

Massachusetts Congressional Delegation to the 117th Congress

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As the results of last week's election come into sharper focus, the Massachusetts political landscape is set, and a new congressional delegation is preparing for the 117th Congress.

While the Commonwealth's highest-profile race this year, the Senate primary between incumbent Ed Markey and challenger Joe Kennedy, didn't change Massachusetts's representation in the upper chamber, it did touch off changes throughout the House delegation. Despite losing some seats, Democrats will maintain control of the House of Representatives, giving each of Massachusetts's House members the privilege of the majority. The senior members of the delegation will maintain significant influence in the House. Moreover, members of the delegation will enjoy good relationships throughout Joe Biden's incoming administration. Massachusetts's congressional delegation produced two candidates in the 2020 Democratic presidential primary: Elizabeth Warren and Seth Moulton. While most members of the delegation formally endorsed their colleague in the Senate, each of them supported the Biden campaign as soon as Warren dropped out. Stephen Lynch endorsed Biden even before he officially announced his candidacy for president. A former member of the delegation, John Kerry, was also very active on the Biden campaign. Watch for Kerry to assume an official position in the Biden White House focusing on efforts to address climate change.

After soundly defeating a well-funded primary challenger, Richie Neal will return to Congress as Chairman of the House Ways & Means Committee. Given the likelihood of health care coverage legislation moving this year, Chairman Neal's leadership position will be critical. He will also have an important role in negotiations over a final pandemic stimulus package, Washington's top legislative priority. The dean of the House delegation, Neal enjoys a particularly close relationship with Biden, having worked closely with him on a number of issues during their time in Washington.

Jim McGovern returns as Chairman of the Rules Committee, which is responsible for setting terms and conditions for the House to consider legislation. He will continue to work closely with House leadership to bring legislation to the floor for consideration.

Katherine Clark, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, is running for Assistant Speaker. The position is fourth in Democratic leadership and is elected by the House Democratic Caucus. The current Assistant Speaker, Ben Ray Lujan, is leaving for the Senate, making this the only open leadership position. Clark, who currently serves as Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus, has been active in recruiting Democratic House candidates and helping freshmen Democrats navigate the chamber. By ascending to Assistant Speaker, Clark would give Massachusetts even more influence in House leadership. Two other candidates, Dave Cicilline of Rhode Island and Tony Cardenas of California, are also running for the position.

Nominated after a hard-fought Democratic primary, Jake Auchincloss easily won the race to replace Kennedy in Massachusetts's 4th Congressional District. The district stretches from Brookline to the South Coast. Auchincloss is seeking a seat on the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. Given the persistent interest in passing a bold infrastructure bill, this could be a key committee assignment for the incoming freshman.

Currently, Lynch represents the state on the T&I Committee, though he may end up giving up his seat there to make room for Auchincloss. Lynch also serves on the Committees on Financial Services and Oversight & Reform, where he chairs the Subcommittee on National Security.

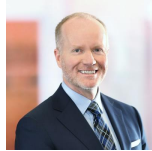
Kennedy's departure leaves Massachusetts without a member on the powerful Committee on Energy & Commerce. With the broadest jurisdiction in Congress, E&C deals with issues relating to telecommunications, consumer protection, energy, environment, and health care. It is an exclusive committee, meaning members who serve on it typically cannot serve on other committees. Watch for Lori Trahan to join E&C in the new Congress.

Moving to E&C would require Trahan to give up her current committee assignments. She serves on the Committees on Armed Services and Education & Labor.

Bill Keating is expected to remain on the Committees on Armed Services and Foreign Affairs. There will be some changes on the Democratic side of the Foreign Affairs Committee, owing to the chairman's primary campaign loss, but expect Keating to remain Chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, Energy, and the Environment.

Finally, Seth Moulton, who serves on the Budget and Armed Services Committees, has expressed interest in changing assignments. However, the Democrats' narrowing margin of control in the House may make moving difficult. With fewer members in the chamber overall, committees may be more evenly split next year than they have been in the 116th Congress.

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