

Congress more diverse, but most identify as Christian

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—A new Pew Research Center report on the religious composition of the 119th session of Congress reveals the majority of its members identify as Christian and 75 are Baptist.

The “Faith on the Hill” report draws on data gathered by CQ Roll Call, a publication that compiles congressional data and provides legislative tracking. For every new session, the website sends questionnaires to new members and follows up with reelected members on their religious affiliation.

“Christians will make up 87 percent of voting members in the Senate and House of Representatives, combined, in the 2025-27 congressional session,” reads the report.

Though the share of Christian members of Congress slightly decreased since the last session, 88 percent, and from a decade ago, 92 percent, the House and Senate are still significantly more Christian than the American public, which has dropped below two-thirds Christian (62 percent).

Less than 1 percent of Congress members identify as religiously unaffiliated, also called “nones,” though they account for 28 percent of the American population. Three Congress members reported being religiously unaffiliated, two more than in the previous session.

The new session includes 71 non-Christian members—six more than the 118th Congress—including 32 Jews, four Muslims, four Hindus, three Unitarian Universalists, three Buddhists, three unaffiliated and one humanist. All but five of the non-Christian members are Democrats.

More Baptists than any other denomination

The new Congress will have a total of 461 Christian members, including 295 members who identify as Protestant.

As in previous sessions, Baptists are the most represented denomination, with 75 Baptist members, eight more than in the last session. The report doesn't specify which Baptist group members affiliate with.

The other most represented Protestant denominations are Methodists and Presbyterians, with 26 members each; Episcopalians, with 22 members; and Lutherans, with 19 members.

These four denominations have had dwindling memberships in recent decades and have also seen their share shrink in Congress. The report's first edition, published in 2011 for the 112th Congress, counted 51 Methodists, 45 Presbyterians, 41 Episcopalians and 26 Lutherans.

The share of Baptists is slightly higher in the House, 15 percent, than in the Senate, 12 percent. Catholics, too, will be more present in the House than in the Senate, respectively 29 percent and 24 percent; whereas, there is a higher percentage of Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Lutherans in the Senate than the House.

Among the 295 Protestant members, 101 didn't specify which denomination they affiliated with. The report noted that many gave "broad or vague answers" like "Protestant" or "evangelical Protestant."

Over the last decade, more members of Congress have given similar answers. In 2015, when the 114th session of Congress started, only 58 members reported being "just Christian" without specifying a denomination.

Of the 218 Republican representatives and senators, 98 percent identified as Christians. Only five Republican members are not Christians—three are Jewish, one is religiously unaffiliated and one person responded “refused/don’t know.”

While congressional Christians on either side of the aisle are more likely to be Protestant than Catholic, Democrats have a higher percentage of Catholics (32 percent) than Republicans have (25 percent).

Congressional Democrats are significantly more religiously diverse than Republicans. Though three-quarters are Christian, there are also 29 Jews, three Buddhists, four Muslims, four Hindus, three Unitarian Universalists, one humanist and two unaffiliated. Twenty congressional Democrats responded “refused/don’t know.”

The 119th session includes 150 Catholics and six Orthodox Christians. It also includes nine members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and one Republican member who identifies as a Messianic Jew.

The religious affiliation of 21 members remains unknown, as they either declined to disclose it or couldn’t be reached.

The analysis didn’t take into consideration Ohio Senator JD Vance, who will become vice president on Jan. 20, Representative Matt Gaetz, who resigned amid sexual misconduct allegations, and Representative Michael Waltz, who announced he would resign on Jan. 20 to serve in the Trump administration as a national security adviser. They all reported being Christians.