

CONGRESSWOMAN PRAMILA JAYAPAL

CHAMPION FOR JUSTICE



Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) has dedicated her life to seeking justice and equality for everyone. For decades, she has spoken out on behalf of those who are most at risk of harm and has taken action for systemic reforms for more humane treatment and equal protection of rights.

Her activism drew national attention in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attack on the United States. In the years that followed, there was a devastating surge nationwide in discrimination and assault against immigrants. To stand up against these hate crimes and backlash against Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians, Jayapal founded OneAmerica, originally called the Hate Free Zone Campaign. Her work quickly

expanded beyond protecting people against hate crimes and turned to defending civil liberties and rights for immigrant communities. She cited her firsthand experience with the immigration process when she arrived to the United States at age 16. Now, OneAmerica is the largest immigrant advocacy organization in Washington and a national force for justice.

For her vision and action, President Barack Obama recognized Jayapal as a Champion of Change in 2013.

In 2014, just as GWI was starting, One America organized the We Belong Together campaign to mobilize action in support of "common-sense immigration reform that will keep families

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together and empower women." GWI joined this campaign and Founding Director Mary Ellsberg participated in a two day fast and civil disobedience in front of the US Capitol. Over 200 women leaders from around the country were arrested, including Jayapal and Ellsberg. They were also arrested during a civil disobedience action protesting the Trump Administration's family separation policy.

Seeking to do even more to affect systemic change, in 2016 Jayapal was elected to the US Congress. Jayapal is the first Asian American to represent Washington at the federal level and one of only two dozen naturalized citizens elected to the US Congress. She currently serves as the Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement and is the first immigrant in recorded committee history to serve as either Ranking Member or Chair of this subcommittee. Jayapal is serving in her second term as Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus where she works to influence broader actions by the US Congress.

By supporting immigration reform, Congresswoman Jayapal supports women. Her approach to immigration reform seeks to prevent family separation and end patterns of gender inequality that have a disproportionately harmful effect on women.

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Above: US Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal addresses a peace vigil in Washington. Photo: Courtesy of talkingpointsmemo.com.

Front left: Congresswoman joins other women for a demonstration. Photo: Courtesy of GWI. Front right: US Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal speaks at a Congressional Tri-Caucus news conference on Capitol Hill. Photo: Courtesy of AP Photo/Andrew Harnik.

GWI is committed to partnering with all who endeavor to end gender-based violence. Starting in our tenth anniversary year, we are shining a light on the struggles and successes of individuals and organizations that inspire us.

We celebrate their achievements as **Champions for Justice**, and we redouble our efforts to resist inequity, demonstrate solidarity with women human rights defenders, and defend the rights of women and girls everywhere.

For more information on our staff, affiliated faculty, Leadership Council, and more partnerships, visit:
<https://globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu/about-gwi>

