run by Black administrators and Black teachers for the benefit of Black communities.[63]

In Congress, Black Members often took the lead in protecting the use of busing to achieve school integration. Despite disagreements among Black Representatives about whether busing was an effective and worthwhile policy, they largely agreed to oppose antibusing legislation. While no Black Representative supported antibusing measures, there was a spectrum of opinion in the House about how to handle the volatile issue.

In the early 1970s, Gus Hawkins took a strong stand against antibusing measures from his seat on the Committee on Education and Labor. For Hawkins, the organized resistance to busing was nothing less than an attempt to turn back the clock on school desegregation itself. The California Representative likened the push for antibusing legislation to "a mob spirit" and viewed a 1972 antibusing proposal as an attempt "to bring back the condition which existed in this country under the separate but equal doctrine." Seven years later, CBC chair Cardiss Collins took the lead in opposing a constitutional amendment banning busing. "I am not proud that some of my colleagues have forgotten the legacy of enforced segregation and slavery which still tells too many black children that they must have the worst school buildings, the worst textbooks, the worst school personnel and the worst learning opportunities."[64]

Students ride a school bus in Charlotte, North Carolina. In a 1971 case regarding desegregation of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg County school district, the Supreme Court ruled that busing Black and White children between majority-Black and majority-White schools was an appropriate tool to help achieve racial integration.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

In the Senate, Edward Brooke supported busing as a means to integrate schools and often led the opposition to legislation that sought to overturn court-ordered busing requirements. His stance came with substantial political risk. In the mid-1970s, Boston, Massachusetts, was perhaps the epicenter of American antibusing protest. But for Brooke, busing was a legitimate, court-sanctioned remedy to help Black Americans achieve their constitutional right to equal opportunity. "It is not necessarily the best way," Brooke explained to a reporter, "but in certain instances busing is the *only* way to achieve desegregation." In 1974, Brooke led opposition to an amendment to a Housing, Education, and Welfare appropriations bill that aimed to bar the department from cutting funds to schools that disobeyed integration orders. That amendment, added by Maryland Representative Marjorie Sewell Holt, would have effectively ended the federal government's role in school desegregation. Had it passed, Brooke argued, the Senate would have done "everything humanly possible to abolish the civil rights laws of this country."[65]

Shirley Chisholm argued that antibusing proposals were little more than "political expediencies" that focused on "highly emotional issues." "Busing," she insisted, "is not the issue." Chisholm opposed antibusing legislation

On May 20, 1975, Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller addresses a Congressional Black Caucus full employment forum. Shirley Chisholm and Vice President Rockefeller greet each other as Walter Fauntroy and Charles Rangel look on.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

and argued that Congress should instead focus on both the "distribution of funds for all kinds of schools in this country" and "integrated housing." Chisholm believed these policies would get to the root of the problems of continued segregation and racial inequality, and would, in her words, create "an open society which in the final analysis will redound to all children." On one occasion, Chisholm explained that, busing aside, some of her constituents believed their children were getting a better education from schools controlled by their Black and Puerto Rican communities. Chisholm told a reporter that she found it "difficult to argue with parents who for the first time, have some faith in the educational process."[66]

The CBC thus attempted to balance the push for integration with the protection of Black community-controlled education. In its 1972 "Black Bill of Rights," the CBC called for "federal, state, and local authorities to fully comply with the Supreme Court's recent school desegregation decision that busing will be employed as a suitable means to ensure quality education for all American children." But in the same document, the caucus called busing a "sterile issue." The CBC instead called for "the development of mechanisms for black control of schools where black children are educated." "The basic issue," the CBC announced, was the "redistribution of educational wealth and control."[67]

Equal Employment

As their housing and school initiatives demonstrated, Black lawmakers recognized the economic dimensions of their civil rights struggle. Inequities in real estate markets and educational opportunity persisted, increasing the urgency of resolving long-standing patterns of discrimination in the labor market.

Supporters of the equal employment clause in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 recognized early on that the law had weak enforcement mechanisms. The law had created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which sought to investigate complaints of racial and sex discrimination, but the commission lacked the power to compel offending employers to cooperate. In 1965, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. sponsored an Equal Employment Act that provided the EEOC with the power to issue cease-and-desist orders to force employers to end discriminatory practices. In 1966, the bill, now sponsored by Gus Hawkins, easily passed the House; but the Johnson administration made no effort to support it, and the Senate did not act on it. Then, in 1970, the Senate passed similar equal employment legislation, but the House Rules Committee chair, Democrat William Colmer, prevented the legislation from reaching the House Floor. The EEOC, Parren Mitchell lamented in 1971, "too often turns out to be a paper tiger."[68]

That year, House Democrats, led by Hawkins, made passing the Equal Employment Opportunity Act a priority for the 92nd Congress. The CBC declared "an all-out war" to combat job discrimination. "Too long already," the CBC argued, "have we delayed the implementation of the National Policy of equal employment. We will hold accountable those who oppose such implementation of the Civil Rights Act, or who use ingenious devices to protect job discrimination while proclaiming themselves friends of civil rights."[69]

The CBC's comments were directed at a substitute to the Hawkins bill, sponsored by Illinois Republican John Neal Erlenborn and supported by the Nixon administration, that would deny the EEOC cease-and-desist powers and instead grant the commission the ability to sue employers in federal court. The CBC opposed Erlenborn's court solution because of the time and money litigation required.

Thus, while a bipartisan consensus had emerged that the EEOC should be granted new powers to enforce equal employment law, what form that enforcement should take remained uncertain. Democratic leadership backed the CBC and liberal Democrats in supporting an EEOC with

cease-and-desist powers, while Republicans and southern Democrats supported the Erlenborn substitute. After two days of debate in September 1971, the House decided to table the CBC's bill and move forward with Erlenborn's substitute; it passed the House 285 to 108. While Hawkins ultimately decided to support the legislation's final version, five CBC members voted against it. After several weeks of debate in the Senate, followed by a conference committee, President Nixon signed the Equal Employment Opportunity Act into law on March 24, 1972.[70]

The battle was not over, however. Eighteen years later, Gus Hawkins, now chair of the Education and Labor Committee, once again led the fight in the House to reform equal employment law. In 1989, a series of Supreme Court decisions upended 20 years of employment law in ways that civil rights advocates argued made it far more difficult for women and minorities to sue employers for discrimination. According to Cardiss Collins, the Supreme Court had "disregarded both the letter and the spirit of Congress' efforts, thus doing damage to the legitimate rights of millions of Americans." In response, Hawkins proposed a new civil rights bill.[71]

Hawkins's 1990 Civil Rights Act sought to return the burden of proof in employment discrimination cases to the employer rather than the plaintiff. It also sought to redefine the standards courts could use to judge whether employers were guilty of practices that led to discrimination, whether the discrimination was intentional or not. The law allowed all victims of employment discrimination, including women, to win monetary compensation from lawsuits—previously only available in instances of racial discrimination under an 1866 law. Donald M. Payne, the first Black Member to represent New Jersey, explained that the bill sought to "restore the important protections that have helped make our society more fair and just since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964."[72]

The George H.W. Bush administration and its Republican congressional allies agreed that employment law should be revised in light of the Supreme Court rulings. But they opposed Hawkins's bill and sought to undermine it by labeling it a "quota bill" that mandated minority hiring. Despite an amendment to the bill that explicitly banned quotas, the President's Office of Management and Budget still argued that it would require "employers to adopt surreptitious quotas" or risk being sued.[73]

Despite the threat of a presidential veto, Democrats, led by Hawkins in the House and Edward Moore "Ted" Kennedy of Massachusetts in the Senate, refused to concede on the main points of the bill. Hawkins's legislation passed both the House and the Senate but was vetoed by President Bush. It fell 12 votes shy of the number that was required to override the veto in the House and one vote short in the Senate.

In 1991, with Gus Hawkins now retired, Democrats again attempted to pass employment legislation. Once again, Black Members were nearly unanimous in their denunciation of the Bush administration's allegations of quotas. Craig A. Washington of Texas argued that the quota debate was a "red herring" and that the legislation was "never the subject of honest intellectual discussion." Congress ultimately passed a veto-proof compromise employment bill that accomplished much of what Hawkins and the CBC hoped to achieve. In cases of indirect job discrimination, the burden of proving that employment decisions did not have a disparate and adverse impact on women or racial minorities was returned to the employer. However, the CBC did not approve of the compromise language that gave employers more room to prove that hiring practices that may have resulted in a disparate impact were a "business necessity." President Bush signed the bill into law on November 21, 1991.[74]

Economic Opportunity

In addition to deepening Washington's role in the fight against job discrimination, Black legislators argued for an expanded idea of the social safety net, one that would make the federal government a guarantor of economic opportunity for all Americans. Black Members shared the belief that promoting economic opportunities for African Americans was essential to furthering the civil rights advances won in the 1960s. The first imperative listed in the CBC's 1972 "Black Bill of Rights," for instance, was the demand for "Jobs and Income." The CBC declared that all Americans had a "right to live" and called for a full employment plan and a guaranteed national income. Many Members supported programs designed to advance African-American economic equality, including job training programs, urban renewal projects, affirmative action programs, and so-called "empowerment zones"—urban and rural areas designated by the federal government to receive grants and loans for job training and tax incentives for minority-owned businesses.[75]

These initiatives took on special urgency as the urban crisis deepened, and Black unemployment rates increased dramatically during the tumultuous economic restructuring

The Humphrey–Hawkins Full Employment Act of 1978 attempted to resolve persistent unemployment in the United States. The Congressional Black Caucus placed its support behind the bill. Joined by Delegate Walter Fauntroy and Representatives Yvonne Burke and Bella Savitzky Abzug of New York, civil rights activist Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr. (center) marched in Washington, DC, to draw attention to the legislation.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

of the 1970s and 1980s. And while members of both parties increasingly took to blaming Washington for the country's economic woes, Black Members steadfastly defended the social safety net and the federal government's role in bringing about a more equitable economy.[76]

It was in that spirit that the CBC prioritized legislation that mandated the federal government work toward achieving full employment. From 1974 to 1975, Representative Gus Hawkins and Senator Hubert H. Humphrey Jr. of Minnesota drafted a measure to drastically cut unemployment in the United States. The bill Hawkins introduced in 1974 redefined full employment as "useful and rewarding employment opportunities for all adult Americans." It also proposed "community job boards" to plan and coordinate employment projects, a "Job Guarantee Office" to fund local projects, a "Standby Job Corps" to offer temporary jobs if a project was not available, and the option for a person to sue in federal court if "deprived of his or her job rights." Hawkins's proposed Equal Opportunity and Full Employment Act was a radical rethinking of the American labor market. As Hawkins sought support for his legislation, including from President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, many of the more controversial aspects of the bill, including the right to sue for a job and the Job Guarantee Office, were removed.[77]

Each member of the CBC cosponsored the final version of the legislation, which became known as the Humphrey–Hawkins Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act of 1978. As Yvonne Burke, then chair of the CBC, explained in a 1976 speech, the full employment legislation was "the heart of our program to improve the economic conditions for Black Americans and for all Americans." By the time the legislation was put to a vote in 1978, it declared the federal government's intention to promote full employment, produce real income gains, achieve price stability, and outline a balanced budget, but it did not fund any new programs or instruments to help create jobs. The concessions made in the final bill, which President Carter signed into law on October 27, 1978, led some analysts to describe the legislation as "an empty symbol." "The bill," Edward Brooke explained, "was somewhat emasculated, if not totally emasculated." But the CBC's ability to persuade President Carter to publicly support a bill linked so closely to the caucus resulted in a symbolic victory. "We would never have struggled so hard to get this act passed if we did not consider it significant," declared Representative Parren Mitchell.[78]

While full employment legislation sought to help vulnerable members of society get by, Black legislators also wanted to help people of color and women get ahead. Baltimore's Parren Mitchell rallied a network of allies to help push through legislation aimed at business development in African-American communities. Primarily interested in promoting economic opportunities in majority-Black city neighborhoods, Mitchell assembled a "brain trust" of national advisers—mostly entrepreneurs, lawyers, bankers, and economists—to make recommendations on policy and legislation. The CBC embraced Mitchell's approach, often asking policy experts for help crafting legislation. Known as the "Little General" for his ability to organize and coordinate support for key legislation, the Representative attached an amendment to a $4 billion public works program that required state and local governments applying for federal contracts to reserve 10 percent of the money for minority-owned companies. In the Senate, Edward Brooke introduced the same amendment, and it was signed into law in 1977. The measure was a significant legislative victory for the CBC and helped the caucus build coalitions for future efforts.[79]

During the 1970s, the CBC presented legislative agendas urging increased spending on domestic programs. In 1981, however, when President Ronald Reagan called for alternatives to his fiscal plan, which emphasized defense spending, the CBC drafted a detailed budget that underscored its contrasting priorities. The CBC plan, which included increased federal funding for domestic programs, cuts to defense spending,

and increased taxes on the wealthiest Americans, received national attention, though little backing in the House. Although the CBC's budget did not gain traction, it quickly became an annual event. Nearly every year going forward, the CBC offered an alternative budget. "Even in defeat we have a responsibility to fight the fight," Ron Dellums explained. "We have to articulate the alternative."[80]

District of Columbia

Another issue of great importance to Black Members of Congress was the matter of representation and self-government, or "home rule," for the District of Columbia. Following the passage of the Residence Act of 1790 and the creation of the city of Washington, the nation's capital had been administered by a patchwork of governing bodies: an appointed mayor and elected city council (both a board of aldermen and common council); briefly, a territorial government in 1871, when the city was designated the "District of Columbia"; a presidentially appointed commission; and congressional committees. As a result of the same processes of Black in-migration and White out-migration that occurred in other urban areas at the same time, Washington was by 1960 a Black-majority city. Congressional debates about representation and the administration of the District resonated with Black Americans across the country.[81]

From his seat on the Committee on District of Columbia, Charles Diggs became an advocate for political representation for Washington, DC. Diggs had chaired a Committee on the District of Columbia subcommittee before taking over the full committee as chair in 1973, marking the end of the exclusive history of White congressional control over the capital. In 1970, with Diggs's support, the House had passed the District of Columbia Delegate Act, which reinstituted the post of Delegate to represent the city in the House. The next year, District residents elected minister and activist Walter Fauntroy as the city's first congressional Delegate since 1875.[82]

Fauntroy and the CBC tirelessly advocated home rule in the District. Fauntroy oversaw a lobbying campaign aimed at building support for the cause from White Members who represented southern districts with substantial Black constituencies. And following the success of the campaign to oust the District Committee's chair, Representative John McMillan, from the House, the effort prevailed. In December 1973, Congress passed a compromise measure—the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act—that gave the District limited self-rule, permitting citizens to elect a mayor and a city council.[83]

Based partially on the successful "Fauntroy strategy," the CBC created the Action-Alert Communications Network (AACN) to mobilize support from non-Black legislators on a range of policy issues affecting African Americans. Encompassing the National Black Leadership Roundtable and the Black Leadership Forum, the AACN tapped into a network of national Black organizations willing to wage grassroots campaigns to apply pressure on White officials whose communities included large numbers of African-American voters. "We are organizing ourselves to impact the political process, to reach out on a very careful basis in coalition with those whose interests coincide with ours," Fauntroy remarked.[84]

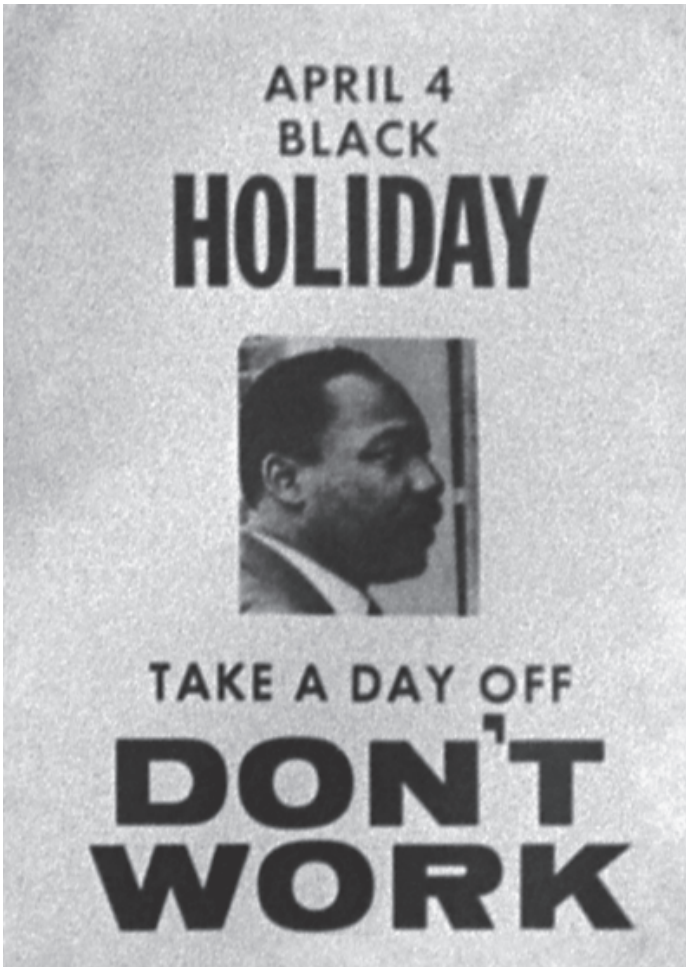
Other African-American Members played key roles in congressional oversight of Washington, DC. Julian Dixon, a District native who held a Los Angeles-area House seat, became chair of the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on the District of Columbia in 1980. During the next two decades, Dixon was a primary congressional ally of Washington, DC. In November 1990, after Fauntroy announced his retirement from the House, Eleanor Holmes Norton won election as Delegate. An advocate for full

Charles Diggs began his congressional career on January 3, 1955. Throughout his more than two decades in the House, Diggs demonstrated his commitment to ending racial discrimination.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

congressional voting rights and statehood for the District, Norton, who along with Maxine Waters of California is the longest-serving Black woman in House history, has represented the District since the 102nd Congress (1991–1993).

By the 1980s, residents of Washington, DC, continued their quest for what Diggs called "self-determination" by advocating for statehood. In the 100th and 101st Congresses (1987–1991), Walter Fauntroy sponsored H.R. 51—the bill number symbolizing Washington, DC, becoming the fifty-first state—to provide statehood to the District of Columbia. The legislation did not receive a hearing in either Congress. When Holmes Norton succeeded Fauntroy, she continued the push for statehood. In the 103rd Congress (1993–1995), H.R. 51 received a vote on the House Floor but was defeated. In 2019, the House passed H.R. 51, once again introduced by Holmes Norton, for the first time, but the bill stalled in the Senate. The House passed the bill again in April 2022.[85]



Congress enacted legislation in 1983 to commemorate the birth date of Martin Luther King Jr. as a national holiday—marking a major legislative triumph for the Congressional Black Caucus. This hand bill, noting the anniversary of King's 1968 assassination, sought to rally public support for the creation of the holiday.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Commemorative Legislation

Black lawmakers often used their influence to pass legislation commemorating people and events from the civil rights movement and to call attention to unrecognized Black contributions to American history. In 1976, Ralph Metcalfe introduced the first resolution to recognize February as Black History Month. Ten years later, the designation of February as "National Black History Month" became law. Led by John Conyers, some Black Members also wanted Congress to apologize for the institution of slavery and to study remedies, including financial reparations, for the harm done to generations of African Americans by slavery and subsequent racial discrimination.[86]

One landmark achievement was the designation of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday as a national holiday. Only days after King's death in 1968, Representative Conyers introduced legislation to establish a federal holiday in the movement leader's honor. When it became clear that Conyers's bill would lose a vote in the House, Senator Edward Brooke offered a compromise measure in the Senate to mark King's birthday as a "day of commemoration." But Brooke's alternative measure also failed to make headway in the Senate. Conyers sponsored similar measures in each successive Congress for the next 15 years. By the mid-1970s, the CBC had made the King holiday a major legislative priority. The caucus directed a successful campaign to build congressional support and to increase public knowledge of the bill. In 1979, the legislation came close to passing the House, but the CBC withdrew the bill when an amendment called for the holiday to be observed on a Sunday rather than the proposed observance of January 15, King's birthday. Supporters of the Sunday amendment pointed to the cost of shutting down the federal government during the years in which King's birthday occurred during the workweek.[87]

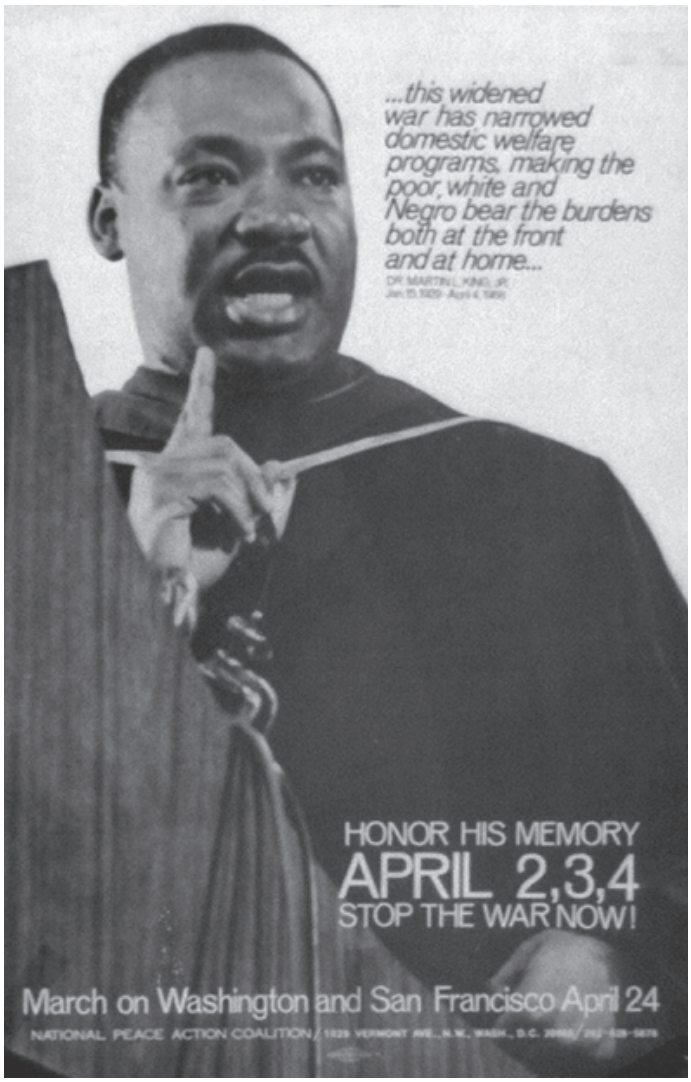
In the 98th Congress (1983–1985), the CBC tapped first-term Representative Katie Hall, chair of the Post Office and Civil Service Committee's Subcommittee on Census and Population—the panel with jurisdiction over the bill—to introduce and manage the measure as it made its way through the legislative process. Hall courted detractors by moving the public holiday to the third Monday of January to prevent government offices from opening twice

in one week, thereby saving money. The House passed her version of the King holiday bill by a vote of 338 to 90; the Senate followed suit, 78 to 22. President Reagan, who initially opposed the legislation, signed the bill into law on November 2, 1983. The bill's success was an important triumph for the CBC, which had marshaled public support and worked Congress's inside channels to overcome enormous opposition in the Senate and White House.[88]

Foreign Policy: Vietnam, Africa, Apartheid, and Beyond

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Vietnam War drew much of Congress's attention. Among Black Members there was little consensus on the war. In his first term in 1965, John Conyers was one of just seven Representatives who voted against a supplemental appropriations bill funding the war. Representative Gus Hawkins also opposed the war, based partly on his experience visiting South Vietnam in 1970, where, he observed, the South Vietnamese government routinely violated the human rights of its prisoners. Others, such as Pennsylvania Representative Robert N.C. Nix Sr., a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, supported the foreign policies of Democratic Presidents—John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson—who broadened the U.S. military commitment and mission in Southeast Asia. As a Senate candidate in 1966, Edward Brooke was initially skeptical about the war. But after an official visit to Vietnam, he concluded there was no prospect of meaningful negotiations with North Vietnamese officials and asserted that the military policy of the Johnson administration was prudent. In 1970, Brooke opposed the Nixon administration's policy of attacking communist sanctuaries in Cambodia. He eventually voted for the Cooper–Church Amendment of 1970, which limited the deployment of U.S. armed forces in the region to Vietnam.[89]

Several Black Representatives elected in the late 1960s and early 1970s were vocal opponents of the Vietnam War. Shirley Chisholm used the occasion of her first House speech to decry the continued involvement of the United States in the conflict. For Chisholm, the war wasted resources that could better be used fighting poverty back home: "We cannot squander there the lives, the money, the energy that we need desperately here in our cities, in our schools." Ron Dellums was elected from a district encompassing Berkley, California, an epicenter of the antiwar movement, in part because of his vocal opposition to the war. In 1971, against the wishes of his party's leadership, Dellums convened informal hearings on American war crimes in Vietnam.[90]



On April 24, 1971, citizens in Washington, DC, and San Francisco, California, rallied to end the Vietnam War. Before his death in 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. raised awareness about the injustice of the war and its impact on working-class and low-income people of all races and ethnicities.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

After Vietnam, the same Black Members of Congress wary of the war also questioned Congress's annual budgetary outlays that funded America's decades-long struggle against the Soviet Union. Representatives Dellums and Mitchell, both military veterans, warned that continued excessive spending on Cold War initiatives was especially detrimental to minority groups, postponing or eliminating long-delayed domestic social programs and urban renewal projects.[91]

In the 93rd Congress (1973–1975), Dellums joined the Armed Services Committee. He viewed his work on

Charles Rangel, Bella Abzug, Ronald Dellums, and Parren Mitchell appear at one of the 1971 ad hoc hearings on the Vietnam War that Dellums convened.

Bob Fitch photography archive, © Stanford University Libraries

the committee as an opportunity to offer an alternative perspective on the use of American military force—inspired in part by Martin Luther King Jr., who was also a vocal opponent of the Vietnam War. From the Armed Services Committee, Dellums sought to raise questions about "the role of non-intervention, the role of peace, the role of arms control, the role of appropriate priorities."[92]

No single foreign policy issue united African Americans in Congress more than their efforts to overturn the South African government's system of apartheid, the country's strict program of racial segregation that began in 1948 and was imposed by the nation's White minority, descendants of colonial settlers. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the CBC oversaw a groundswell of activism to enact economic sanctions against South Africa.

Charles Diggs, who became the first Black Member to travel to Africa in 1957 and the first to serve on the Foreign Affairs Committee in 1959, was known as "Mr. Africa" because of his knowledge of sub-Saharan issues. Diggs's interest in Africa occurred just as Black self-government was returning as a result of successful independent movements across the continent. When the Detroit-area Representative was appointed chair of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa in 1969, he used his position to draw attention to the continent. "I think if I had any one priority, it is to try to put Africa in proper perspective, to try to get the attention of policy makers in the government, the attention of the American investors in Africa and the attention of the American public, in general, and to arouse the substantive interest of black Americans," Diggs remarked.[93]

During his tenure on the Foreign Affairs Committee, Diggs held a series of hearings on South Africa and led fact-finding missions to highlight what he described as "an appalling amount of racial injustice in South Africa—a blatant, ever-present, and all-pervasive discrimination based on race, color, and creed." From 1969 to 1971, he worked to stop federal officials from renewing a special U.S. sugar quota for South Africa. Although the quota went ahead as planned, Diggs kept apartheid in the congressional spotlight with his criticism of the labor conditions of American companies in South Africa. He faulted NASA and major U.S. carmakers for the discriminatory practices in their South African facilities. In 1971, he introduced a measure to implement fair employment practices for U.S. firms operating in South Africa and eligible for government contracts. Diggs also urged an end to new American investment in South Africa to protest apartheid.[94]

With the establishment of the CBC in 1971, Diggs cultivated the group's international agenda. From its inception, the CBC took an active stance in the anti-apartheid movement and other anti-colonial struggles. CBC members were critical of the U.S. government's economic aid and trade agreements with the White minority government in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Portugal, which was clinging to its imperial control of Angola, Mozambique, and Portuguese Guinea (now the Republic of Guinea-Bissau).[95]

In December 1971, Representatives Dellums and Conyers cosponsored the first bill imposing economic sanctions against South Africa. Three months later, in February 1972, they introduced it on behalf of the CBC. The anti-apartheid bill emerged from a petition drafted by employees from a major U.S. camera and film company, who demanded that the corporation cease operations in South Africa. The company, which produced photographs for the mandatory identity passbooks Black South Africans were forced to carry and which were a major symbol of the racial oppression prevalent in the country, eventually bowed to public pressure and withdrew its business.[96]

At a 1976 CBC conference, caucus members established an organization to shape American foreign policy in Africa and the Caribbean. The new lobbying group, renamed TransAfrica, was independent from the CBC but worked closely with the caucus, and began operations in Washington, DC, in 1978. Heading the organization was Randall Robinson, a former staffer for Bill Clay and Charles Diggs. The group called for tough economic sanctions against

South Africa and refused to accept donations from U.S. corporations with business ties to the apartheid government.[97]

On November 21, 1980, just weeks after Ronald Reagan's landslide victory in the U.S. presidential election, Randall Robinson, Walter Fauntroy, and Mary Frances Berry from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights staged a sit-in at the South African Embassy in Washington, DC. The resulting arrests of the high-profile protesters garnered national attention and sparked a new "direct action" approach by TransAfrica and the CBC. Fauntroy described the demonstration as an act of "moral witness" and indicated that a "national campaign" against apartheid would follow. A few days after the incident, Robinson, Fauntroy, and Berry formed the Free South Africa Movement (FSAM) to publicize racial inequality in South Africa and pressure the incoming Reagan administration to toughen its stance toward the apartheid regime.[98]

The FSAM orchestrated a series of demonstrations outside the South African Embassy that tapped into America's own civil rights tradition of nonviolent protest. Charles Hayes, Clay, and Dellums were among the first Representatives to be arrested. The movement drew Black and White Americans from all walks of life: national and local leaders, celebrities, teachers and students, and even Members of Congress who had once expressed ambivalence about the issue. "It was very interesting to see colleagues from both sides of the aisle and of all races, who had previously paid little attention to our efforts, scramble to get arrested in front of the South African embassy and introduce sanctions when the [effects of the] movement hit home in their districts," Dellums later observed. The protests eventually spread to other American cities and kept apartheid in the public eye.[99]

Between the 92nd and 99th Congresses, Black Representatives introduced more than 100 pieces of South Africa legislation—often the same bill multiple times in a single Congress—encompassing issues such as diplomatic relations, economic sanctions, and trade restrictions. Representative William Gray, chair of the House Budget Committee, compared the situation in South Africa to the history of segregation in the United States. "It took us 200, 300 years to eradicate apartheid here by law," Gray observed. "People forget that only 20 years ago, when I came here to Washington, DC, as a boy, I couldn't go into the downtown hotels… . We are only 20 years away from our own story, and that plays a part in our [Americans'] double standard" toward South Africa, he said.[100]

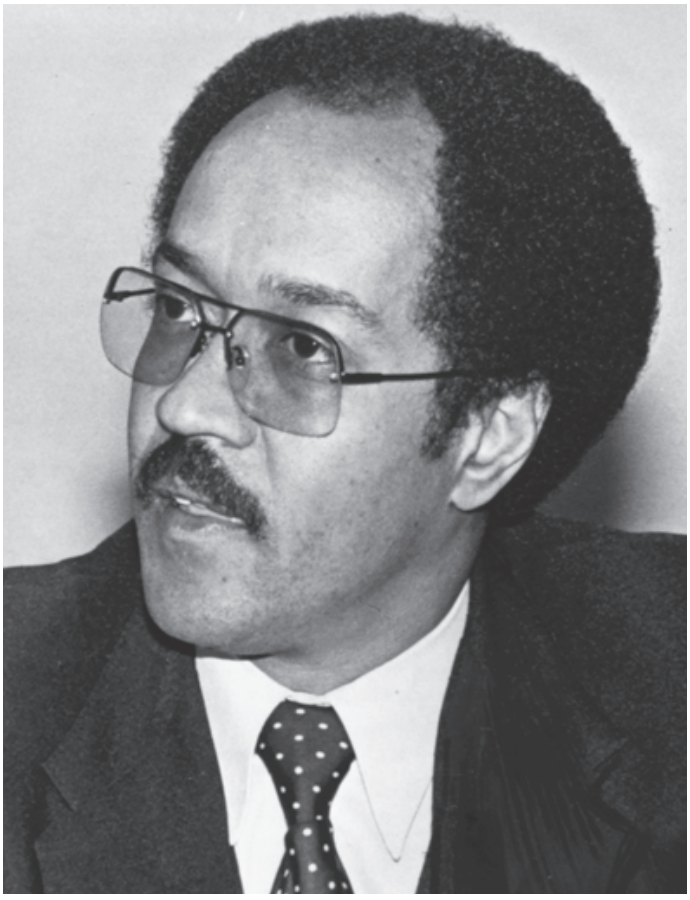
In 1985, Gray introduced a bill endorsed by House leadership banning new loans and implementing limited economic sanctions in South Africa to "stop the future financing of apartheid." The House, which approved the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985 by a vote of 295 to 127, soundly defeated a stronger disinvestment substitute put forth by Dellums and backed by the CBC. The next month the Senate overwhelmingly passed a weaker version of the House anti-apartheid bill by a vote of 80 to 12. Wary of the mounting public pressure for action against South Africa, President Reagan avoided a direct confrontation with Congress and a potential veto override by signing an executive order in September that included some of the sanctions approved by Congress. Gray described Reagan's decision as "an ill-disguised and ill-advised attempt to circumvent an overwhelmingly bipartisan consensus in Congress."[101]

The push for a comprehensive sanctions bill against South Africa reached a crescendo in the second session of the 99th Congress. Gray's anti-apartheid bill made it to the House Floor again for a vote, where it was expected to pass.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Congressional Black Caucus raised public awareness about the apartheid government in South Africa. Their efforts culminated in U.S. sanctions in 1986.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

For a second time, Dellums offered a stronger substitute. The House then unexpectedly approved Dellums's measure by a voice vote. The bill called for a trade embargo and total disinvestment. Stunned and elated, Dellums proclaimed, "We haven't simply altered the debate on apartheid, we've changed the environment. Whatever the dynamics of that moment, its effect can't be changed." A Senate bill sponsored by Richard Green Lugar of Indiana, which passed 84 to 14, resembled Gray's more modest anti-apartheid legislation. In the interest of securing passage of a sanctions bill, CBC members, including Dellums, supported Lugar's measure, which passed the House in September 1986 by a 308 to 77 vote. President Reagan vetoed the anti-apartheid legislation, but on October 2, 1986, the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) became law when the Senate, following the House, overrode the veto. Mickey Leland observed, "This is probably the greatest victory we've ever experienced. The American people have spoken and will be heard around the world."[102]



Representative William H. Gray III of Pennsylvania championed foreign aid for Africa throughout his career in the House.

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

After the passage of the CAAA, Black Members continued their fight to abolish apartheid. In 1986, Gray led a delegation of Representatives to observe the effects of the sanctions in South Africa. Leading the anti-apartheid movement on the Hill, Dellums persisted in introducing legislation for comprehensive economic sanctions. When President Bush considered rescinding sanctions against South Africa, Dellums and the CBC remained firm in their conviction that "sanctions should be lifted only when the oppressed people of South Africa say they should be lifted." With the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and the establishment of majority rule in South Africa in 1994, the CBC achieved its longtime goal of contributing to the abolishment of apartheid.[103]

OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES

As African-American Members entered Congress during this era, they encountered an institution that, like American society generally, was becoming more accessible and offered more opportunities for minority participation. Though there were exceptions, the culture of overt racism of earlier decades—discrimination in the House Restaurant and barbershop, insulting floor tirades by pro-segregationist Members, and other unspoken slights—had largely vanished. African-American Members focused on accruing seniority, winning better committee assignments, and entering House and Senate leadership. But this era also brought with it new challenges over coalition building, collective action, and legislative strategies on Capitol Hill.

While most Black Members embraced their role as representatives for Black Americans, including those beyond their districts, there was no consensus on how to pursue legislation important to their broad constituency. "We all have basically the same goals," Mickey Leland observed. "The question is how to attain those goals." Cardiss Collins, one of the few women members of the CBC in its early years, agreed. "Our main goal is to have greater influence. It's that simple," she said. "When we represent black people in our districts, we are representing all black people because their needs are very similar."[104]

Barbara Jordan used more traditional routes to influence in the House and was careful not to align herself too closely with the agenda of any interest group, including the CBC and the Women's Caucus, both of which she joined. "I sought the power points," she once said. "I knew if I were going to get anything done, [the congressional and party leaders] would be the ones to help me get it done." "I am

neither a black politician nor a woman politician," Jordan said in 1975. "Just a politician, a professional politician."[105]

Even those who came to Congress from the world of activism often adapted their advocacy to work within the legislative process. Ron Dellums was a prime example. Soon after entering the House, he introduced legislation to investigate alleged U.S. war crimes in Southeast Asia. Dellums declared, "I am not going to back away from being called a radical. If being an advocate of peace, justice, and humanity toward all human beings is radical, then I'm glad to be called a radical." To further his goals, Dellums worked his way onto the Armed Services Committee largely to try to curb vast Pentagon expenditures. But in a blatant sign of contempt, committee chair Felix Edward Hébert of Louisiana made Dellums, the first Black Member to serve on the committee, share a single seat with Patricia Scott Schroeder of Colorado, a first-term Member who had won election on an antiwar platform. On Armed Services, Dellums forged a reputation as an effective coalition builder; in the early 1980s, for instance, he allied with fiscal conservatives to halt production of the controversial B-2 bomber. Dellums remembered coming to the realization that he was no longer an activist, that as a Member of the House it was time to "take my seat at the table, and say, 'I'm here to join in governing and in representing the half million people that sent me here to represent them.' " In 1993, Dellums became the committee's senior Democrat and assumed the chair of the Armed Services Committee.[106]

Mickey Leland, a self-described "revolutionary," explained that many of his Black colleagues could now bargain for legislative goals from a position of strength. "We understand that in order to get our point across we don't have to jump up and down on the table or shoot off fireworks to get the attention of the leadership," Leland remarked. "We go in and negotiate."[107]

As Black Members found success in Congress, some came to believe that they were singled out for unjust scrutiny of their conduct. Concerns about public corruption became commonplace in the post-Watergate era as the number of Americans who trusted their government declined. Throughout this period, African-American officeholders, including a significant number of Black Members of Congress, observed that federal investigations into political corruption unfairly and disproportionately targeted Black politicians. Between 1980 and 1992, one-third of all members of the CBC came under federal investigation; only two were ever indicted, and none were convicted.[108]

Mickey Leland of Texas successfully lobbied Congress to create the Select Committee on Hunger in 1984. Leland was killed in a 1989 airplane crash while ferrying relief supplies to Ethiopia.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

Black Members of Congress believed they were held to higher standards than their White counterparts. Some, like Bill Clay, interpreted such scrutiny as a coordinated effort to silence Black officeholders by "diluting [their] influence and credibility." Clay maintained that the legal problems encountered by Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and Harold Ford were examples of a "pattern" of hostile investigatory practices and "harassment." Clay claimed that federal investigations and political corruption probes into the careers and personal lives of Black officeholders were often part of a long-standing "conspiracy to silence dissent." Nor was Clay alone in this belief. In a 1983 letter to Judiciary Committee Chair Peter Wallace Rodino Jr. of New Jersey, Detroit Representative George Crockett expressed similar sentiments when he claimed federal investigations were "used to besmirch the good name of Black leaders in an effort to destroy their political potential." Some prominent Black officials, including Georgia Representative John Lewis, publicly disputed this viewpoint. An official from

a Black political organization succinctly described the relationship between the new role Black legislators had in the political process and the increased scrutiny they faced: "White folks are in a fishbowl; they get to swim. Black folks are in a test tube; they have to go straight up or down."[109]

While some Black Members believed they were unfairly targeted, others took the lead in policing ethical conduct in the House. Black Members were appointed to chair the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, now known as the Ethics Committee, more often than any other congressional panel. Unique among House committees, the Ethics Committee divides seats equally between the two parties. Formed in the late 1960s, the committee created a procedure for adjudicating claims on Member misconduct. Adam Clayton Powell Jr.'s well-publicized ethical issues and the House's refusal to seat Powell in the 90th Congress helped convince the House of the need for the establishment of a code of conduct and a set of procedures for investigating cases of ethical misconduct among Members. In the 1980s and 1990s, respected lawmakers such as Representatives Louis Stokes and Julian Dixon chaired the Ethics Committee. Dixon in turn led a highly sensitive investigation into alleged violations by Speaker Jim Wright of Texas. In 1992, Stokes stepped down from his second stint as chair of the Ethics Committee after his involvement in the House banking scandal. That year, the press publicized General Accounting Office and House internal investigations revealing that some 220 former and current Members had overdrawn their accounts at the informal House "bank" run by the House Sergeant at Arms. Nine African-American Members revealed that they had written checks without sufficient funds, and five were on the list of the "worst offenders" that was released by the House Ethics Committee. The occurrence of the scandal in an election year, with the economy in recession, magnified voters' discontent with incumbent lawmakers. Yet only one Black incumbent linked to the scandal, Charles Hayes, lost his primary re-election in the Chicago district he had represented for a decade; his name appeared on a list that was leaked days before the contest.[110]

Mississippi Representative Mike Espy's reputation as a moderate won over Black and White constituents and earned him an appointment as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture in President William J. Clinton's administration.

Image courtesy of the Mike Espy Collection, Congressional and Political Research Center, University Libraries, Mississippi State University

"THE CONSTANT SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND"

By the end of the 1980s, although internal debate and division occasionally emerged, the CBC remained a relatively cohesive group when it came to policy decisions. "Like coalition building in any context, holding the Black Caucus together required fluidity and flexibility, the constant search for common ground, and no rigid tests of membership," Representative Dellums later noted, "otherwise the fate of other caucuses and coalitions that had arisen during the same period would have befallen the CBC as well."[111]

Increasing geographic and demographic diversity among the constituencies of Black Members meant that some Members promoted policy positions that put them at odds with their CBC colleagues. For instance, Mike Espy was elected from a rural farming district in 1986 with considerable cross-over support from White voters. He was the first Black Representative from Mississippi since John R. Lynch left office in 1883. Espy belonged to a group of centrist Democrats; he opposed gun control measures and supported the death penalty—positions that largely contradicted those of Black Representatives from urban areas. Espy demonstrated his independence from the CBC's traditional politics when he only voted "present" for the caucus's 1989 alternative budget. "I come from a conservative district and I didn't want to vote for that large a tax increase."[112]

While the institutional headway made by African-American Members during the 1970s and 1980s strengthened the collective authority of the CBC, it posed

new challenges to the cohesiveness of the organization. Its success advancing Black Representatives into the upper echelons of the institutional establishment raised expectations for the group and for individual Members to produce immediate, tangible results for African Americans. Moreover, Black Members experienced conflicting pressures between their allegiance to the CBC, their responsibilities on committees, and their commitments to party leaders. The career of Representative William Gray provides an illustration. As chair of the House Budget Committee for the 99th and 100th Congresses (1985–1989), Gray often charted his own course. "I am not here to do the bidding of somebody just because they happen to be black. If I agree with you, I agree with you. I set my policy." Once he assumed the Budget Committee's gavel, Gray encouraged the CBC to continue submitting an alternative budget, although he did not publicly support it. His decision to vote "present" when the CBC measure came to the House Floor disrupted the public solidarity of the organization and frustrated some of his Black colleagues, who thought Gray was placing personal interests ahead of caucus goals.[113]

Even more controversially in the eyes of a few CBC members, Julian Dixon, who chaired the CBC in the 98th Congress, refused to bring the caucus's alternative budget to the House Floor for a vote. In addition to leading the CBC, Dixon also chaired an Appropriations subcommittee, and House leaders asked him to pledge his support for the Budget Committee's budget proposal to attract the votes of rank-and-file Democrats for the measure and to prevent conservative Democrats from introducing an alternative budget that had the potential to pass. A majority of the CBC voted with Dixon to withhold their alternative budget, but some were critical of the decision. John Conyers called the agreement between the CBC and Democratic leadership "an insult to the black people, the working people and those who have looked for some inspiration from the alternative budget of the Congressional Black Caucus." Dixon defended the compromise, "Our purpose, hopefully, is not to go down to defeat with honor. Our purpose is to have some success."[114]

A SHARED PURPOSE

In May 1955, the Reverend George Lee, a Black NAACP leader and voting rights activist in Belzoni, Mississippi, was shot and killed while driving home from a meeting of local activists. Although his assailant was unknown, many suspected Lee was murdered for his voting rights work. Lee

On April 26, 1978, Parren Mitchell, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, speaks at a press conference after meeting with President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter. Mitchell is flanked by Shirley Chisholm, Cardiss Collins, Ralph Metcalfe, and Charles Rangel.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

was likely the first African American in Belzoni to register to vote since the late nineteenth century. He was one of a growing cohort of Black Mississippians risking everything to fight back against the discriminatory laws, economic coercion, and violence that White Mississippians deployed to ensure that, as of the mid-1950s, less than 5 percent of the state's 500,000 eligible Black voters were registered.[115]

Just a month before his murder, George Lee had spoken at a voter registration rally in the town of Mound Bayou, Mississippi, at an event headlined by first-term Representative Charles Diggs. The audience in the all-Black town heard Lee speak hopefully of the day when Black Mississippians in the Delta would elect a Black Congressman, presumably someone who could speak for them as Diggs spoke for his Black Detroit constituents. Asked later by a reporter if he actually thought Mississippi would ever elect a Black Representative, Lee said "Some day. Maybe my grandchildren will."[116]

Because of the bravery and sacrifices of men and women like Reverend Lee, the efforts and example of Charles Diggs, and the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the dream of a Black Congressman from Mississippi was finally realized in 1986 with the election of Mike Espy to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Espy's victory in Mississippi was one more marker of the progress that Black Members of Congress and Black electoral politics more generally had made in the era after the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. That year, a decade after George Lee's murder, there were six Black Members of Congress, all from majority-Black, northern urban districts. Twenty-four years later, at the beginning

of the 101st Congress in January 1989, there were 24 Black Members of Congress, four Black Representatives served as chairs of standing committees, two chaired select committees, and 15 chaired subcommittees.[117]

The inception and growth of the CBC marked the principal institutional development in the story of African Americans in Congress. The caucus acquired stature rapidly, transforming itself into an effective bloc for advocating issues and promoting African Americans to positions of power within Congress. The CBC set a new standard for organizational politics in the late twentieth century, one that would be followed by other groups of lawmakers, including the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

Even as the number of Black Members grew in both size and seniority, the caucus remained small and could only influence debate in the House so much. The election of more Black Members brought more diverse perspectives, ideologies, interests, and constituencies. Nevertheless, William Gray recognized a shared "sense of identity and purpose born of our heritage of discrimination and neglect" among the Black Members of Congress in this era. "They recognized, and acted on," Gray continued, "the premise that our Constitution had never been fully realized for all Americans." This was the product of a shared history of oppression and resistance, one that had also motivated Black civil rights activists such as George Lee, and that would animate new generations.[118]

Notes

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3 Ethel Payne, "Black Caucus Sets New Political Mood," 30 March 1971, *Chicago Daily Defender:* 4.

4 *Congressional Record,* Extensions of Remarks, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (19 February 1971): 3352–3353.

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14 "The Honorable William Lacy Clay Sr. Oral History Interview," Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives (10 September 2019): 5–6. The interview transcript is available online at https://history.house.gov/Oral-History/Rainey/Representative-Clay-Sr/; Bill Clay, *Bill Clay: A Political Voice at the Grass Roots* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2004): 107–129; Brian Purnell, *Fighting Jim Crow in the County of Kings: The Congress of Racial Equality in Brooklyn* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2013): 282; Roger Horowitz, *"Negro and White, Unite and Fight!": A Social History of Industrial Unionism in Meatpacking, 1930–1990* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997): 224; Steve Babson, David Riddle, and David Elsila, *The Color of Money: Ernie Goodman, Detroit, and the Struggle for Labor and Civil Rights* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University, 2010): 338–342; **"**Louis Stokes Oral History Interview, March 14, 1973," by Edward Thompson III, SC5109605963, Ralph J. Bunche Oral Histories Collection on the Civil Rights Movement, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Gale Archives Unbound: 1–2.

15 Included in these eleven Members is Walter E. Fauntroy, who served on the Washington, DC, city council from 1967 to 1969, when positions on the council were appointed by the U.S. President.

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17 Lewis, *Walking With the Wind*: 371.

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University Press, 2009); Martin Luther King Jr., "Our God Is Marching On," 25 March 1965, Montgomery, Alabama, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/our-god-marching.

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22 Robert Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus: Racial Politics in the U.S. Congress* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1998): 54–55; Norman C. Miller, "Negroes in the House Join Forces for Black Interests," 31 March 1970, *Wall Street Journal*: 1; Ethel L. Payne, "Diggs Gives New Leadership in Congress: Hard Worker in 8th Term," 9 April 1969, *Chicago Daily Defender*: 11.

23 William L. Clay, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991* (New York: Amistad Press Inc., 1992): 11, 116–117. For more on Clay, Stokes, and Chisholm, see Robert C. Maynard, "New Negroes in Congress Focus on City Problems," 10 August 1969, *Washington Post*: 2; Richard F. Fenno, *Going Home: Black Representatives and Their Constituents* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press): 62.

24 "Black Nation Growing Stronger," 25 September 1969, *Chicago Daily Defender*: 10; "CLBC History," California Legislative Black Caucus," accessed 26 January 2022, https://blackcaucus.legislature.ca.gov/members/history; Richard Reeves, "Negro Officeholder Forming a National Council," 8 August 1967, *New York Times*: 28; Shirley Chisholm, *Unbought and Unbossed* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1970): 143.

25 William L. Dawson, at that point the longest-serving Black Representative, publicly opposed the actions of the other eight Black Members. Dawson, who had strong ties to Chicago's Democratic machine and the national Democratic Party, argued that the Black Members should have worked within their state delegations rather than through an all-Black caucus. Ethel L. Payne, "Dawson Tells Why He Nixed 'Black Paper,'" 29 September 1969, *Chicago Daily Defender*: 2; Hearings before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Nomination of Clement F. Haynsworth, Jr., of South Carolina, To Be Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States*, 91st Cong., 1st sess. (1969): 473–479; Jason Sokol, *All Eyes Are Upon Us: Race and Politics from Boston to Brooklyn* (New York: Basic Books, 2014): 196–198; Oswald Johnston, "Brooke Asks For Haynsworth Withdrawal," 2 October 1969, *Baltimore Sun*: A1; Matthew Storin, "Faulting Nixon on Haynsworth: Brooke Plays New Role as Negro Leader," 5 October 1969, *Boston Globe:* A35; Joseph Boyce and Philip Caputo, "Probers See Site of Raid on Panthers," 21 December 1969, *Chicago Tribune*: 1; Ethel L. Payne, "Emotions Flare at Hearing: Boo Jesse, Metcalfe," 22 December 1969, *Chicago Daily Defender*: 1; "Blacks Conduct Own Probes," 23 May 1970, *New York Amsterdam News*: 1; Betty Granger Reid, "Recount Deaths in Miss.," 6 June 1970, *New York Amsterdam News*: 47; Clay, *Just Permanent Interests*: 128–137.

26 For a brief history of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and additional information on the organization, see African American Voices in Congress, "About the CBC," accessed 28 April 2022, http://www.avoiceonline.org/about/cbc.html. According to Singh, Clay's strategy for crafting a nonpartisan organization included an unsuccessful attempt to convince the lone Black Republican of the 92nd Congress (1971–1973), Senator Edward W. Brooke of Massachusetts, to join the CBC. Sources are ambiguous about whether the CBC formally extended an offer of membership to Brooke. Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 55–56. See also Clay, *Just Permanent Interests*: ix, 116–117, 165, 173–174.

27 *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (30 March 1971): 8710; Clay, *Just Permanent Interests*: 36; Carol M. Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993): 38.

28 Robert C. Smith, *We Have No Leaders: African Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996): 32–56; Leonard N. Moore, *The Defeat of Black Power and the National Black Political Convention of 1972* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018); Marguerite Ross Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science,* 32, no. 1 (1975): 37–38; Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 76.

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30 Paul Delaney, "Rep. Stokes Heads the Black Caucus," 9 February 1972, *New York Times*: 23; Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus": 39; Robert J. Donovan, "Rep. Stokes on Black Militancy: 'Out of the Streets and Into the System,'" 26 October 1973, *Los Angeles Times*: E7; "Louis Stokes Oral History Interview, March 14, 1973": 3–4.

31 *Congressional Record,* Extensions of Remarks, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess. (5 June 1972): 19754–19756; Austin Scott, "Black Caucus Warns Democrats," 2 June 1972, *Washington Post*: A6; Paul Delaney, "House Caucus Lists 'Black Bill of Rights,'" 2 June 1972, *New York Times*: 22; Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus": 39–41.

32 Austin Scott, "A Realistic Black Caucus: Idea of Being All Things Now Discarded," 28 September 1975, *Washington Post*: A1; Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus": 48; Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 38. The internal structure of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) remained consistent throughout this period, and it developed a considerable administrative staff. Established in 1976, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, complemented the CBC by conducting research and technical assistance and promoting the political participation of African Americans. The CBCF grew more important when, in 1981, the Committee on the House Administration wrote new regulations stipulating that Legislative Service Organizations (LSOs), including the CBC, using House office space, supplies, and equipment could no longer receive funding from outside sources such as corporations or nonprofit foundations. However, LSOs could continue to use tax-exempt foundations for research and other caucus activities. The CBC responded to the rule change by transferring most of its responsibilities to the CBCF. Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 63, 68; Dorothy Collin, "Time of Growth for Black Caucus," 19 September 1982, *Chicago Tribune*: A3; Lynn Norment, "Our Team on Capitol Hill," *Ebony* 39 (August 1984): 44; David C. Ruffin and Frank Dexter Brown, "Clout on Capitol Hill," *Black Enterprise* 15 (October 1984): 100. See also the CBCF website at http://www.cbcfinc.org/.

33 "Congress Caucus for Blacks Only," 22 June 1975, *Chicago Tribune*: 30; Paul Houston, "Black Caucus Won't Let White Congressman Join," 19 June 1975, *Los Angeles Times*: B18. The question of membership qualification has arisen from time to time. See Josephine Hearn, "Black Caucus: Whites Not Allowed," 24 January 2007, *Roll Call*: n.p.; Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests*: 38; Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 102. This development roughly paralleled the decision by the Women's Caucus to admit dues-paying male members on a nonvoting basis in 1982. See Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives, *Women in Congress, 1917–2020* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2020): 394. The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus allowed lawmakers who were not Asian American to become full-fledged members of the caucus from its founding in 1994. Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives, *Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Congress, 1900–2017* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2017).

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35 David E. Rosenbaum, "5 Mississippians Retain Seniority," 20 January 1971, *New York Times*: 14; Martin Nolan, "Seniority Foes Seek Changes," 20 December 1970, *Boston Globe*: 26; "Shirley Chisholm Bucks Hill System," 30 January 1969, *Washington Post*: A2; Julian E. Zelizer, *On Capitol Hill: The Struggle to Reform Congress and Its Consequences, 1948–2000* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 130.

36 Gregory M. Borchardt, "Making D.C. Democracy's Capital: Local Activism, the 'Federal State,' and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Washington, D.C."

(Ph.D. diss., The George Washington University, 2013): 274–275; J.Y. Smith, "Rep. McMillan Defeated in S.C. Runoff," 13 September 1972, *Washington Post*: A1; "Fauntroy Opposes McMillan," 13 December 1970, *Washington Post*: D10; David R. Bolt, " 'Invaders' March on McMillan," 21 June 1970, *Washington Post*: D1; William E. Rone Jr., "The Troubles of Jenrette," 27 July 1975, *Atlanta Constitution*: 2C; Martha M. Hamilton, "House Unit Votes Home Rule," 1 August 1973, *Washington Post*: A1; Stephen Green, "Diggs Plans to Shake Up D.C. Panels," 14 November 1972, *Washington Post*: B1.

37 Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests*: 38; Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus": 46; Zelizer, *On Capitol Hill:* 163–172; Richard D. Lyons, "Ways and Means in Liberal Shift," 12 December 1974, *New York Times*: 38. During this era, African Americans also registered major gains on additional committees where none had previously served, including Banking and Currency (Parren J. Mitchell, 1971), Budget (Parren J. Mitchell, 1974), and Public Works (George W. Collins and Charles B. Rangel, 1971). The most common committee assignment for Black Members during this era was to Education and Labor (and its various iterations); 10 Black Members profiled in this section served on this committee. Nine Black Members served on the District of Columbia Committee, and eight Black Members served on three other committees: Post Office and Civil Service; Public Works; and Government Operations.

38 On the general topic of centralization of power in the House that gave rise to the hierarchical committee system, see Peter Swenson, "The Influence of Recruitment on the Structure of Power in the U.S. House, 1870–1940," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* VII (February 1982): 7–36. For an analysis of committee seniority, see Michael Aboam and Joseph Cooper, "The Rise of Seniority in the House of Representatives," *Polity* 1 (Fall, 1968): 52–84. For an analysis of factors that mitigate seniority as the determining factor in committee hierarchy as well as a discussion of when the seniority system solidified in the House, see Nelson Polsby, Miriam Gallaher, and Barry S. Rundquist, "The Growth of the Seniority System in the U.S. House of Representatives," *American Political Science Review* 63 (September 1969): 787–807; Morris P. Fiorina, "Legislative Incumbency and Insulation," in *Encyclopedia of American Legislative Systems*, vol. 1, ed. Joel Silbey (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994): 516–518. General House Member statistics are drawn from David C. Huckabee, "Length of Congressional Service: First Through 107th Congresses," 9 August 2002, Report RS21285, Congressional Research Service.

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40 Eric Pianin, "Black Caucus Members Face Dilemma of Hill Loyalties," 23 September 1987, *Washington Post*: A1; Milton Coleman, "Black Caucus Comes of Age," 7 January 1985, *Washington Post*: A1.

41 Nadine Cohadas, "Black House Members Striving for Influence," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* 43 (13 April 1985): 675; Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 92; Coleman, "Black Caucus Comes of Age."

42 Swain, "Changing Patterns of African-American Representation in Congress": 129. Black Members also held minor leadership positions during this era. For example, Cardiss Collins was the first Black woman to serve as an at-large Democratic whip, and Parren J. Mitchell also served as an at-large Democratic whip.

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44 Sue Cronk, "In Alabama Primary Negro Woman Is a Candidate," 12 March 1964, *Washington Post*: F1; "Negro Woman and Four Whites Vying for Congress in Carolina," 5 December 1965, *New York Times*: 171; "The Honorable Eva M. Clayton Oral History Interview," Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives (15 May 2015): 3–6. The interview transcript is available online at https://history.house.gov/Oral-History/Women/Representative-Clayton/; "Teacher, 34, To Oppose Dawson," 20 February 1968, *Chicago Daily Defender*: 5.

45 Barbara Jordan and Shelby Hearon, *Barbara Jordan: A Self Portrait* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979): 178–179. See also Fenno, *Going Home*: 103, 107–108; Barbara Reynolds, "The Black Caucus Flexes Its Newly Found Muscles," 5 October 1975, *Chicago Tribune*: A10; Walter Shapiro, "What Does This Woman Want?," October 1976, *Texas Monthly*, https://www.texasmonthly.com/news-politics/what-does-this-woman-want/; Chisholm, *Unbought and Unbossed*: 110. For more on sexism within the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) related to Shirley Chisholm and her 1972 campaign, see "Muriel Morisey Oral History Interview," Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives (19 April 2017): 34. The interview transcript is available online at https://history.house.gov/Oral-History/Women/Muriel-Morisey/; Jackson Landers, " 'Unbought and Unbossed': When a Black Woman Ran for the White House," 25 April 2016, *Smithsonian Magazine*, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/unbought-and-unbossed-when-black-woman-ran-for-the-white-house-180958699/. For an alternative perspective on the CBC's relationship with Chisholm's campaign, see Clay, *Just Permanent Interests*: 218–226.

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47 "The Honorable Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Oral History Interview," Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives (22 July 2015): 12–13. The interview transcript is available online at https://history.house.gov/Oral-History/Women/Representative-Burke/; Austin Scott, "4 on Hill Question Sterilization Guides," 27 October 1973, *Washington Post*: A2; Martin Tolchin, "Mrs. Chisholm Led Fight for Domestics' Base Pay," 21 June 1973, *New York Times*: 45; *Congressional Record,* House, 93rd Cong., 1st sess. (1 May 1973): 13846–13847; To amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to increase minimum wage rate under the Act, to expand the coverage of the Act, and for other purposes, Public Law 93-259, 88 Stat. 55 (1974); A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to provide benefits for homemakers, H.R. 3009, 94th Cong. (1975); To provide for the establishment of multipurpose service programs for displaced homemakers, and for other purposes, H.R. 10272, 94th Cong. (1975); Lisa Levenstein, " 'Don't Agonize, Organize!': The Displaced Homemakers Campaign and the Contested Goals of Postwar Feminism," *Journal of American History* 100, no. 4 (March 2014): 1114–1138.

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92 "The Honorable Ronald V. Dellums Oral History Interview," Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives (19 June 2012): 16. The interview transcript is available online at https://history.house.gov/Oral-History/People/Ronald-V-Dellums/.

93 DuBose, *The Untold Story of Charles Diggs*: 76.

94 Paul Dold, "U.S. Firms in South Africa: New Pressure," 20 August 1971, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1; *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (10 June 1971): 19110; Spencer Rich, "South Africa Sugar Quota Draws Fire," 16 April 1969, *Washington Post*: A2. Charles C. Diggs Jr. was not alone in the early battle to bring the issue of racial segregation in South Africa to the House Floor. Louis Stokes introduced a measure to terminate the sugar quota during the 91st Congress (1969–1971), and William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr. cosponsored a similar bill. When the House voted to extend the South Africa sugar quota in 1971, the Congressional Black Caucus voiced its disapproval, characterizing the decision as "complicity with apartheid." David E. Rosenbaum, "Sugar Vote Voted by House, 229–128," 11 June 1971, *New York Times*: 44; Jesse W. Lewis, "Diggs Presses Anti-Apartheid Bill," 31 March 1972, *Washington Post*: A2; DuBose, *The Untold Story of Charles Diggs*: 129–133; Dold, "U.S. Firms in South Africa: New Pressure"; *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess. (29 March 1972): 10931.

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96 *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (15 December 1971): 47236; *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess. (16 February 1972): 4247; Ronald V. Dellums and H. Lee Halterman, *Lying Down with the Lions: A Public Life from the Streets of Oakland to the Halls of Power* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000): 122–124; "Polaroid Cuts Off Goods to S. Africa," 22 November 1977, *Los Angeles Times*: A1.

97 David Remnick, "Randall Robinson: From Boyhood Pain to a Crusade Against Apartheid," 5 February 1985, *Washington Post*: E1; Robert Kinloch Massie, *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years* (New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1997): 405; Paula Stern, "Ethnic Groups: Shaping the Course of American Foreign Policy," 10 January 1976, *Washington Post*: A15; Harold J. Logan, "A Black Political Group Set Up as Africa Lobby," 21 May 1978, *Washington Post*: A18; "New Lobby of Blacks Will Seek to Influence U.S. Policy in Africa," 22 April 1978, *Washington Post*: A9; Tillery, "Foreign Policy Activism and Power in the House of Representatives: Black Members of Congress and South Africa": 100.

98 Eleanor Holmes Norton, then a Georgetown law professor and Walter E. Fauntroy's eventual successor as DC Delegate, accompanied Fauntroy, Mary Frances Berry, and Randall Robinson to the South African Embassy, but left before the group's arrest to notify the press of the protest. Dorothy Gilliam, "DC Sit-In Led the Way," 9 September 1985, *Washington Post*: A1; "Capital's House Delegate Held in Embassy Sit-In," 22 November 1984, *New York Times*: B10; Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*: 558–560; Kenneth Bredemeier and Michael Marriott, "Fauntroy Arrested in Embassy," 22 November 1984, *Washington Post*: 1; Courtland Milloy, "Blacks Form 'Free S. Africa Movement,'" 24 November 1984, *Washington Post*: C1.

99 Tillery, "Foreign Policy Activism and Power in the House of Representatives: Black Members of Congress and South Africa": 100; Karlyn Barker and Michael Marriott, "Protest Spreads to Other U.S. Cities," 4 December 1984, *Washington Post*: A1; "New Tactics on South Africa," 10 May 1986, *New York Times*: 8.

100 For example, Charles C. Diggs Jr. introduced a Joint Resolution entitled "A Joint Resolution to Protect United States Domestic and Foreign Policy Interests by Making Fair Employment Practices in the South African Enterprises of United States Firms a Criteria for Eligibility for Government

Contracts" seven times during the 93rd and 94th Congresses (1973–1977). According to Representative William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr., the Congressional Black Caucus sponsored 24 bills concerning U.S. policy toward South Africa between 1985 and 1986. Clay, *Just Permanent Interests:* 281; Omang, "Rep. Crockett and the Volley From the Right"; Juan Williams, "Antiapartheid Actions Await Turn of Events; Rep. Gray Says U.S. Moves Depend Upon South Africa," 28 September 1985, *Washington Post*: A7.

101 Jonathan Fuerbringer, "House Votes Sanctions Against South Africa," 6 June 1985, *New York Times*: A1; Bob Secter, "S. Africa Sanctions Passed by the Senate," 12 July 1985, *Los Angeles Times*: A1; George da Lama and Dorothy Collin, "Reagan Slaps S. Africa's Wrist," 10 September 1985, *Chicago Tribune*: 1.

102 Typical protocol dictated that a conference report would be drafted as a compromise between the House and Senate bills. However, leaders from both chambers decided to adopt the Senate bill to avoid the possibility of a pocket veto by President Ronald Reagan. See Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*: 617–618; James R. Dickenson, "Dellums: Exoneration Is His," 20 June 1986, *Washington Post*: A17; Edward Walsh, "House Would Require U.S. Disinvestment From South Africa," 19 June 1986, *Washington Post*: A1; Dellums and Halterman, *Lying Down with the Lions*: 132–138; The Senate voted 78 to 21, and the House voted 313 to 83 to override the presidential veto. "Senate Overrides Reagan's Veto Sanctions 78 to 21," 2 October 1986, *Los Angeles Times*: A1; Edward Walsh, "House Easily Overrides Veto of South African Sanctions," 30 September 1986, *Washington Post*: A1; Desson Howe, "Cheers for Sanctions Vote," 4 October 1986, *Washington Post*: G1.

103 Allister Sparks, "6 Congressmen Begin Tour of S. Africa," 8 January 1986, *Washington Post*: A1; E.A. Wayne, "Congress Considers Boosting Sanctions Against South Africa," 5 November 1987, *Christian Science Monitor*: 3; Dellums wrote about his continued attempts to pass stricter sanctions against South Africa in his memoirs. See Dellums and Halterman, *Lying Down with the Lions*: 138–148. President George H.W. Bush eventually lifted the majority of U.S. sanctions due to what he perceived as a "profound transformation" in the attempt to promote racial equality in South Africa. See Ann Devroy and Helen Dewar, "Citing S. Africa's 'Transformation,' Bush Ends Most Sanctions," 11 July 1991, *Washington Post*: A23.

104 Cohadas, "Black House Members Striving for Influence": 680; "A Time of Testing for Black Caucus as Its Members Rise to Power in House," 27 April 1985, *National Journal*: 911.

105 Fenno, *Going Home*: 106–109.

106 Ray Mosley, "Violence Disavowed by Rep. Dellums," 14 February 1971, *Washington Post*: 113; Dellums and Halterman, *Lying Down with the Lions*: 149–150; "Ronald Dellums Oral History Interview," Office of the Historian: 10.

107 Coleman, "Black Caucus Comes of Age."

108 This perception may have been partially due to an increase in the total number of corruption probes conducted by the federal government, which soared more than 2,300 percent between 1970 (63) and 1991 (1,452). Additionally, the number of Black officials who held public positions increased from 1,469 in 1970 to 6,681 in 1987. Nevertheless, many African-American officials believed they were disproportionately targeted, a belief that research often supported. One study found that of the 465 political corruption probes initiated by the U.S. Department of Justice between 1983 and 1988, 14 percent investigated Black officeholders—even though they represented just 3 percent of all U.S. officeholders. Richard Sutch, "Table Ec1356–1370, Federal Prosecutions of Public Corruption: 1970–1996," in *Historical Statistics of the United States*, vol. 5: *Governance and International Relations*, ed. Carter et al.: 331; Gwen Ifill, "Black Officials: Probes and Prejudice—Is There a Double Standard for Bringing Indictments? The Jury's Still Out," 28 February 1988, *Washington Post*: A9. For more on the subject, see the chapter titled "A Conspiracy to Silence Dissent," in Clay, *Just Permanent Interests*: 312–338; George Derek Musgrove, *Rumor, Repression, and Racial Politics: How the Harassment of Black Elected Officials Shaped Post-Civil Rights America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012).

109 Of the accusations made against Adam Clayton Powell Jr., writes William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr., they "could have been leveled against every chairman of every full committee in the House of Representatives. He did no more, and no less, than any other in terms of exercising traditional legal privileges that accompanied the powerful position of committee chairman." Clay, *Just Permanent Interests*: 82–83, 312–337. See also "Were Black Office-Holders More Routinely Investigated During the '80s?," 19 December 1993, *Atlanta Daily World*: 5; "Crockett Requests Harassment Investigation," 25 July 1983, *Chicago Daily Defender*: 23; Musgrove, *Rumor, Repression, and Racial Politics*: 119; Ifill, "Black Officials: Probes and Prejudice."

110 From 1981 until 2008, whenever Democrats controlled the House, African-American lawmakers led the Standards of Official Conduct Committee for all but one Congress. The Black committee chairs were Louis Stokes (1981–1985; 1991–1993), Julian C. Dixon (1985–1991), and Stephanie Tubbs Jones (2007–2008); William McKay and Charles W. Johnson, *Parliament and Congress: Representation and Scrutiny in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010): 519; "The 22 Worst Offenders," 17 April 1992, *Los Angeles Times*: A18; "List of Members of the House of Representatives Who Acknowledge Having Written Checks on Insufficient Funds at the House Bank," 13 April 1992, Associated Press; "House Check-Kiter List Official: 2 Names Missing from Panel's Record of Worst Abusers," 2 April 1992, *Chicago Tribune*: 6.

111 Dellums and Halterman, *Lying Down with the Lions*: 120.

112 Kenworthy, "Congressional Black Caucus Facing New Circumstances After 20 Years."

113 Similar conflicts between individual aspirations and collective goals unfolded among women Members of Congress, often creating tension between the institutional apprenticeship generation of the 1940s and 1950s, who had attained leadership positions, and the feminist activists who followed them. See, for example, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives, *Women in Congress, 1917–2020* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2020): 3–5, 250. Some outside critics of this transformation implied that the process amounted to a co-optation that marginalized the interests of Black communities. Political scientist Robert C. Smith concluded in the mid-1990s that, "The institutional norms and folkways of the House encourage exaggerated courtesy, compromise, deference, and above all loyalty to the institution. And the black members of Congress are probably more loyal to the House and their roles in it than they are to blacks." See Smith, *We Have No Leaders*: 225; Pianin, "Black Caucus Members Face Dilemma of Hill Loyalties"; Kenworthy, "Congressional Black Caucus Facing New Circumstances After 20 Years."

114 Edward Cowan, "Democratic Budget Is Adopted by House, 229-196," 24 March 1983, *New York Times*: A1; *Congressional Record,* House, 98th Cong., 1st sess. (22 March 1983): 6466; Richard Simon and Nick Anderson, "Respected Lawmaker Julian Dixon Dies," 9 December 2000, *Los Angeles Times*: B1.

115 Lee's murder was the first of three prominent lynchings in Mississippi in 1955. On August 13, Lamar Smith, a Black farmer, was murdered in front of the courthouse in Brookhaven. Smith had voted in a recent primary and was helping others vote by absentee ballot. On August 28, in the most notorious lynching of the period, Emmett Till, a 14-year-old from Chicago, Illinois, visiting family members, was murdered for allegedly whistling at a White woman. For more on the murders of Lee, Smith, and Till, see Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1995): 35–40; United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Voting in Mississippi* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965): 8.

116 Simeon Booker, *Black Man's America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964): 162. In 1982, Katie Hall, a Mound Bayou, Mississippi, native, became the first Black Member of Congress from Indiana. In a 1982 interview, Hall remembered listening to speeches given by well-known Black politicians from across the country who were invited to Mound Bayou by T.R.M. Howard. Steven V. Roberts, "Mississippi Gets a Representative, From Indiana," 26 November 1982, *New York Times*: B8.

117 The six committee chairs were Augustus F. "Gus" Hawkins (Education and Labor), John Conyers Jr. (Government Operations), Ronald V. Dellums (District of Columbia), Julian C. Dixon (Standards of Official Conduct), Mickey Leland (Select Committee on Hunger), and Charles B. Rangel (Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control). Mickey Leland died tragically in a plane crash in Ethiopia in August 1989.

118 *Congressional Record,* Extensions of Remarks, 102nd Cong., 1st sess. (22 March 1991): 7564.

Edward W. Brooke

1919–2015

UNITED STATES SENATOR

1967–1979

Republican from Massachusetts

Image courtesy of the U.S. Senate Historical Office

Elected in November 1966, Edward W. Brooke of Massachusetts became the first Black lawmaker to serve in the Senate in 86 years when he was sworn in the following January. Brooke was the first popularly elected Black Senator and the first Black lawmaker from Massachusetts to serve in Congress. Brooke, a Republican, was an independent thinker who often collaborated with colleagues of both parties. Throughout his political career, Brooke attempted to balance his support for legislation designed to end racial inequality with a mistrust of what he viewed as a "paternalistic government." "Hand in hand with the legal battles and demonstrations there must go self-help," Brooke said. "There must go with this quest for equal opportunity an awareness of equal responsibility."[1]

Edward William Brooke III was born in Washington, DC, on October 26, 1919, to Helen, a homemaker, and Edward Brooke Jr., a longtime lawyer with the U.S. Veterans Administration. The future Senator was named for his grandfather, father, and deceased sister Edwina. He also had an older sister, Helene. After graduating from Dunbar High School in Washington, DC, in 1936, Ed Brooke attended Howard University. Originally intending to pursue a career in medicine, Brooke decided to major in sociology, earning a bachelor's degree in 1941. Shortly after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Brooke entered the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant. Before serving overseas in World War II, Brooke was stationed with the segregated, all-Black 366th Infantry Regiment at Fort Devens in Ayer, Massachusetts. Like many Black Members of the era, Brooke felt keenly the irony and indignity of fighting for democracy abroad while facing racial discrimination in the armed forces. The Massachusetts Army base implemented a Whites-only policy for all clubs, as well as the swimming pool, the tennis courts, and the general store. "In every regard, we were treated as second-class soldiers, if not worse, and we were angry," Brooke recalled. "I felt a personal frustration and bitterness I had not known before in my life." While stateside, Brooke defended Black enlisted men in military court. Despite a lack of legal training, he earned a reputation as a skilled public defender and a "soldier's lawyer."[2]

Brooke spent 195 days with his unit in Italy. His fluent Italian enabled him to cross enemy lines to communicate with Italian partisans. By the war's end, Brooke had earned the rank of captain, a Bronze Star, and a Distinguished Service Award. During his tour in Europe, he also met

Italian-born Remigia Ferrari-Scacco. After a two-year, long-distance relationship, they married on June 7, 1947, in Roxbury, Massachusetts. The couple had two daughters: Edwina and Remi. They divorced in 1978, and a year later Brooke married Anne Fleming with whom he had a son, Edward W. Brooke IV.[3]

Brooke's legal experience on the Massachusetts military base inspired him to earn a bachelor of laws degree in 1948 and a master of laws degree in 1950 from Boston University. Brooke declined offers to join established law firms, choosing instead to start his own practice in the predominantly African-American Boston neighborhood, Roxbury. At the urging of friends from his former Army unit, Brooke interrupted his law career to run for the Massachusetts house of representatives in 1950. Unsure of his preferred party affiliation, Brooke took advantage of a state law allowing candidates to cross-file. Though he had no prior political experience, he received the endorsement of the Republican Party for the house seat representing Roxbury. Unsuccessful in the general election, Brooke entered the race two years later, winning the Republican nomination but losing to his Democratic opponent.[4]

Brooke established himself as a successful lawyer and built community ties that proved significant in future bids for elected office. In 1960, he ran for Massachusetts secretary of state. Although Brooke lost that election, his strong showing surprised observers. In recognition of his performance in the campaign, Republican Governor John Volpe of Massachusetts appointed Brooke chairman of the Boston finance commission, which uncovered corruption in the city's municipal agencies. During his two-year tenure, Brooke transformed the commission into a respectable and effective organization. This position helped make him one of the most popular political figures in the state.[5]

In 1962, Brooke earned the Republican nomination for Massachusetts attorney general, then easily defeated the Democratic challenger. Brooke garnered national attention as the only member of his party to win statewide election in 1962 and enjoyed the distinction of becoming the state's first African-American attorney general. Brooke continued his efforts to thwart corruption in the state government. He also recommended a series of measures to protect consumers' rights and fought to end housing discrimination. Civil rights leaders criticized Brooke's decision that a proposed 1964 boycott by African-American students to protest segregation in the Boston school system would be illegal. "I am not a civil rights leader and I don't profess to be one," Brooke once declared, explaining the conflict between his responsibility as an attorney general who must uphold existing law and his personal views on racial equality. His response to the proposed protest won him the support of many voters in the predominantly White state.[6]

In 1966, Brooke authored *The Challenge of Change: Crisis in Our Two-Party System*, outlining many of his political principles, including his beliefs about civil rights. The "issue [of civil rights] is pressing on the nation, and cries out for a solution," Brooke wrote, arguing that in addition to legislation, African Americans needed access to educational opportunities of high quality to compete with Whites. While he promoted a civil rights agenda for reform, Brooke maintained that militancy among activists undermined the civil rights movement.[7]

After two terms as attorney general, Brooke announced his candidacy in 1965 for the U.S. Senate seat left vacant by the retirement of Leverett Saltonstall. Brooke was unopposed in the Republican primary and faced Democrat Endicott Peabody, the former governor of Massachusetts, in the general election. Campaigning as a "creative Republican," Brooke successfully courted voters from both parties. His criticism of the increasing militancy of some civil rights activists resonated with many White voters in Massachusetts. Although Peabody enjoyed the enthusiastic backing of popular Massachusetts Senator Edward Moore "Ted" Kennedy, he failed to break through with voters, and on November 8, 1966, Brooke won a seat in the 90th Congress (1967–1969), taking 62 percent of the vote. His victory met with considerable fanfare, both in Massachusetts and across the nation. Brooke was the first African-American candidate elected to the Senate since the Reconstruction Era. Asked to comment on his victory, Brooke praised the people of Massachusetts for their ability to "judge you on your merit and your worth alone." He promised to use his position to "unite men who have not been united before," reiterating his pledge to represent his constituents equally. In November 1972, Brooke easily defeated Democrat John J. Droney, the Middlesex County district attorney, earning 64 percent of the vote to win a second term in the Senate.[8]

Initially assigned to the committees on Aeronautical and Space Sciences, Banking and Currency, and Government Operations, Brooke also served on the Armed Services and the Joint Committee on Bicentennial Arrangements

committees for one Congress. From the 92nd to the 95th Congresses (1971–1979), Brooke was on three committees: Appropriations; Special Aging; and Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. Brooke also sat on the Select Equal Educational Opportunity Committee, the Joint Committee on Defense Production, and the Select Standards and Conduct Committee.[9]

Despite being the first Black Senator since the nineteenth century—and having been elected just two years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—Brooke claimed he experienced little institutional racism in the Senate. "In all my years in the Senate, I never encountered an overt act of hostility," he said. Brooke later recalled using the Senate gym and the adjoining facilities without incident. Early in his first term, Brooke went to the Senators' swimming pool in the Russell Senate Office Building. Southern Democrats and staunch segregationists John Cornelius Stennis of Mississippi, John Little McClellan of Arkansas, and James Strom Thurmond of South Carolina greeted Brooke and invited him to join them in the pool. "There was no hesitation or ill will that I could see," Brooke recollected. "Yet these were men who consistently voted against legislation that would have provided equal opportunity to others of my race. I felt that if a senator truly believed in racial separatism I could live with that, but it was increasingly evident that some members of the Senate played on bigotry purely for political gain."[10]

President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed Brooke to the President's Commission on Civil Disorders shortly after he was elected to the Senate. Illinois Governor Otto Kerner led the group, which became known as the Kerner Commission. Charged with investigating the causes of the urban riots of 1967, the Kerner Commission also proposed solutions for the wide-spread incidences of looting and violence in American cities. The 11-member commission reported that American society was sharply divided along racial lines. Brooke agreed with one of the commission's principal recommendations: that the government should fund a series of programs to increase educational, housing, and employment opportunities for people of color living in urban areas. Although the commission's reports received widespread attention by scholars and in the press, President Johnson disagreed with many of its findings, and the commission's recommendations were largely set aside by policymakers.[11]

In the Senate, Edward Brooke was often at the forefront of efforts to expand and protect the legislative achievements of the civil rights movement. Working with Democratic Senator Walter F. Mondale of Minnesota, Brooke succeeded in attaching an antidiscrimination amendment to the groundbreaking Civil Rights Act of 1968. Title VIII of the legislation included provisions to combat racial discrimination in housing. "Fair housing does not promise an end to the ghetto," Brooke cautioned. "It promises only to demonstrate that the ghetto is not an immutable institution in America." Brooke cited his own experience of being one of the "lucky ones" that was fortunate enough to "escape the ghetto," and spoke of the "psychological impact" of living in "an area which has been marked for second-class citizens." To combat the "unconscionable bitterness between white and Black Americans, it is encumbent [*sic*] upon our Government to act, and to act now," Brooke said.[12]

In 1975, Brooke helped lead the effort in the Senate to extend the 1965 Voting Rights Act. When a proposed Senate amendment threatened to dilute the historic voting rights legislation, Brooke joined the debate. "I just cannot believe that here in 1975 on the floor of the Senate we are ready to say to the American people, black or white, red or brown, 'You just cannot even be assured the basic right to vote in this country.'" Brooke's eloquent and impassioned plea to his colleagues helped extend the landmark measure for seven years. Shortly after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, Brooke urged his congressional colleagues to recognize the renowned civil rights leader by declaring January 15 (King's birthday) a national holiday. Arguing that it "would be fitting to pay our respects to this noble figure by enduring public commemoration of his life and philosophy," the Massachusetts Senator earned the support of many African Americans. Brooke also made headlines when he traveled to Jackson State College in Mississippi in May 1970 to help settle the situation after police shot and killed two Black students. In 1977, he successfully fought an amendment to a Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) bill that would have prevented the department from enforcing quotas to meet affirmative action goals.[13]

As a Republican Senator from a state with a small Black population, Brooke had different concerns, interests, and constituencies than most other Black lawmakers, all of whom served in the House of Representatives at the time. Occasionally, this placed Brooke at odds with the Black Representatives, and he never joined the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). But the Senator and House Members

also found occasions to work with and support each other. In 1969, both Brooke and the Black Members of the House opposed Richard M. Nixon's nomination of Clement F. Haynsworth Jr. to the Supreme Court, and they coordinated opposition. In 1971, Brooke declined to participate in the Black Representatives' boycott of President Nixon's State of the Union Address, but he did later support a meeting between the Members and the President. Two years later, Senator Brooke was the keynote speaker at the CBC's annual fundraiser dinner.[14]

Although Brooke maintained his Republican Party affiliation, his stances were often contrary to the official party line. During his two terms in the Senate, Brooke backed affirmative action, federal set asides for contracts with minority businesses, and public housing legislation. He also favored extending minimum wage standards to jobs not covered under the Fair Labor Standards Act, providing tax incentives to companies to enable them to hire more employees, and increasing operating subsidies for commuter rail services and mass transit systems. Brooke was a vocal opponent of antibusing legislation, and on several occasions helped defeat or weaken strong antibusing bills passed in the House. In 1974, he successfully defeated the Holt amendment, introduced by Maryland Representative Marjorie Sewell Holt, to a HEW appropriations bill that would have effectively ended the federal government's role in school desegregation. At times Brooke broke party ranks to work with Democrats in the Senate and the House. For example, Brooke and then-House Majority Leader Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts recommended a swift increase in Social Security benefits in 1972.[15]

Although Brooke initially supported President Nixon, he grew increasingly critical of the Nixon administration. Saying that he was "deeply concerned about the lack of commitment to equal opportunities for all people," Brooke denounced the White House for neglecting Black communities and failing to enforce school integration. In addition to Haynsworth, Brooke opposed two other Nixon Supreme Court nominees: G. Harrold Carswell and William H. Rehnquist. In May 1973, he introduced a resolution authorizing the U.S. Attorney General to appoint a special prosecutor to serve in all criminal investigations arising from the Watergate scandal. Six months later, Brooke became the first Republican Senator to publicly call for President Nixon's resignation. "There is no question that the President has lost his effectiveness as the leader of this country, primarily because he has lost the confidence of the people of the country," Brooke remarked. "I think, therefore, that in the interests of this nation that he loves that he should step down, tender his resignation." Brooke also was one of the few Republicans to disagree publicly with President Gerald R. Ford's pardon of Nixon, deeming it a "serious mistake."[16]

Brooke also influenced American foreign policy, especially during the Vietnam War. As he campaigned for the Senate in 1966, Brooke called for increased negotiations with the North Vietnamese rather than an escalation of the fighting. In 1967, he went on a three-week fact-finding mission to Southeast Asia, and then spoke about that experience in his first formal speech in the Senate. Although Brooke had hoped for a diplomatic solution to the conflict, he came home from Vietnam convinced "that the enemy is not disposed to participate in any meaningful negotiations" and that President Johnson's "patient" approach to Vietnam did, in fact, have merit. Brooke was praised by those who found his willingness to publicly change his position courageous and criticized by many civil rights activists who believed the Vietnam War siphoned valuable funding away from vital domestic programs. Years later, Brooke maintained that his maiden speech had been misinterpreted because the press overlooked his continued support of a reduction of American involvement in the region. As a moderate Republican, Brooke grew impatient with the Nixon administration's aggressive policies in Southeast Asia, which escalated the conflict with few signs of success. In 1970, he and 15 members of his party voted for the Cooper–Church Amendment, which originated in response to Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia and prohibited the use of American troops outside Vietnam. Brooke further challenged the President's war effort by voting for legislation that established a time limit for the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam.[17]

Brooke's solid support base in Massachusetts began to wane after an acrimonious and public divorce in 1978 led to allegations of financial misconduct. In the Republican primary, Brooke faced a challenge from conservative television talk show host Avi Nelson. Although he managed to rebuff Nelson's bid, the controversies surrounding Brooke's finances left him in a weakened position as he entered the general election campaign. In November 1978, Democrat Paul Efthemios Tsongas, a U.S. Representative from Massachusetts, defeated Brooke, 55 to 45 percent.[18]

After leaving office, Brooke resumed the practice of law in Washington, DC. In 1984, he became chairman of a commercial bank in Boston, and one year later, he was named to the board of directors of a large defense contractor. Upon being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2002, Brooke returned to the public spotlight to increase awareness of breast cancer in men. In 2004, President George W. Bush awarded Brooke the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor. In 2007, Brooke published his autobiography, *Bridging the Divide: My Life*. A year later, Congress awarded him the Congressional Gold Medal. Brooke died at his home in Coral Gables, Florida, on January 3, 2015.[19]

Manuscript Collections

Boston University (Boston, Massachusetts). *Papers*: unspecified amount. Includes items from Edward W. Brooke's U.S. Senate career including photographs, letters, daily planners, the public hearings schedule for the Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity, travel arrangements, daily itineraries, and research reports regarding Senator Brooke's re-election. A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

Library of Congress Manuscript Division (Washington, District of Columbia). *Papers*: 1941–2015 (bulk 1963–1978), 245,250 items. Correspondence, memoranda, speeches, transcripts of interviews, writings, reports, notes, subject files, legislation, briefing books, press releases, photographs, and other papers relating primarily to Edward W. Brooke's career as attorney general of Massachusetts (1963–1966) and as U.S. Senator (1967–1978). A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

Notes

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Shirley Chisholm

1924–2005

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1969–1983

Democrat from New York

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

The first African-American Congresswoman, Shirley Chisholm represented a U.S. House of Representatives district centered in Brooklyn, New York. First elected in 1968, Chisholm was catapulted into the national limelight by virtue of her race, gender, and an outspoken personality that she balanced with deft skill as a political insider. Four years later, in 1972, she campaigned for the Democratic presidential nomination. From her seat on the powerful Rules Committee, "Fighting Shirley," as she was known, moved into Democratic leadership and advocated for increased federal spending and expanded programs to help aid low-income and working-class Americans. "I am the people's politician," she once told the *New York Times*. "If the day should ever come when the people can't save me, I'll know I'm finished. That's when I'll go back to being a professional educator."[1]

Shirley Chisholm was born Shirley Anita St. Hill on November 30, 1924, in Brooklyn, New York. She was the oldest of four daughters of Charles St. Hill, a factory worker from Guyana, and Ruby Seale St. Hill, a seamstress from Barbados. For part of her childhood, Chisholm lived in Barbados on her maternal grandparents' farm and received a British education while her parents worked during the Great Depression to settle the family in Bedford-Stuyvesant, a neighborhood in Brooklyn. The most apparent manifestation of her West Indies roots was the slight, clipped British accent she retained throughout her life. She attended public schools in Brooklyn and graduated with high marks. Chisholm attended Brooklyn College on scholarship and graduated with a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1946. She married Conrad Q. Chisholm, a private investigator, in 1949; they later divorced. From 1946 to 1953, Shirley Chisholm worked as a nursery school teacher and then as the director of two daycare centers. Three years later, she earned a master's degree in early childhood education from Columbia University. She served as an educational consultant for New York City's division of daycare from 1959 to 1964. Chisholm was heavily involved in Democratic clubs in Brooklyn in the 1950s and 1960s, including the Bedford-Stuyvesant Political League and the Unity Democratic club. In 1964, Chisholm was elected to the New York state legislature; she was the second African-American woman to serve in Albany. In 1977, she married Arthur Hardwick Jr., a New York state legislator.[2]

A court-ordered redistricting—that carved a new Brooklyn congressional district with a slight Black majority

and a large Puerto Rican population out of Chisholm's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood—convinced her to run for Congress. The influential Democratic political machine, headed by Stanley Steingut, declared its intention to send an African-American candidate from the new district to the House. In the primary, Chisholm faced three African-American challengers: civil court judge Thomas R. Jones, a former district leader and New York assemblyman; Dolly Robinson, a former district co-leader; and William C. Thompson, a well-financed state senator. Thompson received the endorsement of the Steingut machine, which usually guaranteed the candidate a primary victory. Chisholm, however, received the support of community organizers with whom she had worked for more than a decade. Chisholm roamed the new district in a sound truck that pulled up outside housing projects while she announced: "Ladies and Gentlemen … this is fighting Shirley Chisholm coming through." Chisholm capitalized on her personal campaign style. "I have a way of talking that does something to people," she noted. "I have a theory about campaigning. You have to let them feel you." In the primary in mid-June 1968, Chisholm defeated Thompson, her nearest competitor, by about 800 votes in an election characterized by light voter turnout.[3]

In the general election, Chisholm faced James Farmer, who ran as the candidate of both the Republican Party and the Liberal Party. Farmer was one of the principal figures of the civil rights movement, a cofounder of the Congress of Racial Equality, and an organizer of the Freedom Riders in the early 1960s. The two candidates held similar positions on housing, employment, and education issues, and both opposed the Vietnam War. Farmer charged that the Democratic Party "took [Black voters] for granted and thought they had us in their pockets. … We must be in a position to use our power as a swing vote." Farmer focused on Chisholm's gender, arguing that "women have been in the driver's seat" in Black communities for too long and that the district needed "a man's voice in Washington," not that of a "little schoolteacher." Chisholm, whose campaign motto was "unbought and unbossed," met that charge head-on, using Farmer's rhetoric to highlight discrimination against women and to explain her unique qualifications. "There were Negro men in office here before I came in five years ago, but they didn't deliver," Chisholm countered. "People came and asked me to do something … I'm here because of the vacuum." Chisholm portrayed Farmer, who had lived in Manhattan, as an outsider and used her fluent Spanish to appeal to the growing Hispanic population in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. The deciding factor, however, was that more than 80 percent of the district's registered voters were Democrats. Chisholm won the general election by a resounding 67 percent of the vote.[4]

Chisholm's freshman class included two African Americans of future prominence, Louis Stokes of Ohio and William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr. of Missouri, and boosted the number of African Americans in the House from six to nine, the largest total at that time. Chisholm was the only new woman to enter Congress in 1969.[5]

Chisholm did not receive a warm welcome in the House because of her refusal to abide by long-standing House expectations for first-term Members to fly under the radar. "I have no intention of just sitting quietly and observing," she said. "I intend to focus attention on the nation's problems." She did just that, criticizing the Vietnam War in her first House Floor speech on March 26, 1969. Chisholm vowed to vote against any defense appropriation bill "until the time comes when our values and priorities have been turned right-side up again." She was assigned to the Committee on Agriculture, a decision she appealed directly to House Speaker John W. McCormack of Massachusetts, bypassing Ways and Means Committee Chairman Wilbur Daigh Mills of Arkansas, who oversaw Democratic committee appointments. McCormack told her to be a "good soldier," at which point Chisholm brought her complaint to the Democratic caucus and the press. She was reassigned to the Veterans' Affairs Committee which, though not one of her top choices, was more relevant to her district's makeup. "There are a lot more veterans in my district than trees," she quipped.[6]

Chisholm was on the Veterans' Affairs committee during the 91st and 92nd Congresses (1969–1973). From 1971 to 1977, she served on the Committee on Education and Labor, having won a place on that panel with the help of Thomas Hale Boggs Sr. of Louisiana, whom she had endorsed as Majority Leader. She also served on the Committee on Organization, Study, and Review (known as the Hansen Committee), which recommended reforms for the selection of committee chairmen that the Democratic Caucus adopted in 1971. In the 94th Congress (1975–1977), Chisholm was elected assistant secretary of the Democratic Caucus, and from 1977 to 1981, she served as secretary of the Democratic Caucus. She eventually left

her Education Committee assignment to accept a seat on the Rules Committee in 1977, becoming the first Black woman—and the second woman ever—to serve on that powerful panel. Chisholm also was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) in 1971 and the Congressional Women's Caucus in 1977.[7]

As a legislator, Chisholm prioritized educational and labor policies that aided African Americans, women, and the working class and poor. She joined New York Representative Bella Savitzky Abzug in cosponsoring legislation to increase federal funding for and oversight of childcare centers. She also opposed President Richard M. Nixon's proposed guaranteed minimum annual income for families, arguing that the plan's proposed income was not adequate to meet the needs of a family, nor did the legislation provide "day care, job training, and job development which will be necessary if the family assistant plan is to work." She was a fierce defender of federal assistance for education. In 1975, Chisholm successfully added an amendment to a national school lunch bill to expand participation by increasing the family income of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. She helped lead her colleagues in overriding President Gerald R. Ford's veto on the measure. Chisholm said she did not view herself as "an innovator in the field of legislation." In her efforts to address the needs of the "have-nots," she often chose to work outside the established system. At times she criticized Democratic leadership in Congress as much as she did the Republicans in the White House.[8]

Despite her reputation, not unjustly earned, for independence, Chisholm was willing to form coalitions and build connections with powerful lawmakers in the House. In 1973, Chisholm was a leading proponent of an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 that increased the minimum wage and brought domestic workers, a profession that disproportionately employed women of color, under minimum wage regulations. Her colleagues applauded Chisholm for her behind the scenes work on behalf of the legislation. Chisholm insisted that one of her strengths was in bringing legislative factions together. "I can talk with legislators from the South, the West, all over," she said. "They view me as a national figure and that makes me more acceptable." Chisholm gained the trust of her colleagues and was rewarded with a spot on the influential Rules Committee, whose members were chosen by the party leader, and she was elected to a position in the Democratic leadership.[9]

In 1972, Chisholm declared her candidacy for the Democratic nomination for President, charging that none of the other candidates represented the interests of Black and minority voters or those of Americans living in poverty. She campaigned across the country and succeeded in getting her name on 12 primary ballots, becoming as well known outside her Brooklyn neighborhood as she was in it. At the Democratic National Convention she received 152 delegate votes, or 10 percent of the total—a respectable showing given her modest funding. A 1974 Gallup poll listed her as one of the top 10 most-admired women in America.[10]

But while the presidential bid enhanced Chisholm's national profile, it also stirred controversy among her House colleagues. Chisholm's candidacy split the CBC. Many Black male colleagues felt she had not consulted them or that she had betrayed the group's interests by trying to create a coalition of women, Hispanics, White liberals, and welfare recipients. Pervasive gender discrimination, Chisholm noted, cut across racial lines: "Black male politicians are no different from white male politicians. This 'woman thing' is so deep. I've found it out in this campaign if I never knew it before." Furthermore, there were strategic differences, and many CBC members thought it wiser to support the frontrunner, South Dakota Senator George Stanley McGovern, and to try to influence the likely Democratic nominee. Her presidential campaign also strained relations with other women Members of Congress, particularly Bella Abzug of New York, who endorsed Senator McGovern.[11]

Despite her promotion to influential roles in the House, Chisholm maintained her independence. In 1978, as a member of the Rules Committee, she voted against a Rules package that bundled several energy bills, including legislation to deregulate the sale of natural gas. Amid pressure from Speaker of the House Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts and President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, Chisholm refused to support the package. Chisholm claimed she voted against the rule because higher rates caused by deregulation would fall hardest on people with low incomes. Ultimately, the bundle passed the Rules Committee after another Democrat switched his vote and supported the rule.[12]

Even as Chisholm gained influence, she continued to feel slighted because of her race and gender. As part of Democratic leadership, she went to a breakfast meeting every week with President Carter. However, she eventually stopped attending the meetings, believing the men in the

room, especially the President, ignored her. One staffer explained, "She would come back furious … because they had considered her invisible."[13]

Later in her career, Chisholm was a vocal advocate for the humane treatment of Haitian refugees. In the late 1970s, human rights violations by the Haitian government and a poor economy led to an increase in immigration from Haiti to the United States. In 1979, she and Walter E. Fauntroy, the Delegate for Washington, DC, founded and co-chaired the CBC Task Force on Haitian Refugees, later renamed the Task Force on Haiti. Chisholm was particularly concerned with refugee policies of both the Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan administrations, which she argued privileged Cuban refugees fleeing Communist-controlled Cuba over Haitian refugees. "It is clear to the Congressional Black Caucus that the [Carter] administration has no intention of ending its invidious discrimination against Haitians," Chisholm explained to her colleagues in a congressional hearing. In 1980, Chisholm proposed legislation to end the inequity in the federal government's refugee policy and give Haitian migrants a better chance of remaining in the United States.[14]

By 1976, Chisholm faced a stiff challenge from within her own party primary by a longtime political rival, New York city councilman Samuel D. Wright. He criticized Chisholm for her absenteeism in the House, brought on by the rigors of her presidential campaign, and for what he said was a lack of connection with the district. Chisholm countered by playing on her national credentials and her role as a reformer of Capitol Hill culture. "I think my role is to break new ground in Congress," Chisholm noted. Two weeks later, Chisholm turned back Wright and Hispanic political activist Luz Vega in the Democratic primary, winning 54 percent of the vote to Wright's 36 percent and Vega's 10 percent. She won the general election handily with 83 percent of the vote.[15]

From the late 1970s onward, Brooklyn Democrats speculated that Chisholm was losing interest in her House seat. Her name was widely floated as a possible candidate for several jobs related to education, including president of the City College of New York and chancellor of the New York City public school system. In 1982, Chisholm declined to seek re-election. "Shirley Chisholm would like to have a little life of her own," she told the *Christian Science Monitor*, explaining that she wanted to spend more time with her husband, Arthur.[16]

Other reasons, too, factored into Chisholm's decision to leave the House. She had grown disillusioned over the conservative turn the country had taken with the election of President Ronald Reagan in 1980. Additionally, she said that many Democrats, particularly African-American politicians, misunderstood her efforts to build alliances. While her rhetoric about racial inequality could be passionate, Chisholm's actions toward the White establishment in Congress were often conciliatory. Chisholm maintained that many members of the Black community did not understand the need for negotiation with White politicians. "We still have to engage in compromise, the highest of all arts," Chisholm noted. "Blacks can't do things on their own, nor can whites."[17]

After leaving Congress in January 1983, Chisholm cofounded the National Political Congress of Black Women and campaigned for Jesse Jackson's presidential bids in 1984 and 1988. She also taught at Mt. Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, in 1983. Though nominated as U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica by President William J. Clinton, Chisholm declined due to ill health. She settled in Palm Coast, Florida, where she wrote and lectured. Chisholm died on January 1, 2005, in Ormond Beach, Florida.[18]

Manuscript Collection

Rutgers University Library, Special Collections and University Archives (New Brunswick, NJ). *Papers*: 1963–1994, approximately 3.7 cubic feet. The papers of Shirley Chisholm consist of speeches, 1971–1989, on a wide variety of topics; congressional files, 1965–1981, composed primarily of complimentary letters received and presidential campaign materials; general files, 1966–1986, consisting chiefly of biographical materials, including information on Representative Chisholm's record in Congress; newspaper clippings, 1969–1990, including editorials written by Representative Chisholm; constituent newsletters, 1969–1982, complemented by selected press releases; photographs (including photocopies and other reproductions), 1969–1990, many of which depict Representative Chisholm with other political figures; publications, 1969–1992, with additional coverage of Representative Chisholm's political career and her retirement; and campaign miscellany, including buttons from her 1972 presidential campaign and political posters. Also included in the collection are the papers of Representative Chisholm's aide Robert Frishman, 1963–1985. A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

Notes

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William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr.

1931–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1969–2001

Democrat from Missouri

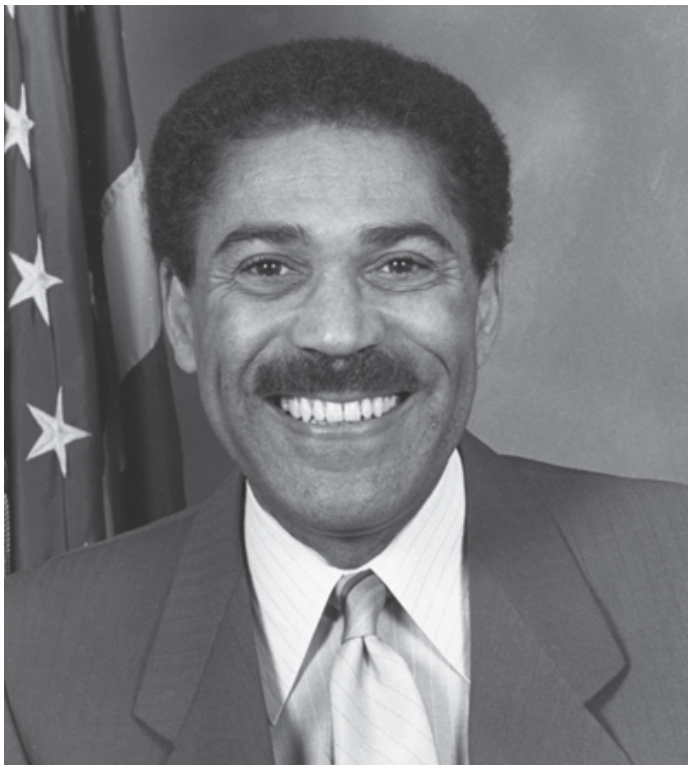

Image courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

The first African-American Representative from Missouri, William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr. served in the U.S. House of Representatives for more than three decades. During his extensive tenure, he used his experience as a civil rights activist and labor union representative in St. Louis to promote legislation to help poor and working-class Americans. Never one to avoid confrontation, the spirited dean of the Missouri delegation observed, "I didn't get so tied to the job that it stopped me from speaking out. People used to say to me, 'How can you do that? You won't get re-elected.' I would say, 'I didn't come here to stay forever.'" For Clay, politics was a means to an end, a way to pursue and effect the change his constituents sought. It was a belief he imparted to the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), which he helped establish in the late 1960s and early 1970s. "We have no permanent friends, no permanent enemies, just permanent interests," Clay said.[1]

William Lacy Clay—who went by Bill—was born in St. Louis on April 30, 1931, to Irving, a welder, and Luella Clay. His political awakening occurred in 1949, after police arrested him, hauled him to a district police station, and tried to coerce him to confess to being involved in a brutal crime with which he had no connection. His aunt, a housekeeper for a member of the St. Louis board of police commissioners, telephoned her employer, and detectives were swiftly dispatched to end the interrogation. That episode, Clay recalled decades later, "convinced me that survival and political influence are inseparable in American society." In 1953, he graduated from St. Louis University with a bachelor's degree in history and political science. Drafted into the U.S. Army, Clay served from 1953 to 1955. While on duty in Alabama, he responded to the racial discrimination he and other African-American troops faced by organizing demonstrations; once, Clay led a boycott of the base barbershop to protest its policy of serving Black soldiers only one day a week. His experiences in the armed forces contributed to his future career as a civil rights activist and politician.[2]

Clay returned to St. Louis and briefly worked as a real estate broker and a manager with a life insurance company. He won his first elective office in 1959 as an alderman from a predominantly Black St. Louis ward and served in this position through 1964. Clay was also active in the St. Louis civil rights movement. He formed a local NAACP youth council and led pickets at restaurants, movie theaters, and other businesses with discriminatory employment practices.

As an alderman, Clay helped pass a fair employment ordinance and a separate law banning racial discrimination in public accommodations. In 1963, to highlight the lack of job opportunities for Black men and women in St. Louis, Clay published a report titled "Anatomy of an Economic Murder." Just months later, he was arrested and jailed for a total of 105 days for his role in demonstrations against the hiring practices of a St. Louis bank. Clay continued to gain experience in local politics as a Democratic ward committeeman, an influential party position, from 1964 to 1967. His early political career coincided with his work as a union official. Clay worked as a business representative for the city employees' union from 1961 to 1964 and as an education coordinator with a local steamfitter's union in 1966 and 1967. Clay married Carol Ann Johnson, and the couple had three children: William Lacy Jr., Vicki, and Michele.[3]

A 1964 Supreme Court decision mandating that congressional districts be drawn with equal populations paved the way for Clay's entry to the U.S. House. Three years later, the Missouri legislature passed a bill that reapportioned the state's districts in compliance with the high court's ruling. One of the new districts incorporated the north side of St. Louis and some of its outlying suburbs; 53 percent of the population was African American. When the 22-year incumbent Frank Melvin Karsten of Missouri chose not to seek re-election in the newly redrawn majority-Black district, Clay entered the 1968 Democratic primary for the open congressional seat. He defeated five candidates for the nomination, earning 41 percent of the vote. Clay faced Curtis Crawford, a former St. Louis assistant circuit attorney, in the general election. Against the backdrop of a turbulent period of racial unrest, which included the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., the 1968 campaign received national attention because the Missouri House election uncharacteristically featured two Black candidates. Clay emphasized his support for employment opportunities for African Americans and the promotion of civil rights. He also pledged to represent the needs of the poor and working-class voters of the district. "The conditions of poverty found in the First District and other areas of the country must be immediately addressed by our federal government to bring faith and hope to our people, before we can talk of quelling unrest and civil disorder." On Election Day, Clay defeated his opponent in the heavily Democratic district with 64 percent of the vote, becoming the first African-American Representative from Missouri in Congress.[4]

Clay's career in the House was notable for his long tenure on a handful of committees. Beginning in his first term for the 91st Congress (1969–1971), Clay was assigned to the Committee on Education and Labor; he would serve on the committee for his entire career. He eventually chaired the Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations and was the ranking minority member after Republicans took control of the House in 1995. Clay served on the Post Office and Civil Service Committee from the 93rd to the 103rd Congress (1973–1995) and on the Committee on House Administration from the 99th to the 103rd Congress (1985–1995), chairing the Subcommittee on Libraries and Memorials. Clay reaped the benefits of the House seniority system, rising through the ranks of the Post Office and Civil Service Committee (chairing two subcommittees) to head the full panel during the 102nd and 103rd Congresses (1991–1995). "From the day you are sworn into Congress, you dream of the day that you will rise to chair a full committee—and today that time has come," Clay declared in 1990. Clay also was a member of the Joint Committee on the Library during the 101st Congress (1989–1991).[5]

As a new Member of the 91st Congress, Clay joined two other African-American lawmakers in their first term: Representatives Shirley Chisholm of New York and Louis Stokes of Ohio. The three vowed to focus on issues affecting their Black and urban constituents, who they believed had been neglected by the government. Clay was one of the 12 founding members of the CBC. First formed in 1969 as the Democratic Select Committee, and renamed in 1971, the CBC sought to provide a formal network for African-American Members to focus on legislative issues directly affecting Black citizens. Soon after its creation, the CBC made headlines because of a public dispute with President Richard M. Nixon. The CBC accused Nixon of ignoring the interests of Black Americans, and after Nixon repeatedly refused to meet with the Black Members, the organization boycotted Nixon's January 1971 State of the Union Address. Clay, along with Ohio Representative Louis Stokes, led the boycott, drafting a letter outlining the reasons for group's protest: "We now refuse to be part of your audience," the letter stated in response to the President's persistent refusals to meet with the Black Members of Congress. When Nixon ultimately met with the CBC in March 1971, each member addressed a major point of concern for the Black community. Clay spoke about the need for student

grants to help impoverished African-American students who could not repay educational loans. After 1971, the CBC quickly developed into one of Congress's most influential caucuses. And years later, Clay said the CBC was "the single most effective political entity we have had in articulating, representing, protecting and advancing the interests of black people in this nation over the past twenty years."[6]

Popular among his St. Louis constituents, Clay made clear his intention to defend the rights of people he believed lacked an adequate voice in the government, even in the face of a shifting political environment. "I don't represent all people," Clay declared. "I represent those who are in need of representation. I have no intention of representing those powerful interests who walk over the powerless people." Clay viewed his position in Congress as an opportunity to publicize issues that concerned African-American voters in his district and throughout the nation. "I didn't come to Congress with any fixed goal, but with a general direction I wanted move in," Clay said early in his career. "That is primarily to educate black people to the rights they should be enjoying and obviously aren't and to articulate for the general public the needs of black Americans."[7]

From his seat on the Education and Labor Committee, Representative Clay guided many initiatives through the House. For nearly two decades, he worked to revise the Hatch Act of 1939, which restricted the political activities of federal workers. In 1993, Clay's amendments to the Hatch Act permitting government employees to publicly endorse political candidates and to organize political fundraisers, among other activities that were previously prohibited, became law. "It's exhilarating to see your efforts finally rewarded," Clay remarked after President William J. Clinton signed the measure at a White House ceremony. Clay also spent several years promoting the Family and Medical Leave Act, which passed in early 1993, mandating that companies with more than 50 workers offer up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for employees to care for a newborn or attend to a family medical emergency. Clay called the Family and Medical Leave Act "landmark legislation, in the same category as legislation against child labor, on minimum wage, and occupational safety, and health." In 1996, he served as the floor manager for a bill to raise the federal minimum wage. "The American people came to know how unfair it was to relegate people at the bottom of the economic scale to a wage that is unlivable," he said shortly after the bill passed the House.[8]

Beginning in the mid-1980s, Clay used his position as chair of the Education and Labor Committee's Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations to support reforms to the nation's retirement income policies. Clay wanted to expand the number of workers covered by retirement plans and to protect employee retirement plans from possible economic upheaval. In 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Retirement Equity Act of 1984, which Clay initially introduced. The act expanded the opportunity to access retirement plans by lowering the age that employees could participate in a pension plan. The St. Louis Representative also sponsored revisions to pension law that were incorporated in the Tax Reform Act of 1986, including shortening the time for an employee to become fully vested and creating tax incentives for employers to cover more employees.[9]

In the 1980s and 1990s, as factories closed and good-paying jobs disappeared in cities across the North and Midwest, including St. Louis, Clay sought legislation to protect Americans from the disruption. Clay argued that "we as a society have an obligation not only to encourage economic growth but to seek to cushion the inevitable human dislocation it causes." Clay supported the mandatory notification of plant closings and worked to protect the negotiating rights of unions.[10]

From his position on the Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations and the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, Clay sponsored several bills that sought to secure or improve the collective bargaining rights of public sector employees. Government workers, at the federal, state, and local level, were not covered by the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, that guaranteed collective bargaining for most private sector workers. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy passed Executive Order 10988 that allowed for collective bargaining for federal employees, but state and local employee relations continued to be guided by state and local law. In 1973, Clay sponsored legislation to give all government workers the right to form unions and bargain collectively. In the late 1980s, Clay also sponsored legislation to expand collective bargaining rights to police and fire fighters. None of these bills advanced out of the House.[11]

In July 1981, Clay proposed legislation to provide new benefits to air traffic controllers, who were in the middle of contract negotiations, including a shortened workweek and new benefit and leave policies. A few weeks later, the air traffic controllers, represented by the Professional Air

Traffic Controllers Organization, went on strike. President Reagan made national news when he promptly fired the striking air traffic controllers. Later in his career, Clay introduced an amendment to the National Labor Relations Act and the Railway Labor Act to prevent employers from permanently replacing striking workers, including air traffic controllers, with new employees. The bill, Clay explained, would "further the economic security of the citizens of this country and promote the democratic values which serve to distinguish our country from all others." The House passed the Workplace Fairness Act in July 1991, but it did not get a vote in the Senate. Clay continued to sponsor similar legislation, but he was frustrated with the Clinton administration for what he perceived as a lackluster attempt to break a Senate filibuster that caused his bill to languish.[12]

As an advocate of improving the education of poor and working-class students and students of color, Clay worked to reduce class sizes, to increase the number of college grants for disadvantaged students, and to boost federal funding for historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU). In 1991, he introduced legislation to provide federal aid to help HBCUs receive private financing. A version of this bill was added to the Higher Education Amendments of 1992, signed by President George H.W. Bush in July 1992. "If America is to be prosperous and stay competitive, we must continue to improve educational opportunities for students of all ages," Clay commented later in the 1990s in response to a growing backlash in the Republican-controlled House against President Clinton's policies for improving public school education.[13]

Clay did not always support Democratic Party initiatives. He criticized the controversial North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), calling it "badly designed" and "fatally flawed." Concerned that NAFTA would undermine the well-being of American workers and weaken job protections, Clay attempted to convince his colleagues of the pitfalls of the bill. "Approval of this measure will increase the downward pressures on the wages of workers in the United States; nullify any movement toward greater labor-management cooperation; discourage efforts to improve the education and skills of low-wage workers; and exacerbate the inequitable distribution of income." With the backing of President Clinton, NAFTA passed the House on November 17, 1993, by a vote of 234 to 200.[14]

Clay's consistent support in his district enabled him to retain his seat despite a series of alleged ethical violations ranging from tax evasion to the misuse of congressional funds. Throughout his career, the Missouri Representative argued that he was the victim of an unfounded government "witch hunt" because of his race and his leadership role on civil rights. "Not many elected officials, black or white, have suffered harassment, humiliation, or intimidation to the degree and extent that I have," Clay remarked. He further contended that African-American leaders faced more scrutiny than their White counterparts. Clay believed the prosecutor in one case acted so unethically that the Missouri legislator introduced a resolution to the impeach the federal prosecutor.[15]

In the early 1990s, Clay became embroiled in a scandal involving the House "bank," an informal, institutional facility some Members used to deposit their congressional pay. The revelation of the bank's long-standing practice of allowing Representatives to write checks with insufficient funds caused a public outcry. Clay vehemently denied "abusing the system" when records revealed he was responsible for numerous overdrafts. "No rules were broken, and no public money was lost," he said. Clay's constituents remained loyal; both in the 1992 primary and in the general election, where he earned 68 percent of the vote.[16]

Moreover, despite several reapportionments that resulted in a growing number of conservative White voters in the outlying suburbs of his district—a consequence of St. Louis's declining population—Clay handily retained his congressional seat. His stiffest opposition for the overwhelmingly Democratic district usually emerged in the primaries. Active in local politics throughout his congressional career, Clay faced a series of challenges from African-American and White candidates alike in St. Louis's tumultuous political environment. Despite this steady opposition, Clay typically won the primaries with ease.[17]

In May 1999, Clay announced his decision to retire at the conclusion of the 106th Congress (1999–2001). "I will continue to speak loudly, boisterously, about the inequities in our society," Clay promised of his remaining time in the office. Clay's colleagues offered many tributes honoring his "brilliant career," ranging from his legislation on behalf of American workers to his commitment to increasing funding for education, especially for minority students. The longtime Representative also received praise for his 1992 book, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991*.[18]

In 2000, Clay's son, William Lacy Clay Jr., was elected to represent his father's former St. Louis district, making the Clays the second African-American father and son ever to serve in Congress (Harold E. Ford and Harold E. Ford Jr. were the first). In addition to *Just Permanent Interests,* Clay has published several other books including a political memoir, *A Political Voice at the Grass Root*s and *The Jefferson Bank Confrontation: The Struggle for Civil Rights in St. Louis*, a history of the protest that led to his jail sentence in the 1960s.

Manuscript Collection

Harris-Stowe State University, Henry Givens Administrative Building (St. Louis, MO). *Papers*: 1968–2000, amount unknown. The papers of William "Bill" Lacy Clay Sr. contain documents, papers, correspondence, and artifacts generated throughout the congressional career of Representative Clay.

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Louis Stokes

1925–2015

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1969–1999

Democrat from Ohio

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

In 1971, Louis Stokes of Ohio became the first Black Representative to sit on the powerful House Appropriations Committee, eventually rising to become chair of its Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies, where he helped direct billions of dollars in federal spending to vital government services. Over the course of his 30-year career in Congress, Stokes, who had spent part of his childhood in public housing in Cleveland before becoming Ohio's first Black Representative in 1969, used his influence to increase opportunities for millions of African Americans. "I'm going to keep on denouncing the inequities of this system, but I'm going to work within it. To go outside the system would be to deny myself—to deny my own existence. I've beaten the system. I've proved it can be done—so have a lot of others," Stokes said. "But the problem is that a black man has to be extra special to win in this system. Why should you have to be a super black to get someplace? That's what's wrong in the society. The ordinary black man doesn't have the same chance as the ordinary white man does."[1]

Louis Stokes was born on February 23, 1925, in Cleveland, Ohio, to Charles and Louise Cinthy Stokes. His parents, who met in Cleveland, were both from Georgia and moved to Ohio as part of the Great Migration, leaving the Jim Crow South for better opportunities in the industrial Midwest. His father worked in a laundromat and died when Louis was young. Stokes and his younger brother Carl were raised by their widowed mother, a domestic worker. The boys' maternal grandmother played a prominent role in their upbringing, tending to the children while their mother cleaned homes in wealthy White suburbs far from downtown Cleveland. Years later, Louise Stokes remembered that she had tried to instill in her children "the idea that work with your hands is the hard way of doing things. I told them over and over to learn to use their heads." Louis Stokes helped the family by shining shoes around his neighborhood and clerking at an Army/Navy store. He attended Cleveland's public schools and served as a personnel specialist in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1946. During World War II, he served in the segregated Army and spent most of his service in the segregated South. His experience during the war laid bare for Stokes the basic inequities facing African Americans—even those who were willing to sacrifice everything for their country. "The scars on my mind from the discrimination, the indignities, and the segregation which I was forced to accept while wearing the uniform of my country will

never be erased," Stokes told his colleagues on the House Floor. He returned home with an honorable discharge, taking jobs in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Department of the Treasury offices in Cleveland while attending college at night with the help of the GI Bill. He attended the Cleveland College of Western Reserve University from 1946 to 1948. Stokes eventually earned a law degree from the Cleveland Marshall School of Law in 1953 and opened a law firm with his brother. Stokes was married twice and had four children: Shelly, Chuck, Angela, and Lori.[2]

Stokes devoted himself to his law practice, taking on several civil rights cases—often working pro bono on behalf of poor clients and activists. He was an active participant in civic affairs, joining the Cleveland branch of the NAACP and the board of the Cleveland and Cuyahoga bar associations; he also chaired the Ohio State Bar Association's criminal justice committee. Stokes eventually served as vice president of the NAACP's Cleveland chapter and led its legal redress committee for five years. His brother, Carl, pursued a high-profile career in elective office, serving two terms in the Ohio legislature, and in 1967, he won election as mayor of Cleveland, becoming one of the first African Americans to lead a major U.S. city. "For a long time, I had very little interest in politics," Louis Stokes recalled. "Carl was the politician in the family and I left politics to him."[3]

Meanwhile, Louis Stokes enjoyed a growing reputation as a prominent Cleveland attorney. Working on behalf of the Cleveland NAACP, Stokes helped challenge the Ohio legislature's redistricting in 1965 that followed the Supreme Court's "one man, one vote" decisions. The state legislature had fragmented Cleveland's congressional districts, diluting Black voting strength. Stokes joined forces with Charles Lucas, a Black Republican, to challenge Ohio's district map. They lost their case in U.S. District Court, but based on Stokes's written appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed with the brief in 1967. From that decision followed the creation of Ohio's first majority-Black district. Later that year, in December 1967, Stokes made an oral argument before the U.S. Supreme Court in *Terry v. Ohio*, a precedent-setting case that defined the legality of police search and seizure procedures.[4]

At his brother Carl's behest, Louis Stokes made his first run for elective office in 1968. He sought to win the seat in the newly created congressional district that encompassed much of the east side of Cleveland—including Garfield Heights and Newburgh Heights—where African Americans accounted for 65 percent of the population. Stokes was hardly a typical newcomer to the political campaign. Carl put his political network at Louis's disposal. "I ran my brother Louis," Carl Stokes recalled, "and put behind him all the machinery that just elected me mayor." With Carl's help, Louis cofounded the Twenty-First Congressional District Caucus—a political organization that would serve as his base throughout his long congressional career. It provided the supporters, volunteers, and organizational structure that sustained Stokes in the absence of support of the local Democratic machine; it was a loyal cadre that would do everything, from stuffing envelopes and knocking on doors to holding an annual picnic that became a highlight of the community's annual calendar. With the local, White-controlled Democratic Party often opposed to the political ambitions of Black Clevelanders, the caucus helped develop independent Black political power in the city. Stokes also had the advantage of having support from leading Black institutions in the city. He won two vital endorsements: the support of the *Call & Post*, the influential local Black newspaper, and the backing of the vast majority of the local church ministers in the new district.[5]

Stokes won the primary with 41 percent of the vote—double the total of his closest competitor, Black city councilman Leo A. Jackson. Stokes faced minimal opposition in his 14 subsequent primaries. In 1976, White leaders in the local Democratic machine recruited one of the incumbent's former staffers to run against him. Stokes won by a landslide. In the 1968 general election, Stokes faced Republican Charles Lucas, his ally in the legal fight to create a majority-Black district. While their policies slightly differed, both supported a de-escalation of the Vietnam War; both opposed War on Crime rhetoric; and both supported policies to end urban poverty. Their major difference was partisan affiliation, and in a heavily Democratic district this gave Stokes a nearly insurmountable advantage. Stokes tied Lucas to Republican presidential candidate Richard M. Nixon and segregationist Republican Senator and Nixon supporter Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, arguing they would not promote legislation that advanced Black interests. Stokes prevailed with 75 percent of the vote. He won his subsequent 14 general elections by lopsided margins in the heavily Democratic district—taking as much as 88 percent of the vote. Gradually, reapportionment changed the

makeup of the state, eliminating five of Ohio's 24 House seats. Stokes's district expanded to include traditionally White communities like Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights. Reapportionment in the early 1990s brought in working-class White neighborhoods including Euclid in east Cleveland, but African-American residents still made up 59 percent of the vote in the district.[6]

As a first-term Representative, Stokes received assignments on the Education and Labor Committee and the Internal Security Committee (formerly the House Un-American Activities Committee). During his second term in the House, Stokes earned a seat on the powerful Appropriations Committee, with oversight of all federal spending bills. He was the first Black Representative to win a seat on the prestigious committee. This exclusive assignment required him to relinquish his other committee assignments. Years later, Stokes said of the Appropriations Committee, "It's the only committee to be on. All the rest is window dressing." During his 30-year career, Stokes also served on the Budget Committee from the 94th through the 96th Congress (1975–1981), the Select Committee on Assassinations in the 94th and the 95th Congresses (1975–1979), the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct from the 96th through the 98th Congress (1979–1985) and again in the 102nd Congress (1991–1993), the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in the 98th through the 100th Congress (1983–1989), and the Joint Select Committee to Investigate Covert Arms Transactions with Iran in the 100th Congress.[7]

Stokes eventually chaired the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee for Veterans, HUD, and Independent Agencies. As a "cardinal"—the name given to Appropriations subcommittee chairs—Stokes controlled more than $90 billion annually in federal money. Stokes was also one of just a handful of African-American Members to wield the gavel on multiple panels: the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (100th Congress), the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (97th and 98th Congresses, 102nd Congress), and the Select Committee on Assassinations (95th Congress).

In 1970, local politics back home in Ohio nearly cost Stokes his seat on the Appropriations Committee. In Cleveland, the Twenty-First District Caucus, headed by the Stokes brothers, was involved in several political disputes with the local, White-controlled Democratic Party. To prove their electoral strength in the face of a Democratic machine unwilling to share power, the Stokes-led caucus endorsed a handful of Republicans for local election. For Cleveland-based Democratic Congressman Charles Albert Vanik this was an act of political disloyalty. Vanik, a member of the Ways and Means Committee which, at the time served as Democrats' Committee on Committees, had the responsibility to choose the Ohio Representative to Appropriations following the death of Michael Joseph Kirwan. Initially, he had promised the seat to Stokes, but he revoked the offer unless Stokes resigned as chairman of the Twenty-First District Caucus. In response, the other eight Black Members of the House demanded that Vanik fulfill his promise to Stokes. Eventually Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma intervened, persuading Vanik to relent and support Stokes's placement on Appropriations.[8]

Few Black Members served in the House when Stokes arrived on Capitol Hill in 1969. Stokes was joined that year by first-term lawmakers Shirley Chisholm of New York and William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr. of Missouri, increasing the total number of Black Representatives to nine. Stokes believed that their elections would transform Black congressional politics. "We felt that it was a new day, and that many blacks who lacked representation in Congress would look to us as their representatives." As their number grew, Black legislators sought to create a power base in Congress. Stokes and Clay quickly developed an enduring friendship and became strong supporters of the formation of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), to promote economic, educational, and social issues important to African-American voters. In 1972, Stokes succeeded Charles C. Diggs Jr. as chair of the CBC and sought to narrow the focus of the caucus to what he believed CBC members could best accomplish in their role as legislators. "From the beginning of the CBC we were trying to be all things to all Black people, and I realized as chairman we needed to understand we were very limited in numbers, we were limited in resources." Under Stokes's guidance, the CBC focused on adding what he called "a black perspective" to legislation. To Stokes, this meant "being able to put an amendment on a bill in committee that you know will affect black people … that you know goes right to the heart of some of the kinds of problems confronted by black people."[9]

Stokes's position on Appropriations was the ideal place for the Cleveland Representative to advocate for funding that aided Black communities, both in his district and nationally. He earned a reputation as a congenial but

determined activist for issues related to Black America and the poor and working class more broadly. In his work in Appropriations, and as a member of the Budget Committee for six years, Stokes fought against cuts to social programs proponents said would balance the budget. Any reduction in federal spending, Stokes argued, would roll back gains made by Africans Americans in the 1960s and 1970s. He described conservative efforts to scale back school desegregation and affirmative action programs as a "full scale attack" on the priorities of Black communities. Despite efforts by the Ronald Reagan administration to curtail funding in 1981, Stokes successfully supported an additional $145 million in Title I grant funding for the education of poor children. "Services and resources necessary to quality in human life (must be) placed irrevocably ahead of weaponry and defense spending," Stokes explained.[10]

Stokes had a special interest in improving federal funding for health care, and he was particularly concerned with reducing what he called the "shocking disparities between the health of minority Americans and the health of white Americans." In the late 1970s, as a member of the Appropriations Committee, Stokes initially and reluctantly supported compromise language that banned federal funds for most abortions but opposed efforts to impose even more restrictive bans on federal funding, which he argued would disproportionately affect women living in poverty. In the Appropriations Subcommittee for Labor, Health, Education, and Welfare, Stokes was a persistent advocate for federal funding to establish Morehouse School of Medicine, which became the third medical school after Howard University College of Medicine and Meharry Medical College whose mission was specifically to train African-American doctors. In 1977, Stokes explained that a new medical school would help lessen the shortage of Black doctors and reduce the "disparity between black and white Americans in the doctor/patient ratio." He also was an early advocate of federal government intervention in the fight against the AIDS epidemic. In 1989, Stokes sponsored the Disadvantaged Minority Health Improvement Act of 1989, which among other things, created the Office of Minority Health and authorized the Department of Health and Human Services to fund programs and studies "with respect to the prevention and control among minority groups of diseases or other adverse health conditions." A year later, under new sponsorship, a similar bill passed the House and Senate and was signed into law. During debate on the House Floor, Stokes was recognized as "the father of the legislation for many, many years."[11]

During his career Stokes, rather than focus on funding local projects that gained favor with voters, maintained a national perspective in his Appropriations responsibilities. He once told a reporter: "I've had to analyze how I see my role in the House. I see myself as representing a broad minority constituency not only in the district, but nationally." And as subcommittee chair, Stokes discussed his desire to reduce the number of earmarks in the VA-HUD budget. Nevertheless, Stokes was attentive to local concerns; during more than two decades on the committee, Stokes steered hundreds of millions of federal dollars into projects in his home state, including funding for community colleges, public housing, economic development, infrastructure projects, and the funding of a NASA facility west of Cleveland.[12]

Democratic leaders frequently sought to capitalize on Stokes's reputation for trustworthiness and fairness—turning to him to lead high-profile committees and handle controversial national issues, as well as the occasional ethics scandal in the House. When Representative Henry B. González of Texas abruptly resigned as chair of the Select Committee on Assassinations after a dispute with staff and Members, Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts tapped Stokes to lead the panel, which was investigating the circumstances surrounding the deaths of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. During the hearings, Stokes made national news when he questioned King's assassin, James Earl Ray. In 1978, the committee filed 27 volumes of hearings and a final report that recommended administrative and legislative reforms regarding the investigation of political assassinations and prosecution of people involved in assassinations. While the panel found that the King and the Kennedy murders may have involved multiple people (James Earl Ray and Lee Harvey Oswald have traditionally been described as lone killers), it concluded there was no evidence to support assertions of a broad conspiracy involving domestic groups or foreign governments.[13]

Stokes's chairmanship of the Select Committee on Assassinations led to his appointment by Speaker O'Neill in 1981 as chairman of the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (often called the Ethics Committee). Initially hesitant to serve as chair, Stokes accepted the

position after O'Neill agreed to reform the committee structure. The Ohio Representative steered the panel through a turbulent period that included investigations of Members implicated in an FBI bribery sting, an investigation into the finances of the 1984 Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee Geraldine Ferraro, and a scandal that involved inappropriate relationships between lawmakers and House Pages. Stokes left the post in 1985 but returned to lead the Ethics Committee in early 1991. Only months after resuming the chair Stokes was linked to the House "bank" scandal; Stokes had written 551 overdrafts against an informal account maintained by the House Sergeant at Arms. Stokes did not participate in the Committee on Standards and Official Conduct's investigation into the overdraft scandal, and he did not return to the committee the following Congress.[14]

From his seat on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Stokes was a forceful critic of the Reagan administration's foreign policy. He gained national prominence as a member of the House Select Committee to Investigate Covert Arms Transactions with Iran—part of a joint investigative committee with the Senate—when he questioned Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North in 1987 about his role in funding anticommunist Nicaraguan Contras through weapons sales to Tehran. Stokes took exception to North's frequent insistence that he acted on the best interest of the United States, and that the congressional inquiry was counter to American interests abroad. At one juncture he reminded North, "I wore [the uniform] as proudly as you do, even when our government required black and white soldiers in the same Army to live, sleep, eat and travel separate and apart, while fighting and dying for our country."[15]

During the 1990s, Stokes's seniority made him an influential voice on the Appropriations Committee. In 1993, at the start of the 103rd Congress (1993–1995), he assumed the gavel as chair of the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, HUD, and Independent Agencies, which controlled one of the largest amounts of discretionary spending in the federal budget. In this position, Stokes prodded federal agencies to diversify their workforce and better serve their minority constituencies. Republicans praised him for his nonpartisan leadership of the subcommittee, but when the GOP won control of the House in the 1994 elections, and Stokes became the ranking member of the panel, he often found himself fighting Republican efforts to cut welfare programs, including public housing. In one committee meeting, Stokes noted that he and his brother, Carl, had grown up in public housing, and that without such assistance "[we] would be either in jail or dead, we'd be some kind of statistic."[16]

In January 1998, Stokes announced that he would retire from the House at the end of the 105th Congress (1997–1999), noting that he wanted to leave "without ever losing an election." He conceded that politics had lost some of its appeal since his brother Carl's death from cancer two years earlier. "We used to talk every day. We could run things by one another," he recalled. "We could think and strategize on political issues. I guess without him here, it really has taken away a lot of what I enjoy about politics. It's not the same." Among his proudest accomplishments as a Representative, Stokes cited both his ability to bring federal money to his district to address needs in housing and urban development and the opportunities that allowed him to set "historic precedents" as an African-American lawmaker in the House. "When I started this journey, I realized that I was the first black American ever to hold this position in this state," Stokes told a newspaper reporter. "I had to write the book … I was going to set a standard of excellence that would give any successor something to shoot for." As his replacement, Stokes supported Stephanie Tubbs Jones, an African-American judge and a former prosecutor who prevailed in the Democratic primary and easily won election to the House in 1998. After his congressional career, Louis Stokes resumed his work as a lawyer in Silver Spring, Maryland. Stokes died on August 18, 2015. He lay in state in Cleveland City Hall on August 24.[17]

Manuscript Collection

Western Reserve Historical Society (Cleveland, OH). *Scrapbooks*: 1948–1998, 10.2 linear feet. The collection consists of 31 volumes that span Louis Stokes's long career in the U.S. House of Representatives, mostly newspaper articles and clippings. The collection also includes awards, certificates, *Congressional Record* excerpts, editorials, invitations, magazine articles, newsletters, pamphlets, press releases, and programs. An external hard drive includes digital images of the volumes.

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George W. Collins

1925–1972

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1970–1972

Democrat from Illinois

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

A diligent but reserved public servant, George W. Collins served in Congress for two years before he died in office unexpectedly. He had entered politics at the local level in Chicago and leveraged his service to Mayor Richard J. Daley's Democratic political machine to win a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Despite a redistricted seat that many experts predicted would lead to his political demise, Collins won a second term in the House in 1972. Following his untimely death in a plane crash only a month after his re-election, Collins's widow, Cardiss Collins, filled his vacancy in the House and served on Capitol Hill for 24 years.

George Washington Collins was born in Chicago, Illinois, on March 5, 1925. The son of Wash and Leanna Collins, George Collins grew up during the Great Depression on the North Side of Chicago. After graduating from Waller High School, Collins entered the U.S. Army as a private in 1943. He served with the Engineers Corps in the South Pacific during World War II before being discharged as a sergeant in 1946. Upon returning to civilian life, Collins attended Northwestern University. In 1958, he married Cardiss Robertson. The couple had one son, Kevin.[1]

Collins gained his first political experience in the local Democratic organization headed by Chicago's powerful longtime mayor, Richard Daley. Appointed precinct captain in 1954 in Chicago's twenty-fourth ward on the West Side, Collins was responsible for helping residents register to vote and locate their polling location. Collins went on to serve as deputy sheriff of Cook County from 1958 to 1961. Collins ascended further in local government as secretary to veteran alderman Benjamin Lewis of the twenty-fourth ward and as an administrative assistant to the Chicago board of health. After Lewis's brutal murder in 1963—he was handcuffed and shot in his office—Collins succeeded his former supervisor as twenty-fourth ward alderman, a position he held until his election to Congress in 1970.[2]

When Representative Daniel John Ronan of Illinois died during his third term in Congress in August 1969, Collins decided to run for the vacant seat. As a faithful member of the Cook County Democratic organization, Collins received the backing of Mayor Daley in the special election for Ronan's unexpired term for the 91st Congress (1969–1971) and for the election for a full term in the 92nd Congress (1971–1973). The district was 42 percent Black and encompassed Chicago's predominantly Black West Side and two working-class White suburbs, Cicero and Berwyn (once labeled the "Selma of the North" by Martin Luther

King Jr.). The Democratic primary election in March 1970 received national media attention because both candidates were African American. During the campaign, Collins emphasized his political experience and his ability to bring improvements to the district because of his connections with city hall. He easily defeated his opponent Brenetta Howell, a community activist, social worker, and mother, with 86 percent of the vote. Collins campaigned mostly in Chicago, where he expected to receive the most support. Democratic organizers in his district told him to avoid Cicero and Berwyn. "They told me not to bring any of my literature out there," Collins said. "Just stay out and they would run me as a straight Democrat."[3]

Aided by the citywide influence of the Daley machine, Collins defeated Republican Alex Zabrosky, a White engineer and steel executive from Berwyn, in the general election, 56 to 44 percent. Collins won Chicago voters by an overwhelming margin, while Zabrosky carried the suburbs with a more modest majority. Collins's 1970 election also marked the first time two African Americans represented Chicago simultaneously in Congress; William L. Dawson had held a Chicago seat in the House since 1943.[4]

Sworn in on November 16, 1970, Collins was assigned to the Government Operations Committee as he finished out the remaining six weeks of the term and gained an additional assignment to the Public Works Committee at the beginning of the 92nd Congress. Vowing to serve his constituents "in any way," he made frequent trips home to Chicago to ensure that he kept in touch with voters. To advance the interests and concerns of his Chicago district, the Illinois Representative promoted a wide range of legislation to help low-income and underserved communities. Although Collins supported President Richard M. Nixon's proposals to provide a minimum federal payment to struggling families with children, they differed over how much aid to provide. Nixon's proposed Family Assistance Plan provided up to $3,720 in annual payments for a family of four. Collins and several of his colleagues in the newly formed Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) cosponsored the Adequate Income Act of 1971, which sought to guarantee a minimum income of $6,500 a year for a family of four. He also introduced a bill which would fund aid programs at higher rates to reduce the share covered by states.[5]

From his seat on the Government Operations Committee's Subcommittee on Legal and Monetary Affairs, Collins participated in an oversight hearing on the growing and largely unregulated tax preparation industry. "Many low- and moderate-income taxpayers are forced to pay what is in effect a surtax in order to find out how much tax they owe," Collins said. "This should not be." He introduced a bill requiring the U.S. Treasury Department to provide free tax preparation to people making under $10,000 a year. A separate Legal and Monetary Affairs Subcommittee hearing revealed that low-income homeowners in Detroit had been defrauded by real estate brokers who sold dilapidated houses using mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Back in Chicago, Collins met with officials from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and helped convince them to bar several real estate brokerages accused of selling substandard homes on the city's West Side from accessing FHA-backed mortgages.[6]

As a veteran of World War II, Collins cared deeply about the welfare of American soldiers, and he worked to end racial discrimination in the armed forces. In 1971, Collins and nine other members of the CBC toured American military bases to investigate widespread allegations of racial discrimination. He and his CBC colleagues conducted a series of hearings to investigate the complaints. Known as a Member who preferred to work quietly behind the scenes, Collins made only occasional speeches on the floor during his tenure in the House. When Vice President Spiro T. Agnew accused African-American Representatives of exaggerating the unequal and at times desperate circumstances of many African Americans living in the United States, several CBC members, including Collins, reproached him. "Mr. Agnew, take off those rose-colored glasses," Collins said. "When the black leadership talk about social, economic, and financial conditions of the black and the poor, it is very real."[7]

Despite a comfortable margin of victory in his initial election to office, Collins's bid for a second term in Congress was uncertain. As a result of a court-ordered redistricting plan for Illinois, Collins faced another product of the Chicago Democratic machine, Frank Annunzio, an Illinois Representative first elected in the 89th Congress (1965–1967), in a newly drawn district that was about 60 percent Black and extended east to west from the heart of downtown Chicago to the western portion of the city. Allegedly offered a position in the city administration in return for not opposing Annunzio, Collins defied the mayor and declared his intention to enter the upcoming election.

Relations between the Chicago Democratic machine and the city's African-American political leadership had deteriorated in the aftermath of a split between the mayor and South Side Representative Ralph H. Metcalfe after Metcalfe accused Daley of devoting insufficient attention to the issue of police brutality in Chicago's Black neighborhoods. In response to Collins's decision to run, Daley, hoping to maintain his relationship with other Black lawmakers, convinced Annunzio to run for an open congressional seat in a district largely composed of various ethnic European groups, including Polish and German Americans that was vacated by Representative Roman Conrad Pucinski. In the Democratic primary in March 1972, Collins handily defeated Rhea Mojica Hammer, an associate producer of a Spanish-language television program. In the general election, Collins trounced his Republican opponent, real estate broker Thomas Lento with 83 percent of the vote.[8]

On December 8, 1972, a month after his re-election to a second term, Collins died in an airplane crash that killed 43 of the 61 passengers and crew onboard a flight from Washington, DC, to Chicago, where Collins had planned to organize a Christmas party for children in his district. Representative Louis Stokes of Ohio, the chair of the CBC, eulogized his colleague: "The legacy which George Collins leaves is an abiding devotion to the people. … Those of us who served with him saw his strength and balance. The legacy he left all of us is that we should renew our devotion to mankind." Shortly after Collins's death, his widow, Cardiss, won the special election to fill his vacant congressional seat, becoming the only African-American woman to succeed her husband in Congress.[9]

Manuscript Collection

University of Illinois at Chicago, Special Collections and University Archives Department, Richard J. Daley Library (Chicago, IL). *Papers*: 1970–1996, 287 linear feet. The Cardiss Collins papers include the papers of Collins's husband, former U.S. Representative George W. Collins.

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2 Grayson Mitchell, "Rep. George Collins (D.–Ill.) Killed in Chicago Jet Crash," 10 December 1972, *Washington Post*: B4; "Crash Takes Life of Congressman"; Bruce A. Ragsdale and Joel D. Treese, *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1989* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1990): 23–24; "Precinct Methods," 23 January 1963, *Chicago Tribune*: 18; "Ben Lewis' Aid Named as 24th Ward Leader," 4 July 1963, *Chicago Tribune*: 7; "Aid of Lewis Named to Fill His Ward Job," 9 July 1963, *Chicago Tribune*: 14.

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4 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," https://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/; *Almanac of American Politics, 1972*: 205–206; Becky Beaupre, "Alex J. Zabrosky, Steel Company Exec.," 4 February 2001, *Chicago Sun Time*s: 62; *Almanac of American Politics, 1972*: 205. William L. Dawson died just six days after Collins's election. Representative Ralph H. Metcalfe succeeded Dawson in the House, thereby keeping two African Americans representing Chicago.

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9 "Rep. George Collins (D.–Ill.) Killed in Chicago Jet Crash"; John Kifner, "Toll in Chicago Crash Rises to 45 as 2 More Bodies Are Found," 10 December 1972, *New York Times*: 77; Christopher, *Black Americans in Congress*: 267–268; Stephens, "Collins Lauded at Rites."

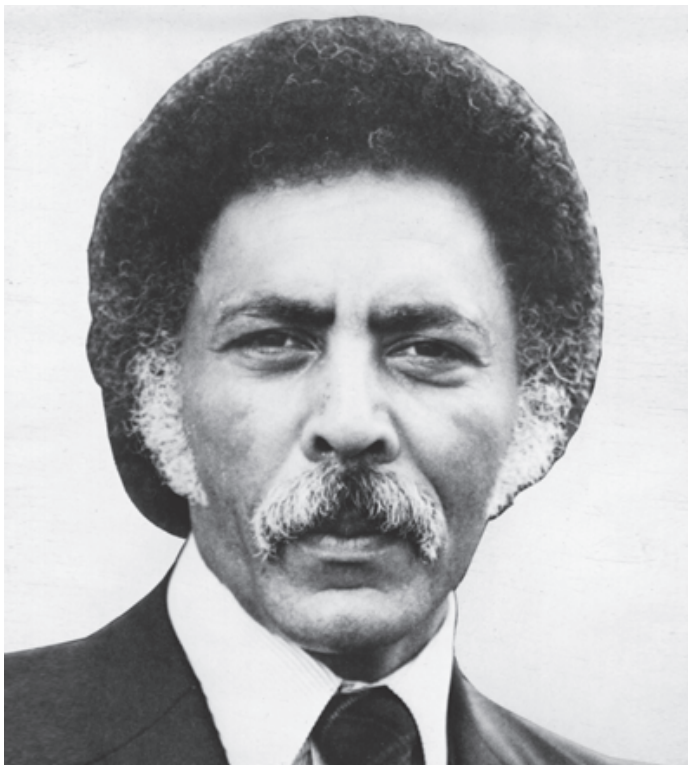
Ronald V. Dellums

1935–2018

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1971–1998

Democrat from California



Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Born and raised in the northern California district where both the free speech movement and the Black Panthers were founded in the 1960s, Ronald V. Dellums embraced the activist spirit of the region, taking his seat in Congress in 1971 as an outspoken critic of the Vietnam War. Throughout his nearly three-decade career in the U.S. House of Representatives, Dellums remained true to his antiwar principles, consistently working to reduce the military budget. Initially a politician who believed more could be accomplished outside the establishment, the California Representative eventually chaired two standing committees and became adept at building congressional coalitions to achieve his legislative agenda. "It was never about personal battles," Dellums recalled upon his retirement from the House. "It has always been about ideas. Individuals come and go, but ideas must ultimately transcend, and ideas must ultimately prevail."[1]

Ronald Vernie Dellums was born on November 24, 1935, in Oakland, California, to Verney Dellums, a Pullman porter and a longshoreman, and Willa Dellums, a beautician and government clerk. His uncle, C.L. Dellums—a leader in the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union—served as a role model and as a political influence. Ron Dellums attended McClymonds High School before graduating from Oakland Technical High School in 1953. After a short stint at San Francisco City College in California, he enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1954. Dellums faced racial discrimination from senior officers and was denied admission into Officer Candidate School despite having the highest test scores in his training battalion. While in the service, Dellums married Arthurine Bethea, and they had two children: Michael and Pam. He and Arthurine later divorced. In 1956, at the end of his two-year enlistment in the Marines, he enrolled at Oakland City College where he earned an associate's degree in 1958. He continued his education at San Francisco State College, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1960. Two years later, he was awarded a master's degree in social work from the University of California at Berkeley. In 1962, he married Leola "Roscoe" Higgs, an attorney; the couple had a daughter, Piper, and two sons, Erik and Brandy. They divorced in 1999, and Dellums married Cynthia Lewis in 2000.[2]

After earning his master's degree, Dellums worked in a series of social work jobs that promoted his involvement with community affairs and local politics in the Bay Area. He began his career as a psychiatric social worker for the

California department of mental hygiene from 1962 to 1964. Between 1964 and 1968, Dellums directed several area programs, including the Bayview Community Center in San Francisco, Hunter's Point Youth Opportunity Council, and the San Francisco Economic Opportunity Council. He later found employment at San Francisco State College and the University of California at Berkeley as a lecturer and worked as a consultant for programs across the country funded by federal War on Poverty legislation passed in the mid-1960s. At the urging of friends and members of the community, Dellums made his first foray into politics when he sought and won a seat on the Berkeley city council in 1967. Asked to describe his approach to politics, he responded, "I'd listen and try to understand what people had to say, but then I'd act on my own beliefs. That's the only way anyone should run for office."[3]

While serving on the council, Dellums mounted a campaign in 1970 for the congressional seat encompassing Berkeley, a university town, and nearby Oakland, one of the most populated and impoverished cities in California. The district was majority White, about 40 percent Black, and home to Asian and Hispanic communities. In the Democratic primary, Dellums squared off against the six-term incumbent Jeffery Cohelan. Running on an antiwar platform, he criticized Cohelan's late opposition to America's involvement in Vietnam. As a 34-year-old, African-American candidate, Dellums connected with the anti-establishment current that was prevalent in Berkeley and Oakland. He also made a concerted effort to appeal to voters across the diverse district. "[I] entered the campaign for Congress with a fervent belief that beyond ethnicity, it would be possible to bring women, labor, seniors, youths, and the poor into a coalition of the 'powerless,'" he later recollected. Dellums's grassroots campaigning ultimately helped him upset Cohelan. After garnering 55 percent of the vote, Dellums remarked that the race "brought up the new versus the old generation issue, war versus peace, open versus closed politics."[4]

The November general election attracted national attention even though Dellums was virtually assured of winning the heavily Democratic district. Vice President Spiro T. Agnew campaigned against Dellums, a vocal critic of the Richard M. Nixon administration's policy in Vietnam, calling him an "out-and-out radical" and an "enthusiastic backer of the Black Panthers." The Vice President's visit to the district did little to slow Dellums's momentum and, in fact, seemed to generate more publicity for his campaign. "One person I forgot to thank," Dellums quipped in his victory speech, "my public relations agent, Spiro T. Agnew." Dellums defeated Republican candidate John Healy, a 25-year-old accountant, and third-party candidate Sarah Scahill with 57 percent of the vote to become one of the first African Americans to represent a majority-White congressional district.[5]

Dellums served on four standing committees during his House career. He served on the Committee on the District of Columbia from his first term in the 92nd Congress (1971–1973) until the 103rd Congress (1993–1995), after which the panel was terminated and folded into the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight. Dellums was also a long-serving Member of the Armed Services Committee, from the 93rd Congress through the 105th Congress (1973–1999). Dellums chaired the District of Columbia Committee for 14 years, from the 96th Congress to the 102nd Congress (1979–1993) and led the Armed Services Committee in the 103rd Congress. At various points in his career, he also held assignments on the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Post Office and Civil Service Committee, the Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

With his election to the 92nd Congress, Dellums quickly made headlines in his district and around the country. Unlike many first-term Members of Congress, who chose to learn the ropes quietly, Dellums adopted an active and vocal approach, introducing more than 200 pieces of legislation. Groomed in the radical tradition of his district, he displayed little patience for congressional customs and the inner workings of the institution. After the House refused to conduct an investigation on possible American war crimes in Vietnam, he spearheaded a plan to hold his own ad hoc hearings—an unusual and controversial move that provoked scorn from some longtime politicians but drew considerable media attention. "I am not going to back away from being called a radical," Dellums remarked defiantly during his first term. "If being an advocate of peace, justice, and humanity toward all human beings is radical, then I'm glad to be called a radical." Dellums was one of the 13 Members who founded the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) in 1971 and served as chair during the 101st Congress (1989–1991). Through the caucus, he convened informal hearings on racism in the military, an issue of personal importance because of the discrimination he encountered in the Marines.[6]

During the next 15 years, the California Representative led the charge against apartheid by sponsoring numerous bills to end U.S. support for the South African government and participating in a series of peaceful demonstrations—which, on one occasion, led to his arrest at the South African Embassy in Washington, DC. During the 92nd Congress, he introduced a measure to prohibit American companies from operating in South Africa. The first legislator to propose such severe restrictions against the apartheid regime, Dellums, alongside the CBC, waged a long, intense battle to highlight the discriminatory practices of South Africa. "We are serious in our determination that positive action be taken soon to terminate U.S. business relationships with apartheid and repression in Africa," Dellums affirmed on behalf of the CBC in 1972. On June 18, 1986, Dellums achieved one of his most significant legislative triumphs. During debate on a bill sponsored by William H. Gray III of Pennsylvania to impose moderate sanctions on South Africa, Dellums proposed a floor amendment to replace the bill's contents with a more stringent measure calling for a near-total U.S. trade embargo and divestment by American companies of their holdings in the African nation. In an unusual turn of events, the opposition chose not to request a recorded roll call vote after a voice vote passed Dellums's amendment. Dellums expressed shock at how easily the bill had passed as well as profound satisfaction: "This is the highest point of my political life, the most significant and personally rewarding," Dellums rejoiced. "It's been a long journey to this moment." Although the Senate ultimately passed a more moderate measure than the House, the two chambers united to easily override a veto by President Ronald Reagan. The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act became law on October 2, 1986.[7]

One of Dellums's long-standing goals as a Representative was to slash the military budget. In the 93rd Congress (1973–1975) he sought a seat on the powerful Armed Services Committee. While this decision may have seemed out of character for an antiwar politician, Dellums explained that if he could become well versed in military affairs, he would be better able to argue the merits of his views on military oversight. "People sent me [to Congress] … to challenge the insanity of war and to raise my voice in the name of peace," he later reflected. The CBC drafted a letter to House Democratic leadership on Dellums's behalf, but the chair of Armed Services, Felix Edward Hébert of Louisiana, and the Committee on Committees opposed the appointment of an outspoken war critic. Refusing to yield, the CBC, led by Louis Stokes of Ohio and William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr. of Missouri, won the backing of Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma to place Dellums on the panel. He became the first African-American lawmaker to serve on the committee. Dellums was appointed to the committee at the same time as Patricia Scott Schroeder of Colorado, another critic of the Vietnam War. In retaliation, Hébert set aside one seat for the two newcomers at the first Armed Services meeting in 1973. Dellums and Schroeder decided to not allow Hébert to see that his antics bothered them, so they sat side by side on the one chair the entire first committee meeting. "Let's not give these guys the luxury of knowing they can get under our skin," Dellums urged Schroeder. "Let's sit here and share this chair as if it's the most normal thing in the world."[8]

In 1982, Dellums sponsored an alternative defense authorization bill that slashed military spending by more than $50 billion. The measure would become part of the CBC's alternative budget, which the caucus proposed annually and that generally called for higher spending on domestic social programs along with cuts to defense spending. Though the resolution received little support outside the CBC, Dellums considered it one of his most meaningful legislative endeavors. "We will be back next year and the year after that and the year after that until we right the wrongs in this madness," he asserted. Dellums remained steady in his opposition to most U.S. military operations, including the American invasion of Grenada in 1983 and the Persian Gulf War in 1991, but he did support some peacekeeping efforts in Africa and the Caribbean. His unswerving commitment to reduce military funding became a hallmark of his House career.[9]

Throughout his tenure on Armed Services, Dellums challenged the Cold War era arms race. On several occasions, he worked with Republican John Richard Kasich of Ohio to stop production of the B-2 bomber. Dellums also opposed the development of the MX missile—a land-based intercontinental ballistic missile that could deploy multiple nuclear warheads midair, each of which could be programmed to hit a different target. Beginning in 1977, he regularly offered amendments to block funding for the research, development, and procurement of nuclear missiles generally. Dellums asserted that the MX program would be too costly and divert funding from economically depressed cities, while also increasing the likelihood of a

deadly nuclear war. "The planet is in extraordinary danger from the potential of a nuclear holocaust and … the MX missile is one of the outward manifestations of that potential danger," he warned.[10]

Dellums rose through the ranks of Armed Services and chaired several subcommittees before making history as the panel's first African-American chair in 1993. Initially, some Members wondered how Dellums's record of opposition to defense spending would influence his decisions as chair. But Dellums ultimately let the committee work its will. His panel's first defense authorization bill allowed a continued ban on gays in the military, a pay increase for the armed services, and a boost in anti-missile funding—all despite his objections. "I'm not here to be dictatorial," he said. "My job as chair is to maintain the integrity of the process."[11]

Dellums chaired the Armed Services Committee during the early post-Cold War era and oversaw broad reductions to the defense budget. The 1995 defense authorization reduced federal defense spending to 18 percent of the total budget, approaching levels not seen since before World War II. "The Berlin Wall is down. The cold war is over," Dellums said on the House Floor. "We now have to think … in very radically different ways." In late 1993, after a battle between U.S. servicemembers and a Somali militia in Mogadishu left a dozen American troops dead, Dellums held a hearing to examine the U.S. military's role in the UN peacekeeping mission in the African nation. Amid congressional criticism of the Clinton administration for the casualties, Dellums cosponsored a measure with Lee Herbert Hamilton of Indiana, chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, that would have required the President to regularly consult with a designated group of Members of Congress regarding military activities abroad. Paradoxically, Dellums's advocacy for peace led him to support U.S. military intervention in Bosnia to stop the genocide against the country's Muslim population. Dellums served as chair for one term before becoming the ranking member in 1995 when the Republicans took control of the House for the first time in 40 years.[12]

As longtime chair of the Committee on the District of Columbia, Dellums examined a range of issues affecting the nation's capital, such as transportation, schools, housing, and public safety. Envisioning himself as "an advocate, not an overseer, of District affairs," Dellums prioritized statehood for Washington, DC. During his first term, he introduced a bill to call for a referendum in which District residents could vote on statehood. Under Dellums's leadership, the District of Columbia Committee approved statehood legislation twice—in 1987 and 1992. "There should be no colonies in a democracy, and the District of Columbia continues to be a colony," Dellums said. A public transportation advocate, Dellums sponsored legislation to fund the completion of the capital city's 103-mile Metrorail system. To improve the city's finances, Dellums oversaw passage of a bill that increased the federal government's annual payment to the District government, which was provided to offset the cost of the federal government's presence in the city. The legislation also set a formula for future federal payments, avoiding the need for negotiations each year.[13]

Dellums rarely faced serious re-election challenges, winning more than 60 percent of the vote throughout most of his House career. His popularity among his constituents, especially in the urban areas of Oakland and Berkeley, allowed him to escape the fate of several Members who lost their congressional seats after they were linked to the House "bank" scandal in the 102nd Congress (1991–1993). By some accounts Dellums had more than 800 overdrafts on what was an informal bank account overseen by House officials. In addition to strong support from his constituents, reapportionment in 1992 gave him a safer district; with the elimination of the outlying suburbs, Dellums captured more than 70 percent of the vote in his three remaining contests.[14]

In February 1998, the 14-term Representative shocked his colleagues when he resigned from the House, citing personal reasons. In his farewell speech, Dellums reflected on his long and successful career: "To get up every day and put on your uniform and put on your tie and march to the floor of Congress knowing that, in your hands, in that card, in your very being, you have life and death in your hands, it is an incredible thing." After Congress, Dellums worked as a lobbyist, starting his own firm in Washington, DC. In 2006, he returned to the political spotlight when he was elected mayor of Oakland at age 70. "You just asked an old guy to come out of the comfort zone and play one more game," Dellums observed. Ronald Dellums died on July 30, 2018, at his home in Washington, DC.[15]

Manuscript Collection

African American Museum and Library at Oakland (Oakland, CA). *Papers*: ca. 1971–1999, 432 linear feet. The Ronald V. Dellums Congressional Papers consists of records, artifacts, memorabilia, and related items produced during his career as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. These materials include committee files; hearing and report books; correspondence with constituents and colleagues;

sponsored or cosponsored bills; personal files; staff files; press releases and other publications; and subject reference files. Significant items include original copies of correspondence and memoranda from House colleagues, staff, and constituents, original copies of invitations to various functions, and photographs. Also included are memorabilia from Representative Dellums's life (awards, plaques, certificates, congressional and military commendations), video recordings of House Floor tributes upon his retirement from Congress, and notes and reports from his work overseeing U.S. Department of Defense budgets. The collection finding aid is available in the repository and online.

Notes

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3 "Dellums, Ronald V.," *Current Biography, 1993* (New York: H.W. Wilson and Company, 1993): 152; Dellums and Halterman, *Lying Down with the Lions*: 41.

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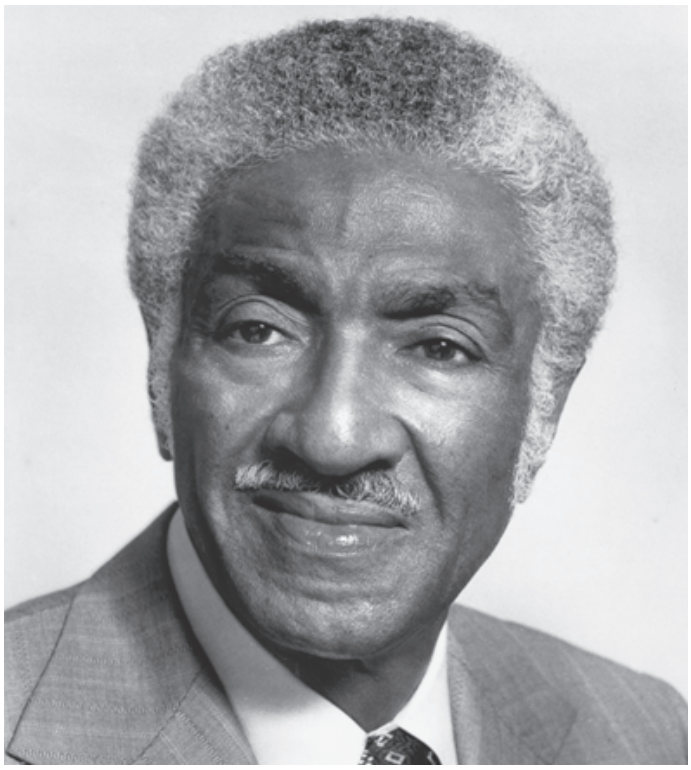
Ralph H. Metcalfe

1910–1978

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1971–1978

Democrat from Illinois



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In 1970, Ralph H. Metcalfe won election to the U.S. House of Representatives from a South Side Chicago district with a storied history of electing Black lawmakers to Congress. A former Olympic champion, Metcalfe rose through the ranks of the Chicago Democratic political machine before winning a seat in Congress. Over time, Metcalfe broke with the city's powerful machine, risking his career but winning him loyal support among his constituents and his Black colleagues in the House. "I'm willing to pay whatever political consequences I have to, but frankly, I don't think there will be any," he remarked. On Capitol Hill, Metcalfe was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), where he joined his colleagues in putting "the interests of black people first—above all else, and that means even going against our party or our political leaders if black interests don't coincide with their positions."[1]

Ralph Harold Metcalfe was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on May 29, 1910, to Marie Attaway, a seamstress, and Clarence Metcalfe, a stockyard worker. As a child, Metcalfe moved with his family to the South Side of Chicago in search of "better opportunities for education and so that we would not come up in a climate of suffering the indignities that black people were suffering during that particular time," he recalled. After graduating from Chicago's Tilden Technical School in 1930, Metcalfe attended Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he received a bachelor's degree in 1936. He completed his education by earning a master's degree in physical education from the University of Southern California in 1939.[2]

During high school, Metcalfe began a long and successful career as a track athlete. "I was told by my coach that as a black person I'd have to put daylight between me and my nearest competitor," Metcalfe recalled. "I forced myself to train harder so I could put that daylight behind me." Metcalfe became a household name in the United States when he medaled in the 1932 and 1936 Olympics. During the infamous Berlin Games of 1936, Metcalfe and Jesse Owens led the American 400-meter relay team to a world record, much to the dismay of German spectators, especially Adolf Hitler, who expected the German athletes to showcase their superiority by sweeping the track and field events. "There was talk of boycotting Hitler and his doctrine of Nordic supremacy," Metcalfe recalled. "But we thought we would make a contribution. There were more negroes on that team than any previous United States Olympic team. We won and it stuck a pin in the balloon of Hitler's doctrine."[3]

Following his retirement from competitive sports in 1936, Metcalfe taught political science and coached track at Xavier University in New Orleans until 1942. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Army Transportation Corps from 1943 to 1945, where he rose to the rank of first lieutenant and earned the Legion of Merit for his physical education training program. When he returned to Chicago after the war, Metcalfe got to know William L. Dawson, a House Member representing Chicago's South Side and a powerful figure in the city's political machine headed by Mayor Richard J. Daley. Dawson took Metcalfe under his political wing and arranged for his selection as director of the civil rights department of the Chicago commission on human relations, a position he held until 1949. Metcalfe then headed the Illinois state athletic commission from 1949 to 1952. In 1947, he married Madalynne Fay Young. The couple had one child, Ralph Metcalfe Jr.[4]

With Dawson's backing, Metcalfe won election as Chicago's third ward Democratic committeeman in 1952. He quickly worked his way up the ranks of Daley's political machine. After becoming an alderman in 1955, he was later selected by Daley to serve as president pro tempore of the Chicago city council.[5]

When Representative Dawson decided to retire from the House in 1970, he chose Metcalfe to replace him. In the Democratic primary, Metcalfe faced A.A. "Sammy" Rayner, an alderman and an undertaker, who blamed the predominantly White power structure of Chicago for the problems facing many African Americans in the city. Metcalfe defended his ties to Daley's machine, reassuring voters that the political organization "is structured in a businesslike manner to get things done and, therefore, it is an asset." Gang violence was a central issue in the campaign—Rayner viewed gangs as a byproduct of the region's economic distress, while Metcalfe ran on a "law and order" platform committed to eradicating violent crime. With the backing of Daley and Dawson, Metcalfe defeated Rayner and went on to win election to the House easily, with 91 percent of the vote against Republican Jayne Jennings, a schoolteacher, a few days before Dawson's death in November 1970. After reapportionment in 1972, Metcalfe's district remained predominantly Black, but its boundaries shifted to include a largely White neighborhood surrounding the University of Chicago. Metcalfe faced little Republican opposition in each of his three re-elections.[6]

During his first term in the House, Metcalfe was assigned to the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries and also became the first African-American Representative to sit on the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee; he served on both committees throughout his tenure. He served on the Post Office and Civil Service Committee during the 95th Congress (1977–1979). In 1971, Metcalfe was one of 13 founding members of the CBC.

In the House, Metcalfe focused on assisting his South Side district. Prior to arriving on Capitol Hill, Metcalfe had led the Chicago city council's housing committee, and he used that experience to shape bills in Congress. Metcalfe introduced legislation to increase the availability of home improvement loans and federal housing programs to benefit his constituents. He also advocated funding for security measures to protect residents living in public housing and fought to eliminate "redlining," the discriminatory practice of withholding funds for home loans and insurance from low-income and predominately Black neighborhoods. "It is essential that individuals living in our cities, or individuals of low or moderate income residing in rural areas, be provided with the means and incentive to remain in their communities," he argued. As a strong proponent of gun control, Metcalfe introduced legislation to prohibit the manufacture and sale of handguns. "The people in the First Congressional District of Illinois know the terror of uncontrolled handguns," Metcalfe said. "They know that the only solution to this epidemic of violent handgun crime is an absolute ban on the manufacture, sale, and distribution of these weapons throughout the United States."[7]

As a CBC member, Metcalfe was selected to voice the caucus's position on health care policy. He chaired the CBC's health subcommittee (later called the CBC Health Braintrust) and helped sponsor a national conference in 1971 to address the needs of African Americans. To reduce racial disparities, Metcalfe favored efforts to increase the number of Black doctors, the expansion of services covered under Medicare, and the protection of funding for sickle-cell anemia research. He criticized the President Richard M. Nixon administration for failing to support legislation aimed at improving health services for those most in need and exhorted his House colleagues to "design a health care package which adequately meets the needs and aspirations of poor and minority groups." Metcalfe delivered the CBC's official response to President Gerald R. Ford's 1976 State of the Union Address, in which he criticized the President's

defense spending and urged greater federal investment into domestic employment and public health programs.[8]

Metcalfe's actions to combat discrimination in American society extended to his work on the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, where he drafted provisions in the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act designed to end persistent civil rights violations in the industry. Drawing on his own athletic career, Metcalfe cosponsored the Amateur Sports Act of 1978, which provided federal funding for American Olympic athletes and increased opportunities for minorities, women, and disabled Americans to participate in amateur sports.[9]

Although his legislative agenda focused heavily on domestic issues, Metcalfe had an interest in U.S. foreign policy as well. As chair of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Subcommittee on the Panama Canal, he held hearings on the governance of the U.S.-controlled Panama Canal Zone. Metcalfe made several visits to Central America and oversaw the enforcement of laws providing equal employment opportunity, improving access to housing, and merging the U.S. and Panamanian school systems. He supported the 1977 treaties that eventually ceded American control of the canal and the surrounding territory to Panama, but he also introduced a resolution that American territory and property in the Canal Zone be disposed of through legislative action. After his death, Congress addressed Metcalfe's concerns with the Panama Canal Act of 1979.[10]

Metcalfe joined his African-American colleagues in the House in calling for the United States to intervene decisively in African affairs, particularly in South Africa. In 1975, he introduced a resolution urging the U.S. government to end all means of support for the apartheid South African government until the end of its government-sanctioned policy of racial discrimination. In a speech on the House Floor, Metcalfe praised the goals of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), an intergovernmental body of independent African nations, which had outlined its support for diplomatic or military intervention to end apartheid in South Africa and White-minority rule in Rhodesia. Metcalfe warned his colleagues that the U.S. must "reassess its own policies in southern Africa" and embrace the OAU's priorities to avoid violent conflict in the region.[11]

In 1972, Metcalfe made national news when he publicly broke with Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, his friend and political ally, and the city's Democratic machine over the issue of police brutality against the Black community. The fissure emerged in late 1971, when Metcalfe opposed the party's decision to endorse Cook County State's Attorney Edward Hanrahan for re-election. Hanrahan had authorized the controversial 1969 police raid that resulted in the murder of Black Panther leader Fred Hampton. In a major blow to Daley's machine, Metcalfe supported Hanrahan's Republican opponent, who won the 1972 election. In the spring of 1972, two Black dentists, one of whom chaired a citizens' committee to support Metcalfe's congressional campaigns, were harassed and arrested by police over alleged traffic violations. Metcalfe spoke out against police brutality and invited Daley to come to the South Side for a meeting on police reform. When Daley refused, Metcalfe pulled his support for the machine and sought broad, systematic reforms in Chicago. "The Mayor doesn't understand what happens to black men on the streets of Chicago, and probably never will," Metcalfe declared. In Washington, he testified before the House Select Committee on Crime to highlight the Chicago Police Department's discriminatory hiring practices and lack of diversity. Back at home, he organized a panel to conduct public hearings for victims and witnesses of police brutality and created a citizens' group to lobby the city government for reforms. "I've always spoken out for my people—for what I believe but in the past I've tried to remedy situations on a case-by-case basis, trying to work within the party or official government circles," Metcalfe said. "In the brutality field, however, I can't just stand by while each and every case is investigated. I want the system changed."[12]

When Metcalfe backed William Singer, Daley's opponent in the 1975 Chicago mayoral primary, Daley retaliated by depriving Metcalfe of the ability to hand out patronage positions. He also orchestrated a challenge against Metcalfe in the 1976 Democratic primary for Chicago's South Side congressional seat. In his fight against what he termed a "political dictatorship" in Chicago, Metcalfe asserted, "There is only one issue. The right of black people to choose their own public officials and not have them picked from downtown." With the CBC's support, he handily defeated Daley aide Erwin A. France with more than 70 percent of the vote in the bitterly contested primary. "This is a people's victory," Metcalfe declared.[13]

With the death of Mayor Daley in December of 1976, tensions eased between Metcalfe and the Chicago machine. But Metcalfe continued to call attention to racial discrimination in Chicago while attempting to improve police services for his constituents residing in impoverished

neighborhoods. "If we want to strengthen and rebuild Chicago, then we must help the people who are sticking it out in the inner city to survive." During the 94th and 95th Congresses (1975–1979), Metcalfe worked to commemorate the accomplishments of African Americans, sponsoring the first resolutions to make February Black History Month.[14]

Metcalfe died suddenly of an apparent heart attack on October 10, 1978, only a month before his almost certain re-election to a fifth term. Representative Louis Stokes of Ohio praised Metcalfe's dedication to his district and the CBC. "Ralph was a man who had the ability to inspire people," Stokes recalled. "The type of individual who, as you came to know him, you would have to admire."[15]

Manuscript Collections

The Metcalfe Collection (Chicago, IL). *Papers*: ca. 1932–1977, amount unknown. The collection documents Ralph H. Metcalfe's athletic pursuits, including his Olympic track victories, his public service including his tenure with the U.S. House of Representatives, and his involvement with the civil rights movement. The collection has not yet been processed.

Chicago Public Library, Woodson Regional Library, Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature (Chicago, IL). *Papers*: 1934–1975, one linear foot. The papers include Ralph H. Metcalfe's early correspondence, awards, photographs, official documents, and memorabilia.

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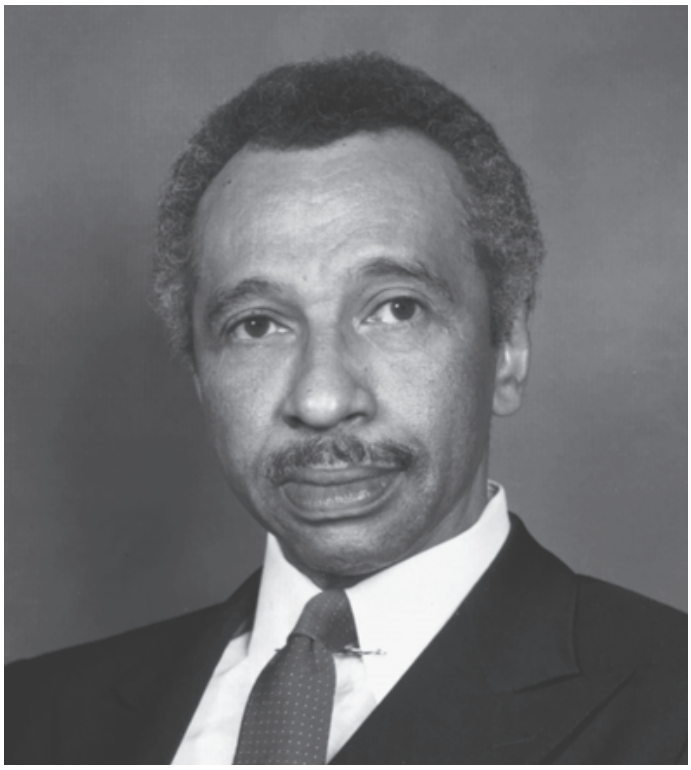
Parren J. Mitchell

1922–2007

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1971–1987

Democrat from Maryland



Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

A lifelong activist who carried on his family's tradition of public service, Parren J. Mitchell won election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1970, becoming the first African-American Representative from Maryland. Mitchell was outspoken and unafraid to denounce racial and economic inequality, and he earned a reputation in the House as a dedicated and successful legislator. Mitchell's passion and determination to extend the gains made in the civil rights movement guided his eight terms in the House, especially his work to increase opportunities for minority-owned businesses. "If you believe in fighting racism, you make a commitment for the rest of your life," Mitchell said in a speech honoring Martin Luther King Jr. in 1989. "There's no getting off that train. You can't say, 'I've put five years in fighting racism and now I am finished.' No, you are not finished. Our job is to fight it every day, to continue to shove it down and when it rises up to shove it down even harder."[1]

Parren James Mitchell was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on April 29, 1922, to Clarence Mitchell Sr., a waiter, and Elsie Davis Mitchell, a homemaker. His older brother, Clarence Mitchell Jr., became an influential and longtime lobbyist for the NAACP, serving as director of the Washington bureau from 1950 to 1978. In their youth, Clarence and Parren participated in demonstrations protesting segregation in Baltimore. This early activism fostered Parren Mitchell's interest in promoting civil rights, which shaped much of his future legislative career. Mitchell's political family tree also extended to his sister-in-law, Juanita Jackson Mitchell, who led the Maryland office of the NAACP, and a nephew who served in the Maryland state senate. After graduating from Douglass High School in Baltimore in 1940, Parren Mitchell joined the U.S. Army in 1942, serving as a commissioned officer and a company commander with the all-Black 92nd Infantry Division. Mitchell earned a Purple Heart during his World War II service in Italy. Following his discharge from the armed services in 1946, Mitchell used funding from the 1944 GI Bill of Rights to enroll in Morgan State College in Baltimore. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1950, he sued the University of Maryland for admission to the main campus in College Park. Mitchell became the school's first African-American graduate student, earning a master's degree in sociology in 1952. After becoming an instructor of sociology at Morgan State, from 1953 to 1954, Mitchell supervised probation work for the Baltimore city circuit court from 1954 to 1957. He was appointed

the executive secretary of the Maryland commission on interracial problems and relations in 1963 and oversaw the implementation of the state's new public accommodations law. Mitchell also led the Baltimore community action agency, an antipoverty program, from 1965 to 1968, before returning to Morgan State as a professor of sociology and the assistant director of its Urban Affairs Institute. In 1969, Mitchell became president of Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc., a nonprofit fair housing organization. Mitchell never married and had no children.[2]

Persuaded by local community groups to run for elective office, Mitchell believed he could best help poor and working-class residents of Baltimore from Congress. Consequently, he entered the 1968 Democratic primary for the Maryland House seat that encompassed much of west Baltimore and its bordering suburbs. During the campaign, Mitchell accused the 16-year incumbent and chair of the Committee on House Administration, Samuel Friedel, of losing touch with his constituents, saying, "He doesn't understand the dimensions of the urban crisis, the mood of the people." Mitchell ultimately lost his first election by 5,000 votes. Two years later, he again challenged Friedel in the Democratic primary. Mitchell countered his opponent's political experience by accentuating his family's civil rights activism and deep roots in Baltimore. In a grassroots campaign that focused on his anti-Vietnam War stance and record of community outreach, Mitchell won by a razor-thin margin of 38 votes. He went on to defeat his Republican opponent, lawyer Peter Parker, in the overwhelmingly Democratic district, becoming the first African-American lawmaker to represent the state of Maryland in Congress. Mitchell, whose district was roughly 40 percent Black, was one of the first Black Members to win election in a minority-Black congressional district. After his Maryland district was redrawn in 1971, Mitchell rarely encountered any serious opposition in his bids for re-election. The new district was majority-Black and encompassed much of Baltimore's Black population; most of the White suburbs had been drawn into other districts.[3]

After being sworn in as a Member of the 92nd Congress (1971–1973) on January 3, 1971, Mitchell was assigned to the Banking and Currency Committee and the Select Committee on Small Business. He served on the Banking and Currency Committee for the duration of his House tenure. In the 94th Congress (1975–1977), when the House turned the Select Committee on Small Business into the permanent Small Business Committee, Mitchell took a seat on the panel. Mitchell stepped down from the Small Business Committee on May 15, 1975, to serve on the Budget Committee. He returned to the Small Business Committee at the beginning of the 96th Congress (1979–1981) and served there until his retirement at the end of the 99th Congress (1985–1987). Mitchell was chair of the committee from 1981 until 1987. Mitchell served on the House Budget Committee from the 93rd to the 95th Congresses (1973–1979). In the 94th and 95th Congresses (1975–1979), Mitchell chaired the Budget Committee's Task Force (that committee's term for a subcommittee) on Human Resources. Mitchell also sat on two joint committees: Defense Production and Economic.

As one of the 12 founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), Mitchell played a significant role in crafting the identity of the new organization in the 1970s. Early on, Mitchell organized a network of Black experts in business and economics to help develop and disseminate ideas to influence legislation. The CBC soon adopted this model—which the caucus called "brain trusts"—in other fields, including health, education, and international affairs. Dubbed the "Little General" for his ability to assemble and organize caucus members with little notice, Mitchell chaired the CBC during the 95th Congress (1977–1979). Representative Cardiss Collins of Illinois noted that Mitchell's efficient and selfless leadership helped lend credibility to the organization. "Parren works hard to make sure each person gets his share of spotlight. He's forging the caucus forward because now we are acting rather than reacting," she said.[4]

Mitchell was known as an outspoken and passionate legislator. One of the first to call for President Richard M. Nixon's resignation after the Watergate scandal, he routinely criticized the White House, under both Republican and Democratic presidencies, during his eight terms in the House for what he perceived as a willingness to neglect the needs of poor Americans. Mitchell's frustration with the slow pace of the advancement of rights for Black Americans sometimes led the press to characterize him as an angry, "unhappy warrior." "I know I get emotional. But it's been more than 20 years from 1954," Mitchell said. "How many people have been jailed, lost, and now you see those gains unraveling."[5]

Early in his congressional career, Mitchell was a vocal opponent of the Vietnam War. "I was part of that breed that came in with some clear-cut objectives," he said. "I

was part of that movement in the country that was deeply dissatisfied with the way the political process was working, and deeply dissatisfied with involvement in Vietnam." In his first term, Mitchell often spoke against the war from the House Floor. The Maryland Representative joined nine of his congressional colleagues on a national tour in 1971 criticizing American foreign policy in Southeast Asia. He and 22 Members of Congress also sought to publicize the antiwar movement by drafting a lawsuit demanding an end to the American bombing and mining of North Vietnamese ports. Mitchell and a handful of Representatives sought to force President Nixon to end a bombing campaign in Cambodia, declaring the action unconstitutional because Congress had not authorized it. Frustrated that money appropriated to subsidize the war in Vietnam drained funding for social programs, Mitchell balked at a Nixon administration proposal to provide North Vietnam financial aid.[6]

Mitchell's primary legislative focus took shape while he was a member, and later chair, of the Small Business Committee. Throughout his congressional career, he directed a series of measures promoting minority-owned businesses and small firms. In 1976 and 1977, Mitchell sponsored the Minority Enterprise Act to expand the Small Business Administration's efforts to fund and support racial minority-owned businesses. Much of Mitchell's bill was eventually included as amendments to the Small Business Act and Small Business Investment Act of 1958, signed into law by President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter in 1978. In 1977, the Maryland Representative attached an amendment to a $4 billion public works program that required state and local governments applying for federal contracts to reserve 10 percent of its funding for minority-owned companies. He later described this effort as "my proudest congressional accomplishment."[7]

Mitchell achieved another major legislative triumph in 1982 when he guided an amendment to a highway funding bill through the House to set aside funding for small businesses whose owners were economically disadvantaged. Despite criticism that his affirmative action proposals constituted a quota system, Mitchell and other proponents maintained that such legislation was necessary to balance the economic scales. As chair of the Small Business Committee, Mitchell criticized the Ronald Reagan administration for what he said were efforts to avoid complying with regulations ensuring that federal contract set-asides were available to "socially and economically disadvantaged businesses." In hearings over federal contracts to small businesses, Mitchell frequently expressed his frustration with the lack of progress in contract procurement for racial minority-owned businesses. "You've got a law, and the law needs to be enforced," he explained at one hearing.[8]

Throughout his career in Congress, Mitchell consistently opposed increased funding for the military, and worked to redirect that money to programs at home. In 1977, for instance, he proposed transferring $6.5 billion from the military budget to domestic programs in the U.S. "I have no great fear of the Soviet Union or China," Mitchell remarked. "If this democracy should ever fail it will come from within because of the enormous disparity between the rich and the poor." As CBC chair, Mitchell lashed out against the Carter administration's proposed 1979 fiscal year budget, which allotted a 3 percent hike for military spending. Calling the boost "unconscionable," Mitchell added, "I certainly feel duped in so far as the military budget is concerned." In 1980, Mitchell sponsored a CBC-backed amendment as an alternative to the House Budget Committee's legislation to balance the budget. Mitchell's unsuccessful proposal would have increased funding for domestic programs for education, job training, and income assistance. According to the Maryland Representative, the measure put forth by the Budget Committee plunged "an economic dagger into the bodies of the poor, the nearly poor and the elderly." The following year, the CBC launched its own comprehensive substitute budget—an initiative put forth annually by the caucus—emphasizing the need for increased funding for domestic programs.[9]

Mitchell's legislative agenda stretched beyond national borders. He advocated for strong economic sanctions against South Africa's apartheid government and was frustrated when the House passed a watered-down version of a bill to limit trade between the United States and South Africa. "You can't compromise with total evil. You can't take a mid-point on immorality," he said. Mitchell also urged U.S. participation in the African Development Fund, an international financial institution that focused on providing money for basic infrastructure projects in Africa. "A brief cost-analysis will show that the benefits received by the United States far exceeds [*sic*] the cost of participating in the African Development Fund, mainly because African countries serve the commercial interests of the United States," Mitchell informed his House colleagues.[10]

Mitchell took great pride in his determination to stay in close contact with his constituents—he commuted to the Capitol every day from Baltimore to ensure he remained accessible to voters. "I know it sounds hokey, but I enjoy all this work," Mitchell admitted. "When you're asked to take this job, you're asked to perform a public service. And that's what I think I do."[11]

Mitchell's announcement in September 1985 that he would not seek re-election to a ninth term came as a surprise to many. "I'm concerned about what you might call the heart of Congress," he said, adding, "Those who are poor are generally treated with contempt. The concerns of minorities are no longer the concerns of this Congress. … It's a step backward." Mitchell denied speculation that his retirement resulted from an ideological rift with the Democratic Party, saying he was leaving because "16 years is a long time to be here." In 1986, he accepted an invitation from Maryland Attorney General Stephen H. Sachs to join his gubernatorial ticket as a candidate for state lieutenant governor; he and Sachs ultimately lost the Democratic nomination. After his retirement from Congress, Mitchell continued to promote economic opportunities for minorities and founded the Minority Business Legal Defense and Education Fund, a private organization that offered legal assistance to the minority business community.[12]

Mitchell died on May 28, 2007, in Baltimore, Maryland, of complications from pneumonia. Mitchell, Representative Elijah E. Cummings of Maryland said, was "a true servant leader, never concerning himself about fame or fortune but, rather, devoting himself entirely to uplifting the people he represented."[13]

Notes

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4 William L. Clay, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991* (New York: Amistad Press, Inc., 1992): 269; Trescott, "'One of God's Angry Men.'"

5 Trescott, "'One of God's Angry Men'"; Sugawara, "Retiring Mitchell Still Has Passion for Justice."

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Charles B. Rangel

1930–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1971–2017

Democrat from New York

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Known in his Harlem, New York, district as the "Lion of Lenox Avenue," Representative Charles B. Rangel rose to become the first African-American chair of the powerful Ways and Means Committee. With a House career that spanned 46 years, Rangel—whose safe Democratic district provided him with seniority and stature on Capitol Hill—was one of the longest-serving Members of Congress in American history. Rangel helped found the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) in 1971 and was a staunch defender of urban economic development and international trade. His assignment to the Ways and Means Committee gave him considerable influence over America's tax policy, and he shaped major bills that ranged from anti-drug policies to health care reform. Upon his retirement, Rangel reflected on his long career, noting, "Thank God I never had to decide between doing the right thing or being defeated at the polls."[1]

Charles Bernard Rangel was born on June 11, 1930, in Harlem, New York City, to Blanche Wharton and Ralph Rangel. The second of three children, he was raised by his mother and his maternal grandfather, Charles Wharton. From 1948 to 1952, Rangel served in the U.S. Army and was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart for his service in the Korean War when he led 40 U.S. soldiers from behind enemy lines despite being wounded himself. After returning to New York and graduating from DeWitt Clinton High School, Rangel earned a bachelor's degree from New York University under the GI bill in 1957. Three years later, he earned a law degree at St. John's University Law School. In 1963, U.S. Attorney General Robert Francis Kennedy appointed him Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York. He later served as an aide to the speaker of the New York assembly and was counsel for the President's Commission to Revise the Draft Laws in 1966. In March 1965, Rangel participated in the famous voting rights march led by Martin Luther King Jr. from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. In 1966, he won a seat in the New York state assembly, representing central Harlem. During his time in Albany, he forged a bipartisan friendship with Republican Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller. On July 26, 1964, Rangel married the former Alma Carter. They raised two children: Steven and Alicia.[2]

As an assemblyman, Rangel supported Harlem's renowned but embattled U.S. Representative Adam Clayton Powell Jr., whom he considered a mentor. Powell had represented the majority-Black district—encompassing Harlem, East Harlem, the Upper West Side, Washington

Heights, and Inwood—since its creation in 1944. But by 1968, Powell's extended vacations to the Bahamas amid multiple congressional ethics investigations had begun to swing public opinion against him. In 1970, Rangel, rather than get dragged down by Powell's eroding reputation, challenged the incumbent in the Democratic primary, partially out of "plain political survival." Backed by New York Mayor and former Congressman John Vliet Lindsay, Rangel made the race about giving Harlem "effective representation" which he claimed it had lost under Powell's inconsistent tenure. Rangel defeated Powell by only 150 votes in the primary that featured three other candidates, and he later prevailed in the general election. Until ethical issues arose in the late 2000s, Rangel rarely faced primary threats. One of the few close contests was in 1994 when Adam Clayton Powell IV, the son of Rangel's predecessor, won 33 percent of the vote against Rangel. In his subsequent 22 re-elections, Rangel won the general contest by lopsided majorities of 80 percent or more.[3]

During his first term in the 92nd Congress (1971–1973), Rangel was assigned seats on the Public Works Committee, the Science and Astronautics Committee, and the Select Committee on Crime. In May 1972, Rangel left Public Works to join the Judiciary Committee. In the 93rd Congress (1973–1975), Rangel left Science and Astronautics for the Committee on the District of Columbia and maintained his seats on the Judiciary and Select Committee on Crime, which soon disbanded. In the 94th Congress (1975–1977), Rangel left both Judiciary and District of Columbia to join the powerful Ways and Means Committee. From the moment Rangel arrived for the opening of the 92nd Congress, Mayor Lindsay and Governor Rockefeller lobbied Wilbur Daigh Mills of Arkansas, the chair of Ways and Means, to give the new Representative a seat on the committee. It took four years, but Rangel became the first African-American member of Ways and Means; 32 years later, in 2007, he became the first African-American chair of the prestigious panel. He was also assigned to the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control in 1975 and chaired that panel from the 98th through the 102nd Congress (1983–1993). From the 104th through the 114th Congress (1995–2017), Rangel served on the Joint Committee on Taxation, which he chaired during the 110th and 111th Congresses (2007–2011).

Rangel was a founding member of the CBC in 1971 and served as the group's chairman in the 94th Congress. Missouri Representative William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr. credited Rangel with creating the group's name because the New York representative explained, "protecting black interests was the primary reason most of us were elected." As chairman of the CBC in 1974, Rangel focused the caucus on pursuing shared legislative goals specific to poor, urban, and African-American constituents.[4]

Rangel's short tenure on the Judiciary Committee coincided with that panel's impeachment hearings of President Richard M. Nixon. Even prior to the Watergate scandal, Rangel had been a cosponsor on a House resolution introduced by John Conyers Jr. of Michigan that called for President Nixon's impeachment because of his escalation of the Vietnam War. During the Watergate hearings, Rangel often intently focused on the executive branch's efforts to withhold evidence. Years after the hearings, Rangel remembered that "as a former prosecutor I was focused on what I saw as a clear path to his conviction." In late July 1974, the Judiciary Committee approved three articles of impeachment, but President Nixon resigned before the House could vote. Rangel came away from the impeachment hearings believing the episode was a "test of the strength of the Constitution … that when this or any other President violates his sacred oath of office, the people are not left hapless, that they can, through the House of Representatives charge him, and his guilt will finally be decided in the hall of the U.S. Senate."[5]

As a member of the Select Committee on Crime, Rangel participated in congressional investigations into the Attica Prison uprising in New York in September 1971 that resulted in 43 deaths. Less than a week after the riot, Rangel and other members of the committee visited the prison and spent two days interviewing staff, prison officials, and inmates. Rangel and the committee later held hearings on "prisons in turmoil," focusing on Attica and other recent prison riots. During the hearings, Rangel expressed concern over conditions in the prisons and the mistreatment of prisoners, and he dismissed suggestions by prison officials that the riots were just the product of revolutionaries. For Rangel, prison riots and other examples of prison failures were especially salient to communities of color because prison populations were, he noted, "disproportionately black and Hispanic." "If the prisons fail, we can expect the present revolving door system of crime and punishment to continue," he wrote in a newspaper column in 1973.[6]

Early in his tenure, Rangel worked to combat drug trafficking and drug use because, he explained, everyday

issues like health, education, and housing had "been corrupted either physically or morally by the drug addiction problem." In the 1980s, amid the rise in the use of cocaine and crack cocaine, especially, Rangel, then the chair of the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, gained wide-spread recognition for his anti-drug legislative work. In 1989, *Ebony* called Rangel "the Front-line General in the War on Drugs." Despite a shared interest in the "war on drugs," Rangel publicly criticized the Ronald Reagan administration for not doing enough to prevent illegal drugs from coming into the United States. "The administration claims to have declared a war on drugs, but when was the last time we heard our commander in chief talk about the international drug problem?" Rangel asked. Rangel was a vocal supporter of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, which increased funding for local and state police, interdiction, educational programs, and treatment and rehabilitation. During the floor debate, Rangel successfully passed an amendment that increased funding for law enforcement. "We cannot wage a narcotics war with peashooters," he lectured to his colleagues.[7]

Despite his advocacy for the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act, Rangel soon opposed one particularly controversial aspect of the law. The law included new mandatory minimum sentencing requirements that set widely divergent penalties for the possession of 5 grams of crack cocaine versus 500 grams of cocaine. The mandatory minimums led to an increase in prison population of often non-violent, low-level users and dealers. Activists, scholars, and lawmakers soon argued that the 100-to-1 sentencing disparity had racially discriminatory outcomes as Black offenders more often would be convicted for possession of crack cocaine than cocaine. In 1993, Rangel introduced legislation to end the sentencing disparity. "It's clearly unconstitutional and way out of line to be such a different level of crime for basically the same type of drug. No one can justify the 100-to-1 ratio. Clearly we are talking about different neighborhoods, not different crimes," he said. In 2010, Rangel supported the passage of the Fair Sentencing Act that reduced the disparity from 100-to-1 to 18-to-1.[8]

On Ways and Means, Rangel worked to open economic opportunities for minority groups and poor Americans. Rangel authored the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit in the Tax Reform Act of 1986, a measure that significantly boosted affordable housing in the United States. In 1993, he authored a provision providing tax breaks to promote investments and jobs in low-income neighborhoods called "empowerment zones." Tax benefits for enterprise and empowerment zones were later included in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993. And as part of an economic stimulus bill to rejuvenate the U.S. economy after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Rangel extended unemployment benefits for workers in industries affected by the attacks, especially those in New York's travel and hospitality businesses.[9]

In 1987, Rangel contributed to the demise of apartheid in South Africa as the author of the "Rangel amendment" which denied certain tax benefits to U.S. corporations working there. As U.S. businesses pulled out of South Africa, the country's revenue streams dried up and the apartheid government grew weaker before collapsing amid democratic reforms. Thirteen years later, Rangel worked to open commerce by supporting the African Growth and Opportunity Act, providing new incentives for U.S. companies to begin trading with sub-Saharan Africa. He also helped found the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program through Howard University in 2002, which aimed to significantly increase the representation of minorities in the U.S. Foreign Service.[10]

In 2003, Rangel introduced legislation to reinstate the military draft, revisiting an issue he had worked on before his first House campaign. "How can anyone support the war and not support the draft?" he asked amid U.S. conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. He argued repeatedly that the government relied on disadvantaged and working-class enlistees to fight its battles. His bills to reinstate the draft never gained much traction; in fact, Rangel voted against his own bill in 2004, sending it down to defeat 402 to 2. Rangel insisted he did so to protest "procedural finagling." Rangel also sponsored the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax (HEART) Act to provide financial help to America's veterans. The bill became law on June 17, 2008.[11]

During his long tenure on the Ways and Means Committee, Rangel frequently clashed with its chairmen, Democrats and Republicans alike. On several occasions, Rangel and the CBC quarreled with Ways and Means Chair Daniel David Rostenkowski of Illinois due to Rostenkowski's relationship with Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, who often pushed for policies the caucus viewed as discriminatory and detrimental to African Americans. At a time when Members rarely went toe-to-toe with the powerful Rostenkowski, Rangel's independence and

his role as the CBC's voice in conference committee deliberations often put him at odds with the chair. Shortly after Republicans gained the majority in 1995, Rangel sparred with new Chair William Reynolds Archer Jr. of Texas over the elimination of tax preferences for minorities in the media.[12]

For his part, Rangel liked to stress that he found common ground on tax reform with Republican leadership despite rising partisanship in the House. But things were different under Archer's successor, William Marshall Thomas of California. Tensions boiled over late on a Friday in July 2003, when Thomas's attempt to rush a bill through committee led Rangel to sequester his fellow Democrats in the committee library to read the bill. Insults flew and Thomas's staff, intending to remove Rangel and his colleagues from the room, summoned the Capitol Police and the House Sergeant at Arms. Tensions subsided and the committee left shortly afterward for floor business, but the fallout proved rancorous and led Thomas to issue an apology.[13]

Rangel ascended to the chairmanship of Ways and Means when Democrats regained the majority in 2007. As chair, Rangel worked in a bipartisan manner with ranking members James O. McCrery III of Louisiana and, later, David Lee Camp of Michigan to pass small business tax breaks, relief for Hurricane Katrina victims, and a ban on genetic discrimination for health insurance. He also worked alongside the George W. Bush administration to extend the Andean Trade Preference Act with Peru that reinforced labor and environmental standards. Though many in the CBC expected Rangel to push legislation important to the caucus (including hearings on reparations, gun control legislation, and action against racial profiling), Rangel insisted his position also made him accountable to constituents outside the CBC. Rangel did address one important concern of the CBC with legislation pumping funds into the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina. But he made it clear that the legislation was about economic fairness. "When God hit with Katrina, she didn't give a damn about color at all," he said, "but she sure did give the poor people a hard road to travel."[14]

Rangel was chair of Ways and Means as the financial crisis of 2008 unfolded, and the global economy went into a recession. In January 2009, Rangel led the committee markup of the sections of the House's economic recovery legislation. The committee's bill included tax relief for parents and for businesses to depreciate their equipment and prevent layoffs, and funds to invest in education and technology training. Rangel also served on the conference committee that resolved differences between the House and Senate versions of the final bill. In February 2009, President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.[15]

As Ways and Means chair, Rangel shepherded early versions of the Democrats' landmark health care bill, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. For Rangel, reforming the health care system was part of a career-long effort to challenge income inequality. "We have a moral obligation in terms of the number of people who have lost their homes, gone into bankruptcy as a result of the costs of providing health care," Rangel explained during a committee hearing. On July 17, 2009, he presided over a 16-hour markup that passed 23 to 18. Rangel joined his fellow Democrats in turning back 32 amendments from Republicans seeking to strip key provisions from the bill including the employer mandate and the tax surcharge. As the bill made its way through Congress, Rangel remained involved in high-level meetings with party leaders.[16]

Rangel's chairmanship was ultimately undone by a string of ethics violations. Reports emerged in July 2008 that Rangel had accepted rent-controlled apartments in New York at values far below market. In response, Rangel requested an investigation of his personal finances. But additional allegations arose of improper use of his office resources and failure to disclose or pay taxes on $500,000 worth of assets in the Dominican Republic. Rangel fought these claims every step of the way. The investigation dragged on for two election cycles and lasted through the Democrats' high-profile push to reform the country's health care system. "I don't want anyone to feel embarrassed, awkward," he would later insist in a speech on the House Floor in 2010. "Hey, if I was you, I may want me to go away, too. I am not going away. I am here." Nevertheless, Rangel took a leave of absence as chair just days before President Barack Obama signed the signature health care bill into law in March 2010. The leave of absence became permanent. The Ethics Committee found him in violation of 11 of 13 charges and voted 9 to 1 to recommend that the House censure the Harlem Congressman. After the committee referred the matter to the full House in December 2010, Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California presided over the debate, with Zoe Lofgren of California prosecuting and Robert C. "Bobby" Scott of Virginia acting as Rangel's defense. The House

voted 333 to 79 to censure Rangel, making him the twenty-third Representative to be censured in House history and the first in nearly 30 years.[17]

Rangel's ethical difficulties bolstered primary opponents. He faced five challengers in 2010 and lost the backing of the *New York Times* editorial board. Nevertheless, he captured 51 percent in the primary; his closest rival Adam Clayton Powell IV won 24 percent. Redistricting radically changed Rangel's old Harlem district in 2012, making it majority Hispanic for the first time. That year, Adriano J. Espaillat, a Dominican American and state assemblyman, challenged Rangel in the Democratic primary, which Rangel ultimately won 44 percent to Espaillat's 42 percent. Espaillat unsuccessfully challenged the results in the state supreme court. Rangel's vote total improved in a 2014 primary rematch, as he secured 47 percent of the vote against Espaillat's 44 percent. Rangel cruised to victory in each general election.[18]

In the wake of his censure and with Democrats having lost the House majority in 2010, Rangel's influence waned. He remained an *ex officio* member of Ways and Means in the 112th Congress (2011–2013) before regaining full status in the 113th Congress (2013–2015). He served as ranking member on the Subcommittees on Trade in the 113th and 114th Congresses (2013–2017).[19]

Rangel retired following the conclusion of the 114th Congress (2015–2017). Voting in the Democratic primary in June 2016, he told reporters, "This is the first time in 46 years I couldn't find my name."[20]

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Walter E. Fauntroy

1933–

DELEGATE

1971–1991

Democrat from the District of Columbia

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Walter E. Fauntroy's leadership in the civil rights movement paved the way for his two-decade career as the District of Columbia's Delegate in the U.S. House of Representatives. While he worked on many issues during his tenure, Fauntroy dedicated much of his career to attaining home rule, the right of the city's residents to elect a municipal government, for Washington, DC, and to ending apartheid in South Africa. During his time in the House, Fauntroy embraced coalition building to accomplish his legislative goals, finding strength in numbers. Paraphrasing former President Theodore Roosevelt, Fauntroy once remarked that "when you carry a big stick you can walk quietly."[1]

Walter Edward Fauntroy was born in Washington, DC, on February 6, 1933, the fourth of seven children of Ethel, a part-time seamstress, and William Fauntroy, a clerk with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Fauntroy graduated from Dunbar High School in Washington, DC, in 1952 and earned a bachelor's degree from Virginia Union University in Richmond in 1955. On August 3, 1957, Fauntroy married Dorothy Simms. The couple had a son, Marvin, and later adopted a baby girl, Melissa Alice. After receiving a bachelor of divinity degree from Yale Divinity School in 1958, Fauntroy became pastor of Washington's New Bethel Baptist Church.[2]

Through his ministry and his devotion to improving conditions for African Americans, Fauntroy, like many other Black clerics of the era, became actively involved in the civil rights movement. Impressed by the DC minister's organizational skills and commitment to the movement, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. appointed Fauntroy director of the Washington bureau of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1961. While with the SCLC, Fauntroy helped coordinate the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963. In preparation for the Washington march, Fauntroy and other leading civil rights activists, such as future Representative Andrew Young of Georgia, assisted King with his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. He also urged President Lyndon B. Johnson and Congress to pass civil rights legislation. President Johnson appointed Fauntroy vice chairman of the 1966 White House Conference "To Fulfill These Rights," which focused on recommendations for improving the lives of African Americans after the passage of the landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act. Fauntroy also helped organize the 1965 march in Alabama from Selma to Montgomery and was national coordinator of the 1968 Poor People's Campaign, which

sought to draw attention to poverty and force government action to combat it.[3]

Fauntroy centered many of his civil rights, antipoverty, and neighborhood revitalization activities on the nation's capital. He was the founder and director of the Shaw Urban Renewal Project, an economic initiative to restore the historic African-American neighborhood of Washington, DC, where Fauntroy grew up. He served as vice chair of the District of Columbia city council from 1967 until he resigned in 1969 to spend time with the Model Inner City Community Organization, a neighborhood planning agency he founded with other Washington ministers.[4]

The following year, Fauntroy's political fortunes advanced when Congress passed the District of Columbia Delegate Act. The legislation reinstituted a nonvoting Delegate to represent the nation's capital in the U.S. House, a position last held by Norton Parker Chipman from 1871 to 1875. In the crowded January 1971 Democratic primary, Fauntroy ran on a platform of instituting home rule for the District, eliminating job discrimination for African Americans, and providing federally funded day care. With the help of campaign appearances by Coretta Scott King, the widow of Martin Luther King Jr., and strong support from local Black churches, Fauntroy orchestrated a surprising upset over six opponents, garnering 44 percent of the vote. Overwhelmingly elected in the March 1971 general election with a 59 percent majority, Fauntroy routed his closest opponent, Republican John Nevius, a White lawyer with a strong civil rights record, to become the first African American to represent the District of Columbia in Congress. "It was an exhilarating experience in learning the ways of politics, in being Americans for the first time," Fauntroy exclaimed after his victory. Fauntroy won by comfortable margins in his subsequent re-election bids in the predominantly African-American and Democratic city.[5]

Fauntroy's first committee assignment was to the Committee on the District of Columbia, where he served for his entire House career and led several subcommittees, including the Subcommittee on Fiscal Affairs and Health. He served on the Banking and Currency Committee (later named the Banking, Currency, and Housing Committee and subsequently the Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs Committee) from the 93rd to the 101st Congresses (1973–1991) and chaired three of its subcommittees, including the influential Domestic Monetary Policy Subcommittee. He also served on the Select Committee on Assassinations during the 94th and 95th Congresses (1975–1979), chairing its Subcommittee on the Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. From the 98th to the 101st Congress (1983–1991), he served on the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control.[6]

Sworn in to the U.S. House on April 19, 1971, Delegate Fauntroy immediately began work on accomplishing his major campaign promise: achieving home rule for the District of Columbia. As a Delegate, Fauntroy was unable to vote on the House Floor, but he could serve on and vote in committee and introduce legislation. Fauntroy used his seat on the District of Columbia Committee to build support among his colleagues and in the capital for a measure that would provide self-government for District residents. Those who lived in the capital city had lacked the ability to choose their own municipal government since portions of the District of Columbia Organic Act—a Reconstruction-era law that consolidated the District of Columbia into a territorial government—were repealed in 1874. "The election of a congressman is but the first step toward full self-government for the District," Fauntroy commented. "The immediate next step is that of organizing the people for political action to make their congressman effective." Only a few months after becoming a Delegate, Fauntroy introduced a home rule bill to expand the independence of the District by removing some of Congress's oversight authority and allowing DC residents to select their own local officials. He also ran as a "favorite-son" candidate in the 1972 DC Democratic presidential primary in a symbolic move to draw attention to home rule and issues affecting Black Americans. After winning the election, he threw his support (the 15 votes of the Washington, DC, delegation) behind the eventual Democratic nominee, George Stanley McGovern, who endorsed much of Fauntroy's DC agenda. "We must learn to use our power and stop relying on simple benevolence," Fauntroy declared.[7]

In 1972, the defeat of District of Columbia Committee Chairman John Lanneau McMillan of South Carolina, a longtime opponent of home rule, removed a critical obstacle from the pursuit of self-government for the nation's capital. Fauntroy had campaigned against McMillan in 1970 alongside the SCLC, which sent busloads of supporters of McMillan's opponent to South Carolina. With McMillian gone, Fauntroy, Charles C. Diggs Jr. of Michigan, the new chair of the District of Columbia Committee, and the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC)

helped pass the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act in December 1973. When the bill was in committee, Fauntroy pushed for a provision to give the District financial autonomy, but the final legislation kept the budget under congressional control. The bill gave Washington, DC, limited self-rule, permitting citizens to elect a mayor and a city council. Although pleased with this progress, Fauntroy continued his efforts to attain greater independence for the District from the federal government. In 1978, he helped guide a proposed constitutional amendment through the House to give the District of Columbia full representation in both houses of Congress—one of his most significant accomplishments. The vote "reaffirmed my great faith in the American people," asserted an elated Fauntroy. Despite his intense lobbying efforts, which included nationwide speaking tours, the DC Voting Rights Amendment failed to achieve ratification, with only 16 of the necessary 38 states approving the measure by 1985. Some critics blamed the DC Delegate for neglecting to muster enough support for the amendment and for causing a public backlash against the legislation after a controversial meeting with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat. "The District is too urban, too liberal, too Democratic and too black," Fauntroy remarked bitterly after the defeat of the proposed amendment. Undaunted by the earlier failure, Fauntroy and Senator Edward Moore "Ted" Kennedy of Massachusetts each introduced legislation in 1987 that would have granted the District of Columbia statehood and full representation without amending the Constitution.[8]

As chair of several subcommittees on the District of Columbia Committee, Fauntroy vowed to improve conditions for his many low-income constituents, focusing on affordable housing and antidrug legislation. He offered an unsuccessful floor amendment to a 1972 military construction bill that would have removed authorized funding for a military construction project on a vacant portion of the Bolling-Anacostia military complex that he believed could be used for affordable housing. Fauntroy criticized urban renewal efforts in the nation's capital that adversely affected its many impoverished Black residents. In 1978, he compiled a housing and community proposal to address common neighborhood problems such as housing shortages, abandoned buildings, resident displacement, and inadequate community services. He also cosponsored antidrug bills as a member of the House Select Committee on Narcotics and a resolution to create an organization to battle regional drug trafficking.[9]

Fauntroy played an active role in the CBC, seeking to use his position to highlight issues concerning African Americans, both in the District and nationwide. As chair of the CBC during the 97th Congress (1981–1983), he criticized the economic and social policies of President Ronald Reagan, insisting that they undermined progress made during the civil rights movement. "We are gravely concerned about how his policies will affect Black working people and the million more white Americans who are unemployed or in danger of losing their jobs," he stated, addressing the economic recession of the early 1980s. In 1977, Fauntroy sought to increase the CBC's effectiveness by founding the National Black Leadership Roundtable (NBLR), a group of national organizations encompassing Black civil rights, business, and labor leaders, to promote the public policy agenda of the caucus. Under Fauntroy's direction, the NBLR successfully promoted the election of more African Americans to federal office. To build on the NBLR's efficacy, Fauntroy helped the CBC initiate the Action-Alert Communications Network, a grassroots network of organizations designed to keep Black voters in at least 100 congressional districts informed on important issues and to urge them to pressure their Members of Congress to vote with the CBC.[10]

Fauntroy's legislative interests extended beyond domestic affairs, and he used his position in the House to bring attention to South Africa's policy of apartheid. The DC Delegate made headlines on November 21, 1984, along with Mary Frances Berry, a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and Randall Robinson, director of the foreign policy advocacy organization TransAfrica. The group was arrested for refusing to vacate the premises of the South African Embassy in Washington, DC, while protesting the imprisonment of several South African labor and civil rights leaders. Their arrest, the first of many until the passage of comprehensive economic sanctions by the United States against South Africa in 1986, sparked a national wave of civil disobedience. "We knew we had to humble ourselves and go to jail," explained Fauntroy after his highly publicized arrest. The three subsequently launched the Free South Africa Movement (FSAM) to bring attention to racial inequality in South Africa and to pressure the Reagan administration into stiffening its foreign policy toward the apartheid regime. Fauntroy drew upon

his experience as a civil rights leader to help orchestrate a campaign of demonstrations outside the South African Embassy that included Members of Congress, civil rights leaders, and celebrities. In January 1986, he joined five congressional colleagues on a tour of South Africa to assess the effects of limited economic sanctions imposed by the United States during the first session of the 99th Congress (1985–1987). Fauntroy continued his work with the FSAM and the CBC to pressure Congress to pass stronger sanctions against South Africa. On October 2, 1986, the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act became law after the House and Senate overrode a veto by President Reagan.[11]

Fauntroy, who believed his responsibility as a Member of Congress required him to focus on international and domestic issues, also spent considerable time during his career highlighting human rights violations in Haiti and promoting the country's economic development. Responding to critics who argued he spent too much time away from the nation's capital Fauntroy said, "When I sought the office of delegate, I ran on the theme that once elected I would build a network of friends for the District, and my traveling is for the purpose of strengthening that network." In 1979, Fauntroy and Shirley Chisholm of New York created a CBC task force to bring attention to Haiti's high poverty rate and to urge the U.S. government to allow more Haitian refugees fleeing the rule of President Jean-Claude Duvalier to seek asylum.[12]

Fauntroy opted to leave his safe congressional seat to run for mayor of Washington, DC, in 1990. While the longtime Delegate indicated his decision to run surfaced from a desire to heal a polarized and beleaguered city, some speculated he had become frustrated with his limited authority as a Delegate. Fauntroy joined a crowded field in the Democratic primary to replace Mayor Marion S. Barry Jr., who had been arrested and imprisoned, and who later sought counseling for drug addiction. During the campaign, Fauntroy had difficulty convincing his political base that he understood the problems facing the District—a criticism that stemmed from his global approach to politics as a Delegate. "The people do not know me," Fauntroy admitted. "They don't know what I do on the Hill." After winning less than 10 percent of the vote in the Democratic primary, Fauntroy noted, "I am disappointed, of course, that I did not win and that I will not have the opportunity to personally implement solutions to some of the most serious problems facing any city in this nation."[13]

In 1995, Fauntroy was sentenced to two years of probation for filing a false financial report in 1988 when he served in Congress. Fauntroy continued to serve as the pastor of the New Bethel Baptist Church in Washington, DC, and engaged in community service projects until his retirement in 2009. Fauntroy later experienced a series of legal setbacks following a charge of check fraud; the issue was later resolved, and the charges were dropped.[14]

Manuscript Collection

George Washington University, Special Collections, The Estelle and Melvin Gelman Library (Washington, DC). *Papers*: ca. 1941–2006, 757 linear feet. Delegate Walter E. Fauntroy's papers contain correspondence, news releases, booklets, articles, brochures, statements, meeting files, briefing books, memorabilia, newsletters, photographs, negatives, slides, bills, and hearing files related to his career in the U.S. House of Representatives as Delegate of the District of Columbia. A small portion of the collection includes Fauntroy's administrative files, project proposals, speeches, correspondence, financial and legal documents, church sermons, church administrative documents, religious sheet music, and personal papers. A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

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Yvonne Brathwaite Burke

1932–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1973–1979

Democrat from California

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

In 1972, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke made history as the first African-American woman elected to Congress from California and only the third Black woman to serve on Capitol Hill. Six years earlier, she had become the first African-American woman elected to the California state assembly, beginning a meteoric and ground-breaking rise to the highest echelons of political power. In the U.S. House of Representatives, Burke's assignment to the Appropriations Committee enabled her to influence federal spending, and her election as the first woman chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) provided a platform to influence policy across the government. In 1973, Burke became the first woman in Congress to both give birth and be granted maternity leave while serving.

Yvonne Brathwaite Burke was born Perle Yvonne Watson on October 5, 1932, in Los Angeles, California, the only child of James Watson, a custodian at the MGM film studios, and Lola Watson, a real estate agent in East Los Angeles. Burke, who rejected the name Perle and went by Yvonne, grew up in modest circumstances. At age four, she transferred from the public school to a model school for exceptional children and later became the vice president of her class at Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles. She enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley in 1949 before transferring to the University of California at Los Angeles, where she earned a bachelor's degree in political science in 1953. She was among the first Black women admitted to the University of Southern California School of Law. She earned her law degree and passed the California bar in 1956. In 1957, she wed mathematician Louis Brathwaite; they divorced in 1964. In 1972, she married William Burke. They raised two children: Christine, who was William Burke's child from a previous marriage, and Autumn.

Even though she held a prestigious law degree, legal firms in the city discriminated against her and refused to hire Burke because she was a Black woman. Consequently, Burke opened her own private practice, specializing in civil, probate, and real estate law. She also served as the state's deputy corporation commissioner and as a hearing officer for the Los Angeles police commission. Burke organized a legal defense fund for people arrested during the wave of civil unrest, arson, and property destruction that occurred in Watts, a Los Angeles neighborhood, in 1965. She was also named by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. to the McCone Commission, which investigated the conditions that led to the unrest. A year later, in 1966, she won election to the

California assembly. She eventually chaired the assembly's committee on urban development and won re-election in 1968 and 1970. Among her assembly bills were measures to reinstate retirement benefits for any Japanese Americans that lost their qualifications after being interned during World War II, to create a Black studies program in state schools, and to instruct the attorney general to perform a study on police and community interactions.[1]

Burke ultimately grew impatient with the slow pace of legislation in the California assembly and, when court-mandated reapportionment created a new congressional district, she decided to enter the race for the U.S. House seat. The new district encompassed much of southwest Los Angeles and had a large African-American constituency. Democrats made up nearly 75 percent of registered voters. In the Democratic primary, Burke defeated Billy Mills, a popular Black Los Angeles city councilman, as well as three other challengers, with 54 percent of the vote. Less than a month later, she garnered national media attention as the vice chair of the Democratic National Convention in Miami Beach that nominated Senator George Stanley McGovern of South Dakota. Burke spent much of the convention controlling the gavel during the long and sometimes-raucous platform deliberations, eventually helping to pass revised rules that gave minorities and young voters a greater voice in shaping party policy.[2]

Back home in Los Angeles that fall, Burke faced 31-year-old Gregg Tria, a recent law school graduate who ran on an antibusing and anti-abortion platform, in the general election. Burke defeated Tria easily, winning 73 percent of the vote. Burke won re-election with 80 percent of the vote in both 1974 and 1976, against Republicans Tom Neddy and Edward Skinner, respectively.[3]

In Burke's first term during the 93rd Congress (1973–1975), she received assignments on two committees: Public Works; and Interior and Insular Affairs. When a spot on the powerful Appropriations Committee opened in late 1974, the Democratic Caucus wanted a Member from California to fill it. Encouraged by Representative Phillip Burton of California, Burke campaigned for the committee vacancy and won, giving up her other two committee assignments to join the panel. She served on Appropriations for the duration of her House career. Burke's appointment to the panel occurred at a time when African-American lawmakers began to serve simultaneously on the most influential House committees: Appropriations (Burke and Louis Stokes of Ohio), Ways and Means (Charles B. Rangel of New York and Harold E. Ford of Tennessee), and Rules (Andrew Young of Georgia).[4]

In the 94th Congress (1975–1977), Burke was appointed chair of the Select Committee on the House Beauty Shop, a position that rotated among the women Members and oversaw the facility used by women lawmakers and House staff. Burke set out to address workplace inequalities at the beauty shop, improving salaries as well as the facility's physical condition. "The women at the beauty shop were not treated very well," Burke remembered years later. "I just became very concerned about them. And they said, 'We need someone who is willing to carry our water, to really kind of take up for us.'" When her staff questioned the decision to chair the committee, Burke brushed aside their concerns. "'Someone has to stand up for women, and someone has to stand up for women who are working over there in the beauty shop,'" she replied.[5]

Burke made national headlines in her first term when she revealed in the spring of 1973 that she was expecting a child. In Congress, she said, "at that time and you were a woman, everything about you was always open to the press. Your life was an open book." When Autumn Roxanne Burke was born on November 23, 1973, Burke became the first Member to give birth while serving in Congress. The House subsequently granted Burke maternity leave, another first in congressional history.[6]

The interests of low-income and minority communities were at the forefront of Burke's legislative agenda. During her first term in office, she fought efforts by the Richard M. Nixon administration to dismantle certain programs established as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society agenda, particularly the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), which oversaw federal efforts to end poverty. In testimony before the Education and Labor Committee's Subcommittee on Equal Opportunities, Burke argued that any effort to defund or relocate responsibilities of the OEO would be a detriment to low-income Americans. She pointed to the agency's community development, health care, and law services as successes of the program. "With the dismantling of OEO, not only the symbol of concern, but the actual involvement and commitment of the government will be suspended," she said. "Who will lobby for the poor in communities where the poor have no effective voice in the decisions of governments?"[7]

Representative Burke recognized that the civil rights struggle had shifted to a phase in which less overt discrimination still plagued the country and needed to be addressed by Congress. In an article for *Ebony*, she wrote, "The kinds of things we faced in my generation were easy to understand," she explained. "Your parents said, 'They don't let you sit down here, they don't let you go to that place.' Everybody knew. But now it is so complex, so frustrating to young people when they are led to believe that everything is fine, yet at the same time it is not fine."[8]

Burke also fought for equal opportunities for minority-owned businesses in the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline by adding two amendments to the bill that provided the framework for the nearly 800-mile-long project. Encouraged by a letter from a worker in Seattle, Washington, about the participation of minority businesses in the project, one of Burke's amendments required the Secretary of the Interior to enforce a rule outlawing discrimination against people or businesses from the hiring, supply, and contracting processes based on their "race, creed, color, national origin, or sex." Speaking on the House Floor, Burke emphasized that "the construction of the Alaskan Pipeline will create substantial employment opportunities, and it therefore seems desirable and appropriate to extend the existing programs for nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity" to the project. Burke's second amendment to the bill, the Buy America Act, required builders to use domestic manufacturing products "to the maximum extent feasible" on the pipeline. Despite voicing strong concerns about the pipeline's potential environmental problems, Burke continued to back the project with the belief that it would support the United States' energy sector.[9]

In 1975, Burke commented on her position on Appropriations: "My general philosophy as a committee member will be to reorder spending priorities toward domestic, people-oriented programs and cut back on nonessential defense spending." As a committee member, she objected to raising bus fares in Washington, DC, sought funding for an American Indian hospital in Los Angeles, and pushed for more diversity in the Federal Bureau of Investigation.[10]

Burke seemed to take to heart the advice former President Johnson gave her before she started her congressional career: "Don't talk so much on the House Floor," he told her. Over time, she earned a reputation as a legislator who avoided confrontation and controversy yet worked determinedly behind the scenes to effect changes she believed were important. "I don't believe in grand-standing but in the poverty areas, if there is something we need, then I'll go after it," she explained. Using her experience as a former state legislator in the California assembly, Burke chose her positions carefully and usually refrained from partisan rhetoric in debates. "I took always a lot of pride in my ability to bring people together, to compromise issues, to negotiate issues," she said. "I was always direct. I was me."[11]

Burke supported most major feminist issues and joined the Congressional Women's Caucus when it was founded in 1977, serving as the group's first treasurer. She was part of the effort that extended the time limit for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment by an additional three years. In the 94th Congress, the California Representative introduced the Displaced Homemakers Act, which authorized the creation of job training centers for women—particularly middle-aged, self-supporting women—who were entering or re-entering the labor market after many years. The purpose of the bill, which also provided health and financial counseling, was "to help displaced homemakers make it through a readjustment period so that they may have the opportunity to become productive, self-sufficient members of society," Burke explained. In 1977, she vigorously criticized the Hyde amendment, which prohibited the use of federal Medicaid funds for abortions. "The basic premise which we cannot overlook is that if the Government will not pay for an indigent woman's abortion, she cannot afford to go elsewhere," Burke wrote in a *New York Times* op-ed. In 1978, Burke introduced a bill to prohibit pregnancy-related discrimination in the workplace, particularly employer policies that kept women out of their jobs for long periods before and after childbirth.[12]

These efforts in support of women's rights, along with her prominent committee assignments and her role as chair of the CBC from 1976 to 1977, positioned Representative Burke to meet the needs of what she called her "three constituencies. I had a constituency of African Americans, a constituency of women, and a constituency that elected me." She was part of a group of Members who were asked to appear at events across the nation in the 1970s. In states "that did not have women-elected Members and who did not have African-American-elected Members—they expected us to go," she recalled.[13]

After three terms in the House, the demands of traveling to and from California with her young family convinced

Burke to seek out new opportunities back home on the West Coast. Hoping to have a more direct and administrative effect on policy than the demands of her job in the House allowed, Burke declined to run for re-election to the 96th Congress (1979–1981) to campaign for the office of California attorney general, the chief law enforcement position for the state (and a position no woman had held in any state government). She won the Democratic nomination but lost to Republican state senator George Deukmejian in the general election. In June 1979, California Governor Jerry Brown appointed Burke to the Los Angeles County board of supervisors, making her the first Black person to sit on the panel. In 1980, she lost her bid to a new four-year term and returned to private law practice. In 1984, Burke was the vice chair of the Los Angeles Olympics Organizing Committee. Burke became the first African American to win outright election as a Los Angeles County supervisor in 1992, defeating future Representative Diane E. Watson by a narrow margin. A year later, she became the first woman and the first person of color to chair the board. Burke served 16 years on the board of supervisors until her retirement in 2008. In 2010, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Burke to the California transportation commission. In 2012, she was appointed to the Amtrak board of directors by President Barack Obama.[14]

Manuscript Collection

University of Southern California, Special Collections, Regional History Collections (Los Angeles, CA). *Papers*: 1959–1980, 417 linear feet. The papers of Yvonne Brathwaite Burke contain the records of Burke's political activities from her tenure in the California assembly (1966–1972), U.S. Congress (1973–1979), the Los Angeles County board of supervisor (1979–1980), and her campaign for California attorney general (1978). The collection contains audiotapes (cassette and reel-to-reel) and videotapes (cassette). A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

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Barbara Jordan

1936–1996

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1973–1979

Democrat from Texas

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

From her seat on the House Judiciary Committee, Barbara Jordan of Texas—the first Black woman ever elected to Congress from the South—expertly interpreted the issues of the Watergate impeachment investigation at a time when many Americans despaired about the Constitution and the country. Jordan was one of the first African-American lawmakers elected from the South since 1898, and during her three terms in office, her pragmatic leadership style enabled her to build broad coalitions of support in her diverse district. "I am willing to work through any structure," she said. "I am not so hard that I cannot bend as long as my basic principles are intact."[1]

Barbara Charline Jordan was born in Houston, Texas, on February 21, 1936, one of three daughters of Benjamin M. Jordan and Arlyne Patten Jordan. Benjamin Jordan, a graduate of Tuskegee Institute, worked in a local warehouse before becoming pastor of Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church, which his family had long attended. Arlyne Jordan was an accomplished public speaker. Barbara Jordan was educated in the Houston public schools and graduated from Phillis Wheatley High School in 1952. She earned a bachelor's degree from Texas Southern University in 1956 and a law degree from Boston University in 1959. That same year, she was admitted to the Massachusetts and Texas bars, and she began to practice law in Houston in 1960. To supplement her income, Jordan was employed as an administrative assistant to a county judge. Jordan never married.[2]

In 1960, Jordan, in addition to beginning her legal career, worked on John F. Kennedy's Democratic presidential campaign. She eventually helped manage a highly organized get-out-the-vote program that served Houston's 40 African-American precincts. In 1962 and 1964, Jordan ran for the Texas house of representatives but lost both times. In 1966, she ran for the Texas senate when court-enforced redistricting created a constituency that consisted largely of minority voters. Jordan won, defeating a White liberal and becoming the first African-American state senator in Texas since 1883 and the first Black woman elected to the Texas state legislature. Jordan received a cool welcome from the other 30 White and male senators. Undeterred, Jordan quickly established herself as an effective legislator who pushed through bills establishing the state's first minimum wage law, antidiscrimination clauses in business contracts, and the Texas fair employment practices commission. On March 28, 1972, Jordan was elected president pro tempore of the Texas

senate, making her the first Black woman in America to preside over a legislative body. In seconding the nomination, one of Jordan's male colleagues on the other side of the chamber stood, spread his arms open, and said, "What can I say? Black is beautiful." One of Jordan's responsibilities as president pro tempore was to serve as acting governor when the governor and lieutenant governor were out of the state. When Jordan filled that largely ceremonial role on June 10, 1972, she became the first Black chief executive in the nation.[3]

In 1971, Jordan entered the race for the Texas congressional seat encompassing downtown Houston. The district had been redrawn after the 1970 Census and was about 55 percent African American and 15 percent Latino. In the 1972 Democratic primary, Jordan faced Curtis Graves, another Black state legislator, who criticized her for what he said was her close relationship with the White political establishment. Jordan blunted Graves's charges with her legislative credentials. "I'm not going to Washington and turn things upside down in a day," she told supporters at a rally. "I'll only be one of 435. But the 434 will know I'm there." Jordan took the primary with 80 percent of the vote. In the general election, against Republican Paul Merritt, she won 81 percent of the vote. Along with Andrew Young of Georgia, Jordan became the first African American in the twentieth century elected to Congress from the Deep South. In the next two campaign cycles, Jordan overwhelmed her opposition, capturing 85 percent of the total vote in both general elections.[4]

In both her Texas legislative career and in the U.S. House, Jordan pursued influence and change within existing systems. "I sought the power points," she once said. "I knew if I were going to get anything done, [the congressional and party leaders] would be the ones to help me get it done." Immediately upon arriving in Congress, Jordan worked to establish relationships with the rest of the Texas delegation, which wielded outsized influence in the House. During debate, Jordan regularly sat on the center aisle of the chamber's large, theater-style seating arrangement. She did so to better hear the day's proceedings, to be seen by the presiding officer when she sought recognition, and to save an open seat for colleagues who wanted to stop and chat. But her decision broke with years of tradition in which members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) usually sat to the far right of the rostrum of the Democratic side of the chamber. As the Representative for downtown Houston, Jordan also occasionally broke with her party to vote for oil and gas deregulation to appease her district's petroleum industry. "They support me as the least of the evils," she noted. "They are not a strong base of support. They know it and I know it."[5]

In the House, Jordan sought out powerful committee assignments, where, as a Black woman, she could blaze new trails and magnify her influence. She disregarded suggestions that she accept a seat on the Education and Labor Committee and instead used her connection with former President Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas—she had once been his guest at the White House during her time as a state legislator—to intercede on her behalf with Wilbur Daigh Mills of Arkansas, who, as chair of the Ways and Means Committee, also led the Democratic Committee on Committees. With Johnson's help, Jordan landed a seat on the Judiciary Committee, where she served for her three terms in the House. In the 94th and 95th Congresses (1975–1979), she was also assigned to the Committee on Government Operations.[6]

Jordan prioritized her independence in Congress. Although she belonged to a handful of caucuses, including the CBC, she remained wary of allying too closely with any particular interest group. House women met informally to discuss policy too, but Jordan's attendance at those meetings was irregular, and she was noncommittal on most issues that were brought before the group. She was especially careful not to attach herself too closely to an agenda she had little control over that might impinge on her ability to navigate and compromise within the institutional power structure. "I am neither a black politician nor a woman politician," Jordan said in 1975. "Just a politician, a professional politician."[7]

Jordan entered the House amid a power struggle between the Democratic-controlled Congress and the Republican administration of President Richard M. Nixon over federal spending. The administration had vetoed two spending bills in the first months of 1973 and impounded—or, refused to spend—funds appropriated by Congress. Just a few months into her first term, Jordan joined her first-term colleagues in a House Floor protest calling on congressional leaders to reassert their constitutional authority over spending matters. "As freshman members … we expect to endure a certain amount of individual impotence in terms of our ability to influence congressional actions," she said. "[But] we do not expect powerlessness of Congress as an institution."[8]

The following year, Jordan took on a national leadership role as a member of the Judiciary Committee. In the summer of 1974, as the committee considered articles of impeachment against President Nixon for crimes associated with the Watergate scandal, Jordan delivered opening remarks that shook the committee room and captivated the large television audience that had tuned in to the proceedings. "My faith in the Constitution is whole, it is complete, it is total," Jordan said. "I am not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the subversion, the destruction of the Constitution." After explaining why she supported each of the five articles of impeachment against President Nixon, Jordan concluded by saying that if the Judiciary Committee did not find the evidence compelling enough, "then perhaps the eighteenth-century Constitution should be abandoned to a twentieth-century paper shredder." Reaction to Jordan's statement was overwhelming. Jordan recalled that people swarmed around her car after the hearings to congratulate her, and many people sent the Texas Representative letters of praise. Back home in Houston, a new billboard read: "Thank you, Barbara Jordan, for explaining the Constitution to us."[9]

Watergate also helped shape Jordan's legislative priorities. In October 1973, shortly after Nixon fired special prosecutor Archibald Cox, who had been appointed to investigate the Watergate scandal, she joined colleagues in cosponsoring legislation that would have appointed a new special prosecutor who could not be arbitrarily removed from office. Jordan also introduced a bill of her own that would have created a permanent system in which grand juries could choose to appoint a special prosecutor to take over a case if the jury determined that the original prosecutor had a conflict of interest.[10]

During her career, Jordan sought legislative remedies to expand the reach of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965. "The momentum of the 1960's has run out," Jordan declared. "Congress will be called upon to defend progress already made rather than undertake new initiatives." In 1973, she amended a reauthorization bill for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA)—an agency tasked with distributing grants to state and local law enforcement agencies—to require it enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited racial discrimination in programs that receive federal funding. Under the law, the LEAA could withhold funding or bring suit against recipients of its grants if they were found to have engaged in racial or gender discrimination. When policymakers discovered that the LEAA failed to challenge any civil rights violations, Jordan successfully passed legislation to strengthen the LEAA's antidiscrimination program in 1976. From her seat on the Government Operations Committee, she pursued similar legislation to require the Office of Revenue Sharing to enforce Title VI when distributing funds to state and local governments. In 1977, she cosponsored an ambitious bill with William Donlon "Don" Edwards of California to require all agencies to enforce Title VI, though it did not become law. She also joined seven other members on the Judiciary Committee in opposing Gerald R. Ford's nomination as Vice President after the resignation of Spiro T. Agnew, citing what they said was his mediocre civil rights record.[11]

In 1975, a decade after the passage of the Voting Rights Act, Jordan supported legislation to extend the act's provisions for an additional 10 years, noting that state and local officials had continued to implement policies aimed at suppressing voters of color. "The barriers continue," Jordan said. "And so must the Voting Rights Act—the most effective statute minorities have to guarantee that one day those barriers will come down." She introduced legislation to extend the act's voter protections to language minorities, particularly Hispanic Americans. Under her bill, states and local jurisdictions in which more than 5 percent of the population spoke a single language other than English would be subject to Voting Rights Act's special provisions if officials only printed election materials in English. The bill also required areas covered by the Voting Rights Act to seek approval from federal authorities before implementing changes to their voting procedures. Her legislation was incorporated into the Voting Rights Act's 1975 reauthorization.[12]

As a legislator, Jordan sought to improve the lives of her working-class constituents. She sponsored bills to extend Social Security benefits to homemakers and provide a tax credit to low-income employed and self-employed people. To combat rising inflation rates, Jordan introduced legislation to prohibit manufacturers from fixing the retail prices of their products, which became law in 1975.[13]

In 1976, Jordan became the first woman and the first African-American keynote speaker at a Democratic National Convention. Appearing after a subdued speech by Ohio Senator John Herschel Glenn Jr., Jordan energized the convention with her soaring oratory. "We are a people in

search of a national community," she told the delegates, "attempting to fulfill our national purpose, to create and sustain a society in which all of us are equal. … We cannot improve on the system of government, handed down to us by the founders of the Republic, but we can find new ways to implement that system and to realize our destiny." Amid celebration of the national bicentennial, and in the aftermath of the Vietnam War and Watergate, Jordan's message of hope and resilience, like her commanding voice, resonated with Americans. She campaigned widely for Democratic presidential candidate James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, who defeated President Ford in the general election. Though it was widely speculated that Carter was considering Jordan for Attorney General, he offered her the job as ambassador to the United Nations. Jordan did not accept the offer, explaining that she would only accept a position "consistent with my background."[14]

In 1978, downplaying reports about her poor health, Jordan declined to run for what would have been certain re-election to a fourth term, citing her "internal compass," which she said was pointing her "away from demands that are all consuming." She also said she wanted to work more directly on behalf of her fellow Texans. Jordan was appointed the Lyndon Johnson Chair in National Policy at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin, where she taught until the early 1990s. She continued to lecture widely on national affairs. In 1988 and 1992, she delivered speeches at the Democratic National Convention; she gave her 1992 keynote address amid a lengthy battle with multiple sclerosis. In 1994, President William J. Clinton appointed her to lead the Commission on Immigration Reform, a bipartisan group that delivered its findings in September of that year. Jordan received nearly two dozen honorary degrees and, in 1990, was named to the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca, New York.[15]

Jordan died in Austin, Texas, on January 17, 1996, from pneumonia that was a complication of leukemia. Newspapers across the country published extensive obituaries that celebrated her oratory, her defense of the Constitution, and the role she played in inspiring generations of minority women in politics. "She left Congress after only three terms, a mere six years," the editors of the *New York Times* wrote. "No landmark legislation bears her name. Yet few lawmakers in this century have left a more profound and positive impression on the nation than Barbara Jordan."[16]

Manuscript Collection

Texas Southern University (Houston, TX). *Papers*: 1936–2011, 600 linear feet. The papers document the political and professional career of Barbara Jordan and are divided into three series: Texas state senate, U.S. House of Representatives, and personal. The bulk of the materials date between 1966 and 1979. The state senate papers document Jordan's campaign activities, bills, her governor-for-a-day honor, her involvement with the Democratic National Convention, and the Prairie View voting rights case. The U.S. Representative papers contain records on constituents, legislation, committees, office administration, and campaigns. Other records include personal correspondence, press/media files, appointment logs, schedules, invitations, arrangements, job recommendations, and appointments to political offices. Jordan's involvement with other Members of Congress is represented, as is correspondence reacting to her keynote speech at the 1976 Democratic Convention. A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

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Andrew Young

1932–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1973–1977

Democrat from Georgia

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

As a senior aide to Martin Luther King Jr. in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) during the 1960s, Andrew Young helped shape the civil rights movement and its philosophy of nonviolent resistance. When he was sworn into Congress in 1973, Young worked to bring King's vision of human rights to the nation and the world. Young's experiences in the grass-roots politics of the civil rights movement and his diplomatic perspective allowed him to take principled but pragmatic stands for his constituents. Looking back on his decision to run for the House, Young remembered viewing "political office as a way of sustaining what we had done and needed to do again rather than as a deviation from our history of collective struggle."[1]

Andrew Jackson Young Jr. was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on March 12, 1932, to Andrew and Daisy Fuller Young. His father was a dentist, and his mother was a schoolteacher. Growing up, Andrew and his younger brother Walt lived in what was described as "a middle-class, predominantly Irish and Italian" community in New Orleans; they were the only Black children in the neighborhood. After graduating from Gilbert Academy in 1947, he attended Dillard University, a historically Black university in New Orleans, Louisiana, for one year and then transferred to Howard University, a historically Black university in Washington, DC. Young earned a bachelor's degree in biology in 1951. After graduating from Howard, Young considered a career in dentistry, but decided to join the ministry instead. He attended the Hartford Theological Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut, earning a bachelor of divinity degree in 1955, and was ordained a minister in the United Church of Christ. After graduating from the seminary, Young served as a pastor and teacher in Marion, Alabama, and in Thomasville and Beachton, Georgia, until he was invited to work in the Youth Work Division of the National Council of Churches in New York City, where he served as assistant director from 1957 to 1961. In 1961, Young returned to the South to participate in a voter education program sponsored by the United Church of Christ. He moved from New York to Atlanta and joined the SCLC. Young married the former Jean Childs, a teacher, in 1954. They had four children: Andrea, Lisa, Paula, and Andrew III. After his wife died of cancer in 1994, Young married Carolyn Watson, an elementary school teacher.[2]

Young first became connected with the SCLC through his work organizing a citizenship education program in Dorchester, Georgia. By mid-1962, he began to work

closely with Reverend King's staff. When King and Ralph Abernathy, another SCLC leader, were arrested and imprisoned for seven weeks for training students to register voters, they relied on Young to handle various duties while they were incarcerated in Albany, Georgia. Young also served as a mediator between the SCLC and the Albany police. He subsequently volunteered to mediate between the SCLC and White southerners during other demonstrations. In 1964, King named Young executive director of the SCLC. In his leadership role, Young provided logistical and legal support for prominent demonstrations and legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.[3]

When civil rights activist and member of the Georgia house of representatives Julian Bond declined to run in the Democratic primary for the congressional district encompassing metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, and its northern suburbs, Young resigned from the SCLC in 1970 to enter the race. Young suggested his campaign was motivated by the belief that he could initiate change from inside the political power structure, rather than from outside: "There just comes a time when *any* social movement has to come in off the street and enter politics." Young advocated what he called the New South Coalition, which he defined as "black votes, liberal votes, [and] white labor votes." It was a balancing act, he said. "The problem is to involve those new white voters without stirring up the dyed-in-the-wool racists in the process." Young and other Atlanta politicians such as then-Mayor Sam Massell and future Mayor Maynard Jackson, who would become the first African American to lead a major southern city, relied upon the New South Coalition as a base of electoral support. In the Democratic primary, Young defeated Wyman C. Lowe, a White lawyer, in a runoff election, with 60 percent of the vote. In the general election, however Young lost to two-term incumbent Republican Standish Fletcher Thompson, who garnered 57 percent of the vote. After his loss, Young chaired Atlanta's Community Relations Commission, a city-run agency created as a community sounding board to hear claims of discrimination and monitor race relations. This position allowed Young to acclimate himself with the political environment of Georgia's Fifth District and provided him greater exposure to local constituents.[4]

In 1972, Young orchestrated a second campaign for the House when the incumbent, Thompson, ran for the U.S. Senate. After defeating three opponents in the Democratic primary with 60 percent of the vote, he ran in the general election against Republican Rodney Cook, a veteran politician who served four terms in the Georgia house and was also an Atlanta alderman. As part of his platform, Young described a four-point plan for improving public education that advocated federal and state grants instead of property taxes for funding greater community involvement, a curriculum that was relevant to its urban constituents, and racial integration at all levels of the system. Young also directed an aggressive voter registration drive and a coordinated media blitz. He benefited from redistricting that added African-American communities while reducing the number of conservative White voters. After redistricting, the proportion of Black voters increased from about 30 percent to 38 percent. On Election Day, Young defeated Cook in the majority-White district, winning an estimated 95 percent of the Black vote and 23 percent of the White vote.[5]

Young was the first Black Representative from Georgia since Jefferson F. Long's election a century earlier. Young and fellow first-term Representative Barbara Jordan of Texas served as the first Black Members from former-Confederate states since 1901. "I consider this victory a little more than just being the first Black man to go to Congress from this deep South state," Young noted. "I see this as a city-wide mandate of people of both races working together to achieve the kind of representation that this area so badly needs." Young comfortably won re-election in 1974 and 1976.[6]

During the 93rd Congress (1973–1975) Young served on the Committee on Banking and Currency. In the 94th Congress (1975–1977), he left Banking and Currency to become the first Black Representative appointed to the House Rules Committee. The Rules Committee, one of the most powerful panels in the House, controls the flow of legislation to the House Floor. Young remained on the Rules Committee for the remainder of his career. Young also joined the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), where he was elected treasurer and was an executive committee member.[7]

During his first term, Young worked to direct government resources to underserved communities and promoted expanded political participation in civic affairs. One of his early initiatives was an amendment to the Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act, legislation that facilitated the building of mass transit systems such as MARTA in Atlanta. Young's amendment, which he sponsored from his seat on the Banking and Currency

Committee, would have required federal funding of projects to be dependent on the participation of local advisory councils that reviewed planning, construction, and operations of mass transportation systems. For Young, local advisory councils promised to help incorporate new and diverse voices into regional decision-making processes. Moreover, the councils would enable local communities to exercise more control over the distribution of funds for building and maintaining important infrastructure projects. "I hope we can begin to write mass transit bills so that the people who live in the inner city can be in on the early planning … and be in on the contracts." During debate on the legislation, however, the House voted in favor of an amendment to remove Young's citizen advisory councils.[8]

Young's approach to lawmaking was reflected in his constituent services. He made it a point to visit his district on weekends because he understood the importance of being visible in his community and among Black voters in Atlanta. "[W]e're terribly cynical about people we don't see," Young once remarked about politicians generally. "We don't read too much about our men in the paper, so it's their physical presence and accessibility that counts."[9]

Young established a liberal voting record on domestic issues. He rejected cuts in federal spending for people with low incomes while supporting an increase in wages for young workers and domestic workers. "Domestic workers ought to be included in any minimum wage considerations for our society has thrived too long on their suffering and sacrifice," he said in 1973. Young also criticized cuts to rural spending programs by the Richard M. Nixon administration. He argued that both Black and White middle-class families could suffer because of Nixon's economic policies, such as the federal moratorium on financing new housing. Throughout his congressional career, both on his own and through the CBC, Young challenged President Nixon to preserve legislation that benefited his Black constituents. He denounced the Nixon administration for an antibusing bill and for failing to support mass transit. In a CBC forum called the "True State of the Union," Young declared, "the overall goal [for Congress] must be to return the economy to a system which generates growth and production instead of death and destruction," and to "provide the aggressive leadership in rebuilding an economy of peace and justice."[10]

In the House, Young developed a keen interest in U.S. foreign policy, especially concerning Africa, Asia, and Latin America. One of his earliest bills called for barring U.S. government contracts to companies that practiced racial discrimination in South Africa. In July 1973, Young successfully lobbied for a provision in a foreign aid bill that authorized the President to cancel aid that Portugal would use for military action in its African colonies. "This House," Young implored, "should take a very simple step to indicate that we will no longer participate, directly or indirectly, in the Portuguese crimes against the African people of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique." The amendment passed the House. Young also supported the United Nations sanctions against Rhodesia and called for a boycott of chrome from the White-minority controlled African country. In 1975, Young testified before the Senate against the nomination of Nathaniel Davis for Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, due to his ambassadorship to Chile during a CIA-sponsored coup d'état against its president in 1973. Young also made congressional visits to South Africa in 1972 and to Zambia, Kenya, and Nigeria in 1975.[11]

In the summer of 1975, Young worked to pass an extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. As a member of the Rules Committee, he introduced the legislation for debate and delivered remarks outlining the successes of the Voting Rights Act: increasing the number of Black elected officials in the South, boosting Black voter turnout, and initiating monitoring by federal examiners and observers. He believed the Voting Rights Act was necessary to ensure minority participation in voting and argued that the act allowed politicians to appeal to a cross-section of society instead of only to a privileged few. "There was a time, when, in order to be elected from our part of the country, you had to present yourself at your worst," Young observed. "The man who was the chairman of my campaign … had to run as a segregationist when he wanted to run statewide." Following these deliberations, the House voted 341 to 70 to extend coverage of the Voting Rights Act.[12]

For the remainder of the Congress, Young continued to seek ways to improve the lives of his constituents. He sponsored bills that outlined comprehensive health care plans and testified on behalf of bills that supported economic development in his district and in Africa. Young sponsored the Food Stamp Act of 1976, which proposed an overhaul of the anti-hunger program to make it more readily accessible by eliminating the requirement to purchase stamps.[13]

Young worked successfully with Republicans across the aisle by approaching them one-on-one to discuss political

issues. He reached compromises with political allies and opponents using negotiating skills he honed in the SCLC. Although Young clearly staked out liberal positions, he exhibited a shrewd political pragmatism that surprised his allies. New York Representative Shirley Chisholm noted that Young had "an ability to mediate, arbitrate—to speak with all kinds of persons within the Republican and Democratic parties." Young himself observed that "[s]ome of the people I disagree with the most are some of the people I have come to respect the most … I can usually swing Democratic support, but unless you can get Republican support, nothing happens around here. I'm not going to ask them … to do anything that's going to hurt them politically and they know better than to ask me." In October 1973, after the resignation of Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, Young was the only CBC member who voted for Republican Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford of Michigan to succeed Agnew. "I decided that here was a guy I wanted to give a chance," Young said of his vote. "He was certainly better than a Reagan or any of the other alternatives at the time. Besides, Atlanta was going to need to work very closely with the next administration."[14]

During the early 1970s, Young became acquainted with James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, who was the governor of Georgia. Carter's sincerity and the men's mutual interest in promoting human rights formed the basis for a strong relationship. The Georgia Representative supported Carter's bid for the presidency in 1976 with a seconding speech at the Democratic National Convention in New York City and he organized voter registration drives in urban areas for the successful Carter campaign. On January 29, 1977, after accepting President Carter's offer to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Young resigned from Congress.[15]

As the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Young became the initial point of contact for the Carter administration's foreign policy in Africa and Asia in an era when the United States competed for influence with the Soviet Union in developing countries. By using the network of contacts that had been developing since the 1950s, he played an active role in articulating Carter's position on human rights in Rhodesia, South Africa, and Angola. Young resigned the ambassadorship in 1979 in the wake of severe criticism following his meeting with Zehdi Labib Terzi, the U.N. observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization. From 1982 to 1990, he served as mayor of Atlanta. He traveled extensively to promote Atlanta's reputation as a financial competitor on the world stage. While mayor, Young also played an active role in bringing the 1996 Olympic Games to Atlanta. In 1990, he launched a gubernatorial bid, but lost to Lieutenant Governor Zell Bryan Miller, who garnered 65 percent of the vote in a runoff election. He eventually formed a consulting firm dedicated to fostering economic development in Africa and the Caribbean. In 2003, Young considered a run for the U.S. Senate, but declined because "[w]inning would mean I would spend the next seven years of my life in Washington, and Washington is not always the center of action." Young remains involved with several consulting firms and nonprofit organizations in the Atlanta area.[16]

Manuscript Collection

The Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History (Atlanta, GA). *Papers*: ca. 1910–2007, 474 linear feet. The Andrew Young papers document his career and family life spanning more than 50 years, including his positions as a minister, civil rights activist, U.S. Representative, Ambassador to the United Nations, mayor of Atlanta, co-chair of the 1996 Atlanta Committee of the Olympic Games, and his involvement with Law Companies Group, Inc., and GoodWorks International. The collection contains correspondence, speeches, press releases, calendars, books, minutes, reports, publications, articles, photographs, scrapbooks, artifacts, textiles, trophies and awards, artwork, posters, programs, campaign memorabilia, manuscripts, travel documents, notes, sermons, ephemera, and audiovisual material. A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

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Cardiss Collins

1931–2013

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1973–1997

Democrat from Illinois

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Elected to 12 consecutive terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, Cardiss Collins ranks as one of the longest-serving women of color in the history of Congress. Succeeding her late husband, Representative George W. Collins, after his death in 1972, Cardiss Collins was one of only a handful of women to serve in Congress for more than 20 years, and for six years she was the only Black woman in the chamber. Collins, a member of the powerful Chicago Democratic organization headed by Mayor Richard J. Daley, was a dedicated legislator who focused on the economic and social needs of her urban district. "We must have housing, jobs and an energy policy that doesn't tell our people 'make a decision between heating and eating,'" she said.[1]

Cardiss Collins was born Cardiss Hortense Robertson on September 24, 1931, in St. Louis, Missouri, to Finley, a laborer, and Rosia Mae Robertson, a nurse. Upon graduating from the Detroit High School of Commerce in Michigan, she worked in a factory tying mattress springs while living with her maternal grandmother in Chicago. She later found employment as a stenographer at a carnival equipment company. Attending night classes at Northwestern University, she earned a business certificate in 1966 and a diploma in professional accounting one year later. After graduation, Collins remained in Chicago, where she worked for the Illinois department of labor as a secretary and later with the Illinois department of revenue as an auditor.[2]

Collins gained her first political experience serving as a committeewoman for Chicago's Democratic ward organization. In 1958, she married George Collins and participated in his various campaigns for alderman, committeeman, and U.S. Representative while raising their son, Kevin. On November 3, 1970, George Collins won both a special and a general election to fill a U.S. House seat representing Chicago that had been left vacant following the death of Illinois Representative Daniel John Ronan. Known as a diligent but quiet Member who rarely spoke on the House Floor, George Collins had close political ties to Richard J. Daley.[3]

In December 1972, shortly after George Collins won election to another term in Congress, he died in an airplane crash near Chicago's Midway Airport. Attention immediately turned to Cardiss Collins to fill his seat. "I never gave politics a thought for myself. When people started proposing my candidacy right after the crash, I was

in too much of a daze to think seriously about running," she said. As she mourned, Collins announced her candidacy for the special election to fill the congressional seat held by her late husband that encompassed the predominantly African-American West Side of Chicago. Newly drawn after court-ordered redistricting, the district stretched east to west across the city and was about 60 percent Black. Its borders took in some of the wealthiest and some of the poorest neighborhoods in Chicago. With the solid backing of Mayor Daley's Cook County Democratic organization, Collins handily defeated her opponents Otis Collins, a former state representative, and Milton Gardner, a law student, in the Democratic primary, winning 84 percent of the vote. On June 5, 1973, she became the first African-American woman to represent the state of Illinois in Congress by defeating Republican contender Lar Daly and Independent Angel Moreno with an overwhelming 92 percent of the vote.[4]

Collins, who was reserved by nature, was eager to begin legislating and set out to learn and master the lawmaking process in an institution often dominated by big personalities. A few years after taking office, she noted, "Once people learned I had something to say, I gained confidence." In 1973, Collins commented that her primary objective as a Representative was to "provide better living and working conditions for people [on Chicago's west side] and other low- and moderate-income people throughout the country." Known for her commitment to the issues directly affecting her constituents, Collins spent eight days each month in her district to ensure that she stayed abreast of their concerns. The close attention Collins paid to her district reaped benefits at the polls. For more than two decades, Collins won by comfortable margins in the strongly Democratic district, typically defeating her Republican opponents by more than 80 percent. Collins did, however, experience some difficult primary races during the mid-1980s against Danny K. Davis, who later succeeded her—a consequence of the decline in power of the Cook County Democratic organization that accelerated with the death of Richard J. Daley in 1976. Still, Collins proved to be a resilient and popular lawmaker.[5]

During her first term in Congress, Collins served on the Committee on Government Operations. As a member of the panel throughout her tenure in Congress, Collins chaired two Government Operations subcommittees: Manpower and Housing; and Government Activities and Transportation. She eventually rose to the position of ranking Democrat of the full committee during the 104th Congress (1995–1997). Collins also served on the Committee on International Relations from 1975 to 1980, the District of Columbia Committee during the 95th Congress (1977–1979), and the influential Committee on Energy and Commerce from the 97th through the 104th Congress (1981–1997). She was the first Black woman to serve on the panel and eventually chaired the Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Competitiveness Subcommittee in the 102nd and the 103rd Congresses (1991–1995). In 1975, Collins was the first African American and woman selected as an at-large Democratic whip.[6]

During the 96th Congress (1979–1981), Collins became chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), giving her a powerful position with which to influence the lawmaking process. As only the second woman to lead the CBC and as the fourth Black woman ever to serve in the U.S. House, Collins found herself in the spotlight. The high visibility of her position encouraged her to become more outspoken. As chair, Collins voiced disapproval with President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter's record on civil rights, and she criticized the President for failing to gather congressional support to make Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a federal holiday. Collins also disparaged the House for its failure to pass the bill, saying that "racism had a part in it." At one fundraiser, Collins called for unity within the CBC as many Black lawmakers grew disillusioned with the Carter administration, declaring, "We will no longer wait for political power to be shared with us, we will take it." Members of the CBC praised Collins, citing her ability to lead with fairness and to create an atmosphere that encouraged unity through open debate.[7]

Throughout her 24 years in Congress, Collins dedicated herself to the advancement of African Americans and other minority communities. Collins was an advocate for affirmative action in hiring and federal contract set-asides for minority-owned businesses. According to Collins, some federal agencies—including the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Federal Trade Commission, and the U.S. Department of Justice—were not upholding the provisions of the Civil Rights Act requiring agencies that received federal funding provide information on their affirmative action programs. Her 1984 findings as chair of the House Subcommittee on Government Activities and Transportation led her to ask Congress to curb funding to

specific agencies, arguing, "Laws that have been debated and passed by the courts cannot arbitrarily be negated by individuals." She continued her defense of affirmative action by drawing attention to the hiring practices of U.S. airlines, which rarely placed African Americans in professional positions. In her push for equality in the aviation industry, Collins successfully amended the Airport and Airway Safety, Capacity, and Expansion Act of 1987, requiring that 10 percent of all concession stands in airports be run by minority- and women-owned businesses.[8]

Collins also worked to prevent federal tax write-offs for advertising firms that discriminated against minority-owned media companies. Hoping to "provide black and other minority station owners with a mechanism for redress," Collins argued that financial penalties for offending agencies would help combat discrimination and level the playing field for all media organizations. She also used her Energy and Commerce Committee seat to crusade against gender and racial inequality in broadcast licensing. On several occasions, Collins introduced legislation to preserve Federal Communications Commission policies designed to increase the number of women and minorities who owned media companies.[9]

As a Government Operations subcommittee chair, Collins held oversight hearings on an array of topics, including safety in air travel and the transportation of toxic materials. After Congress passed the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act in 1987, Collins monitored the implementation of a provision that encouraged the federal government to make its surplus properties available to local governments and nonprofits to assist people experiencing homelessness. She authored legislation to facilitate the transfer of a federal building near the Capitol to the District of Columbia government for use as a homeless shelter.[10]

As chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Competitiveness, Collins pursued legislation to regulate children's products. She sponsored the Child Safety Protection Act, which required warning labels on toys with small parts and required the Consumer Product Safety Commission to establish standards for the manufacture of children's bicycle helmets. The act was signed into law in 1994.[11]

To promote equal opportunities for women who participated in collegiate sports, Collins introduced the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act on February 17, 1993. The amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965 directed colleges and universities to publicize the rate of program participation by gender. "Putting the public spotlight on athletic schools with records of sex discrimination in their programs will increase pressure for change," she said. In recognition of her commitment to gender equity in athletics, Collins was inducted into the Women's Sports Hall of Fame in 1994.[12]

To expand access to health care, Collins cosponsored the Universal Health Care Act (1991) and the Health Security Act (1993) and urged the National Institutes of Health to direct resources to study health and wellness issues that concern minorities. "It can no longer be assumed that the entire American population has one uniform set of health care needs and medical responses," she said. A longtime advocate of increasing breast cancer awareness, Collins drafted legislation to help women older than age 34 receive Medicare coverage for mammograms and introduced a law designating October as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.[13]

Collins declined to run for re-election to the 105th Congress (1997–1999). She vowed to remain active in Democratic politics but decided that the time had come to end her career in elective office. "I'm going to be 65 next year, and that's the time many people retire," she said. After Congress, Collins returned to Chicago, Illinois, and, later, moved to Alexandria, Virginia, where she died on February 3, 2013, at the age of 81.[14]

Manuscript Collection

University of Illinois at Chicago, Special Collections and University Archives Department, Richard J. Daley Library (Chicago, IL). *Papers*: 1970–1996, 287 linear feet. The Cardiss Collins papers include U.S. House of Representatives reports, legislation, resolutions, certificates, artifacts, records of activity of the Congressional Black Caucus, correspondence, election campaign documents, newsletters, photographs, audio recordings of speeches, newspaper clippings, travel records, videos, legislative and hearing records, newspaper clippings, and memorabilia. The collection also includes the papers of Collins's husband, former U.S. Representative George W. Collins.

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Harold E. Ford

1945–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1975–1997

Democrat from Tennessee

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

The first African-American lawmaker to represent Tennessee in the U.S. Congress, Harold E. Ford transformed his family's entrepreneurial success into a political dynasty that shaped state and national politics. Ford's membership on the influential House Ways and Means Committee enabled him to build support among his constituents by directing ample federal funding to his district. Elected at age 29, Ford was one of the youngest Members ever to chair a subcommittee on Ways and Means. During his more-than-two-decade career in the House, Ford strongly advocated government assistance for Americans experiencing poverty and set out to reform welfare in the United States. "No one in this prosperous country should be forced by economic conditions to go hungry or homeless or lack adequate health care," he said. "A budget that makes the poor poorer makes us all poorer."[1]

Harold Eugene Ford was born on May 20, 1945, in Memphis, Tennessee, one of 15 children of Newton, an undertaker, and Vera, a homemaker. Ford earned a bachelor of science from Tennessee State University, a historically Black university in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1967, and an associate of arts degree in mortuary science from John Gupton College, also in Nashville, in 1969. Ford later earned a master's degree in business administration from Howard University, in Washington, DC, in 1982. On February 10, 1969, he married Dorothy Bowles. The couple had three children, future Representative Harold E. Ford Jr., Newton Jake, and Sir Isaac, before divorcing in 1999.[2]

Following college, Ford entered the family mortuary business. One day, after meeting a candidate for state office at his business, Ford decided to run for a seat in the Tennessee state house of representatives himself. "This fellow came in looking for a campaign contribution for his race for the state legislature," Ford later recalled. "When he stepped out the door, I decided to run." Ford lobbied support from churches, civic clubs, and other African-American groups in Memphis. His well-organized campaign also tapped into his family's business network—an invaluable community that laid the groundwork for his victorious bid for the state legislature in 1970. Ford made his mark early in the Tennessee house of representatives. Named majority whip in his first term, he also chaired a legislative committee that investigated utility rates and practices. Though Ford was not the first in his family to run for office—his great-grandfather held a county office, and his father campaigned unsuccessfully for a seat in the Tennessee house—his election

to the state house set the foundation for a new family-run political machine. Within five years, Harold Ford held a seat in Congress, his brother Emmitt served in the Tennessee state house, and his brother John simultaneously served in the state senate and on the Memphis city council. The Ford family also benefited from changes in the political landscape. In the 1970s, African Americans moved to Memphis in greater numbers in search of employment, while many White residents fled to the suburbs after court-ordered busing desegregated the city's public schools.[3]

After two terms as a state legislator, Ford, at the urging of local Black politicians, ran for a seat in the U.S. House in 1974. He easily defeated his three opponents—Mary A. Guthrie, a Catholic nun; Joan Best, a schoolteacher; and Lee Whitman, a lawyer—in the Democratic primary with 63 percent of the vote. Ford faced Dan Heflin Kuykendall, a four-term incumbent Republican, in the general election. The southwest Tennessee congressional district was the site of rapid demographic change. In just two years, the district's Black population grew from 29 to 45 percent, though it retained a narrow White majority. To strengthen his standing with Black voters and Democratic White voters in the district, Ford's platform emphasized economic development for the community. "Inflation knows no color … that's what the people will vote on," Ford remarked. His campaign enlisted an army of paid workers and volunteers, both Black and White, and received financial support from Black churches and luminaries such as the singer Isaac Hayes. An energetic campaigner, Ford "organized the headquarters and phone banks … put together caravans that … would wind slowly through residential neighborhoods carrying campaign workers who would put up yard signs and hand out candy to kids." With the Watergate scandal as a backdrop to the early part of the campaign, Ford called for the immediate impeachment of President Richard M. Nixon. Kuykendall, who had faced little previous opposition, had difficulty separating himself from the embattled President. After contesting the initial results, Ford narrowly won the general election by 744 votes, becoming the first Black Representative from Tennessee. He joined an influx of first-term Members of the House elected to the 94th Congress (1975–1977). Dubbed the "Watergate Babies," the 75 new Democratic Representatives capitalized on an anti-Nixon sentiment in the wake of the scandal.[4]

Ford typically won re-election by comfortable margins. He locked in the Black vote and a larger number of White voters in his district to win 61 percent of the vote in 1976. By the 1980s, Ford's district had become majority Black, and the Tennessee Representative increased his margins of victory, typically garnering more than 70 percent of the vote. In his later terms, despite a series of legal issues, Ford continued to win re-election with smaller margins of victory.[5]

During his first term, Ford was assigned to the Committee on Banking, Currency, and Housing, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the Select Committee on Aging, and the Select Committee on Assassinations. In September 1975, the Tennessee Representative resigned from the Banking and Veterans' Affairs Committees to become the second African American, after Charles B. Rangel of New York, selected to serve on the prestigious House Ways and Means Committee, which set federal tax and revenue policy. Ford served on the Ways and Means Committee for the remainder of his House career and remained on the Select Committee on Aging through the 102nd Congress (1991–1993). In 1987, Speaker of the House Jim Wright of Texas appointed Ford to the powerful Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, which makes committee assignments for Democratic Members of the House.

Throughout his career, Ford focused on improving the nation's welfare system to provide low-income Americans with a social safety net and job training. He also sought economic development initiatives to bring new businesses and revenue to Memphis. During the 95th Congress (1977–1979), Ford attempted to cultivate public support for President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter's comprehensive urban policy plan—an initiative to invest in American cities that had suffered economic setbacks. Ford informed his constituents that they were "in a position to impact directly upon the 5-10 pieces of legislation which are required to implement these proposals. … Only through such actions can we as black people ever make the 'system' work as it should."[6]

As a member of the Select Committee on Aging, Ford worked to assist senior citizens who needed health care in his district. He cosponsored the extension of the Older Americans Act, which was due to expire in 1978. To draw constituent support for the measure, Ford participated in a field hearing in his district. "The response … has been overwhelming with 'aging' enthusiasts in my district who are anxious to have their voices heard," Ford wrote.[7]

As a Member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health, Ford criticized President Ronald Reagan's

efforts to curtail Medicare funding. In 1981, the Tennessee Representative also attempted to block a measure by the Ways and Means Committee to cut more than $1.7 billion from Medicare and sponsored legislation that would have expanded the federal health insurance program's coverage to include hearing aids, eyeglasses, and dental care. "Good and accessible health care … is almost as basic of a right as freedom of speech," Ford said. "I cannot buy the argument that we can't afford a national health plan."[8]

In the 97th Congress (1981–1983), Ford became chairman of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation, a position he used to secure federal government aid for unemployed workers who had exhausted state benefits. In 1981, in response to an economic recession, Ford cosponsored legislation to establish the Federal Supplemental Compensation program, which extended unemployment payments for up to 10 weeks. The following year, Ford held a hearing to consider his bill to extend federal compensation for an additional three to seven weeks per recipient. Criticizing the Reagan administration, Ford declared, "The President's policies have included recession, and American workers are the innocent victims." His bill did not make it out of committee. In 1983, he helped manage a bill to extend the compensation program and again expand the number of weeks that an unemployed worker could receive benefits. The bill was signed into law with some of the expanded benefits intact.[9]

In 1987, Ford introduced the Family Support Act—an overhaul of the federal welfare program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), that linked benefits to work. The legislation amended AFDC to require states to establish work, education, and training programs and required parents who received AFDC support to participate. The amendment also required states to provide a minimum level of cash assistance and improve the availability of child care services. Although the initial cost was high, Ford pointed out, "We will save revenue for the federal government three to four years down the road." After nearly two years of legislative maneuvering, a pared-down version of Ford's initial proposal was signed into law.[10]

In 1987, Ford was indicted on 19 federal counts that included charges of obstruction against the Internal Revenue Service, mail and bank fraud, and embezzlement. The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) publicly backed Ford, pledging to raise $250,000 to help pay his legal bills. Ford and the CBC questioned the legitimacy of the investigation, arguing that it was racially or politically motivated.[11]

Following his indictment, Ford resigned as subcommittee chair but continued to work on issues important to his constituents. He supported a bill to raise the ceiling on the number of immigrants admitted to the United States and introduced legislation that would provide college scholarships and job training for low-income people. In his district, Ford helped secure a multimillion-dollar development project for downtown Memphis. During his congressional tenure he also obtained federal funding for public housing improvements and upgrades for Memphis International Airport, as well as increased opportunities for minority businesses in his Tennessee district.[12]

After a mistrial was declared in April 1990, a federal judge ruled that Ford's second trial would take place in Memphis, but that jurors would be selected from several outlying counties due to the publicity of the first proceeding. House leaders filed an amicus curiae brief on Ford's behalf arguing that the Representative's right to a fair trial had been violated by the decision to bus jurors in from rural western Tennessee. Ford's defense team and the CBC made an unsuccessful request for a review by the U.S. Department of Justice. In April 1993, a predominantly White jury acquitted Ford of all charges.[13]

After his acquittal, Ford's seniority privileges were restored, and he reclaimed his position as chair of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources following a six-year absence. The Tennessee Representative also continued his pursuit of welfare reform. He served as an intermediary between the William J. Clinton administration and the CBC, which had differing priorities on welfare reform. Ford generally supported Clinton's proposals, though he shared the CBC's wariness over time limits on cash assistance and emphasized that adequate employment should be made available to recipients. "The problem is not that welfare recipients choose not to work, but that welfare recipients do not have the job skills to get jobs that will support their children," he said. Ford proposed a more gradual approach to helping people transition off of welfare that included standardizing and increasing benefits rather than abruptly ending services. He also put forward a more ambitious welfare-to-work plan that would pay workers a minimum of $9 to $9.50 an hour. In return for receiving double the minimum wage, workers would relinquish welfare benefits such as food stamps and housing subsidies.

"What I'm looking at, on a national level, is replacing welfare with a jobs program," Ford noted. Ultimately, the 1996 welfare reform bill signed into law by President Clinton failed to include Ford's comprehensive initiatives.[14]

For several years, speculation swirled around Ford's possible retirement from the House. "I didn't want history to show I was on my way down," Ford said when asked if he had thought of stepping down after his legal vindication in 1993. Three years later, Ford announced his decision to leave Congress. "I'm going to leave while I'm on top," he remarked. "I've been there (in Congress) a long time. I've seen how members of Congress stayed beyond the level of capacity where they can really be effective." Ford's son, Harold E. Ford Jr., won his father's House seat for the 105th Congress (1997–1999), making Harold Ford the first African-American Representative whose son succeeded him in Congress. After his career in the House, Ford managed a political consulting firm in Tennessee and remained active in his family's funeral home business.[15]

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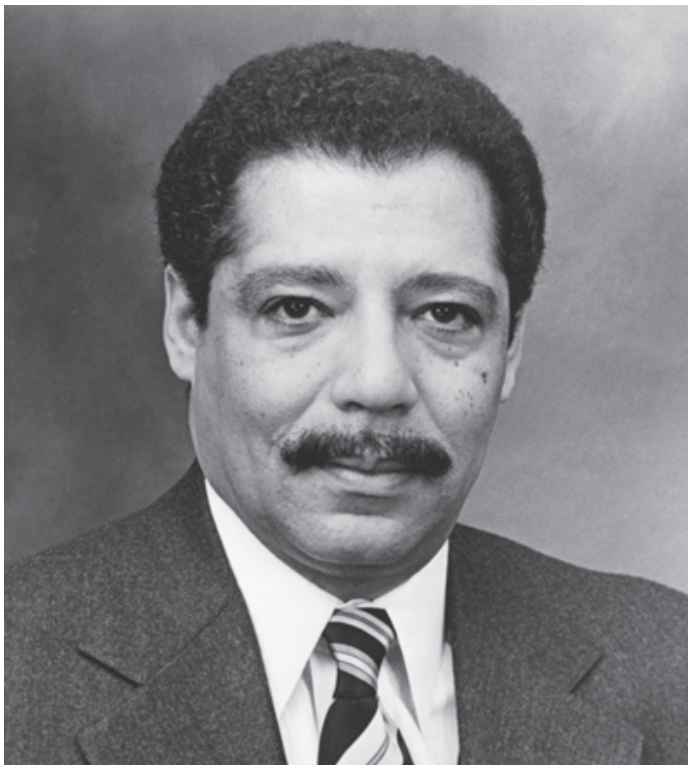
Julian C. Dixon

1934–2000

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1979–2000

Democrat from California



Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Julian C. Dixon, who was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from a Los Angeles district in 1979, became the first African-American lawmaker to head an Appropriations subcommittee. During his two decades in Congress, House leaders entrusted Dixon with sensitive, high-stakes responsibilities. As chair of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, he led the investigation into allegations that Speaker Jim Wright of Texas had violated House Rules, and he held a high-ranking position on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Dixon's low-key, evenhanded approach helped him thrive in such key committee assignments. "I don't mean to be critical of anyone else's style, but I think it's better to have an impact on the issue than to give a speech that gets picked up in the national press," Dixon said.[1]

Julian Carey Dixon was born in Washington, DC, on August 8, 1934. His father Henry Dixon was a longtime postal worker. Dixon attended Monroe Elementary School in northwest Washington, DC, before moving to the Culver City section of Los Angeles County, California, with his mother Corinne Carey Gleed at age 11. He graduated from Susan Miller Dorsey High School in 1953. From 1957 to 1960, Dixon served in the U.S. Army, attaining the rank of sergeant. In 1962, he graduated with a bachelor's degree from Los Angeles State College; five years later, he earned a law degree from Southwestern University in Los Angeles. Dixon married Felicia Bragg, and the couple had a son, Cary Gordon, before divorcing. Dixon later married Bettye Lee.[2]

Dixon's political career began as a legislative aide to California state senator and future U.S. Representative Mervyn M. Dymally. In 1972, Dixon won election to the California assembly, filling the seat of Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, who embarked on a successful campaign for a Los Angeles-based seat in the U.S. House. Dixon registered as an immediate force in Sacramento, chairing the assembly's Democratic caucus—he was the first freshman legislator to hold that post—and attaining positions on the influential ways and means and criminal justice committees. His signature piece of legislation was a criminal and juvenile justice measure that brought $55 million in state funding to California counties. Dixon built a network of important allies in addition to Dymally and Governor Jerry Brown, including assembly speaker Leo T. McCarthy, assemblyman Henry Arnold Waxman, and assembly majority leader Howard Lawrence Berman. The latter two eventually served alongside Dixon in the U.S. House.[3]

When Yvonne Burke announced she was retiring from Congress to run for California attorney general in 1978, Dixon entered the race for the vacant House seat. The district encompassed much of West Los Angeles, including Culver City, Inglewood, and Palms, a neighborhood adjacent to Beverly Hills. With registered Democrats composing 76 percent of the constituency, the district contained a cross section of wealthy, middle-class, and working-class voters and a plurality-Black population (about 38 percent of the district); the constituency also included a large White population and a growing Hispanic segment. Dixon was one of three major contenders in a field of eight that vied for the Democratic nomination, including two other prominent African-American candidates: California state senator Nate Holden and Los Angeles City councilman David S. Cunningham Jr. During the primary, Dixon relied on his connections to state legislators such as Berman and Waxman, using their help to launch a direct-mail campaign that challenged Holden's credentials as a state legislator. Dixon handily won the September primary with 48 percent of the vote; Holden was runner-up with 34 percent. That win assured Dixon a House seat. Without an opponent in the general election, he did not maintain a campaign headquarters and did little campaigning; during his relatively few appearances, he emphasized health care, affordable housing for seniors, and energy issues. Redistricting after the 1980 and 1990 censuses changed the geography of the district, eliminating some precincts, but did not dilute the district's heavily Democratic composition; African Americans still accounted for roughly 40 percent of the population after 1980, and that percentage remained steady through 2000. In his subsequent 11 re-elections, Dixon won by lopsided margins, capturing between 73 and 87 percent of the vote.[4]

When Dixon claimed his House seat in January 1979, he won a coveted assignment on the Appropriations Committee—a rare coup for a first-term Member. Dixon later claimed that he had convinced party leaders to give him the seat "using three hats": first, his predecessor, Yvonne Burke, had served on the panel for the previous two Congresses; second, he had experience in the appropriations process in the California assembly; and third, he suggested the panel needed more minority representation. Dixon remained on the Appropriations Committee throughout his long House career. In 1980, he became the first African American to win a subcommittee chair on Appropriations, taking over as head of the District of Columbia Subcommittee. In the 98th Congress (1983–1985), Dixon received an additional assignment on the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (widely known as the Ethics Committee). He served on the Ethics Committee until the end of the 101st Congress (1989–1991). In 1993, House leaders tapped Dixon for a seat on the influential Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, where he remained through the 106th Congress (1999–2001), by which time he had become the panel's ranking Democrat.[5]

Dixon quickly earned a reputation as an institutional player who worked effectively behind the scenes and shunned the limelight. "I do not work the press," he said. "I never had a press aide, as such. I realize that there are sexy issues one can get a lot of public attention working on. I have not avoided those issues but I have not pursued them." Dixon's quiet but effective approach brought him several difficult assignments, demonstrating the level of trust House leadership placed in him. He was eventually tapped as chair of the rules committee for the 1984 Democratic National Convention—another first for an African American.[6]

At the start of the 99th Congress (1985–1987), House leaders chose Representative Dixon to chair the Ethics Committee. It was a sensitive post given that the committee dealt with the behavior and actions of their colleagues in the House. The following Congress, Dixon presided over an investigation into a book deal that critics suggested had earned Speaker Jim Wright outside income in violation of the House Rules. Numerous other complaints were filed against Wright after the investigation began. Under Dixon's leadership, the Ethics Committee released a 456-page report by an outside counsel indicating that the Speaker had violated the House Rules on numerous counts. When the committee signaled its willingness to investigate the allegations in the report, Wright stepped down in June 1989. Dixon was lauded as a fair-minded, effective leader who imparted a bipartisan ethos to the committee's deliberations and conclusions. Nevertheless, Dixon dodged publicity, voicing his plan to leave the committee in early 1989. "It is no secret that I had no desire to serve any longer," he said. Dixon followed House precedent which required the Ethics Committee chairman to be retained during an ongoing investigation, though he left the post at the end of the 100th Congress (1987–1989).[7]

Dixon also chaired the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) in the 98th Congress. His role as a conciliator

sometimes caused friction among the members of the caucus. Every year, the CBC offered an alternative federal budget which highlighted the legislative needs and programs that were important to Black communities. But in 1983, Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts asked Dixon to not introduce the CBC's budget, allowing Democratic leadership to deny other budget proposals that may have derailed passage of the leadership's legislation. Some CBC members criticized Dixon for agreeing to withhold the caucus's budget, but he had not acted unilaterally; rather, a majority of the CBC voted to not propose their alternative. Dixon later praised the leadership's budget for including 75 percent of the provisions in the CBC's alternative budget. "Our purpose, hopefully, is not to go down to defeat with honor," Dixon explained. "Our purpose is to have some success."[8]

In addition to his work on the Ethics Committee, Dixon's other principal focus was the District of Columbia Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee. He took over the post from Representative Charles Wilson of Texas in early 1980. "Because of my background in dealing with urban problems in the state legislature, and my fondness for the District by way of birth, I would take it if it became available," Dixon had said. Some Members considered the post an unrewarding burden because it afforded little opportunity to address issues in their home districts. For example, Louis Stokes of Ohio, who was next in seniority, declined to serve as chair. Dixon, however, believed his subcommittee chair dovetailed with the interests of his urban and working-class constituents: "My people aren't parochial," he explained. "They have expanded horizons."[9]

As chair, Dixon balanced competing tensions and political impulses in the House between those seeking to grant the federal city greater autonomy on the path to complete home rule—the right of the District's residents to self-government—and those who sought to exercise a greater oversight role of the capital. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, Dixon sought to help manage the District of Columbia's budget while appropriating federal dollars for important programs. These programs included youth training initiatives, subsidized mental health care for low-income individuals, and federal support for District efforts to collect fees for parking and traffic violations committed by foreign embassy vehicles. Some political observers noted that he had as much impact on the city as its congressional Delegates during that period. During his early years as subcommittee chair, Dixon maintained a hands-off approach and deferred to local leaders. Eventually, Dixon grew disillusioned with the actions of city officials as the city fell deeper into debt and Mayor Marion S. Barry Jr. was beset by legal issues. "I have personally come to the conclusion that the District government has not acted in good faith with the Congress," Dixon said at an Appropriations Committee hearing in 1995. "I wanted to think the best. Now I believe the worst." Dixon urged city officials to repeal a 1994 law that prevented privatization of city functions, a practice Dixon felt necessary to chip away at the city's debt. Even then, he fought efforts by the Republican-led House to cut the city's federal funding. "The train is coming down the track in Congress, and I don't want to see it," Dixon warned the district's government in 1995. "Repeal it."[10]

Dixon also served on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations from 1979 through 1989, where he influenced U.S. assistance to foreign countries. Dixon drafted bills requesting the President and Secretary of State avoid inviting South African officials to visit until apartheid ended and for the United States to oppose loans by the International Monetary Fund to any country that employed apartheid. He also urged congressional support of Namibia against "South Africa's illegal occupation." In December 1984, Dixon joined California Representative Howard Berman and the mayor of Annapolis, Maryland, Richard Hillman, in a peaceful demonstration outside the South African Embassy in Washington, DC, against the minority-White apartheid government, prompting the arrest of Dixon and his fellow protestors. Dixon cosponsored the landmark Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, which placed economic sanctions on South Africa. Dixon also authored two resolutions recommending sanctions against the Haitian government and Jean-Claude Duvalier, its former president.[11]

Dixon pursued legislative items pertaining to issues that were important to the African-American community. He authored a resolution, passed by the House, to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Dr. Benjamin Mays, the longtime president of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, and a mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He also sponsored a resolution designating September 1983 Sickle Cell Anemia Awareness Month.[12]

Dixon's position on the Appropriations Committee left him well-placed to direct funding to his Los Angeles district, including initiatives to establish a mass transit system in the

city, for which he secured more than $3.8 billion in federal funding from 1983 to 2000 and programs to promote affordable housing and better access to health care. He also helped secure federal relief funding after violence and looting broke out in Los Angeles in 1992 and in the aftermath of the 1994 Northridge earthquake. In a 1997 omnibus measure, he managed to win several million dollars for the development and upgrade of the Alameda Corridor, which connected the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach with national rail lines. Dixon also worked to create a loan guarantee program for small businesses and contractors that were hurt economically by military base closings in Southern California, and he helped to secure federal grants for museums and educational opportunities in his district. At several points, Dixon was mentioned as a possible candidate for a seat on the powerful Los Angeles County board of supervisors (where his predecessor served after she left the House), but he chose to remain on Capitol Hill.[13]

As a member of the Permanent Select House Committee on Intelligence, Dixon advocated for increased transparency among the nation's intelligence agencies. In 1999, Dixon helped shepherd passage of the appropriations bill for intelligence agencies. Colleagues praised Dixon for his role in shaping the bipartisan bill, though Dixon repeatedly expressed regret at the classified nature of the funding totals. "I believe that no harm to the national security would be caused by making the aggregate budget request, the aggregate authorization, or the aggregate appropriations public," he said during debate. Dixon's service on the select committee complemented his interests on the national security subcommittee under Appropriations. Dixon generally sought to limit defense spending, though he joined other Californians in voting to restart the B-2 stealth bomber program headquartered in his state.[14]

Just one month after being re-elected to a twelfth consecutive term, Representative Dixon died of a heart attack on December 8, 2000, in Los Angeles. A close friend and fellow House Member from Los Angeles, Howard Berman, described Dixon as "unique for the political class because he had his ego under control. … His interest was in accomplishing things and in loyalty to the institution." Recalling his service on the Appropriations Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, the *Washington Post* eulogized Dixon, a native of the District, for his "unfailing respect for city residents." Dixon, the *Post* wrote, "never forgot his roots," making him "one of the best friends the District ever had."[15]

Manuscript Collection

California State Archives (Sacramento, CA). *Papers*: 1973–1978, 5.5 cubic feet. The collection includes material from Julian C. Dixon's time as a California assemblyman: bill files, 1973–1978; committee files, 1973–1977; and subject files, 1973–1976. The bill files contain amendments, analyses, letters, resolutions, telegrams, testimony, position statements, legislative counsel opinions and conflict letters, floor and committee statements, press releases, newspaper editorials and clippings, background reports, and other data. Committee files include correspondence received and sent, memos, bill analyses, background documentation, as well as general information received on legislation and issues under consideration. Subject files contain correspondence, reports, newspaper clippings, press releases, speeches, opinions, and background materials, related to proposed and pending legislation, community activities, and district affairs. A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

Notes

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Melvin H. Evans

1917–1984

DELEGATE

1979–1981

Republican from the U.S. Virgin Islands

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

In 1979, Melvin H. Evans became the first Black Delegate to represent the U.S. Virgin Islands in Congress. Evans, who had also been the first popularly elected governor of the Virgin Islands, used his political experience to promote health care, education, and other areas of concern to his constituents during his one term in the U.S. House of Representatives. "We of the Virgin Islands believe that the significance of our progress towards full membership in the American system reaches beyond the hearts and minds of our small numbers," he declared.[1]

Melvin Herbert Evans was born to Charles and Maude Evans in Christiansted, St. Croix, on August 7, 1917, only months after the United States purchased the Virgin Islands from Denmark. After graduating from Charlotte Amalie High School on St. Thomas, Evans received a bachelor's degree in 1940 from Howard University and a medical degree from Howard University College of Medicine in 1944. In 1945, Evans married Mary Phyllis Anderson, a nurse he met in a New York hospital; the couple had four sons: William, Melvin Jr., Robert, and Cornelius. During the next 15 years, Evans served in a variety of medical and public health positions at hospitals and institutions in the mainland United States and the Virgin Islands. From 1959 to 1967, Evans served as the commissioner of health for the Virgin Islands; he also chaired the governor's commission on human resources from 1962 to 1966. In 1967, he received a master's degree in public health from the University of California at Berkeley. He returned to private practice for two years before President Richard M. Nixon appointed him governor of the Virgin Islands. In August 1968, Congress passed the Virgin Islands Elective Governor Act, providing for the election of a governor by the territory's residents. Evans was elected as a Republican to the governor's office in 1970 and served until 1975. After his unsuccessful bid for re-election in 1974, he was Republican National Committeeman from the Virgin Islands and chair of the board of trustees of the College of the Virgin Islands.[2]

As governor, Evans frequently appeared before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs to testify in favor of legislation to provide the Virgin Islands a nonvoting Delegate in the House of Representatives. "Representation in Congress for the U.S. Virgin Islands is an urgent and necessary step in our American democratic process," he explained. In 1972, Congress authorized nonvoting Delegates for the Virgin Islands and Guam. When the first Delegate of the Virgin Islands, Democrat Ron de Lugo,

announced his decision to leave the House at the end of the 95th Congress (1977–1979) and run for governor back home, Evans entered the 1978 election to fill the open seat. Unopposed in the Republican primary, Evans faced Democrat Janet Watlington, a congressional aide to de Lugo. Evans ran on his record as governor, while Watlington emphasized her Capitol Hill experience and argued that she could collaborate more effectively with the Democratically controlled House. Either candidate would have been the first Black Delegate to represent the island territory, which was about 80 percent Black. In a tight race, Evans narrowly defeated Watlington with 52 percent of the vote. Sworn in to the 96th Congress (1979–1981) on January 15, 1979, Evans served on the Armed Services and Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committees, as well as the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, which held jurisdiction over legislation affecting the territories.[3]

During his congressional career, Evans focused on improving education and health care in the Virgin Islands. He secured federal funds to provide the territory's public education system with additional programs and services for its expanding school-aged population. After a career in medicine, Evans worked to alleviate the critical shortage of doctors at local health facilities by introducing legislation permitting foreign physicians to practice in the Virgin Islands. "I firmly believe that the 120,000 people of the U.S. Virgin Islands, in addition to the 1½ million tourists who annually visit our islands, must be provided adequate medical assistance to which they are entitled," he said on the House Floor. He also urged the House to appropriate funding to build two hospitals to accommodate the growing population of the territory.[4]

Determined to improve the quality of life on the Virgin Islands, Evans used his position in Congress to bring awareness to a variety of local issues and concerns. In 1979, Evans introduced legislation making farm credit loans available to local fishing and agricultural industries, which had been denied access after Congress failed to include the Virgin Islands in the 1971 Farm Credit Act. Evans successfully amended the Justice System Improvement Act of 1979 to ensure that the Virgin Islands would remain classified as a state for the purpose of receiving federal law enforcement funding. Following the devastation wrought by Hurricane David and Tropical Storm Frederic in 1979, Evans urged Congress to approve flood control measures for the islands, with an emphasis on mitigating future hazards. "Simply restoring things as they were before is to set the stage for a repetition every time there are storms," he said before an Appropriations Subcommittee. In 1980, he organized congressional hearings in St. Croix and St. Thomas to investigate chronic delays in mail delivery between the continental United States and the Virgin Islands. Evans also sponsored a bill, that later became law, allowing federal recognition for National Guard officers from the Virgin Islands. As a member of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, Evans accompanied members of the Coast Guard Subcommittee on a trip to the Virgin Islands to examine the effects of drug trafficking. He cosponsored legislation to bolster the Coast Guard's enforcement of drug laws; the measure was approved in 1980.[5]

Evans also worked to secure and expand the rights of African Americans. Shortly after joining the House, he remarked, "No one who has not been disenfranchised does not understand what it means to be disenfranchised." He added, "I'm from an area, you know, that got its first delegate to Congress only six years ago." Evans was one of only 17 Black Members serving in the 96th Congress, and despite his Republican affiliation the entirely Democratic Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) welcomed him as a member, contending that partisanship should not play a role in advancing the rights of communities of color. Evans was both the first Virgin Islands Delegate and the first Republican caucus member. "Not only do I speak with a Republican point of view but I represent it in the caucus," he said. During his only term, Evans cosponsored the bill that established the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site in Atlanta, and supported efforts to designate a national holiday in remembrance of the civil rights leader. He strongly opposed a proposed constitutional amendment to eliminate court-ordered busing in public schools: "When people protest how strongly they favor civil rights and how vehemently they oppose segregation and then seek to remove one of the only, if not the only, remedies, however imperfect, without offering viable alternative, it causes serious concern." Evans's dedication to civil rights also extended to international politics. He joined many of his House colleagues in expressing outrage against the South African government's practice of racial segregation.[6]

As a Delegate, Evans could not vote on the House Floor. But his ability to vote in committee nevertheless gave him considerable influence over the legislative process. On the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, Evans

made headlines when he voted against a public lands bill championed by congressional Democrats and U.S. Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus that would have prohibited commercial activity on 80 million acres of Alaskan wilderness. Evans was a swing vote that led to the bill's demise—the committee then approved an alternative bill that halved the amount of protected land and opened the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration. The vote worried many of his constituents who feared that Evans's actions had jeopardized the Virgin Islands' standing among influential members of the Interior Committee.[7]

In 1980, Evans lost re-election to former Delegate Ron de Lugo, who had returned to seek his old seat after failing to win his bid for governor of the territory. Evans garnered 47 percent of the vote. Many Members of the House paid tribute to the retiring Evans, commending his commitment to the Virgin Islands. "A man of conviction and high integrity, Congressman Evans would not be swayed from his principles," asserted Representative Donald Clausen of California. "A spokesman for the common man, he assured that the interests of his constituents were never overlooked." In 1981, President Ronald Reagan nominated Evans as United States Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago. Evans served as ambassador until his death of a heart attack in Christiansted on November 27, 1984.[8]

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William H. Gray III

1941–2013

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1979–1991

Democrat from Pennsylvania

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

A community activist and third-generation pastor of a large Baptist church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, William H. Gray III defeated a longtime incumbent to take his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Though new to elective office, Gray proved adept at congressional politics, rising meteorically in power during his 12 years in Congress. Gray was the first Black Member of Congress to chair the powerful Budget Committee, where he oversaw national spending priorities. Gray continued up the leadership ladder to become the first Black Majority Whip. At the height of his political career, he abruptly resigned to take a position to assist historically Black colleges and to return to the pulpit. Soon after he announced his retirement from Congress, Gray told his congregation, "I want people to be able to say, 'He was a preacher and a public policy leader, but most important, he opened the doors for a whole new generation of black people.'"[1]

William Herbert Gray III was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on August 20, 1941. The second child of Dr. William H. Gray Jr. and Hazel Yates Gray, he had an older sister, Marion. William Gray spent the first nine years of his life in St. Augustine and Tallahassee, Florida, where his father served as president of Florida Normal and Industrial College (now Florida Memorial College) and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Florida A&M University). His mother was a high school teacher and once served as dean of Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. When William Gray III's grandfather and namesake died in 1949, the Grays moved to North Philadelphia, where William Gray Jr. took over his father's pastoral position at Bright Hope Baptist Church, which William Gray Sr. had held since 1925. William Gray graduated from Simon Gratz High School in Philadelphia in 1959 and earned a bachelor's degree from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1963. Gray majored in sociology, but one of his professors encouraged him to become involved in politics. During his senior year in college, Gray interned for Philadelphia Representative Robert N.C. Nix Sr.[2]

After college, Gray followed his father and grandfather into the ministry. He received a master's degree in divinity from Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, New Jersey, in 1966 and a master's degree in theology from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1970. He became a community activist in 1970 while living in Montclair, New Jersey, after he won a housing discrimination suit against a landlord

who denied him an apartment because of his race. The case generated national attention and the New Jersey superior court awarded him financial damages, setting a legal precedent. Gray founded the nonprofit Union Housing Corporation in Montclair to build affordable homes for low- and moderate-income tenants. In 1971, he married Andrea Dash, a marketing consultant. They raised three sons: William IV, Justin, and Andrew. After his father died in 1972, Gray assumed the pastor's position at Philadelphia's Bright Hope Baptist Church. The congregation swelled to more than 4,000 members, and Gray continued his community activism. In 1975, he cofounded the Philadelphia Mortgage Plan, an organization that helped people in low-income communities to obtain mortgages.[3]

Concern about community housing issues and the high unemployment rate in his West Philadelphia neighborhood drew Gray into politics in 1976. Having never held elected office, Gray took an interest in the northwest Philadelphia congressional district that was represented by his former boss, Robert Nix, a longtime Representative and a Philadelphia political powerbroker. Gray had become disillusioned with what he perceived as Nix's unresponsiveness to his constituents, nearly one-third of whom lived below the poverty line. Gray challenged Nix in the Democratic primary but lost by only around 300 votes. Gray returned in 1978 to challenge the incumbent again, dubbing Nix "the phantom" because of the infrequency of the aging Representative's visits to his district. Gray also called attention to the district's ailing economy, which had the highest unemployment rate in the state. Encouragement from former Representative Andrew Young of Georgia, who was serving as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, gave Gray the confidence to enter elective politics. "Bill, if you can pastor Bright Hope Baptist Church, Congress will not be difficult," Gray recalls Young telling him. "It is essentially pastoring, ministering to the folks in your district." Bright Hope Baptist members played an integral part in Gray's campaign, hosting events and helping him plan strategy. Gray defeated Nix in the 1978 primary, winning 58 percent to 41 percent. Winning the primary was tantamount to victory in the district, which was overwhelmingly Democratic and about 65 percent Black.[4]

Unconcerned about the general election, Gray spent the time between the primary and the November election lobbying for choice committee posts. His friendship with Young provided Gray with important connections in Washington. After winning the general election by a wide margin over Republican Roland Atkins, Gray received several plum committee assignments in the 96th Congress (1979–1981) as a result of his earlier lobbying efforts. In addition to a seat on the Committee on the District of Columbia, the only post he would hold for his entire career, Gray also occupied seats on the prestigious Budget and Foreign Affairs Committees. House Democratic leadership as well as the leaders of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) took note of his political acumen and pegged him as a rising star. CBC chair Parren J. Mitchell of Maryland called Gray's skills "top flight." The caucus elected Gray as its secretary, and in his second term he served as vice chair. Gray's fellow first-term Democrats also elected him as their representative to the Steering and Policy Committee, which sets committee assignments for Democratic Members and writes party policy. Gray left the Foreign Affairs Committee after his first term. He served on the Budget Committee in the 96th Congress and again from the 98th through 100th Congresses (1983–1989). He became the first Black Member to chair the Budget Committee in 1985, a position he held until 1989. Gray initially left the Budget Committee in 1981 for a spot on the Appropriations Committee, where he remained for the rest of his career, but returned to the Budget Committee in 1983. Gray later chaired the Temporary Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction in the 99th and 100th Congresses (1985–1989) and served on the House Administration Committee during the 102nd Congress (1991–1993).[5]

Gray typically won re-election with little opposition, generally garnering margins of at least 90 percent. Careful not to suffer the same fate as Nix, he kept in close contact with the district and remained attentive to the needs of the Black community. Throughout his congressional career, Gray continued to preach two Sundays per month at Bright Hope Church. "I was elected to Congress," he once told the *Washington Post*, "I was called to preach. One I do because people allow me to do it. The other I have to do." In May 1985, Gray's dedication to his constituents was tested. His district was the scene of disaster after members of MOVE, a radical Black liberation group, clashed with police. Following a shootout with the organization, Philadelphia police dropped a bomb from a helicopter onto the MOVE townhouse, killing 11—six MOVE members and five children who were in the house—and burning several city blocks in a West Philadelphia neighborhood.

The bombing caused a national uproar. Gray responded to his constituents' needs by touring the scene of the destruction and obtaining federal aid for the victims from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.[6]

Gray's work on the Foreign Affairs Committee focused on Africa. In 1980, he joined a delegation led by Andrew Young and W. Averell Harriman to observe the independence ceremony in Zimbabwe. Gray called this the "highest moment in my life in Congress." "Have you ever heard the sound of freedom being born in a nation that is black?" he added. As a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Gray sponsored a bill that created the African Development Foundation, which delivered U.S. aid to African villages. Gray continued to advocate for better resources and support the continent throughout his career. In a 1985 speech, he called for "a new Marshall Plan" for Africa, referring to an aid program that provided billions of dollars to war-torn Europe after World War II. "If we can do it for Europe, we can do it for Africa," he implored. In 1983, he sponsored a floor amendment guaranteeing minority-owned businesses, private organizations, and historically Black universities greater participation in international relief programs administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development. In 1984, Gray co-led a congressional delegation to Ethiopia to witness the country's ongoing famine. He criticized the Ronald Reagan administration for its delayed response in providing emergency food rations to the starving nation. Three years later, he made a rare break from his own party, supporting a Republican-sponsored bill to condemn Ethiopia's Communist leaders for human rights violations and for exacerbating the famine. Gray was the lead sponsor of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, which imposed economic sanctions on South Africa until it ended its policy of racial apartheid.[7]

Gray received his initial position on the Budget Committee with the blessing of outgoing panel member, Representative Parren Mitchell, who was eager to find a CBC member to replace him on the committee in 1979. Serving his first term on the Budget Committee, Gray grew frustrated with committee Democrats' seemingly weak defense against cuts in social spending. When the committee proposed to balance the 1981 budget, partly through large cuts in social welfare spending, Gray declared, "There will be 17 votes—those of the Congressional black caucus—against this resolution when it comes to the floor." His prediction was correct. All 15 voting Members of the CBC voted against the resolution. Two CBC Members, Melvin H. Evans of the Virgin Islands and Walter E. Fauntroy of the District of Columbia, did not have voting privileges on the House Floor. Throughout his career, Gray continued to defend spending for social aid programs, but as he came to occupy a position of power, as chair of the Budget Committee and later in the Democratic leadership, he was more receptive to compromise. Gray often skillfully arbitrated differences between House and Senate versions of the federal budget.[8]

House Rules allowed Members to serve on the Budget Committee for a maximum of six successive years. In 1984, chair Representative James Robert Jones of Oklahoma faced the end of his allotted term. He and outgoing Representative Leon Edward Panetta of California, who also aspired to the chairmanship, sought a change in the rule so that they could continue serving, but last-minute opposition from Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts thwarted their plan. Having quietly secured support in case the rule had not changed, Gray was the only member of the panel who had enough votes for the chairmanship upon Jones's departure, despite a late bid by Democratic Texas Representative Jonas Martin Frost. Nearly 2,000 of Gray's proud constituents, organized by Bright Hope congregants, flooded the Capitol to watch his swearing-in as the first Black chairman of the Budget Committee. Gray downplayed the symbolism. "There is no title here called 'Black America Budget Chairman,'" Gray declared. "It's called House Budget Committee Chairman. I happen to be black and there is no conflict in that … it's been proven over the years that blacks can provide leadership in Congress."[9]

A natural politician, Gray tactfully managed the often-contentious, partisan Budget Committee as chair. Gray's colleague, Washington Democrat Michael Edward Lowry, speculated about the origins of Gray's ability to broker compromises: "It's maybe his professional training as a minister. He's a great judge of knowing how far he can push his members. He never gets mad." Gray often unified an increasingly diverse Democratic Party—and some Republicans—around a budget that incorporated his commitment to social spending, forging a strong coalition that spanned the party's broad fiscal spectrum. Surprisingly, Gray found allies in the "boll weevils," southern Democrats who tended to support the Reagan administration's cuts in social spending; two boll weevils, Representatives

James Marvin Leath and Charles Walter Stenholm, both from Texas, were among Gray's biggest supporters.[10]

Despite his reputation for compromise, Gray did not back down from creating a budget consistent with his liberal Democratic ideals. He guided four successive Democratic budget resolutions through the House—often over vehement protests from many committee Republicans. One observer remarked, "Gray treated the budget process as a political puzzle, not an economic problem; he saw the budget for what it is: a political statement rather than a blueprint for fiscal governance." However, the increasing federal deficit became a sticking point. Gray battled Republican attempts to reduce deficit spending. His focus was preserving funding for social programs, and he believed efforts to reduce the deficit should not override compassionate spending. "A balanced budget is good for the country, the affluent and poor alike," Gray noted. "I seek [a budget] that doesn't sacrifice programs for the poor and minorities, one that is fair and equitable." The Budget Committee under Gray virtually ignored the Gramm–Rudman–Hollings Act of 1985, and its revisions in 1987, which demanded automatic across-the-board budget cuts if the President and Congress did not cap the deficit at a specific annual level. As a result, Gray oversaw the first trillion-dollar budget in U.S. history for fiscal year 1988. Few rank-and-file Democrats voted against Gray's budgets. A record low of 15 Democrats refused to support their party's budget resolution in Gray's first year as chairman. A total of 53 Democrats voted against his first three budget resolutions combined; previously, this figure was more typical for a single year.[11]

By the late 1980s, Gray sought to move up in Democratic Party leadership. In 1987, Gray began lobbying to succeed Representative Richard Andrew Gephardt of Missouri as chair of the House Democratic Caucus in order to coordinate the party's political goals and dole out committee assignments. Gray's experience as Budget Committee chair and as the leader of the Democrats' platform drafting committee for the 1988 National Convention demonstrated his ability to unite the various party factions. The House Democratic Caucus overwhelmingly elected Gray as Democratic Caucus chair in December 1988. Again, Gray downplayed the milestone he had achieved as the first African-American chair of the House Democratic Caucus, noting that his new position called for building coalitions, not representing one arm of the Democratic Party. "I hope we can tie our ropes together so we can be one party and show the nation what we stand for as Democrats," Gray declared. Just six months later, Gray took one more step up the leadership ladder when he succeeded Representative Tony Coelho of California as Majority Whip. While he was running for the position, several media outlets reported that the FBI was conducting a preliminary investigation into allegations that an employee on Gray's office payroll was not showing up for work. The FBI soon clarified that Gray was not the target of its investigation, but the incident elicited anger among Gray and his Democratic colleagues, who suspected that the leak was an attempt to sabotage Gray's career.[12]

As Majority Whip, Gray was responsible for determining and organizing votes from the Democratic Members for issues of party interest. Gray, who held the third-ranking leadership position in the House, was the highest-ranking African American in congressional history. As Whip, Gray transitioned from budget specialist to generalist. "You have to develop expertise on every issue that's going to come to the floor," he noted. He wasn't afraid of tackling unpopular legislation, overseeing passage of a bill to raise the salaries of Members of Congress while restricting their ability to collect speaking fees and other forms of outside income.[13]

At the peak of his political power, Gray abruptly announced his resignation from Congress on June 20, 1991, effective the following September 11. Gray left Congress to head the United Negro College Fund (later known as the College Fund/UNCF)—which allocates federal money to augment the facilities, programs, and faculty at historically Black colleges and universities—saying his new duties were "just as important as being a member of the leadership in Congress." Gray's departure sent shockwaves through the political community. Gray served as president and CEO of the College Fund/UNCF until March 2004. In 1994, President William J. Clinton asked Gray to serve as his special adviser on Haiti, which was then embroiled in civil war. Gray's efforts to restore democracy to the island nation won him a Medal of Honor from Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Gray continued to serve as minister of Bright Hope until he retired in January 2007. Gray died suddenly on July 1, 2013, in London, England.[14]

Manuscript Collection

New York Public Library, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (New York, NY). *Papers*: 1979–1991, 87.8 linear feet. The William H. Gray Congressional Records contain office, working, and research files used and created by Gray, his office staff, and the committees on which he served: Appropriations;

Budget; and Foreign Affairs. His involvement in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985, a precursor to the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, is also documented. There are also files for the Congressional Black Caucus, in addition to Gray's speeches, news releases, and press clippings that document his other legislative activities. *Audio-visual*: 1979–1991, 143 audiocassettes, 15 videocassettes. The collection spans Gray's congressional career.

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11 *Politics in America, 1990* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1989): 1273; "William H. Gray III," *Notable Black American Men*: 479; Washington, *Outstanding African Americans of Congress*: 36; Luix Overbea, "Pennsylvania's Gray—Budgeteer, Congressman, and Minister," 21 October 1985, *Christian Science Monitor*: 11; James A. Thurber, "Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act," in *The Encyclopedia of the United States Congress*, vol. 1, ed. Donald C. Bacon et al. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995): 129–130; *Politics in America, 1988*: 1283.

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Mickey Leland

1944–1989

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1979–1989

Democrat from Texas

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

In November 1978, Mickey Leland of Texas won election to the U.S. House of Representatives to replace Houston's pathbreaking Congresswoman, Barbara Jordan, who had decided to retire. Inspired by an extended stay on the African continent, Leland poured his energy into seeking solutions to a disastrous famine in East Africa and raising funds for relief efforts. Leland worked tirelessly as chair of the House Select Committee on Hunger, which he had lobbied Congress to create. Responding to critics who felt he should focus on domestic poverty first, Leland replied, "I am as much of a citizen of this world as I am of this country. To hell with those people who are critical of what I am able to do to help save people's lives. I don't mean to sound hokey, but I grew up on the Christian ethic which says we are supposed to help the least of our brothers." Leland ultimately gave his life to the cause. In 1989, he died in a plane crash while on a humanitarian mission to transport supplies to an Ethiopian refugee camp.[1]

George Thomas "Mickey" Leland III was born in Lubbock, Texas, on November 27, 1944, to George Thomas Leland Jr. and Alice Leland. It was Leland's maternal grandfather who nicknamed him Mickey. When Leland was young his parents separated, and he moved to Houston with his brother, Gaston, and their mom. His mother put herself through school, became a teacher, and later remarried. Mickey Leland graduated from Phyllis Wheatley High School in Houston in 1963 and attended Texas Southern University, a historically Black university in Houston. Earning his bachelor's degree in pharmacy in 1970, Leland worked as a clinical pharmacy instructor at Texas Southern before taking a job as a pharmacist. He also served with several university organizations, setting up free clinics and other aid for low-income people in the Houston area. In 1983, Leland married Alison Walton, a Georgetown University Law School graduate who worked in investment banking. In 1986, the couple celebrated the birth of their first son, Jarrett.[2]

Influenced by diverse doctrines—the writings of Black activists and the emphasis of his Roman Catholic faith on helping the disadvantaged—Leland was active in the civil rights movement as a student in the late 1960s, often participating in unruly protests, and describing himself as a "Marxist" and a "revolutionary." His arrest while demonstrating against police brutality in Houston proved to be a pivotal moment in his life, persuading Leland to work within the political system rather than against it. In 1971,

Leland made his first trip to Africa. He developed a deep affection for the continent, staying in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania for three months, rather than his scheduled three weeks. He drew inspiration from Tanzania's first president Julius Nyerere, a socialist and anticolonial activist who inspired pan-Africanists around the world. "Nobody knew where I was. … I got totally absorbed in Africa," Leland recalled. Leland was first elected to the Texas state house of representatives in 1972 and served his diverse Houston neighborhood from 1973 to 1979. He quickly earned a reputation as a militant, firebrand politician in the state legislature, appearing on the first day in a tie-dyed dashiki shirt, an Afro haircut, and platform shoes. Leland served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1972. He also served as a delegate to the Texas state constitutional convention in 1974, where he helped rewrite Texas's 97-year-old Jim Crow-era constitution, focusing on reforming the judicial and executive branches of the state government.[3]

In 1978, three-term Houston Representative Barbara Jordan announced her retirement from Congress. The first Member to serve the newly created district, Jordan represented central city neighborhoods where the population was almost three-quarters minority, mostly lower- and middle-class Black and Mexican Americans. Leland entered the May 6 Democratic primary, garnering 48 percent of the vote against seven other candidates. Falling short of the necessary 50 percent to win the nomination, Leland faced the primary runner-up, African-American candidate Anthony Hall, in a runoff on June 3. Though Jordan refused to endorse any one candidate, Leland's ability to garner support from both the district's Black and Hispanic constituents sealed his victory over Hall, with 57 percent of the vote. Without official opposition in the general election, Leland won 97 percent of the vote for the 96th Congress (1979–1981). He was re-elected five times, typically winning majorities of 90 percent or more.[4]

Upon his arrival in Washington, Leland won a seat on the powerful Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee (renamed the Energy and Commerce Committee in 1981)—often sought after by Members because of its regulatory powers across a broad swath of industry. He was also assigned to the Post Office and Civil Service Committee, where he chaired the Subcommittee on Postal Operations and Services. In addition, Leland served on the Committee on the District of Columbia from the 96th Congress until his resignation from the panel in 1985. In the 98th Congress (1983–1985), Leland served on the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families. In 1984, Leland convinced the House to create the Select Committee on Hunger, a panel he chaired from its founding until his death. Leland was an active member of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), which he chaired during the 99th Congress (1985–1987).

To best serve the large Mexican-American population in his district, Leland learned Spanish. He once surprised his colleagues by arguing in Spanish on the House Floor in favor of maintaining clauses in the Voting Rights Act that required local election offices to provide voting information in languages other than English. "Many of you cannot understand me," Leland said in Spanish. "And even though you cannot understand me when I speak Spanish maybe you can begin to understand the hypocrisy of our political system which excludes the participation of Hispanic-Americans only for having a different culture and speaking a different language." His bilingualism also allowed him to develop a controversial relationship with Cuban leader Fidel Castro. Leland disagreed emphatically with Castro's political philosophy but respected his influence among poorer nations. In 1979, Leland and Ronald V. Dellums of California met with Castro at the Cuban Mission to the United Nations in New York City.[5]

From his seat on the Energy and Commerce Committee, Leland sought to diversify the telecommunications industry. He took on television executives and advocated for the hiring of more minority employees for on- and off-screen positions. He supported the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) policy to provide tax breaks to corporations that sold broadcast stations to women and people of color, which it adopted in 1978. In 1986, the FCC, under the Ronald Reagan administration, ended its minority preference programs, prompting Leland to introduce a bill to codify the reneged policies into law. The following year, Congress passed an appropriations bill that required the FCC to reinstate its minority preference policy.[6]

Leland was an early advocate for establishing an African-American history museum in the nation's capital. He authored a nonbinding joint resolution expressing support for the construction of such a museum on federal land, which was signed into law in 1986. In 1989, he introduced legislation alongside John Lewis of Georgia to authorize a Black history museum within the Smithsonian Institution. Leland's advocacy helped pave the way for the eventual

congressional approval of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in 2003.[7]

Leland used his seat on the Post Office and Civil Service Committee to shield the United States Postal Service (USPS) from annual budget battles. With the passage of the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, the USPS had been required to cover its own operating expenses. The financially self-sufficient agency was then given "off-budget" status, meaning that its receipts and expenditures were not included in the federal budget or deficit, insulating it from political influence. In the mid-1980s, the Office of Management and Budget, under the Reagan administration, reincorporated the USPS into the budget, making it a target for budget cuts to help reduce the deficit. Leland sponsored a bill to permanently separate the agency's finances from the budget and exempt it from budget cuts and sequestrations. The bill passed the House and was incorporated into an omnibus reconciliation bill in 1989. As chair of the Subcommittee on Postal Personnel and Modernization, Leland held a series of hearings on mail scams, particularly those that targeted the elderly. He introduced a bill to enhance the Postal Inspection Service's investigatory powers to prevent fraud. A Senate version of the bill became law in 1983.[8]

As chair of the CBC, Leland twice presented the caucus's alternative budget, which outlined its members' priorities for federal spending. The 1985 and 1986 CBC budgets sought to redirect defense spending towards domestic social programs—including employment and education programs—while raising taxes on corporations and high-income earners. "A budget is not mearly [*sic*] a collection of stated ideas and goals, but the real life choice of how our Government cares and provides for its people," Leland stated.[9]

From the beginning of his congressional career, Leland looked abroad, focusing on international cooperation and exchange. One of his first acts in Congress was to fund a six-week trip to Israel to allow Black teenagers from the Houston area to learn about Jewish culture and to create a cross-cultural dialogue between young people in the two countries. Leland opposed the Reagan administration's Cold War policies in Latin America and criticized its efforts to block charitable organizations from providing humanitarian aid to Nicaragua while the administration was sending military aid to the Contras, the counter-revolutionary rebel groups opposed to the ruling socialist party in the Central American country. In an op-ed, Leland wrote that hunger and suffering were "compounded when humanitarian aid is allowed to become a tool of ideology or political strategy, instead of assessing the aid strictly on the basis on greatest need."[10]

Leland led the CBC at the height of its influence on U.S. foreign policy. A leading voice in the call for divestment in apartheid South Africa, Leland created the CBC's divestment task force and worked to identify the names of companies doing business in South Africa. Following the passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, Leland discovered that South African companies continued to invest in the U.S. market through indirect means. He introduced a bill that would have blocked all investments by South African mining corporations or related entities in the U.S. capital market.[11]

Leland spent most of his congressional career attempting to redirect U.S. foreign policy away from the military imperatives of the Cold War toward examining the inequalities between rich and poor nations. When famine struck East Africa in the early-1980s, Leland was an outspoken advocate for alleviating hunger on the continent. Throughout his first two terms, he lobbied for the creation of a congressional committee to focus on world poverty and hunger. While sympathetic to his cause, many Members provided less support than Leland requested, as they believed it would only add to Congress's bureaucracy. Leland also worked to alleviate domestic poverty and hunger, proposing tax exemptions for American companies that donated to food banks. In 1987, he spent a night on a Washington, DC, steam grate to emphasize the experience of people without housing, and he regularly raised aid for Houston-area food banks. He also introduced numerous bills aimed at boosting housing, food, health care, and education assistance programs for people experiencing homelessness. Leland often invoked two images from his frequent trips to Ethiopian refugee camps: a throng of starving people rubbing their stomachs and pleading for food and an Ethiopian girl who died in his arms as he turned to ask her caretakers about her condition. "Every day I see her face," Leland recalled.[12]

After gathering 258 cosponsors and the support of 60 national organizations, Leland realized his goal in 1984 of creating a congressional committee to examine global hunger and poverty when his resolution passed on February 22 by a vote of 309 to 78. He was appointed the first chair of the Select Committee on Hunger in the 98th Congress. Modeled after the Select Committee on Children, Youth

and Families, the Hunger Committee studied the effects of domestic and international hunger and poverty. In 1984, partially aided by publicity from American and British musicians, Leland's committee helped push through Congress the African Famine Relief and Recovery Act, which included $800 million in aid. The committee also evaluated the effectiveness of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), which coordinated federal aid to countries experiencing natural and man-made disasters. In a 1986 report, the committee determined that annual appropriations made to OFDA failed to keep up with inflation, while the number of victims of global disasters had increased greatly since the office's establishment in 1964. The committee report recommended doubling OFDA's annual appropriation from an average of $25 to $50 million, with a larger portion of the funds to be allocated towards long-term disaster mitigation projects. On the domestic front, the committee played a key role in the passage of the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988, which bolstered funding for food stamps and school meal programs and authorized the Agriculture Department to purchase greater amounts of agricultural commodities to make available for food banks.[13]

Leland traveled frequently to Africa, often guiding Members and their staffs to refugee camps so they could witness firsthand how aid money was being used. On August 7, 1989, he took advantage of the congressional summer recess to visit a refugee camp near the Sudanese-Ethiopian border. Shortly after his plane took off from Addis Ababa, it crashed over a mountainous region in Ethiopia while navigating a storm. All 15 people aboard were killed, including Leland and three congressional aides. Out of mutual respect for Leland, the United States and Ethiopia temporarily repaired their strained diplomatic relations, and Ethiopian military leader Mengistu Haile Mariam allowed American military planes to search for Leland's downed aircraft. The U.S. military discovered the wreckage after seven days of searching, and a congressional delegation accompanied Leland's remains to Texas for burial.[14]

Leland was widely eulogized. Visitors poured into his Capitol Hill office to offer their condolences. Staff in the neighboring office occupied by Representative George W. Crockett Jr. of Michigan helped field the overwhelming number of phone calls. Communities touched by Leland were quick to honor him: The CBC renamed its humanitarian award for him in 1989, Houston International Airport named its largest terminal for him, and the NAACP sponsored a project to plant trees in Africa in his name. The tragedy of Leland's death was compounded when Alison Leland gave birth in January 1990 to premature twin sons, Cameron George and Austin Mickey, five months after her husband's death. Democratic leaders in the House led a fundraiser to collect donations for Leland's three children. Alison Leland declined an offer to run for her husband's vacant House seat. With her support, Houston-area state legislator Craig A. Washington succeeded Leland in the December 9 special election. Without Leland's forceful support and leadership, the House disbanded the Select Committee on Hunger in the 103rd Congress (1993–1995).[15]

Manuscript Collection

Texas Southern University, Mickey Leland Center on Hunger, Poverty, and World Peace (Houston, TX). *Papers*: 1970–1989, 653 boxes. The collection documents Mickey Leland's public service career as a Texas state representative and as a U.S. Representative. Materials include correspondence, news clippings, artifacts, photographs, audio and videotapes, speeches, news releases, committee testimony, and casework. Topics include health care for the poor, prison reform, police harassment and brutality, racial discrimination, affirmative action, budget discrimination in higher education, labor legislation, political election organization, infant mortality, minority rights in business, health education, apartheid and global racial discrimination, developing countries, emergency shelters for the homeless, nutrients for the malnourished, and food security. A finding aid is available online.

Notes

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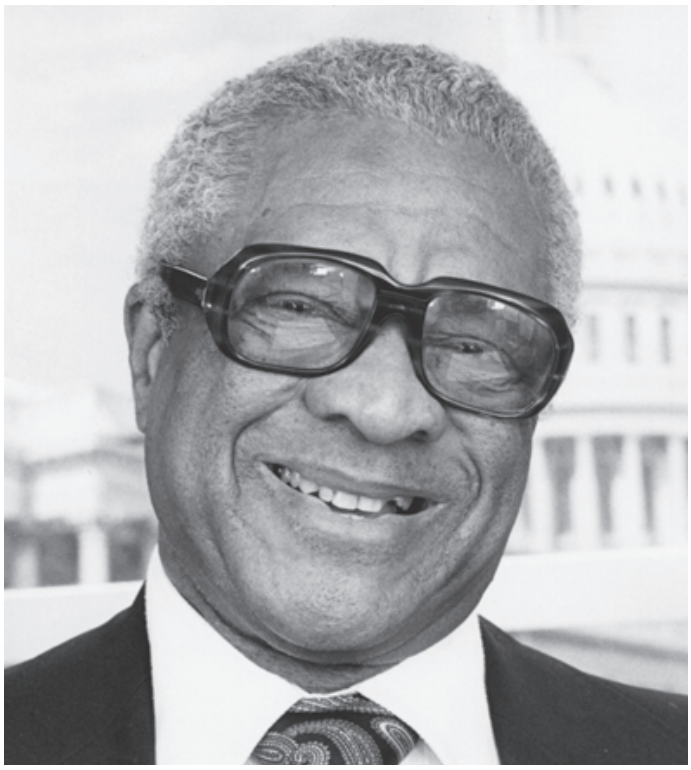
Bennett M. Stewart

1912–1988

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1979–1981

Democrat from Illinois



Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1978, Bennett M. Stewart continued a 50-year tradition of African-American representation in Congress from Chicago's South Side that began with the election of Representative Oscar De Priest of Illinois in 1928. Aligned with Chicago's waning political machine, Stewart used his seat on the powerful Appropriations Committee to direct federal resources to his district and advocate for economic and social development initiatives rather than defense funding. "Only when we transfer our national priorities from the arms race, will we address adequately the needs of the human race," he said on the House Floor.[1]

Bennett McVey Stewart was born in Huntsville, Alabama, on August 6, 1912, to Bennett Stewart and Cathleen Jones. He attended public schools in Huntsville and graduated from high school in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1932. In 1936, Stewart received a bachelor's degree from Miles College, in Birmingham, where he met his future wife, Pattye Crittenden. The couple married in 1938 and had three children: Bennett Jr., Ronald, and Miriam. From 1936 to 1938, Stewart served as assistant principal of Irondale High School in Birmingham. Stewart returned to Miles College as an associate professor of sociology from 1938 until 1940, when he began an 18-year career as an insurance company executive. When the insurance company expanded its operations to Illinois, Stewart was assigned to Chicago in 1950 to oversee its new offices. In 1968, Stewart left the private sector to work as an inspector with Chicago's building department and as an advisor for the city's department of urban renewal. His positions with the city sparked his involvement in politics, and, in 1971, Stewart won election to the Chicago city council from the twenty-first ward. A year later, he was elected to serve on the Democratic committee for the same ward; he held both offices until 1978.[2]

When Chicago Representative Ralph H. Metcalfe died unexpectedly only weeks before the general election in 1978, a power struggle to fill the vacant House seat erupted on the city's South Side. For decades, Mayor Richard J. Daley's political machine dominated Chicago's municipal government. Metcalfe, who had once been linked to Daley, had broken with the mayor over the issue of police brutality, significantly weakening the machine in Chicago's South Side Black neighborhoods. After Daley's death in 1976, his machine, although weakened, managed to maintain its hold over city hall. As a result, when Metcalfe died in 1978, the machine stepped in to dictate the terms of his replacement in Congress.[3]

To replace Metcalfe, Chicago's political bosses turned to Stewart, who had remained loyal to the Democratic city organization. Although some believed that Metcalfe's son would seek the Democratic nomination, or that Black leaders would stage a write-in campaign to re-elect Metcalfe posthumously in order to force a special election, the ten ward committeemen from the First Congressional District selected Stewart as the Democratic nominee. Many of Metcalfe's supporters in the district resented the closed nomination process and believed that Stewart had few qualifications for the job. In the general election, Stewart faced A.A. "Sammy" Rayner, a former alderman and perennial candidate for the congressional seat who ran as a Republican. Two years earlier, Metcalfe had dominated Rayner with 92 percent of the vote. But on Election Day in 1978, Stewart defeated Rayner with just 58 percent of the vote—an abnormal, narrow margin of victory in the heavily Democratic district. Stewart took his seat in the 96th Congress (1979–1981) and received a premier assignment on the Committee on Appropriations. Stewart and Julian C. Dixon of California, elected the same year, became just the third and fourth Black lawmakers in congressional history to serve on the Appropriations Committee.[4]

During his short tenure in the House, Stewart focused on the needs of his Chicago constituents. He vigorously supported federal loan guarantees for the Chrysler Corporation, which employed more than 1,500 workers in his district but faced financial collapse in 1979. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, Stewart backed federal emergency relief to provide low-income Americans with heating assistance. The funding, he said, was "a small price to pay to help alleviate the burdens imposed on the poor," including many of his constituents back home in Chicago. Stewart served on the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on the Department of Transportation and was appointed to the conference committees for the 1980 and 1981 transportation appropriations bills, working with members of the Senate to finalize the bills for the President's signature. He touted the 1981 transportation bill for allocating a minimum of $100 million for improvements to mass transit and highway systems in the Chicago area. Stewart also introduced a bill to extend the length of public service employment programs, citing the necessity for a longer transition period for residents of cities like Chicago, which had a higher rate of unemployment than the national average. In 1980, Stewart requested a General Accounting Office (GAO) analysis of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). Prompted by a charge of financial misconduct, the GAO revealed that inefficient management had driven the CHA to the verge of bankruptcy.[5]

In 1979, Stewart criticized a proposed constitutional amendment to prohibit public school busing. He recalled the humiliating segregation practices he had grown up with in Birmingham and called the proposal an "attempt to undermine the Fourteenth Amendment." "If we eliminate busing we re-create a system of segregation in the United States," he wrote. Like Representative Metcalfe before him, Stewart introduced legislation designating February as Black History Month. "We must not continue to permit the history and heritage of black people to be ignored," Stewart exclaimed. "If we educate our Nation's youth, black and white, about the heritage of our whole society we may be able to eliminate racial tensions that have existed in the past." Stewart also urged Congress to recognize the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by creating a federal holiday in honor of King's work on behalf of civil rights and racial equality in America.[6]

Having secured the endorsement of Democratic leaders from the South Side for a second term in Congress, Stewart nonetheless faced mounting dissension in his party. Typically, the machine's nominee faced minimal opposition in the primary. But some local politicians continued to resent the strong-arm tactics of party leaders who chose Stewart to replace Metcalfe after his sudden death two years earlier. In 1980, Stewart faced three well-known opponents in the Democratic primary: Harold Washington, an Illinois state senator; John Stroger, a Cook County commissioner; and Ralph Metcalfe Jr., the son of the late Representative. In the end, Stewart placed a distant third behind Metcalfe and the winner, Washington, who captured nearly 50 percent of the vote.[7]

After leaving Congress, Stewart served as interim director of the Chicago department of inter-governmental affairs from 1981 to 1983 and served on the staff of Chicago Mayor Jane Byrne. Stewart lived in Chicago until his death on April 26, 1988.[8]

Manuscript Collection

Chicago History Museum, Research Center (Chicago, IL). *Papers*: 1971–1983, 0.5 linear feet. The papers include correspondence, speeches, awards, and aldermanic campaign disclosure material from Bennett M. Stewart's time as alderman of Chicago's 21st Ward (1971–1978) and as a U.S. Representative from the First Congressional District of Illinois (1979–1980). *Photographs*: ca. 1971–1985, 461

images. Visual materials span Stewart's political career as a Chicago alderman and U.S. Representative, including portraits of Stewart and group portraits with local and national political figures.

Notes

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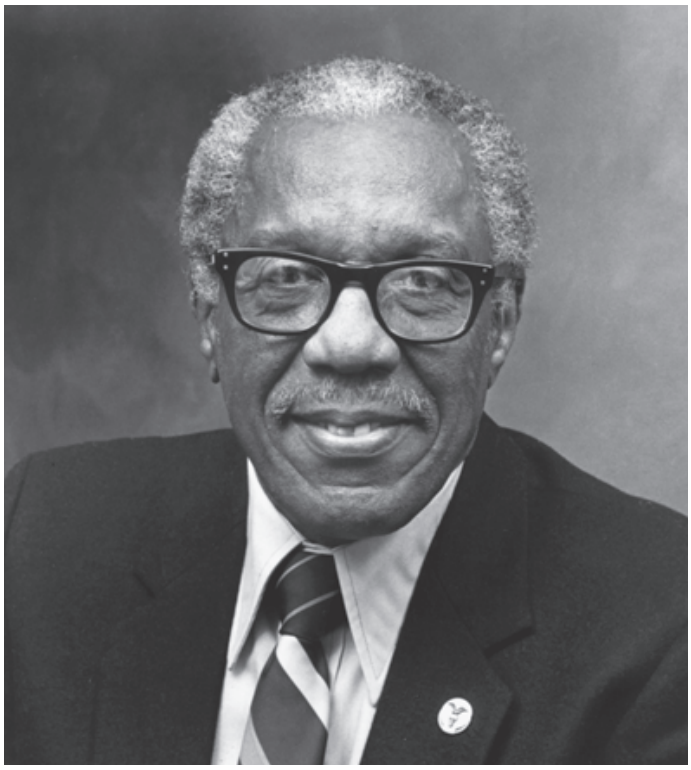
George W. Crockett Jr.

1909–1997

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1980–1991

Democrat from Michigan



Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

George W. Crockett Jr. won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1980 after a lengthy career as a lawyer and a judge. At age 71, he was the oldest African-American Member ever elected to Congress. The Michigan Representative came to the House with a reputation as a tireless civil rights advocate and a staunch defender of civil liberties. In the House, Crockett was known for challenging the Ronald Reagan administration's interventionist foreign policy and instead prioritized economic development programs, both domestically and abroad. "The people in my Detroit district do not believe that our national security is linked solely to our ability to deter military attack," he said. "Let us confront the world not with a greater nuclear destructive possibility, but with healthy bodies and better educated minds."[1]

Born in Jacksonville, Florida, on August 10, 1909, George William Crockett Jr. was the son of George Crockett Sr., a carpenter, and Minnie Jenkins Crockett. He attended public schools in his native city and graduated with a bachelor's degree from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1931. Crockett went north to study law at the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, where he earned a law degree in 1934. That same year he married Dr. Ethelene Jones, the first Black woman to practice obstetrics and gynecology in Michigan and the first woman president of the American Lung Association. The couple had three children: Elizabeth Ann Hicks, George William Crockett III, and Ethelene Crockett Jones. After his wife died in 1978, Crockett married Harriette Clark Chambliss, a pediatrician with two sons, in 1980.[2]

Crockett worked in Jacksonville, Florida, and Fairmont, West Virginia, as a lawyer in private practice. In West Virginia, he organized a new branch of the NAACP and campaigned for Senator Matthew Mansfield Neely, an ally of the labor movement. His early experiences with politics took him to Washington, DC, in 1939 as the first African-American attorney with the U.S. Department of Labor. Though he progressed quickly through the ranks, he soon faced blatant employment discrimination when he was told that a Black attorney could not lead his legal division. Crockett left the Department, and, in 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed him a hearing examiner with the Fair Employment Practices Committee. A year later, he moved to Detroit, Michigan, to direct a Fair Employment Practices office with the United Auto Workers. During this time, he remained active in the legal

defense of labor unions and civil rights organizers and represented clients before the House Un-American Activities Committee, which often targeted activists and their associates for investigation.[3]

In 1949, Crockett made national news for defending 11 Communist leaders accused of subversion against the U.S. government under the Smith Act, a law which made advocating for or teaching about the overthrow of the government by force or violence a criminal offense. Though he was warned that defending Communists in federal court could hurt his public image, Crockett took the case because "if communists' rights were abridged, Blacks' rights would soon be crushed." All 11 were convicted. Upon the conclusion of the nine-month proceedings, the judge also found Crockett and the other defense attorneys in contempt of court and sentenced them to jail for allegedly disrupting courtroom proceedings throughout the trial. The Supreme Court eventually upheld the penalty. Recalling his four-month prison term, Crockett said, "I think I have always been a champion of the underdog in our society and, if anything, that segregated prison life probably pushed me a little farther along the road." Crockett also argued before the Supreme Court on behalf of Eugene Dennis, the top defendant in the 1949 trial, for an earlier sentence for contempt of Congress and was one of the defense lawyers in the influential case *Dennis v. United States*, which upheld the convictions of the Communist leaders and the constitutionality of the controversial Smith Act.[4]

During his pre-congressional career, Crockett established a solid civil rights record. He helped found Michigan's first integrated law firm and organized the Mississippi Project to provide free legal services for civil rights workers imprisoned in Mississippi. When members of the Ku Klux Klan set fire to a Black church in Philadelphia, Mississippi, Crockett strategized with Michael Schwerner, a civil rights volunteer, on how to hold the arsonists accountable in court. Schwerner and fellow activists James Chaney and Andrew Goodman were murdered the next day, June 21, 1964, after investigating the church fire, though their bodies were not discovered for another six weeks. Crockett was among those who investigated their disappearance, which sparked national outrage and further galvanized the civil rights movement.[5]

Upon his return to Detroit, Crockett unsuccessfully ran for a city council seat in 1965, but the publicity helped him win election the following year as a judge of the recorder's court, which had jurisdiction over felony cases in Detroit. Crockett served on the court from 1966 to 1978 and was its presiding official for the latter four years. He often dispensed lenient sentences for defendants arrested in civil rights protests. Crockett, who thought that African-American judges should be the "conscience of the judiciary," garnered national attention in 1969 when he released more than 100 members of a Black separatist group after a violent encounter with the Detroit police. Crockett defended his actions by asking, "Can any of you imagine the Detroit police invading an all-white church and rounding up everyone in sight to be bused to a wholesale lockup in a police garage?" After retiring from the recorder's court, he served as a visiting judge on the Michigan court of appeals and as corporation counsel for the city of Detroit.[6]

As a celebrated leader in Detroit's Black community, Crockett entered the race for the House seat left vacant by the resignation of Charles C. Diggs Jr. in 1980. The overwhelmingly Democratic congressional district, entirely within the city limits of Detroit, encompassed the downtown commercial center. During his campaign, Crockett promised to fight unemployment, improve health care, and provide housing opportunities for the residents of Detroit. Known for his integrity and civil rights record, Crockett won endorsements from Detroit Mayor Coleman A. Young and former Representative Diggs, and secured the Democratic nomination with a 42 percent plurality in the crowded August primary. He easily defeated his Republican opponent, Theodore Wallace, with 92 percent of the vote in the 1980 special election for the remainder of the 96th Congress (1979–1981). He also defeated Republican M. Michael Hurd in the general election for the full term in the 97th Congress (1981–1983), again earning 92 percent of the vote. Crockett retained his House seat for another four terms, rarely facing any formidable challenge in the majority-Black district, except in his final primary run against future Representative Barbara-Rose Collins, when he collected 51 percent of the vote.[7]

Sworn in to office on November 12, 1980, Crockett was appointed to the Committee on Foreign Affairs during his partial first term and remained on the panel for the rest of his House career. In the 97th Congress, he briefly served on the Small Business Committee before switching to the Judiciary Committee—a spot he retained from 1982 through the 101st Congress (1989–1991). He also served on the Select Committee on Aging from the 97th Congress

until his retirement at the end of the 101st Congress. During the 100th and 101st Congresses (1987–1991), Crockett chaired the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, which oversaw U.S. policy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the House, Crockett focused on constituent services and used his committee seats to bring attention to important issues. The Michigan Representative explained, "We have enough legislation now to take care of just about every situation that arises, if we will just enforce it and apply it." He did, on occasion, make exceptions to this practice. In 1984, for instance, Crockett authored a resolution calling for the release of Nelson Mandela, the imprisoned South African leader; the Mandela Freedom Resolution went on to pass the House. Throughout his tenure in Congress, he remained a consistent critic of the apartheid regime and was arrested in 1984 for participating in a demonstration outside the South African Embassy. Although he was not a legislator focused on introducing bills, he did take an active role in drawing attention to aspects of U.S. foreign policy he found troubling.[8]

When conservative groups questioned Crockett's appointment to chair the Western Hemisphere Affairs Subcommittee, he replied that he had "never collaborated with the Communist Party as such," Crockett said. "Admittedly, some of the positions I've taken, dictated by the U.S. Constitution, have coincided with desires and positions of the Communist Party, like supporting freedom of speech." During his first year as chair, Crockett held a hearing to examine the State Department's lack of diversity, which he believed projected "a white male image to a world whose population is dominated by people of color." Based on his interest in foreign policy, Crockett served as a member of the U.S. delegation to the 42nd General Assembly of the United Nations in 1987 and 1988. He also traveled with a U.S. congressional delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Havana, Cuba, in 1981, and to the Seventh United Nations Congress on Prevention of Crime meeting in Milan, Italy, in 1984.[9]

As subcommittee chair, the Detroit Representative criticized President Ronald Reagan's foreign policy in the Americas. While considering the 1988 foreign aid authorization bill, Crockett criticized the administration's funding request because it allocated more than half of the aid available for the Western Hemisphere to just four Central American countries. Noting that "there is a lot more to the Western Hemisphere than Central America," he signaled his intent to focus on delivering aid to the Caribbean. During his last term in office, he proposed several bills to provide grants for the economic development of Caribbean nations, particularly in the agriculture and tourism industries.[10]

Crockett strongly opposed the Reagan administration's support of the anti-Communist Contras in Nicaragua, believing that the use of military aid "does more to prolong military conflicts, to drain resources from needed economic development, and to create political instability than it does to further the needs of the people." When the President sent the U.S. military into Grenada, Crockett unsuccessfully sought passage of a committee amendment directing the President to withdraw the troops within 30 days, a power afforded to Congress under the War Powers Resolution. When the President sent military aid to the Salvadoran government following that country's descent into civil war, Crockett brought a lawsuit against the administration for violating the Foreign Assistance Act, which prohibits sending aid to governments engaged in human rights abuses.[11]

Only a few months after President George H.W. Bush proposed more stringent antidrug policies in September 1989, Crockett made headlines as the first Member of Congress to call for the decriminalization of drugs. The former judge, known for taking controversial positions, noted, "Our courts are burdened down with these drug cases and there is nothing we can do about it." Crockett likened the U.S. criminalization of drugs to the prohibition of alcohol in the 1920s and argued that as long as there was demand for drugs, simply prosecuting suppliers would be an ineffective tactic on its own. He pointed out that federal money slotted for drug enforcement could be invested in housing and vocational programs to help his constituents and other impoverished Americans, which he believed would reduce the "unrelenting hopelessness" that he said fueled drug use.[12]

From his seat on the Judiciary Committee, Crockett confronted the disproportionate levels of scrutiny faced by Black politicians and public officials. In 1983, he wrote a letter to Judiciary Chair Peter Wallace Rodino Jr. of New Jersey requesting an investigation into the conduct of federal prosecutors, whom he believed were abusing grand jury proceedings to publicly smear Black officials. In his letter he referenced the attempted prosecution of

Alcee L. Hastings, a Black federal judge in Florida, who was accused of soliciting bribes in a criminal case in exchange for giving the defendants a lighter sentence. In 1988, the Judiciary Committee approved articles of impeachment against Hastings. During the markup, Crockett was the only Member to vote no on several articles—which accused the judge of making false statements during his bribery trial and leaking the contents of an FBI wiretap in a separate case—because he believed the allegations lacked evidence. Crockett did, however, vote for one article on the charge of soliciting bribes. Before the vote, he indicated his concern over what he considered to be "open season on black public officials," but concluded that, in Hastings's case, "an honest effort was made to put racism aside."[13]

In March 1990, at the age of 80, Crockett announced his intention to retire from the House: "After 68 years of working, I'm hoping to enjoy a little time off." The Michigan Representative denied that his decision had been influenced by the prospect of another difficult primary race against Barbara-Rose Collins. "I've just gotten older and wiser," he said. In his retirement Crockett continued his record of activism, joining the Detroit branch of the NAACP in its fight in 1996 to prevent the closing of the Detroit recorder's court, the court where Crockett began his career as a judge. On September 7, 1997, Crockett died of complications from cancer and a stroke.[14]

Manuscript Collection

Howard University, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center (Washington, DC). *Papers*: 1980–1990, 190 linear feet. The papers of George W. Crockett Jr. consist of speeches, photographs, correspondence, and other material documenting his legislative activities, particularly his service on the House Select Committee on Aging, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Judiciary Committee. An inventory is available at the repository.

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Mervyn M. Dymally

1926–2012

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1981–1993

Democrat from California

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

During his six terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, Mervyn M. Dymally was a prominent advocate for human rights and economic development across the globe. With a seat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Dymally traveled the world to help shape U.S. foreign policy, particularly toward nations in the Caribbean and Africa. He also served as a subcommittee chair on three different standing committees. Born in Trinidad, Dymally championed immigrant rights as well as proposals designed to direct federal funding for programs in his California district.

Mervyn Malcolm Dymally was born on May 12, 1926, in Cedros, Trinidad, in the British West Indies, to Hamid and Andreid (Richardson) Dymally. He attended Cedros Government School and graduated from St. Benedict and Naparima Secondary School in Trinidad in 1944. Dymally worked as a janitor and a labor organizer early in his career. He also worked as a reporter, covering labor issues for *The Vanguard*, a weekly newspaper published by the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union. Inspired by the story of Booker T. Washington, a Black educator and the founder of Alabama's Tuskegee University, Dymally moved to the U.S. when he was 19 to study journalism at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. After a semester, he transferred to Chapman University in Southern California. He said of his early years in the United States, "I came to L.A. in 1949. Those periods were waiting for that golden apple tree that I'd read about. … I couldn't find that gold tree, and I was searching for that. But I always worked, always found some kind of job. It's a matter of survival." Dymally earned a bachelor's degree in education from California State University in Los Angeles in 1954. After college, he taught students with functional needs for six years in Los Angeles. He earned a master's degree in government from California State University in Sacramento in 1969 and a Ph.D. in human behavior from the United States International University in San Diego in 1978. He married Alice M. Gueno, an educator from New Orleans, and they raised two children: Mark and Lynn.[1]

While working as a teacher, Dymally volunteered as a campaign worker and later worked as a field representative for the American Federation of Teachers. He joined the California Young Democrats and became the organization's state treasurer. In 1960, he campaigned for the Democratic candidate, John F. Kennedy.[2]

In 1962, Dymally won election to the California state assembly from a district in southern Los Angeles County.

He succeeded assemblyman Augustus F. "Gus" Hawkins, who had won a U.S. House seat. Dymally became the first foreign-born Black candidate elected to the California legislature. Four years later, he became the first African-American candidate elected to the California senate, where he chaired the senate Democratic caucus. Dymally chaired three full committees—social welfare; military and veterans affairs; and elections and reapportionment—as well as the joint committee on legal equality for women, from which he authored the legislation that eventually resulted in the state's ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. He also was chairman of the California state Black caucus. For Dymally, politics was "the cutting edge in the entire civil-rights movement," and he sought to break down barriers to public office and use legislative power to rectify injustice. In 1974, Dymally was elected lieutenant governor of California—becoming the first African-American official to win statewide office in California. His campaign focused on the state's energy and environmental concerns as well as on equal rights for women. "I'm not shying away from race questions, but neither am I running a campaign on black issues," he noted during the contest. He served as lieutenant governor until 1979, heading the state commission for economic development and the commission of the Californias—a joint committee to facilitate collaboration with Mexican officials. In 1978, he lost re-election to Republican Mike Curb.[3]

In 1980, Dymally entered the Democratic primary for a diverse U.S. congressional district that encompassed suburbs in southern Los Angeles County—Gardena, Compton, Torrance, and Hawthorne—which had a population that was more than 60 percent Black, Latino, and Asian American. While the west side of the district contained affluent businesses, the east side, home to mostly working-class Black residents, had an unemployment rate of 40 percent. Representative Charles Herbert Wilson had represented the Democratic-leaning district for nearly two decades, with no serious opposition until the late 1970s. But in 1980, Wilson entered the primary while under investigation by the House Ethics Committee for financial misconduct. Dymally faced Wilson and former U.S. Representative Mark Warren Hannaford of California in a three-way race. Dymally had a core group of support among African-American voters and the backing of then-California assemblyman Howard Lawrence Berman and U.S. Representative Henry Arnold Waxman—two of his allies from his days in the state legislature. As a candidate, Dymally organized meetings with Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. and community leaders to gather information about the most pressing issues in the district. Their concerns mostly centered around access to federal funds for local projects, including community policing efforts in the district and the construction of the Century Freeway—a highway connecting the city of Norwalk with Los Angeles International Airport. To address the district's unemployment, Dymally believed enhancing the aerospace industry would create more jobs for the area. In the Democratic primary, Dymally received 51 percent of the vote while Hannaford and Wilson received 25 and 16 percent, respectively. In the general election, Dymally won handily over Republican candidate Don Grimshaw, capturing 64 percent of the vote.[4]

Though its borders changed during a later reapportionment, Dymally's district remained heavily Democratic (more than 70 percent by the end of the 1980s) during his 12 years in office. By 1992, it included large portions of Carson and the Los Angeles neighborhoods Watts and Wilmington, in addition to Compton and Lynwood. In his subsequent five re-elections Dymally prevailed easily with 70 percent or more of the vote.[5]

When Dymally took his seat in the House in January 1981, he won assignments on three committees: Foreign Affairs; the District of Columbia; and Science and Technology. In the 98th Congress (1983–1985), Dymally left his post on Science and Technology for a seat on the Post Office and Civil Service Committee. He served on that panel, Foreign Affairs, and the District of Columbia Committee until he retired in 1993. For a single term in the 99th Congress (1985–1987), Dymally also served on the Education and Labor Committee. In the 100th Congress (1987–1989), he chaired the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC).

Democratic leadership named Dymally chair of the District of Columbia's Subcommittee on Judiciary and Education during his first term. He served in this position for the remainder of his congressional career and sponsored several bills relating to the District's judicial system that became law. As a member of the committee, he supported statehood for the majority-Black city and increased funding for education programs. Dymally served briefly as the Post Office and Civil Service's Postal Personnel and Modernization Subcommittee chairman—an assignment he welcomed because many of his constituents were postal

workers. As chair of that committee's Census and Population Subcommittee, Dymally passed a bill into law that extended some federal workplace rights to postal workers.[6]

Having immigrated to the United States after growing up in Trinidad, Dymally hoped to use his own experiences to help shape U.S. foreign policy from his seat on the Foreign Affairs Committee. Early in his career, Dymally focused on political, economic, and immigrant concerns affecting countries in the Caribbean. He introduced legislation such as the Caribbean Infrastructure Assistance Act and the Caribbean-Central America Higher Education Act, but neither of the bills made it to the House Floor for debate. He also founded the CBC's Caribbean Task Force and criticized the Ronald Reagan administration's treatment and detainment of Haitian refugees.[7]

As chair of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Operations (101st Congress; 1989–1991) and the Subcommittee on Africa (102nd Congress; 1991–1993), Dymally became a leading spokesperson on human rights and economic development around the globe. He was a prominent critic of apartheid in South Africa and called for U.S. sanctions against its minority-White government. He introduced a resolution to condemn nations that disregarded a South African arms embargo and then strongly opposed the George H.W. Bush administration's efforts to end sanctions in 1991. "The basic life for blacks in South Africa has not changed," Dymally said, adding that sanctions should be lifted only when the country created a democratic government. He advocated for a U.S. aid package to advance the process. In 1985, Dymally joined British officials in calling for the United Nations to pressure South Africa to grant Namibia its independence and, two years later, supported UN supervision over Namibian democratic elections. In 1990, he and fellow California Representative Ronald V. Dellums proposed an amendment to the Intelligence Authorization Act to prohibit covert U.S. military action in Angola. Dymally was also critical of Israel for continuing its trade with South Africa and suppressing Palestinian protests in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. He was a steadfast supporter of the creation of a Palestinian state.[8]

Dymally also focused on international issues as chair of the CBC. In 1987, the Prime Minister of Japan made an offensive comment about the intelligence of African Americans and other people of color living in the United States. The CBC claimed this comment was part of a long-standing prejudice some Japanese corporations held that led to the lack of Black employees in Japanese firms as well as limited deals between Japanese companies and African-American business owners. In response, Dymally led a delegation to Japan to discuss the country's relationship with Black businesses in the United States. "We do not want this to be perceived as Blacks against the Japanese," Dymally stated. "This is a basic issue of international economic justice. We also are looking at addressing this question with South Africa, West Germany, the United Kingdom, and other foreign manufacturers who sell consumer goods without ever owning up to corporate responsibility."[9]

For his California district, Dymally backed federal defense spending on projects for the Los Angeles-based aerospace industry and worked with aerospace companies to create federal grants for California high school students pursuing careers in science and technology. He also opposed the Reagan administration's funding cuts to federal housing, employment, and education initiatives that benefited his constituents in South Los Angeles. Along with California Representatives Gus Hawkins and Julian C. Dixon, Dymally opposed the Reagan administration's proposed cuts to the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, which funded subsidized jobs throughout the country. In 1981, the three Representatives hosted a forum in Los Angeles and asked their constituents to report job losses so the CBC could coordinate a response.[10]

To connect with his constituents, Dymally held seven public seminars across the district each year. At one of these events, a constituent discussed ongoing efforts to grant reparations to Japanese Americans interned by the U.S. government during World War II. In December 1982, Dymally introduced the Japanese-American and Aleut-American Relocation and Internment Individual Redress Act, becoming one of the first Representatives to propose legislation to pay monetary compensation directly to individual detainees. His bill came only two years after the creation of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Interment of Civilians, which Congress established in 1980 to understand the history and consequences of internment. Dymally recalled that he knew the bill "wasn't going to pass, but it was going to educate the public." He also introduced legislation designed to establish a community fund to pay compensation to those who had been detained during the war. In September 1987, Dymally spoke on the House Floor backing the redress effort. He called the internment

of Japanese Americans a case of "blatant discrimination" and demanded compensation for those who were stripped of their property. In 1988, Congress passed the Civil Liberties Act, which authorized payment to surviving detainees.[11]

Dymally also worked to assist a small constituency of Filipino World War II veterans living in California. In 1942, Congress passed a law allowing non-citizens serving with U.S. forces to become naturalized, but the Philippines had been excluded because of Japanese occupation. Dymally introduced five bills between 1984 and 1989 to enable Filipino veterans to become eligible for citizenship. In a 1989 subcommittee hearing that considered one of his bills, Dymally told his colleagues that "we are legally and morally obligated to return the promise of the Congress of 1942. As a nation that promotes equality, fairness and justice globally, we must keep our promise to the Filipinos." In 1990, he worked with Senator Daniel Ken Inouye of Hawaii to successfully include the provision in the Immigration and Nationality Act, signed by President Bush.[12]

In February 1992, Dymally announced that he would retire from the House at the end of the 102nd Congress. "I did not get elected to stay in office forever," Dymally remarked. "I have no regrets. The people have supported me. They have permitted me to be independent and even wrong sometimes." Though he endorsed his daughter, Lynn, to succeed him, Compton Mayor Walter R. Tucker III won the Democratic primary and easily prevailed in the general election for Dymally's vacant seat.[13]

In his retirement, Dymally worked as a foreign affairs consultant for Caribbean, African, and Asian interests. In 2002, he was elected to the California state assembly to represent a district that encompassed South Los Angeles and the cities of Compton, Paramount, and Long Beach. In the state assembly, Dymally was elected chair of the Democratic study group, which developed progressive legislation. In 2008, he ran to serve a second time in the state senate but lost to assemblyman Rod Wright. He also taught as a professor at the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles and led the university's Urban Health Institute. Mervyn Dymally died on October 7, 2012, in Los Angeles.[14]

Manuscript Collection

California State University, Los Angeles, Special Collections (Los Angeles, CA). *Papers*: ca. 1962–1993, approximately 440 linear feet. The papers of Mervyn M. Dymally document his service in the California state assembly, California state senate, and his tenure as California lieutenant governor. The collection includes correspondence, press clippings, press releases, speeches, and photographs.

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Gus Savage

1925–2015

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1981–1993

Democrat from Illinois

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

In 1980, Gus Savage, a veteran civil rights activist and pioneer African-American journalist, used his strong community ties to earn a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives from the South Side of Chicago. During his 12 years in Congress, Savage's personality and militant approach to highlighting racial inequalities in his district and around the nation made headlines and often provoked controversy. "I value my independence," Savage avowed. "And I view struggle as desirable. I don't crave acceptance. I march to my own tune. If the machine doesn't like it, that's tough. If my colleagues don't like it, that's also tough."[1]

Born in Detroit, Michigan, on October 30, 1925, Augustus Alexander "Gus" Savage moved to the South Side of Chicago with his family at age five. He attended public schools in Chicago, graduating from Wendell Phillips High School in 1943. Savage served in a segregated unit of the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1946; the racial discrimination he experienced in the military led to a lifelong fight against inequality. After he completed a tour of duty in World War II, Savage attended Roosevelt University in Chicago, where he earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy in 1951. Enrolled in Chicago-Kent College of Law during 1952 and 1953, he changed his career to journalism in 1954. At the height of the civil rights movement in 1965, Savage founded and published the Chicago-based *Citizen Newspapers*, the nation's largest Black-owned chain of independent weekly newspapers. Savage married Eunice King on August 4, 1946. The couple had two children: Thomas James and Emma Mae. Eunice King Savage was the general manager of *Citizen Newspapers* for 15 years. She died of lung cancer in 1981.[2]

Savage used his publications to combat discrimination in housing, employment, and labor unions. In the 1960s, he chaired Chicago's South End Voters Conference and led Protest at the Polls, an organization dedicated to electing Black officials independent from Chicago machine politics. Savage also served as the campaign manager for the Midwest League of Negro Voters. He organized and participated in a series of protests, including one against the National Tea Company—an advertiser in his newspapers—to draw attention to the company's poor record on minority hiring practices. He also had an important role reporting on the brutal lynching of Emmett Till, a 14-year-old African-American boy from Chicago who was murdered in Mississippi for allegedly whistling at a White woman. Savage edited and published *The American Negro: A Magazine*

of Protest, which was among the first publications to print the shocking photographs of Till's mutilated body. *Jet* and the *Chicago Defender* ran the images as well, laying bare for a national audience the devastating reality of racial violence against Black Americans.[3]

In 1948, Savage worked as a Progressive Party organizer for former Vice President Henry A. Wallace's presidential campaign against the incumbent, President Harry S. Truman. Savage also became involved in local politics as an outspoken critic of Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley and his party machine. Beginning in the 1960s, Savage used his newspapers to criticize the White power structure that dominated the city for much of the twentieth century. It was not long before he ran for office himself. Savage made five unsuccessful bids for elective office at the local and the national levels before eventually earning a seat in Congress. Savage twice challenged the Daley machine for a seat in Congress but was soundly defeated in 1968 by five-term incumbent William Thomas Murphy and in 1970 by the machine-backed candidate, Morgan Francis Murphy.[4]

When Representative Morgan Murphy announced his retirement from the House in December 1979, Savage joined the race to succeed him. Created in 1971, the predominantly African-American, working-class congressional district formed a U shape that encompassed much of Chicago's far South Side, several suburban neighborhoods, and an industrial area surrounding Lake Calumet. In the four-candidate Democratic primary, Savage faced another Daley machine candidate, Reginald Brown, who was the principal of the Chicago Vocational School, alongside two other Democrats. Savage emphasized his reputation as an independent politician and an alternative to the Chicago machine. After winning the primary by earning 45 percent of the vote, Savage trounced his Republican opponent in the general election with 88 percent of the vote, becoming the district's first African-American Representative. Savage joined two other Black politicians from Chicago—Cardiss Collins and Harold Washington—in the 97th Congress (1981–1983). It was the first time three African-American lawmakers represented Chicago simultaneously and a clear indication of the growing political influence of the city's Black voters.[5]

During his six terms in office, Savage served on three committees: Post Office and Civil Service; Public Works and Transportation; and Small Business. He also chaired the Public Works and Transportation Subcommittee on Economic Development during the 101st and 102nd Congresses (1989–1993).

Savage once observed that he viewed his election to the House as "a vehicle to effect change." And on Capitol Hill, he focused on advancing the rights of African Americans and improving conditions in his Chicago district. In a major legislative triumph, Savage sponsored an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for the 1987 fiscal year that reserved upwards of $25 billion in federal military contracts for minority-owned and -controlled businesses and institutions, as well as historically Black colleges and universities. "I would only remind our colleagues that our great Nation, America, was founded on an impossible dream, and America was built by doing the improbable," Savage said during debate on his measure. "Do not limit your goal to the attainable; set your goal at what is right." In 1988, he sponsored legislation to build a new federal office building in his district and urged the use of minority contractors for the project. Savage also sponsored measures to provide homebuyers with mortgage assistance and prevent foreclosures.[6]

Savage used his position in the House to advocate against practices that disproportionately affected Black Americans. The Chicago Representative joined his Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) colleagues in criticizing President Ronald Reagan's economic agenda during the 1980s. "Reagan is a reverse Robin Hood, robbing the poor and giving to the rich," he said, referring to a 1981 administration proposal that included tax cuts for the wealthy and decreased federal spending for programs to assist Americans living in poverty. He also found fault with much of the President's foreign policy, including the U.S. invasion of Grenada. Savage favored cuts for military programs such as the Strategic Defense Initiative—a space-based missile defense system touted by the Reagan administration—and called for a reduction of the armed forces. "I don't want to take young men into the Army to train them to kill," he said. "I'd rather we send them to college to train them to heal."[7]

On foreign policy matters, Savage worked to direct America's attention to African affairs. He toured the continent on congressional visits to Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zaire, Somalia, Angola, and Kenya. Savage was critical of congressional support for Israel, and consistently made anti-Semitic remarks about the power of lobbyists to influence Congress on Middle Eastern issues and provide campaign contributions to his opponents. Savage was also

one of only three Members of the House who voted against a resolution requesting that the United States withhold funds from the United Nations if Israel was barred from participating in General Assembly proceedings.[8]

Over the course of his career in Congress, Savage faced several investigations into his conduct. In 1981, he was involved in a confrontation with the District of Columbia police superintendent regarding a traffic violation his son committed, and, in 1984, he was the subject of an investigation by the Federal Election Commission about incomplete campaign finance reports. He was also criticized for his poor voting record and regular absences. In 1989, the House Ethics Committee, chaired by CBC member Julian C. Dixon of California, investigated Savage after he was accused of sexual harassment by a Peace Corps volunteer during an official congressional visit to Zaire. The subsequent public report condemned Savage's behavior but did not recommend punishment. Questioned by reporters, Savage said the "white racist" press had attacked him unfairly, asserting, "Black leadership is under attack in this county, and I'm the No. 1 target." Savage granted few interviews as a Representative, insisting the media distorted his image and record.[9]

Savage faced competitive primary races throughout his career and never received more than 52 percent of the vote. In three successive primaries he was opposed by Mel Reynolds, a former Rhodes Scholar and professor. Following the 1990 Census, the Illinois state legislature redrew Savage's district for the 1992 election cycle, expanding its boundaries to encompass more suburban neighborhoods. The new district lines ultimately aided Reynolds by depriving Savage of parts of neighborhoods in Chicago where his most loyal voters lived. Reynolds also received the endorsement of the influential African-American newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*. In 1992, Savage lost to Reynolds by an unexpectedly wide margin of 63 to 37 percent. After leaving the House in January 1993, Savage continued to live in Washington, DC. He died in Chicago on October 31, 2015, the day after his ninetieth birthday.[10]

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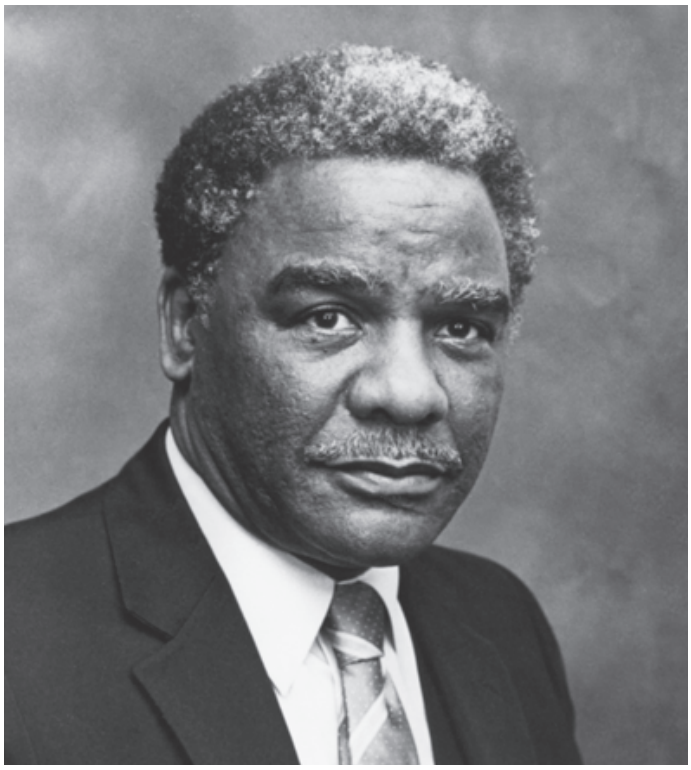
Harold Washington

1922–1987

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1981–1983

Democrat from Illinois



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In the early 1980s, Representative Harold Washington of Illinois served slightly more than one term in the U.S. House of Representatives before winning election as the first African-American mayor of Chicago. On Capitol Hill, Washington represented a South Side district with a celebrated history of electing Black lawmakers to Congress. Washington confronted the powerful party machines that for years had dictated the rhythms of Chicago politics. In the House, Washington worked to protect and open access to federal aid programs, and used his seat on the powerful Judiciary Committee to advance the cause of civil rights. "The reason my face and my name are known all over is because of the history of the Chicago political machine and the movement that brought it down," Washington remarked. "I just happened to be there at the right time to capitalize on it."[1]

Harold Washington was born on April 15, 1922, in Chicago, Illinois, to Bertha, an amateur singer and domestic worker, and Roy Lee Washington, a minister and lawyer. After his parents divorced in 1928, Washington lived with his father, who married Arlene Jackson, a local schoolteacher, in 1935. Washington's father was active in Chicago politics, serving as a precinct captain in the city's predominantly Black South Side. Washington accompanied his father to rallies and meetings and learned the intricacies of the political machine that dominated Chicago politics by observing future Representatives Arthur W. Mitchell, William L. Dawson, and Ralph H. Metcalfe. Washington attended Forrestville School and DuSable High School in Chicago before dropping out to work in a meatpacking factory and compete as an amateur boxer and a hurdler. In 1941, Washington married Dorothy Finch. The couple divorced in 1951. Drafted into the military in 1942, Washington served with the U.S. Army Air Corps unit of engineers in the Pacific until 1946. After World War II, he attended Roosevelt University in Chicago and served as class president during his senior year. After earning a bachelor's degree in political science in 1949, he went on to receive a law degree from Northwestern University's School of Law in 1952, joining his father in private law practice in Chicago after he passed the bar in 1953.[2]

When his father died in 1953, Washington succeeded him as a precinct captain in the third ward regular Democratic organization. Washington joined the city corporation counsel's office as an assistant prosecutor from 1954 to 1958, and in 1960, he started a four-year stint as an arbitrator for

the Illinois industrial commission. Washington served in the Illinois state house of representatives from 1965 to 1976 and in the Illinois state senate from 1976 to 1980. Although he was closely aligned with the city's political machine and often followed its "idiot card"—the derogatory name for the voting instructions assembled for machine candidates—Washington defied organization leaders on occasion, such as his votes for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), a fair housing code, and the establishment of a statewide holiday honoring civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. Despite facing some legal issues—Washington spent a month in jail on a 1971 conviction for failure to file income tax returns—he maintained support among his constituents.[3]

In 1977, following the sudden death of the powerful Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley, Washington ran to fill the vacancy. Washington had grown frustrated with the local Democratic organization, which he believed stifled Black politicians like himself who refused to fall into line on every issue, and challenged the machine-backed candidate, Michael Bilandic, for the Democratic mayoral nomination. As he struggled to raise campaign funds, he focused much of his attention on Chicago's South Side. During the campaign, he likened the city's Black population to a "sleeping giant," predicting that if "the potential black vote ever woke up, we'd control the city." In a field of four contenders, Washington finished third with 11 percent of the vote. Afterward, he promised voters that his split with the machine was permanent. "I'm going to do that which maybe I should have done 10 or 12 years ago," Washington exclaimed. "I'm going to stay outside that damned Democratic Party and give it hell."[4]

Three years later, Washington challenged first-term Representative Bennett M. Stewart, the machine's incumbent, in the 1980 Democratic primary for Chicago's South Side seat in the House. Washington was well known in the majority-Black district, which included middle-class and poor neighborhoods running south along Lake Michigan as well as Chicago's downtown commercial Loop. His earlier mayoral run had won him support among independent voters, and he benefited from local discontent with the city's political machine which, two years earlier, had all but handpicked Stewart to replace Representative Ralph Metcalfe in the House after his sudden death in 1978. In the 1980 primary, Washington garnered nearly 50 percent of the vote to defeat Stewart, who placed third in a field of four candidates that included Ralph Metcalfe Jr., the son of the late Representative. In the November general election, Washington trounced his Republican opponent, George Williams, securing 95 percent of the vote to earn a seat in the 97th Congress (1981–1983).[5]

Sworn in on January 3, 1981, Washington received assignments on three committees: Education and Labor; Judiciary; and Government Operations. Washington was the sixth consecutive African-American Representative from Chicago's South Side, a line of succession which began with Oscar De Priest's election to the House in 1928. Unlike his predecessors, however, Washington lacked the backing of the Chicago political establishment, and he continued his anti-machine posture on Capitol Hill.

Washington refused for weeks to resign from his seat in the statehouse to deny Mayor Jane Byrne, who had inherited Chicago's machine after Daley's death, the ability to replace him in Springfield with a party regular from her personal staff. Though Washington did not accept his salary during the standoff, state Democrats threatened lawsuits, and House Minority Leader Robert Henry Michel of Illinois discussed a formal motion declaring Washington's seat vacant before the Congressman ultimately relented.[6]

Elected to office at the same time as President Ronald Reagan, Washington spent much of his time on Capitol Hill criticizing the President's proposals to cut taxes and slash spending on federal aid programs. He criticized the President's agenda for favoring wealthy Americans while simultaneously trying "to balance the budget on the backs of the poor," including his constituents in Chicago. Washington said cuts to federal assistance programs, such as college financial aid, were "unfairly targeted" at districts like his, and said limiting access to college education would have a detrimental effect on the economy. Washington also disagreed with much of the President's foreign policy, especially the increased production of nuclear weapons, the emphasis on defense spending, and U.S. military intervention in Central America.[7]

Washington's most enduring influence as a Representative was his commitment to civil rights. From his seat on the Judiciary Committee in 1982, Washington helped negotiate an extension of sections of the Voting Rights Act that prevented localities with a history of voting rights abuses from using "bail-out" provisions to avoid federal supervision. Washington's efforts during seven weeks of lengthy hearings before the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights drew praise from civil

rights leaders. The Congressional Black Caucus, which Washington labeled "the one forum by which black leaders can speak to the nation," chose the Illinois Representative to help manage the bill during debate on the House Floor. In this role, Washington led the opposition to several amendments that sought to weaken the bill by allowing local officials, rather than federal courts, to review requests to skirt federal oversight.[8]

During his House career, Washington denounced proposals to weaken the enforcement of affirmative action and endorsed the ERA. After the ERA failed to secure ratification by the 1982 deadline, he expressed regret and blamed the Reagan administration for its failure. "To me, the ERA is a nondebatable issue," Washington noted. "Black people have suffered from discrimination, degradation, and inequality in all areas of life. So, on this issue of peoples' rights, it is easy to identify with the inequities women are facing."[9]

Concerned that Mayor Byrne and other Chicago machine leaders would launch a challenge to his re-election, Washington spent considerable time campaigning back home during his first term. Despite his apprehension, he ran unopposed in the Democratic primary and easily won a second term in the House, garnering 97 percent of the vote in the general election.[10]

Shortly after his victory in November 1982, Washington announced his candidacy for mayor of Chicago. Approached by several African-American groups interested in fielding a strong Black candidate to oppose Byrne, Washington agreed to run only after a campaign to register more than 100,000 African-American voters in Chicago. Throughout the Democratic primary, Washington used a grassroots approach, emphasizing his anti-machine record, especially when courting Black voters. "It's our turn," Washington said repeatedly. "We're not going to apologize for it and we're not going to waste a lot of time explaining it. It's our turn—that's all." Drastically outspent by his opponents in a closely watched race, Washington nonetheless won the February Democratic nomination; the primary boasted the largest voter turnout in 25 years. In the April general election, Washington narrowly defeated former Illinois state legislator Republican Bernard Epton to become Chicago's first African-American mayor. On April 30, 1983, a little more than two weeks after the election, he resigned his House seat.[11]

As mayor, Washington struggled to reform the Chicago political scene, but he did weaken the power of the machine. Seven months after winning election to a second mayoral term, Washington died of a heart attack on November 25, 1987. "Losing our mayor is like losing a black folk hero," noted a Chicago constituent. Even the *Chicago Tribune*, which had at times criticized Washington, observed that few people "have made quite so powerful an impact" on the city. During a salute to his former colleague on the House Floor, Mervyn M. Dymally of California recognized Washington's political legacy: "He was purposeful and constantly focused, for his battle did not begin and end with the roll call, but extended into a crusade to heal the cancerous lesions of race hatred and generations of divisive political warfare."[12]

Manuscript Collection

Chicago Public Library, Harold Washington Library Center, Special Collections (Chicago, IL). *Papers*: 1970–1983, 57 linear feet. The collection of Harold Washington's congressional records documents his promotion and sponsorship of legislation, committee work, and involvement with the Congressional Black Caucus. The papers contain correspondence with constituents, including casework, fundraising, and the organization of task forces to deal with such issues as housing and health. A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

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Katie Hall

1938–2012

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1982–1985

Democrat from Indiana

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

In the 1950s, Katie Hall was inspired to seek out a "world larger than Mississippi" after hearing speeches by visiting African-American Members of Congress in her hometown of Mound Bayou. Hall moved to Gary, Indiana, in 1960 and was active in local and state politics before winning a 1982 special election to the U.S. House of Representatives. She was the first Black Member of Congress from Indiana, and in a little more than two years on Capitol Hill she successfully led the House effort to create a federal holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.[1]

Katie Hall was born Katie Beatrice Green on April 3, 1938, to Jeff and Bessie Mae Hooper Green, in Mound Bayou, Mississippi. One of 12 children, Hall attended the public schools in Mound Bayou and graduated with a bachelor's degree from Mississippi Vocational College—now known as Mississippi Valley State University—a historically Black university, in 1960. In 1957, she married John H. Hall and they had two children: Jacqueline and Junifer.[2]

When a local physician and civic leader invited Representative William L. Dawson of Illinois and other African-American Members of Congress to speak in Mound Bayou in the 1950s, Hall embraced the power of politics to effect change. "They started me to thinking what life should be like," she recalled. The day after she graduated from college in 1960, Hall and her young family moved north to Gary, Indiana, an industrial city on the south shore of Lake Michigan, in pursuit of work and political freedom. Hall and her husband swiftly launched themselves into local politics and registered to vote. The Halls met attorney Richard G. Hatcher at a NAACP meeting in 1962. The next year, Katie Hall worked on Hatcher's campaign for the Gary city council, and in 1967, Hall was part of the team that helped elect Hatcher one of the first Black mayors of a major American city. During this period, she taught high school social studies in Gary and pursued a master's degree from Indiana University in Bloomington, graduating in 1968.[3]

Hall's work on the campaign trail led her to consider a career in politics. She ran unsuccessful campaigns for the Gary city council in 1970 and the Indiana state house of representatives in 1972 but won a seat in the state house in 1974. Two years later, Hall was elected to the state senate, where she served from 1976 until 1982. She also led the Lake County Democratic committee from 1978 to 1980 and chaired the 1980 Indiana Democratic convention. Hall dedicated her efforts in the state legislature to supporting development in and around Gary, securing

funds for conventions, sports centers, and the Gary/Chicago International Airport. She also helped establish the position of deputy mayor for Gary in 1975.[4]

In September 1982, Indiana Democratic Representative Adam Benjamin Jr. died of a heart attack. A week later Hall attended a public forum to discuss a possible successor and was surprised to hear her name mentioned. "I had always thought about running for Congress," she admitted, but refrained because "I saw Adam as a very highly respected Congressman who did the job very well. I saw him as a person who was undefeatable." Patricia Benjamin, the late Representative's wife, also expressed interest in succeeding her husband.[5]

Under Indiana law, the chair of the district's Democratic committee selected the nominee to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the 97th Congress (1981–1983). The party chair at the time was Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher, who Hall considered a political mentor. Hatcher recalled Hall's support for his own political career in the 1960s and selected her as the Democratic candidate for the district representing the northwest corner of the state, anchored by Gary, the steel-producing hub of the region. At the same time, the district committee nominated Hall—with Hatcher casting the deciding vote—for a full term in the 98th Congress (1983–1985) representing a new seat that had been drawn following the 1980 Census. The district's boundaries remained relatively unchanged after the reapportionment, and White northern Indiana Democrats protested Hall's nomination to the safe Democratic seat because she was Black. Although downtown Gary was primarily African American, the population of the entire district was 70 percent White. A legal battle ensued when Patricia Benjamin's supporters claimed that Hatcher, as chairman of the old district, did not have the right to select a candidate for the new district. The courts refused to overturn Hatcher's decision. Hall's nomination for both the vacancy and the full term was tantamount to election in the working-class, Democratic district. She defeated her Republican opponent, Thomas Krieger, with 63 percent of the vote to win election to the remainder of the 97th Congress. She simultaneously won election with 56 percent of the vote for the 98th Congress. Hall was the first Black woman from Indiana to serve in the U.S. Congress.[6]

When she arrived in Washington to be sworn in on November 2, 1982, Representative Hall received seats on the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service and the Committee on Public Works and Transportation. Hall voted with the Democratic majority against much of the Ronald Reagan administration's legislative agenda, focusing on education, labor, and women's issues. Hall said many of her constituents believed the President had failed on women's issues "and I have to agree," she insisted, pointing to the lack of enforcement of equal opportunity laws in education and employment. She voted against the Social Security Amendments of 1983 which raised the retirement age and delayed cost-of-living adjustments. "I thought it would put an undue hardship on many of my constituents," she argued.[7]

Hall's northwest Indiana congressional district led the nation in steel production at the time. As a member of the House Steel Caucus, Hall cosponsored the Fair Trade in Steel Act, designed to revitalize American steel production in cities like Gary by limiting steel imports. Hall urged the Reagan administration to implement protectionist measures. As part of the executive committee of the Steel Caucus, Hall met with President Reagan in 1983 to discuss the administration's new task force established to revitalize the industry without instituting tariffs. Hall also worked to improve conditions overseas and during a congressional fact-finding tour of six North African countries, Hall joined her colleagues in the fight to alleviate hunger in Ethiopia.[8]

Hall made her most lasting legislative contribution as chair of the Post Office and Civil Service Subcommittee on Census and Population, which held jurisdiction over federal holidays. In July 1983, Hall introduced a bill to make the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. a public holiday. Since King's assassination in 1968, similar measures had been introduced annually, but all had failed. Although Detroit Representative John Conyers Jr. had regularly sponsored the measure, the Congressional Black Caucus selected Hall as the floor manager for the measure. Representative William H. Gray III of Pennsylvania observed, "Sometimes when you get to the goal line it's good to go to someone fresh and new to take it over. She brought a freshness of approach, a spirit of reconciliation to what had sometimes been a bitter battle." Hall held hearings on the measure, welcoming testimony from Senator Edward Moore "Ted" Kennedy of Massachusetts, Stevie Wonder, and King's widow Coretta Scott King.[9]

Many opponents argued the bill would be too expensive, citing the estimated cost of the holiday to the federal government, while others disparaged King's character as unworthy of celebration. Hall negotiated with opponents

by moving the holiday from a fixed date—King's January 15 birthday—to the third Monday in January to prevent government offices from having to open twice in one week and thereby save money. She introduced a new bill on July 29, 1983, which was referred to the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service and swiftly sent to the House Floor under suspension of the rules. Hall opened debate in the chamber by reminding her colleagues, "The legislation before us will act as a national commitment to Dr. King's vision and determination for an ideal America, which he spoke of the night before his death, where equality will always prevail."[10]

On the House Floor, most opponents continued to object to the bill's cost, but some such as Representative Lawrence Patton McDonald of Georgia, alleged King was a Communist sympathizer and cited King's sealed FBI surveillance records to impugn his character. Others wanted to remove King's name from the title of the bill and complained that they were shut out of the amendment process. After one day of contentious debate on August 2, 1983—more than 15 years after King's assassination—the bill passed the House by a vote of 338 to 90.[11]

In the Senate, the measure faced an uphill climb as North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms threatened to filibuster. He criticized what he said was the burdensome cost of a new holiday for the federal government and also stated without evidence that King was connected to the Communist Party and should not be honored for his "calculated use of nonviolence as a provocative act." Leadership in both parties criticized Helms and quickly offered Helms a vote on tobacco legislation crucial to North Carolina to end the standoff. On November 2, 1983, President Ronald Reagan abandoned his opposition to the measure and signed it into law. Hall also sponsored a bill creating a federal commission to encourage commemorative events on the first observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which was scheduled for January 20, 1986. It was signed into law in 1984.[12]

In 1984, Hall encountered formidable competition in her bid for renomination and re-election to the 99th Congress (1985–1987). Despite support from prominent Democrats, including Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts, Hall faced two strong challengers in her district primary: former Adam Benjamin aide Peter Visclosky and county prosecutor Jack Crawford. Hall maintained that her opposition was based partially on her race and gender. During one debate, Hall declared, "If I wasn't black and female, there wouldn't be a contest." Rev. Jesse Jackson, whose name appeared on the primary ballot for the Democratic presidential nominee, also rallied to her aid. In the May primary, Hall lost the Democratic nomination to Visclosky by a margin of 2,367 votes. Low turnout among Gary residents significantly reduced Hall's vote tally when compared with her victorious 1982 campaign, despite Jackson's presence on the ballot. Hall argued that racism had led to her defeat, pointing to Visclosky's accusations that she ignored non-Black constituents, particularly in the suburbs, in favor of serving the interests of Mayor Hatcher in Gary. Hall also questioned the returns in areas where her campaign predicted a stronger showing than reflected in the final count. She filed suit to force a recount of the primary results. In one suburban county, a recount confirmed her losing margin without changing a single vote.[13]

After Congress, Hall continued to be active in Indiana Democratic politics. In 1986 and in 1990, she tried unsuccessfully to recapture the Democratic nomination in her old House district. Hall returned to Gary and began teaching again while also serving as the vice chair of the city's housing board. Hall became the Gary city clerk in 1988. She resigned in January 2003 after pleading guilty to charges of federal mail fraud. On February 20, 2012, Katie Hall died at the age of 73, in Gary, Indiana.[14]

Manuscript Collection

Indiana Historical Society, Smith Memorial Library (Indianapolis, IN). *Papers*: ca. 1957–2017, one manuscript box, three DVDs (2014–2015), two folders of black and white photographs, one folder of color photographs, one OVC color photo, one oversize manuscript folder, and four artifacts (campaign buttons). The Katie Hall collection includes photographs (ca. 1956–2016), essays (2015–2016), Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission papers (1984–1986), newspaper clippings, articles, correspondence, resolutions, proclamations, appointments, programs, invitations, and reports.

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Major R. Owens

1936–2013

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1983–2007

Democrat from New York

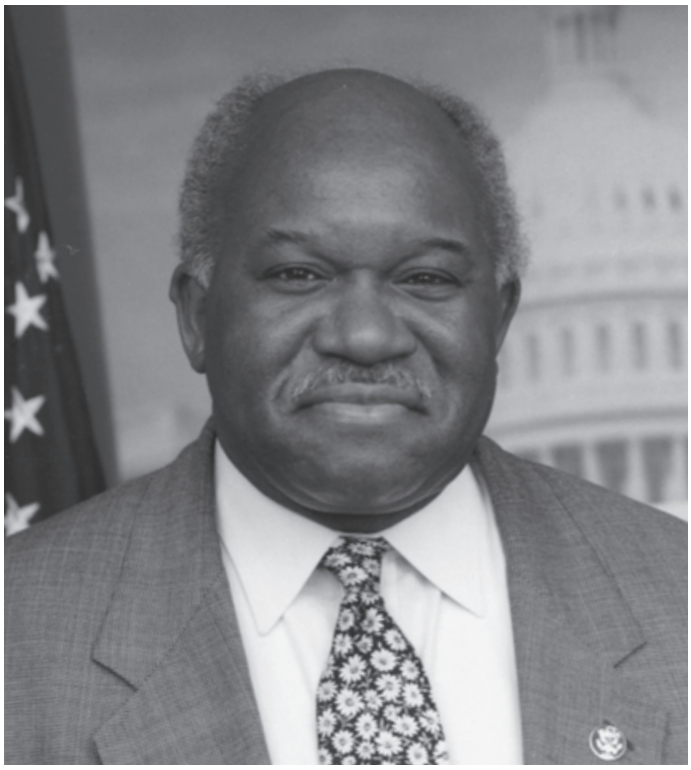

Image courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

Major R. Owens, a librarian, civil rights activist, and community reformer, served in the New York state senate before winning the seat held by legendary Brooklyn Representative Shirley Chisholm—the first African-American woman elected to Congress—when she retired from the U.S. House of Representatives. Beginning in 1983, Owens became a significant advocate for education during his 12 terms in Congress. "Education is the kingpin issue," he explained. "Proper nurturing of and attention to the educational process will achieve a positive domino reaction which will benefit employment and economic development. … The greater the education, the lesser the victimization by drugs, alcoholism, and swindles. … We have to believe that all power and progress really begins with education."[1]

Major Robert Odell Owens was born in Collierville, Tennessee, on June 28, 1936, to Ezekiel and Edna Owens. Owens's father, a day laborer in a furniture factory who espoused President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal philosophy, shaped Owens's political views at an early age. "I can't remember a time when I wasn't aware of the fact that a much bigger world than my own personal universe was out there," Owens once remarked. "We were very poor and always had to struggle to make ends meet. Still, I was also aware that we were not alone—that millions of people, in this country and abroad, faced similar kinds of problems. I also realized that what happened in the larger world affected my family and its personal welfare." He also recalled that his mother, "the scholar of the family," influenced how he approached his education. His parents' optimism about their children's future left Owens with the attitude that "there was no reason why I couldn't go out and scale life's summits." Early on, he aspired to be a novelist. He attended public schools in Memphis, Tennessee, graduating from Hamilton High School. Owens then went to Atlanta, Georgia, and attended historically Black colleges for both his undergrad and graduate studies. In 1956, Owens earned a bachelor's degree with high honors from Morehouse College. A year later, he completed a master's degree in library science at Atlanta University. In 1956, he married Ethel Werfel. They raised three children—Christopher, Geoffrey, and Millard—before divorcing in 1985. Major Owens later married Marie Cuprill, the staff director of a House Education and Labor subcommittee, and became a stepparent to her two children: Carlos and Cecilia.[2]

In 1958, Owens took a job as a librarian at New York's Brooklyn Public Library, where he worked until 1966. He

became active in the Democratic Party during that time and was involved in community organizations and the civil rights movement. In 1961, Owens joined the Brooklyn chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), later chairing the organization. While in CORE, Owens helped lead a series of rent strikes and organized a voter registration program. In 1965, he ran for a seat on the city council but lost. He was also vice president of the metropolitan New York council of housing, a nonprofit tenants' assistance group. Additionally, Owens taught as an adjunct professor of library science and was director of the Community Media Program at Columbia University.[3]

From 1966 to 1968, he served as the executive director of Brooklyn's Brownsville community council, an antipoverty organization. One observer described him as "the most canny and capable of the community corporation directors," and the Brooklyn borough president later named September 10, 1971, as "Major R. Owens Day." Based on Owens's work on antipoverty programs in the Brownsville neighborhood, New York Mayor John Vliet Lindsay appointed him the commissioner of the community development agency, giving him responsibility for the city's antipoverty programs. Owens left the post in late 1973 near the end of Lindsay's term as mayor, accusing antipoverty and school programs in Brownsville of corruption and further asserting that Samuel Wright, the newly elected African-American New York city councilman, had awarded school board contracts as "political payoffs." Owens first ran for elective office in 1974, winning a seat in the New York state senate, where he chaired the senate Democratic operations committee. He also tended to back local and statewide candidates from outside the Brooklyn Democratic machine. He embraced this outsider status in his own U.S. congressional race in the early 1980s.[4]

After Representative Shirley Chisholm announced her retirement in 1982, Owens became a candidate for her Brooklyn-based seat, which encompassed the neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, and Crown Heights. The district was roughly 80 percent Black and overwhelmingly Democratic, with a high poverty rate. In the Democratic primary, Owens faced African-American New York state senator Vander L. Beatty. Considered the leading reformer among local politicians, Owens had grassroots support and the endorsement of the *New York Times*, *New York Amsterdam News*, and the *Village Voice*. The wealthy Beatty was backed by many top Democratic leaders, including Representative Chisholm, the Brooklyn political machine led by borough president Howard Golden, and a patronage network Beatty had cultivated from his time in Albany. Owens exploited Beatty's connection to corrupt local officials, stressing his own honesty and independence from the local political machine. Owens prevailed in the primary by 2,400 votes and survived a court challenge from Beatty and his backers, who questioned the results. Six months later, Beatty was indicted on charges of election fraud. In the general election, Owens cruised to victory, defeating Republican David Katan with 91 percent of the vote.[5]

Over the course of his career, Owens monitored potential primary challengers, especially because he came from outside the political establishment, but he usually lacked significant opposition. Although he did face a serious primary challenge in 2000, Owens never stumbled in any of his general election campaigns. He won each of his 11 re-elections with at least 89 percent of the vote.[6]

When Representative Owens took his seat in the House for the 98th Congress (1983–1985), he received assignments on the Education and Labor Committee and the Government Operations Committee. He remained on both panels throughout his House career. In 1987, Owens became chair of the Education and Labor Subcommittee on Select Education and Civil Rights—a position he held until Republicans won control of the chamber in 1994 and abolished the subcommittee. By the 109th Congress (2005–2007), Owens was the third-ranking Democrat on the Education and the Workforce Committee and the Government Reform Committee. In addition, he served as the ranking minority member on the Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Workforce Protections. Owens also was a member of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and the Progressive Caucus.

Early in his House career, Owens surveyed the effects of America's depressed economy in the early 1980s and explained that he planned to "push the prerogatives of a congressman to the limit" to publicize the needs of his constituents. "My principal focus is on jobs and employment. From my perspective the Democratic-controlled House has been extremely negligent in this area. It has shown little, if any, urgency about the plight of the unemployed." One of Owens' legislative solutions, H.J. Res. 202, proposed a constitutional amendment that would guarantee an employment opportunity for Americans. Owens realized such an ambitious bill was not likely to pass. "I don't expect it to pass this year or next," Owens said, "but I do expect it to have an impact."[7]

As a lawmaker, Owens focused on a cause near to his heart: advocating more federal money for education and libraries, which dovetailed with the needs of his urban district. From his post as chair of the Subcommittee on Select Education and Civil Rights, Owens focused on funding for library services, institutions of higher learning, and programs to lower the high school dropout rate among Black students. From his seat on the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, he was a strong supporter of amendments to a 1985 bill reauthorizing the Higher Education Act that provided more than $100 million to historically Black colleges. He called the measure "the payment of a long overdue debt" in response to critics who charged it was "unwarranted special treatment." Owens also served as chairman of the CBC's Higher Education Braintrust.[8]

When the Cold War ended in the early 1990s, Owens advocated shifting money from America's military buildup to domestic programs to help poor and working-class communities in cities across the country. "We need our fair share of this peace dividend, in particular to rehabilitate crumbling and dilapidated inner-city schools, and to guarantee a first-rate education for urban youths," he said. Owens sponsored several bills aimed at aiding under-resourced school systems, including the National Institute for the Education of At-Risk Students Act and the Safe Schools Act of 1994. Owens criticized budgets under Republican Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, asserting that they neglected the pressing needs of Black communities. On the House Floor in 1990, he belted out lines from a song he wrote: "At the big white DC mansion/There's a meeting of the mob/And the question on the table/Is which beggars they will rob."[9]

As chair of the Subcommittee on Select Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, Owens introduced the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990, a landmark law Owens said set forth "clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities." Among the provisions were the first guidelines prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities in businesses and public spaces and the establishment of standards for accessibility to public buildings. The measure also contained provisions to promote development programs for preschool children and to introduce new technologies to assist students with disabilities, which Owens had championed earlier. "A civilized and moral government which is also seeking to enhance its own self-interest must strive to maximize the opportunities for the educational development, equal access and productive employment of all its citizens," Owens noted. "Greater than all the physical barriers are the barriers of entrenched attitudes and the silent insistence that people with disabilities should be grateful for minimal governmental protection and assistance." After introducing the bill in February 1989, Owens successfully guided it through his Subcommittee on Select Education, and onto final passage by the House. As floor manager, Owens led the debate on the conference report and ushered the bill toward final passage in October 1990. President Bush signed the bill into law on October 30, 1990.[10]

As chair of the Subcommittee on Select Education, Owens also was the lead sponsor of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act Amendments of 1989. The bill reformed the long-established Volunteers in Service to America program, which assigned volunteers to community-based aid agencies to combat urban and rural poverty. Additionally, he was a key backer of the Child Abuse Prevention Challenge Grants Reauthorization Act of 1989, which renewed a measure first passed in 1974. The bill provided federal funding to states to assess, investigate, and prosecute cases of child abuse, and directed research on effective child abuse prevention and treatment programs run by states.[11]

Over time, the makeup of Owens's Brooklyn-based district changed. Following reapportionment after the 1990 Census, African Americans made up 55 percent of the district, Whites were 19 percent, and Hispanics were 12 percent. That round of reapportionment expanded the western borders of the district to take in the wealthy Park Slope neighborhood and middle-class Kensington. During the 1980s and 1990s, large numbers of Haitians began moving into the district, making it the second-largest Haitian community in the country, second to Miami. Roughly two-thirds of the district's Black population hailed from nations in the Caribbean Basin. Immigrant groups complained that Owens was "totally out of touch with the Haitian community." While he supported the return to power of ousted Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, opponents blamed him for being less active regarding issues such as housing and political asylum. In 2000, Owens received a stiff primary challenge from New York City Councilwoman Una Clarke, a Jamaican-born politician with roots among the growing number of Caribbean

immigrants in Owens's district. A one-time political ally of Owens, Clarke capitalized on simmering immigrant discontent, charging he had not done enough to bring federal economic aid to the district and that he was unresponsive to immigration issues. Owens relied on support from First Lady and New York Senate candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton and other prominent Democrats. Owens eventually turned back Clarke's primary challenge.[12]

Reapportionment following the 2000 Census did not significantly reconfigure the district. Owens cruised to re-election in 2002, but when he announced in early 2003 that he would seek re-election in 2004 and then retire in 2007, two New York City council members jumped into the primary. Yvette D. Clarke, daughter of Owens's 2000 primary opponent, drew 29 percent of the vote, while Tracy Boyland won 22 percent of the vote. Representative Owens won the primary with 45 percent of the vote and captured the general election to his final term with 94 percent of the vote. Among those who announced their candidacy for his open seat in 2006 was Owens's son Chris. Yvette D. Clarke eventually won the Democratic primary and the general election to succeed Representative Owens.[13]

In retirement, Owens suggested he would pursue his interest in literature. "It's something that I have always wanted to do," Owens said. "I even began writing a novel when I was younger. And that's one of the things I want very much to get back to." In late 2006, Owens was named a distinguished visiting scholar at the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress, where, in 2011, he completed a book on the CBC and its impact on national politics. Owens died of heart failure on October 21, 2013, in New York City.[14]

Manuscript Collection

University at Albany, State University of New York, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives (Albany, NY). *Papers*: 1988–2006, 129 cubic feet. The collection includes Major R. Owen's office files and personal papers from his 24 years in Congress. It includes subject files related to his committee work on education, civil rights, and workforce issues as well as matters related to New York City and New York State, foreign affairs, and his membership in the Congressional Black Caucus. There are materials related to Owens's bills, budgets, government reports, remarks, photographs, correspondence, press releases, news clippings, speeches, appointment calendars, and voting records. A small number of audiocassettes and videotapes are also included.

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Edolphus Towns

1934–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1983–2013

Democrat from New York

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

From the North Carolina tobacco fields of his youth, Edolphus Towns went on to master the turbulent politics of urban Brooklyn and rose to chair the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform during a 30-year career in the U.S. House of Representatives. From his first year in Congress in 1983, Towns focused on how the federal government could aid all Americans. He supported improvements in America's health care systems, higher education reforms, and the protection of consumers. "Our resources are abundant, our productive capacity enormous. Surely we can find a way in all this to take care of each other," Towns said.[1]

Edolphus Towns Jr. was born on July 21, 1934, in Chadbourn, North Carolina, to Versie and Edolphus Towns. His parents were tobacco sharecroppers. Towns attended the local public schools before graduating in 1956 from North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro. He served in the U.S. Army for two years before moving to New York City where he taught at Medgar Evers College, Fordham University, and in the city's public schools. From 1965 to 1975, Towns served as director of the Metropolitan Hospital and then as assistant administrator at Beth Israel Hospital. Towns earned a master's degree in social work in 1973 from Adelphi University in Garden City, New York. He married Gwendolyn Forbes, a public school teacher, in 1960, and they raised two children: Darryl and Deidra.[2]

Active in the Brooklyn Democratic organization, Towns won election as Democratic Party state committeeman for New York's fortieth assembly district in Brooklyn in 1972. In 1976, he was appointed the first African-American deputy borough president for Brooklyn, a position that Towns used to connect with the various social and political organizations in the borough. In 1982, when Democratic Representative Frederick William Richmond resigned after being indicted on felony charges, Towns moved quickly to run to fill the vacancy. Redistricting that year had created a new Democratic district composed primarily of African-American and Hispanic voters in northern Brooklyn and Bedford-Stuyvesant. Towns garnered the support of Brooklyn Democratic leader Meade H. Esposito and Democratic reformer Al Vann. "I expect to be the consensus candidate," Towns predicted. Two other candidates split the Hispanic vote, and Towns won the primary by a plurality. He easily won the general election. Subsequent redistricting made Towns's district more Democratic. Bedford-Stuyvesant remained the heart of the district while Brooklyn Heights

was added. Towns's constituency was described as one of the state's most diverse and solidly Democratic, comprising Black, Hispanic, Caribbean, and Jewish voters. Towns's winning margins in the general elections hovered at 85 percent or more in his 14 re-elections.[3]

Towns did, however, often face challengers in the Democratic primaries. As the 1998 race neared, for instance, Brooklyn Democratic chair Clarence Norman actively tried to recruit a challenger to Towns while former Democratic mayor David Dinkins endorsed Barry Ford in the primary. For his part, Towns pointed out that he had "never seen [Ford] at a town hall meeting, a community board meeting or a tenants association meeting." He quipped, "This is one Ford this Congressional District won't buy." Towns ultimately won the primary with 52 percent of the vote.[4]

When he began his congressional career in the 98th Congress (1983–1985), Towns served on three committees: Government Operations (later renamed Oversight and Government Reform); Public Works and Transportation; and the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control. He remained on Government Operations for his entire House career. Towns swapped membership on Public Works and Transportation for Energy and Commerce in the 101st Congress (1989–1991). The House abolished the Select Committee on Narcotics in 1993. In the 103rd Congress (1993–1995), Towns chaired the Government Operations Subcommittee on Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations. In the 110th Congress (2007–2009), he was the chair of the Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Government Management, Organization, and Procurement. During the 111th Congress (2009–2011), Towns became chair of the full Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Wielding the full committee gavel required Towns to relinquish his seat on Energy and Commerce. When Republicans retook control of the House after the 2010 midterm elections, Towns lost his chairmanship. Democratic leadership then gave the ranking Democratic position on the committee to Elijah E. Cummings of Maryland to help rebuff investigations into Barack Obama's presidential administration by the new Republican majority. In the 112th Congress (2011–2013), his last term in office, Towns served on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee.[5]

During his career, Towns cultivated a restrained style. "I should jump out and push and get in front of the camera," he once acknowledged, "but that's just not my nature." But his low-key style did help him win some legislative victories early in his career. He cosponsored legislation with Representative Charles Thomas McMillen of Maryland and Senator William Warren "Bill" Bradley of New Jersey to require colleges to report the graduation rates of their student athletes. "If we can report the on-time arrivals of airlines," Towns argued, "surely we can let student-athletes know whether they are likely to receive a useful college degree if they sign a letter of intent at a university." The legislation became the Student Right to Know Act, enacted during the 101st Congress. To further protect the rights of college student-athletes, Towns introduced legislation in the 102nd Congress (1991–1993) that would have required the National Collegiate Athletic Association to implement a formalized process before taking punitive actions against an athlete or coach.[6]

Because Towns had also worked as a hospital administrator, health care reform ranked high among his legislative priorities. In Congress, he hoped to improve access to health services in underserved communities, including Medicare drug coverage and alcohol treatment programs for pregnant women. He also lobbied to increase reimbursements for nurse midwives and physician assistants. During the 103rd Congress, Towns, as chair of the Government Operations Committee's Subcommittee on Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations, held hearings to review the Food and Drug Administration's pharmaceutical regulations. He also advocated for preventive medicine as an alternative to health care reform. Towns encouraged healthier diets, sought money for funding poison-prevention programs, and worked to convince city planners to build new waste incinerators away from minority communities. Towns also advocated for the availability of breast cancer screenings and better training for nursing home staff. He criticized the National Cancer Institute after its recommendation that women under the age of 50 could go without annual mammograms. "Both early detection and screening in younger women can be beneficial in combating this disease," he said. "If you can recommend an appropriate daily allowance for vegetables in the American diet, you should be able to recommend lifesaving screenings for American women." In 1993, when President William J. Clinton's health care reform package came out in favor of a "managed competition" approach over the "single payer" system, Towns criticized the President's

proposal. He claimed that the administration's approach would leave minority medical providers and minority medical schools behind. "Single payer is the way to go. It would solve a lot of problems, and it would be fair to everyone," Towns explained. "This [Clinton's] plan is better than nothing, but it's far from adequate."[7]

Towns chaired the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) during the 102nd Congress, and led the caucus's opposition to George H.W. Bush's nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. Towns also helped coordinate the CBC's effort to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1991, legislation that strengthened equal employment law that President Bush had vetoed the year before. Towns sponsored a CBC-supported substitute amendment to a compromised version of the Civil Rights Act of 1991. While the substitute failed, Towns still supported the passage of the act. In response to a 1992 amendment to end congressional funding of legislative service organizations, like the CBC, Towns defended the caucus which, he explained "was founded 20 years ago to represent the needs and dreams of millions who not only reside in our districts but in every corner of this nation.[8]

In 2009, Towns became the chair of the Oversight and Government Reform amidst the economic recession that began in 2007. Under Towns, the committee focused on overseeing government programs used to support banks and other financial institutions to prevent a larger financial crisis. Towns held hearings on the decision of some companies who received federal bailout money to still give their executive's large compensation. "These huge pay packages are offensive during these difficult times and Americans are angry about it." He also led hearings investigating the relationship between federal regulators and the financial institutions receiving support. After the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Towns led hearings on the oversight of the federal government's disbursement of the stimulus funds and its contract procurement practices. In keeping with his concern over federal spending practices, Towns sponsored legislation in 2012 to better track and regulate improper payments by federal agencies. President Obama signed the bill into law in January 2013. As chair, Towns also led committee investigations into high profile consumer safety issues. In 2010, he held hearings on a car manufacturer's faulty gas pedals that resulted in dozens of car-accident related deaths. He also investigated the manufacturing and recall practices of a company that produced children's pain medicine.[9]

In 2012, Towns faced two challengers for re-election: New York state assembly member Hakeem S. Jeffries and city council member and former Black Panther Charles Barron. Instead of going through a tough campaign, the 78-year-old Towns announced he would not run for a sixteenth term. He retired at the end of the 112th Congress. After Congress, Towns has worked as a political consultant and lobbyist and joined the board of several organizations. "Ed Towns' life journey—from son of a tobacco sharecropper to Chair of a House Committee—is testament to the opportunities that the United States can offer those who are dedicated to helping improve the lives of others," Towns's Oversight and Reform Committee colleague Carolyn Bosher Maloney of New York explained following his retirement announcement.[10]

Notes

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Alan Wheat

1951–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1983–1995

Democrat from Missouri

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

As a freshman Member of Congress, Representative Alan Wheat of Missouri received a rare appointment to the prestigious House Committee on Rules that shaped his congressional career. He used his seat on the influential panel to push through legislation important to his district and the Democratic Party. During his six terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, Wheat secured funding crucial to his constituents, advocated for civil rights legislation, and skillfully represented the diverse interests in his Kansas City district.[1]

Alan Dupree Wheat was born in San Antonio, Texas, on October 16, 1951, to James Wheat, an officer and civil engineer in the U.S. Air Force, and Emogene "Jean" Wheat, a teacher. Wheat grew up on military bases and attended schools in Wichita, Kansas, and Seville, Spain, before graduating from Airline High School in Bosier City, Louisiana, in 1968. After earning a bachelor's degree in economics from Grinnell College in Iowa, Wheat worked as an economist for several years in Kansas City, first at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1972 and for the regional planning organization for the Kansas City metropolitan area from 1973 to 1975. Wheat then served as an aide to Jackson County, Missouri, executive Mike White before winning election to the Missouri general assembly in 1976 at age 25. During three terms in the Missouri state legislature, Wheat chaired the urban affairs committee. He married Yolanda Townsend, a lawyer, and the couple had two children: Christopher and Nicholas. Wheat also had a daughter, Alynda, from a previous relationship.[2]

When Missouri Representative Richard Walker Bolling announced his retirement in August 1981 after more than three decades in office, Wheat joined seven other candidates in the Democratic primary to represent the majority-White, predominantly Democratic district encompassing much of Kansas City. The district, which was 23 percent Black, had been recently redrawn, and stretched from Kansas City's downtown business district to several surrounding suburbs, including Independence, Missouri, hometown of President Harry S. Truman. Wheat earned the backing of Freedom, Inc., an African-American political organization in Kansas City, and welcomed Missouri Representative and Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) founder William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr. to campaign on his behalf. Wheat was the only Black candidate in the crowded field. Although he lacked campaign resources in the primary, Wheat mobilized

volunteers and embraced grassroots organizing. He earned the Democratic nomination with 31 percent of the vote thanks in large part to solid Black voter support.[3]

As the Democratic nominee, Wheat redoubled his efforts at outreach, particularly to White voters, by visiting local Democratic clubs and community events throughout the district. Bolling backed Wheat's candidacy by raising money and appearing in televised campaign ads on his behalf. Wheat worked to appeal to middle- and working-class voters with his criticism of President Ronald Reagan's economic policies and his promises to continue Bolling's legislative agenda. Wheat went on to win the November 1982 general election against Republican Missouri state representative John Sharp with 58 percent of the vote. Wheat became the first African-American Member to represent Kansas City and the second Black Representative in Congress from Missouri.[4]

Elected to the 98th Congress (1983–1985) at age 31, Wheat received a spot on the powerful House Rules Committee thanks to a recommendation from Bolling who had chaired the committee for four years before his retirement. Since the Rules Committee controls the flow of legislation on the House Floor, Wheat took advantage of the process to add late amendments to bills and limit their consideration in debate, effectively getting the final word on legislation before House passage. "Rules gave me the opportunity to immediately start making an impact on the House of Representatives," Wheat recalled in 1994. "Perhaps not so much as a sponsor of legislation but being able to have an impact on legislation as it came through the committee." He was well-positioned to secure federal funding for a series of projects affecting his district, ranging from flood control initiatives to highway and transit spending and the building of a new Kansas City courthouse. He played a significant role in the passage of legislation to prohibit American airplanes from being serviced and maintained overseas, which saved the jobs of hundreds of Kansas City-based airline employees. He also supported a bill to expand the Harry S. Truman National Historic Site. In 1989, Wheat also used his seat on the Rules Committee to help institute a ban on smoking on most domestic flights by attaching the bill to a routine procedural measure to avoid undue attention from tobacco lobbyists and other opponents. He regularly sponsored resolutions from the Rules Committee governing floor debate and amendments for bills he found important, such as the 1987 Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, which launched more than a dozen grant and federal aid programs for unhoused Americans.[5]

From the 99th to the 103rd Congresses (1985–1995), Wheat served on the District of Columbia Committee, chairing the Government Operations and Metropolitan Affairs Subcommittee during his final four terms in office. Wheat was also a member of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families and the Select Committee on Hunger.

From his position on the Rules Committee, Wheat sponsored the debate and rules resolutions for the civil rights bill of 1990, a comprehensive measure to expand legal protections against employment discrimination that he called "the single most important civil rights legislation since the 1964 Civil Rights Act." Wheat's rule governing consideration of the bill ensured that it arrived on the House Floor largely intact. He applauded the wide-ranging protections afforded by the bill and criticized those who "would have us believe that certain kinds of discrimination are more onerous than other kinds of discrimination. … I have a hard time understanding how any kind of discrimination that might be based upon gender, age, physical disability, would somehow be better or worse than discrimination based on race." The George H.W. Bush administration strongly opposed the bill, and inaccurately claimed that the measure would lead to racial quotas in hiring practices. President Bush vetoed the bill after it passed both chambers of Congress. Though Wheat preferred a more expansive version of the civil rights legislation when the bill was revived in the 102nd Congress (1991–1993) and criticized Congress's practice of exempting itself from the law's provisions, he supported the final framework and crafted the rule for its consideration in the House.[6]

In the 102nd Congress Wheat joined fellow Missouri Representative Bill Clay in cosponsoring legislation to provide financial assistance to historically Black colleges and universities. The bill was designed to fund infrastructure projects on campuses and create new programs of study. The measure became part of the Higher Education Amendments of 1992.[7]

As vice chair of the CBC during the 100th and 101st Congresses (1987–1991), Wheat instituted a policy that allowed White Members of Congress to join the organization as associate members. Forty-one White Members joined in 1988, but the CBC ended the practice

shortly after Wheat left office. Additionally, Wheat served as president of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, an independent, nonprofit organization geared toward public policy analysis.[8]

Wheat's interest in foreign policy was wide-ranging. He denounced South Africa's apartheid regime and used his place on the Rules Committee to play a significant role in clearing procedural hurdles and managing debate on the floor as the House considered the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. The Missouri Representative was a member of a congressional delegation that visited South Africa in 1990, meeting with both anti-apartheid leaders like Dr. Frank Chikane and representatives of the apartheid government such as South African President Frederik de Klerk. After touring the country, Wheat remarked, "It is true that a start has been made, but it is only a start down the long road that must be trod toward freedom in South Africa." He urged his colleagues to strengthen economic sanctions against South Africa until the country instituted full democratic reforms. Wheat also opposed the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983 and President Reagan's decision to furnish military aid to the Contras in Nicaragua. In 1991, Wheat joined the Democratic majority in condemning the resolution authorizing the use of force in the Gulf War.[9]

Wheat also supported federal legislative action to aid cities. In 1984 he introduced a bill to create urban enterprise zones, where tax incentives and infrastructure investments were strategically deployed to promote economic development. He consistently supported bills designed to invest in enterprise zones and later proposed tax credits for health and child care for enterprise zone residents. Wheat also voted against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993, citing his constituents' concerns. "A vote against NAFTA is a vote for the opportunity to craft a new agreement that will take on the tough issues of wage discrepancies, Mexican labor standards, and job training," he said. "It is a vote for the chance to negotiate a better pact that will include workable plans to fund initiatives to adequately retrain U.S. workers, clean up the environment, and replace lost tariff revenue." In 1994, Wheat responded to constituent concerns about neighborhood violence by enthusiastically backing the omnibus crime bill that year, breaking with many of his colleagues in the CBC to support one of President William J. Clinton's priorities.[10]

Wheat's attention to the needs of his district paid off at the polls, where he enjoyed comfortable margins of victory. During his re-elections, he reminded voters of his valuable position on the Rules Committee, which allowed him to secure funding for projects for the district. Wheat also employed clever campaign advertisements with wheat stalks—an obvious reference to his name and a symbol of midwestern agriculture. In 1992, his name appeared on a list of dozens of Members who overdrew their accounts at the informal House "bank" managed by the Sergeant at Arms. Nevertheless, Wheat was elected to a sixth term in the House with 59 percent of the vote during an election cycle in which the bank controversy effectively ended the careers of other Members. His share of the vote that year was the lowest since his first run for Congress in 1982.[11]

When Missouri's Republican Senator John Claggett Danforth announced his decision to retire at the conclusion of the 103rd Congress (1993–1995), Wheat entered the race to fill the vacant Senate seat. "I want my career to be meaningful," he stated. "I don't want to look back after 30 or 40 years' service and have nothing to say except that I grew in seniority and inherited a committee chairmanship." Wheat earned the Democratic nomination with 41 percent of the vote, defeating Jackson County executive Marsha Murphy to become the first African-American candidate in Missouri to be nominated for statewide office. In the general election he faced an uphill battle against former Missouri Governor John David Ashcroft. The competitive primary had depleted Wheat's campaign funds, and a rising anti-incumbent sentiment in 1994 put him on the defensive. Wheat's campaign focused on his formidable experience as a legislator on Capitol Hill and his consistent record of support for the Democratic Party's agenda. He visited rural counties, seeking to build support beyond Kansas City, and promised to work to revitalize the economy across the state. Ashcroft accused Wheat of backing excessive government spending and criticized his support for abortion rights and gun control. Ashcroft also made crime a central issue of the campaign, describing Wheat's voting record as "soft-on-crime" and denouncing his opposition to the death penalty. In an election year in which the GOP gained control of the House and the Senate for the first time in decades, Wheat lost to Ashcroft with 36 percent of the vote.[12]

After his congressional service, Wheat served as vice president of a pharmaceutical company and as vice president

of public policy and government relations of the global relief organization Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE). In 1996, Wheat accepted a position as deputy campaign manager for President Clinton's re-election campaign. Two years later in 1998, he founded a political consulting firm in Virginia. In 2013, Wheat joined a national law firm as head of public policy practice. In March 2021, he was also appointed to the board of directors of a for-profit higher education corporation.[13]

Manuscript Collection

University of Missouri, Kansas City, The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center (Kansas City, MO). *Papers*: ca. 1982–1994, 257 cubic feet. Alan Wheat's papers consist of congressional files, including press releases, newsletters, correspondence, voting records, office files, calendars, and speeches. The collection also contains photographs and videotapes. A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

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Charles A. Hayes

1918–1997

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1983–1993

Democrat from Illinois

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Elected in his first bid for public office, Charles A. Hayes served five terms in the U.S. House of Representatives after succeeding Representative Harold Washington, who resigned in 1983 to become mayor of Chicago. A longtime labor activist and union official, Hayes sought to enact policies to empower workers and strengthen civil rights protections. He also called for a bold economic agenda to alleviate poverty and create jobs, particularly for his constituents on Chicago's South Side. "Full employment," Hayes noted, "is America's first requirement for attaining genuine freedom and opportunity for all."[1]

Charles Arthur Hayes was born in Cairo, Illinois, on February 17, 1918, to Charles, a farm laborer, and Nevada Hazel Hayes, a homemaker. Hayes graduated from Cairo's Sumner High School in 1935 before taking a job as a machine operator at a woodworking company in his hometown. His long career of union activism began in 1939 when he organized a strike at his workplace and established Local 1424 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, serving as chapter president in the early 1940s. "I found out pretty early in my life that you couldn't deal with an employer on a one-on-one basis. You had to do it collectively," Hayes reflected. In 1942, he moved to Chicago and found work in a meatpacking plant, where his colleagues elected him chair of the grievance committee of the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA). Hayes became a staff member for the union in 1949, and eventually served as director of the UPWA's District 1. From 1979 until his retirement in 1983, Hayes served as the international vice president of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. During his labor union career, he promoted increased benefits and improved conditions for workers, fought to eliminate segregation and discriminatory hiring and promotion practices, and provided African-American and women workers with opportunities to serve as leaders in the labor movement. Hayes was twice widowed and once divorced. He had two daughters: Barbara and Charlene.[2]

Alongside his work as a union leader, Hayes also engaged in civil rights activism. Early in his UPWA career, Hayes participated in a successful sit-in at a Chicago department store restaurant close to the stockyards protesting the restaurant's refusal to serve Black workers. He organized moral and financial support for the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott in 1955. He also worked closely with Martin Luther King Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference through

the 1960s and was a founding member of Jesse Jackson's Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity) in 1971.[3]

In 1959, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) subpoenaed Hayes to testify about his alleged ties to the Communist Party as a trade union leader. From the late 1940s through the 1960s, HUAC subpoenaed witnesses from across the country and from all manner of professions, amid its efforts to uncover the reach of Communist influence in American society. During the hearing, Hayes denounced Communism but declined to answer questions about any personal connections with the party.[4]

Hayes's job as a union representative often took him to Capitol Hill. And as a veteran lobbyist for the meatpacking union, he gained valuable experience about Congress's inner workings. Back home in Chicago, Hayes worked against the powerful local political machine and supported the anti-establishment candidate, Harold Washington, in his bids for mayor of Chicago—both his unsuccessful run in 1977 and his victorious campaign in 1983. Like Washington, Hayes believed the city government could be doing more for the city's many impoverished Black residents, especially those living on the South Side. The friendship of the two Chicago leaders figured prominently in Hayes's path to Congress.[5]

Washington had served just one term in the House when he was elected Chicago's first African-American mayor. And when he resigned from Congress on April 30, 1983, Hayes joined 13 other candidates in the special Democratic primary to fill his seat. Well-known in the South Side district because of his union activism, Hayes nonetheless faced an array of challengers with more name recognition, including Ralph Metcalfe Jr., the son of a former Representative; civil rights leader Al Raby; and Lu Palmer, a newspaper columnist and community activist. During the campaign, the 65-year-old Hayes promised to advocate for federal assistance for public housing and employment programs. With the enthusiastic backing of organized labor as well as Mayor Washington, Hayes won the crowded and competitive primary on July 26, 1983, with 45 percent of the vote. Although Washington's active campaigning on Hayes's behalf contributed to his win, Hayes assured his supporters that he would maintain his independence in Congress. "I'm not going to be a mouthpiece for him," Hayes said. One month later, Hayes easily defeated his Republican opponent, community newspaper columnist Diane Preacely, in the special election with 94 percent of the vote.[6]

Hayes took his seat in Congress on September 12, 1983. During his tenure in the House, he served on three committees: Education and Labor; Small Business; and Post Office and Civil Service. Hayes also joined the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), and viewed its collective power to influence legislation as an important asset in advancing the rights of African Americans—one that surpassed the abilities of any individual Member. Hayes once remarked, "To say that a person can just go (to Congress) and change it all—it doesn't work that way."[7]

As a member of the Education and Labor Committee, Hayes worked to combat the high dropout rate among students in Chicago, which far exceeded the national average. In 1985, he introduced the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act to allocate $50 million in federal funding to state and local government officials to help students stay in school. "The greatest security our Nation can have is to have our children properly educated," Hayes said in 1986. The bill passed the House but faltered in the Senate. Hayes then worked with committee chair Augustus F. "Gus" Hawkins of California to include his dropout prevention measure into a major 1988 education reform law. In 1990, his bill to extend funding for the dropout program for an additional two years was signed into law as well. Echoing many of his African-American colleagues in the House, Hayes questioned the Ronald Reagan administration's education policies. He criticized President Reagan's proposed budget cuts in the mid-1980s, calling them "a callous disregard for the dreams and aspirations of millions of poor and disadvantaged children and young adults."[8]

During his congressional career, Hayes worked on his campaign promise to tackle unemployment. He sponsored bills to provide disadvantaged youth with job training, as well as legislation creating public works programs to rebuild infrastructure in cities like Chicago. After the economic recession of the early 1980s caused manufacturing plants in his district to close, Hayes urged lawmakers to support legislation to assist workers who had lost their jobs. He also worked to strengthen the 1978 Humphrey–Hawkins Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act, which promoted employment opportunities in accordance with a growth in productivity. Hayes sponsored the Income and Jobs Action Act of 1985 to reinforce the principles outlined in the 1978 measure and to "focus attention and find solutions to the problem of unemployment and stop acting as though the problem does not exist." Drawing on his experience as a

labor leader, Hayes consistently supported legislation to protect American workers through higher wages, restrictions on imports, and more comprehensive benefits for children and health care.[9]

During his last two terms, Hayes chaired the Post Office and Civil Service Committee's Subcommittee on Postal Personnel and Modernization. As subcommittee chair, Hayes held hearings to draw testimony from U.S. Postal Service (USPS) administrators and postal union leaders over labor issues. While questioning Chicago's postmaster, Hayes expressed concern over possible job losses stemming from the increasing use of automation by the USPS. He also held a hearing on legislation to provide free mail service to troops serving in the Persian Gulf region, which became law in 1990. Back at home, Hayes organized a task force in his congressional district that successfully lobbied USPS officials in Chicago to increase the number of business contracts they signed with women- and minority-owned businesses.[10]

A consistent opponent of South Africa's White-minority government, Hayes introduced legislation to impose economic and diplomatic sanctions against South Africa as a means of ending apartheid. In November 1984, he was one of several House Members arrested for protesting at the South African Embassy in Washington, DC. In 1986, he visited the country as part of a congressional delegation led by William H. Gray III of Pennsylvania. Hayes strongly supported the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, which imposed sanctions on the South African government until it dismantled its system of apartheid. "If blame is to be laid for the continuing deaths of antiapartheid protesters in South Africa," he wrote, "those who have not strongly denounced the continued abuse of power by the South African Government are as much to blame as that Government itself."[11]

Hayes faced little opposition during his re-elections, and typically won with more than 90 percent of the vote. In the 1992 Democratic primary, however, several factors contributed to an unusually difficult campaign for the five-term incumbent. Partially because his district's population had declined during the 1980s, Illinois state officials redrew the district's boundaries following the 1990 Census. Although the district still included the predominantly African-American South Side, it also picked up several White neighborhoods and suburban areas of southwest Chicago. Hayes faced a formidable challenger in the primary—Bobby L. Rush, a Chicago alderman and a former member of the Black Panther Party. During the campaign, Rush accused Hayes of making promises to his constituents but failing to secure substantial legislative victories. Just days before the March 17 Democratic primary, Hayes was linked to a scandal in the House after a study by the Government Accounting Office indicated that many Members consistently overdrew their accounts in the House "bank," an informal service provided by the House Sergeant at Arms. The ensuing investigation by the House Ethics Committee revealed that Hayes wrote 716 checks exceeding his account balance over a 39-month period. "I believe the whole thing is a personal matter," Hayes commented after his overdrafts became public. "It did not cost the taxpayers a dime and is a side issue when our nation is in a serious crisis." Rush won 42 percent of the vote, besting Hayes by 3 percent. In 1993, the Justice Department cleared Hayes of any criminal wrongdoing for overdrawing his account while he was a Member of the House.[12]

Hayes remained active in labor and community affairs after his congressional career. He died of cancer in Chicago on April 8, 1997. "Charlie Hayes was a giant in the history of the struggle for civil rights and political rights for Americans of African descent," reflected Senator Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois. "He was a trailblazer in the trade-union movement and to the end maintained his passionate commitment to working men and women." In 1999, the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center, a nonprofit technology center for disadvantaged Chicago residents, opened in a historic building previously used by the UPWA.[13]

Manuscript Collection

Chicago Public Library, Archival Collections (Chicago, IL). *Papers*: 1944–1997, 10 linear feet. The Charles A. Hayes Papers have been arranged into three series: precongressional records, congressional records, and photographs. The first series documents aspects of Hayes's life prior to his congressional campaign and House service beginning in 1983. The second series documents Hayes's first congressional campaign, his service from 1983 to 1993, and his life after Congress, from 1993 to his death in 1997. The third series contains more than 100 photographs that document his personal life, labor organizing, and congressional career. A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

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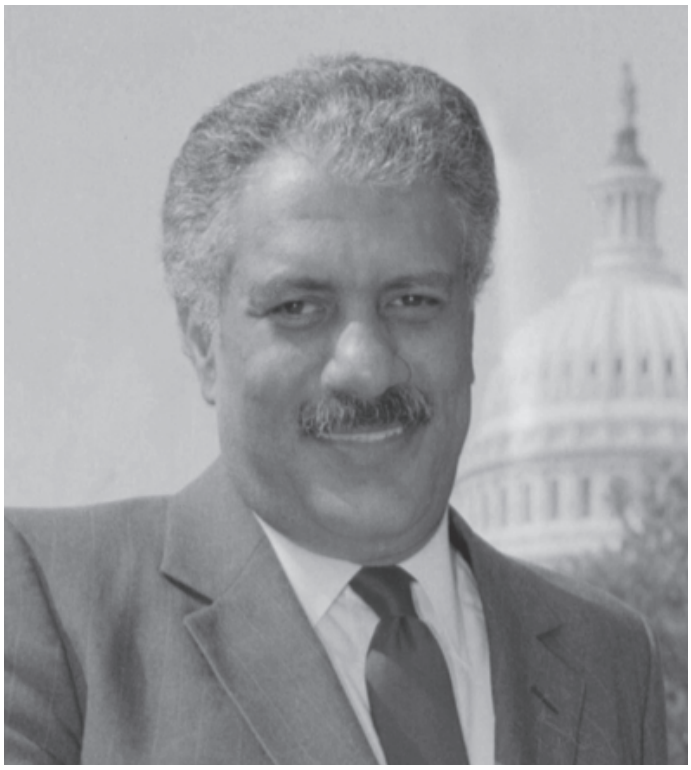
Alton R. Waldon Jr.

1936–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1986–1987

Democrat from New York



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Following more than two decades of public service at the state and municipal levels in New York, Alton R. Waldon Jr. won a special election to the 99th Congress (1985–1987) in June 1986. Two months later, he failed to win the Democratic nomination for that year's general election to the 100th Congress (1987–1989). Though he served in the House for less than six months, Waldon made history as the first Black Representative elected from New York City's borough of Queens. He devoted his short term to protesting apartheid in South Africa. "I could have made a lot of money if I had gone and practiced law in the private sector," Waldon noted upon wining his election to the House. "But I always preferred public service; it's my calling."[1]

Alton Ronald Waldon Jr. was born on December 21, 1936, in Lakeland, Florida. His parents, Rupert Waldon and Alton R. Waldon Sr., moved the family to New York City when their son was six years old, and he grew up in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. Alton Waldon Sr. worked as a longshoreman. Waldon graduated from Boys High School in 1954, joined the U.S. Army in 1956, and served until he was discharged in 1959. He married Barbara DeCosta, a graphic designer, in 1961. They had three children: Alton III, Dana, and Ian. Waldon spent his first few years out of the military pursuing a professional singing career before he joined the New York City housing authority's police force in 1962. The housing authority police, which provided security for residents of the city's public housing, was at the time separate from the New York City police department. Waldon advanced from the rank of patrolman to captain and became the commander of the department's training center. Waldon received a bachelor's in criminal justice from John Jay College in New York City in 1968 and earned a law degree from New York Law School in 1973. In 1970, during his legal studies, Waldon won the prestigious Thurgood Marshall Fellowship, awarded every three years to promising minority law students by the New York state trial lawyers association. In 1975, Waldon was appointed deputy commissioner of the New York state division of human rights. In 1981 and 1982, he served as assistant counsel for a New York state office serving people with developmental and intellectual disabilities. In 1982, Waldon won election to represent his Queens neighborhood in the New York state assembly, where he served until 1986.[2]

In April 1986, Representative Joseph Patrick Addabbo died after a long battle with cancer. During his 25-year career, Addabbo had risen to chair the Appropriations

Subcommittee on the Department of Defense. Since the early 1960s, the population of his southeastern Queens district had grown by about 25 percent. Its demographics had also changed. When he started in the House, the district had been majority White; by 1986, it had a slight Black majority. In May that year, Queens Democrats nominated Waldon to run for Addabbo's seat in the June 10 special election. Three Democrats joined the canvass under third party banners: Floyd H. Flake, a popular pastor of the Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church in Jamaica; New York City health department official Kevin McCabe; and state senator Andrew Jenkins. A lone Republican, Richard Dietl, also joined the race.[3]

Although he did not have the backing of the Democratic Party, Flake was considered Waldon's strongest opponent. Flake's position in the religious community gained him the support of many Black ministers in the district. Churches were instrumental in influencing voters, and routinely provided transportation to the polls. Flake gained the endorsement of the *New York Times* just five days before the election, though the newspaper also portrayed Waldon favorably. When the polls closed on Election Day, Flake led by 197 votes out of more than 40,000 cast, with absentee ballots yet to be counted. But Flake's name did not appear on the absentee ballots because a filing technicality had temporarily eliminated him from the race; by the time his candidacy was reinstated right before the election, it was too late to change the absentee ballots. The final count put Waldon ahead of Flake by a mere 278 votes. Flake attempted to discard the absentee ballots in court, but a three-judge federal appeals panel ruled in Waldon's favor on July 25. Waldon was in Washington, DC, visiting Representative Charles B. Rangel of New York when he received the news of his election. He was sworn in four days later, on July 29, 1986, as the first Black Representative from Queens. "How sweet it is," he declared. "I am the son of a man who could not read and write, and only in America could this happen, to have someone to come from abject poverty … and to sit in this august body."[4]

During his brief term, Waldon received assignments to the Committee on Education and Labor and the Committee on Small Business, but he focused primarily on U.S. relations with South Africa. Waldon entered Congress at the height of the battle for strict sanctions against South Africa's White-minority government to condemn its apartheid system. Waldon supported the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, which initially called for a near-total trade ban with the country. "South Africa is not a legitimate state," he said. "The only way to balance the inequities in South Africa is to establish a new black-majority government." Though he was disappointed when the Senate amended the act to weaken the sanctions, Waldon and other Black Members led the fight to override President Ronald Reagan's veto of the compromise bill. "America is the cradle of freedom," Waldon wrote. "But unless we move with determination and dispatch the babe of hope will be stillborn in Pretoria." He also opposed aid to Angolan rebels, who received support from South Africa's White-minority government and called on President Reagan to participate in a summit with the leaders of the nations bordering South Africa.[5]

Domestically, Waldon sought investments in educational programs and supported legislation meant to combat drug trafficking and the use of crack cocaine. He voted for the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, which bolstered the enforcement of drug laws and expanded the use of mandatory minimum sentencing. "For those of us who are black this self-inflicted pain is the worst oppression we have known since slavery," he declared on the House Floor. "Let us … pledge to crack down on crack." He also called for a national task force to focus on illiteracy, which he described as a "corrosive force that is silently eroding the social infrastructure of our Nation."[6]

Just two months after he took his seat, Waldon found himself battling Flake for re-election. Waldon had the benefit of incumbency and support from New York Governor Mario Cuomo, but Flake returned with a strong base and the backing of New York City Mayor Edward Irving Koch. Waldon lost the nomination to Flake by about 3,000 votes.[7]

After leaving Congress in January 1987, Waldon sat on the New York state investigation commission until 1990. The following year, he won a seat in the New York state senate, where he served for a decade. He also worked as an agent for several professional football and basketball players. When Representative Flake resigned from Congress in 1997, Waldon unsuccessfully sought the Democratic nomination for his old seat. Despite his close ties to Democratic officials in Queens, the party chose assemblyman Gregory W. Meeks. Waldon ran in the special election as a third-party candidate but only garnered 21 percent of the vote. In 2000, Waldon accepted a judicial appointment to the New York court of claims. He retired from the court in 2006.[8]

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Mike Espy

1953–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1987–1993

Democrat from Mississippi

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

In 1986, Mike Espy of Mississippi won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, becoming the first Black Mississippian to serve in Congress in more than 100 years. During his career, Espy gained unprecedented levels of biracial support among voters but he often had to navigate strict racial divisions that were deeply woven into the state's society. "Service, service, service," Espy said when asked to describe his legislative focus in the House. From his seats on the Agriculture and Budget Committees, he worked on economic development issues and procuring aid for farmers in his impoverished rural district. After three terms in the House, Espy was appointed Secretary of Agriculture in the Cabinet of President William J. Clinton.[1]

Alphonso Michael "Mike" Espy was born in Yazoo City, Mississippi, on November 30, 1953. He and his twin, Althea Michelle, were the youngest of Henry and Willie Jean Espy's seven children. Both of Espy's parents graduated from the Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in Alabama, and his father served as a county agent for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the 1930s and 1940s before joining the funeral home business founded by his father-in-law, T.J. Huddleston Sr. Huddleston, Mike Espy's maternal grandfather and one of the wealthiest Black men in the South, founded a chain of funeral homes and in 1928 built the first Black hospital in Mississippi.[2]

Mike Espy attended a local parochial school through his first two years of high school. After the school closed in 1969, he transferred to Yazoo City High School. Espy was one of the only Black students at the school, and he carried a stick to fend off racist attacks from his classmates. "Relative to the civil rights experiences of snarling dogs and whips and things it was pretty tame," Espy recalled of his schooldays. "But I'd always have a fight. The teacher would leave the room, and then you're one among 35 in a classroom and they'd make racial jeers." A year later, in 1970, Yazoo City High School was fully integrated, and Espy was elected president of the Black student body during his senior year—the White students had their own president. Espy graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science from Howard University in Washington, DC, in 1975. He earned a law degree from Santa Clara University Law School in Santa Clara, California, in 1978, and returned to Mississippi to practice law. He married Sheila Bell and the couple had two children: Jamilla and Michael, before divorcing.[3]

Espy began his political career working in several state government positions. He served as the first Black assistant

secretary of state, managing the central Mississippi legal services division from 1978 to 1980. For the next four years, Espy served as assistant secretary of state for the public lands division, in charge of enforcing a state law that set aside one of every 36 square miles for educational purposes. From 1984 to 1985, Espy was assistant state attorney general for the consumer protection division. Espy also took on a prominent role in national politics when he served on the rules committee for the 1984 Democratic National Convention.[4]

Following the 1980 Census—nearly 100 years after the last Black Representative to serve Mississippi, John R. Lynch, departed the House in 1883—statewide redistricting created a new congressional district that stretched along the Mississippi River and encompassed the cities of Vicksburg and Greenville. The redrawn seat was majority-Black, but it had a voting-age population that remained majority White. In 1982, Robert Clark, a Black state legislator, had come close to defeating White Republican William Webster Franklin—who appealed to White voters using a controversial campaign slogan "He's one of us"—in the new district. In 1984, federal courts redrew the district's boundaries to include more Black voters. The new district was 58 percent Black, with a voting age population that was around 53 percent Black. The district also was the most impoverished in the country; 42 percent of its residents lived below the national poverty line and five counties had an unemployment rate of at least 20 percent. When Robert Clark ran for the seat and lost a second time to Franklin, Espy studied the results and concluded that, with improved voter turnout, he could win the seat himself. "The time was right, it was hot. I saw it in the numbers," he recalled.[5]

In 1986, Espy won the Democratic nomination with 50 percent of the vote against two White challengers: Paul B. Johnson, a grandson of a former Mississippi governor, and Hiram Eastland, a cousin of the late segregationist U.S. Senator James Eastland. In the general election, Espy faced the incumbent Republican, Franklin. Race remained a stark dividing line in Mississippi, and Espy worked to turn out Black voters, going door to door asking supporters to volunteer transportation and other services on Election Day. "I need you; I can't do it by myself," he remembered saying. "Please sir, please ma'am, turn out, serve as a poll watcher or a driver or a food-fixer. The answer is in your hands." Espy also stepped across the deep racial divide to court White voters in the district. Doing so, however, required a tenuous balancing act, he said. "You must excite your black voters and not incite your white voters." Espy promised to combat the agricultural depression that plagued White farmers in western Mississippi, touting a promise from the soon-to-be House Speaker Jim Wright of Texas that he would be appointed to the powerful House Agriculture Committee. On Election Day, Espy won with 52 percent of the vote, including 12 percent of the White turnout. In winning his first elective office, Espy also became the only Black Representative in the 100th Congress (1987–1989) to represent a rural district. Espy's historic election caused the *Washington Post* to envision a new future for the state of Mississippi. Espy's victory "did more than shatter the age-old color barrier," the *Post* reported. "It is further evidence that Mississippi is ready for a change."[6]

Having defeated a Republican incumbent, Democratic House leaders rewarded Espy with favorable committee assignments for a first-term Representative, enabling him to look after the interests of his rural district. He received his promised seat on the Agriculture Committee as well as an assignment on the prestigious Budget Committee. He also served on the Select Committee on Hunger. Espy was re-elected three times. In 1988, Espy won the general election with 65 percent of the vote and more than tripled his share of the White vote compared to two years earlier. Espy noted that his successful first term in Congress, and his focus on constituent services, caused White voters to "overcome the apprehension" of voting for a Black candidate. In Espy's next two elections, in 1990 and 1992, he defeated Republican Dorothy Bedford with 84 and 76 percent of the vote, respectively.[7]

In his first term, Espy sponsored the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Act, enlisting the aid of fellow Mississippi Democrat and powerful Appropriations Committee Chair Jamie Lloyd Whitten, who helped secure $2 million to fund the project. The bill, provisions of which were incorporated into the 1989 agriculture appropriation bill, established a nine-member panel to study the region's widespread poverty and created a plan for economic development along the banks of the Mississippi River. The governors of participating states (Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, and Illinois) selected the commission's members. "We must strive to bring this … region, which has been described as soil rich but dirt poor, into full partnership with the rest of the country," Espy said in a House Floor speech. In addition, Espy touted the Mississippi Delta's

fastest-growing enterprise: catfish farming. He sought federal grants for the thousand-acre pools where catfish were bred and sponsored a resolution declaring April 4, 1987, as National Catfish Day. He even persuaded the U.S. Army to serve catfish in its mess halls at least once a week.[8]

As the only Black House Member from a rural area and whose district had formerly been represented by a Republican, Espy embraced the political center to a greater degree than did many of his African-American colleagues in Congress, occasionally putting him at odds with the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). He received significant pushback from the CBC over his membership in the National Rifle Association and his support for welfare reform. "I stopped going to CBC meetings," he recalled. "I supported their initiatives, but I just didn't feel comfortable." On most issues, however, Espy sided with his party. He generally disagreed with President Ronald Reagan's focus on building America's Cold War military capacity, and voted against authorizing President George H.W. Bush's use of military force in Iraq in 1991. Espy also supported abortion rights.[9]

Espy was a strong advocate for welfare reform and pushed for the adoption of programs to assist low-income Americans in achieving economic self-reliance. As chair of the Budget Committee's Task Force on Community Development and Natural Resources, and as chair of the Select Committee on Hunger's Domestic Task Force, he presided over several hearings on "asset-oriented policy" that focused on boosting the ability of welfare recipients to save money. Espy supported the use of Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) which had certain tax advantages and accrued interest with matching government contributions. The hope was that IDAs would help Americans achieve life goals such as homeownership or starting a business. "It's not what you make, it's what you keep," Espy noted. The task forces also heard testimony from advocates of "microenterprises," through which welfare recipients received loans from local banks to start their own small businesses. Working with Hunger Committee Chair Tony Patrick Hall of Ohio, Espy cosponsored legislation that sought to develop federal IDA and microenterprise programs.[10]

Espy's involvement in the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission provided him the opportunity to form a close working relationship with then-Arkansas Governor Clinton, who chaired the commission. Both politicians also belonged to the Democratic Leadership Council, a coalition that promoted the same welfare-reform efforts that Espy pushed in the House. Espy was one of the first Democratic lawmakers to endorse Clinton's 1992 candidacy for President. That year, Espy won re-election to a fourth term in Congress, but had to relinquish his seat on the Budget Committee after reaching a three-term limit. After getting passed over for a seat on the prestigious Appropriations Committee, Espy wrote out the top 10 reasons he should head the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on the back of an envelope and handed it to a Clinton aide while attending a post-election banquet. Clinton offered him the post, and Espy resigned from Congress on January 22, 1993, to serve in Clinton's Cabinet.[11]

Up to that point, most Agriculture Secretaries had come from the Midwest, and Espy was the first African American and the first Mississippian to lead the USDA. As the fourth-largest federal department, the USDA oversaw services ranging from the administration of food assistance programs to farm subsidies. Espy directed several noteworthy achievements at the USDA, including improved meat inspection processes after an outbreak of illness caused by the bacterium E. coli in fast-food hamburgers. He also trimmed the agency's bureaucracy and provided relief for farming areas following devastating Mississippi River floods in 1993. Espy resigned as Agriculture Secretary on December 31, 1994, following allegations of ethics violations. He was indicted on felony bribery and fraud charges amid accusations that various food companies had paid his way to sporting events and awarded his girlfriend a scholarship. Espy was acquitted in 1998.[12]

Espy returned to Jackson, Mississippi, to practice law, while also serving an unpaid post as an adviser to Department of Energy during the last years of the Clinton administration. In 2018, when Republican Mississippi Senator William Thad Cochran announced his retirement, Espy declared his candidacy for the November special election to fill the seat. In a four-way contest, Espy's main opponent was former state agriculture commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith, a Republican, who had been appointed to the Senate seat in April. Running in a predominantly Republican state, Espy emphasized bipartisanship and promised to support Mississippi interests over party ideals. Neither candidate received a majority of the vote on Election Day, triggering a runoff. On November 27, 2018, Hyde-Smith defeated Espy with 54 percent of the vote.

Espy challenged Hyde-Smith again in 2020 for the full six-year Senate term. He secured the Democratic nomination but lost the general election with 44 percent of the vote on November 3, 2020.[13]

Manuscript Collection

Mississippi State University Libraries, Congressional and Political Research Center (Starkville, MS). *Papers*: ca. 1986–1996, 72 cubic feet. The Mike Espy Collection contains files, audio-visual material, publications, and memorabilia documenting his congressional career plus personal files and other items from his work as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. The collection is currently in process and closed. An oral history project is being planned with Espy to accompany the collection.

Notes

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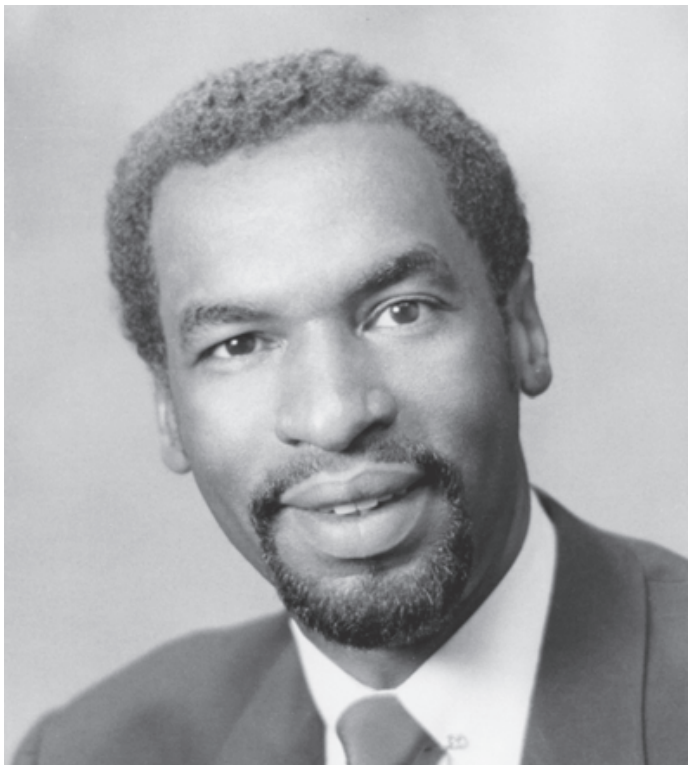
Floyd H. Flake

1945–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1987–1997

Democrat from New York



Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Although Floyd H. Flake arrived in Congress in January 1987 without having held public office, he was bolstered by his experience managing one of the largest churches in New York City: the Allen African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. As a provider of a broad range of social services, the church was the economic focal point of the Jamaica, Queens, neighborhood. A Democrat, Flake often worked across the aisle with Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives to develop and fund urban renewal and education projects using private enterprise. But Flake's calling ultimately remained his church, and halfway through his sixth term in Congress he left to return to New York. "I realize I could never be a Beltway politician," Flake noted. "[Back home] there are real people with real everyday problems that need to be addressed."[1]

Floyd Harold Flake was born in Los Angeles, California, on January 30, 1945, one of 13 children of Robert Flake Sr., a janitor, and Rosie Lee Johnson-Flake, a homemaker. The Flakes moved to Houston, Texas, where Floyd Flake attended public schools and joined the AME church at the age of 10. Flake was the first in his family to attend college. He graduated in 1967 from Ohio's historically Black Wilberforce University with a bachelor's degree in psychology. He subsequently did graduate work at Payne Theological Seminary at Wilberforce before earning his master's degree in divinity at the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, in 1995. Flake later studied business administration at Northeastern University in Boston. Between his studies, he was employed as a social worker in Dayton, a salesman for a large tobacco company, and a marketing analyst for an international technology and document management company. Flake eventually drew on his background in religious studies and education, working as the director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Afro-American Center and the chaplain at Boston University. Flake married Margaret Elaine McCollins, also an ordained minister, and they raised four children: Aliya, Nailah, Robert Rasheed, and Harold Hasan.[2]

In 1976, Flake and his wife Elaine took over the Allen AME Church in Jamaica, a primarily Black neighborhood and one of the poorest sections of the mostly middle-class Queens borough in New York. Named for Richard Allen, the founder of the first AME church, Flake's parish was the oldest AME church in Queens, dating back to the 1860s. Under Flake's leadership, Allen AME membership grew from less than 1,500 to nearly 10,000 members in two decades. Allen

AME provided community outreach services such as a health clinic, a primary school, and affordable housing. Other local Black pastors spoke highly of Flake's ministry. "He is a master builder," noted a local Pentecostal reverend. A regional Baptist leader called him "a role model for the clergy."[3]

Flake did not consider running for public office until Joseph Patrick Addabbo, a longtime Representative from southeastern Queens, died in April 1986, opening a House seat. The district's demographics had changed dramatically during Addabbo's 25-year career—from a large, middle-class Irish and Italian majority to one that was 65 percent Black. Democratic leaders in the borough sought a Black candidate to succeed Addabbo for the remainder of the 99th Congress (1985–1987). Excluding Flake's impoverished neighborhood in Jamaica, the district constituted one of the largest Black middle-class communities in the nation. Flake lost the Democratic nomination for the seat to Alton R. Waldon Jr., a state assemblyman and a former police officer. But in the crowded special election, Flake ran on the Unity Party platform. Several other Democrats also joined the race on third-party tickets, providing Waldon with competition in the overwhelmingly Democratic district. Flake was Waldon's chief opponent; he enjoyed the endorsement of the *New York Times* as well as the powerful support of local clergy. Flake won the initial canvass in June by a mere 197 votes, but Waldon took the lead by 276 votes after the absentee ballots were counted. Flake's name was not on the absentee ballots, due to a filing error that occurred shortly before the election. Although he attempted to nullify the absentee ballots in federal court, he was unsuccessful. "It was mindboggling," Flake noted of his loss to Waldon. "One day you go to bed having won an election. A week later you discover you've lost because of absentee ballots."[4]

Flake returned three months later to face Waldon for the Democratic nomination for the full term in the 100th Congress (1987–1989). In addition to his Jamaica base, Flake also enjoyed an endorsement from New York City Mayor Edward Irving Koch, who delivered to him some of the predominantly Jewish and Italian neighborhoods that remained in the district. Flake defeated Waldon in the primary by 3,000 votes. Flake's nomination propelled him to an easy victory in the general election in the heavily Democratic district, where he won with 68 percent of the vote.[5]

Flake won re-election five times, typically garnering between 60 and 70 percent of the vote in general elections. In 1992, a well-publicized legal controversy catapulted Flake into a primary battle. Two years earlier, Floyd and Elaine Flake had been charged with income tax evasion and embezzlement of federal funds appropriated to build the church's senior citizen housing complex in 1981. The Flakes maintained their innocence, and their supporters claimed the charges were politically and racially motivated. Following a well-publicized, three-week trial in March 1991, a judge dismissed the charges against the Flakes, declaring the prosecution's evidence insufficient. Following the controversy, Simeon Golar, an African-American judge, challenged him for the Democratic nomination. Golar claimed that Flake focused more on his church and its surrounding neighborhood than on his congressional duties and neighborhoods outside Jamaica. The Democratic establishment in Queens chose to support Golar in the primary. Flake retaliated by providing a slate of candidates for local elections who were loyal to him and running against the party's handpicked candidates. Election officials threw several of Flake's candidates off the ballot for failure to observe filing rules. Flake ultimately won the nomination.[6]

In the 100th Congress, Flake's background in business and urban redevelopment won him appointments to the Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs Committee and the Small Business Committee. Following the loss of several incumbents on the Banking Committee in the 1992 elections, Flake rose to chair the panel's Subcommittee on General Oversight, Investigations, and Resolutions of Failed Financial Institutions. During the 100th Congress, Flake also served on the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families. From the 100th to the 102nd Congress (1987–1993), Flake served on the Select Committee on Hunger. In the 103rd Congress (1993–1995), Flake joined the Government Operations Committee, which he left at the end of the term. Following the 1992 election, Flake attempted to gain a seat on the Appropriations Committee but was passed over for two New York Members with less seniority. Congressional observers attributed this decision by Democratic leaders as a penalty for Flake's reputation as an independent lawmaker and his support of local politicians not endorsed by the party.[7]

Flake used his committee assignments to help steer federal money toward development projects in his district. In 1995, a New York publication cited him as one of the most effective downstate New York Representatives regarding the procurement of federal funds. Flake's willingness to

work with Republicans and their traditional corporate constituents often helped him to meet his goals. In 1993, taking advantage of his promotion to the chair of the Banking Committee's subcommittee on General Oversight, Investigations, and the Resolution of Failed Financial Institutions, Flake introduced a comprehensive community development plan that outwardly opposed a plan advanced by Democratic President William J. Clinton. Along with the ranking member on the Banking Committee, Representative James Albert Smith Leach of Iowa, Flake crafted legislation that redirected one-third of the funding for the Clinton proposal from local community development banks to large lending institutions. Flake said this move provided incentives for big banks to lend to poor communities—first, by underwriting local lenders in order to help small businesses get off the ground and, second, by encouraging larger lenders to take on the businesses as they matured. Parts of Flake's legislation were later incorporated into the Community Development Banking and Financial Institutions Act, which was signed into law in 1994.[8]

After Republicans took over the House majority in the November 1994 elections, Flake strove to work across the aisle. He was particularly supportive of Republican efforts to introduce school vouchers—tax credits given to parents so their children could attend private schools. New House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia took note of Flake's work at Allen AME, especially the Allen AME Christian School that Flake founded. And in 1997, Gingrich brought Flake in to cosponsor the American Community Renewal Act, a reform bill introduced by J.C. Watts Jr. of Oklahoma, which offered tax breaks and school vouchers to poor urban neighborhoods. Although the bill did not make it out of committee, Flake's support of school vouchers drew criticism from within his party. Citing his own church-run school, Flake argued that private schools used fewer tax dollars per student annually and graduated more students than did public schools. He also believed that vouchers would motivate public schools to better manage their finances and curricula. Most Democrats viewed the program as an across-the-board abandonment of the public school system. Both the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and a powerful lobby composed of many New York City teachers and administrators opposed the legislation. House Minority Leader Richard Andrew Gephardt of Missouri noted, "I've been to Floyd Flake's school, and I've seen how truly remarkable it is. But if we're going to rip the rug from underneath public schools, we've made a grave error." Flake's support was not without reservation; he informed Gingrich that the Republican's larger legislative agenda ignored urban America.[9]

Flake occasionally collaborated with Republicans, but he voted with Democrats more often than not. Though wary of dependence on government assistance, Flake railed against program cuts the House approved in a 1996 welfare reform bill, which he noted would cost New Yorkers $750 million in lost federal benefits. Flake noted the role of the federal safety net in helping poor people make ends meet in cities with wealth inequality. "Any attempts to reform welfare must be carried out with equal amounts of compassion for recipients and zeal for reform," he said.[10]

Flake also was an active member of the CBC and supported its broad mission. "With those 39 votes, we were able to do a very effective job of lobbying the President and Congress because those votes made a big difference," Flake noted after an increase in the caucus membership following the 1992 elections. But he cautioned against the CBC's continued support of educational policies, economic development, and anti-poverty programs that relied too much on the federal government. After Republicans took control of both chambers of Congress and, as a result, President Clinton "had to center himself by dealing with both sides," Flake argued that the CBC should "become more bipartisan or work with the President understanding that he, as the leader of the nation, cannot afford to make policies that were effective for us in the 1970s."[11]

Allen AME remained a significant part of Flake's life, and in July 1997 he announced that he was resigning from Congress to concentrate on his pastoral duties. "My calling in life is as a minister," Flake told reporters, "so I had to come to a real reconciliation … and it is impossible to continue the sojourn where I am traveling back and forth to DC." Flake retired from Congress on November 15, 1997. Candidates who hoped to succeed Flake immediately sought his endorsement, recognizing the local political power of Allen AME's congregation. Flake backed the eventual winner, former state assemblyman Gregory W. Meeks.[12]

Flake continued to be politically active following his departure from Congress, writing opinion pieces for the *New York Post* and working for various conservative think tanks to promote school vouchers. "The best thing that's happened to me is getting out of Congress," Flake declared in a 1997 interview, "because I'm going to be a real hell-

raiser from now on!" In addition to fulfilling his duties as head pastor at Allen AME, Flake also served as president of Wilberforce University from 2002 to 2008.[13]

Notes

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John Lewis

1940–2020

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1987–2020

Democrat from Georgia

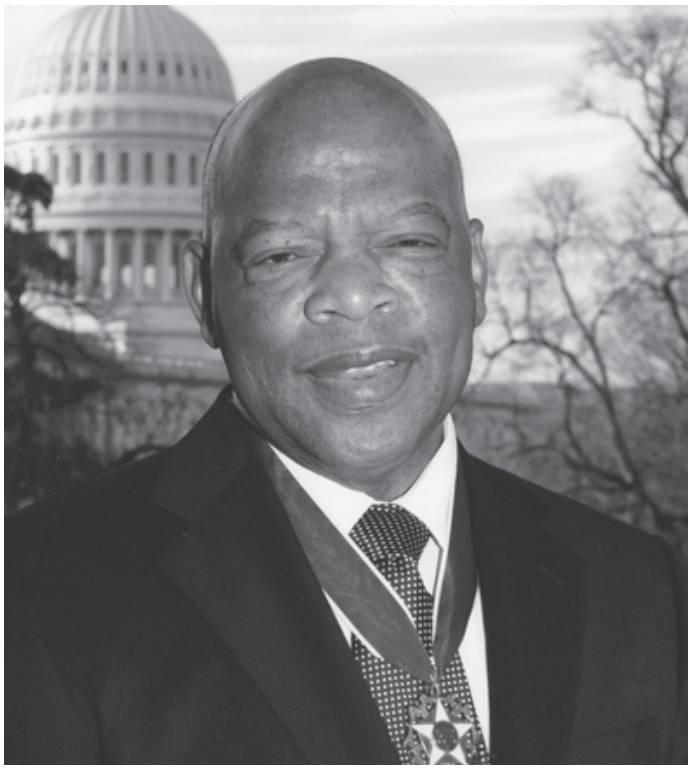

Image courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

The son of Alabama sharecroppers, Representative John Lewis of Georgia dedicated his life to advancing the cause of freedom and equality in America. As a leader in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Lewis challenged Jim Crow segregation and oppression across the South through nonviolent protest. His bold, peaceful stands against discrimination were often met with violence, and Lewis regularly put his own physical safety on the line. In 1965, Alabama state troopers in the town of Selma attacked Lewis and other demonstrators with clubs and tear gas during a march for voting rights. Images of the assault were broadcast around the country and directly contributed to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Two decades later, in 1986, Lewis was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from an Atlanta district, part of a new generation of Black lawmakers from the South made possible by Lewis's tireless work to expand access to the ballot. During his more than three decades in Congress, Lewis was a formidable legislator who exerted moral and political leadership within the Democratic Party and never forgot his roots as an activist.

John Lewis was born on February 21, 1940, in Troy, Alabama, one of 10 children of Eddie and Willie Mae Lewis. To escape the exploitative system of sharecropping prevalent across the South, his parents saved enough money to purchase a 110-acre farm to grow cotton, corn, and peanuts. To help make ends meet, Lewis's father also drove a school bus, and his mother was a domestic worker. John Lewis attended segregated public schools in Alabama, and as a boy he felt called to ministry, aspiring to emulate the career of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. after hearing him speak on the radio. In 1957, Lewis moved to Nashville, Tennessee, to attend the American Baptist Theological Seminary, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1961. Lewis then enrolled at Fisk University, also in Nashville, and in 1967 earned a degree in religion and philosophy. In 1968, Lewis married Lillian Miles and they had one son: John-Miles Lewis.[1]

Before his twenty-first birthday, Lewis had taken on a central role in the American civil rights movement. He embraced King's philosophy of nonviolent resistance and as a college student participated in sit-in protests to desegregate lunch counters in Nashville in the spring of 1960. Lewis was a founder and chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a national civil rights organization with chapters at colleges throughout

the South. In 1961, he endured brutal physical beatings and a lengthy arrest as one of 13 participants in the first Freedom Rides, organized by the Congress of Racial Equality to desegregate interstate commercial busing in the South. Lewis's fearless commitment to peaceful protest resulted in more than 40 arrests between 1960 and 1966.[2]

In 1963, Lewis helped plan the iconic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. In the buildup to the event, Lewis, King, labor leader A. Philip Randolph, activist Bayard Rustin, and other march organizers were accused by powerful segregationists like Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina of having ties to the Communist Party. On August 28, Lewis delivered a keynote address at the Lincoln Memorial in which he called on an army of movement activists to "march through the South" in a sustained campaign of nonviolent resistance to produce effective federal civil rights legislation and destroy Jim Crow.[3]

In 1964, as part of SNCC's Freedom Summer campaign in Mississippi, Lewis braved constant threats and violence to lead a voter registration drive and peaceful protests against segregation. He worked with SNCC staff to train an interracial group of activists to set up schools and register people to vote. After months of organizing, Lewis was part of a group of civil rights activists invited by the Guinean government to travel to the West African nation and share their experiences with young people in September 1964. Lewis extended his trip to several African nations, including Liberia, Ghana, Zambia, and Ethiopia. During a brief stop in Nairobi, Kenya, he had a chance meeting with Malcolm X, who was also traveling at the time, during which they discussed the global Black freedom struggle and their goals for the movement in the United States.[4]

When Lewis returned to America, he embarked on a new voter registration drive in Selma. SNCC worked with King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to coordinate picket lines and protests in early 1965. On Sunday, March 7, Lewis and hundreds of others began a march to the state capital in Montgomery to raise awareness of voter suppression. As the group crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge over the Alabama River, baton-wielding state troopers descended on the peaceful marchers, beating and tear-gassing them. Photos of local law enforcement attacking Lewis with a club circulated throughout the nation. Lewis, who suffered a fractured skull on what became known as "Bloody Sunday," called for the federal government to protect protestors. "I don't see how President [Lyndon B.] Johnson can send troops to Vietnam … I don't see how he can send troops to Africa and can't send troops to Selma," he said before receiving treatment for his injury.[5]

The appalling brutality against peaceful demonstrators in Selma served as the catalyst for congressional action on voting rights. While some Members, including James Douglas Martin of Alabama, accused Lewis of instigating the violence, momentum for a new voting rights legislation gathered speed. Only six months later, in early August, Lewis attended a ceremony at the White House to watch as President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The new law banned discrimination at the polls and sanctioned federal oversight of the nation's elections. It also included a "preclearance" requirement in which counties with a history of discrimination required Department of Justice approval before making any changes to their voting laws.[6]

Lewis left SNCC in 1966 and finished a degree at Fisk before taking a job in New York City as associate director of the Field Foundation, which worked to combat poverty and inequality. In 1967, he moved to Atlanta, where he took a job as director of the Community Organization Project for the Southern Regional Council, an interracial advocacy group. Shortly into his tenure there, he took a brief leave to work on the presidential campaign of Senator Robert Francis Kennedy of New York. Lewis was with Kennedy in Los Angeles when the Senator was assassinated in June 1968.[7]

In 1970, Lewis became executive director of the Voter Education Project, a nonpartisan organization working to register voters across the South. On March 3, 1975, he testified in front of a House Judiciary Committee subcommittee on the need to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act. Lewis recommended that Congress renew and strengthen the act. "Those who hold illegitimate power will not give it up voluntarily," Lewis warned. He called on Congress to pass a "permanent, national act" to "guarantee minority voting rights protection" across the nation.[8]

Lewis first ran for Congress in a 1977 special election to replace Georgia Representative Andrew Young, who had resigned to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. In the crowded Democratic primary for the seat representing Atlanta's Fifth District, Lewis ran on a platform calling for strong federal antipoverty programs. On Election Day, Lewis won 29 percent of the vote—second in a field of 12, behind Atlanta city council president Wyche Fowler Jr. Because Fowler failed to secure a majority, he faced Lewis in a runoff. On the day of the

election, Walter E. Fauntroy, the District of Columbia's Delegate in Congress, visited Atlanta and told crowds that the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) needed Lewis on Capitol Hill. Fowler ultimately prevailed with 62 percent of the vote.[9]

One month later, President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter appointed Lewis associate director of the federal volunteer agency, ACTION, where he worked to build connections with local volunteer groups and diversify the agency's workforce. He resigned in January 1980, citing his desire to return to Atlanta and pursue a career in politics. He later tied his decision to leave Washington to a contentious hearing in front of the House Appropriations Committee, in which several Members tried to limit funding for ACTION programs. Lewis became determined to seek elected office "where I would have more control over the things I thought ought to be done, where I wouldn't have to go up to Capitol Hill and answer to some committee chair who was simply using this agency or that to score political points. I wanted to get on the other side of that table." In October 1980, he was named director of community affairs at the National Consumer Cooperative Bank, a financial institution chartered by Congress to provide funding for consumer cooperatives.[10]

In 1981, Lewis defeated a 24-year veteran of city politics to claim a seat on the Atlanta city council. In his first elected office, Lewis grappled with local issues including public funding for infrastructure, zoning laws, and homelessness. He touted his independence and urged the council to adopt ethics reforms, including financial disclosure requirements. He was also one of the leading opponents of a four-lane highway designed to serve the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum. Lewis criticized the plan for harming local neighborhoods, cutting through a city park, and increasing traffic and pollution. Ultimately, the council approved the road, but it was reduced to two lanes. In 2018, it was renamed the John Lewis Freedom Parkway.[11]

In 1986, Representative Fowler announced his intention to run for the U.S. Senate. With Georgia's Fifth District seat open for the first time in nearly a decade, Lewis resigned from the city council to join seven other candidates in the Democratic primary. The Fifth District had been redrawn following reapportionment in 1982. The new seat covered most of Atlanta and rural areas in southwest Fulton County, and the district's Black population increased from about half to nearly two-thirds of all registered voters. Lewis initially finished second to his former SNCC colleague and then-Georgia state senator Julian Bond, with 35 percent of the vote. But Bond's share of the vote fell just short of 50 percent, triggering a runoff for September 2. Lewis assumed the role of outsider, campaigning door to door across the district. He criticized Bond for absenteeism in the state senate and for not effectively serving his constituents during his 20-year career in state politics. Lewis promised to advocate for all people and business in his district. "I'm not on the black slate," he declared, "I'm on the people's slate."[12]

As the primary runoff neared, Lewis worked to chip away at Bond's lead. In a televised debate, Lewis suggested both candidates submit to a drug test for public review—echoing a similar request by President Ronald Reagan of his administration's staff weeks earlier. Bond declined and accused Lewis of "demagoguery," but the ploy became a focal point during the campaign's final days. Lewis ultimately prevailed in a narrow victory, earning 52 percent of the vote. Polling suggested he won a larger share of Black voters than in the initial primary while also attracting nearly 80 percent of White voters. In the general election, Lewis easily defeated Republican candidate Portia A. Scott with 75 percent of the vote. In his subsequent 16 re-elections, Lewis won by similar margins, running unopposed in all but three cycles since 2002.[13]

When Lewis entered the House in January 1987, he was assigned to two committees: Public Works and Transportation; and Interior and Insular Affairs. In the 101st Congress (1989–1991), he received an additional post on the House Select Committee on Aging. Lewis also served on the Budget Committee for the 108th Congress (2003–2005) and the Joint Committee on Taxation during the 116th Congress (2019–2021). In addition to his committee responsibilities, Lewis was part of the Democratic whip operation for 30 years. He was named a chief deputy whip in 1989 before being appointed senior chief deputy whip in the 108th Congress. As a chief deputy whip, Lewis held a seat on the influential Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, which helps set the party's agenda and oversees committee assignments. He was also a member of the CBC. Lewis relinquished his other committee assignments after winning a coveted seat on the powerful Ways and Means Committee in the 103rd Congress (1993–1995). He remained on the tax-writing panel for the rest of his career.[14]

From the start, Lewis had a far-ranging legislative agenda. He backed or introduced a wide array of proposals

early in his House tenure, including legislation advancing civil rights as well as environmental justice, education, and health care. He often described his work on Capitol Hill as being in pursuit of King's ideal notion of the "beloved community"—one committed to equality and founded on peace and justice for all.[15]

Lewis's celebrated record of activism gave him a prominent place on Capitol Hill. Reporters sought his perspective on every important bill, controversy, or Democratic maneuver in Congress. His public comments carried significant weight within the Democratic Caucus and often garnered praise from Republicans. For many on Capitol Hill, Lewis was the "conscience of Congress."[16]

Lewis also attended to the needs of his district. He took the lead in securing federal funds for urban development and highlighted troubling inequities in a city experiencing dynamic change. When a major department store vacated its downtown Atlanta building in 1991, Lewis joined his Georgia colleagues in calling for the federal government to transform the space into offices for the thousands of federal workers in the city. Lewis used his seat on the Public Works Committee to secure funding for what became the Atlanta Federal Center. He argued that consolidating the federal workforce in the city center would encourage people to take mass transit and lower pollution. Lewis was known as a thoughtful lawmaker who often carefully evaluated the local effect of urban development, calling for federal funds for infrastructure improvements to help the city prepare to host the summer Olympics Games. He was also a prominent opponent of highway projects that he said would disrupt residential neighborhoods and compromise air quality in the city.[17]

In addition to his work on local issues, Lewis used his seat in the House as a platform to bring his commitment to human rights to U.S. foreign policy. In 1988, he was arrested during an anti-apartheid protest at the South African embassy in Washington. Lewis's renowned commitment to the philosophy of nonviolence complicated his position on U.S. military actions abroad. In 1991, he was a vocal opponent of American intervention in the Gulf War, calling war "obsolete as a tool and as a means to conduct foreign policy." In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, however, Lewis declared his intention to "send the strongest possible message that we can't let terrorism stand" and joined the overwhelming majority of House Members who voted to authorize the use of military force overseas. One year later, he cited the destructive nature of war to adamantly oppose the Bush administration's planned invasion of Iraq.[18]

At certain points in his career, Lewis broke with his party to oppose major international trade initiatives. Lewis joined Majority Whip David Edward Bonior of Michigan in opposing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), proposed by Democratic President William J. Clinton in 1993. Lewis warned the agreement threatened jobs in the United States over the long-term. Despite his opposition, NAFTA went into effect in 1994. He also criticized the move to normalize trade relations with China in 2000, criticizing the human rights record of the Chinese government.[19]

When the Republican Party won control of the House in the 104th Congress (1995–1997), Lewis helped lead the Democratic opposition to the agenda of Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia. Lewis worked to stop Republicans from cutting welfare programs and other government spending. In 1995, he joined protestors to disrupt a speech given by Gingrich to a private organization in support of reductions to Medicare. He was one of the most prominent voices criticizing Gingrich for profiting from a lucrative book deal and tried to force the House Ethics Committee to release a preliminary report on Gingrich's alleged wrongdoing. In 1997, House Republicans revoked Lewis's speaking privileges for a day when, during a speech on the House Floor, he accused Gingrich of lying to the Ethics Committee.[20]

Lewis briefly considered mounting a challenge to Georgia Republican Senator Paul Coverdell in 1997. "I do not want to give the Republican incumbent a free ride," Lewis said. He ultimately decided to hold on to his House seat, and during the remainder of the 105th Congress (1997–1999), Lewis was a prominent voice against the impeachment of President Clinton.[21]

Throughout his time on Capitol Hill, Lewis searched for ways to use the power of the federal government to ensure equal protection of the law. In 2004, he introduced the FAIRNESS Act to clarify the processes the government used to determine if discrimination occurred in the workplace. When the Voting Rights Act was set to expire in 2007, Lewis was at the forefront of the Democratic effort to reauthorize the legislation and opposed amendments that he said made it harder to register to vote. Lewis was clear that the gains in voting rights of the previous four decades were not irreversible. "We cannot separate the debate today

from our history and the past we have traveled." The law, he said, was as necessary in 2006 as it was in 1965.[22]

In 2013, when the Supreme Court struck down as unconstitutional the formula used by the Justice Department to determine which jurisdictions were subject to the preclearance provision, Lewis denounced the decision. The Court, he said, "had stuck a dagger in the heart of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. They're saying, in effect, that history cannot repeat itself. But I say, come and walk in my shoes."[23]

As Lewis worked to protect the gains of the civil rights movement, he also worked to preserve and celebrate its history. In his first term, he passed a bill naming a federal building in Atlanta after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; throughout his career, he proposed several bills to bestow similar honors on judges, lawyers, and activists who helped shape the civil rights movement. He also led an annual "pilgrimage" to Selma to retrace his steps across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in 1965. Lewis urged congressional colleagues from both sides of the aisle to join him in Alabama, and over the years scores of them participated in the pilgrimage. His graphic novel on his experience in the civil rights movement was the first of the genre to win a National Book Award for young people's literature in 2016.[24]

In each term from 1988 to 2003, Lewis proposed legislation to establish a national museum of African American history. He worked tirelessly to gather support for the measure, and his bill creating the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC, was finally signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2003. The museum opened on the National Mall in 2016.[25]

Lewis also took bold stands on controversial or contested issues such as gay rights. He opposed both the Defense Department's 1993 "don't ask, don't tell" policy that banned openly gay service members in the U.S. military, and the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act. In support of his convictions, he often participated in protests and risked arrest. In 2016, Lewis led a 25-hour sit-in on the House Floor to protest the lack of gun control legislation following a mass shooting at a nightclub in Orlando, Florida.[26]

Lewis remained an activist during his career on Capitol Hill. He called on popular movements to do what he had done in the 1960s: pressure Congress to act. "Without social movement, without people speaking out, making their voices heard, without moving their feet, sometimes Congress is reluctant to move or to act," Lewis said. "Now one thing about elected officials, and I think the Voting Rights Act proved that, they can count, they're good on counting. They can change their minds, their attitudes. They can get religion pretty quick."[27]

When the Democratic Party won the House majority for the 110th Congress, Lewis seized the opportunity to pass legislation. After a long period in the minority, Lewis became chair of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Oversight in the 110th and 111th Congresses (2007–2011). He held hearings to expose fraud in the Medicare program, investigated government tax credits for development projects in New Orleans, Louisiana, following the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, and searched for ways to improve the tax code to strengthen nonprofit advocacy organizations. In the wake of the mortgage crisis and banking failures, Lewis led subcommittee hearings to investigate the use of federal money in the Troubled Asset Relief Program and sought ways to improve the services provided by the IRS to taxpayers. In the 110th Congress, Lewis sponsored the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act, which provided $20 million over 10 years to revisit investigations into crimes against civil rights workers that occurred before January 1, 1970. The bill became law in 2008.[28]

After losing the House majority in 2010 and spending eight years in the minority, House Democrats reclaimed power following the 2018 midterm elections. In the 116th Congress, Lewis again took the gavel of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Oversight. Lewis worked with several Republican colleagues to build support for his Taxpayer First Act which reformed the internal workings of the IRS and improved taxpayer services. The bill became law in 2019. In December 2019, he supported the impeachment of President Donald J. Trump.[29]

In 2019, Lewis passed William Lacy "Bill" Clay Sr. of Missouri to become the third-longest-serving Black Member of Congress. He remained committed to speaking truth to power and calling on the nation to live up to its inspired ideals. In the summer of 2020, Lewis voiced support for the protests occurring around the world against police brutality and racism following the murder of George Floyd, a Black man, while in police custody in Minnesota; Lewis visited Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, DC, in early June.[30]

On July 17, 2020, John Lewis died in Atlanta of pancreatic cancer. A procession was organized to walk his remains across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma one final time before his casket laid in honor in two state capitals: Montgomery, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia. Ten days

later, Lewis became the first Black lawmaker to lie in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda.[31]

In 1995, almost a decade into his House career, Lewis offered a personal reflection on the convictions that guided his actions and defined his life. "What am I? I am a man who deeply believes in compassion and hope," Lewis wrote. "A man who believes we can move beyond the anger, hatred and attacks that have assaulted our nation's psyche. A man who, day after day, struggles to build the bridges that will allow us all to come together in Dr. King's beloved community."[32]

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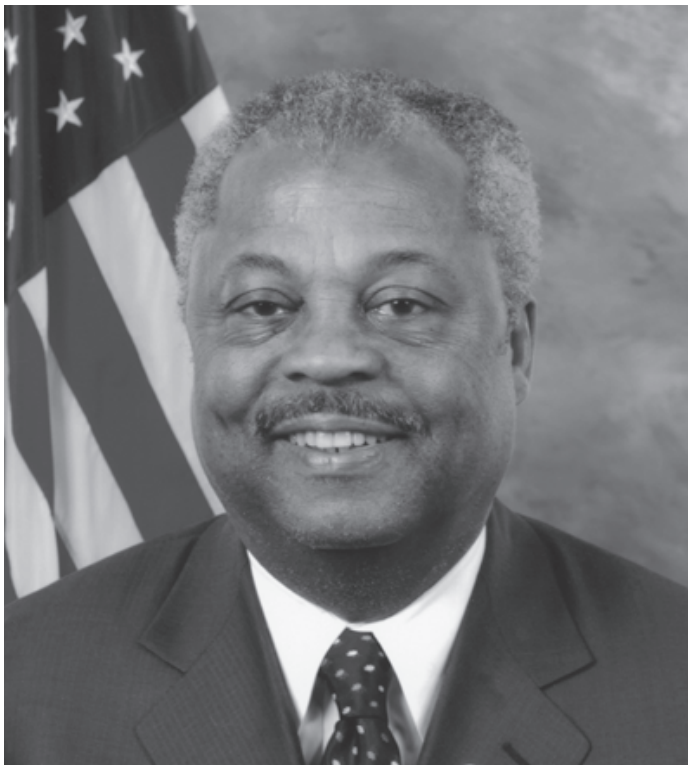
Donald M. Payne

1934–2012

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1989–2012

Democrat from New Jersey



Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

With his election to the U.S. House of Representatives in November 1988, Donald M. Payne became the first African-American lawmaker to represent New Jersey in the U.S. Congress. An experienced community activist and elected official, Payne delivered essential resources to his constituents in Newark while advocating for expanded educational opportunities and fostering relations between the United States and countries in Africa. "I want to be a congressman to serve as a model for the young people I talk to on the Newark street corners," Payne said. "I want them to see there are no barriers to achievement. I want to give them a reason to try."[1]

Donald Milford Payne was born on July 16, 1934, in Newark, New Jersey, the son of William Evander Payne, a dock worker, and Norma Garrett Payne. Payne, along with his brother William and sister Kathryn, grew up in Doodletown, an Italian-American section of Newark. "Everyone, whites and blacks, worked for low wages, although we didn't think of it as living in poverty, and there was a real sense of neighborhood, of depending on one another," Payne later said about his early life. As a teenager, Payne joined a group called "The Leaguers," which sought to support Black youth in Newark by providing social, educational, and work activities. The founders, Reynold and Mary Burch, were prominent African-American community leaders in Newark and helped Payne secure a four-year scholarship at Seton Hall University. Payne graduated in 1957 with a bachelor's degree in social studies and later pursued graduate studies at Springfield College in Massachusetts. On June 15, 1958, he married Hazel Johnson. The couple raised three children—Donald Jr., Wanda, and Nicole—before Hazel died in 1963. Payne never remarried. He taught English and social studies and coached football in the Newark public schools before working for a major insurance company. He later served as vice president of a computer forms manufacturing company founded by his brother.[2]

Payne became involved in politics at age 19 as manager of his brother's successful campaign to serve as Newark's first African-American district leader. He pursued community work through the local YMCA. From 1970 to 1973, Payne served as president of the YMCA of the United States—the first African American to hold that position. In 1972, he was elected to the Essex County board of freeholders. Payne served as a freeholder for six years, and eventually chaired the board. In 1982, Payne won election to the Newark municipal council, where he served until his election to Congress.[3]

Payne twice challenged Representative Peter Wallace Rodino Jr. in the Democratic primary for a U.S. House seat encompassing Newark and portions of Essex County. The district had become overwhelmingly Black (nearly 60 percent by the 1990 Census) and Payne argued that it should be represented by an African-American lawmaker. But in both 1980 and 1986 Payne lost his bids to unseat the influential, longtime chair of the House Judiciary Committee. In 1988, however, when Rodino announced his retirement after 40 years in Congress, Payne became a leading contender for the nomination to fill the open seat. In the June 1988 Democratic primary, he defeated Ralph T. Grant, a Newark city councilman, by a two-to-one ratio. In a district that voted overwhelmingly Democratic, Payne defeated Republican Michael Webb, a local teacher, with 77 percent of the vote in the general election. He won by similar margins in his subsequent 11 re-elections.[4]

After Payne was sworn into the House on January 3, 1989, he received assignments on three committees: Government Operations; Education and Labor; and Foreign Affairs. He served on the Government Operations Committee for two non-consecutive terms before leaving the committee at the start of the 104th Congress (1995–1997). Payne remained on the two other panels for the remainder of his House career. During the 103rd and 104th Congresses (1993–1997), Payne and other Members successfully lobbied to save the Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Africa from elimination. Payne also chaired the Government Operations' Subcommittee on Human Resources and Intergovernmental Affairs during the 102nd Congress. In the 110th Congress (2007–2009), Payne assumed the gavel of the Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health. Payne served as an assistant whip throughout his congressional career.[5]

Payne's domestic agenda focused on bringing financial resources to his district and promoting educational opportunities. Early in his career, Payne introduced several resolutions promoting National Literacy Day that became law. Payne sponsored bills that expanded educational opportunities such as the College Opportunity Act of 1991, and the Urban Schools America Act of 1993. An advocate for urban redevelopment, Payne successfully steered $6 million toward the building and improvement of parks in his district with the help of the New Jersey delegation during the 105th Congress (1997–1999).[6]

As chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) during the 104th Congress, Payne helped the CBC navigate new House rules and was known for his thoughtful, determined, and low-key leadership style. "I think there is a lot of dignity in being able to achieve things without having to create rapture," he once noted. In 1995, the new Republican majority eliminated financing for legislative service organizations in the House as a method to curb spending, causing the CBC and other caucuses to lose much of their logistical support. The CBC came to rely more heavily on the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and caucus members contributed staff and resources from their offices to keep the organization running. Despite the financial hardship caused by the new rules, Payne was confident that the CBC—which at the time had a membership that was all Democratic except for Republican Gary A. Franks of Connecticut—would "be a strong factor in influencing the position of our party and of the House." Payne led the CBC's opposition to much of the Republican majority's legislation. Payne oversaw the caucus's program to block bills that could negatively affect African Americans, forming a task force to review upcoming legislation and regularly discussing strategy with President William J. Clinton.[7]

Like his CBC predecessors Charles C. Diggs Jr. of Michigan and Mickey Leland of Texas, Payne also advocated for greater U.S. engagement in Africa. As a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Payne worked to foster relations with sub-Saharan Africa and brought attention to international human rights issues. During the 106th Congress (1999–2001), for example, Payne sponsored H. Res. 62, a resolution passed by the House condemning violence in Sierra Leone. A frequent visitor to the African continent during his congressional career, Payne was dubbed the "unofficial ambassador of Congress to the nations of Africa." During the 103rd Congress (1993–1995), Payne publicly questioned the Clinton administration's decision to forcibly return Haitian refugees who risked their lives to sail to the United States. He also criticized the administration's failure to craft a comprehensive approach to Africa and its tepid response to the civil war in Rwanda. Payne's concern for human rights abroad was reflected in his sponsorship of bills such as the Nigeria Democracy Act and the Northern Ireland Peace and Reconciliation Act. In 2007, Payne introduced legislation to guide U.S. foreign policy with Ethiopia in order to

"foster stability, democracy and economic development." The bill passed the House but not the Senate.[8]

For two decades, Payne worked to bring attention to human rights violations and the devastations of war occurring in Sudan. In October 1990, as a member of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Payne led a hearing on famine in the country and the Sudanese government's role in the crisis. Throughout his career, Payne frequently introduced legislation to bring attention to the crises in Sudan. In 1996, for example, he sponsored legislation to stop the United States from "providing economic, military, or arms transfers to Sudan" until the government ended slavery in the country. In June 2001, Payne, along with columnist and minister Barbara Reynolds, was arrested outside the Sudanese Embassy during a protest against slavery in the east African country. Three years later, in June 2004, the House passed Payne's concurrent resolution declaring genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan. A similar concurrent resolution, sponsored by Senator Sam Dale Brownback of Kansas, passed the Senate in July 2004. In July 2011, Payne was part of the United States delegation which attended the ceremony celebrating the independence of South Sudan. "I witnessed the joy of the people of South Sudan and how jubilant they felt … that the day finally came that they received their independence."[9]

Payne also worked with President George W. Bush to bring attention to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa. He acknowledged that while he opposed Bush on many policies, he said the President had gone "beyond what any other president had done" to work on the issue. Payne praised the administration's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which provided $15 billion to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. In September 2003, President Bush appointed Payne to serve as a congressional delegate to the United Nations.[10]

Later in his career, Payne supported measures that memorialized and commemorated African-American history. In 2007, for example, Payne sponsored the Commission on the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade Act, which President Bush signed into law in February 2008. The legislation put in motion plans to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the decision to ban the transatlantic slave trade in United States. "Our nation's willingness to confront its past and calmly assess the impact of enslaved people on the United States strengthens our ability to serve as an advocate on the international stage," Payne said on the House Floor. In 2008, Payne also introduced a concurrent resolution that passed both chambers commemorating the life of Thurgood Marshall, the famed civil rights attorney and the first Black Supreme Court Justice, on the 100th anniversary of his birth.[11]

In February 2012, Payne announced that he had been diagnosed with colon cancer and would seek treatment while tending to his congressional duties. He died of complications from his illness in Livingston, New Jersey, on March 6, 2012. In November 2012, Payne's son, Donald M. Payne Jr., was elected in a special election to succeed his father, making the Paynes the third African-American father-and-son pair ever to serve in Congress.[12]

Manuscript Collection

Seton Hall University, The Monsignor William Noé Field Archives and Special Collections Center (South Orange, NJ). *Papers*: 1988–2012, 53.35 linear feet. The collection contains Donald M. Payne's professional papers from his time as U.S. Representative and focuses on his legislative work on behalf of his district and state. A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

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Craig A. Washington

1941–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

1989–1995

Democrat from Texas

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Elected in a special election to fill the U.S. House of Representatives seat of the late Mickey Leland of Texas, Craig A. Washington used his time in Congress to support civil rights and the rights of criminal defendants. In the House, Washington took pride in his independent approach to lawmaking. "I did this my way," he said, conceding his loss in the 1994 Democratic primary to future Representative Sheila Jackson Lee. "There are a lot of easier ways to be a congressman or run for Congress. I wanted people to hear the truth."[1]

Craig Anthony Washington was born to Roy and Azalea Washington on October 12, 1941, in Longview, Texas. He attended two historically Black universities, earning a bachelor's degree in 1966 from Prairie View A&M University and a law degree from Texas Southern University in Houston in 1969. Washington was on the Texas Southern University Law School faculty from 1969 to 1970 before opening his own criminal defense practice in Houston. In 1973, Washington was elected to the Texas state house alongside future U.S. Representative Mickey Leland. In 1983, Washington moved to the state senate, where he proved to be a commanding orator and legislative strategist. Washington soon became one of the most prominent lawmakers working on behalf of civil rights in Texas. He sought ways to increase the participation of minorities and women in state government, supported Texas divestment from South Africa, and coordinated his state's fight against the AIDS epidemic. Washington married twice and raised five children.[2]

On August 7, 1989, Representative Mickey Leland died in a plane crash in Ethiopia while traveling to a United Nations refugee camp. Leland's downtown Houston district had been represented by African-American lawmakers in the House since its creation in 1972, when Leland's predecessor, Representative Barbara Jordan, was elected to the first of three terms in Congress. A longtime Leland ally, Washington entered the primary election to succeed him after Leland's widow, Alison, declined to run. Under the campaign slogan, "Pass the Torch," Washington ran with the support of the Leland family and won the nonpartisan primary. In a December 9 special election, Washington defeated Houston city councilman Anthony Hall with 56 percent of the vote.[3]

Washington took his oath of office on January 23, 1990, the opening day of the second session of the 101st Congress (1989–1991). "I could never replace Mickey

Leland. I'm merely his successor," he said. Washington's legal background won him appointments to the Judiciary Committee and the Committee on Education and Labor. Washington also filled Leland's seat on the Select Committee on Hunger, which the late Representative had created. After easily winning re-election twice in his heavily Democratic district—running unopposed in 1990 and capturing 65 percent of the vote in 1992—Washington traded his seat on the Education and Labor Committee for a sought-after place on the Energy and Commerce Committee in the 103rd Congress (1993–1995).[4]

Washington's experience as a lawyer and a civil rights activist influenced his efforts to shape new civil rights legislation during the George H.W. Bush administration. A 1990 civil rights bill sought to strengthen protections against employment discrimination based on race, sex, or ethnicity. President Bush threatened to veto the bill, claiming that it would mandate businesses to impose hiring quotas. As part of the conference committee of Representatives and Senators attempting to modify its provisions to secure passage, Washington voted against a compromise measure granting employers more leeway to avoid accusations of discrimination, declaring that the changes would produce a "hollow shell of a civil rights bill." After President Bush vetoed the resulting conference bill, Democrats pursued and passed a similar civil rights bill in 1991 at the start of the 102nd Congress (1991–1993). Washington ultimately backed the new proposal and condemned Republicans for using the "red herring" of quotas to stoke opposition to the legislation.[5]

As a member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Criminal Justice, the former criminal defense lawyer opposed the William J. Clinton administration's Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. Washington argued the crime bill was too punitive. In response to the legislation, Washington introduced the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Reform Act, which was cosponsored by 21 of his colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus. Washington's bill focused on preventive measures to reduce crime, like alternative sentencing programs, late-night recreational activities that sought to keep teenagers busy, and community policing initiatives. Washington also sponsored the Family Unity Demonstration Project that would have funded trial programs creating "community correctional facilities" that allowed incarcerated parents to live with their children.[6]

At times, Washington voted against large federal science initiatives that likely would have helped his district because he believed the federal funding could be better used to improve education, health care, and social services. He was one of two members of the Texas delegation in the House to vote against continued funding for the Department of Energy's superconducting super collider in 1993. The project, which would enable scientists to study small particles of matter, was planned for East Texas and would have brought the state millions of federal dollars. Washington was also the only Texan to vote against building a space station whose construction and maintenance would have employed constituents of his Houston district, which was home to NASA's Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center. Washington was one of seven members of the Texas delegation in the House to vote against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), despite its support by Houston-area businesses, arguing that the measure would outsource 3,000 jobs from his district to Mexico.[7]

In 1991, Washington voted against sending U.S. troops into Kuwait to drive out Iraqi forces under President Saddam Hussein. Instead, he proposed a resolution calling for a declaration of war rather than an authorization of military force. "Either you are for war or you are against war," Washington declared on the House Floor. "Let it be said by history that the Congress of the United States saw its duty and we did it." When U.S. troops returned home from Kuwait, Washington voted against authorizing a celebration of their victory and insisted economic issues like urban poverty took precedence.[8]

In 1992, Washington ran to serve as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), which worked on issues and developed policy important to Black communities across the country. The 103rd Congress (1993–1995) was pivotal for the CBC, whose membership increased from 26 to 40 following the 1992 elections. Washington proposed assigning a caucus member to every House subcommittee and cited his independent voting record as proof of his commitment to bold leadership. However, he lost the race to Maryland Democrat Kweisi Mfume.[9]

In January 1991, Washington filed for bankruptcy, admitting he owed $250,000 in federal taxes and $65,000 in local taxes. Washington faced further difficulty when *Congressional Quarterly* reported that he was absent from nearly 25 percent of the votes during the 102nd Congress, giving him the worst attendance record in the

Texas delegation and the second-worst record of any Representative. Washington expressed exasperation with often lengthy voting processes, saying he skipped votes that had no bearing on his Houston districts so he could meet with constituents and focus on projects closer to home. In response, Washington began logging his missed votes and recording his alternative activities.[10]

In 1994, Washington faced a challenge in the Democratic primary from Houston city councilwoman Sheila Jackson Lee who promised to provide voters "representation you can be proud of." Although six of Washington's congressional colleagues flew to Houston to show their support for his re-election, Houston-area business owners rallied around Jackson Lee, upset that Washington had voted against NASA projects and against NAFTA. Washington lost the nomination to Jackson Lee, who handily defeated the incumbent with 63 percent of the vote, and went on to win the general election.[11]

Following his departure from Congress, Washington resumed practicing law and bought a farm outside Houston. He expressed no interest in returning to politics.[12]

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