Women Construction Owners & Executives, USA

WCOE USA Legislative Update

A New Congress: Democrats Control the Senate and House

What it Means for WCOE Members

The 2026 elections will bring a change in leadership on Capitol Hill, with Democrats winning control of both the House and Senate. With Republican President Donald Trump remaining in office, the country enters a period of divided government when the new Congress convenes in January. Some races remain unresolved, but control of both chambers has been decided.

CONGRESS BEFORE AND AFTER THE ELECTION
Preliminary counts — As of early Wednesday morning, November 4, 2026

SENATE — Before → Incoming (awaiting 2 uncalled races)
Democrats: Were 47 Now 54 (+7)
Republicans: 53 → 44

HOUSE — Before → Incoming (awaiting 63 uncalled races)
Democrats: Were 214 now 231 (+17)
Republicans: 218 → 141
Other independent: 1 → 0
Previously vacant seats: 2
Senate Democratic totals include two independents. Incoming counts are preliminary.

The Democrats were expected to take control of the House, particularly with the Republican majority so small. In the Senate races, even days before election day, most political analysts were saying races determining control of the Senate were too close to call. But when the races broke, they broke toward the Democrats, even in some very red states.

Expect 100 or More New Members in Congress: Across the Senate and House, (535 Members), there will be 100 or more new Members, although the final number remains unsettled. That turnover means many lawmakers and their staffs will be learning about your industry and how your businesses and local economies will be affected by their decisions.

What Do the Changes Mean? President Trump retains veto authority, and overriding a veto requires a two-thirds vote in each chamber. So policy changes won't be dramatic. However, Democratic control means Democratic chairs to Congressional committees. Chairs influence which bills receive consideration, which hearings are held and which agency actions receive scrutiny. For construction businesses, that could shift attention toward issues such as infrastructure spending, small business contracting and the administration's implementation of federal procurement programs. Committee leadership can give an issue a public hearing and require agency officials to explain their decisions, even when new legislation is unlikely to become law.

For women in the construction industry, the practical questions are familiar: Will projects move forward? How will small businesses and women-owned businesses be affected, and will contracting opportunities be accessible? The issues for WCOE members will be much the same; will federal policies support their ability to compete, invest and grow? WCOE will remain focused on these issues.

Watch for more details on the new Congress in upcoming Washington Updates. WCOE will once again review the Rutgers University Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) statistics on representation for women in the Congress.

New Opportunities for WCOE Members to Engage: For WCOE, the transition offers an opportunity to introduce over 100 newly elected Members and their staffs to the business realities of women-led construction companies. Concrete examples—of a delayed procurement, a financing barrier or a contracting requirement that limits competition—can help turn broad policy discussions into practical solutions.

The most effective message remains one that can resonate across party lines: women construction owners and executives need fair opportunities to compete, clear rules and a dependable environment in which to build their businesses.

WCOE proudly plans to roll out its new advocacy club, helping WCOE members engage on behalf of their own businesses with the new Congress as it begins the 120th Congressional Session January 3, 2027.