

# Rules Governing House Committee and Subcommittee Assignment Procedures

Updated November 13, 2024

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

R46786



**R46786**

November 13, 2024

**Michael Greene**

Analyst on Congress and  
the Legislative Process

## Rules Governing House Committee and Subcommittee Assignment Procedures

Members of the House are assigned to serve on committees at the start of every Congress. Most assignments involve a three-step process involving the party caucuses and action on the House floor. First, a Member is nominated to committee assignments by his or her party's steering committee. Next, the full party caucus or conference votes to approve the steering committee's nominations. Finally, a simple resolution is introduced and agreed to on the House floor that formally elects Members to their party-approved committee assignments. These resolutions, by long-standing practice, have been agreed to without objection as the parties mutually recognize each other's right to determine committee assignments for their own Members.

Service on standing and non-standing committees in the House is shaped by both the rules of the House and rules adopted by the political parties. "Standing committees" are permanently established under House Rule X, as opposed to "non-standing" committees (e.g., select or joint committees), which are created by resolution or law and are often temporary in nature. The rules of the House limit Members' service to no more than two standing committees and not more than four subcommittees thereon. However, House rules also allow for these restrictions to be waived upon recommendation by either party caucus.

Both the Republican Conference and the Democratic Caucus have further rules limiting the type and number of committees Members may serve on. In general, Members of both parties are limited to one committee assignment when serving on an "exclusive" committee. Otherwise, Members may generally receive two "non-exclusive" committee assignments. The party caucuses can grant exceptions to these limitations as deemed warranted. In addition, under both parties' rules, Members are generally limited to chairing one committee or subcommittee, with some exceptions. The Republican Conference also limits chairs (and ranking members) to serving for not more than three consecutive terms.

Both the Democratic Caucus and Republican Conference task steering committees with recommending most committee assignments for their respective memberships. The particulars of this nominating process vary between the two parties, with each party specifying different factors in the consideration of making assignments. Still other assignments are recommended directly by the party leader (either the Speaker for the majority or minority leader for the minority)—including to all non-standing committees. In any case, recommendations for assignments to standing committees must also be approved by a majority of the full party caucus before final action can be taken on the House floor.

Just as the House elects its Members to committee assignments, so too do committees elect their members to serve on subcommittees. In general, the Republican Conference vests greater authority in committee chairs in determining subcommittee assignments. The Democratic Caucus has more formal procedures that all of its committees must follow in making subcommittee assignments. Unlike committee assignments, subcommittee assignments are not approved on the House floor.

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction .....   | 1  |
| The Role of Adopted Rules versus Unwritten Practice .....                  | 1  |
| House Rules and Practices Relating to Standing Committee Assignments.....  | 2  |
| Sizes and Ratios of Committees.....  | 3  |
| Party Rules and Practices Relating to Standing Committee Assignments ..... | 3  |
| Democratic Caucus Rules .....  | 4  |
| Limitations .....  | 6  |
| Republican Conference Rules .....  | 7  |
| Limitations .....  | 8  |
| Committee Chair Appointments .....   | 8  |
| Democratic Caucus Rules .....  | 8  |
| Limitations .....  | 9  |
| Republican Conference Rules .....  | 10 |
| Limitations .....  | 10 |
| Committee Vice Chair Designation .....                                     | 11 |
| Subcommittee Assignments.....  | 11 |
| Subcommittee Chair Appointments .....                                      | 12 |
| Democratic Caucus Rules .....  | 12 |
| Republican Conference Rules.....   | 14 |
| Subcommittee Assignment Procedures .....                                   | 14 |
| Democratic Caucus Rules .....  | 14 |
| Republican Conference Rules.....   | 15 |
| Subcommittee Vice Chair Designation .....                                  | 16 |
| Non-Standing Committee Assignments .....                                   | 16 |
| Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence .....                           | 16 |
| Removal from Committees.....   | 17 |

## Tables

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 1. Party Designation of Exclusive and Non-exclusive Committees .....         | 3  |
| Table 2. Committee Nominations within the Democratic Caucus .....                  | 5  |
| Table 3. Committee Nominations within the Republican Conference .....              | 7  |
| Table 4. Limitations on Committee Assignments for Standing Committee Chairs.....   | 10 |
| Table 5. Number of Subcommittees Permitted for the 118 <sup>th</sup> Congress..... | 12 |
| Table A-1. Republican Steering Committee Membership.....                           | 18 |
| Table A-2. Democratic Steering and Policy Committee Membership.....                | 19 |
| Table B-1. Joint Committee on Taxation.....  | 21 |
| Table B-2. Joint Committee on Printing.....  | 21 |
| Table B-3. Joint Committee on the Library.....                                     | 21 |
| Table B-4. Joint Economic Committee.....   | 21 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table C-1. Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party ..... | 22 |
|--|----|

## **Appendixes**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Appendix A. Composition of Party Steering Committees.....          | 18 |
| Appendix B. Composition of Joint Committees.....                   | 21 |
| Appendix C. Composition of Temporary House Select Committees ..... | 22 |

## **Contacts**

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Author Information..... | 22 |
|-------------------------|----|

## Introduction

At the outset of every two-year Congress, the House of Representatives assigns Members to serve on the chamber's various committees.<sup>1</sup> Service on House committees can provide Members with opportunities to develop expertise in specific policy areas, contribute to marking up legislation that will be considered on the House floor, and participate in oversight hearings on topics of interest to the American public. The House is responsible for electing Members to committees and does so through the adoption of simple resolutions (H.Res.). However, this step represents the culmination of processes internal to each party caucus that began at the end of the previous Congress. Both the Democratic Caucus and Republican Conference appoint Members to steering committees, composed of party leaders and elected Members, which are responsible for nominating party colleagues for assignment to committees. The steering committee's nominations are then voted on by the full membership of the full party caucus before being submitted to the House for approval by resolution. Tables listing the composition of each party's steering committee in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress (2023-2024) can be found in **Appendix A**.

This report provides an examination of the committee assignment process for both standing and non-standing committees and their subcommittees. The term *standing committees* refers to committees permanently established under House Rule X that have legislative and oversight jurisdiction over a number of stated subject areas. Non-standing committees (e.g., select or joint committees) are created by resolution or law, typically to investigate certain issues or events, and may or may not have legislative jurisdiction.<sup>2</sup>

The structure of this report is intended to allow readers to jump directly to information about different types of committee assignments and the party procedures that are of immediate interest to them. The report begins with an examination of requirements and limitations under House rules related to committee assignment. It then discusses relevant rules adopted by the Democratic Caucus and Republican Conference and lays out party procedures for assigning Members to, and leadership on, standing committees, subcommittees, and non-standing committees. For the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, Democratic Caucus rules can be found at <https://www.dems.gov/rules-of-the-democratic-caucus>, and Republican Conference rules can be found at <https://www.gop.gov/conference-rules-of-the-118th-congress/>.

## The Role of Adopted Rules versus Unwritten Practice

This report primarily limits its discussion to House rules, Republican Conference rules, and Democratic Caucus rules. While these rules provide some formal parameters that the parties may use in making committee assignments, both parties also have long-standing practices that further shape the process. Given that party decisions related to committee assignments occur outside of public view, this report cannot authoritatively or comprehensively account for these practices or how they may vary from procedures defined under the rules. In any case, the formal House and party rules remain paramount as they serve to inform Members of their rights in the process, and they might be relied upon in complicated or contentious situations.

---

<sup>1</sup> While most committee assignments occur at the beginning of a Congress, the House continues to periodically adopt assignment resolutions throughout the session. Throughout a Congress, new assignments might need to be made for a number of reasons—for example, special elections, a Member switching parties, or Members retiring. In the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress (2019-2020), the House agreed to over 30 such appointing resolutions, including during the second session.

<sup>2</sup> More discussion on the types of committees in the House (and Senate) can be found in CRS Report 98-241, *Committee Types and Roles*, by Valerie Heitshusen.

## House Rules and Practices Relating to Standing Committee Assignments<sup>3</sup>

Under its rules, the House is required to elect the standing committees within seven calendar days after the start of a new Congress.<sup>4</sup> While the preliminary assignment of Members to committees typically occurs within that time period, additional assignments are routinely made in the weeks that follow. Elections to committees formally occur through the adoption of simple resolutions, offered by Members on behalf of their respective party caucuses, assigning Members from the majority or minority parties.<sup>5</sup> While technically debatable and amendable, by long-standing practice, these resolutions have been agreed to by unanimous consent in tacit recognition by the parties of each other's right to determine committee assignments for their own Members.<sup>6</sup>

House Rule X, clause 5(b)(2)(A), limits each Member to service on two standing committees and not more than four subcommittees, thereon, at the same time. However, the rule further provides that these limitations can be waived by recommendation of either the Democratic Caucus or Republican Conference for their respective membership.<sup>7</sup> In other words, Members may serve on more than two committees or four subcommittees if so approved by their party. Such occasional exceptions are commonly referred to as “waivers.”

In addition to limits on committee and subcommittee service generally, House rules also dictate the composition of membership on the Budget and Ethics Committees. Membership on the Committee on the Budget is comprised of:

- five Members from the Committee on Appropriations,
- five Members from the Committee on Ways and Means,
- one Member from the Committee on Rules,
- one Member designated by majority party leadership, and
- one Member designated by minority party leadership.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> For purposes of this report, any reference to “Members” includes the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico and Delegates representing the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories. The Resident Commissioner and Delegates are elected to committees in the same manner as Representatives and may also chair committees and subcommittees.

<sup>4</sup> House Rule X, clause 5(a)(1).

<sup>5</sup> Such resolutions are privileged for consideration under House Rule X, clause 5(a)(1), if offered at the direction of the Republican Conference or Democratic Caucus—meaning that they have priority over the routine daily order of business. For further reading on the concept of privilege in the House, see CRS Report 98-315, *Privileged Business on the House Floor*, by James V. Saturno.

<sup>6</sup> The content of these resolutions list names of individuals appointed on behalf of the majority and minority parties to specified committees and their relative order of seniority on the committee. Examples from the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress include the appointment of committee chairs (H.Res. 9), Members from the majority party (H.Res. 62), and Members from the minority party (H.Res. 63).

<sup>7</sup> This limitation also does not apply in certain specific circumstances, including ex officio service by chairs and ranking minority members on their standing committee's subcommittees and Member service on an Ethics Committee investigative subcommittee.

<sup>8</sup> House Rule X, clause 5(a)(2). While the rule sets the composition described above, it is not limited to only those Members. The rule also provides for additional membership of those “who are members of other standing committees.” During the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress (2023-2024), the Committee on the Budget had 36 Members.

The Committee on Ethics consists of 10 Members, with membership equally divided between the parties. House Rule X, clause 5(a)(3), further limits Members to serving on the committee for not more than three Congresses within a period of five consecutive Congresses.<sup>9</sup>

## Sizes and Ratios of Committees

Other than the considerations discussed above, House rules are silent on the sizes of standing committees and do not prescribe a particular ratio of majority to minority Members.<sup>10</sup> As a result, leadership from both parties negotiate these parameters following the outcome of an election and prior to the start of the next Congress.<sup>11</sup> The sizes of committees may be adjusted to account for Member interest and, more importantly, provide for party ratios that, in the aggregate, reflect the overall party composition of the chamber.<sup>12</sup> In turn, these decisions about sizes and ratios provide the party caucuses with the information they need to make assignments for their respective memberships.<sup>13</sup> Discussion of the parties' processes for assigning Members to committees follows in the sections below.

## Party Rules and Practices Relating to Standing Committee Assignments

In addition to the limits placed on committee assignments by House rules, both the Democratic Caucus and the Republican Conference observe further restrictions on committee service. Both Democrats and Republicans categorize committees as “exclusive” or “non-exclusive” in their respective party rules or practices. As the name might suggest, Members assigned to an exclusive committee generally receive no other committee assignments (though the parties sometimes grant waivers on a case-by-case basis). Committees are designated as exclusive in recognition of their broad legislative jurisdictions and substantial workloads. Members often seek assignments to exclusive committees because they can provide the opportunity to more frequently work on major legislative and oversight initiatives over the course of a Congress. Both the Republican and Democratic parties distinguish the same committees as exclusive or non-exclusive, as listed in **Table 1** below. However, while the Democratic Caucus formally establishes exclusive committees in their party rules, the Republican Conference does not, instead treating committee exclusivity as a long-standing informal practice.

**Table 1. Party Designation of Exclusive and Non-exclusive Committees**

| Exclusive Committees |                                  |                |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Appropriations       | Energy and Commerce <sup>a</sup> | Ways and Means |
| Rules                | Financial Services <sup>b</sup>  |                |

<sup>9</sup> The rule specifies that service on the committee for a portion of a Congress does not count toward the three Congress limit, and a Member may serve for a fourth or fifth Congress as chair or ranking member.

<sup>10</sup> House rules designated the size of standing committees until the adoption of the Committee Reform Amendments of 1974, which went into effect at the start of the 94<sup>th</sup> Congress (1975-1976).

<sup>11</sup> 2 U.S.C. §29a.

<sup>12</sup> In particular, Democratic Caucus Rules 16(A) and (B) direct that the party should attempt to negotiate committee ratios that are “at least as representative” as the ratio of Democrats to Republicans in the House. Republican Conference rules do not contain any equivalent requirement.

<sup>13</sup> More information on historical committee ratios can be found in CRS Report R40478, *House Committee Party Ratios: 98th-118th Congresses*, by Sarah J. Eckman.

| Non-Exclusive Committees |                      |                                   |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Agriculture              | Foreign Affairs      | Oversight and Reform              |
| Armed Services           | Homeland Security    | Science, Space, and Technology    |
| Budget                   | House Administration | Small Business                    |
| Education and Workforce  | Judiciary            | Transportation and Infrastructure |
| Ethics                   | Natural Resources    | Veterans' Affairs                 |

**Source:** Based on Democratic Caucus Rule 17 and Republican Conference practices.

- a. The Committee on Energy and Commerce is exclusive for Members of the Democratic Party serving on the committee for the first time during the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress (1995-1996) or later. It is not treated as an exclusive assignment for Democratic Members with service on the committee prior to the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress.
- b. The Committee on Financial Services is exclusive for Members of the Democratic Party serving on the committee for the first time during the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress (2005-2006) or later. It is not treated as an exclusive assignment for Democratic Members with service on the committee prior to the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress.

## Democratic Caucus Rules

Committee assignments within the Democratic Caucus generally follow a two-step process. First, Members are nominated to service on committees by either the Steering and Policy Committee or the party's leader (the Speaker of the House when Democrats are in the majority or the Democratic leader when the party is in the minority). Nominations are then subject to approval by majority vote of the full Democratic Caucus before being formally submitted to the House for approval by resolution.

The Steering and Policy Committee is responsible for nominating the membership of all standing committees except for the Committee on Rules and the Committee on House Administration, whose membership is directly nominated by the party leader. A Member may also nominate him- or herself for assignment to a standing committee by submitting written notice, co-signed by at least 50% of their state's Democratic delegation, to the Steering and Policy Committee for consideration, although this is rare.

Pursuant to House Democratic Caucus rules, the Steering and Policy Committee accounts for multiple factors when considering committee assignments. Nominations by the committee are not required to follow seniority and should not "discriminate" based on Members' prior work experience.<sup>14</sup> Instead, Caucus Rule 19(B)(2) directs Steering and Policy to consider

merit, length of service on the committee, degree of commitment to the Democratic agenda, and the diversity of the Caucus, including appropriate representation of the Caucus' ideological and regional diversity, in making nominations for committee assignments.

Nominations to the Committees on Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Budget are governed by slightly different procedures. Pursuant to Caucus Rule 19(D), Members on Appropriations and Ways and Means are automatically re-nominated to those committees by the Steering and Policy Committee each Congress. Vacancies in either committee are filled based on nominations by the Steering and Policy Committee in the same fashion as in any other standing committee.

Nominations to the Budget Committee are governed by House Rule X, clause 5(a)(2), which, as noted, requires Members be drawn from the Committees on Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Rules. The Steering and Policy Committee nominates Members to all seats on the Budget Committee—except one Member appointed by the party leader—and the chair (or ranking

<sup>14</sup> Democratic Caucus Rule 19(B)(4).



minority member), who is directly appointed by the full Democratic Caucus. Any Member may also nominate him- or herself to a seat on Appropriations, Ways and Means, or Budget by submitting a written notice co-signed by five additional Democratic Members to the Democratic Caucus chair and vice chair by close of business on the day prior to committee elections.

Once nominations have been submitted to the Democratic Caucus, assignments are approved one committee at a time by a majority of those present and voting. A secret ballot vote may be held on the assignment of any individual Member if demanded by 10 or more members of the caucus. In such cases, caucus rules provide for 30 minutes of debate, equally divided between proponents and opponents of the candidate. Following debate, if any nominee is rejected, the full list of committee nominees is returned to the Steering and Policy Committee to allow for new nominations to replace rejected Members (or, in the case of the Committees on Rules and House Administration, the party leader submits new nominations).

**Table 2. Committee Nominations within the Democratic Caucus**

| <b>Committee</b>                      | <b>Steering and Policy Committee Nominates</b> | <b>Party Leader Nominates</b> |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Agriculture                           | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Appropriations                        | Chair and members <sup>a</sup>                 |                               |
| Armed Services                        | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Budget                                | All but one member <sup>b,c</sup>              | One member                    |
| Education and Workforce               | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Energy and Commerce                   | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Ethics                                | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Financial Services                    | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Foreign Affairs                       | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Homeland Security                     | Chair and members                              |                               |
| House Administration                  |  | Chair and members             |
| Judiciary                             | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Natural Resources                     | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Oversight and Reform                  | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Rules                                 |  | Chair and members             |
| Science, Space, and Technology        | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Small Business                        | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Transportation and Infrastructure     | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Veterans' Affairs                     | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Ways and Means                        | Chair and members <sup>a</sup>                 |                               |
| Special, select, and other committees |  | Chair and members             |

**Source:** CRS analysis of House Democratic Caucus Rules 19 and 21.

**Notes:** Any Democratic Member may petition for nomination to any committee assignment (except to Rules or House Administration) upon written request co-signed by at least 50% of the Member's state Democratic delegation and submitted to the Steering and Policy Committee.

- a. The Steering and Policy Committee is required under caucus rules to nominate Members who served on the committee in the previous Congress but is otherwise responsible for making nominations to fill any vacancies. A Member may also petition for a nomination to the committee by submitting a written notice co-signed by five additional Democrat Members to the Democratic Caucus chair and vice chair by close of business on the day prior to committee elections.
- b. Democratic Caucus rules direct the Steering and Policy Committee to make nominations to the Budget Committee in accordance with House Rule X, clause 5(a)(2), which requires that members be drawn from the Committees on Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Rules.
- c. The chair of the Budget Committee is appointed directly by majority vote of the Democratic Caucus pursuant to Democratic Caucus Rule 20(A)(1)(a).

## **Limitations**

Democratic Caucus rules establish certain limitations on Member service on committees in addition to those provided for in the rules of the House. However, in practice, Members may receive waivers or be given temporary committee assignments that would otherwise not be allowed under these limitations. Absent any waiver or temporary assignment, the following restrictions on committee service apply to Democratic Members:

- Assignment to an exclusive committee precludes any further committee assignments other than to the Committees on Budget and House Administration.
- A Member may not serve on more than two committees with legislative jurisdiction. This rule does not apply to the Committees on House Administration or Ethics.
- Democratic Caucus rules reiterate House Rule X, clause 5(a)(3)(B), limiting service on the Ethics Committee to not more than three Congresses within a period of five successive Congresses.
- Members assigned to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence may be given only one additional standing committee assignment. While serving on the Intelligence Committee, Members may take a leave of absence from their other prior assignments to preserve their committee seniority upon their return.

## ***Temporary Assignments***

The Steering and Policy Committee is empowered by caucus rules to determine, on a committee-by-committee basis, whether to fill any remaining vacancies after Democratic Members have received their preliminary assignments. Any Members' assignments to these additional vacancies are designated as temporary and come with additional restrictions. Members on temporary assignment do not accrue seniority on the committees while serving in that capacity, and their appointments are considered expired at the end of a Congress, meaning they do not have the automatic right to return to the committees in the subsequent Congress. Temporarily assigned Members also generally cannot bid on subcommittee assignments except if vacancies remain after all other committee members have declined the seats.

## ***Waivers***

When deemed necessary, the Democratic Caucus may grant a waiver to allow a Member to serve on a committee in a way that would otherwise violate caucus or House rules that limit the number of committees on which a Member may serve. The Steering and Policy Committee is implicitly empowered to recommend "committee waivers, grandfathering, and special permissions" for

Members when making recommendations for committee assignments.<sup>15</sup> Although the Steering and Policy Committee's rules of procedure are not public, caucus rules dictate that the committee shall record all such dispensations in a form accessible to Democratic Members. The application of waivers or other arrangements made with individual Members can vary considerably and are at the discretion of the Steering and Policy Committee, subject to the approval of the full caucus.

## Republican Conference Rules

Within the Republican Conference, the Steering Committee is responsible for nominating party Members to most standing committee assignments.<sup>16</sup> The party's leader (the Speaker or the Republican leader, depending on whether the party is in the majority) makes nominations to the Committees on Rules and House Administration and for one assignment to the Committee on the Budget. All nominations to committees are then subject to approval by majority vote of the Republican Conference. By default, any contested election is conducted by secret ballot, and proxy votes are prohibited. However, any vote by the Republican Conference may be conducted by secret ballot if demanded by a Member and seconded by five additional Republican Representatives. If any nomination fails to secure majority support of the conference, then the nominating body is directed to submit a new recommendation for consideration. While Republican Conference rules do not specify a method by which Members can directly nominate themselves for committee assignments, the rules do not prohibit that possibility either.<sup>17</sup>

Vacancies in committees are filled by the entity or individual responsible for making nominations at the start of the Congress. Vacancies filled by the Steering Committee are submitted directly to the House and do not require approval by the Republican Conference. The Republican leader nominates replacements for vacancies on the Committees on Rules and House Administration and one seat on Budget, which must then be approved by a majority of the Republican Conference.

**Table 3. Committee Nominations within the Republican Conference**

| <b>Committee Assignment</b> | <b>Steering and Policy Committee Nominates</b> | <b>Party Leader Nominates</b> |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Agriculture                 | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Appropriations              | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Armed Services              | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Budget                      | Chair and all but one member <sup>a</sup>      | One member                    |
| Education and Workforce     | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Energy and Commerce         | Chair and members                              |                               |
| Ethics                      | Chair and members                              |                               |

<sup>15</sup> Democratic Caucus Rule 10(B)(3).

<sup>16</sup> While this report discusses assignment procedures according to the rules of the Republican Conference, readers can find additional discussion of the bidding process by Republican Members in *Hit the Ground Running Member Book*, 112<sup>th</sup> Congress ed., pp. 38-39, <https://www.governmentattic.org/4docs/HitGroundRunning2011.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> By contrast, nominations for committee chairs are in order only if made by recommendation of the Steering Committee pursuant to Republican Conference Rule 14(a)(1). Because the rules specify what nominations are in order for chairs and are silent in regard to other committee assignments, it appears possible that Republican Members may be able to nominate themselves for consideration by the full conference, notwithstanding the recommendations of the Steering Committee.

| Committee Assignment                | Steering and Policy Committee Nominates | Party Leader Nominates |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Financial Services                  | Chair and members                       |                        |
| Foreign Affairs                     | Chair and members                       |                        |
| Homeland Security                   | Chair and members                       |                        |
| House Administration                |   | Chair and members      |
| Judiciary                           | Chair and members                       |                        |
| Natural Resources                   | Chair and members                       |                        |
| Oversight and Accountability        | Chair and members                       |                        |
| Rules                               |   | Chair and members      |
| Science, Space, and Technology      | Chair and members                       |                        |
| Small Business                      | Chair and members                       |                        |
| Transportation and Infrastructure   | Chair and members                       |                        |
| Veterans' Affairs                   | Chair and members                       |                        |
| Ways and Means                      | Chair and members                       |                        |
| Special, select, & other Committees |   | Chair and members      |

**Source:** CRS analysis of House Republican Conference Rule 12.

- a. House Rule X, clause 5(a)(2), further requires that Members on the Budget Committee be appointed from Members on the Committees on Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Rules.

## Limitations

There are no explicit limitations codified in the Republican Conference's rules regarding Members' service on committees, although limitations set by the rules of the House still apply. However, as previously discussed, the conference does observe a long-standing practice designating certain committees as exclusive. Generally, Republican Members appointed to exclusive committees do not receive any other assignments to standing committees. However, Republican Conference Rule 12(b)(3) allows Members assigned to the Committee on Rules to be "on leave with seniority" from standing committees on which they previously served. This status allows a Member to retain seniority when returning to membership on said committee after concluding their service on the Rules Committee.

# Committee Chair Appointments

## Democratic Caucus Rules

The Democratic Steering and Policy Committee is responsible for nominating chairs (or ranking members when in the minority) to all standing committees except for the Committees on Rules, House Administration, and the Budget. The Democratic leader nominates chairs to the Committees on Rules and House Administration, while the Democratic Caucus directly elects the chair of the Committee on the Budget. As when considering committee assignments, the Steering and Policy Committee is directed by caucus rules to factor in merit, committee service, commitment to the Democratic agenda, and overall diversity of the caucus without having to strictly adhere to seniority in making nominations.

The election of committee chairs by the full Democratic Caucus is subject to different criteria depending on whether a nominee would be continuing as chair from a prior Congress or the position is vacant. In cases where the candidate nominated by the Steering and Policy Committee or Democratic leader served as chair in the previous Congress, other candidates must meet either of the following requirements in order to also be considered during the caucus vote:

- During consideration of chair candidates by the Steering and Policy committee, at least 14 Members voted for someone other than the prevailing nominee; or
- 50 or more Members submit a written request to the Steering and Policy committee that additional nominations be considered by the Democratic Caucus.

If the caucus is filling a vacant committee chair, Members do not need to meet these extra requirements in order to contest the Steering and Policy Committee's nominee. Members may nominate themselves or any other Member of the caucus to be chair so long as the candidate serves on the committee in question.<sup>18</sup> However, as described above, Democratic Caucus rules make it more difficult to challenge a chair seeking to continue in that role from one Congress to the next.

All votes on committee chairs taken by the Steering and Policy Committee and the Democratic Caucus are conducted by secret ballot unless a majority votes to waive the requirement.<sup>19</sup> Debate on this motion is limited to 60 minutes, equally divided between proponents and opponents for each nominee, but may be extended by majority vote of the caucus.<sup>20</sup> If more than two candidates are under consideration for a chair position, the Member receiving the fewest votes is eliminated after each round of voting until one nominee receives majority support.<sup>21</sup>

## Limitations

Committee chairs are further limited on any additional committee assignments. In general, a Member is limited to serving as a chair for only one committee, though the caucus may waive the rule in regard to non-standing committees.<sup>22</sup> Chairs are also generally prohibited from serving as chairs of subcommittees or members of the Committee on Ethics.<sup>23</sup> Lastly, committee chairs for certain committees may not receive any additional committee assignments, as detailed in **Table 4**.

---

<sup>18</sup> This requirement does not apply to the Committee on the Budget, because the chair is elected by the caucus before any other assignments to the committee are made.

<sup>19</sup> Democratic Caucus Rule 21(A)(4).

<sup>20</sup> Democratic Caucus Rule 21(C).

<sup>21</sup> Democratic Caucus Rule 3(C) further provides that if multiple candidates are tied in receiving the fewest votes in a round, neither is eliminated. If those candidates tie for the fewest votes in a second round of voting, they are both eliminated from consideration.

<sup>22</sup> In addition, Democratic Caucus Rule 22(C) makes exceptions that allow for specific concurrent chair assignments. The chair of the Committee on Ways and Means may also concurrently serve as chair of the Joint Committee on Taxation. The House Administration chair may also concurrently serve as the chair of the Joint Committee on Printing and the Joint Committee on the Library.

<sup>23</sup> The chairs for the Committees on Appropriations, Ethics, House Administration, and joint committees may also serve as subcommittee chairs (Democratic Caucus Rule 22(D)(1)).

**Table 4. Limitations on Committee Assignments for Standing Committee Chairs**

House Democratic Caucus Rule 22(A)(1)

| Committee chairs limited to one committee assignment |                                   | Committee chairs who may receive an additional committee assignment |                                |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Appropriations                                       | Homeland Security                 | Agriculture   | Oversight and Accountability   |
| Armed Services                                       | Judiciary                         | Budget  | Science, Space, and Technology |
| Education  | Rules                             | Foreign Affairs   | Small Business                 |
| Energy and Commerce                                  | Transportation and Infrastructure | House Administration  | Veterans' Affairs              |
| Ethics   | Ways and Means                    | Natural Resources   |                                |
| Financial Services                                   |                                   |   |                                |

**Source:** CRS analysis of House Democratic Caucus rules and House rules.

## Republican Conference Rules

As with Member committee assignments, the Steering Committee and Republican leader are responsible for nominating committee chairs (or ranking members when in the minority), who are then subject to approval by majority vote of the Republican Conference. The Steering Committee exclusively nominates chairs to all standing committees except Rules and House Administration (both of which are nominated by the Republican Party leader). In considering its recommendations, the Steering Committee interviews every Member interested in becoming a committee chair, including those Members who held chairs in the previous Congress and desire to continue serving in that capacity. The Steering Committee is not ultimately bound to nominate Members based on their committee seniority. Any chair elections that are contested by multiple candidates are held by secret ballot.<sup>24</sup>

While Republican Members may express interest to the Steering Committee or Republican party leader for consideration to be committee chairs, Members may not nominate themselves or others for the final vote conducted by the full Republican Conference. This vote may be held by secret ballot on demand of a Member with support from five other Members.<sup>25</sup> For elections with more than two candidates where no Member receives a majority of the vote, the candidate receiving the fewest votes is eliminated after each round of balloting. If any chair nominee fails to secure the support of a majority of the Republican Conference, the entity responsible for the nomination shall be directed to submit a new name for consideration. Any vacancies that arise are to be filled in the matter they were initially appointed and, “wherever possible,” within 30 calendar days during which Congress is in session.<sup>26</sup>

## Limitations

Conference Rule 15 limits Republican Members to serving as chair of only one standing committee at a time. This limitation does not apply to the Committees on Ethics or House Administration nor any joint, select, or special committees. The rule may also be waived by approval of both the Steering Committee and the Republican Conference. In addition to these

<sup>24</sup> Republican Conference Rule 4.

<sup>25</sup> Republican Conference Rule 8.

<sup>26</sup> Republican Conference Rule 16 establishes the 30-session-day window for filling a vacancy and directs that such vacancy be filled under the procedures defined in Conference Rule 14, as discussed in this section.

limitations, Republican Members may not be elected to serve as a committee chairs (or ranking members) for more than three consecutive terms (six years).

## Committee Vice Chair Designation

The chair of each standing committee designates a vice chair for purposes of presiding over meetings when the chair is absent pursuant to House Rule XI, clause 2(d). Both the Republican Conference and Democratic Caucus provide more specific procedures, requirements, and limitations when designating this position. The Democratic Caucus also provides for the designation of a vice ranking member when the party is in the minority. The Republican Conference does not provide for an equivalent position in its rules.

Republican Conference rules give the party's Steering Committee the option of designating committee vice chairs and that such appointments may be made without regard to seniority. If the Steering Committee opts not to designate a vice chair for a committee, the responsibility falls to the committee chair under House rules. Unlike other committee leadership positions within the Republican Conference, there is no stated term limit on service as a vice chair.

Within the Democratic Caucus, the Democrats on the committee are responsible for electing vice chairs when in the majority and vice ranking members when in the minority. As with most other elected positions with the caucus, when there is more than one candidate for the position, the vote is held by secret ballot unless waived.<sup>27</sup> To be eligible to serve in this role, a Member must have been on the committee for less than five terms and may only hold the position for one term. These restrictions reflect the caucus's intent that the positions serve as "an opportunity for a junior Member to gain insight and experience into the workings of the committee."<sup>28</sup>

## Subcommittee Assignments

Just as the House divides its workload among its committees, so in turn do most committees have subcommittees that further specialize in aspects of their parent entities' jurisdictions. House rules permit each standing committee to establish five subcommittees.<sup>29</sup> A sixth subcommittee is permitted on any committee choosing to have a dedicated committee on oversight.<sup>30</sup> Six House standing committees are specifically permitted a higher number of subcommittees, as listed in **Table 5**. The Committee on Appropriations has the largest allotment of permitted subcommittees, primarily to accommodate a structure of one subcommittee dedicated to each of the 12 regular appropriations bills.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Under Democratic Caucus Rule 3(C), a candidate must receive majority support from the committee caucus to be elected. If more than two candidates are under consideration, the Member receiving the least amount of votes is eliminated each round until one nominee receives majority support. If multiple candidates are tied in receiving the fewest votes in a round, neither is eliminated. If those candidates tie for lowest number of votes in a second round of voting, they are both eliminated from consideration.

<sup>28</sup> Democratic Caucus Rule 21(D).

<sup>29</sup> House Rule X, clause 5(d)(1).

<sup>30</sup> House Rule X, clause 5(d)(2)(A)). A standing committee (except the Committee on Appropriations) with more than 20 members must either establish an oversight subcommittee or assign oversight duties to its subcommittees in their respective jurisdictions pursuant to House Rule X, clause 2(b)(2). The allowance of a sixth oversight committee under clause 5(d)(A) effectively protects a committee with larger membership from otherwise losing a subcommittee to the requirements of clause 2(b)(2).

<sup>31</sup> See CRS Report RL31572, *Appropriations Subcommittee Structure: History of Changes from 1920 to 2023*, by (continued...)



**Table 5. Number of Subcommittees Permitted for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress**  
Beyond the Maximum of Five Set by House Rule X, Clause 5(d)(1)

| Committee                    | Number of Subcommittees Permitted |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Appropriations               | 13                                |
| Armed Services               | 7                                 |
| Foreign Affairs              | 7                                 |
| Oversight and Accountability | 7                                 |
| Transportation               | 6                                 |
| Agriculture                  | 6                                 |

**Source:** House Rule X, clause 5(d)(1), and H.Res. 5, Section 2(l)(2).

The size and ratio of party membership on each subcommittee are controlled by the majority party members of its parent committee. Ratios on subcommittees usually reflect the ratio of parties on the full committee, resulting in majority party control of each subcommittee as well. While Republican Conference rules are silent on these aspects of subcommittees, Democratic Caucus rules prescribe further parameters. Specifically, Democratic Caucus Rule 27 limits individual subcommittee membership to no more than 60% of the full committee and requires that subcommittee ratios “shall be no less favorable to the Democratic Party than the ratio of the full committee.”

## Subcommittee Chair Appointments

The formal selection process for subcommittee chairs varies between the two parties, with the Democratic Caucus establishing a bidding process for each committee and the Republican Conference empowering committee chairs to determine selection procedures. In practice, both parties look to seniority as the primary factor in the appointment of subcommittee chairs, though candidates are also subject to votes of approval within their respective party organizations.

## Democratic Caucus Rules

Within the Democratic Caucus, members of each committee bid for subcommittee chairs in the order of their seniority on the full committee. (The Committee on Appropriations may alternatively use subcommittee seniority as the order for bidding among its membership.) The full committee chair does not bid to be a subcommittee chair. Candidates must then be approved by a majority of committee caucus members present and voting, by secret ballot (though in practice, this is almost always done by voice vote). Approval by the committee caucus marks the end of the process for the majority of subcommittee chair candidates. However, under certain conditions, subcommittee chair candidates are subject to additional votes of approval by the Steering and Policy Committee and the full Democratic Caucus.

Once the committee caucus approves subcommittee chairs, they are submitted to the Steering and Policy Committee for review (with the exception of the Committee on Ethics). Per Democratic Caucus rules, the Steering and Policy Committee must vote to approve subcommittee chair nominees meeting certain criteria:

---

James V. Saturno. House Rule X, clause 5(d)(1), permits the Committee on Appropriations to have up to 13 subcommittees. In prior Congresses, the 13<sup>th</sup> subcommittee was on the District of Columbia.



- Subcommittee chairs nominated within exclusive committees (except the Committee on Rules), or
- Subcommittee chairs nominated to any non-exclusive committees for which they are also members of exclusive committees (except the Committee on Rules).

In considering these nominations, the Steering and Policy Committee is directed to “consider all relevant factors” of a nominee, “including merit, length of service on the committee, degree of commitment to the Democratic agenda, and the diversity of the caucus.”<sup>32</sup> Any debate on the nominee is limited to 60 minutes, equally divided between proponents and opponents, but can be extended by majority vote of the full Democratic Caucus. At the conclusion of debate, the vote is taken by secret ballot.<sup>33</sup>

The full Democratic Caucus may also be required to approve subcommittee chair nominees. Such a vote is required when:

- recommended by the Steering and Policy Committee,
- 50 or more Members submit a written request to the caucus chair within three legislative days of a nomination being submitted to the Steering and Policy Committee,
- the nominee for a subcommittee chair of a non-exclusive committee is also a member of an exclusive committee (except the Committee on Rules) and has been approved by the Steering and Policy Committee, or
- the nominee had been convicted of a felony or censured by the House in the preceding Congress.

Consideration by the Democratic Caucus follows the same procedures as described for Steering and Policy Committee votes (i.e., 60 minutes of equally divided debate on the nomination and vote by secret ballot). If a candidate is rejected at any stage of consideration, the bidding process starts over from the beginning.

In general, a member of the Democratic Caucus may not hold more than one subcommittee chair position. Caucus Rule 22(D) prohibits full committee chairs from also serving as subcommittee chairs for any committee except for the Appropriations, Ethics, House Administration, or joint committees. Caucus Rule 28(F) limits a member to serving as chair for only one subcommittee. This rule does not apply to subcommittee chair positions on the committees on Ethics or House Administration or joint committees.

When a subcommittee chair vacancy arises, it is filled by the same process described above unless the committee caucus approves different procedures by unanimous consent.<sup>34</sup> Vacancies occurring after March 1 of the second session of the Congress may instead be filled directly by the next most senior party member of the subcommittee. For the remainder of the Congress, subcommittee chairs appointed after March 1 of the second session are exempt from caucus rules otherwise limiting service as chair on more than one committee or subcommittee.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> House Democratic Caucus Rule 28(C)(2), p. 28.

<sup>33</sup> The procedures in this paragraph follow those provided in Caucus Rule 21, as directed by Caucus Rule 28(C)(3).

<sup>34</sup> Subcommittee chair vacancies arising at any time within the Committee on Appropriations must be filled within 30 calendar days pursuant to Caucus Rule 29(B).

<sup>35</sup> Democratic Caucus Rule 28(G).

## **Republican Conference Rules**

The Republican Conference empowers its committee chairs to determine the process by which subcommittee chairs are selected with few limitations. A committee chair must produce written procedures for selecting subcommittee chairs prior to the committee's organization meeting that may be amended or rejected by majority vote of the committee caucus.<sup>36</sup> For the Committee on Appropriations, the committee chair nominates subcommittee chairs for approval by the Republican Steering Committee. Any vacancies to subcommittee chairs are filled in the same manner as they were initially appointed.

While committee chairs may determine the selection process for subcommittee chairs, Republican Conference rules also place further limitations on service in such positions. As with other committee leadership positions, a Republican Member cannot serve as a subcommittee chair (or ranking minority member) for more than three consecutive terms (six years).<sup>37</sup> Additionally, no Member may serve concurrently as chair of more than one subcommittee (or standing committee) unless the Republican Conference has granted a waiver. This limitation does not apply to subcommittee chair positions on the Committees on Ethics or House Administration or on joint or select committees.

## **Subcommittee Assignment Procedures**

House rules limit Members to serving on not more than four subcommittees of standing committees but also provide that each party caucus or conference may propose exceptions to this limitation for their respective memberships.<sup>38</sup> As a result, it is possible for Members to serve on more than four subcommittees, subject to the approval of their party caucuses. Exceptions to this four-subcommittee limit are commonly referred to as waivers. Waivers are issued to Members on a case-by-case basis depending on the needs of the party and vacancies to be filled.

Both the Democratic Caucus and the Republican Conference have rules addressing the appointment of Members and chairs to subcommittees. The Republican Conference largely defers authority to committee chairs, when in the majority, in making these assignments. In contrast, the Democratic Caucus has explicit procedures for the appointment of subcommittee members and chairs. Unlike committee assignments, subcommittee assignments are not approved on the House floor. Committees usually vote to approve these assignments at the organizational meetings of the committees held at the beginning of a new Congress.

## **Democratic Caucus Rules**

Following the appointment of subcommittee chairs, House Democrats use a five-step bidding process to assign their Members to subcommittees. The procedures, detailed in Caucus Rule 30(D), are designed to credit prior committee service and committee seniority while also ensuring that each new committee member is guaranteed at least one subcommittee assignment. In the steps below, Members bid on one subcommittee vacancy per round in order of their seniority on the committee, as follows:

---

<sup>36</sup> Republican Conference Rule 19(a)(1).

<sup>37</sup> Republican Conference Rule 14(e).

<sup>38</sup> House Rule X, clause 5(b)(2)(A).

1. A Member who served on the committee in the previous Congress may choose to retain one<sup>39</sup> prior subcommittee assignment. Subcommittee chairs do not participate in this round (with the exception of the Committee on Appropriations).
2. A Member eligible to participate in step 1 who opted out of retaining an existing assignment may bid on one available subcommittee slot.
3. A new committee members may then bid on one available seat (and is guaranteed one assignment under caucus rules).
4. All committee Members may then continue to bid on available subcommittee slots in rounds in order of their seniority on the full committees.<sup>40</sup> Subcommittee chairs may participate in bidding at this point.
5. If any subcommittee slots remain, Members serving on the committee on a temporary basis may bid on vacancies in order of their seniority on the committee.

Following each bid for assignment, the committee caucus must approve the request. Under Caucus Rule 3, these elections are conducted by secret ballot (unless waived) and subject to majority approval. Given the number of assignments to be filled and the fact that only one Member per assignment can be considered at a time, the committee caucus is likely to agree to these assignments without objection in most cases, approving all bids at the conclusion of the process. The full committee will then approve both parties' slates of subcommittee assignments at its organizational meeting. Subcommittee vacancies are filled by the same process above, though the committee caucus may determine different procedures by unanimous consent.

Democratic Caucus Rule 31 reinforces the limitation in House rules on Member service to no more than four subcommittees. Members found in violation by a survey of the caucus are required to comply within 30 calendar days or the matter is referred to the Steering and Policy Committee for disposition. However, this four-subcommittee rule can be waived for individual Members by the caucus on a case-by-case basis.

## **Republican Conference Rules**

For House Republicans, the subcommittee assignment process may vary from committee to committee and from Congress to Congress. In contrast with the multi-step bidding process codified in the Democratic Caucus's rules, the Republican Conference gives committee chairs the authority to establish the processes by which subcommittee assignments are made. The only written requirement placed on committee chairs appears in Conference Rule 19(a)(1), which directs that written procedures be provided to Republican committee members prior to the party's committee organization meeting. The rule also provides that amendments to the chair's procedures can be adopted by a majority of the committee's Republican members.

---

<sup>39</sup> If a subcommittee from the prior Congress is divided into two new subcommittees, the Member is allowed to bid on both new entities. This round of bidding within the Committee on Appropriations allows prior members to retain two prior subcommittee assignments.

<sup>40</sup> For the Committee on Appropriations, bidding continues in committee rank order for Members who have only one subcommittee assignment, then opens up to all committee members for bidding on remaining slots. As noted previously, continuing members of the Committee on Appropriations may retain two subcommittee assignments in the first step of the bidding process.

## Subcommittee Vice Chair Designation

House Rule XI, clause 2(d), requires that each committee chair appoint a vice chair for each subcommittee (as well as for the full committee itself, as discussed previously). Vice chairs are selected from the Members of the majority party on each subcommittee for the purpose of presiding over meetings when the subcommittee chair is absent. As previously discussed, the Democratic Caucus and Republican Conference consider different criteria in selecting full committee vice chairs. However, both entities' rules are silent on the appointment of subcommittee vice chairs. As a result, such appointments remain at the discretion of each committee's chair.

## Non-Standing Committee Assignments

In addition to the standing committees of the House, there are also various other types of non-standing committees that have special requirements as to the makeup of their membership. In general, the Speaker appoints Members to these committees in consultation with the minority leader and in accordance with any other requirements specified in the establishing legislation.<sup>41</sup> Democratic Caucus Rule 33 encourages the Speaker to give “due consideration” to all Members expressing interest in being appointed to these committees. The rule further specifies that all such appointments are for the duration of one Congress and that all seats are treated as vacant at the start of a new Congress. Republican Conference Rule 13 reaffirms the right of the Speaker to appoint Members to all non-standing committees as specified under law. In general, select and joint committees have additional requirements placed on the composition of their respective memberships. The composition of and party rules relating to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence is discussed below. More details on the composition of joint committees can be found in **Appendix B** and regarding temporary select committees in **Appendix B**.

## Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

The size and composition of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence is defined by House Rule X, clause 11, but can be adjusted by unanimous consent.<sup>42</sup> Under the rule, the committee shall not have more than 22 members and is subject to the following requirements:<sup>43</sup>

- Not more than 13 Members from the same party,
- At least one Member from the Committee on Appropriations,
- At least one Member from the Committee on Armed Services,
- At least one Member from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and
- At least one Member from the Committee on the Judiciary.

---

<sup>41</sup> House Rule I, clause 11, provides the Speaker sole authority to “appoint all select, joint, and conference committees ordered by the House.” In practice, the minority leader submits proposed committee assignments for the minority party, whom the Speaker then formally appoints. During the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, Speaker McCarthy declined to seat certain minority party members on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence who were proposed by Minority Leader Jeffries. See also Mike Lillis and Mychael Schnell, “McCarthy Formally Blocks Schiff, Swalwell from Intel panel,” *The Hill*, January 24, 2023, <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/3829218-mccarthy-formally-blocks-schiff-swallowell-from-intel-panel/>.

<sup>42</sup> See *Precedents of the U.S. House of Representatives*, vol. 1, ch. 3, §8.8, pp. 308-309.

<sup>43</sup> During the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, by unanimous consent the House appointed 25 Members to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, three more than allowed under the rule. See *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 169 (February 1, 2023), p. H613-614.

Ex officio membership is also given to the Speaker and minority leader (neither of whom is given a vote during committee business). Members may not serve on the committee for more than four Congresses within a period of six Congresses, though this limitation does not apply to the chair or ranking member.<sup>44</sup>

Both the Democratic Caucus and the Republican Conference have additional rules that apply to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Democratic Caucus Rule 18(D) limits members to one standing committee assignment while also serving on the Intelligence Committee. As previously noted, while serving on the committee, Democratic members may take a leave of absence from their prior committee or subcommittee assignments and have their seniority restored upon their return. Under Republican Conference rules, Republican chairs and ranking members on the committee and its subcommittees are limited to three consecutive terms (six years).

## Removal from Committees

The House has the ability to remove a Member from one or more committee assignments if a majority agrees to do so. This is usually done in a similar fashion to how committee assignments are made, with the decision to remove first determined by the relevant party caucus and the formal act of removal occurring through the adoption of a simple resolution on the House floor. However, in any case, a majority of the House has the ability to remove a Member from committee assignments even if this action is not initiated by the Member's own party.<sup>45</sup>

Both the Democratic Caucus and the Republican Conference vest their respective steering committees with the authority to recommend that a Member be removed from his or her assigned committees.<sup>46</sup> Such a recommendation is then subject to the approval of the full party caucus or conference. Democratic Caucus Rules 24 and 25 automatically remove a committee or subcommittee chair from that position if the Member is indicted or convicted of a felony imposing a sentence of two or more years.<sup>47</sup> Republican Conference Rule 27 specifies that a member convicted of a felony carrying a sentence of two or more years is to be removed from his or her committee assignments within 10 legislative days. Under Republican Conference Rule 28, a committee chair censured by the House is automatically removed from his or her leadership position.

Member committee assignments are also contingent on their continued membership within their parties. When a Member switches political parties or chooses to become independent, his or her existing committee assignments are automatically nullified under House Rule X, clause 5(b)(1). Any further committee assignments are then at the discretion of the party to which the Member is newly affiliated.

---

<sup>44</sup> Service on the committee for only a portion of a Congress also does not count against the four-Congress limit.

<sup>45</sup> In recent Congresses, majorities from both parties have taken action to remove minority party members from committees without the support of the minority party. See H.Res. 72 and H.Res. 789 (117<sup>th</sup> Congress) and H.Res. 76 (118<sup>th</sup> Congress).

<sup>46</sup> Democratic Caucus Rules 10(C)(2) and Republican Conference Rule 11. In situations where the Republican Conference is considering the removal of a Member from a standing committee, the committee chair participates as a voting member of the Steering Committee, the entity that takes the preliminary vote on removal.

<sup>47</sup> Democratic Caucus Rule 25 also automatically removes a committee or subcommittee chair if he or she is censured by the House or convicted of a crime. Caucus Rules 24 and 25 both automatically reinstate a chair if he or she is found not guilty or if the conviction is overturned unless the caucus votes otherwise within 10 legislative days.

## Appendix A. Composition of Party Steering Committees

**Table A-I. Republican Steering Committee Membership**

| Member   |
|--|
| Speaker of the House (when the Republican Party is in the majority)  |
| Republican Leader  |
| Republican Whip  |
| Chief Deputy Whip  |
| Chair of the Republican Conference                                   |
| Chair of the National Republican Congressional Committee             |
| Former Chair of the National Republican Congressional Committee      |
| Chair of the Committee on Policy                                     |
| Vice Chair of the Republican Conference                              |
| Secretary of the Republican Conference                               |
| Member designated by the Speaker/Leader                              |
| Sophomore Class Representative                                       |
| Freshman Class Representative  |
| Dean of the House (when a Member of the House Republican Conference) |
| Region I Representative  |
| Region II Representative   |
| Region III Representative  |
| Region IV Representative   |
| Region V Representative  |
| Region VI Representative   |
| Region VII Representative  |
| Region VIII Representative   |
| Region IX Representative   |
| Region X Representative  |
| Region XI Representative   |
| Region XII Representative  |
| Small State Representative   |
| Texas Representative   |
| Texas Representative II  |
| Florida Representative   |
| Ohio Representative  |
| Rotating Standing committee chair <sup>a</sup>                       |

**Source:** House Republican Conference Rule 11(B), <https://www.gop.gov/conference-rules-of-the-118th-congress/>.

**Notes:** Republican Members appointed to the Republican Conference's Steering Committee for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress can be found at <https://www.gop.gov/steering-committee/>. Pursuant to Conference Rule 11(d), when the Republican Party is in the majority in the House, the Speaker has four votes and the Republican leader has two votes in the Steering Committee. When the party is in the minority, the Republican leader has four votes and the Republican whip has two votes.

- a. The chair of a standing committee participates in the Steering Committee when decisions are being made to elect or remove Members from that standing committee.

**Table A-2. Democratic Steering and Policy Committee Membership**

| <b>Member</b>   |
|---|
| Speaker of the House (when the Democratic Party is in the majority) |
| Co-Chair for Steering   |
| Co-Chair for Policy   |
| Co-Chair  |
| Democratic Leader   |
| Democratic Whip   |
| Assistant Speaker   |
| Caucus Chair  |
| Caucus Vice Chair   |
| Chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee            |
| Co-Chair, Democratic Policy and Communications Committee            |
| Co-Chair, Democratic Policy and Communications Committee            |
| Co-Chair, Democratic Policy and Communications Committee            |
| Co-Chair, Democratic Policy and Communications Committee            |
| Caucus Leadership Representative                                    |
| Freshman Leadership Representative                                  |
| Chair, Committee on Caucus Procedures                               |
| Parliamentarian   |
| Senior Chief Deputy Whip  |
| Senior Chief Deputy Whip  |
| Chief Deputy Whip   |
| Chief Deputy Whip   |
| Chief Deputy Whip   |
| Chief Deputy Whip   |
| Chief Deputy Whip   |
| Chief Deputy Whip   |
| Chief Deputy Whip   |
| Chief Deputy Whip   |
| Freshman Class Representative                                       |

---

**Member**

---

Region 1 Representative

Region 2 Representative

Region 3 Representative

Region 4 Representative

Region 5 Representative

Region 6 Representative

Region 7 Representative

Region 8 Representative

Region 9 Representative

Region 10 Representative

Region 11 Representative

Region 12 Representative

Chair, Committee on Appropriations

Chair, Committee on the Budget

Chair, Committee on Rules

Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce

Chair, Committee on Financial Services

Chair, Committee on Ways and Means

Up to 15 Members appointed by the Speaker

---

**Sources:** CRS analysis of House Democratic Caucus rules (at <https://www.dems.gov/rules-of-the-democratic-caucus>) and press releases by House Democratic leadership offices.

**Notes:** The House Democratic Caucus does not make public the membership of its Steering and Policy Committee.



## Appendix B. Composition of Joint Committees

Joint committees are established by law and are composed of Members from both the House and the Senate. In the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress (2023-2024), four joint committees are in operation. The Speaker appoints Members to these committees in consultation with the minority leader and in accordance with requirements specified in the respective committee's establishing legislation. The full composition of each joint committee is listed below.

**Table B-1. Joint Committee on Taxation**

26 U.S.C. §8002

| <b>Five Members from the Senate Committee on Finance</b> | <b>Five Members from the House Committee on Ways and Means</b> |
|--|--|
| Three majority Members and two minority Members          | Three majority Members and two minority Members                |

**Table B-2. Joint Committee on Printing**

44 U.S.C. §101

| <b>Five Members from the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration</b> | <b>Five Members from the Committee on House Administration<sup>a</sup></b> |
|---|--|
| Four Members and the chair of the committee                               | Four Members and the chair of the committee                                |

- a. 2 U.S.C. §132b references the House Committee on House Oversight. The committee's name was changed to the Committee on House Administration by H.Res. 5 during the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress (1999-2000).

**Table B-3. Joint Committee on the Library**

2 U.S.C. §132b

| <b>Five Members from the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration</b> | <b>Five Members from the Committee on House Administration<sup>a</sup></b> |
|---|--|
| Four Members and the chair of the committee                               | Four Members and the chair of the committee                                |

- a. 2 U.S.C. §132b references the House Committee on House Oversight. The committee's name was changed to the Committee on House Administration by H.Res. 5 during the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress (1999-2000).

**Table B-4. Joint Economic Committee**

15 U.S.C. §1024

| <b>Ten Members of the Senate</b>               | <b>Ten Members of the House</b>                |
|--|--|
| Six majority Members and four minority Members | Six majority Members and four minority Members |

## Appendix C. Composition of Temporary House Select Committees

**Table C-1. Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party**

Established by H.Res. 11, 118<sup>th</sup> Congress (2023-2024)

| 16 Committee Members   |  |
|--|--|
| Nine Members appointed by the Speaker, one of whom is designated as chair. | Seven Members appointed on recommendation of the minority leader |

### Author Information

Michael Greene  
Analyst on Congress and the Legislative Process

---

### Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. 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's institutional role. 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 the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.