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Makeup of Congress doesn't reflect U.S. population, SUNY New Paltz center says

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NEW PALTZ >> The U.S. House of Representatives would have 13 more women than men if each state's delegation was based on the demographic characteristics of the people who send elected officials to Washington, according to a hypothetical map created by the Center for Research, Regional Engagement and Outreach at SUNY New Paltz.

Joshua Simons, senior research associate at the center, used the most recent Census data available to create an "interactive, hypothetical map that profiles each state's delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives based on the demographic characteristics these members of Congress would have if these were proportional to the demographic characteristics of the people of the states that sent them to Washington," according to a press release.

In creating the map, Simons found there would be 13 more women than men in the House, which is more than twice as many women as currently serve. He also found there would be twice as many Hispanic representatives and 25 percent more African-American representatives. Additionally, the members' median income, before being elected, would be approximately \$53,000, and 31 representatives would have made less than \$10,000 per year for their entire household.

Simons also found there would be 89 representatives in the House under the age of 35 and the median age would be 38 instead of the current 57. Additionally, 60 representatives would not have earned a high school diploma.

There are 435 members of the House of Representatives.

"This work encourages all of us to think hard about the meaning of 'representation' and about the degree to which Congress is truly representative of all Americans," Gerald Benjamin, director of the Center for Research, Regional Engagement and Outreach and an associate president for regional engagement, said in the press release. "While this project is not designed to propose an electoral system that would create substantially different demographic and social outcomes in congressional membership than the one now in use, it is clear that the current system is not likely to do so. The combined effect on our two-party system, the use of gerrymandered single-member districts and big-money politics shapes political opportunity and choice in limiting ways."

To view the map online, go to www.newpaltz.edu/crreo/congress.

URL: <http://www.dailyfreeman.com/general-news/20141023/makeup-of-congress-doesnt-reflect-us-population-suny-new-paltz-center-says>

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