

Issue Brief: Office holding and SES/Class

Key Words

Office holding, ethnoracial pentagon, minorities, class, United States Census

Description

This issue brief discusses office holding and socio economic status in federal representation in Congress. It also touches the issues of minorities and office holding.

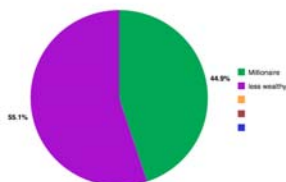
Key Points

- Class/SES plays an important role in the opportunity to be elected to office in Congress
- Members of both the Senate and House of Representatives on average are wealthier than the average American citizen
- Due to disproportions in wealth, minority groups are underrepresented in Congress
- Affluent members in Congress are represented in both the Democratic and Republican party
- Class is not the only thing needed to be elected into office

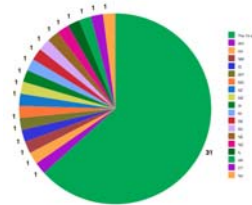
Issue Brief

Although the “wealthy” class doesn’t start at having \$1,000,000 net worth, it is an easy marker and therefore will be the main divide in this issue brief. Focusing mainly on Congress, being in a higher class can be linked to being in office. However, being rich doesn’t make you more likely to be in any one party.

In the United States population, roughly 2,886,200 people have over \$1,000,000 in net worth. That’s out of more than 310 million people, which comes out to be around .62% of the total population being millionaires. Congress has 535 members and 237 millionaires. Of the entire Congress, 44% are millionaires, which is extremely higher than the total population.



Of the top ten richest people in Congress, 8 are Democratic and 2 are Republican but there is no obvious trend in the overall 237 between party lines. Often a candidate is able to win the office over the opponent because of funding (Obama outspent McCain dramatically in the most recent presidential election). The 50 richest Congressmen dwell in 29 states. 9 of those states: Massachusetts, California, Colorado, Florida, New Jersey, Texas, New York, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Georgia have 31 of the 50 wealthy.



Another interesting aspect of class and office is the share of office holding that is held by minorities. There are 75 Congressmen who belong to a minority race (4 Republicans and the rest are Democrats). Of those 75 representatives, none are among the richest 50 wealthiest. Obviously there are many other factors besides class that indicate if a candidate will come into office.

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