

# [***What lawmakers wore to the State of the Union spoke volumes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BH5-WWS1-JC5B-G1FJ-00000-00&context=1516831)

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WASHINGTON — The main attraction at any [*State of the Union*](https://apnews.com/article/state-of-union-biden-gaza-ukraine-israel-1a42ff9d4ef3e0f2753e43ac8d39fc18) is the president’s speech. But that doesn’t mean lawmakers and guests can’t send their own message — and they did that Thursday night with their fashion choices as President Joe Biden addressed Congress.

**Democratic women wore white for reproductive rights**

White suits have become a recurring fashion statement for women on the Democratic side of the aisle, honoring the color choice of the suffragists fighting for the passage of the 19th amendment more than a century ago.

“For tonight’s State of the Union address, we’re in white and wearing ‘Fighting for Reproductive Freedom’ pins,” said a social media post from the Democratic Women’s Caucus.

The sartorial choice comes amid election year rollbacks in women’s health care after the Supreme Court’s 2022 [*decision to overturn Roe v. Wade*](https://apnews.com/article/abortion-supreme-court-decision-854f60302f21c2c35129e58cf8d8a7b0) and its constitutional right to abortion. Access to abortion and [*fertility treatment (IVF)*](https://apnews.com/article/alabama-ivf-treatments-embryos-law-7f706015308a5dfbc06abce511834d49) was a key component of Biden’s speech.

“Our message is clear: we won’t stop fighting until all women can access the health care they need to control their own lives and futures,” the Democratic Women’s Caucus said.

**The impact of the Israel-Hamas war was on display**

Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle wore pins and stickers in honor of the hostages still being held captive in Gaza.

Rep. Greg Landsman, D-Ohio, walked around the chamber with a white badge that had the number “153” written on it, referencing the number of days since the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas-led militants, who stormed through southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and kidnapping roughly 250 people, including women and children.

One Republican at the speech, Rep. Ashley Hinson of Iowa, was seen wearing a pin that said “Bring them Home.”

On the other side, a number of progressive women, members of the “squad,” came to the chamber donning a Palestinian keffiyeh, the black and white checkered scarves that have come to symbolize solidarity with Palestinians — and Reps. Rashida Tlaib of Michigan and Cori Bush of Missouri, held signs that read “Lasting Ceasefire Now.”

**Republicans wear border security *politics* on their lapels**

Many Republicans sported bright red “Stop the Biden Border Crisis” buttons. Others wore buttons in support of [*Laken Riley*](https://apnews.com/article/laken-riley-university-georgia-death-nursing-student-a88e92600ab4dcce1a88e121b7b9c722), the nursing student in Georgia who was killed while jogging last month and whose death has become a focal point for Republican criticism of border policies.

One Republican, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene from Georgia, co-opted the language used by activists after the police killing of George Floyd to send her message. She wore a T-shirt that read, “Say her name.”

**Support for Ukraine with blue and yellow**

Continuing aid for Ukraine in its efforts to defend itself against Russia’s two-year-old invasion was one of the first appeals made by Biden in his speech. Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr, D-N.J., showed his support wearing a blue and yellow cloth around his shoulders.

**A surprise attendee at the speech**

Former Republican Rep. George Santos, attended the speech despite having been [*expelled from Congress*](https://apnews.com/article/george-santos-expulsion-vote-ethics-investigation-fd0f1524065883c6b2fe3e6f9afd84db) in December. He was wearing a Laken Riley badge and a shirt with a glittery collar.

Santos, who is facing federal charges of [*defrauding donors*](https://apnews.com/article/george-santos-fraud-arraignment-17e24ff38501a80c09e0ec517129d760) to his 2022 campaign, posted on X after the State of the Union that he will [*run again,*](https://apnews.com/article/george-santos-running-again-ebf8c0c87d939ed6def387ab1b56f884) challenging Republican Rep. Nick LaLota, who represents a district on New York’s Long Island that is different from the one Santos represented before he was expelled. LaLota was a leader of the effort to expel Santos.

\_\_\_ Associated Press writers Farnoush Amiri, Lisa Mascaro and Chris Megerian contributed to this piece.

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