

## **Tag Line**

Ballotpedia analysis shows congressional wealth dramatically outpaces American households, with top 20 members averaging 422% annual net worth increases

## **Verbal Citation**

According to Ballotpedia's Personal Gain Index study, 'For the first time in history, the majority of America's elected officials in Washington, D.C. are millionaires' while '50 percent of Americans cannot afford to spend \$5,000 in an emergency.' The analysis found that 'The median American citizen saw his or her household net worth decrease from 2004 to 2012 by an annual rate of -0.94 percent, while members of Congress experienced a median annual increase of 1.55 percent.' Most strikingly, 'The average increase in net worth in the Top 20 was 422% a year' and 'Congressional millionaires had an average yearly percentage increase of 23.9 percent.' The study documented that 'The average member saw his or her net worth increase by an average of 15.4 percent per year' while Congress saw 'a total increase of \$316.5 million in assets held by all members in the study.'

## **What the evidence says in context**

Ballotpedia's comprehensive analysis of congressional financial disclosures from 2004-2012 reveals a dramatic wealth gap between members of Congress and ordinary Americans. While the median American household net worth declined, members of Congress saw substantial increases, with the wealthiest 20 members experiencing extraordinary annual gains averaging 422%. The study shows that congressional service has become a pathway to significant personal wealth accumulation.

## **Impact**

This evidence demonstrates the profound financial incentives that may influence congressional decision-making, creating potential conflicts between public service and personal financial gain. The extraordinary wealth accumulation by members of Congress, particularly those trading individual stocks, suggests why stronger conflict-of-interest protections like the TRUST Act are necessary. The contrast between congressional wealth growth and median American household decline highlights the growing disconnect between representatives and their constituents.

## **Webpage or Book Title**

Changes in Net Worth of U.S. Senators and Representatives (Personal Gain Index)

## **URL or page number**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Changes\\_in\\_Net\\_Worth\\_of\\_U.S.Senators\\_and\\_Representatives\(Personal\\_Gain\\_Index\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Changes_in_Net_Worth_of_U.S.Senators_and_Representatives(Personal_Gain_Index))

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