



Adam Smith (Washington politician)

David Adam Smith^[1] (born June 15, 1965)^[2] is an American politician and attorney serving as the U.S. representative for Washington's 9th congressional district. A member of the Democratic Party, Smith previously served in the Washington State Senate.

A graduate of the University of Washington School of Law, Smith briefly worked as a prosecutor and *pro tem* judge for the city of Seattle before entering politics. Smith was elected to the State Senate in 1990; at age 25, he was the youngest state senator in the country. He ran in and won his first congressional race in 1996, and has been reelected 14 times. From 2019 through 2022, he chaired the House Armed Services Committee, and is currently the Ranking Member. Smith is a member of the New Democrat Coalition and the Congressional Progressive Caucus. He is the dean of Washington's House delegation.

Early life and education

Born in Washington, D.C. and raised in SeaTac, Washington, Smith was adopted as an infant by Lelia June (née Grant) and his maternal uncle Ben Martin Smith III.^[3] He attended Bow Lake Elementary and Chinook Middle School before graduating from Tyee High School in 1983. In high school, Smith participated in the Close Up Washington civic education program. His father, who worked for United Airlines as a ramp serviceman and was active in the Machinists' Union, died when Smith was 19.^[4]

Smith attended Western Washington University in Bellingham for a year before graduating from Fordham University in 1987 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. He completed a Juris Doctor from the University of Washington in 1990. He worked his way through college by loading trucks for United Parcel Service.^[2]

Adam Smith



Smith in 2009

Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee

Incumbent

Assumed office

January 3, 2023

Preceded by Mike Rogers

In office

January 3, 2011 – January 3, 2019

Preceded by Buck McKeon

Succeeded by Mac Thornberry

Chair of the House Armed Services Committee

In office

January 3, 2019 – January 3, 2023

Preceded by Mac Thornberry

Succeeded by Mike Rogers

Early career

After law school, Smith worked as a private practice attorney with Cromwell, Mendoza & Belur. From 1993 to 1995, he served as a prosecutor for Seattle.^{[3][5]} In 1996, he worked temporarily as a *pro tem* judge.^{[3][5]}

Smith served in the Washington State Senate from 1991 to 1997.^[5] He was 25 years old at the time of his election in 1990, defeating a 13-year incumbent Republican, Eleanor Lee, to become the nation's youngest state senator.^[5]

U.S. House of Representatives

Elections

1996

Smith won his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1996 by defeating another incumbent Republican, Rep. Randy Tate, with 50.4 percent of the vote. He has never faced another contest nearly that close.

1998

Smith ran for a second term and defeated Republican Ron Taber in the general election, winning 65% of the vote.^[6]

2000

Smith ran for a third term and defeated Republican Chris Vance in the general election, winning 61.7% of the vote.^[7]

2002

Smith was reelected for a fourth term.

2004

Smith was reelected for a fifth term.

**Member of the
U.S. House of Representatives
from Washington's 9th district**

Incumbent

Assumed office
January 3, 1997

Preceded by Randy Tate

**Member of the Washington Senate
from the 33rd district**

In office
January 14, 1991 – January 3, 1997

Preceded by Eleanor Lee

Succeeded by Julia Patterson

Personal details

Born David Adam Smith
June 15, 1965
Washington, D.C., U.S.

Political party Democratic

Spouse Sara Bickle-Eldridge
(m. 1993)

Children 2

Education Fordham University (BA)
University of Washington (JD)

Website House website (http://adamsmith.house.gov)
Campaign website (http://electadamsmith.com)

Smith's voice

5:48

Smith opening a House Armed Services Committee hearing on the FY2022 Defense Department budget request.
Recorded June 23, 2021

2006

In 2006, Smith won his sixth term in Congress against Republican Steve Cofchin, with 65.7% of the vote to Cofchin's 34.3%.^[8]

2008

In 2008, Smith won a seventh term in the House, defeating James Postma, a 74-year-old retired engineer running on a pro-nuclear power platform, with 65% of the vote.^[9]

2010

Smith was reelected for an eighth term.

2012

For his first seven terms, Smith represented a district that straddled Interstate 5, from Renton through Tacoma to just outside of Olympia. Smith's district was significantly redrawn after the 2010 census. It absorbed much of southeast Seattle as well as most of the Eastside. As a result, it became the state's first with a majority of residents who are racial or ethnic minorities.^[10] It is also the state's second-most Democratic district; only the neighboring 7th district, which covers the rest of Seattle, is more Democratic.

Smith was reelected for a ninth term.

2014

Smith was reelected for a tenth term.

2016

Smith was reelected for an eleventh term.

2018

Smith was reelected for a twelfth term.

2020

Smith ran for a thirteenth term and defeated Republican Doug Basler in the general election, winning 74.1% of the vote.^[11]

2022

Smith ran for a fourteenth term and defeated Republican Doug Basler in the general election for a second time, winning 71.6% of the vote.^[12]

2024

Smith ran for a fifteenth term and defeated Democrat Melissa Chaudhry in the general election, winning 65.4% of the vote.^[13]

Tenure

Smith has been a long-time member in moderate "New Democrats" organizations and once chaired its political action committee.^[14]

In April 2007, Smith supported Barack Obama in the 2008 U.S. presidential election.^[15] He also appeared on *Hardball with Chris Matthews* speaking for Obama. The same year, he also appeared on *The Colbert Report*, in the show's 434-part series known as "Better Know A District".

On July 8, 2024, Smith called for Joe Biden to withdraw from the 2024 United States presidential election.^[16] Smith voted with President Joe Biden's stated position 100% of the time in the 117th Congress, according to a *FiveThirtyEight* analysis.^[17]



Adam Smith and Barack Obama at a campaign rally at Seattle's KeyArena, February 8, 2008.

Foreign affairs

On October 10, 2002, Smith was among the 81 Democratic members of the House to vote to authorize the invasion of Iraq.^[18] In March 2012, he said that U.S. troops had done "amazing work" in Afghanistan and that it was "time to bring the troops home".^[19]

Smith voted against the Protect America Act of 2007, which has been criticized for violating Americans' civil liberties by allowing wiretapping without issued warrants.^[20] But in 2008, he voted for a similar bill, the FISA Amendment Act of 2008 (FAA), reauthorizing many of the provisions in the expired Protect America Act, leading critics like the ACLU to call it "an unconstitutional bill that would significantly modify the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act", granting expansive new monitoring powers to the executive branch with very little court oversight. The FAA also ensured the dismissal of all pending cases against telecommunication companies for their previous illegal spying on American citizens on behalf of the Executive Branch.^{[21][22][23]} Smith also voted for the 2001 Patriot Act and to extend the Bush administration's warrantless wiretapping program.^[24]

On December 16, 2010, Smith defeated Silvestre Reyes and Loretta Sanchez to become the Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee after Chairman Ike Skelton was defeated for reelection. In the first round, Sanchez and Smith earned 64 votes, and Reyes earned 53. In the runoff, Smith defeated Sanchez by 11 votes.^[25]

In 2011, recognized for his work in fighting global poverty, Smith became only the second member of Congress selected for the Borgen Project's board of directors.^[26] The same year, he argued against cuts that could "jeopardize our national security" and leave the U.S. "more vulnerable to nuclear terrorism".^[27]

In 2001, Congress passed the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF),^[28] which gave the president authority to use "all necessary and appropriate force" against those who committed and aided the September 11 attacks. While this power has been rarely used to detain persons in the U.S., Smith introduced a bill to ensure that anyone detained on U.S. soil under the AUMF has access to due process and the federal court system.^[29] The bill also prohibits military commissions and indefinite detention for people detained in the U.S. and would ensure the detainees constitutional rights.^[29]



Smith as a representative during the 109th Congress

Smith and Representative Mac Thornberry co-sponsored an amendment to the fiscal 2013 defense spending bill reversing previous bans on disseminating Defense and State Department propaganda in the U.S., reversing the Smith–Mundt Act of 1948 and the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 1987, designed to protect U.S. audiences from government misinformation campaigns.^[30] The bill passed on May 18, 2012, 299 to 120.^[31]

Smith, concerned about the 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan, tried to contact Joe Biden in advance, without success; however, he did get a call from Biden after he criticised the disastrous Afghanistan escape —the only one he got from Biden in four years.^[32]

Domestic affairs

In December 2023, Smith introduced the End Hedge Fund Control of American Homes Act of 2023 to the House. This legislation would require hedge funds to sell at least 10% of the single-family homes they own yearly over 10 years. After this period, hedge funds will be banned from owning single-family homes.^[33]

Key votes

- Smith voted to approve the invasion of Iraq.^[18]
- Smith voted to approve the Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act (CISPA)^[34]
- Smith co-sponsored the Smith–Mundt Modernization Act of 2012, which allowed domestic dissemination of U.S. public diplomacy information.^[35]
- Smith voted against an amendment restricting the National Security Agency from collecting phone records of Americans suspected of no crimes without a warrant.^[36]

Committee assignments

- Committee on Armed Services (Ranking Member)

Caucus memberships

- 21st Century Healthcare Caucus
- American Sikh Congressional Caucus
- Black Maternal Health Caucus^[37]

- [European Union Caucus](#)
- [Goods Movement Caucus](#)
- [Intellectual Property Caucus \(Co-chair\)](#)
- [United States Congressional International Conservation Caucus](#)^[38]
- [Waterways Caucus](#)
- [New Democrat Coalition](#)^[14]
- [Congressional Progressive Caucus](#)^[39]
- [Congressional Arts Caucus](#)^[40]
- [Congressional Equality Caucus](#)^[41]
- [Afterschool Caucuses](#)^[42]
- [Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus](#)^[43]
- [Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus](#)^[44]
- [U.S.-Japan Caucus](#)^[45]
- [Medicare for All Caucus](#)
- [Congressional Coalition on Adoption \(co-chair\)](#)^[46]
- [Rare Disease Caucus](#)^[47]
- [Congressional Caucus on Turkey and Turkish Americans](#)^[48]
- [Congressional Taiwan Caucus](#)^[49]

Electoral history

Washington State Senate

Washington's 33rd senate district results, 1990^[50]

Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Adam Smith	12,643	51.68%
	Republican	Eleanor Lee (incumbent)	11,819	48.32%
Total votes			24,462	100%
	Democratic gain from Republican			

Washington's 33rd senate district results, 1994^[51]

Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Adam Smith (incumbent)	15,320	52.14%
	Republican	Jerry Guite	14,060	47.86%
Total votes			29,380	100%
	Democratic hold			

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 1996^[52]

Party	Candidate	Votes	%
Democratic	Adam Smith	105,236	50.14%
Republican	Randy Tate (incumbent)	99,199	47.27%
Natural Law	David Gruenstein	5,432	2.59%
Total votes		209,867	100%
Democratic gain from Republican			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 1998^[53]

Party	Candidate	Votes	%
Democratic	Adam Smith (incumbent)	111,948	64.69%
Republican	Ron Taber	61,108	35.31%
Total votes		173,056	100%
Democratic hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2000^[54]

Party	Candidate	Votes	%
Democratic	Adam Smith (incumbent)	135,452	61.67%
Republican	Chris Vance	76,766	34.95%
Libertarian	Jonathan Wright	7,405	3.37%
Total votes		219,623	100%
Democratic hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2002^[55]

Party	Candidate	Votes	%
Democratic	Adam Smith (incumbent)	95,805	58.52%
Republican	Sarah Casada	63,146	38.57%
Libertarian	John Mills	4,759	2.91%
Total votes		163,710	100%
Democratic hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2004^[56]

Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	162,433	63.28%
	<u>Republican</u>	Paul Lord	88,304	34.40%
	<u>Green</u>	Robert Losey	5,934	2.31%
Total votes			256,671	100%
	<u>Democratic</u> hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2006^[57]

Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	119,038	65.72%
	<u>Republican</u>	Steven Cofchin	62,082	34.28%
Total votes			181,120	100%
	<u>Democratic</u> hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2008^[58]

Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	176,295	65.45%
	<u>Republican</u>	Jim Postma	93,080	34.55%
Total votes			269,375	100%
	<u>Democratic</u> hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2010^{[59][60]}

Primary election				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	63,866	51.24%
	<u>Republican</u>	Dick Muri	32,116	25.76%
	<u>Republican</u>	Jim Postma	24,509	19.66%
	<u>Green</u>	Roy Olson	4,159	3.34%
Total votes			124,650	100%
General election				
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	123,743	54.85%
	<u>Republican</u>	Dick Muri	101,851	45.15%
Total votes			225,594	100%
	<u>Democratic</u> hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2012^[61]^[62]

Primary election				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	72,868	61.16%
	<u>Republican</u>	Jim Postma	27,616	23.18%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Tom Cramer	8,376	7.03%
	<u>Republican</u>	John Orlinski	6,624	5.56%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Dave Christie	3,659	3.07%
Total votes			119,143	100%
General election				
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	192,034	71.62%
	<u>Republican</u>	Jim Postma	76,105	28.38%
Total votes			268,139	100%
	<u>Democratic</u> hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2014^[63]^[64]

Primary election				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	59,489	64.00%
	<u>Republican</u>	Doug Basler	25,290	27.21%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Don Rivers	5,434	5.85%
	<u>Independent</u>	Mark Greene	2,737	2.94%
Total votes			92,950	100%
General election				
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	118,132	70.83%
	<u>Republican</u>	Doug Basler	48,662	29.17%
Total votes			166,794	100%
	<u>Democratic</u> hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2016^[65]^[66]

Primary election				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	67,100	56.28%
	<u>Republican</u>	Doug Basler	27,848	23.36%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Jesse Wineberry	17,613	14.77%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Daniel Smith	3,935	3.30%
	<u>Independent</u>	Jeary Flener	2,733	2.29%
Total votes			119,229	100%
General election				
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	205,165	72.89%
	<u>Republican</u>	Doug Basler	76,317	27.11%
Total votes			281,482	100%
	<u>Democratic</u> hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2018^[67]^[68]

Primary election				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	71,035	48.42%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Sarah Smith	39,409	26.86%
	<u>Republican</u>	Doug Basler	36,254	24.71%
Total votes			146,698	100%
General election				
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	163,345	67.90%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Sarah Smith	77,222	32.10%
Total votes			240,567	100%
	<u>Democratic</u> hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2020^{[69][11]}

Primary election				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	145,601	73.59%
	<u>Republican</u>	Doug Basler	30,923	15.63%
	<u>Republican</u>	Joshua Campbell	15,983	8.08%
	<u>Libertarian</u>	Jorge Besada	4,792	2.42%
	<u>Write-in</u>		560	0.28%
Total votes			197,859	100%
General election				
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	258,771	74.14%
	<u>Republican</u>	Doug Basler	89,697	25.70%
	<u>Write-in</u>		582	0.17%
Total votes			349,050	100%
	<u>Democratic</u> hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2022^{[70][12]}

Primary election				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	78,272	55.27%
	<u>Republican</u>	Doug Basler	29,144	20.58%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Stephanie Gallardo	22,531	15.91%
	<u>Republican</u>	Sea Chan	5,338	3.77%
	<u>Republican</u>	Seth Pedersen	4,781	3.38%
	<u>Independent</u>	David Anderson	1,541	1.09%
Total votes			141,607	100%
General election				
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	171,746	71.61%
	<u>Republican</u>	Doug Basler	67,631	28.20%
	<u>Write-in</u>		471	0.20%
Total votes			239,848	100%
	<u>Democratic</u> hold			

Washington's 9th congressional district results, 2024^{[71][13]}

Primary election				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	78,761	53.83%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Melissa Chaudhry	30,229	20.66%
	<u>Republican</u>	Paul Martin	26,646	18.21%
	<u>Republican</u>	Mark Greene	9,459	6.47%
	<u>Independent</u>	David Ishii	963	0.66%
	<u>Write-in</u>		248	0.17%
Total votes			146,306	100%
General election				
	<u>Democratic</u>	Adam Smith (incumbent)	182,780	65.44%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Melissa Chaudhry	90,601	32.44%
	<u>Write-in</u>		5,917	2.12%
Total votes			279,298	100%
	<u>Democratic</u> hold			

Personal life

In 1993, Smith married Spokane native Sara Bickle-Eldridge, a graduate of the University of Washington and Seattle University School of Law. Their daughter was born in July 2000, followed by their son in June 2003.^[3] He is an Episcopalian.^[72]

Smith has talked openly about his struggles with anxiety, depression, and chronic pain.^[73] He wrote about it at length in his 2023 memoir *Lost and Broken: My Journey Back from Chronic Pain and Crippling Anxiety*.^[74]

See also

- 2006 United States House of Representatives elections in Washington



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External links

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- Adam Smith for Congress (<https://www.electadamsmith.com/>)
- Biography (<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=s000510>) at the *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*
- Financial information (federal office) (<https://www.fec.gov/data/candidate/H6WA09025>) at the Federal Election Commission
- Legislation sponsored (<https://www.congress.gov/member/adam-smith/1528>) at the Library of Congress
- Profile (<https://justfacts.votesmart.org/candidate/845>) at Vote Smart
- Appearances (<https://www.c-span.org/person/?44329>) on C-SPAN

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