

# [***Gavin Newsom Picks Laphonza Butler To Fill Dianne Feinstein s Senate Seat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:699D-S3N1-DXVP-5001-00000-00&context=1516831)

Forbes.com

October 2, 2023 Monday

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**Length:** 475 words

**Byline:** Robert Hart, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Butler, a former advisor to Kamala Harris, will become the third Black woman to serve in the Senate and the first Black lesbian to openly serve in Congress.

**Body**

**Topline**

California Governor Gavin Newsom on Sunday pledged to name Laphonza Butler to fill the Senate seat held by the late Dianne Feinstein, his office said in astatement, securing the Democrats slim majority in the closely divided chamber.

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Laphonza Butler was named to replace the late Dianne Feinstein in the Senate.

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

Butler,44, leads Emily s List, a political group working to elect female Democrats who support reproductive rights.

She is a former labor leader, advised Vice President Kamala Harris during her campaign for president in 2020 and worked as anexecutiveat rental giant Airbnb.

She will be the only Black woman in the Senate and just the third Black woman to ever serve in the chamber after Carol Moseley Braun and Harris, who Newsom also replaced when she stepped down after being elected vice president.

Butler, who is openly lesbian, will also be the first openly LGBTQ+ person to represent California in the chamber and the first Black lesbian to openly serve in the Senate.

Butler will complete the term of the late Feinstein, which runs through 2024, and will step down from her role leading Emily s List upon joining the Senate, Newsom said.

Butler currently lives in Maryland but owns a home in California and will switch her voter registration, the governor s officereportedly said.

**Crucial Quote**

Newsom, whopromisedto fill Feinstein s seat with a Black woman should she step down, said Butler was an advocate for women and girls, a second-generation fighter for working people, and a trusted adviser to Vice President Harris. She represents the best of California, and she ll represent us proudly in the United States Senate, Newsom said, adding that Butler will carry the baton left by Senator Feinstein, continue to break glass ceilings, and fight for all Californians in Washington D.C.

**What To Watch For**

Democrats had narrow control over the Senate even beforeFeinstein s death last weekand Democrats are keen to move quickly to give more breathing room during critical upcoming votes. Butler is expected to be sworn in by Harris soon, perhaps as early as Tuesday or Wednesday,accordingtonewsreports.

**News Peg**

Feinstein died late on Thursday after more than three decades serving California in the Senate, her officeconfirmedon Friday. Feinstein, who was the longest serving woman in the Senate and the oldest member of Congress at the time of her death, had resisted calls to retire before the next election despite growing concerns over her health, including a months-long absence following a case of shingles, but said she would not seek reelection in 2024. She was a trailblazer for women in U.S. ***politics*** and was a vocal advocate for women s rights and gun control.

**Further Reading**

Dianne Feinstein Dead At 90: Here s What Happens Next Ahead Of Senate Race(Forbes)

**Load-Date:** October 2, 2023

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