

### Third Grade Lesson on Patsy Mink by Sohyun An

#### GA Social Studies Standards

SS3CG1 Describe the elements of representative democracy/republic in the United States.

- a. Describe the three branches of national government: executive (president), legislative (Congress), and judicial (Supreme Court of the United States).
- c. State the main responsibility of each branch: executive (enforcing laws), legislative (making laws), judicial (determining if laws are fair).

#### Background Information

Congress and the people we vote into Congress play a very important job. Our lives are ultimately affected by the rules and laws passed in Congress, so it is essential to pick the right people to represent us.

Patsy Mink (1927-2002) was a distinguished and dedicated legislator who served in the United States Congress. She was the first woman of Color and first Asian American woman elected to Congress.

Mink was born in Hawai'i before it became a state. While her Japanese American family was not incarcerated during WWII, her father, a second-generation civil engineer, was interrogated by authorities after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

In spite of the discrimination Japanese Americans faced during WWII, Mink ran for student government in high school and successfully won the position of student president. She later graduated from the University of Hawai'i with degrees in zoology and chemistry and then applied to medical schools. However, Mink was denied admissions because she was a woman, as some schools outright explained. After rejection, she shifted her ambitions and graduated from law school. Again, she faced discrimination. She had difficulty getting a job at top law firms because she was a mother.

Mink decided to run for Congress after Hawai'i became a state in 1959, and she became the first Asian American woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1964.

As a member of Congress, Mink was one of the main authors and sponsors of Title IX. Title IX states that **“no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”**

While Title IX is perhaps best known for opening up school sports programs so women could participate, the reforms were also applied to education, including to law and STEM programs that traditionally denied access to most women.



Fighting for women’s equal rights as a member of Congress, Mink drew from her personal experiences of discrimination. After Mink’s death in 2002, Title IX was officially renamed the “Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity Education Act.” The U.S. Mint released the design for a 2024 quarter that honors Patsy Mink.

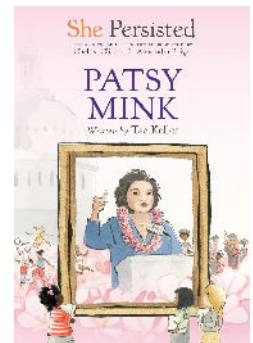
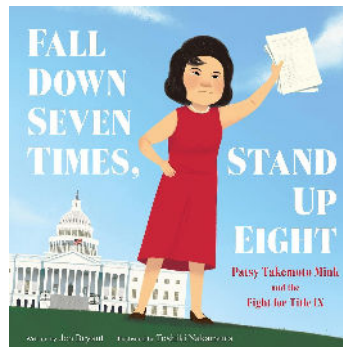


In addition to Title IX, Mink also worked with Representative Norman Mineta from California to create the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus in 1994 and highlight Asian and Pacific American issues in Congress. She also spoke out against Supreme Court nominees who supported whites-only policies and who were accused of assaulting women.

She advocated for ending the Vietnam War and diverting those financial resources into social programs. She also supported bilingual education and affordable childcare. Throughout her career, she prioritized what she believed to be right for as many people as possible, rather than make political decisions that would get her re-elected.

### Instructional Suggestion

1. After learning about the Congress/legislature, ask students to share any member of Congress that they know of. Then, ask students if they heard about Patsy Mink.
2. Show a video clip [Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority](#)
3. Discuss the story in the video clip regarding who Patsy Mink is, what she did as a member of Congress, why she did, what is Title IX, and why it is important.
4. Read a picture book, [Fall Down Seven Times, Stand Up Eight: Patsy Takemoto Mink and the Fight for Title IX](#) as a class or have students read a chapter book [She Persisted: Patsy Mink](#) on their own. Then, have a book discussion on her work as a member of Congress.



### Do you want to include more stories of Asian America into your lessons?

Check out this fabulous book, [Teaching Asian America in Elementary Classrooms](#) by Noreen Naseem Rodríguez, Sohyun An, & Esther June Kim.

