

Rep. Mary Peltola

(1973 ~ present)



Mary Sattler Peltola was born in Anchorage, Alaska, and is a member of the Yup'ik tribe of Western Alaska through her mother, Elizabeth Piicigaq Williams. She is also a member of the Russian Orthodox Church in Alaska. As a child, she traveled around Alaska with her father, Ward Sattler, as he campaigned for Alaska Congressman Don Young. These formative experiences led her to choose a life of service. In college, Mary worked as a herring and salmon technician for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game while completing her college degree in political science at the University of Alaska.

During an internship with the Alaska Legislature in 1996, Mary developed a keen interest in local politics. In 1998, she was elected to the Alaska House of Representatives, where she served as a member of the Democratic Party until 2009. Afterwards she continued to serve the people of Alaska in various ways: as a city council representative, as a judge on the Orutsararmiut Native Council's tribal court, and as the executive director of the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

Mary Peltola believed that her next step was to run for election as a representative for Alaska. She succeeded in a special election for the seat of Republican Don Young (who had died in office), beating out Sarah Palin. Upon being sworn in on September 13, 2022, she became the first Alaska native to serve in Congress. Only sixteen days later, the first bill she introduced was approved by the House of Representatives. The bill will create an Office of Food Security in the Department of Veteran Affairs. She is running for re-election this month.

"We are not helpless. It's time to show up.

Let's show up for our neighbors whose voices aren't being heard.

Let's show up for people of color, low income, rural and indigenous folks.

Let's show up for our children who deserve a better world that we found it."