

# THE U.S. SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE





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## **History of the Committee**

The appropriating power of Congress rests upon the authority conferred by Article I, section 9, of the United States Constitution: “No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.”

The framers of the Constitution placed ultimate control over government spending in the hands of those who were directly responsible to the people. “This power over the purse,” wrote James Madison, “may, in fact, be regarded as the most complete and effectual weapon with which any constitution can arm the immediate representatives of the people, for obtaining a redress of every grievance, and for carrying into effect every just and salutary measure.”

From 1816, when the Senate created its first permanent standing committees, through the end of the Civil War, the Finance Committee handled most appropriations, but did so without system or discipline. To complicate matters further, the Civil War vastly expanded federal spending. The lack of centralized control over spending, tolerable in an earlier

era, now disadvantaged the Senate, particularly in its relations with the executive branch. By 1867, no less than the power of the purse was at stake.

To reform the appropriations process, the Senate on March 6, 1867, created a separate Committee on Appropriations and the panel rapidly became a Senate powerhouse. Today, nearly a third of the Senate's 100 members serve on the committee, with responsibilities distributed among a dozen subcommittees. These subcommittees hold jurisdiction over expenditures by the legislative and judicial branches, the independent agencies, and the cabinet departments of the executive branch.

### **Chairwoman of the Committee**



**Barbara A. Mikulski**  
(D-MD)  
Chairwoman 2012-Present

Senator Barbara A. Mikulski became the first woman and first Marylander to chair the Committee on December 20, 2012. She was first appointed to the committee in 1987. In addition to her full committee duties, she serves as chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies.

Senator Mikulski was born and raised in the Highlandtown neighborhood of East Baltimore, Maryland. She graduated from Mt. St. Agnes College and earned a Masters of Social Work from the University of Maryland. Determined to make a difference, she began her career in social work helping at-risk children and educating seniors about Medicare. Social work evolved into community activism when Mikulski successfully organized communities to defeat a proposed

16-lane highway through Baltimore's Fells Point. Senator Mikulski has a long record of public service, starting with her election in 1971 to the Baltimore City Council. In 1976 she was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where she represented Maryland's 3rd District for ten years. She became the first Democratic woman senator elected in her own right in 1986. In 2012 Senator Mikulski became the longest serving woman in the history of the United States Congress.

### **Recent Chairmen of the Committee**



**Daniel K. Inouye**  
(D-HI)  
Chairman 2009–2012

Senator Daniel K. Inouye served on the Appropriations Committee from 1971 until his death in 2012. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, on September 7, 1924, Inouye served in the U.S. Army's 442nd Regimental Combat Team during World War II. Composed of soldiers of Japanese ancestry, the 442nd became one of the most decorated military units in U.S. history. For his combat heroism, which cost him his right arm, Inouye was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart with Cluster. He entered political life after graduating from the University of Hawaii and the George Washington University Law School, becoming one of Hawaii's first representatives in Congress in 1959. Elected to the Senate in 1962, Inouye gained national distinction in the 1970s as a member of the Senate Watergate Committee and in 1987 as chairman of the Senate Iran-Contra Committee. He served as the Senate's president pro tempore from 2010 to 2012.



**Robert C. Byrd**

(D-WV)

Chairman 2007–2009

2001–2003 and

1989–1995

Robert C. Byrd, the longest-serving senator in U.S. history, joined the Appropriations Committee in 1959

and served until his death in 2010. Born in North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, on November 20, 1917, Byrd worked as a welder building naval ships in Baltimore, Maryland, and Tampa, Florida, during World War II. He completed most of his higher education after taking political office, graduating from American University Law School in 1963 and receiving a second degree from Marshall University in 1994. Elected to the West Virginia house of delegates in 1946, Byrd enjoyed a long and distinguished career in public service. In 1952 he won election to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he served for three terms until his election to the U.S. Senate in 1958. During his more than 50 years of service in the Senate, Byrd held all major leadership positions, including majority whip, minority leader, and majority leader. He served four separate terms as the Senate's president pro tempore between 1989 and 2010.



**Thad Cochran**

(R-MS)

Chairman 2005–2007

Thad Cochran, now the senior senator from Mississippi, joined the Appropriations Committee in 1981. Born in Pontotoc, Mississippi, on December 7,

1937, Cochran earned a B.A. from the University of Mississippi, Oxford, in 1959. Following two years of service in the U.S. Navy, he studied international

law and jurisprudence at Trinity College, University of Dublin, Ireland, and then graduated from the University of Mississippi Law School in 1965. Admitted to the Mississippi bar in 1965, Cochran practiced law until his election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1972. He joined the Senate in 1978, becoming the first Republican in more than a century to win statewide election in Mississippi. Cochran continues to serve on the Appropriations Committee, where he is vice chairman of the Subcommittee on Defense. Cochran has also chaired the Senate Republican Conference and currently holds the position of ranking member on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.



### **Ted Stevens**

**(R-AK)**

Chairman 2003–2005  
and 1997–2001

Ted Stevens served on the Committee on Appropriations for more than 35 years, from 1972 until he left office in 2009. Born

in Indianapolis, Indiana, on November 18, 1923, Stevens served as a pilot in the China-Burma-India theatre during World War II, winning many combat decorations. Following the war, Stevens graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1947 and received his law degree from Harvard Law School in 1950. He subsequently practiced law in Washington, D.C., and in the state of Alaska. In the early 1950s Stevens moved to Alaska, at that time a territory of the United States, where he began his public service in territorial and then state political offices. Stevens was appointed to the U.S. Senate in 1968, won election to the seat in 1970, and served until January 3, 2009. During his long Senate career, Stevens chaired five full Senate committees, including Appropriations. He served as the Senate's president pro tempore from 2005 to 2007.

## History of the Committee Rooms

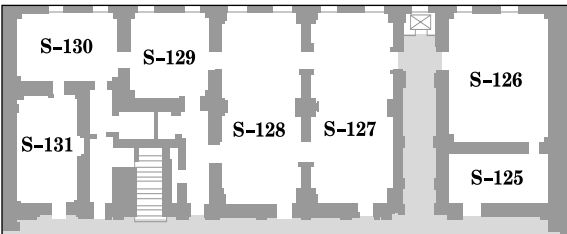
The Senate Appropriations Committee's suite of offices is perhaps the most elegant of all Senate or House committee quarters. The seven rooms span the west side of the first floor in the Senate wing of the U.S. Capitol; the wing was built in the 1850s to accommodate the growing legislature. In 1911 the Appropriations Committee moved from second floor quarters into these rooms, first occupying rooms S-127, 128, and 129, and eventually expanding into adjacent rooms S-125, 126, 130, and 131.



Constantino Brumidi, ca. 1866

Much of the mural painting in the suite is the work of artist Constantino Brumidi, who had experience as a fresco painter in Rome. Brumidi prepared designs, supervised the decoration, and painted murals in many parts of the Capitol from 1855 until his death in 1880. While trained

in the Renaissance tradition of Michelangelo and Raphael, Brumidi integrated national themes into his classical repertoire, making the images in the Capitol uniquely American. His designs also reflected the use of the room, as can be seen throughout the Appropriations suite.



Floor plan of Appropriations Committee Suite





Room S-127 when used by the Senate Committee on the Philippines, ca. 1900

S-127. The main committee room was first occupied by the Committee on Naval Affairs, and the art reflects a naval theme. The decoration is in a style derived from ancient Roman wall paintings in the Baths of Titus and the excavations of Pompeii. As originally designed by Brumidi, the upper walls were to be filled with depictions of U.S. naval battles in illusionistic porticoes. Because of dissatisfaction with the artists who were to have carried out the work, only one scene was completed. The highly ornate ceiling as executed by Brumidi and his assistants is painted in fresco and tempera. Seven Roman gods and goddesses of the sea, together with America in the form of a Native American woman, dominate the ceiling. Interspersed throughout are scenes of mermaids, centaurs, eagles, Native Americans, and settlers. The walls depict classical maidens in flowing robes with various naval instruments. Other original details in the room include the marble mantel, gilded mirror, and wooden shutters. The central chandelier, originally gas-burning and purchased in 1873 for the White House, was later acquired for the Capitol and modified

for electricity. The room's other dominant features include a blue, gold, and burgundy carpet inspired by the room's design elements and the historic Minton tiles, and a 31-foot conference table at which each committee member has a designated place.

**S-128.** A fresco entitled *Bellona, the Roman Goddess of War* is located over the main entrance to the suite, reflecting the room's original use by the Committee on Military Affairs.

The room itself was decorated over a 15-year period by Brumidi and English artist James Leslie; Brumidi painted the lunettes with Revolutionary War scenes—*The Boston Massacre, 1770*; *The Battle of Lexington (1775)*; *Death of General Wooster, 1777*; *Washington at Valley Forge, 1778*; and *Storming of Stony Point, 1779*—while Leslie painted the pilasters with elaborate military arms representing different historical periods. The ornate gilded valances and mirror over the marble mantel are also decorated with military accouterments. In a eulogy to Brumidi, shortly after his death, Senator Daniel Voorhees of Indiana praised the decorations and reflected: “Who ever passed through the room of the Committee on Military



Room S-128 when used by the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, ca. 1900



*The Battle of Lexington, S-128*

Affairs without the feeling that the very genius of heroism had left there its immortal aspirations?” The elaborate floor tiles were manufactured by Minton, Hollins and Company of Stoke-Upon-Trent, England. Despite nearly 150 years of service, the tiles remain in excellent condition due to a unique “encaustic” tile-making process that used layers of colored clay embedded in a neutral clay base to enhance color and durability.

**S-129.** The smaller room to the south of S-128 was assigned to the Committee on the Library at the time Brumidi painted the ceiling frescoes in 1875. The frescoes show allegorical figures of science, architecture, sculpture, and painting. After the ceiling was completed, the walls of the room remained undecorated for many years. It was not until 1910 that Carl Rakemann, whose father had worked with Brumidi, completed the decoration of the room. Since the room was used by the Military Affairs Committee at the time he worked on it, Rakemann chose a motif in keeping with the adjoining reception room, painting the four lunettes with portraits of outstanding Revolutionary War generals and historic flags. George Washington, Joseph Warren, Anthony Wayne, and Horatio Gates are depicted in each of the rooms’ four lunettes.

**S-125, 126, 130, 131.** Four less elaborately decorated rooms complete the committee’s suite. These include S-125 and 126, both used for decades by



*Authority Consults the Written Law*, a fresco over the door to S-131

the Committee on the Judiciary before being transferred to Appropriations in 1947. In March 2013 the Senate designated S-126 as the “Senator Daniel K. Inouye Room,” in recognition of his service to the Senate and to the people of the United States. Rooms S-130 and 131 were once assigned to the Senate majority leader. A lunette over the door into S-131 depicts the fresco *Authority Consults the Written Law*, designed by Brumidi for the Committee on Revision of the Laws, which occupied the room at the time. In September 1996 the Senate designated S-131 as the “Mark Hatfield Room,” in honor of the former committee chairman.

On the cover: Senate Appropriations Committee hearing room, S-127, courtesy Architect of the Capitol

*The Battle of Lexington, Authority Consults the Written Law*, and historic views of rooms S-127 and S-128, courtesy Architect of the Capitol

Constantino Brumidi, courtesy Library of Congress

Senators' images, courtesy Senate Historical Office

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