

## 'Jersey Girls' missing from Washington



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GUEST COLUMN: DANIEL J. DOUGLAS



What kind of party is it without “Jersey Girls?” By “Jersey Girls,” I actually mean New Jersey women.

No offense intended, but I did want to draw your attention to the fact that it has been over a decade since New Jersey has sent a woman to represent them in Congress.

Some will correctly point out that no matter what the outcome of this year’s gubernatorial election, there will be at least a female lieutenant governor, as both the Democratic and Republican candidates selected women as their lieutenant governor running mates.

If all the predictions are wrong, state Sen. Barbara Buono would become New Jersey’s second female governor, following in the pioneering footsteps of Christine Todd Whitman, who became the first female governor in 1994.

Everyone knows the big political dance is really in Washington. But few women have made it beyond the state’s boundaries to represent voters in Washington, the nation’s capital. Over the course of nearly a century of women having the right to vote, only five New Jersey women have served in the House of Representatives, and none have served in the Senate, according to the Center for American Women in Politics at Rutgers University.

The most recent woman to represent a New Jersey congressional district was Republican Marge Roukema of Ridgewood (1981-2003). Preceding Rep. Roukema were Republican Florence Price Dwyer of Elizabeth (1967-1973), Republican Millicent Fenwick of Bernardsville (1975-1983), the first Democratic woman from New Jersey in the House of Representatives Mary Teresa Norton of Jersey City (1925-1951), and Democrat Helen Stevenson Meyner of Phillipsburg (1975-1979).

You will note that none of the New Jersey women in Congress came from South Jersey.

Maybe this year's Miss America Pageant will produce new members of Congress in the years ahead. The contestants have a head start; they already have a platform issue.

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