

Gay Politicians Gain Influence in Congress

An Oregon woman will be the first openly **lesbian lawmaker** to lead a state legislative chamber in the U.S.

Democrats in the state House Thursday night chose Rep. Tina Kotek of Portland to be the next speaker. The decision must be formally ratified in January.

Kotek's selection notches another milestone from an election that brought a series of victories to the gay community. Voters last week elected the first openly gay U.S. senator and the first bisexual member of Congress.

Kotek will be the first gay woman to get the top job in a legislative chamber.

Gay leaders will also control the House or Senate in four other states: Washington, California, Colorado and Rhode Island. The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund says that's more than ever before and up from two before the election.

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