

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 rules change adopted on January 7, 2003, pursuant to H.Res. 5, exempts the Intelligence Committee chair from the limit.

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 108th 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.

Republican Steering Committee

Designated Representative	Member Serving in 108th Congress	Comments
Speaker of the House	Denny Hastert	Has 5 votes in Steering Committee
Majority Leader	Tom De Lay	Has 2 votes in Steering Committee
Majority Whip	Roy Blunt	-
Chief Deputy Whip	Eric Cantor	-
Republican Conference Chair	Deborah Pryce	-
Republican Conference Vice Chair	Jack Kingston	-
Republican Conference Secretary	John Doolittle	-
Republican Policy Chair	Christopher Cox	-
NRCC Chair	Tom Reynolds	-
Appropriations Committee Chair	Bill Young	
Energy and Commerce Committee Chair	Joe Barton	Billy Tauzin resigned as chair, February, 2004
Rules Committee Chair	David Dreier	-
Ways and Means Committee Chair	Bill Thomas	-
California Representative	Ken Calvert	-
Florida Representative	Adam Putnam	-
Region I Representative	Doc Hastings	Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, Minnesota, South Dakota, Utah

Designated Representative	Member Serving in 108th Congress	Comments
Region II Representative	John Shadegg	Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska
Region III Representative	Lamar Smith	Texas, Oklahoma Joe Barton served until February, 2004 when elected Energy and Commerce chair
Region IV Representative	Tom Latham	Iowa, Missouri, Illinois
Region V Representative	Dave Camp	Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana
Region VI Representative	John McHugh	New York, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland
Region VII Representative	Curt Weldon	Pennsylvania, New Jersey
Region VIII Representative	Ralph Regula	Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia
Region IX Representative	Hal Rogers	Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky
Region X Representative	Mac Collins	Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Georgia
Small State Representative	Don Young	Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wyoming, Idaho, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Utah
107 th Class Representative	John Culberson	-
108 th Class Representative	John Carter	-

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 108th Congress.

Democratic Steering Committee

Designated Representative	Member Serving in the 108 th Congress	Comments
Steering Committee Chair	Nancy Pelosi	-
Steering Committee Co-Chair	Rosa De Lauro	-
Steering Committee Vice-Chair	Jose Serrano	-
Steering Committee Vice-Chair	Maxine Waters	-
Steering Committee Vice-Chair	John Tanner	-
Whip	Steny Hoyer	-
Democratic Caucus Chair	Robert Menendez	-
Democratic Caucus Vice-Chair	James Clyburn	-
Assistant to the Democratic Leader	John Spratt	-
DCCC Chair	Robert Matsui	-
Senior Chief Deputy Whip	John Lewis	-
Chief Deputy Whip	Jan Schakowsky	-
Chief Deputy Whip	Ron Kind	-
Chief Deputy Whip	Baron Hill	-

Designated Representative	Member Serving in the 108th Congress	Comments
Chief Deputy Whip	Joe Crowley	-
Chief Deputy Whip	Max Sandlin	-
Chief Deputy Whip	Maxine Waters	-
Chief Deputy Whip	Ed Pastor	-
Region I	Tom Udall	Southern California: 22, 24, 26, 27, 28-36, 42, 46, 49, 50; Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado
Region II	Mike Thompson	Northern California: 1, 5-10, 12-18, 20; Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam
Region III	Carolyn Kilpatrick	Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin
Region IV	Jerry Costello	Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky
Region V	Earl Pomeroy	Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, North Dakota, Oregon, Washington, Oklahoma
Region VI	Jim Turner	Texas
Region VII	Chris John	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	Sherrod Brown	Ohio, Pennsylvania
Region XI	Joe Crowley	New York
Region XII	John Tierney	Connecticut, District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Virgin Islands
Appropriations Committee Ranking Member	David Obey	-
Budget Committee Ranking Member	John Spratt	Also serves by virtue of being Assistant to the Democratic Leader

Designated Representative	Member Serving in the 108th Congress	Comments
Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member	John Dingell	-
Rules Committee Ranking Member	Martin Frost	-
Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member	Charles Rangel	-
Organization Study and Review (OSR) Chair	Ben Cardin	-
Members appointed by Democratic Leader	Earl Blumenauer, Michael Capuano, Sheila Jackson-Lee, John Larson, Zoe Lofgren, Nita Lowey, Carolyn McCarthy, Betty McCollum, Alan Mollohan, John Murtha, Donald Payne, Collin Peterson, Ciro Rodriquez, Mike Ross, Dutch Ruppersberger, Hilda Solis	-