

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Date of Elections:** November 5, 1974

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the members of the House of Representatives and one-third (34) of the members of the Senate on the normal expiry of their term of office.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The bicameral Parliament of the United States of America, the Congress, consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The Senate is composed of 100 members elected for 6 years on the basis of two for each of the country's 50 States, a third of whom are chosen every two years in such manner that, in each State, both Senators are not normally standing for election at the same time.

The House of Representatives is composed of members elected for 2 years in the 50 States in such manner that each Representative represents roughly the same number of citizens, provided that each State has at least one Representative. Within the constitutional limitation that " the number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand " inhabitants, the Congress itself has the power to determine the size of the House of Representatives. Under the law presently in force, the membership from the 50 States is fixed at 435. In addition to these Representatives, there are Delegates from the District of Columbia, the organized territories of Guam and the Virgin Islands, who are elected for 2 years, and a Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, elected for 4 years; these four officers may take part in the debate of the House, but have no right to vote except in committees.

### **Electoral System**

The Constitution of the United States lays down that all citizens who, " in each State, shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislature " are entitled to vote in elections for Congress; it prescribes, furthermore, that the right of citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of race, colour or sex, or by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

Within these limitations, the determination of who may vote falls under the jurisdiction of each State, with the proviso that no violation be made of

the factors of discrimination proscribed by the Constitution. In all States, electors are required to be United States citizens and not less than 18 years of age. State residence requirements longer than 30 days have been ruled unconstitutional unless an important State interest in a longer requirement can be justified.

With the passage of the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1970, the States ceased to have the right to impose literacy tests or similar devices as a condition to vote prior to August 6, 1975.

The insane and persons convicted of a crime which carries the penalty of disfranchisement are disqualified from voting in virtually all States. Other grounds for disqualification found in some States include conviction for an election-connected offence, dueling, bad moral character and imprisonment. Tests of moral character, however, fall under the prohibitions of the Voting Rights Amendments of 1970, and therefore are suspended until August 6, 1975.

Electors must have their names appear on the registers as eligible voters in virtually all the States. In these cases, persons must take the initiative in order to become registered to vote. Once on the register, voters in all but two States need take no initiative other than to continue to vote regularly, provided that they do not change their names or addresses. The registers — which are mostly drawn up at the country level — are revised almost continuously, and particularly before State-wide elections.

Although voting is not compulsory, employers in over 30 States are required to allow their employees to take time off to vote without loss of pay. Most States permit absentee voting especially for members of the armed forces and their dependants and government employees.

No person may be a Representative who has not attained the age of 25 years and been for 7 years a citizen of the United States; for the Senate, the requirement is 30 years of age and 9 years' citizenship. When elected, a member of Congress must be an inhabitant of the State for which he is chosen. No Senator or Representative may hold any civil office under the authority of the United States during his term in Congress.

A person may run for Congress either as an independent or as a member of a political party; most candidates are, in practice, presented on the ballot paper under a party designation. Voters may "write in" the name of a candidate who does not appear on the printed ballot.

Nomination as a result of nominating, or primary, elections of parties is the practice in most States. It is regulated by State law. Usually, a person may become a candidate in the primary election by obtaining a petition subscribed by a designated number of voters of his political party. Voters then choose their party's candidate at the primary election.

The number of voters whose support is necessary to qualify as a candidate in either a party's primary or in a general election, and the necessity or amount of an accompanying filing fee, vary according to State law.

The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 placed certain well-defined limits on the amount which could be spent for communications media use in nomination or election campaigns by any candidate to Congress. No candidate for the Senate may, furthermore, spend more than \$35,000 of his own or his family's funds in connection with his campaign; the limit is \$25,000 for candidates for the House.

Each State is entitled to at least one Representative and all beyond this minimum number are apportioned among the States according to population, so that no congressional district is exactly the same size. Districts must however be substantially the same size in terms of population. Representatives of States entitled to more than one Representative all come from single-member districts.

Each of the 50 States is entitled to two Senators, both of whom represent the State as a whole regardless of its population. Each elector therefore votes for two senatorial candidates.

Members of Congress are all directly elected, generally on the basis of simple plurality of vote. The two exceptions are the State of Georgia and the District of Columbia, both of which provide for a run-off election in the event that no candidate obtains an absolute majority of the votes cast in the general election.

If a seat becomes vacant in the House of Representatives between general elections, a by-election is held. If a seat becomes vacant in the Senate, the Governor of the State concerned may, through a temporary appointment, fill it until a by-election is held in conformity with the laws of that State.

### **General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections**

The Democratic Party further strengthened its majority position in the Senate and the House of Representatives in the 1974 Congressional elections, which were held simultaneously with those for 35 of 50 State governorships. The percentage of qualified voters participating in the elections was 38 %, the lowest total in years.

According to most political observers, the Republicans, already in the minority despite having a Republican in the White House, could not overcome being identified with the country's inflation and unemployment problems and the Watergate scandal. Although President Ford campaigned heavily for Republican candidates, the Democratic Party won enough Representatives' seats to gain a two-thirds majority in the House, and at least 3 Senate seats.

The Democratic success was in keeping with the tradition according to which the party in power in the White House loses seats in Congress in mid-presidential term elections; during the past century, in 25 such «off-year» elections, the White House party lost seats in all but one.

Although many independent and minor-party candidates ran in the Congressional elections, none of them were successful.

The make-up of the new Congress indicates a marked shift towards youth. The average age of the Representatives dropped to 49.8 years, the first time since World War II that the average age of either Chamber was below 50. The House also has 18 women, a record number.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the Rouse of Representatives*

Valid votes 51,730,848

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	/o	Number of Seats in the House of Representatives
Democratic Party. . . . .	434	30,031,886	58.05	290 (+42)
Republican Party. . . . .	377	20,732,629	40.08	145 (-42)
Independent Party. . . . .	54	333,794	.64	—
American Independent Party	33	161,645	.31	—
Conservative Party. . . . .	17	118,662	.22	—
Liberal Party. . . . .	11	79,223	.15	—
American Party. . . . .	18	60,313	.11	—
Peace and Freedom Party . . .	9	32,502	.06	—
U.S. Labor Party. . . . .	18	28,876	.05	—
Socialist Workers Party . . . .	26	22,144	.04	—
Others. . . . .	61	129,174	.24	—
				435

*United States of America*

*2. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the Senate \**

Valid votes 40,485,346

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	<i>o</i>	Number of Seats obtained on Nov. 5	Number of Seats in the Senate
Democratic Party . . .	34	22,490,020	55.55	23	61 (58)
Republican Party . . .	31	16,175,539	39.95	10	38 (42)
Conservative Party . .	1	822,584	2.03	—	—
American Party . . . .	8	382,636	.95	—	—
Independent Party . . .	8	188,678	.47	—	—
American Independent Party. . . . .	5	152,010	.38		
Peace and Freedom Party. . . . .	1	96,436	.24	—	—
Peoples' Party . . . . .	1	42,767	.10	—	—
Others . . . . .	28	134,676	.33	—	—
				<b>33</b>	99

Excluding undecided Senate election in State of New Hampshire.

### 3. Distribution of Members of Congress according to Professional Category

	House	Senate	Total *
Public Service/Politics . . . . .	346	94	440
Law . . . . .	221	67	288
Business or Banking . . . . .	140	22	162
Education . . . . .	64	8	72
Agriculture . . . . .	31	10	41
Journalism . . . . .	24	5	29
Medicine . . . . .	5	1	6
Engineering . . . . .	3	2	5
Clergymen . . . . .	5	—	5
Labour leaders . . . . .	3	—	3
Scientists . . . . .	2	—	2
Law enforcement . . . . .	2	—	2

\* As may be seen in the totals, many of the Representatives and Senators list themselves in several professional categories. The majority of the duplication occurs in the Public Service/Politics category. Although 440 Members of Congress view this area as one of their occupations, only 25 Members consider Public Service/Politics as their sole occupation.

### 4. Distribution of Members of Congress according to Sex

—	House	Senate
Men	417	100
	18	
	435	100

### 5. Distribution of Members of Congress according to Age Group

—	House	Senate
20-29 years	1	—
30-39 . . . . .	66	4
40-49 . . . . .	149	24
50-59 . . . . .	127	37
60-69 . . . . .	71	21
70-79 . . . . .	14	13
80-89 . . . . .	2	—
	435	99