



Ronald W. Walters Leadership & Public Policy Center

The Midterm 2014 Election: A Look at the Black Candidates for Congress

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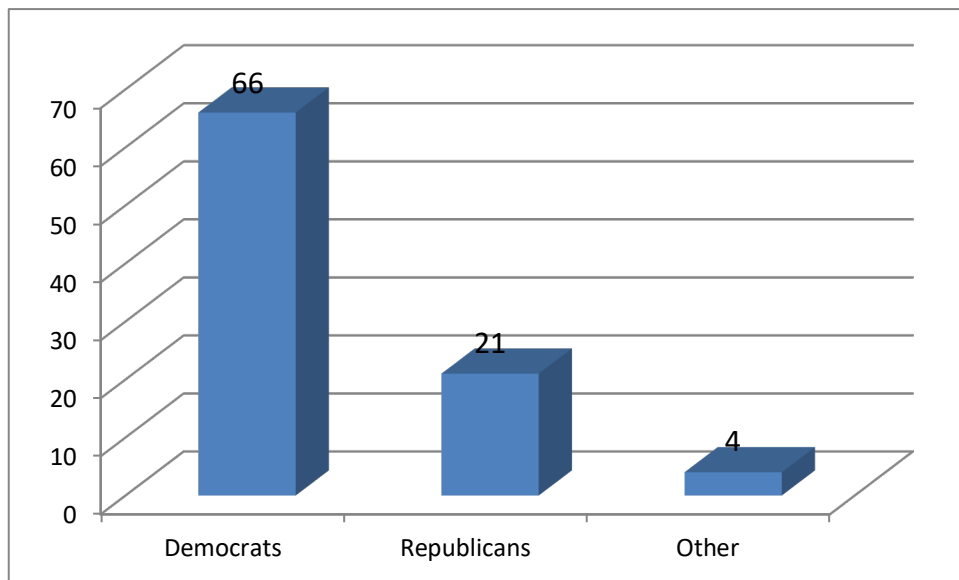
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A total of 91 African American ran for congressional (U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives) offices in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The majority of the candidates ran on the Democratic Party ticket—66 (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Black Candidates by Political Party

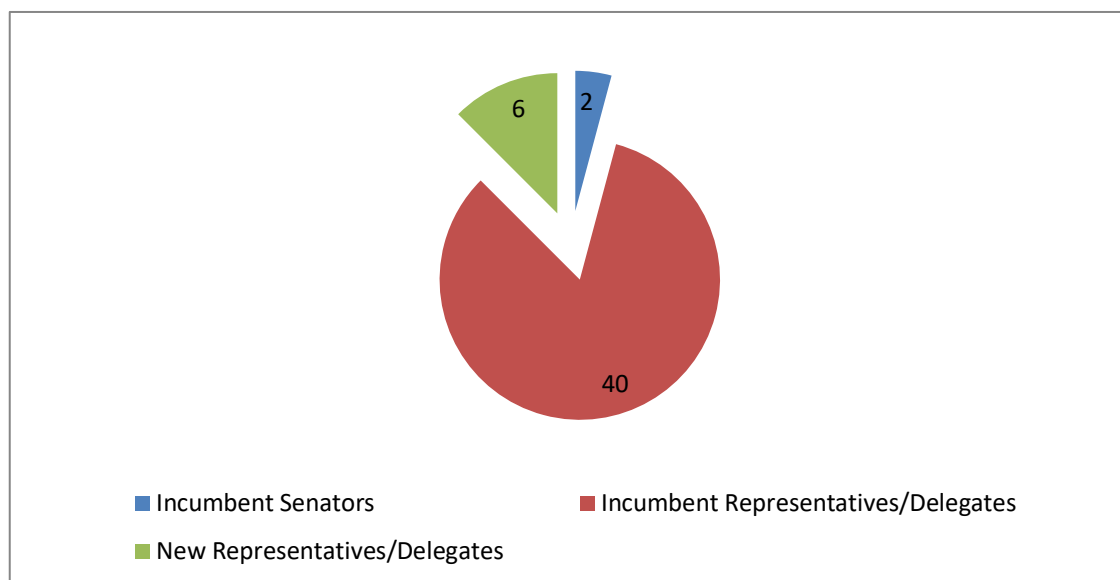


Incumbents

Of the 91 candidates, over half, 48 (52.7%) were victorious; 87.5 percent of the victors were incumbents. The 48 African American Members of Congress in the 114th Congress will be record-setting. The two incumbent Senators, Corey Booker (NJ) and Tim Scott (SC), 39 Members of the House of Representatives and one non-voting Delegate won reelection. Only one of the black incumbents did not retain his seat, Steve Horsford, a first term Congressman from Nevada. The 97.6 percent reelection rate for black incumbents is consistent with the reelection rate for Members of Congress in general. A total of 416 Members of Congress sought

re-election, and 393, or 94.47 percent, were successful. All of the black Members of Congress, with the exception of Delegate Donna Christensen (VI) who chose instead to run for Governor of the Virgin Islands, ran for reelection. African Americans were elected in four congressional districts that previously did not have an African American representative—Michigan-14th; New Jersey-12th; Texas-23rd; and Utah-4th , and an African American was elected in the 12th District of North Carolina to the seat vacated by Mel Watt when he accepted a political appointment in the Obama Administration.

Chart 2: Black Elected Members of the 114th Congress



Republicans

Less than one-fourth (23%) of the black congressional candidates were Republicans, but for the first time since Reconstruction one Senator and two Representatives of African descent will be members of the Republican Party. Tim Scott (SC) won election to fill the unexpired term of former U.S. Senator Jim DeMint, becoming the first Republican of African descent to win a Senate seat in the South since Reconstruction. Hiram Rhodes Revels from Mississippi was the first African American to serve in the Senate in 1870. Scott will have to run again in 2016. Mia Love of Utah became the first Republican woman of African descent and the first Haitian-

American to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. She formerly served as Mayor of Saratoga Springs, Utah. Another first was made when Will Hurd defeated incumbent Democrat, Rep. Pete Gallego in Texas' 23rd District to become the first black Republican U.S. Representative from the South since Reconstruction. Hurd is a 37-year-old former CIA officer.

Women

Black women scored some significant victories in the Midterm election. With the increase from 16 to 20 black women in the House of Representatives (including two Delegates), the 114th Congress will have the largest number of black women in history serving in Congress. Of the 12 new women Representatives elected, four were black women. Black women, who make up 12.7 percent of the U.S. female population, will make up 21.4 percent of the women serving in the U.S. House for the upcoming session of Congress.

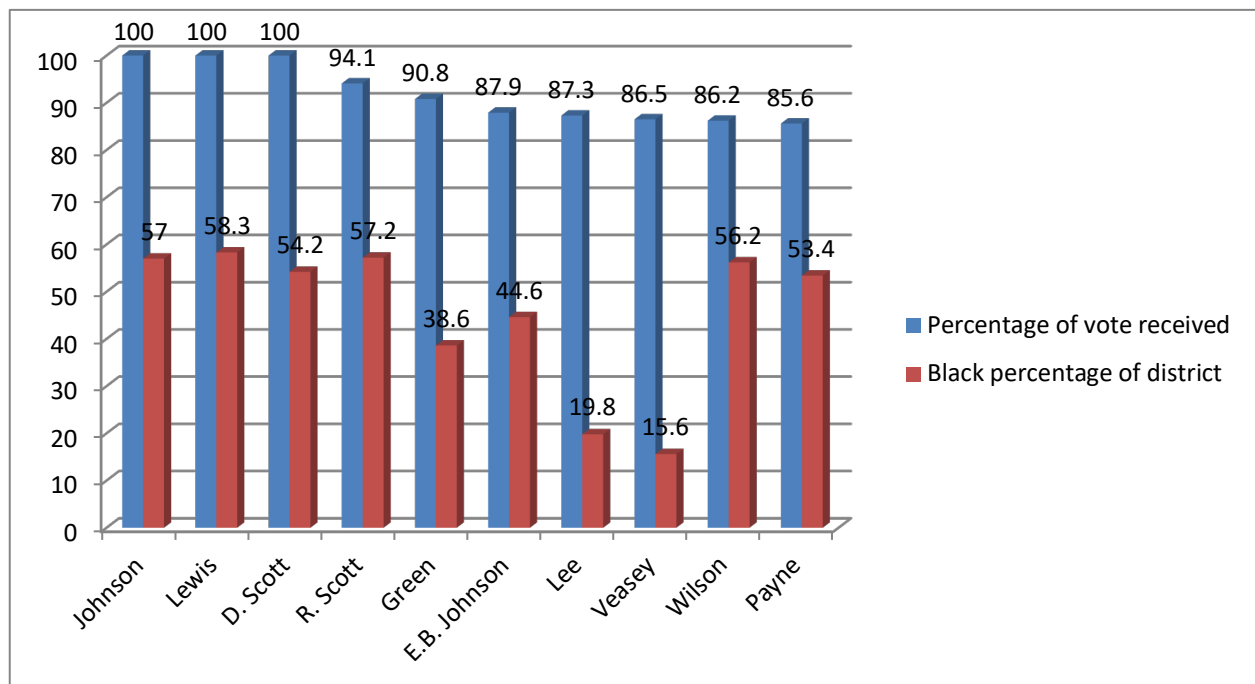
As pointed out above, the first black female Republican Representative, Mia Love, was elected to represent the 4th District of Utah. N.C. Assemblywoman, Alma Adams, became the 100th woman to be elected to the House when she won election to fill the seat vacated by Mel Watt in the 12th District of North Carolina. She also won a full term in the 114th Congress. In New Jersey, Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson Coleman became New Jersey's first African-American congresswoman by winning election in an open seat. New Jersey, which has one of the highest percentage of women serving in the state legislature (30%), has not had a woman in its federal delegation since 2003. Southfield, Michigan Mayor Brenda Lawrence was elected to fill the seat vacated by Congressman Gary Peters (MI-14th) who was elected to the U.S. Senate. Stacey Plaskett was elected Delegate from the U.S. Virgin Islands. Delegate Donna Christensen did not run for reelection because she ran for Governor of the Virgin Islands.

Percentage of Votes Received

Generally, the black incumbent Senators and Representatives received a high percentage of the votes cast in their state/district. Eighteen received 80 percent or more of the vote and of that number, three Representatives, all from Georgia, received 100 percent of the votes cast in their district. (Chart 3) The common perception is that black Congress members get a high percentage of votes because they represent predominantly black districts. Only three congressional districts

that are represented by black Representatives have black populations of 60 percent or more—Alabama 7th, Louisiana 2nd, and Mississippi 2nd. There is one congressional district in Tennessee with a 63.8 percent black majority that is represented by a white Representative. Sixteen of the black Representatives (over one-third) represent districts that are minority black (less than 50 percent black), and only 11 of the 44 Representatives represent districts that are 55 percent or more black. Three black Representatives won in districts that are majority Hispanic. In total, ten Representatives who received 70 percent or more of the vote represent districts that are minority black.

Chart 3
Black Representatives Receiving the Largest Percentage of Votes by Percentage of Blacks Living in the District

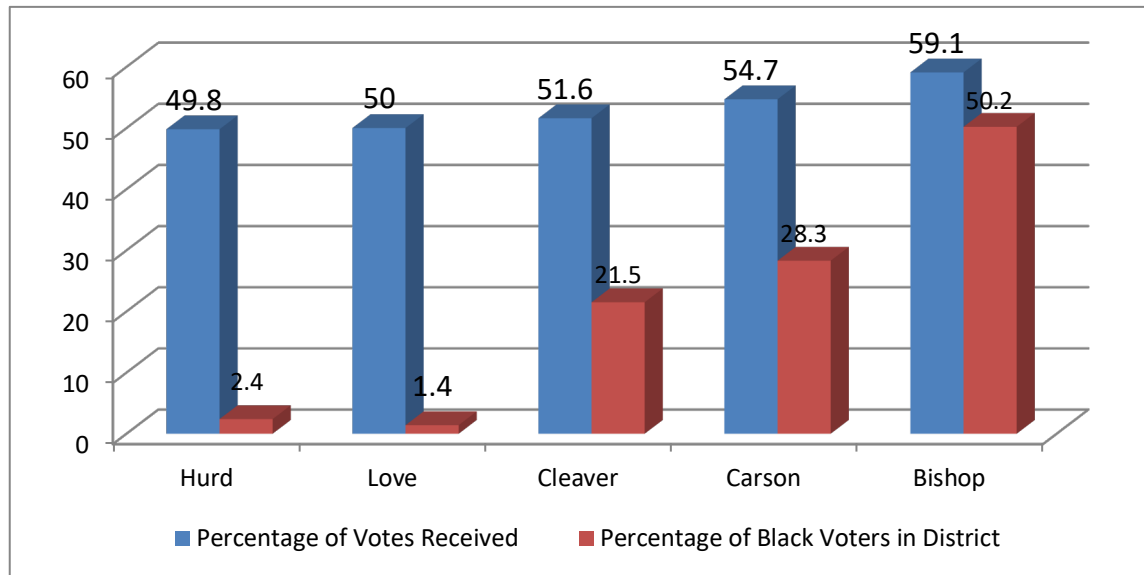


The two newly elected Republican Representatives represent districts with the smallest percentage of black voters, and they received the smallest percentage of the votes. (Chart 4) Hurd from Texas won with 49.8 percent of the vote, and Love from Utah won with 50 percent of

the vote. Hurd beat an incumbent Hispanic Democratic Representative in a 70.8 percent Hispanic district. Love won in an open seat in a predominantly white district.

The black Democratic incumbent receiving the lowest percentage of votes was Representative Emanuel Cleaver of Missouri who received 51.6 percent of the votes. Cleaver’s district is only 21.5 percent black, but there are other Representatives who received much larger percentages of the vote with a smaller black population percentage. Representative Barbara Lee’s district is only 19.8 percent black, and but she received 87.3 percent of the vote. Representative Marc Veasey’s district is 15.6 percent black and 65 percent Hispanic, and he received 86.5 percent of the vote.

Chart 4
Black Representatives Receiving the Smallest Percentage of Vote by Percentage of Black Voters in District



The South

Twenty of the black Representatives represent districts located in one of the former Confederate states. Despite the fact that the southern states are “red” states, all of the southern black Members are Democrats except for one new Representative and the incumbent Senator from South Carolina (who was originally serving in an appointed capacity). The Republicans have not done a good job of recruiting black candidates in the South where they control most of the

congressional seats. Only six Republicans—including the two who won--ran for congressional seats in the South. On the Democratic side, 34 African Americans ran for congressional seats as Democrats—including the 18 who won.

Conclusion

The 2014 Midterm election was historic in that a record number of African Americans ran for seats in the U.S. Congress. It was also historic in the number of African American women and the number of African American Republicans who were elected to Congress. The question to be answered now is “What effect will the large number of blacks in Congress have on legislation that could positively impact the lives of African Americans.” Since the majority of the African American Members are Democrats and the majority of the House and Senate Members are Republicans, the black members will not hold significant leadership positions where they can guide legislation and influence the congressional leadership. They are, however, in a position to play their original role of being the “Conscience of the Congress.” The first Congressional Black Caucus members were only 13 in number, but they caught the attention of the President of the United States and of their colleagues by putting on a united front. Forty votes can be a critical block when the majority is looking to pass legislation or pass veto-proof legislation.

Appendix 1: Black Members of 114th Congress

State	Candidate	Office	Incumbent Y/N	Pol. Party	Winner Y/N	District	vote %age	black % of District
AL	Terri Sewell	US House	Y	D	Y	7th	83.9	64.1
CA	Maxine Waters	US House	Y	D	Y	43rd	70.4	23.6
	Barbara Lee	US House	Y	D	Y	13th	87.3	19.8
	Karen Bass	US House	Y	D	Y	37th	83.8	24.3
FL	Corrine Brown	US House	Y	D	Y	5th	65.5	52.7
	Alcee Hastings	US House	Y	D	Y	20th	81.6	52.9
	Frederica Wilson	US House	Y	D	Y	24th	86.2	56.2
GA	Sanford Bishop	US House	Y	D	Y	2nd	59.1	50.2
	John Lewis	US House	Y	D	Y	5th	100	58.3
	Hank Johnson	US House	Y	D	Y	4th	100	57
	David Scott	US House	Y	D	Y	13th	100	54.2
IL	Danny K. Davis	US House	Y	D	Y	7th	85	54.6
	Bobby Rush	US House	Y	D	Y	1st	72.4	51.3
	Robin Kelly	US House	Y	D	Y	2nd	78	55.5
IN	Andre Carson	US House	Y	D	Y	7th	54.7	28.3
LA	Cedric Richmond	US House	Y	D	Y	2nd	68.7	62.9
MD	Elijah Cummings	US House	Y	D	Y	7th	69.7	54.6
	Donna Edwards	US House	Y	D	Y	4th	70	54.2
MI	John Conyers	US House	Y	D	Y	13th	79.5	56.5
	Brenda Lawrence	US House	N	D	Y	14th	77.8	57.2
MN	Keith Ellison	US House	Y	D	Y	5th	70.8	15.6

MS	Bennie Thompson	US House	Y	D	Y	2nd	67.5	65.2
MO	William Lacy Clay	US House	Y	D	Y	1st	72.9	48.9
	Emanuel Cleaver	US House	Y	D	Y	5th	51.6	21.5
NJ	Corey Booker	US Senate	Y	D	Y		55.6	N/A
	Bonnie Watson Coleman	US House	N	D	Y	12th	60.8	17.6
	Donald Payne, Jr.	US House	Y	D	Y	10th	85.6	53.4
NY	Charles Rangel	US House	Y	D	Y	13th	74.5	31
	Gregory Meeks	US House	Y	D	Y	5th	80.6	51
	Yvette Clarke	US House	Y	D	Y	9th	81.4	52.7
	Hakeem Jeffries	US House	Y	D	Y	8th	81.2	56
NC	G.K. Butterfield	US House	Y	D	Y	1st	73.4	52.1
	Alma Adams	US House	N	D	Y	12th	75.4	49
OH	Marcia Fudge	US House	Y	D	Y	11th	79.2	54.2
	Joyce Beatty	US House	Y	D	Y	3rd	63.9	32.1
PA	Chaka Fattah	US House	Y	D	Y	2nd	81.6	58.6
SC	Tim Scott	US Senate	Y	R	Y		61.1	N/A
	James Clyburn	US House	Y	D	Y	6th	72.5	56.9
TX	Sheila Jackson Lee	US House	Y	D	Y	18th	71.8	38.6
	Al Green	US House	Y	D	Y	9th	90.8	38.6
	Eddie Bernice Johnson	US House	Y	D	Y	30th	87.9	44.6
	Marc Veasey	US House	Y	D	Y	33rd	86.5	15.6
	Will Hurd	US House	N	R	Y	23rd	49.8	2.4 (70.8 Hispanic)
UT	Mia Love	US House	N	R	Y	4th	50	1.4
VA	Robert Scott	US House	Y	D	Y	3rd	94.1	57.2

WI	Gwen Moore	US House	Y	D	Y	4th	70.3	33.7
	Eleanor Holmes Norton	US House	Y	D	Y		97	49.5
VI	Stacey Plaskett	US House	N	D	Y			N/A