

## Congressional Black Caucus Reaches Historic 62 Members While Preparing to Challenge Trump Policies



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**(NNPA)** - The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) will enter the 119th session of Congress with a historic 62 members, marking the largest number of Black federal lawmakers in U.S. history. In total, 67 Black lawmakers will serve, with five Republican members declining to join the caucus. However, this historic milestone comes against the backdrop of a new Trump administration that has signaled sharp policy shifts, including an almost entirely white Cabinet and the implementation of the anti-minority Project 2025.

The CBC, established in 1971 to advocate for Black and marginalized communities, now represents 120 million Americans, including 41% of Black Americans. Yet its leaders face a steep challenge under a Trump administration openly pursuing policies that could roll back decades of progress in civil rights, healthcare access, and economic equity.

"We've always been the conscience of Congress, no matter who's in charge," said Rep. Gregory Meeks, D-N.Y., a senior CBC member and ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "But now we have a larger choir of leaders ready to call truth to power, ensuring the voices of the voiceless are heard. This administration poses a danger, and we're here to counter that."

### Project 2025 and the Challenge Ahead

President-elect Donald Trump's administration is advancing Project 2025, a policy blueprint critics say is designed to dismantle protections for marginalized communities while consolidating power among white conservatives. The plan includes eliminating the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, granting police broad immunity in cases involving unarmed citizens, and reversing diversity and inclusion initiatives across federal agencies.

In addition to these policy threats, Trump's Cabinet appointments include figures like Dr. Mehmet Oz, tapped to oversee Medicaid and Medicare, and Linda McMahon, his pick for Secretary of Education, raising alarms about the administration's priorities. The nearly all-white leadership team underscores a stark contrast to the growing diversity in Congress.

"It will be interesting to see how this administration interacts with a record number of Black lawmakers," said Niccara Campbell Wallace, executive director of the Rolling Sea Action Fund. "The CBC's growth means there are more voices to push back, to advocate for policies that reflect the reality of a diverse America."

### Historic Firsts in Representation

While the Trump administration doubles down on policies many see as anti-minority, the new Congress will also usher in a wave of historic firsts. Two Black women will serve simultaneously in the U.S. Senate for the first time. Delaware's Lisa Blunt Rochester and Maryland's Angela Alsobrooks join a small but growing list of Black women elected to the Senate, doubling the total from two to four.

Blunt Rochester, the first woman and Black person to represent Delaware in the Senate, reflected on her groundbreaking victory. "This is a historic step forward for our state and our nation," she said.

Alsobrooks, a former Prince George's County executive, highlighted the broader significance of her win. "In over 2,000 people who have served in the U.S. Senate, only three have looked like me," she said. "I stand here because of the sacrifices of those who came before me."

Oregon's Janelle Bynum also made history, flipping the state's 5th Congressional District to become its first Black member of Congress. Bynum, who unseated a Republican incumbent, noted, "It's not lost on me that I'm one generation removed from segregation. We believed in a vision and didn't stop until we accomplished our goals."

Delaware voters made further history by electing Sarah McBride, the first openly transgender person to serve in Congress. These victories occurred even as the country faced deep divisions over affirmative action, LGBTQ rights, and racial equity.

### The Role of the CBC

The CBC's role as the conscience of Congress will be tested as it confronts an administration bent on undoing civil rights gains. Meeks emphasized that the caucus would oppose policies that disproportionately harm Black and marginalized communities, from healthcare access to police reform.

"Instead of just a quartet, we now have a full choir," Meeks said. "And we will be loud, clear, and consistent."

With Republicans maintaining control of both chambers of Congress, the CBC's ability to influence legislation will likely depend on its capacity to build coalitions and galvanize public support. Wallace noted that the CBC's growth, even in a Republican-controlled Congress, is a testament to Black voters and communities' enduring belief in American ideals.

"Black Americans have always believed in the promise of what America can be," Wallace said. "Even when the odds are stacked against us, we continue to fight for a seat at the table."

### Looking Ahead

As the CBC prepares for its largest-ever session, its leaders are already looking to the future. Meeks said the caucus is planning to spend the next two years opposing harmful policies and laying the groundwork for the 2026 mid-term elections.

"Two years go by fast," he said. "We'll be working every day to reverse the tragedies this administration will bring to our communities and the country as a whole."

Blunt Rochester added, "We've come a long way, but our work is far from over. Together, we will continue to fight for the future America deserves."

## Special Prosecutors Drops Charges Against Trump Helping President-elect to Avoid Legal Consequences Ahead of Second Term

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**(NNPA)** - President-elect Donald Trump is on course to avoid accountability for his alleged efforts to overturn the 2020 presidential election and other legal battles, as Special Counsel Jack Smith on Monday, Nov. 25, moved to dismiss the four federal felony charges against him. The charges stemmed from Trump's attempts to remain in power despite losing the election and his role in the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol.

A grand jury initially indicted Trump in August 2023 for conspiracy to defraud the United States, conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding, obstruction of an official proceeding, and conspiracy against rights. The indictment accused Trump of knowingly spreading false claims about voter fraud, pressuring then-Vice President Mike Pence to reject electoral votes, and orchestrating a plan to subvert the democratic process. Smith's case marked a historic first—no former president had ever been criminally charged for seeking to retain power unlawfully.

However, the case stalled as Trump's legal team successfully argued that the constitutional protections of presidential immunity barred his prosecution. In July 2024, the Supreme Court ruled in Trump's favor, cementing the broad immunity application for sitting presidents. The ruling, combined with Trump's victory in the 2024 election, has ensured that he will face no immediate legal repercussions.

Smith's motion to dismiss echoed the Justice Department's longstanding policy against prosecuting sitting presidents. "That prohibition is categori-

cal and does not turn on the gravity of the crimes charged, the strength of the government's proof, or the merits of the prosecution, which the government stands fully behind," Smith wrote.

The motion comes as Trump was set to be sentenced this month in New York on 34 felony convictions related to falsifying business records tied to a hush-money payment to adult film actor Stormy Daniels. That sentencing has been delayed indefinitely, and many legal experts believe it may never occur. Trump has also faced charges in Fulton County, Georgia, for an alleged attempt to overturn the 2020 election in the state, but the future of that case remains uncertain as his return to the presidency approaches.

Meanwhile, Smith is expected to file a final report with Attorney General Merrick Garland before resigning. Garland has pledged to release the report publicly, but Trump's incoming administration could delay or block its disclosure. Trump plans to install loyal allies at the Justice Department, including former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi as Attorney General. Bondi has vowed to investigate and prosecute those who brought cases against Trump, calling them members of a "deep state" conspiracy.

"The Department of Justice, the prosecutors will be prosecuted, the bad ones," she declared last year after Trump's indictment in Georgia. Her appointment would dramatically shift the DOJ's focus under Trump's administration.

Many January 6 defendants continue to serve prison sentences for their roles in the Capitol at-



Former President Donald Trump poses for his booking photo at the Fulton County Jail on Thursday. Photo: Fulton County Sheriff's Office



Jack Smith and Donald Trump

tack. Some have expressed regret, admitting Trump's false election fraud claims misled them. Meanwhile, Trump has promised to pardon many of those convicted, referring to them as "political prisoners" and "warriors."

Trump will be sworn in on January 20, 2025, walking through the same Capitol tunnel where some of the most violent clashes of January 6 took place. "When he lost the 2020 race, Trump resorted to crimes to hold onto power," Smith wrote in court filings.