

CRS Report for Congress

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House Standing Committee Chairs: Rules Governing Selection Procedures

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Summary

House Rules, Republican Conference rules, and Democratic Caucus rules each detail aspects of the procedures followed in selecting standing committee chairs. This report summarizes those procedures. It will be updated if rules and procedures change.

House Rules

House Rule X, clause 5(c)(2), adopted in 1995 and effective immediately, limits committee (and subcommittee) chairs to three-terms of consecutive service. Service for less than a full session in a Congress is disregarded. (A four-term limitation was also placed on the speakership.)

Republican Conference Procedures

Republican Conference rules delineate procedures for the selection of standing committee chairs. The Speaker, with the Republicans in the majority, has the authority to nominate the chairs of the House Administration Committee and Rules Committee. His nominations for these two chairs are submitted directly to the full Republican Conference for ratification. If the conference rejects the Speaker's nominee, the Speaker has the authority to submit another name to the conference.

All other standing committee chairs are nominated by the Republican Steering Committee and ratified by the full Republican Conference. Pursuant to conference rules, the Member nominated to be chair does not need to be the Member with the longest continuous service on the committee. In the 107th Congress, the Steering Committee "interviewed" prospective candidates for committee chairmanships. All their recommendations were accepted by the full Republican Conference. Some of the new chairs were the most senior member of the committee; others were not.

The Steering Committee is comprised of party leaders, selected committee leaders, class leaders, and regional representatives. The Steering Committee is reconstituted each

Congress. Regions are restructured to reflect as closely as possible an equal number of Republican members from each region. Each region elects its Steering Committee member. If members are elected from states that have four or more Republican members, a “small state” group is triggered to also elect a member to the Steering Committee; the small state group is composed of states that have three or fewer Republican members. The following table depicts the Republican Steering Committee as constituted at the beginning of the 107th Congress.

Republican Steering Committee

Designated Representative	Member Serving in 107 th Congress	Comments
Speaker of the House	Denny Hastert	Has 5 votes in Steering Committee
Majority Leader	Dick Armey	Has 2 votes in Steering Committee
Majority Whip	Tom DeLay	
Chief Deputy Whip	Roy Blunt	
Republican Conference Chair	J.C. Watts	
Republican Conference Vice Chair	Deborah Pryce	
Republican Conference Secretary	Barbara Cubin	
Republican Policy Chair	Christopher Cox	
NRCC Chair	Tom Davis	
Appropriations Committee Chair	Bill Young	
Rules Committee Chair	David Dreier	
Ways and Means Committee Chair	Bill Thomas	
California Representative	Ken Calvert	
Cotton South Representative	Sonny Callahan	Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, West Virginia
East North Central Representative	Dave Camp	Indiana, Michigan, Illinois

Designated Representative	Member Serving in 107th Congress	Comments
Great Plains Representative	Tom Latham	Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Missouri, South Dakota
Mid-Atlantic Representative	Ralph Regula	Ohio, Pennsylvania, Delaware
Atlantic Coast Representative	John McHugh	New York, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey
Southeast Representative	John Linder	Georgia, Florida
Tidewater South Representative	Cass Ballenger	North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland
West South Central Representative	Joe Barton	Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
West Representative	Bob Stump	Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming
Small State Representative	Don Young	Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wyoming, Idaho, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Utah
105 th Class Representative	Jerry Moran	
106 th Class Representative	John Sweeney	
107 th Class Representative	John Culberson	

Democratic Caucus Procedures

Democratic Caucus rules address selecting committee chairs even though Democrats are not currently in the majority. The Democratic leader nominates a chair/ranking member for the Committees on Rules and House Administration who must be approved by the entire Democratic Caucus. The Budget Committee chair/ranking member is selected from among members choosing to run for the position. Other chair/ranking member nominations are made by the Democratic Steering Committee and voted on by the entire Democratic Caucus. In making selections, the Steering Committee considers, pursuant

to caucus rules, “merit, length of service on the committee and degree of commitment to the Democratic agenda of the nominee, and the diversity of the Caucus.” The Steering Committee is reconstituted each Congress, and regions can be restructured to reflect equal Democratic representation among regions. The number of appointments made by the party leader can also change. The following table depicts the Democratic Steering Committee as constituted at the beginning of the 107th Congress.

Democratic Steering Committee

Designated Representative	Member Serving in the 107 th Congress	Comments
Steering Committee Chair	Dick Gephardt	
Steering Committee Co-Chair	Steny Hoyer	
Steering Committee Vice-Chair	Jose Serrano	
Vice-Chair, Deputy Whip	Maxine Waters	
Whip	David Bonior (replaced by Nancy Pelosi on 1/15/02)	
Democratic Caucus Chair	Martin Frost	
Democratic Caucus Vice-Chair	Robert Menendez	
Assistant to the Democratic Leader	Rosa DeLauro	
DCCC Chair	Nita Lowey	
Deputy Whip	Chet Edwards	
Deputy Whip	John Lewis	
Deputy Whip	Ed Pastor	
Region I	Brad Sherman	Southern California: 22, 24, 26, 27, 28-36, 42, 46, 49, 50; Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado

Designated Representative	Member Serving in the 107th Congress	Comments
Region II	Mike Thompson	Northern California: 1, 5-10, 12-18, 20; Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam
Region III	Collin Peterson	Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin
Region IV	William Lipinski	Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky
Region V	Darlene Hooley	Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, North Dakota, Oregon, Washington, Oklahoma
Region VI	Max Sandlin	Texas
Region VII	Bart Gordon	Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama
Region VIII	Jim Davis	Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida
Region IX	Nick Rahall	Maryland, New Jersey, West Virginia, Virginia
Region X	John Murtha	Ohio, Pennsylvania
Region XI	Elliot Engel	New York
Region XII	William Delahunt	Connecticut, District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Virgin Islands
Appropriations Committee Ranking Member	David Obey	
Budget Committee Ranking Member	John Spratt	
Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member	John Dingell	
Rules Committee Ranking Member	Martin Frost	also serves by virtue of being Caucus Chair
Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member	Charles Rangel	

Designated Representative	Member Serving in the 107th Congress	Comments
Organization Study and Review (OSR) Chair	Ben Cardin	
16 Members appointed by Democratic Leader	Lucille Roybal-Allard, Mike Capuano, James Clyburn, Elijah Cummings, Gene Green, Steve Israel, William Jefferson, Carolyn Kilpatrick, Karen McCarthy, Frank Pallone, Silvestre Reyes, Tim Roemer, Bennie Thompson, Peter Visclosky, Lynn Woolsey	One vacancy created when Nancy Pelosi became whip