

# WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

## A Civics In Real Life Series

### FEMALE FIRSTS

### Mia Love



When it comes to “female firsts” in the U.S. Congress, there are a few individuals to note. In 1917, [Jeannette Rankin](#) became the first woman elected to Congress. In 1968, [Shirley Chisholm](#) became the first Black female elected to Congress. Chisholm was elected as a Democratic Party candidate to represent New York’s 12th congressional district. It would be another 46 years, however, until the first Republican Black female would be elected. In 2014, [Mia Love](#) broke that glass ceiling. Chosen to represent Utah’s 4th congressional district, Mia Love became the first Black person elected to Congress from Utah, the first Haitian-American elected to Congress, and as of 2025, the first and only Black woman elected to Congress as a Republican. Mia Love was born in Brooklyn, New York, to Haitian immigrant parents. She grew up and attended college in Connecticut, majoring in musical theater. After college, Love worked in the corporate world and was also a flight attendant, moving to Utah in 1998. This is where Love’s passion for civic engagement began. Her first [interaction with civic affairs](#) came when she spoke at a community event in her hometown of Saratoga Springs, Utah. In 2003, Love won a seat on the Saratoga Springs City Council, where she served for six years before becoming the mayor. In 2012, Love decided to give up her mayoral seat and run for a new Congressional seat created after the 2010 Census. Love lost this election to long-time Utah politician Jim Matheson by 768 votes. Despite this loss, Love quickly became a rising star in the Republican Party. In 2014, Love ran again and won, receiving 78% of the vote. During her time in Congress, Love was appointed to the House Financial Services Committee, joined several caucuses, and sponsored/co-sponsored numerous pieces of legislation. With her unique position as the only Republican Black female in Congress, she was often able to reach across the aisle and accomplish many bipartisan initiatives. Love went on to win reelection in 2016 but lost her seat in 2018 to Saratoga Springs Democratic Mayor Ben McAdams. The election was extremely close and not decided until two weeks after election day, with Love losing by just 694 votes. After leaving Congress, Love worked at the university level and contributed to political television shows on CNN and ABC. Sadly, in February 2022, Love was diagnosed with an incurable brain cancer. On March 23, 2025, Mia Love [passed away](#) at the age of 49. Knowing that her days were numbered, two weeks before her death, Mia Love took the opportunity to [write](#) “a love letter to America...not to say goodbye but to say thank you and express my living wish for you and the America I know.”

### Civics Challenge: Search & Learn

First Female Republican Party Candidate Elected To Your State Legislature:	
First Female Democratic Party Candidate Elected To Your State Legislature:	
Has Your State Ever Had A Female U.S. House Member or U.S. Senator? Elaborate.	
Has Your State Ever Elected A Woman Of Color? Elaborate.	



Lou Frey  
Institute