

Returning to civilian life, Kennedy did newspaper work for several months, covering a United Nations conference, the Potsdam Conference, and the British elections of 1945. In 1946 he became a candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives from the Massachusetts eleventh congressional district. Kennedy won the primary, the fall election, and reelection to the House in 1948 and again in 1950. Kennedy was a strong supporter of labor, working for higher wages and better working conditions.

In April 1952 Kennedy ran for a seat in the U.S. Senate against Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. (1902–1985), a Republican liberal. Kennedy won by over seventy thousand votes. Lodge reeled under the impact. He had not run against a man, but a whole family. Kennedy's political success was soon followed by high points in his personal life. On September 12, 1953, Kennedy married Jacqueline Lee Bouvier (1929–1994), daughter of a New York City financier. John and Jacqueline Kennedy had three children. Taking his Senate seat in January 1953, Kennedy continued to support key labor, economic, and foreign relations issues. A recurrence of his old back injuries forced Kennedy to use crutches during 1954. An operation in October 1954 was followed by another in February 1955. He spent his months of illness and recovery writing biographies of Americans who had shown moral courage at difficult points in their lives. These biographies became the best-selling book *Profiles in Courage* (1956), which won the Pulitzer Prize for biography in 1957.

Kennedy's record in elected office and the books and articles that he had written attracted national attention. After he lost the vice presidential nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1956, he decided to run for president. Formally announcing his candidacy in January 1960, Kennedy made whirlwind tours and won the Democratic primaries in New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, Oregon, Maryland, Nebraska, and West Virginia. On July 13, 1960, Kennedy was nominated for president, with Lyndon B. Johnson (1908–1973) as his running mate.

"Jack in Walk" shouted the Boston Globe after Kennedy's nomination. But it would be no easy walk to win the White House against the Republican candidate, Vice President Richard Nixon (1913–1994). A series of televised debates with Nixon was crucial to Kennedy's campaign. Many viewers believed Kennedy defeated Nixon with his style. Kennedy showed the American people that he had a sense of humor, a love of language, and a sense of the past. On November 9, 1960, John F. Kennedy became the youngest man and the first Roman Catholic in American history to win the presidency.

At the inauguration on January 20, 1960, the first U.S. president born in the twentieth century was sworn into office. Kennedy's inaugural address included the challenge: "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." In his short time in office, Kennedy faced many crises. The first of which involved Cuba, a country about ninety miles south of Florida. On April 17, 1961, fourteen hundred Cuban exiles, supported by the United States, invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. On April 18 the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971) sent a note to Kennedy stating that his government would help the Cuban government resist an attack. By April 20 the invasion had failed. Although the plan for training Cuban exiles had actually begun during the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890–1969), Kennedy took responsibility for it. He had first supported the plan but later refused to commit the