



United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary

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About the Committee

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Noteworthy

Did You Know? The Ironclad Test Oath required every member of Congress to attest that they had not served the Confederacy in any official capacity. In 1866, the Committee considered and reported the full Senate the credentials of Tennessee Senator-elect David Patterson. The Senate debated at length before reaching a compromise to seat Patterson and exclude him from the Ironclad Test Oath.

Webcasts

03/10/2011 10:00 AM
Executive Business Meeting

03/09/2011 10:00 AM
Oversight of the Department of Homeland Security

03/03/2011 10:00 AM
Executive Business Meeting

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Q: What are the rules of the Judiciary Committee?

At the start of every Congress, the newly elected Senate approves resolutions establishing the membership of each Senate committee. The ratio of each Senate panel is determined by the ratio of majority to minority members in the Senate. The determination of which Senators sit on each committee is determined by each party, and is adopted by the full Senate through two resolutions: one establishing the majority's Committee membership, and one establishing the minority's Committee membership. The resolutions adopting the Judiciary Committee's membership for the 112th Congress were adopted on February 3, 2011. The members of the Judiciary Committee then determine which Senators will sit on each Subcommittee panel. The full Committee also adopts the rules that will govern the Committee's actions during the Congress. The Committee's rules are renewed, and amended if necessary, at the start of each Congress. The Judiciary Committee rules are available online here.

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Q: How many Senators are there on the Judiciary Committee?

There are currently 18 members of the Judiciary Committee, 10 members of the majority party, and eight members of the minority party. The ratio of majority to minority members on the Committee is based on the ratio of majority to minority members of the Senate. To read biographies of the current members of the Judiciary Committee, click here.

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Q: How many subcommittees are there in the Judiciary Committee?

There are six Judiciary Committee Subcommittees: Administrative Oversight and the Courts; Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights; The Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights; Crime and Terrorism; Immigration, Refugees and Border Security; and Privacy Technology and the Law. For more about subcommittee members and jurisdiction, click here.

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Q: How can the Committee be contacted?

For a full listing of contact information for the majority and minority offices for the Judiciary Committee and its subcommittees, click here.

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Q: How can I apply for an internship or a clerkship on the Committee?

Applications for internships and clerkships on the Judiciary Committee are considered through Members' personal offices. For information on how to contact Members' offices, click here.

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Q: How can I attend a Committee hearing?

Judiciary Committee hearings are open to the public. The Senate Judiciary Committee hearing room is located in room 226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building. During regular hearings, the room can accommodate approximately 40 members of the public. Admission to hearings is on a first come, first served basis, and members of the public are encouraged to arrive early, particularly for high profile hearings, to ensure they will be seated. Food and drink in the hearing room is prohibited. Attendees may bring one, small personal item such as a purse, handbag, or briefcase into the hearing room. For safety reasons, large duffel bags, suitcases and other luggage is not permitted in the hearing room. Attendees are not permitted to hold or display signs, posters, or placards in the hearing room. Hearings are held in both the morning and afternoon. For more on upcoming and past hearings in the Judiciary Committee, [click here](#).

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Q: Are photography and videography allowed in the hearing room?

No flash photography is permitted in the hearing room, however non-flash photography is permitted. Only accredited members of the press are permitted to sit in front of the dais to take photographs. Similarly, only credentialed members of the press are permitted to use video recorders in the hearing room. Members of the press should contact the Senate Daily Press Gallery or the Senate Radio-Television Gallery in advance of attending a hearing.

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Q: Are Committee hearings webcast?

All Committee hearings, including business meetings, are webcast live online. Visit the hearing calendar for information about upcoming and past hearings, and to access archived webcasts. Links to webcasts appear two hours before hearings begin, and video begins streaming live once the hearing is called to order. Webcast archives are accessible within 24 hours of scheduled hearings. For a complete archive of Judiciary Committee webcasts, [click here](#).

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Q: How can I obtain witness testimony?

Prepared testimony is made available on the Judiciary Committee website after the start of Committee hearings. Testimony is also searchable by [clicking here](#). Witnesses who appear before the Committee often provide prepared testimony, which is available online. Witnesses will often read portions of this prepared statement into the hearing record. After the witnesses have had the opportunity to present their testimony, Senators will engage the witnesses in a question and answer period.

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Q: Where can I obtain Committee transcripts and Committee reports?

Two frequent documents requested of the Judiciary Committee are hearing transcripts and Committee reports. Once a hearing transcript or a Committee report has been published, it is available online through the Government Printing Office. Transcripts: Transcripts are comprised of member statements, witness testimony, the hearing question and answer period, and responses to questions submitted for the record to witnesses. Because witnesses are often asked to answer questions for the record in the days and weeks following hearings, it can sometimes take several months for hearing transcripts to be published. Committee Reports: Committee reports are filed with legislation that is reported by the Judiciary Committee during executive business meetings. Reports analyze proposed legislation, and often times outline legislative history and the Committee's actions related to the proposed legislation. They are useful in understanding the Committee's debate about the legislation. To see Committee reports that have already been printed, [click here](#).

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Q: How can I get a copy of a bill or resolution that has been referred to the Committee?

Hundreds of bills and resolutions are referred to the Judiciary Committee each Congress. The text and status of all legislation and resolutions is available online through Thomas, a legislative search engine operated by the Library of Congress. Thomas also provides links to Committee Reports filed in conjunction with reported legislation.

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Q: What kinds of hearings are held by the Judiciary Committee?

The Judiciary Committee holds hearings to conduct oversight, consider legislative proposals, consider judicial and executive nominations, and to consider pending business. For a complete listing of hearings conducted by the Judiciary Committee, including executive business meetings, [click here](#).

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Q: What kinds of nominations are considered by the Judiciary Committee?

The power to advise the President and consent to his or her nominations lies with the Senate. The Judiciary Committee considers two kinds of nominations: executive nominations and judicial nominations. The Judiciary Committee is responsible for conducting hearings and reporting for full Senate consideration nominations to executive positions at the Department of Justice and all executive agencies that fall under the Justice Department's jurisdiction, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation as well as agencies affiliated with the federal judiciary. These nominations also include those of presidential nominees to fill U.S. Attorney and U.S. Marshall positions across the country. The Judiciary Committee also considers nominations to fill the 870 federal judgeships across the country. These include district and appellate judgeships, as well as seats on the U.S. Supreme Court. For information about nominations reported by the Senate Judiciary Committee this Congress, [click here](#). To learn more about the federal judiciary, visit the Administrative Office of the Courts.

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Q: What is the process of considering nominations?

Presidential nominations sent to the Senate for consideration must first be reported by the Committee to which they are referred. Some nominations, including judicial nominations, require nominees to complete a Committee questionnaire in which nominees are asked to list previous professional experience. In the case of judicial nominations, an evaluation from the American Bar Association is needed before the Judiciary Committee will schedule a hearing to consider the nomination. Following a Committee hearing where nominees respond to questions from members of the Committee, nominations are listed for Committee consideration during executive business meetings. The full Senate considers the nomination if the Committee orders the nomination to be reported to the body.

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Q: When does the Committee consider pending legislation?

The Judiciary Committee frequently convenes executive business meetings, or markups, to consider pending legislation that has been referred to the Committee. Once the Committee orders pending legislation or nominations to be reported, the measures are placed on the Senate's Executive Calendar where it will await action by the full Senate. To find the status of pending legislation, visit the Library of Congress's legislative search page, Thomas. For a calendar of executive business meetings, [click here](#).

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