

Representative Patsy Takemoto Mink

U.S. Representative (D-Hawaii)

Honolulu, HI

Patsy Takemoto Mink's professional record shows leadership in areas of significance to all Americans, but particularly to women: civil rights, education, the environment, child care, open government, and equal opportunity. She is a trailblazer as the first Japanese-American woman to pass the Hawaii State Bar Examination; the first Japanese-American woman to serve in local, state, and national government; and the first Japanese-American woman to be elected, and then re-elected to the United States Congress.

Her role in the writing and the enactment of legislation, especially the first Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Act (1968), the Women's Educational Equity Act, and Title IX amendments to the Higher Education Act made these landmarks possible. As a litigator, Rep. Mink brought a class action suit against the University of Chicago and Eli Lilly Company on behalf of 1000 women unknowingly subjected to the experimental program testing diethylstilbestrol (DES), which resulted in a settlement. Her litigation to strengthen freedom of information rights set precedents critical in obtaining Nixon tapes in investigating the Watergate scandal, and established the "fairness doctrine" to provide access to radio stations for opposing political views.

Holding her present congressional position since the 1990 elections, Rep. Mink first served Hawaii in the Territorial House of Representatives (1956-58). After Hawaii obtained statehood she won the 1962 election to the Hawaii State Senate and ran for national office in 1964, winning the first of six consecutive terms served as Hawaii's representative from 1965-77.

The recipient of dozens of local, state, and national awards and numerous honorary degrees, Rep. Mink is widely published and has been active in diverse political, professional, civic, and civil rights organizations. A 1948 graduate of the University of Hawaii, she earned her B.A. degree with a major in zoology and chemistry and earned her J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School in 1951. She has one child.

