

More women, minorities in new congress

By Matthew Daly
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The 114th Congress that convened this month counts more minorities and women than ever, although lawmakers remain overwhelmingly white and male in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives and Senate.

A record 104 women are serving in congress, and for the first time, African-American members of both genders and representing both parties are among the ranks on Capitol Hill.

The number of female lawmakers is up slightly from 100 at the close of the last congress, but represents about 20 percent of the total in congress. It's far less than the nearly 51 percent of the U.S. population.

A total of 96 racial minorities serve in congress, about 18 percent.

There are 100 senators and 435 seats in the house.

The house has 246 Republicans and 188 Democrats. One seat is vacant following the recent resignation of representative Michael Grimm (R-New York), who plead-

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U.S. brewery apologizes to those offended by its Gandhi beer

By Stephen Singer
The Associated Press

HARTFORD, Connecticut — A Connecticut brewery has apologized to Indians offended that the company is using Mohandas Gandhi's name and likeness on one of its beers.

New England Brewing Co. sells an India pale ale it calls Gandhi-Bot. The label features a cartoon image depicting a robot version of the late Indian leader, who favored prohibition.

"We apologize to any Indian people that find our Gandhi-Bot label offensive. Our intent is not to offend anyone, but rather pay homage and celebrate a man who we respect greatly," the company wrote on its Facebook page.

The brewery's website promotes the Gandhi-Bot beer, which has been distributed for about five years, as "fully vegetarian" and "an ideal aid for self-purification and the seeking of truth and love."

Critics in the U.S. and India have complained about the commercial use of Gandhi, who is revered for leading India to independence through nonviolence.

Proloy K. Das, a Hartford lawyer, tweeted that Connecticut "should be ashamed to be home" to New England Brewing.

He told The Associated Press that the issue is not just the use of Gandhi's name, but also his depiction as something comparable to a robot. "There's really no spin you can put on this," he said.

New England Brewing referred questions to its posting on Facebook, where it also urged users not to use its page to argue with those upset by the label.

"We want to do our best to be culturally sensitive and respectful," the brewery said.

New England Brewing posted its apology at about the time criticism began mounting. Newspapers in India reported that a lawyer brought a case against the beer company in Hyderabad, saying the use of Gandhi's image violates Indian law as an insult to the nation's honor.

State representative Prasad Srinivasan, a Republican who is from India, said he was "beyond appalled" at the use of Gandhi's image.

"How this celebrates the apostle of peace by putting his image on a beer can boggles one's mind," he said.

Tushar Gandhi, the Indian leader's great-grandson, said Gandhi "abhorred alcohol drinking" and spoke against it, *The Telegraph* newspaper reported. Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Gandhi's grandson, was quoted as calling the use of his image "crass and silly."



ed guilty to a felony tax evasion charge.

The senate has 54 Republicans and 44 Democrats, plus two independents — Maine's Angus King and Vermont's Bernie Sanders. Both caucus with Democrats.

House of Representatives

A total of 84 women serve in the house, compared with 80 in the last congress. The new lawmakers include Elise Stefanik, a 30-year-old New York Republican who is the youngest woman ever elected to the house. Also making history is Mia Love, 38, whose election to a suburban Salt Lake City district made her the first black female Republican to win a seat in congress.

Forty-four African Americans serve in the house, including Love and another black Republican freshman, Will Hurd of Texas. Hurd made news in December when he was named chairman of an Information Technology subcommittee on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, an unusual distinction for a freshman.

SLOW CHANGE. The 114th Congress that convened this month counts more minorities and women than ever — including a record 104 women — although lawmakers remain overwhelmingly white and male in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives and Senate. Pictured is Democrat Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, who is the only Asian-American senator. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin, File)

There are 34 Hispanic lawmakers, including 10 Republicans, as well as 10 Asian Americans and two Native Americans, both Oklahoma Republicans.

Senate

The number of women in the senate remains at 20, following the election of Republicans Joni Ernst of Iowa and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, and the defeats of Democrats Kay Hagan of North Carolina and Mary Landrieu of Louisiana. (Re-elected were Republican Susan Collins of Maine and Democrat Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire.)

Two African Americans serve as senators — Republican Tim Scott of South Carolina and Democrat Cory Booker of New Jersey. There are three Hispanic senators: Republicans Marco Rubio of Florida and Ted Cruz of Texas and Democrat Robert Menendez of New Jersey.

Democrat Mazie Hirono of Hawaii is the only Asian American in the senate.

Freshmen

Fifty-eight house freshmen were sworn in this month — 43 Republicans and 15 Democrats. Three other members are new to congress but are considered veterans of a few weeks. Representatives Dave Brat (R-Virginia), Donald Norcross (D-New Jersey), and Alma Adams (D-North Carolina), took the oath shortly after November's elections to fill the seats of lawmakers who had left congress.

The senate welcomes 13 new members — 12 Republicans and one Democrat, Gary Peters of Michigan.




QUESTIONABLE CHOICE.

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