

# [***Virginia State Senator Likely To Make History As State s First Black Congresswoman Who Is Jennifer McClellan?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6753-5HW1-DXVP-50MP-00000-00&context=1516831)

Forbes.com

December 22, 2022 Thursday

Copyright 2022 Forbes LLC All Rights Reserved

**Length:** 393 words

**Byline:** Sara Dorn, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** McClellan is projected to win the February 21 special election against Republican Leon Benjamin.

**Body**

**Topline**

Virginia state Sen. Jennifer McClellan is likely to become the first Black woman to represent Virginia in Congress after winning the Democratic primary in the race to replace Rep. Donald McEachin, who died weeks after winning reelection in November, in his deep blue district.

<figure>

<figcaption>

Virginia state Senator Jennifer McClellan (Photo by Shannon Finney/Getty Images for Bumble)

Getty Images for Bumble

</figcaption></figure>

**Key Facts**

In a resounding victory, McClellan won 85% of votes to beat state Sen. Joe Morrissey in what was referred to as a firehouse primary in which the Democratic party, rather than the state government, runs the election under a tight timeline.

McClellan will face Republican Leon Benjamin, a Navy veteran and pastor, in the Feb 21 special election.

McClellan, 49, who gained recognition in Virginia ***politics*** during her failed run for governor last year, earned endorsements from prominent national Democrats, including Reps. Elaine Luria and Joyce Beatty, along with pro-choice groups such as the Planned Parenthood Action Fund and NARAL Pro-Choice America, according toher website.

During the brief campaign, which began after McEachin s death on November 28, she highlighted her record representing Richmond during her 17 years in the General Assembly, where she championed laws to strengthen voting and abortion rights and expand Obamacare in Virginia.

**Key Background**

McEachin died at the age of 61 from complications following his battle with colorectal cancer in 2013. He was first elected to represent the 4th Congressional District, which encompasses the state capital of Richmond, in 2016. McClellan also ran against state Del. Lamont Bagby in the Democratic primary, but he dropped out to endorse her. Morrissey, while serving in the Virginia House of Delegates, resigned from office in 2014 after he was convicted of contributing to the delinquency of a minor, a charge that stemmed from his relationship with a 17-year-old receptionist in his law office. He then won a special election to fill his own seat while serving prison time in 2015.

**Big Number**

64%. That s the share of votes McEachin won to be re-elected when he ran against Benjamin in November.

**Further Reading**

Democrats in Virginia Pick Jennifer McClellan in Special House Primary (The New York Times)

Virginia Rep. Donald McEachin dies at age 61(CNN)

**Load-Date:** December 23, 2022

**End of Document**