

GOP: On the Right Side of History



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen 1st Hispanic Female Member of Congress

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (born Ileana Carmen Ros y Adato; July 15, 1952) is the most senior U.S. Representative from Florida, representing Florida's 27th congressional district. She was Chairwoman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee from 2011-2013. In 1989, Ros-Lehtinen became the first Cuban American and Latina elected to Congress. She was also the first Republican woman elected to the House from Florida, and is currently the most senior Republican woman in the U.S. House and in Congress. Ros-Lehtinen gave the first Republican response to the State of Union address in 2011, and gave the third in 2014.

Ileana Ros y Adato was born in Havana, Cuba, one of two children born to Enrique Ros (1924–2013), who later became a businessman and anti-Fidel Castro activist, and his wife, Amanda Adato. The family immigrated to the United States when Ileana was seven years old. She received her Bachelor of Arts in education and her Master of Arts in educational leadership from Florida International University. She attended the University of Miami where she earned an Ed.D in higher education.

After incumbent Democrat U.S. Congressman Claude Pepper died on May 30, 1989, there was a special election scheduled for August 29, 1989. State Senator Ros-Lehtinen defeated Democrat Gerald Richman 53%–47%. In 1990, she won re-election to a full term with 60% of the vote. In total, she was elected to fourteen full terms never winning with less than 58%. (Source: Wikipedia)