



**Congressional
Research Service**

Informing the legislative debate since 1914

House Standing Committee Chairs and Ranking Minority Members: Rules Governing Selection Procedures

Judy Schneider

Specialist on the Congress

Updated August 31, 2017

Congressional Research Service

7-....

www.crs.gov

RS21165

Summary

House rules, Republican Conference rules, and Democratic Caucus rules each detail aspects of the procedures followed in selecting standing committee chairs and ranking minority members. The Republican Steering Committee and the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee are constituted during the early organization meetings traditionally held in November and December to determine most committee chairs and ranking minority members and to make committee assignments for most committees. Their recommendations are then forwarded to the full Republican Conference and Democratic Caucus for approval.

Although structured slightly differently, both the Republican Steering Committee and the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee are composed of elected party leaders, regional members, class representatives, and other party officials.

This report will be updated if rules or procedures change.

Contents

House Rules.....	1
Republican Conference Procedures.....	1
Democratic Caucus Procedures.....	3

Tables

Table 1. Republican Steering Committee.....	2
Table 2. Democratic Steering Committee.....	3

Contacts

Author Contact Information.....	5
---------------------------------	---

House Rules

House Rule X, clause 5(c)(2), adopted in 1995 limited 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, exempted the Intelligence Committee chair from the limit. A rules change adopted on January 4, 2005, pursuant to H.Res. 5, exempted the Rules Committee chair from the limit. In 2009, the Democratic majority removed term limits from House rules. The rules adopted on January 3, 2013, reinstated term limits for all committee chairs, but continued the exemption for the Rules Committee chair.

Republican Conference Procedures

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

All other standing committee chairs or ranking minority members are nominated by the Republican Steering Committee and ratified by the full Republican Conference. Pursuant to conference rules, the Member nominated to be chair or ranking minority member does not need to be the Member with the longest continuous service on the committee. In recent Congresses, the Steering Committee "interviewed" prospective candidates for chair or ranking slots. Some of the new chairs and ranking members have been the most senior members of the committee, others were not.

The Steering Committee is composed 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 Steering Committee 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.

On November, 19, 2015, the House Republican Conference adopted a conference resolution redesigning the composition of the Steering Committee.

The chairs of the Committees on Appropriations, Budget, Energy and Commerce, Financial Services, Rules, and Ways and Means were removed, except when the Steering Committee is considering members for election to one of those specific committees. If, for example, a member is elected to the Ways and Means Committee, that committee's chair would join the Steering Committee to deliberate and vote on the new member.

Six members are to be elected by the conference as at-large members.

The Speaker has the authority to appoint one at-large designee.

The Speaker, who previously had five votes, will have four votes.

The conference resolution stated that elections for the at-large members would be held not later than 30 calendar days after the resolution was adopted. The six members receiving the greatest number of votes would be elected. The Republican Conference elected the six members on December 10, 2015.

It is anticipated that the number of regions and the regional allocation will be reviewed in the near future.

Table 1 depicts the membership of the reconstituted Republican Steering Committee as of July 1, 2017.

Table 1. Republican Steering Committee

Designated Representative	Member Serving in 115 th Congress	Comments
Speaker	Paul D. Ryan	Has 4 votes on Steering Committee
Majority leader	Kevin McCarthy	Has 2 votes
Minority whip	Steve Scalise	
Chief deputy whip	Patrick McHenry	
Republican Conference chair	Cathy McMorris Rogers	
Republican Conference vice-chair	Doug Collins	
Republican Conference secretary	Jason Smith	
Republican Policy chair	Luke Messer	
NRCC chair, former chair	Greg Walden	
NRCC chair	Steve Stivers	
Rotating committee chair		
Speaker Designee	Susan Brooks	
Texas Representative I	Lamar Smith	
Texas Representative II	John Carter	
Florida Representative	Vern Buchanan	
California Representative	Devin Nunes	
Pennsylvania Representative	Bill Shuster	
Ohio Representative	Pat Tiberi	
Region I	Tom Reed	New Jersey, New York, Maine
Region II	Bob Goodlatte	Kentucky, Maryland, Virginia
Region III	Richard Hudson	Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky
Region IV	Tom Graves	Georgia, South Carolina
Region V	Mike Rogers	Alabama, Tennessee
Region VI	John Shimkus	Illinois, Indiana, Iowa
Region VII	Fred Upton	Michigan, Wisconsin
Region VIII	Steve Womack	Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Puerto Rico

Designated Representative	Member Serving in 115 th Congress	Comments
Region IX	Kevin Yoder	Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma
Region X	Tom Emmer	Alaska, Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Wyoming
Region XI	David Schweikert	Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, American Samoa
Small State Representative	Kevin Cramer	(Composed of delegations with one or two members): Alaska, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Wyoming, American Samoa, Puerto Rico
114 th Class Representative	Steve Russell	
115 th Class Representative	Francis Rooney	

Democratic Caucus Procedures

Democratic Caucus rules address selecting committee chairs and ranking minority members. The Democratic leader nominates a chair and ranking member for the Committees on Rules and House Administration, who must be approved by the entire Democratic Caucus. The Budget Committee chair and ranking member are selected from among members choosing to run for the position. Other chair and ranking Member nominations are made by the Democratic Steering and Policy 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. **Table 2** depicts the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee as constituted as of July 1, 2017.

Table 2. Democratic Steering Committee

Designated Representative	Member Serving in the 115 th Congress	Comments
Steering Committee chair	Nancy Pelosi	
Steering Committee co-chair	Rosa DeLauro	
Policy Committee co-chair	Eric Swalwell	
Vice Chair/Parliamentarian	Jared Polis	
Vice Chair	Barbara Lee	
Co-Chair, Policy and Communications	Cheri Bustos David Cicilline Hakeem Jeffries	
Democratic whip	Steny Hoyer	
Assistant Democratic leader	James Clyburn	
Democratic Caucus chair	Joseph Crowley	

Designated Representative	Member Serving in the 115th Congress	Comments
Democratic Caucus vice-chair	Linda Sanchez	
DCCC chair	Ben Ray Lujan	
Caucus leadership representative	Tony Cardenas	
Freshman leadership representative	Colleen Hanabusa	
Senior Chief Deputy whip	John Lewis	
Chief Deputy whip	Joaquin Castro	
Chief Deputy whip	Krysten Sinema	
Chief Deputy whip	Diana DeGette	
Chief Deputy whip	G.K. Butterfield	
Chief Deputy whip	Keith Ellison	
Chief Deputy whip	Jan Schakowsky	
Chief Deputy whip	Debbie Wasserman Schultz	
Chief Deputy whip	Terri Sewell	
Chief Deputy whip	Peter Welch	
Region I	Judy Chu	Southern California: 21-53
Region II	Doris Matsui	Northern California: 1-20; Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, Alaska, Marianas Islands
Region III	Gwen Moore	Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska
Region IV	Andre Carson	Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma
Region V	Dina Titus	Colorado, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Idaho
Region VI	Lloyd Doggett	Texas, Arizona, New Mexico
Region VII	Stacey Plaskett	Louisiana, Tennessee, Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
Region VIII	Lois Frankel	Georgia, Florida
Region IX	Bill Pascrell	Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia, DC, Delaware
Region X	Marcy Kaptur	Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, West Virginia
Region XI	Gregory Meeks	New York
Region XII	Mike Capuano	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont
Appropriations Committee ranking member	Nita Lowey	
Budget Committee ranking member	John Yarmouth	
Energy and Commerce Committee ranking member	Frank Pallone	

Designated Representative	Member Serving in the 115th Congress	Comments
Financial Services Committee ranking member	Maxine Waters	
Rules Committee ranking member	Louis Slaughter	
Ways and Means Committee ranking member	Richie Neal	
Organization Study and Review (OSR) chair	Karen Bass	
Freshman Representative	Jamie Raskin	
Members appointed by Democratic leader	Matt Cartwright Steve Cohen Katherine Clark John Delaney Mike Doyle John Garamendi Sheila Jackson Lee Dan Kildee Derek Kilmer Raja Krishnamoorthi Betty McCollum Donald Norcross Darren Soto Mike Thompson	

Author Contact Information

Judy Schneider
Specialist on the Congress
-redacted-@crs.loc.gov, 7-....

EveryCRSReport.com

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) is a federal legislative branch agency, housed inside the Library of Congress, charged with providing the United States Congress non-partisan advice on issues that may come before Congress.

EveryCRSReport.com republishes CRS reports that are available to all Congressional staff. The reports are not classified, and Members of Congress routinely make individual reports available to the public.

Prior to our republication, we redacted phone numbers and email addresses of analysts who produced the reports. We also added this page to the report. We have not intentionally made any other changes to any report published on EveryCRSReport.com.

CRS reports, as a work of the United States government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.

Information in a CRS report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to members of Congress in connection with CRS' institutional role.

EveryCRSReport.com is not a government website and is not affiliated with CRS. We do not claim copyright on any CRS report we have republished.