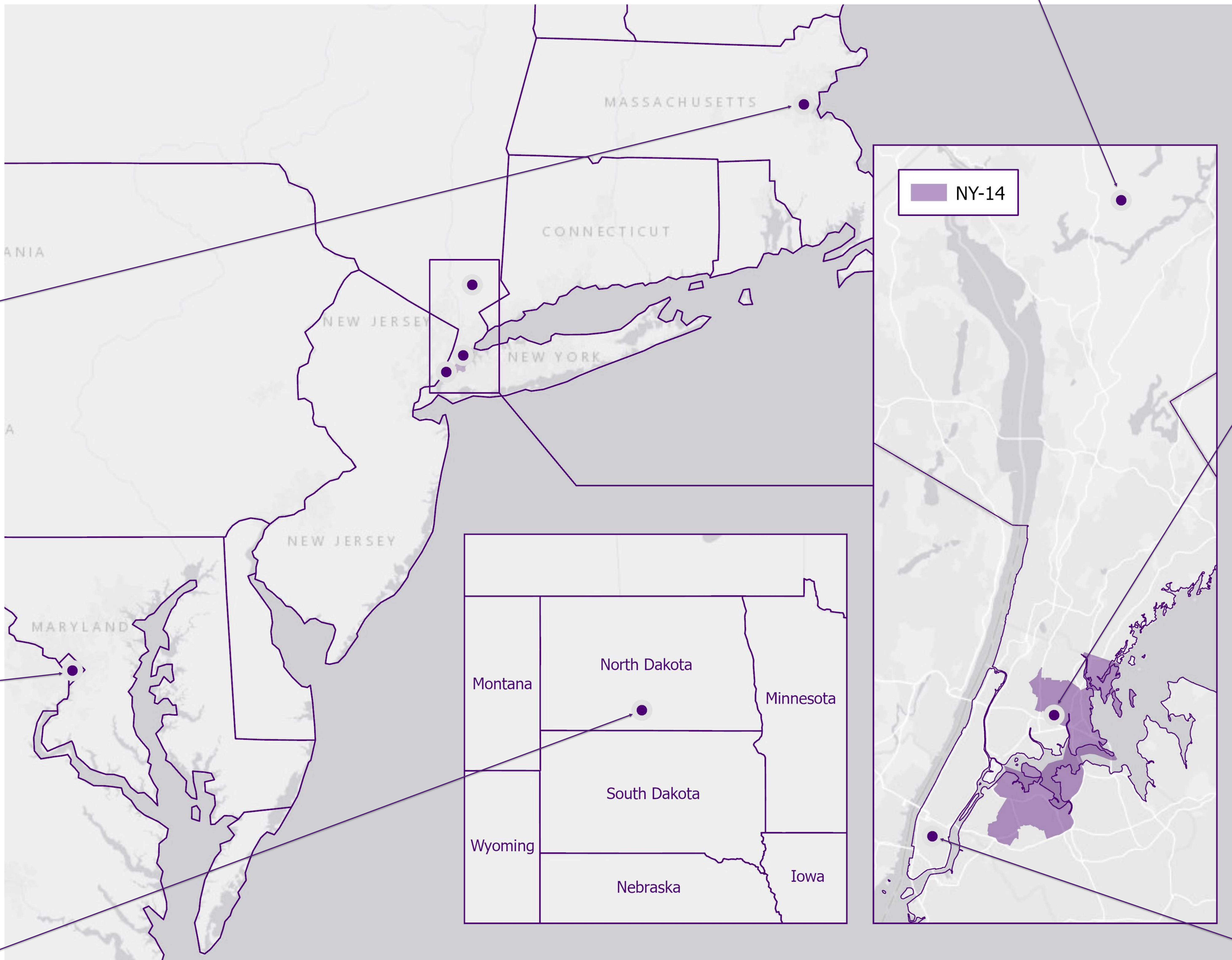




Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez represents New York's 14th Congressional District, which comprises large portions of the Bronx and Queens in New York City. She's also part of DSA, and, as such, well-known for her progressive platform, drawing intense criticism from both liberals and conservatives alike.

Yorktown Heights

When AOC was five years old, her parents moved the family to the suburbs so that she could attend better public schools. "But that didn't mean life got easy... 'The thing that people don't realize is that wherever there is affluence, there's an underclass. There's a service class. And that's what I grew up in, scrubbing toilets with my mom.'" (Cadigan) Her experiences, between the city and more affluent suburbs, deepened her understanding of the effects of income inequality.



The Bronx

AOC was born in the Bronx on 13 October 1989. She comes from a working-class family in which her father, Sergio – also from the Bronx, born to a Puerto Rican family – owned a small business, while her mother, Blanca – born and raised near Arecibo, PR – was a house cleaner and bus driver.

She returned to her hometown after college and worked multiple jobs, as an educational director, waitress, and bartender, in order to help her mom after the passing of her father.

A large part of New York's 14th Congressional District is also in the Bronx. On 26 June 2018, AOC defeated Rep. Joe Crowley in the district's Democratic primary by 15 points despite Crowley's prominent position in the Democratic party, along with the fact that his campaign outspent AOC's by an 18 to 1 margin. AOC went on to win the general election on 6 November 2018, making her the youngest woman to be elected to congress.

Manhattan

The beginnings of her 2018 campaign are tied to Flats Fix, a taqueria near Union Square in Manhattan where she worked as a bartender. "For 80 percent of this campaign, I operated out of a paper grocery bag hidden behind that bar.' Between shifts at the restaurant, she'd reach into the bag for her political literature and a change of clothes, then set out to canvass." (Cadigan)

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Boston

After high school, AOC would go on to study at Boston University on scholarship and earn a degree in international relations and economics. During this time, she also worked in the foreign affairs and immigration office of Sen. Ted Kennedy.

"I was the only Spanish speaker, and as a result, as basically a kid — a 19-, 20-year-old kid — whenever a frantic call would come into the office because someone is looking for their husband because they have been snatched off the street by ICE, I was the one that had to pick up that phone... I was the one that had to help that person navigate that system." (Joyce)

Washington, D.C.

On one of her first days on Capitol Hill in November 2018, AOC participated in a climate change protest at Nancy Pelosi's office. She would sponsor one of her first pieces of legislation, the Green New Deal, a few months later in February 2019.

Standing Rock Reservation

AOC travelled to North Dakota in 2016 to join protests against the development of the Dakota Access Pipeline, which threatens the region's water supply. She credits this experience as the one that compelled her to run for office.