

## NEWS

## Hakeem Jeffries elected to replace Pelosi as top House Democrat, ushering in new generation of leadership



Democrats elected Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) to lead the House caucus in the next Congress, ushering in a new generation of House leadership with Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA) as the next minority whip and Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-CA) as House Democratic conference chairman.

House Democrats elected all three by acclamation on Wednesday.

Rep. Hakeem Jeffries as leader is the first Black person to lead congressional caucus.

The changing of the guard comes in the wake of Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), 82, and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), 83, announcing their plans to step down from their leadership roles but remain in Congress next term.

Jeffries, 52, is expected to govern to the left of Pelosi in the new Congress.

"He's a pragmatic progressive who works across the aisle to get stuff done," one source close to Jeffries said. "He's also got one of the most progressive voting records in Congress."

Jeffries made history on Wednesday as the first black lawmaker elected to be leader of a party in Congress. The New York Democrat has been described by multiple of his colleagues

as someone able to serve as a bridge between generations and between progressives and centrists in the caucus.

Jeffries was first elected to his seat in 2012, rising to become a co-chairman of the House Democratic Policy and Communications Committee in 2017 before being elected as House Democratic Caucus chairman, a position he has held since 2019.

Clark, 59, will assume the No. 2 position in the caucus. The Massachusetts Democrat won her seat in a special election in 2013, becoming vice chairwoman of the House Democratic Caucus in 2019 before rising through the ranks to assistant speaker in 2021.

Aguilar, 43, will succeed Jeffries as caucus chairman, a position that entails setting the agenda and leading weekly caucus meetings. The California Democrat, who first came to Congress in 2015, serves as vice chairman and has played a key role in the Jan. 6 committee's investigation into the riot at the Capitol.

All three lawmakers ran unopposed for their new roles after Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO) dropped his bid for caucus chairman, instead running to become the next chairman of the Democratic Policy and Communications Committee.

While Pelosi and Hoyer opted to step back from their leadership position, Majority Whip James E. Clyburn (D-SC), 82, is running for the No. 4 House Democrat role, that of assistant leader, though Rep. David Cicilline (D-RI) announced on Wednesday that he would challenge Clyburn.

Aguilar initially intended to run for assistant leader, but Clyburn's decision to seek the role led to his decision to seek the caucus chair position.

House Republicans held their internal leadership elections shortly before Congress's Thanksgiving recess, with House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) winning the internal race for speaker but facing obstacles in obtaining the votes needed to secure the gavel on the floor.

GOP lawmakers elected House Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-LA) to serve as majority leader next Congress, National Republican Congressional Committee Chairman Tom Emmer (R-MN) to serve as whip, House Republican Conference Chairwoman Elise Stefanik (R-NY) to remain in her position, and Rep. Richard Hudson (R-NC) to head the House GOP's campaign arm.

Jeffries said Tuesday night that he had an "open mind" when it comes to forging a working relationship with McCarthy.

"I think I've been pretty gentle on Kevin McCarthy," he told reporters. "Moving forward, it's my hope that House Democrats can find common ground with Republicans to get things done that would make life better for everyday Americans whenever possible. We are also prepared to oppose their extremism when we must." (Source: Juliegrace Brufke, Congressional Reporter- Nov 30)



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