

Harris elected California's new U.S. senator

By Phil Willon, Los Angeles Times

California voters on Tuesday elected the state's first new U.S. senator in 24 years, and made history in the process.

State Attorney Gen. Kamala Harris won the race, according to the Associated Press, becoming the first black politician in history to represent California in the Senate.

With Harris cemented as the solid front-runner and Democratic Party favorite, challenger Rep. Loretta Sanchez, D-Orange, embraced the role of the underdog and attempted to stitch together support from Latinos, Republicans and moderates. But hampered by an underfunded campaign and missteps, her effort failed to take hold.

The Harris-Sanchez Senate race was the first major test of California's "top-two" primary system, an experiment in democracy that California voters approved in 2010 in an effort to reduce the highly partisan influence of the Democratic and Republican parties and give independents and moderates more clout in the political process.

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