

Baptists gain eight seats in Congress, but strong Christian majority on decline

WASHINGTON (BP) – Mark Harris, who began a term in Congress this year after a 10-year quest, will continue serving at Trinity Baptist Church in Mooresville, N.C., the Southern Baptist pastor told the Biblical Recorder.

Harris is among 12 new Baptists included in 75 Baptists serving in the 119th Congress, according to analyses from CQ Roll Call and Pew Research, a net increase of eight over the 67 who served in the previous Congress.

The new Congress, which met briefly today to certify Donald Trump as U.S. president, includes 461 Christians, compared to 469 in the 118th Congress, and 491 in the 2015-2017 session.

While overwhelmingly Christian and more Christian than the general population, the Christian share of Congress has continued to decline for more than a decade, Pew Research said in its analysis based on its 2023 National Public Opinion Reference Survey and CQ Roll Call numbers.

There are eight fewer Christians in the 119th Congress than the 118th Congress, down to 86.7 percent from 87.8 percent; but Christians comprised 92 percent of Congress a decade ago. Compared to the general population, Congress continues to draw a larger share of Christians, Pew said. Among U.S. adults, 62 percent identify as Christian, down from 78 percent in 2007, and 92 percent in the early 1960s, comparable to the share of Christians in Congress a decade ago.

Baptists fill 14.1 percent of the 532 seats spoken for to date, Pew said, compared to 12.5 percent in the 118th Congress.

In addition to Harris, Representative Tim Moore (R-NC), a member of First Baptist Church of Kings Mountain, joins Congress as a Southern Baptist.

Other Baptists of various Baptist denominations are seven Republicans:

- Mike Haridopolos of Florida
- Marlin Stutzman of Indiana
- Troy Downing of Montana
- Brad Knott of North Carolina
- Sheri Biggs of South Carolina
- John McGuire of Virginia
- Jim Justice of West Virginia

And three Democrats: Senator Angela Alsobrooks of Maryland and Representatives Cleo Fields of Louisiana and Sylvester Turner of Texas.

Roman Catholics, holding 151 seats, maintain the largest denominational representation in Congress, CQ Roll Call said, although Protestants combined account for 295 members.

At a time of rising antisemitism, Jewish Americans hold 32 seats in the 119th Congress, Pew said, comprising 6 percent of Congress compared to 2 percent of the U.S. population. The 32 seats do not include a lone Messianic Jewish member, identified as Anna Paulina Luna of Florida, whose paternal ancestry is Jewish.

Other religions represented in Congress include four Muslims, four Hindus, three Unitarian Universalists, three Buddhists and 21 who did not identify with any religion. Included among Protestants are nine Mormons and six Orthodox Christians. One House seat remains vacant, Florida's First District formerly held by Matt Gaetz.

Pew's analysis is available [here](#).