

★ CURRENT MEMBERS ★

Albert R. Wynn

1951 –

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE
DEMOCRAT FROM MARYLAND

1993 –



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE MEMBER

Albert Wynn won election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1992, in an affluent, predominantly African-American district in suburban Maryland. With a decade of service in the state legislature, Wynn quickly adapted to the U.S. House, eventually earning a seat on the prestigious Energy and Commerce Committee and moving into the hierarchy of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC).

Albert Russell Wynn was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on September 10, 1951. His family moved to North Carolina, where his father farmed and his mother taught school.¹ When his father was hired by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the family moved to a suburb of Washington, DC, where Wynn attended the public schools in Prince George's County, Maryland. In 1973, Wynn graduated with a bachelor of science degree in political science from the University of Pittsburgh. He briefly studied public administration at Howard University in Washington, DC, before entering Georgetown University and earning a law degree in 1977. Wynn later served as director of the Prince George's County consumer protection commission. After opening his own law firm in 1982, Wynn won election to the Maryland house of delegates, where he served from 1983 to 1987. He was then elected to the Maryland state senate, serving there until 1993 and rising to the post of deputy majority whip. Wynn is married to Gaines Clore Wynn, an artist and art educator. They have two daughters, Meredith and Gabrielle, and a grandson, Kaden Nicholas.

Following the 1990 Census, the Maryland state legislature created a new congressional district that encompassed sections of Prince George's and Montgomery counties inside the Capital Beltway along the border of the District of Columbia. In the 1970s and 1980s, Prince George's County had become increasingly African American as blacks from Washington, DC, moved to the suburbs. Prince George's County was home to a large group of middle- to upper-middle-class African Americans, many of whom were federal workers, and blacks accounted for 58 percent of the heavily Democratic district. In the March 3, 1992, Democratic primary, Wynn garnered 28 percent of the vote, defeating his closest opponent, Prince George's County's State's Attorney Alex Williams, by several percentage points—in large measure because he performed better than Williams in the

Montgomery County sections of the district.² Wynn easily prevailed in the general election, claiming 75 percent of the vote against Republican candidate Michele Dyson, an African-American business consultant. In his subsequent seven re-election bids, Wynn has won with pluralities of 75 percent or more (he received 87 percent of the vote in 1998). Reapportionment after the 2000 Census pulled several heavily Democratic sections out of Wynn's district and added more conservative locales in the suburbs of Montgomery County. Nevertheless, in 2006, Representative Wynn won re-election, with 80 percent of the vote, against Republican challenger Michael Moshe Starkman.³

When Wynn took his seat in the House on January 5, 1993, he received assignments on three committees: Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs (later named Financial Services), Foreign Affairs, and Post Office and Civil Service. In the 105th Congress (1997–1999) Representative Wynn accepted a post on the prestigious Commerce Committee (later named Energy and Commerce), requiring him to yield his prior assignments. He has served on Energy and Commerce since then, and in the 110th Congress (2007–2009) he was appointed chairman of the Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials. Since 2002, Wynn has chaired the CBC's Political Action Committee and Minority Business Task Force. He heads the CBC task forces on campaign finance reform and minority business and serves as a Senior and Regional Whip.⁴

Wynn's district is home to more federal workers (70,000) than any other district in the country. In addition, a number of small businesses in Wynn's district contract with federal agencies. Much of his legislative focus is on issues affecting that constituency; for instance, Wynn has been a leading advocate for the protection of federal salaries and pensions as well as for the creation of more federal contracts for minority businesses and small businesses. Wynn has also focused on bringing federal dollars into the district for transportation and infrastructure projects.⁵

FOR FURTHER READING

"Wynn, Albert Russell," *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodesplay.pl?index=W000784>.

NOTES

- 1 *Politics in America, 2008* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 2007): 468.
- 2 Michele L. Norris, "Montgomery Bolstered Wynn; Lower Turnout in P.G. Hurt Williams in Democratic House Primary," 5 March 1992, *Washington Post*: C1; Michele L. Norris, "4th District Nod Goes to Wynn; Rep. Byron Loses in Upset in Maryland's 6th District," 4 March 1992, *Washington Post*: A1.
- 3 "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," available at http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/2006election.pdf.
- 4 "Official Biography of Congressman Albert Russell Wynn," http://www.wynn.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=26 (accessed 29 October 2007).
- 5 "Official Biography of Congressman Albert Russell Wynn"; *Politics in America, 2006* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc. 2005): 476.