

# CLAIRE MCCASKILL (D-MO)

**IN OFFICE**

Up for re-election in 2018

**2nd Term**

Re-elected in 2012

**SENIORITY RANK**


41


Out of 100


**CONTACT**

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 **DC Office** 730 Hart Senate Office Building

## BGOV BIOGRAPHY

By Brian Nutting and Kathleen Hunter Bloomberg News

Claire McCaskill has built a record as an independent-minded senator who devotes much of her legislative energy to matters such as making government more transparent and accessible, improving contracting and auditing, protecting whistle-blowers who publicize waste, requiring regulations to be written in plain English and asking the legislative branch bear its share of the burden of cutting spending.

In the 113th Congress she was in the midst of the debate about sexual abuse in the military. The 2014 defense authorization bill contained some McCaskill-written provisions, including one that would permit the victim of an alleged sexual assault to express a preference whether the case should be tried in military or civilian court.

McCaskill also pressed for more attention to reports of sexual assaults on college campuses.

She has affiliated with centrist Democrats who banded loosely together to form what they called the Moderate Dems Working Group to pursue what they consider pragmatic policies on issues including budget deficits, energy and climate change.

Throughout her tenure in the Senate, she's been among the leaders of Democrats who have broken with party ranks most often.

After Democratic losses in the 2014 midterm elections cost her party control of the Senate, McCaskill opposed Harry Reid's re-election as the party's leader. "I heard the voters of Missouri loud and clear," she said. "They want change in Washington. Common sense tells me that begins with changes in leadership."

McCaskill, who acknowledged that there wasn't an alternative candidate to Reid, said her message to the caucus was that Democrats need to focus on "making this place functional again and working with our Republican colleagues."

She voted for the bipartisan immigration bill that the Senate passed in 2013, only to see the measure go nowhere in the

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House. President Barack Obama, saying that he'd waited more than a year for the House to act, announced he was acting unilaterally to allow as many as 5 million undocumented immigrants to stay in the U.S. McCaskill opposed Obama's move, saying in a statement: "Our immigration system is broken, and I support a comprehensive plan to fix it, but executive orders aren't the way to do it."

She has advocated strategies for reducing federal spending such as reducing official Senate travel and eliminating the automatic annual pay increase for members of Congress, ending direct payments to farmers, and capping spending at an annually declining percentage of the nation's gross domestic product.

She has teamed with Republicans on those bills -- with David Vitter of Louisiana on the automatic pay raises, Jeff Flake of Arizona on the farm payments and Bob Corker of Tennessee on the spending cap.

McCaskill also has broken ranks with many of her Democratic colleagues in voting to support the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. "It's not a matter of if it's going to be built -- it's a matter of when, and where," she said after a vote in 2012.

In the 114th Congress, McCaskill was named the ranking member of the Aging Committee. She said she'd "work to protect consumers and seniors, to make sure Congress is living up to the promises we've made to them, and to help ensure their government is working for them."

McCaskill has worked to cultivate an image as a populist reformer. Drawing on her eight years as state auditor in Missouri, she has placed a heavy emphasis on eliminating wasteful government spending and promoting transparency and accountability, including her opposition to earmarks -- the targeted spending for lawmakers' pet projects.

Her reputation as an ethics watchdog took a bit of a hit in early 2011, when Politico reported that she had failed to pay personal property taxes on a private plane she and her husband owned and that she had billed taxpayers for political trips around Missouri. She paid almost \$288,000 in back taxes and refunded to the Treasury more than \$88,000 for the trips.

### Early Years

When McCaskill was young, her father worked at a feed mill and her mother worked at the family drugstore. Later, she got a taste of politics when her father served as state insurance commissioner and her mother was the first woman on the Columbia City Council.

McCaskill worked her way through college and law school and took a post as a prosecuting attorney in Kansas City. At the age of 29 she won election to the Missouri state House. She served six years -- becoming the first woman to give birth while serving in the state legislature -- then lost a race to become Jackson County prosecutor. Four years later she tried again and won, running the prosecutor's office for six years before capturing her first statewide victory as state auditor.

In that post she instituted performance auditing practices that presaged her interest in those issues in the Senate. In 2004, midway through her second four-year term as auditor, McCaskill challenged the incumbent governor, Bob Holden, in the Democratic gubernatorial primary. While she won that battle, she narrowly lost the November general election to Republican Matt Blunt.

Her strong showing led party leaders to urge her to run again two years later, this time for the Senate against incumbent Republican Jim Talent. McCaskill won by just 2 percentage points, placing her in the sights of national Republican Party leaders looking for vulnerable Democratic seats to claim in 2012.

At the start of the 2012 campaign, McCaskill looked to be one of the most threatened incumbents seeking re-election. Then Republicans nominated Todd Akin, a six-term House member, and within two weeks he uttered comments that altered the dynamics of the race.

In a television interview during which he was explaining his opposition to abortion even in the case of rape, Akin said that "legitimate rape" rarely results in pregnancy. His statement immediately drew a barrage of criticism, including condemnation from a number of Senate Republicans.

Brushing aside urgings by some Republican leaders to drop out of the race, Akin kept going -- and his campaign never recovered. In November 2012, even as Republican Mitt Romney defeated Barack Obama in Missouri by 9 percentage points, McCaskill returned to the Senate with a victory margin of almost 16 percentage points.

Updated Dec. 22, 2014

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## BIO FROM REPRESENTATIVE'S WEBSITE

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From the Senator's Website

The year that Missouri's Harry Truman left the Presidency, Claire McCaskill's parents, Bill and Betty Anne traveled to Rolla, Missouri for the birth of their daughter. At the time, there was no hospital in their hometown of Houston, Missouri.

Not long after Claire was born, the family moved to Lebanon, Missouri. Another move shortly thereafter landed Claire in Columbia, Missouri, where she attended Hickman High School.

Claire began waiting tables in the Lake of the Ozarks the day after graduating high school - a job she would hold for six years in order to help pay her way through college and law school at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

After law school, Claire started work as an assistant prosecutor in Kansas City. She eventually served as a felony courtroom prosecutor specializing in sex crimes and arson cases.

In 1982, Claire won a seat in the Missouri State Legislature, where she chaired the General Assembly's Civil and Criminal Justice Committee, helping shape the state's criminal justice system to better protect Missouri's families and improve safety in their communities.

Claire would also become the first woman Missouri State Legislator to have a baby while in office, leading her to juggle the responsibilities of lawmaker and mother.

Claire made history in 1992 when she became the first woman to be elected Jackson County Prosecutor. As head of the largest prosecutor's office in the state, in a region that includes Kansas City, Claire broke new ground in combatting violent crime. She launched one of the nation's first drug courts, and established a domestic violence unit - a first-of-its-kind initiative for the region, aimed at curbing domestic and sex violence, as well as child abuse.

Claire won reelection and served as Jackson County Prosecutor until 1999, when she was sworn in as Missouri State Auditor.

As the state's top government watchdog, Claire revolutionized the office of State Auditor-expanding her work beyond traditional financial audits, to include "performance audits," to root out fraud and abuse of power in state agencies and organizations.

Claire's dogged pursuit of accountability included audits of the state's Social Services Foster Care Program and child support enforcement, Child Abuse Hotline, child care facilities inspections and licensing, as well as domestic violence shelters and puppy mills.

She also conducted reviews of the effectiveness of Missouri's Sunshine Law, education funding, and the rise in student loan and college tuition rates in the state.

In 2004, Claire took on her own party establishment and became the first person in Missouri history to defeat a sitting Governor in a primary election.

In 2006, Claire became the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate from Missouri, winning the seat once held by Harry Truman.

Making good on a campaign pledge, Claire waged a successful six-year effort to rein in wasteful wartime contracting practices in Iraq and Afghanistan. During the final hours of Claire's first Senate term, her signature legislation implementing historic wartime contracting reforms was signed into law.

Claire's efforts led to the creation of a new Senate panel charged with contracting oversight. As Chairman, Claire led more than 20 hearings, and launched more than 40 investigations at 22 federal departments and agencies, resulting in nearly 30 instances of misconduct referred to federal investigators.

Claire drew on her personal commitment to America's military veterans, helping to pass the 21st Century GI Bill, and establishing a veterans' "secret shopper" program to improve health care services for Missouri's veterans. Following reports of neglect, Claire successfully pushed for the removal of Army officials managing Walter Reed Army Medical Center - and shortly after, led the successful effort to reform management of Arlington National Cemetery after disclosures of mismarked gravesites.

Claire teamed up with her Republican colleagues to establish a ban on Congressional earmarks, and has helped lead efforts to repeal automatic pay raises for Congress. She bucked her party's leadership, authoring a bill to impose a cap on federal discretionary spending - legislation which came within one vote of Senate passage.

And when dozens of small towns across rural Missouri were threatened with post office closures, Claire waged a successful battle to protect those post offices - which Claire called "the lifeblood of rural Missouri."

Following Claire's resounding reelection in 2012, her oversight panel was expanded into a permanent subcommittee charged with protecting taxpayer dollars and investigating waste, fraud, and abuse at every federal agency. A recognized tech leader - with a penchant for communicating directly with constituents via Twitter - Claire was also named Chairman of

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the Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Protection. In the first year of her second term, Claire launched investigations into areas including fraudulent robocalls, financial management at the U.S. Energy Department, inaccuracies on credit reports, security clearance background checks, and the Pentagon's troubled POW/MIA-recovery program.

And as a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, Claire drew upon her years as a courtroom prosecutor in leading efforts to curb sexual assaults in our Armed Forces - advocating for sweeping changes to the military justice system to protect and empower survivors and hold perpetrators and commanders accountable.

As Missouri's Senator, Claire has earned a reputation as a plain-spoken, independent voice for Missouri's families and businesses - willing to buck her own party to do what's right, and fighting to expand opportunities for Missouri's kids and grandkids.

Claire returns home to Missouri nearly every weekend, where she loves spending time with her six grandchildren. She and her husband Joseph have a blended family of seven children, all but two of whom live in St Louis.

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## PERSONAL PROFILE

### COMMITTEES

[Senate Committee on Armed Services](#)

[Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs](#)

[Senate Special Committee on Aging](#)  
Ranking Member

[Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation](#)

### CAUCUSES

[Senate Small Brewers Caucus](#)

[Senate Community Health Centers Caucus](#)

[Congressional Veterans Jobs Caucus](#)

Birthdate 07/24/1953

Birthplace Rolla, MO

Political Party Democratic Party

Marital Status Married

Spouse Joseph Shepard

Residence St Louis, MO

Family 7 children; 6 grandchildren

Religion Roman Catholic

### PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

#### Education

University of Missouri  
Bachelor of Arts 1975

University of Missouri  
JD 1978

1982 - 1988 State Representative, (MO)House of Representatives 1992 - 1998 Prosecutor, County of Jackson CO 1998 - 2006 State Auditor, State of Missouri 01-03-2007 - Present Senator:Missouri, (US)Senate