

RIVER VALLEY Democrat Gazette

Womack to run for reelection to Congress; Van Buren resident also declares candidacy

June 1, 2025 by [Alex Thomas](#) , [Doug Thompson](#)

The next race for Arkansas' 3rd Congressional District seat is starting to take shape.

U.S. Rep. Steve Womack, R-Ark., recently announced he would seek a ninth term representing the district, which includes communities in Benton, Carroll, Crawford, Madison, Sebastian and Washington counties.

At least one more person intends to run: Diana Lawrence, a Democrat from Van Buren.

The general election is set for Nov. 3, 2026.

Womack, 68, has represented the 3rd Congressional District since January 2011 after being mayor of Rogers for more than a decade. The congressman additionally served three decades in the Arkansas Army National Guard, retiring in 2009 as a colonel. In the 2024 general election, Womack defeated Democrat Caitlin Draper and Libertarian Bobby Wilson after first overcoming a primary challenge from state Sen. Clint Penzo, R-Springdale.

"I'm running for reelection in Congress because I believe now, more than ever, our country needs strong, principled leadership," Womack said May 20 in a statement. "With President Trump back in the White House, we have a monumental opportunity to get our fiscal house in order, enact a pro-growth agenda, and pass on a stronger, safer America to future generations."

Womack currently serves as a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee -- the committee responsible for reviewing agency budgets and approving spending -- and leads its Housing, Transportation and Urban Development Subcommittee.

From January 2018 to January 2019, he chaired the House Budget Committee, which drafts an annual budget resolution setting spending and revenue levels.

"Representing my friends and neighbors in Congress has been the honor of my life, and I'm well positioned to fight for the Third District and for Arkansas values in Washington," Womack added.

Womack officially starts his reelection bid with his campaign having nearly \$2 million cash on hand. According to the Federal Election Commission, the Womack for Congress Committee reported more than \$345,000 in receipts with around \$61,700 in disbursements for the first quarter of 2025.

Lawrence, 62, moved to Arkansas to be near her grandchildren, then decided her new state needs a new representative in Congress, she said.

"I'm doing this because I want a better future for my kids and grandkids," said Lawrence in a phone interview last week about her intention to run for Congress. Lawrence will run as a Democrat as she has done before in Wisconsin, she said.

"I think people are unhappy with what Trump is doing and what Steve Womack is not doing," she said, referring to President Donald Trump. Womack may have started as a moderate Republican, but he is now an unquestioning supporter of the president, she said.

Her new home district lost a lot of industry recently in Sebastian County, she said. Now government services that would help the people left behind by the loss of those jobs are being cut, she said.

She and her husband settled in by January, moving from Virginia, she said. She spent much of her life in Wisconsin and also spent time in Texas, according to her campaign website.

Lawrence is new to Arkansas but not to politics as a Democrat running in a largely Republican district. She ran for the Wisconsin State Assembly, that state's equivalent to the Arkansas House, three times. She won the Democratic primary there twice, election records show. She garnered more than 40% of the vote in a 2018 general election race against incumbent Assemblyman Dave Murphy, a Republican, election records show. She gained 39.5% in a 2020 rematch, but increased the number of votes cast for her during a higher turnout in that election.

She also ran once for the county board, Wisconsin's equivalent to a quorum court, in 2014 in Outagamie County, Wis. She also ran as a Democrat there and lost against the Republican incumbent. Those races taught her how to campaign, she said.

No Democrat has won election as Arkansas' 3rd District congressional representative since 1964.

Womack has faced Democratic opposition for the seat five times in his eight elections so far. He won each of those general election contests by either a margin of more than two-to-one over the Democrat or close to it, election records show. His closest contest to date came in the 2024 Republican primary, when Penzo took 46.1% of the vote.

Lawrence holds a geography degree from the the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, she said. She has worked "in customer service at every job I've done," she said, adding she would make constituency service a priority if elected.

Her work history includes a variety of positions, from bank teller to real estate agent to the health care field. She most recently did some substitute teaching in public schools in Virginia. She is now a full-time grandparent, she said.



Alex Thomas

Alex Thomas has served as the Washington Correspondent for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette since November 2022. He also produces "Arkies in the Beltway," a weekly podcast covering national politics and the Arkansans involved in public policy debates.



Doug Thompson

Doug Thompson is a reporter with more than 40 years of experience, including more than a quarter-century in Northwest Arkansas. He covers state politics from a Northwest Arkansas perspective and issues of regional importance for the Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. He previously served as a state Capitol reporter, business and agriculture reporter, editorial writer, columnist and regional reporter for southwestern Arkansas. Before that he covered city government. He moved to Northwest Arkansas in 1998.

Published online as:

<https://www.rivervalleydemocratgazette.com/news/2025/jun/01/womack-to-run-for-reelection-to-congress-van/>