

RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF THE 112TH CONGRESS

The Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life recently published data on how the religious makeup of the 112th Congress compares with that of the American public ([click here](#) to see chart). The Pew Forum provided the following summary:

"The 112th Congress, like the U.S. public, is majority Protestant and about a quarter Catholic. Baptists and Methodists are the largest Protestant denominations in the new Congress, just as they are in the country as a whole.

"A few of the country's smaller religious groups, including Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Jews, have greater numerical representation in Congress than in the general population. Some others, including Buddhists and Muslims, are represented in Congress in roughly equal proportion to their numbers in the adult U.S. population. And some small religious groups, such as Hindus and Jehovah's Witnesses, are not represented at all in Congress.

"Perhaps the greatest disparity between the religious makeup of Congress and the people it represents, however, is in the percentage of the unaffiliated—those who describe their religion as atheist, agnostic or 'nothing in particular.' According to information gathered by CQ Roll Call and the Pew Forum, no members of Congress say they are unaffiliated. By contrast, about one-sixth of U.S. adults (16%) are not affiliated with any particular faith. Only six members of the 112th Congress (about 1%) do not specify a religious affiliation, which is similar to the percentage of the public that says they don't know or refuses to specify their faith."

Before the November election, there were 97 Catholic Democrats in the House and 36 Catholic Republicans. Now there are 68 Catholic Democrats in the House and 64 Republicans. The overall number in the House Catholic caucus remained steady, but its composition is decidedly more conservative.