



New American Mamas Shaping State Legislatures in 2024

Overview

Breaking into politics isn't easy—especially for mothers and individuals from underrepresented backgrounds who are often sidelined. These challenges are especially evident at the state legislative level, where mothers of children under 18 make up just 7.9% of state legislators, and only 4.89% are New Americans.¹ Less than 2% of all state legislators are New American Mamas. Within this small, powerful group, New American Mamas bring lived experiences and insights that shape policies to better reflect and serve diverse communities. Understanding who these legislators are and the distinct barriers they face can guide efforts to support more responsive and representative governance.

This fact sheet provides an analysis of the representation of New American Mamas in state legislatures, using data from New American Leaders and Vote Mama Foundation. **New American Leaders** is the only nationwide, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that empowers first and second-generation Americans to run, win, and lead in public office through training, governance support, and research that drives inclusive democracy. **Vote Mama Foundation** is the leading source of research and analysis on the political participation of mothers and works to break the structural barriers moms face running for and serving in elected office. Together, these organizations aim to foster more inclusive political representation and reduce barriers to political participation.

In 2024, both organizations released new data that calls for more diverse governing bodies across state legislatures. [Vote Mama Foundation](#) identified 582 state legislators who are Mamas. [New American Leaders](#) identified 188 New American women represented across state legislatures. Of these New American women, 78—**41.49%**—are **New American Mamas**, demonstrating a substantial presence of leaders who bring unique perspectives and also face additional barriers, as both Mamas and New Americans.²

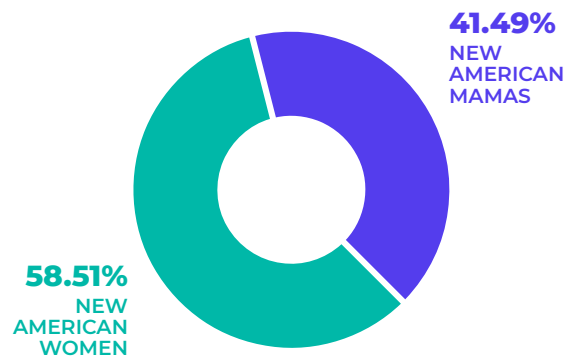
Definitions

Mama: Cis and trans women with biological children, foster children, stepchildren, and formally or informally adopted children under the age of 18.

New American Woman: An individual who identifies as a woman and is a first-generation immigrant (someone who personally migrated to the United States) or a second-generation immigrant (someone whose parent(s) migrated to the United States).

New American Mama: A cis or trans woman who is a first- or second-generation immigrant to the United States and has children under the age of 18.

New American Women Breakdown



¹ New American Leaders and Vote Mama Foundation identify New Americans and mothers of minor children by primarily relying on sources such as campaign websites, official biographies on state legislature websites, and newspaper articles. It is possible that we may be underestimating the number of New American Mamas in office, as some representatives may not publicly disclose their New American or motherhood status.

² The data collection period for both organizations ended in February 2024. After this period, three New American Mamas were elected in special elections and are therefore not included in the statistics presented in this fact sheet.

New American Mamas are present in **30 state legislatures**, with **32.05%** serving in state senates and **67.95%** serving in state houses. A majority, **61.54%**, of these New American Mamas are incumbents, having been elected before 2024.

When looking at partisanship, **70** of these legislators are Democrats, and **eight** are Republicans. Additionally, **five** New American Mamas identify as LGBTQ+, underscoring the resilience required to overcome multiple, intersecting barriers to entering and remaining in state legislatures.³

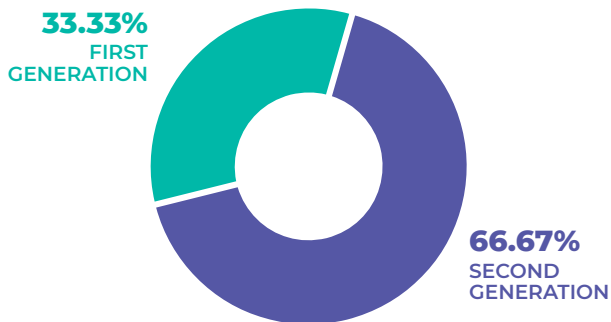
These statistics highlight the increasing representation of New American Mamas in state legislatures, marking a significant step toward a more inclusive and diverse political landscape. However, there is still considerable work needed to dismantle barriers to office for underrepresented communities.

New American Status, Race and Ethnicity, and Regional Breakdown

The diverse backgrounds of New American Mamas—from their generational ties to their racial and regional identities—bring perspectives that strengthen policymaking. Their experiences reflect resilience and a deep understanding of community needs, enhancing the breadth of voices in state legislatures across the country.

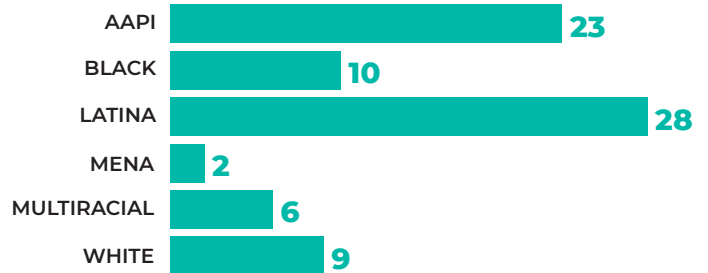
Among the 78 New American Mamas serving in state legislatures, **33.33%** (26 legislators) are first-generation New Americans, born outside the United States, while **66.67%** (52 legislators) are second-generation New Americans, with at least one parent born outside the United States.

Generational Status of New American Mamas



Race and Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity add another layer of complexity to the challenges these legislators face to getting into and staying in office. Their intersecting identities bring essential perspectives needed to address the diverse needs of their communities. Among these legislators:



Regional Origins

The regional diversity of New American Mamas highlights the global backgrounds represented in U.S. state legislatures:

- **Asia:** 29
- **North America:** 28
- **South America:** 9
- **Europe:** 9
- **Africa:** 3

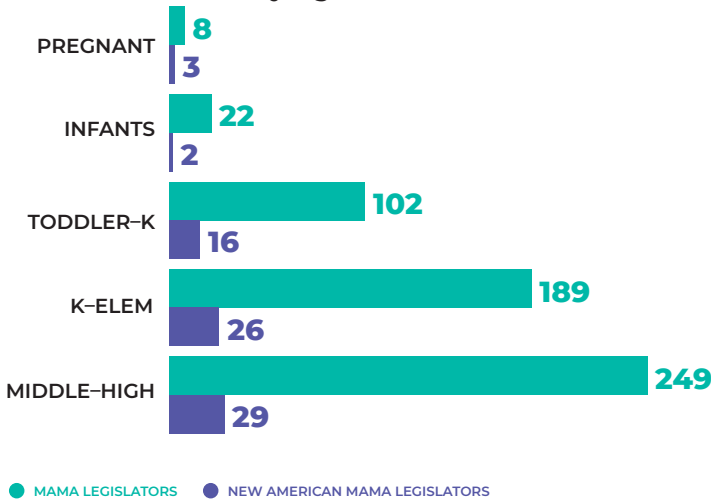
Mama Representation

Vote Mama Foundation has identified **30 state legislators** who have been pregnant or given birth in the past year. This number is double the amount from 2022. Of the 30, 5 of these legislators are also New Americans, meaning 15% of all legislators who have been pregnant or given birth while serving in office are also New Americans. Additionally, Vote Mama Foundation found that as of 2024, only 1.7% of all state legislators in the U.S. are moms of minors under the age of 6. The report found that the representation of Mamas increases as the child's age range increases, suggesting there are barriers to running for and serving in office among mothers of children who have yet to be enrolled in school. This is further complicated by the fact that [many states have low pay or no pay for legislators](#), which can compound the costs of providing childcare while serving in office.⁴ This trend is similar among New American Mamas; representation increases as the age of the youngest child increases. We have identified 21—**26.92%**—New American Mamas who are currently serving in office and have children under the age of six. Five of these New American Mamas

³ Of the 5 LGBTQ+ legislators 2 identify as queer, 2 identify as lesbian/gay, and one identifies as bisexual. Four of the 5 are cisgender and one identifies as Two-spirit.

were pregnant or had given birth within the past year.

Mamas' Children by Ages



New American Mamas in Action

We asked New American Mamas what their experiences have been as a New American and as a mother of young children:

Michigan



**State Senator
Stephanie Chang**

MI - 3

"I am a proud daughter of Taiwanese American immigrants and that definitely shapes who I am as a lawmaker. I fight for the kind of opportunity, fairness and access that my parents came to America believing in. I've been proud to champion immigrants' rights issues like driver's licenses (Drive SAFE) and language access for state government services.

I am also a proud mommy legislator. I gave birth in my first year in office (2015) so my entire time in the legislature has been a simultaneous journey of public service and motherhood – learning how to be the best mom I can be while being the best public servant I can be. This has meant that I bring my daughters with me to community meetings and events and that they have been to session and committee hearings many times. I not only champion issues facing moms and children, but also try to infuse being a mom into the way I serve.

Juggling family and work responsibilities is hard. I literally would not have been able to do this job for the past ten years without my husband, parents and mother-in-law's support in caring for my daughters.

[One man said if I couldn't find a babysitter, I should stay home from public meetings.](#) All of these challenges make me stronger and even more proud to be a daughter of immigrants and mommy legislator."

New York



**State Senator
Samra G. Brouk**

NY - 55

"As a mother, I strive to balance my legislative work with my family life as a mother of a young girl. I want to build systems of empowerment, equity, and justice so that my daughter can thrive. It is incredibly important to show all young people they can be leaders within their communities— especially women of color. We all have the potential to achieve lasting change.

The barriers I faced were much the same as many other black people and women running for office. I grew up as a daughter of an immigrant and a public school teacher. We didn't have ample resources or family connections. Not many women who looked like me were in political office, but with education, self-confidence, and support from my community, I felt encouraged to be the change I wanted to see. As the second woman in history to give birth while sitting as a New York state senator, I also learned more about the challenges of motherhood. This experience renewed my commitment to advancing care for birthing mothers and positively influenced the course of my career."



**State Assemblymember
Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas**

NY - 34

"Being a legislator, both as the daughter of an immigrant and as a mamá, means balancing immense responsibilities. As an advocate for immigrant justice in a time of rising hostility toward our newest New Yorkers, I've faced significant backlash—even in a diverse, largely immigrant district. At the same time, I am a mother, often required to be away from my family for extended periods—spending over 60 days per year in the state capitol, three hours away. This means missing important milestones in my son's life, from school performances to parent-teacher conferences and basketball games. Despite these challenges, I carry a deep sense of responsibility to serve. I bring to the legislature the lived experiences of both a New American and a mamá, advocating for policies that support families like mine. I've fought for and passed legislation on maternal health, reproductive justice, immigrant access to healthcare, and the creation of an excluded workers fund. These are the issues that matter most to me and to my community, and I remain committed to advancing them every day."

Recommendations

1 Authorize Campaign Funds for Childcare (CFCC)

Advocate for state-level policies that allow candidates to use Campaign Funds for Childcare expenses, easing financial burdens on New American Mamas pursuing public office.

2 Establish Comprehensive Childcare and Family Support Programs for Candidates

Develop funded childcare support programs specifically for candidates, with options for on-call childcare services, flexible childcare stipends, and mobile childcare units for campaign events. Consider partnerships with local childcare providers to offer subsidized, extended-hour services during peak campaign periods. Additionally, provide resources for family support, such as virtual tutoring or eldercare assistance, to accommodate candidates juggling multiple caregiving responsibilities.

3 Modernize Legislative Practices for Family Flexibility

Encourage flexible scheduling, family leave policies, “no meeting breaks” during peak family and caregiving hours, virtual legislative hearings, and remote voting structures within legislative bodies to support legislators in balancing caregiving responsibilities with their roles, enhancing retention and effectiveness in office. Legislatures can provide on-site childcare breastfeeding rooms and changing tables in all legislative buildings, to ensure that legislators with young children can fully participate without added strain on family responsibilities.

4 Create Family-Friendly Legislative Spaces

Implement features like on-site childcare, breastfeeding rooms, and family-friendly areas within legislative buildings to ensure that legislators with young children can fully participate without added strain on family responsibilities. Establish a certification program for legislative bodies that meet these standards, encouraging supportive policies and attracting a more diverse range of candidates.

5 Support Mentorship Networks for Caregivers in Politics

Develop mentorship programs that connect New American Mamas with fellow legislators and staff, offering guidance on balancing caregiving with political careers. Include support for staff members with caregiving roles, fostering an inclusive environment that values family responsibilities at all levels of government. Create campaigns that celebrate the contributions of caregiver legislators, highlighting the unique perspectives they bring. This can foster public support and normalize the role of caregiver-legislators, challenging stereotypes that may discourage caregiver candidates from running.

New American Mamas bring invaluable perspectives rooted in resilience and community commitment, strengthening policymaking for a range of social and economic issues. Supporting these leaders and creating pathways for future candidates helps build a legislative environment that is responsive, adaptable, and equipped to address the evolving challenges faced by families and communities.



PHOTO: STATE SENATOR SAMRA G. BROUK

Learn More

To learn more about supporting New Americans, Mamas, and New American Mamas striving to participate in, run for, and serve in public office, visit our websites for additional resources and actionable ways to get involved. Together, we can help create an environment where all voices are empowered and able to run, win, and lead.

New American Leaders

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Vote Mama Foundation

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