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Inaugural Tickets: Past Practices and Considerations for 2025

Since the 20th Amendment was ratified, the oath of office for President of the United States has been administered every four years on January 20. The next presidential inauguration is scheduled to take place on January 20, 2025.

On March 4, 1801, Thomas Jefferson became the first President to be inaugurated at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., in a room now known as the “Old Supreme Court Chamber.” In 1829, Andrew Jackson became the first President to be inaugurated on the East Front of the Capitol, where the majority of swearing-in ceremonies continued to take place until the late twentieth century. It was not until President Ronald Reagan’s inauguration on January 20, 1981, that the swearing-in ceremony moved to the West Front of the Capitol where larger crowds could be accommodated.

Sen. Mitch McConnell, *Congressional Record*,
(October 11, 2000), p. S10267

The move to the West Front of the Capitol not only accommodated larger crowds who could view the ceremony from the Capitol grounds, but also allowed for use of the National Mall. Additionally, the Architect of the Capitol has been able to build a larger platform on the West Front, which in recent years has accommodated more than 1,600 people.

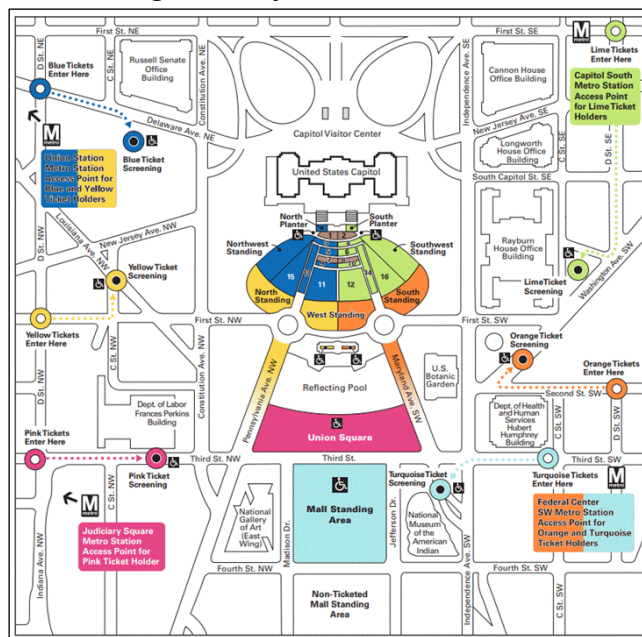
For the 2025 swearing-in ceremony, the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies (JCCIC) has announced that the ceremony will again be conducted on the West Front of the Capitol.

Inaugural Tickets Overview

As the host of the inauguration, the House and Senate jointly appoint the JCCIC every four years. The JCCIC is primarily responsible for arranging and hosting the swearing-in ceremony and an inaugural luncheon.

To accommodate both Members of Congress and constituents who might be interested in attending the swearing-in ceremony in person, the JCCIC has traditionally authorized seated and standing sections on the inaugural platform, the U.S. Capitol grounds, and the National Mall to accommodate attendees. To ease the process of attendees finding their seating or standing locations, the JCCIC has issued a map of seating sections and standing areas for the 60th Inaugural Ceremonies in 2025. **Figure 1** shows the 60th Inaugural Ceremonies Seating Section and Standing Area Map.

Figure 1. 60th Inaugural Ceremonies Seating Section and Standing Area Map



Source: U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, “JCCIC Announces Tickets and Public Access for 60th Inaugural Ceremonies,” press release, January 13, 2025, https://www.inaugural.senate.gov/press_release/jccic-announces-tickets-and-public-access-for-60th-inaugural-ceremonies.

Ticket Allocation

For past inaugurations, the JCCIC has allocated tickets to congressional offices. Allocated tickets were generally a combination of seated tickets—on the inaugural platform and areas closest to the West Front of the Capitol—and standing tickets, which were often behind the seated tickets. As depicted in **Figure 1**, for 2025, ticket areas are color coded, with seated tickets located on the numbered sections on the inaugural platform. Standing tickets are located in the non-numbered areas behind the seating platform. The standing areas are further labeled by geographic position relative to the Capitol and include Northwest Standing, North Standing, West Standing, South Standing, Southwest Standing, National Mall Standing, and Union Square Standing areas. Open areas beyond these locations do not appear to be ticketed and are generally open to the public. In past years, the JCCIC has set up large screens for viewing in nonticketed sections.

Ticket Distribution

For previous inaugurations, the JCCIC allocated tickets to each Member office. Each Representative or Senator then determined ticket allocation and distribution. In total, the

JCCIC traditionally distributes more than 200,000 tickets for every inauguration.

For 2025, the JCCIC intends to distribute both seated tickets and standing tickets to each congressional office. Each office will receive a certain number of tickets for non-Members for seats distributed among various seating or standing areas. Historically, tickets have taken different forms. **Figure 2** shows an example of a ticket issued for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1933 inauguration.

Figure 2. 1933 Inaugural Ceremony Ticket



Source: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, "80th Anniversary—Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1933 Presidential

Inauguration," *Forward with Roosevelt*, March 4, 2013, <https://fdr.blogs.archives.gov/2013/03/04/from-the-museum-48/>.

Security Perimeter

The USCP, along with the United States Secret Service (USSS) and other federal law enforcement agencies, provides security for the inauguration. The USSS is the lead federal law enforcement agency, as authorized by P.L. 106-544, and provides security for the President-elect (and current President, for inaugurations involving a transition) and coordinates the event as a National Special Security Event (NSSE). The USCP provides policing and security for Members of Congress and around the Capitol Building.

For the 2025 inauguration, the USCP plans to set up a security perimeter around the West Front of the Capitol in preparation for the swearing-in ceremony. On Inauguration Day, streets around the Capitol Complex are generally closed and access to Capitol Hill buildings is restricted. Additionally, gates will open to the public at 5 a.m. on Inauguration Day and ticket holders will be required to pass through security screenings.

For more information on the inauguration, see CRS Report R42603, *Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies: History, Membership, and Inaugural Activities*, by Jacob R. Straus; CRS In Focus IF12867, *The Presidential Inaugural Parade: Past Practices and Congressional Considerations*, by Jacob R. Straus and Shawn Reese; and CRS In Focus IF11710, *Inauguration Security and Operations*, by Shawn Reese, Jacob R. Straus, and Christina Miracle Finch.

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