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Congressional Commissions: Overview and Considerations for Congress

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Congressional Commissions: Overview and Considerations for Congress

Congressional commissions are formal groups established to provide independent advice, recommend changes in public policy, study or investigate a particular problem or event, or commemorate an individual, group, or event. While there is no legal definition of *congressional commission*, this report defines it as a multimember independent entity that (1) is established by Congress, (2) exists temporarily, (3) serves in an advisory or commemorative capacity, (4) is appointed in whole or in part by Members of Congress, and (5) reports to Congress. These five characteristics differentiate congressional commissions from presidential commissions, executive branch commissions, and other bodies with “commission” in their names. Since the 101st Congress (1989-1990), Congress has established over 170 congressional commissions.

Commissions might offer some advantages for policymakers. By establishing a commission, Congress can potentially provide a highly visible forum for important issues and assemble greater expertise than may be readily available within the legislature. Commissions can allow for the examination of complex policy issues over a longer period and in greater depth than may be practical for legislators. The nonpartisan or bipartisan character of most congressional commissions may also make their findings and recommendations more politically acceptable, both in Congress and to the public. On the other hand, critics argue that congressional commissions can be expensive, that they are often formed to take difficult decisions out of Congress’s hands, and that their recommendations are mostly ignored by decisionmakers.

The temporary status of congressional commissions and the short time they are often given to complete their work call for legislators to construct commission statutes with care. Legislators have a wide variety of options for tailoring a commission’s composition, organization, and working arrangements, based on Congress’s particular goals. As a result, individual congressional commissions often have organizational structures and powers quite different from one another.

This report provides an overview and analysis of congressional commissions, information about the general statutory structure of a congressional commission, and a catalog of congressional commissions created since the 101st Congress.

For additional information on congressional commissions, see CRS Report R45328, *Designing Congressional Commissions: Background and Considerations for Congress*, by Jacob R. Straus; CRS Report RL33313, *Congressional Membership and Appointment Authority to Advisory Commissions, Boards, and Groups*, by Jacob R. Straus and Karen L. Shanton; CRS Report R41425, *Commemorative Commissions: Overview, Structure, and Funding*, by Jacob R. Straus; and CRS Report R45826, *Congressional Commissions: Funding and Expenditures*, coordinated by Jacob R. Straus.

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Introduction

Congressional commissions are formal groups established by Congress to provide independent advice, recommend changes in public policy, study or investigate a particular problem or event, or commemorate an individual, group, or event. Usually composed of subject matter experts, current or former government officials, or members of the public chosen by Members of Congress and/or officials in the executive branch, commissions may hold hearings, conduct research, analyze data, investigate policy areas, or make field visits as they perform their duties. Most commissions complete their work by outlining their activities, findings, or recommendations in a written report to Congress. Occasionally, legislation submitted by commissions will be given “fast track” authority in Congress.

Commissions might offer some advantages for policymakers.¹ By establishing a commission, Congress can potentially provide a highly visible forum for important issues and assemble greater expertise than may be readily available within the legislature. Complex policy issues can be examined over a longer period and in greater depth than may be practical for legislators, and the nonpartisan or bipartisan character of most congressional commissions may make their findings and recommendations more politically acceptable, both in Congress and to the public. On the other hand, some have expressed concerns that congressional commissions can be expensive, that they might be created to take difficult decisions out of Congress’s hands, and that their findings and recommendations are mostly ignored.

Two broad types of congressional commissions exist: policy commissions and commemorative commissions. Policy commissions generally study a particular public policy problem (e.g., the United States Commission on North American Energy Freedom) or investigate a particular event (e.g., the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States).² They typically report their findings to Congress along with recommendations for legislative or executive action. Commemorative commissions, such as the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, are commonly tasked with planning, coordinating, and overseeing celebrations or memorials of people or events, often in conjunction with milestone anniversaries.³

The temporary status of congressional commissions and their often-short time horizons make it important for legislators to construct commission statutes with care. Statutes establishing congressional commissions generally include language that states the mandate of the commission, provides a membership structure and appointment scheme, defines member or staff compensation and other benefits, outlines the commission’s duties and powers, addresses funding, and sets a termination date for the commission.

Each organizational choice offers a variety of options. Legislators can tailor a commission’s composition, organization, and arrangements, based on particular goals. As a result, individual commissions often have organizational structures and powers quite different from one another.

¹ Colton Campbell, *Discharging Congress: Government by Commission* (Praeger, 2002); and Jordan Tama, *Terrorism and National Security Reforms: How Commissions Can Drive Change During Crisis* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

² United States Commission on North American Energy Freedom: P.L. 109-58, 119 Stat. 1064 (2005). National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States: P.L. 107-306, 116 Stat. 2408 (2002).

³ Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission: P.L. 106-173, 114 Stat. 14 (2000). For more information on commemorative commissions, see CRS Report R41425, *Commemorative Commissions: Overview, Structure, and Funding*, by Jacob R. Straus.

Defining Congressional Commission

In the past, confusion has arisen over whether particular entities are “congressional commissions.” There are several reasons for this confusion. First, the law does not define the term *congressional commission*; observers might disagree as to whether an individual entity qualifies. Second, the federal government has many entities with the word “commission” in their names, such as regulatory commissions, presidential advisory commissions, and advisory commissions established by executive agencies.⁴ Conversely, some congressional commissions do not have the word “commission” in their names; instead, they might be called boards, advisory panels, advisory committees, task forces, or other terms.

This report defines a congressional commission as a multimember independent entity that (1) is established by Congress, (2) exists temporarily, (3) serves in an advisory or commemorative capacity, (4) is appointed in part or whole by Members of Congress, and (5) reports to Congress. This definition differentiates congressional commissions from presidential commissions, executive branch commissions, and other bodies with “commission” in their names, while including most entities that fulfill the role most commonly attributed to commissions: studying policy problems and reporting findings to Congress.⁵ Each of the five characteristics of a congressional commission is discussed below.

Independent Establishment by Congress

Congress usually creates congressional commissions by statute.⁶ Not all statutorily established advisory commissions, however, are congressional commissions. Congress may also statutorily establish executive branch advisory commissions. Conversely, Congress does not establish all federal advisory commissions. The President, department heads, or individual agencies may also establish commissions under various authorities.⁷

⁴ For more information on executive branch advisory commissions, see CRS Report R47984, *The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA): Overview and Considerations for Congress*, by Meghan M. Stuessy and Kathleen E. Marchsteiner; and CRS In Focus IF12102, *Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA): Committee Establishment and Termination*, by Meghan M. Stuessy.

⁵ Alternative definitions might be equally appealing. The wide variety of boards, task forces, panels, and commissions created by Congress, coupled with the lack of a legal definition for “congressional commission,” results in many gray areas. Consequently, some observers might consider an entity that is created by Congress but that does not meet all five characteristics a congressional commission. For example, in the 110th Congress, Congress authorized the Committee on Levee Safety (P.L. 110-114, §9003, 121 Stat. 1288 [2007]). The committee was a temporary advisory body created by statutory authority, but the executive branch and state officials determined its membership and it reported to both Congress and the Secretary of the Army. In the 116th Congress, Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to establish a Commission on the Naming of Items of the Department of Defense that Commemorate the Confederate States of America or Any Person Who Served Voluntarily with the Confederate States of America (P.L. 116-283, §370; 134 Stat. 3553 [2021]) and to implement the plan it submitted. While those commissions are not included in this report, some observers might consider them congressional commissions.

⁶ Entities that are widely considered congressional commissions could be established outside of Congress. For example, the U.S. Institute of Peace established the Iraq Study Group. After its creation, Congress appropriated money to the U.S. Institute of Peace and informally arranged for the selection of the panel’s chairs. For more information on the Iraq Study Group, see U.S. Institute of Peace, “Iraq Study Group,” <https://web.archive.org/web/20241001204124/https://www.usip.org/programs/iraq-study-group>.

⁷ For more information on establishing an advisory commission in the executive branch, see CRS Report R47984, *The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA): Overview and Considerations for Congress*, by Meghan M. Stuessy and Kathleen E. Marchsteiner. Many well-known advisory commissions have been established by the President or by an agency. For example, the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century (the Hart-Rudman Commission) and the (continued...)

Congressional commissions also generally operate independently of Congress. This characteristic excludes commission-like entities established *within* Congress, such as congressional observer groups, working groups, and advisory groups created by individual committees of Congress under their general authority to procure the “temporary services” of consultants to “make studies or advise the committee,” pursuant to 2 U.S.C. §4301.⁸

Temporary Existence

Congressional commissions are established to perform specific duties, with statutory termination dates that are often linked to task completion. This criterion excludes entities that typically serve an ongoing administrative purpose, do not have statutory termination dates, and do not produce regular reports, such as the House Office Building Commission or the Senate Commission on Art.⁹ Also excluded are entities that serve ongoing diplomatic or interparliamentary functions, such as the United States Group of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly or the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group.¹⁰ Finally, Congress has created a number of permanent boards to oversee government entities, such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Council and the John F. Kennedy Center Board of Trustees.¹¹ Although some might consider these entities congressional commissions, their lifespan, purpose, and function differ from temporary congressional commissions as defined above.

Advisory or Commemorative Role

Policy commissions typically produce reports that present findings and offer recommendations for legislative or executive action but lack the power to implement their recommendations. Commemorative commissions may have authority to carry out activities, programs, or projects but only in connection with celebrations or memorials. These powers contrast with those of regulatory commissions, which are usually granted administrative authority over public policy.

Inclusion of Members in the Appointment Process

Members of Congress—particularly House and Senate leaders—are intimately involved in the congressional commission appointment process, either through direct service on the commission or by appointing or recommending candidates for membership.¹²

National Commission on Social Security Reform (Greenspan Commission) were both established by executive branch action.

⁸ For example, in June 1995, the Senate Committee on Finance created the Advisory Commission to Study the Consumer Price Index. The advisory commission submitted its final report to the committee in December 1996. See U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Finance, *Final Report of the Advisory Commission to Study the Consumer Price Index*, committee print, 104th Cong., 2nd sess., S.Prt. 104-72 (GPO, 1996).

⁹ House Office Building Commission: 2 U.S.C. §2001; P.L. 59-253; 34 Stat. 1365 (1907). Senate Commission on Art: 2 U.S.C. §2101; P.L. 100-696; 102 Stat. 4610 (1988).

¹⁰ United States Group of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly: 22 U.S.C. §1928a; P.L. 84-689; 70 Stat. 523 (1956). United States Group of the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group: 22 U.S.C. §276d; P.L. 86-42, 73 Stat. 72 (1959).

¹¹ United States Holocaust Memorial Council: 36 U.S.C. §2302; P.L. 106-292, 114 Stat. 1030 (2000). John F. Kennedy Center Board of Trustees: 20 U.S.C. §76h; P.L. 85-874; 72 Stat. 1698 (1958).

¹² For more information on the inclusion of Members of Congress in the commission appointment process, see CRS Report RL33313, *Congressional Membership and Appointment Authority to Advisory Commissions, Boards, and Groups*, by Jacob R. Straus and Karen L. Shanton.

Reporting Requirements

Congressional commissions are usually required to submit their reports to Congress or to both Congress and the President. Other advisory commissions, such as presidential or executive branch commissions, typically submit their reports only to the President or an agency head.

Types of Congressional Commissions

There are two general types of congressional commissions: policy commissions and commemorative commissions. Most congressional commissions are *policy commissions*, or bodies that study a particular policy problem or investigate a specific event and report their findings to Congress. Other commissions are *commemorative commissions*, or entities established to commemorate a person, group, or event, often to mark an anniversary. These categories are not mutually exclusive; a commission can perform policy and commemorative functions in tandem.

Policy Commissions

Congress establishes the vast majority of congressional commissions to study, examine, investigate, or review a particular policy problem or event. For example, policy commissions have focused on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, motor fuel tax enforcement, threats to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) attacks, and the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.¹³

Commemorative Commissions

Congress also creates commemorative commissions. Commemorative commissions most often commemorate or celebrate an individual, group, or event and may be assigned administrative activities, such as the construction of a national memorial. For example, Congress authorized the World War I Centennial Commission to coordinate the 100th Anniversary of World War I and to establish the National World War I Memorial in Washington, DC.¹⁴

For more information on commemorative commissions, see CRS Report R41425, *Commemorative Commissions: Overview, Structure, and Funding*, by Jacob R. Straus.

Potential Value of Congressional Commissions

Congress might find commissions useful in helping carry out its work. Commissions may be established to, among other things, cope with increases in the scope and complexity of legislation, forge consensus, draft bills, promote interparty communication, address issues that do not fall neatly within the jurisdictional boundaries of congressional committees, and develop

¹³ Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism: P.L. 110-53, 121 Stat. 501 (2007). Motor Fuel Tax Enforcement Advisory Committee: P.L. 109-59, 119 Stat. 1959 (2005). Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse Attack: P.L. 106-398, 114 Stat. 1654A-345 (2000). National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the 9/11 Commission): P.L. 107-306, 116 Stat. 2408 (2002).

¹⁴ World War I Centennial Commission: P.L. 112-272; 126 Stat. 2449 (2013).

recommendations.¹⁵ These goals can be grouped into five categories: expertise, political complexity, consensus building, collective action problem solving, and visibility.

Obtaining Expertise

Congress may choose to establish a commission when legislators and their staffs do not currently have the requisite knowledge or expertise in a complex policy area or when an issue area is sufficiently complicated that engaging noncongressional experts could aid in policy development.¹⁶ By assembling experts in particular policy areas to focus on a specific mission, legislators might efficiently obtain insight into complex public policy problems.¹⁷ Further, a commission can devote itself to a particular issue full time and focus on a single problem without distraction.¹⁸

Overcoming Political Complexity

Complex policy issues may also introduce institutional challenges because they do not fall neatly within the jurisdiction of any particular congressional committee.¹⁹ By virtue of their ad hoc status, commissions may circumvent such issues. Similarly, a commission may allow legislation or policy solutions to bypass the traditional development process in Congress, potentially sidestepping some of the impediments inherent in a decentralized legislature.²⁰

Building Consensus

An array of political considerations may confront legislators seeking policy changes or congressional investigations. The normal legislative or oversight process may sometimes suffer politically from charges of partisanship.²¹ By contrast, the nonpartisan or bipartisan character of most congressional commissions may make their findings and recommendations less susceptible to such charges and more credible both in Congress and with the public.²²

Commissions may also offer space to negotiate compromises among competing viewpoints, avoiding the short-term tactical political maneuvers that may accompany public negotiations in a congressional markup or oversight session.²³ Similarly, because commission members are often

¹⁵ Colton Campbell, “Creating an Angel: Congressional Delegation to Ad Hoc Commissions,” *Congress and the Presidency*, vol. 25, no. 2 (Autumn 1998), p. 162.

¹⁶ Campbell, “Creating an Angel,” p. 174; and Campbell, *Discharging Congress*, pp. 55-59. For more information, see CRS Report R47173, *Information Access for Congressional Advisory Commissions*, by Jacob R. Straus and Tyler L. Wolanin.

¹⁷ Campbell, *Discharging Congress*, p. 51.

¹⁸ Morris P. Fiorina, “Group Concentration and the Delegation of Legislative Authority,” in Roger G. Noll, ed., *Regulatory Policy and the Social Sciences* (University of California Press, 1985), p. 184. See also James E. Katz, “Science, Technology, and Congress,” *Science*, vol. 30, no. 4 (May 1993), pp. 41-44.

¹⁹ George T. Sulzner, “The Policy Process and the Uses of National Governmental Study Commissions,” *Western Political Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 3 (September 1971), pp. 438-448.

²⁰ Kenneth R. Mayer, “Closing Military Bases (Finally): Solving Collective Dilemmas Through Delegation,” *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 3 (August 1995), pp. 395-397.

²¹ Campbell, *Discharging Congress*, pp. 9-10.

²² Sulzner, “The Policy Process and the Uses of National Governmental Study Commissions,” pp. 443-445.

²³ John B. Gilmour, “Summits and Stalemates: Bipartisan Negotiations in the Postreform Era,” in Roger H. Davidson, ed., *The Postreform Congress* (St. Martin’s Press, 1993), pp. 247-248.

not elected officials, they may be better suited to suggesting unpopular, but arguably necessary, policy solutions.²⁴

Solving Collective Action Problems

A commission may help legislators solve collective action problems, in which all legislators individually seek to protect the interests of their own districts despite widespread agreement that the collective result of such interests is something none of them prefers. Legislators can use a commission to jointly “tie their hands” in such circumstances, helping prevent individual concerns about the effect or implementation of a proposed policy solution from impeding consensus about it.²⁵

For example, in five instances, Congress empowered commissions to make recommendations about closures and realignments of military bases.²⁶ Under the terms of the statutes, each commission produced a list of recommended base closures and realignments, and statutory “fast track” procedures were used to govern congressional consideration of the commission’s report.²⁷ This process bypassed internal congressional politics over which individual bases would be closed and helped protect individual Members from political charges that they did not “save” their district’s base.²⁸

Raising Visibility

By establishing a commission, Congress can provide a highly visible forum for important issues that might otherwise receive little attention from the public.²⁹ Commissions are often composed of notable public figures whose personal prestige can transfer to their recommended policy solutions.³⁰ Meetings and press releases from a commission may receive significantly more attention in the media than corresponding information coming directly from members of congressional committees. Completion of a commission’s work product may temporarily focus

²⁴ Daniel Bell, “Government by Commission,” *Public Interest*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Spring 1966), p. 7; Campbell, *Discharging Congress*, p. 70; Campbell, *Discharging Congress*, p. 13; Newt Gingrich, “Leadership Task Forces: The ‘Third Wave’ Way to Consider Legislation,” *Roll Call*, November 16, 1995, p. 5.

²⁵ Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House* (University of California Press, 1993), p. 80.

²⁶ In 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995, and 2005, Congress authorized Base Realignment and Closure Commissions (BRACs). Department of Defense, *DoD Base Realignment and Closure: BRAC Rounds (BRAC 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995 & 2005), Executive Summary Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Budget Estimates, Program Year 2023*, April 2022, https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2023/budget_justification/pdfs/05_BRAC/FY2023_BRAC_Overview.pdf. See also Mayer, “Closing Military Bases,” pp. 398-399.

²⁷ “Under the terms of the statutes that authorized these previous BRAC rounds, the BRAC Commission’s recommendations automatically take effect unless, within a stated period after the recommendations are approved by the President and submitted to the House and Senate, a joint resolution of disapproval is enacted rejecting them in their entirety. Congressional consideration of this disapproval resolution was governed not by the standing rules of the House and Senate but by special expedited or ‘fast track’ parliamentary procedures laid out in statute.” For more information, see CRS Report R43102, “Fast Track” Legislative Procedures Governing Congressional Consideration of a Defense Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) Commission Report, by Christopher M. Davis; and CRS Report RS20234, Expedited or “Fast-Track” Legislative Procedures, by Christopher M. Davis.

²⁸ Charles E. Cook, “Base Closing Furore: Minimal Political Impact for Members,” *Roll Call*, March 18, 1993, p. 1.

²⁹ David S. Brown, “The Public Advisory Board as an Instrument of Government,” *Public Administration Review*, vol. 15, no. 3 (Summer 1955), pp. 197-199.

³⁰ Charles J. Hanser, *Guide to Decision: The Royal Commission* (Bedminster Press, 1965), pp. 222-225.

public attention on a topic that otherwise would receive scant attention, increasing the probability of congressional action on it.³¹

Criticism of Commissions

Some political and scholarly observers have criticized congressional commissions. These criticisms chiefly fall into three groups. First, critics often charge that commissions are an “abdication of responsibility” on the part of legislators.³² Second, some criticize commissions as undemocratic, replacing elected legislators with appointed decisionmakers. Third, critics also say that commissions are not cost-effective, arguing that they are expensive and that Congress can ignore or decline to implement their recommendations.

Abdicated Responsibility

Critics of commissions argue that legislators may create commissions specifically for “blame avoidance.”³³ In this view, Congress uses commissions to distance itself from politically risky decisions. By creating a commission, legislators can take credit for addressing a controversial topic without having to stake out a substantive position on it. If the commission’s work is ultimately popular, legislators can take credit for it, and, if it is unpopular, they can shift responsibility to the commission.³⁴

Reduced Democratic Accountability

Some critics contend that commissions are not democratic. This criticism takes three forms. First, commissions may not be representative of the general population or reflect the variety of public opinion on an issue.³⁵ Second, commissions lack public accountability. Unlike Members of Congress, commission members are often not elected officials and are therefore insulated from electoral pressures or popular opinion. Finally, commissions may not operate in public. Unlike Congress, commission meetings, hearings, and investigations may be held in private.³⁶

Financial Inefficiency

A third criticism of commissions is that they can have high costs and low returns. Congressional commission costs vary widely, ranging from several hundred thousand dollars to over \$10 million. In most cases, Congress is under no obligation to act on, or even respond to, the work of a commission; if legislators disagree with a commission’s results or recommendations, they may simply ignore them. In addition, there is no guarantee that any commission will produce a balanced product—commission members may have their own agendas, biases, and pressures—or

³¹ Sulzner, “The Policy Process and the Uses of National Governmental Study Commissions,” p. 444.

³² Sen. Trent Lott, “Special Commissions,” Remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 148 (September 23, 2002), p. S9050. See also David Schoenbrod, *Power Without Responsibility: How Congress Abuses the People Through Delegation* (Yale University Press, 1993), p. 100; and R. W. Apple, “Keeping Hot Potatoes Out of the Kitchen,” *New York Times*, February 2, 1989, D20.

³³ R. Kent Weaver, “The Politics of Blame Avoidance,” *Journal of Public Policy*, vol. 6, no. 4 (October-December 1986), pp. 373-374. See also Douglas Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action* (Yale University Press, 1990), p. 101.

³⁴ Campbell, *Discharging Congress*, pp. 68-69; and Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action*, p. 101.

³⁵ R. Kent Weaver, “Is Congress Abdicating Power to Commissions?” *Roll Call*, February 12, 1989, pp. 5, 25.

³⁶ Natalie Hanlon, “Military Base Closures: A Study of Government by Commission,” *Colorado Law Review*, vol. 62, no. 2 (1991), pp. 331-364.

a high-quality one.³⁷ Finally, advisory boards may be economically or legislatively inefficient if they function as patronage devices, with Members of Congress using commission positions to pay off political debts.³⁸

Selected Considerations for Congress

Statutes establishing congressional commissions generally specify the scope of a commission's mission, its structure, and its rules of procedure. Legislators can tailor the composition, organization, and working arrangements of a commission, based on the particular goals of Congress. As a result, individual congressional commissions often have organizational structures and powers quite different from one another.³⁹

This section provides an overview of certain features commonly found in commission statutes. For a more detailed and comprehensive description of legislative language and features that often appear in congressional commission statutes, see CRS Report R45328, *Designing Congressional Commissions: Background and Considerations for Congress*, by Jacob R. Straus.

Membership and Appointment Authority

Congressional commissions use a wide variety of membership framework and appointment structures. The statute establishing a commission may require its membership to be made up in whole or in part of specifically designated Members of Congress, typically Members in congressional or committee leadership positions. In other cases, selected leaders are charged with appointing commission members or recommending potential commission members to other appointing authorities. These leaders typically include representatives of both parties, may act either in parallel or jointly, and may make recommendations either to other congressional leaders, such as the Speaker of the House and President pro tempore of the Senate, or to the President or another executive branch official.

Reporting Requirements

Congressional commission statutes usually direct commissions to carry out specific tasks. One of the primary functions of most congressional commissions is to produce a final report for Congress outlining their activities, findings, or recommendations.⁴⁰ These reports can be sent to Congress generally, to specific congressional committees, to the President, to executive agencies, or to a combination of entities. Recommendations in a commission report are only advisory. The potential implementation of such recommendations depends on future congressional or executive branch action.

Report Destination

Most commissions submit their work products to both Congress and the President. A smaller number send their work only to Congress, and others have submitted to both Congress and a

³⁷ James Q. Wilson, "A Reader's Guide to the Crime Commission Reports," *Public Interest*, no. 9 (Fall 1967), pp. 64, 82.

³⁸ Brown, "The Public Advisory Board as an Instrument of Government," p. 199.

³⁹ These considerations are based, in part, on Campbell, *Discharging Congress*, p. 7, Table 1.3.

⁴⁰ Some commissions, such as the Motor Fuel Tax Enforcement Advisory Commission (P.L. 109-59; 119 Stat. 2941 [2005]), are not required to submit a final report but instead make annual reports to Congress during the specified lifespan of the commission.

specified executive branch agency. The report’s destination might matter for the type of future action taken on a topic. Sending a report to both Congress and the President might prompt either legislative or executive action in a policy area. If a commission sends its report to only one entity, on the other hand, others might be less likely to act.

Deadlines

Most commission statutes set a deadline for the submission of a final report. The final report deadline varies from commission to commission. Some commissions, such as the National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education, have had less than six months to submit their final reports to Congress.⁴¹ Other commissions, such as the Antitrust Modernization Commission, have had three or more years to complete their work.⁴²

Commission Expenses

Congressional commission costs vary widely, and Congress has funded them in various ways. Overall expenses for any individual commission depend on a number of factors, including whether commissioners are paid, how many staffers the commission has and how much they are paid, and how long the commission lasts.

Some commissions have few or no full-time staff, while others employ large numbers, such as the 80 full-time paid employees of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States.⁴³ Additionally, some commissions provide compensation to members, while others only reimburse them for travel expenses. In some cases, commissions finish their work and terminate within a year of creation; in others, work may not be completed for several years.

Secondary factors that can affect commission costs include the number of commissioners, the frequency of commission meetings or hearings, and the number and size of publications the commission produces. For a more detailed analysis of commission funding and expenditures, see CRS Report R45826, *Congressional Commissions: Funding and Expenditures*, coordinated by Jacob R. Straus.

Commission Member Pay

Most statutorily created congressional commissions do not compensate their members, except to reimburse them for expenses directly related to their service, such as travel costs.⁴⁴ Statutes that do authorize commissioner compensation almost always specify the level of compensation. Typically, commissioner pay is set in accordance with one of the federal pay scales, prorated to the number of days of service.⁴⁵ The most common level of compensation is the daily equivalent

⁴¹ National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education: P.L. 105-18; 111 Stat. 207 (1997).

⁴² Antitrust Modernization Commission: P.L. 107-273; 116 Stat. 1856 (2002).

⁴³ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission): P.L. 107-306; 116 Stat. 2408 (2002).

⁴⁴ For example, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom’s statute (P.L. 105-292; 112 Stat. 2798 [1998]) stated, “(i) Funding.—Members of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Commission.”

⁴⁵ For example, the Antitrust Modernization Commission’s statute stated, “(a) Pay.—(1) Nongovernment employees.—Each member of the Commission who is not otherwise employed by a government shall be entitled to receive the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay payable for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5 (continued...)

of the basic annual rate of pay for Level IV of the Executive Schedule (EX), which is \$197,200 in 2026.⁴⁶

Staffing

Congressional commissions are usually authorized to hire a staff. The size of the staff is not generally specified, leaving the commission flexibility to judge its own staffing needs. Typically, maximum pay rates will be specified, but the commission will be granted authority to set actual pay rates within those guidelines.

Many congressional commissions are also authorized to hire consultants and procure intermittent services, to request detailees from federal agencies, or to accept voluntary services.

Cataloging Congressional Commissions

This report attempts to identify all congressional commissions enacted into law between the 101st Congress and the first session of the 119th Congress.

Methodology

To identify congressional commissions, CRS searched Congress.gov for commission-related terms and phrases in the text of laws enacted between the 101st Congress (1989-1990) and the first session of the 119th Congress (2025).⁴⁷ Each search result was examined to determine if (1) the legislation established a commission, and (2) the commission met the five criteria outlined above. If the commission met the criteria, its name, public law number, Statutes-at-Large citation, date of enactment, and other information were recorded.

Results

A total of 174 congressional commissions were identified through this search. **Figure 1** shows the number of commissions enacted in each Congress between the 101st Congress and the first session of the 119th Congress.

Two caveats accompany these results. First, as stated above, identifying congressional commissions involves making judgment calls about particular characteristics. Second, tracking provisions of law that create congressional commissions is an inherently inexact exercise.

Although many such bodies are created in easily identifiable freestanding statutes, others are

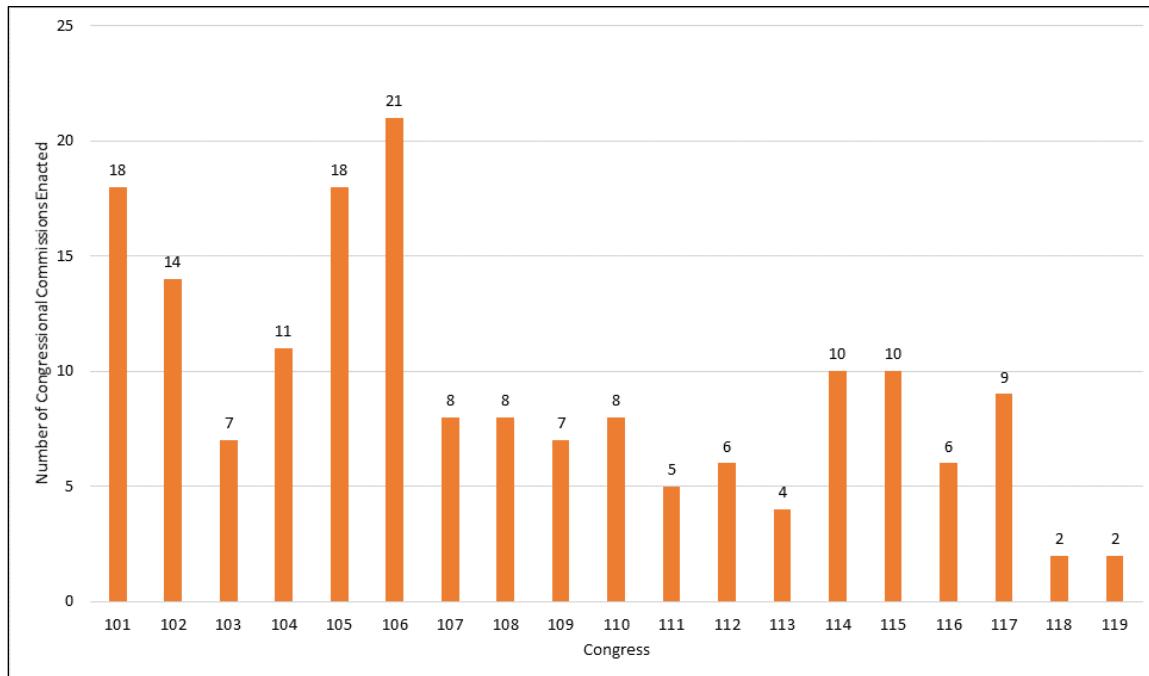
United States Code, as in effect from time to time, for each day (including travel time) during which such member is engaged in the actual performance of duties of the Commission. (2) Government employees.—A member of the Commission who is an officer or employee of a government shall serve without additional pay (or benefits in the nature of compensation) for service as a member of the Commission. (b) Travel Expenses.—Members of the Commission shall receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code.” P.L. 107-273, 116 Stat. 1857 (2002).

⁴⁶ Office of Personnel Management, “Salary Table No. 2026-EX: Rates of Basic Pay for the Executive Schedule (EX),” <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/26Tables/exec/html/EX.aspx>. Although Level IV of the Executive Schedule is the most common compensation level, commission members could be compensated at other levels of the Executive Schedule or at particular levels of the General Schedule. However, members of congressional commissions that fall under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (P.L. 92-463; 5 U.S.C. §§1001-1014) are prohibited from receiving compensation in excess of the rate specified for Executive Schedule Level IV.

⁴⁷ The search included such terms as commission, task force, advisory, board, panel, independent establishment, coordinating committee, study group, and working group.

established as part of much longer omnibus legislation.⁴⁸ Consequently, the search methodology may have missed individual commissions.

Figure 1. Number of Congressional Commissions Created by Congress
101st Congress to First Session 119th Congress



Source: CRS search of public laws enacted between the 101st Congress and the first session of the 119th Congress.

Congressional Commissions, 101st to the 119th Congress, 1st session

The tables that follow provide information about the 174 congressional commissions CRS identified through a search of Congress.gov for legislation enacted between the 101st Congress and the first session of the 119th Congress. Not included are commissions that were reauthorized during a given Congress.⁴⁹

Each table contains the commissions established in one Congress, listed in alphabetical order. For each newly created commission, the tables provide the following information: the name of the commission, the public law creating the commission, and the year of enactment.

⁴⁸ For example, the FY1999 Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act (P.L. 105-277, 112 Stat. 2681 [1998]) included provisions for 12 separate advisory bodies.

⁴⁹ For example, in the 117th Congress, Congress extended the Commission on Combating Synthetic Opioid Trafficking (P.L. 117-51, 135 Stat. 408 [2021]). That commission was initially authorized in the 116th Congress (see **Table 4**).

Table 1. Congressional Commissions Created During the 119th Congress, 1st Session

Commission	Authority
Commission on the National Defense Strategy	P.L. 119-60, §1095 (2025)
Congressional Strategic Advisory Group	P.L. 119-60, §8729 (2025)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 2. Congressional Commissions Created During the 118th Congress

Commission	Authority
Commission to Study the Potential Transfer of the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History	P.L. 118-144; 138 Stat. 1667 (2024)
FISA Reform Commission	P.L. 118-49, §18(c); 138 Stat. 885 (2024)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 3. Congressional Commissions Created During the 117th Congress

Commission	Authority
Afghanistan War Commission	P.L. 117-81, §1094; 135 Stat. 1935 (2021)
Commission on Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution Reform	P.L. 117-81, §1004; 135 Stat. 1884 (2021)
Commission on Reform and Modernization of the Department of State	P.L. 117-263, §9803; 136 Stat. 3924 (2022)
Commission on the National Defense Strategy for the United States	P.L. 117-81, §1095; 135 Stat. 1943 (2021)
Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture	P.L. 117-140; 136 Stat. 1259 (2022)
Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States	P.L. 117-81, §1687; 135 Stat. 2126 (2021)
Medical Advisory Board of Central Intelligence Agency	P.L. 117-103, §602; 136 Stat. 992 (2022)
National Commission on the Future of the Navy	P.L. 117-263, §1092; 136 Stat. 2807 (2022)
National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology	P.L. 117-81, §1091; 135 Stat. 1929 (2021)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 4. Congressional Commissions Created During the 116th Congress

Commission	Authority
Adams Memorial Commission	P.L. 116-9, §2406; 133 Stat. 748 (2019)
Commission on Combating Synthetic Opioid Trafficking	P.L. 116-92, §7221; 133 Stat. 2270 (2019)
Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys	P.L. 116-156; 134 Stat. 700 (2020)
Commission on the State of U.S. Olympics and Paralympics	P.L. 116-189, §11; 134 Stat. 970 (2020)

Commission	Authority
Congressional Oversight Commission (CARES Act)	P.L. 116-136, §4020; 134 Stat. 486 (2020)
Route 66 Centennial Commission	P.L. 116-256; 134 Stat. 1142 (2020)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 5. Congressional Commissions Created During the 115th Congress

Commission	Authority
400 Years of African-American History Commission	P.L. 115-102; 131 Stat. 2248 (2018)
Commission on Farm Transitions—Needs for 2050	P.L. 115-334, §12609; 132 Stat. 5009 (2018)
Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse Attacks and Similar Events ^a	P.L. 115-91, §1691; 131 Stat. 1786 (2017)
Cyberspace Solarium Commission	P.L. 115-232, §1652; 132 Stat. 2140 (2018)
Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission	P.L. 115-77; 131 Stat. 1251 (2017)
National Commission on Military Aviation Safety	P.L. 115-232, §1087; 132 Stat. 1992 (2018)
National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence	P.L. 115-232, §1051; 132 Stat. 1962 (2018)
Public-Private Partnership Advisory Council to End Human Trafficking	P.L. 115-393, §703; 132 Stat. 5278 (2018)
Syria Study Group	P.L. 115-254, §1501; 132 Stat. 3519 (2018)
Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission ^b	P.L. 115-31, §431; 131 Stat. 502 (2017)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Notes:

- The Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse Attacks and Similar Events is distinct from the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Attack that was created by P.L. 106-398, Title XIV. The legislation authorizing the new Electromagnetic Pulse Commission repealed P.L. 106-398, Title XIV.
- The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission was incorporated by reference in P.L. 115-31. Text of the bill can be found in S. 847 (115th Congress) and in Appendix C of P.L. 115-31 (131 Stat. 842A-17).

Table 6. Congressional Commissions Created During the 114th Congress

Commission	Authority
Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children	P.L. 114-244; 130 Stat. 981 (2016)
Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking	P.L. 114-140; 130 Stat. 317 (2016)
Commission on the National Defense Strategy for the United States	P.L. 114-328, §942; 130 Stat. 2367 (2016)
Congressional Task Force on Economic Growth in Puerto Rico	P.L. 114-187, §409; 130 Stat. 593 (2016)
Creating Options for Veterans' Expedited Recovery Commission	P.L. 114-198, §931; 130 Stat. 769 (2016)
John F. Kennedy Centennial Commission	P.L. 114-215; 130 Stat. 830 (2016)
National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service	P.L. 114-328, §551; 130 Stat. 2130 (2016)
United States Semiquincentennial Commission	P.L. 114-196; 130 Stat. 685 (2016)

Commission	Authority
Virgin Islands of the United States Centennial Commission	P.L. 114-224; 130 Stat. 921 (2016)
Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission	P.L. 114-323, §601; 130 Stat. 1936 (2016)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 7. Congressional Commissions Created During the 113th Congress

Commission	Authority
Commission on Care	P.L. 113-146, §202; 128 Stat. 1773 (2014)
Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum	P.L. 113-291, §3056; 128 Stat. 3810 (2014)
National Commission on Hunger	P.L. 113-76, §743(b); 128 Stat. 41 (2014)
National Commission on the Future of the Army	P.L. 113-291, §1701; 128 Stat. 3664 (2014)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 8. Congressional Commissions Created During the 112th Congress

Commission	Authority
Commission on Long-Term Care	P.L. 112-240, §643; 126 Stat. 2358 (2013)
Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities	P.L. 112-275; 126 Stat. 2460 (2013)
Congressional Advisory Panel on the Governance of the Nuclear Security Enterprise	P.L. 112-239, §3166; 126 Stat. 2208 (2013)
Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission	P.L. 112-239, §671; 126 Stat. 1787 (2013)
National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force	P.L. 112-239, §361; 126 Stat. 1703 (2013)
World War I Centennial Commission	P.L. 112-272; 126 Stat. 2448 (2013)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 9. Congressional Commissions Created During the 111th Congress

Commission	Authority
Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission	P.L. 111-21, §5; 123 Stat. 1625 (2009)
Foreign Intelligence and Information Commission	P.L. 111-259, §601; 124 Stat. 2739 (2010)
Independent Panel to Assess the Quadrennial Defense Review	P.L. 111-84, §1061; 123 Stat. 2467 (2009)
Indian Law and Order Commission	P.L. 111-211, §235; 124 Stat. 2282 (2010)
Ronald Reagan Centennial Commission	P.L. 111-25; 123 Stat. 1767 (2009)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 10. Congressional Commissions Created During the 110th Congress

Commission	Authority
Commission on the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade	P.L. 110-183; 122 Stat. 606 (2008)
Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism	P.L. 110-53, §1851; 121 Stat. 501 (2007)
Commission on Wartime Contracting	P.L. 110-181, §841; 122 Stat. 230 (2008)
Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino	P.L. 110-229, §333; 122 Stat. 784 (2008)
Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States	P.L. 110-181, §1062; 122 Stat. 319 (2008)
Congressional Oversight Panel (Emergency Economic Stabilization Act)	P.L. 110-343, §125; 122 Stat. 3791 (2008)
Genetic Nondiscrimination Study Commission	P.L. 110-233, §208; 122 Stat. 917 (2008)
National Commission on Children and Disasters	P.L. 110-161, §601; 121 Stat. 2213 (2007)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 11. Congressional Commissions Created During the 109th Congress

Commission	Authority
Commission on the Implementation of the New Strategic Posture of the United States	P.L. 109-163, §1051; 119 Stat. 3431 (2006)
Human Space Flight Independent Investigation Commission	P.L. 109-155, §821; 119 Stat. 2941 (2005)
Motor Fuel Tax Enforcement Advisory Commission	P.L. 109-59, §11141; 119 Stat. 1959 (2005)
National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission	P.L. 109-59, §11142; 119 Stat. 1961 (2005)
National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission	P.L. 109-59, §1909(b); 119 Stat. 1471 (2005)
Technical Study Panel	P.L. 109-236, §11; 120 Stat. 501 (2006)
United States Commission on North American Energy Freedom	P.L. 109-58, §1423; 119 Stat. 1064 (2005)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 12. Congressional Commissions Created During the 108th Congress

Commission	Authority
Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program	P.L. 108-199, §104; 118 Stat. 435 (2004)
Commission on the National Guard and Reserves	P.L. 108-375, §513; 118 Stat. 1880 (2004)
Commission on the Review of the Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States	P.L. 108-132, §128; 117 Stat. 1382 (2003)
Helping to Enhance the Livelihood of People (HELP) Around the Globe Commission	P.L. 108-199, §637; 118 Stat. 101 (2004)
National Commission on Small Community Air Service	P.L. 108-176, §411; 117 Stat. 2549 (2003)

Commission	Authority
National Prison Rape Reduction Commission	P.L. 108-79, §7; 117 Stat. 980 (2003)
Panel to Review Sexual Misconduct Allegations at United States Air Force Academy	P.L. 108-11, §501; 117 Stat. 609 (2003)
Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission	P.L. 108-136, §1501; 117 Stat. 1676 (2003)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 13. Congressional Commissions Created During the 107th Congress

Commission	Authority
Antitrust Modernization Commission	P.L. 107-273, §11051; 116 Stat. 1856 (2002)
Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Commission	P.L. 107-202; 116 Stat. 739 (2002)
Brown v. Board of Education 50 th Anniversary Commission	P.L. 107-41; 115 Stat. 226 (2001)
Commission on the Application of Payment Limitations for Agriculture	P.L. 107-171, §1605; 116 Stat. 216 (2002)
Guam War Claims Review Commission	P.L. 107-333; 116 Stat. 2873 (2002)
National Commission for the Review of the Research and Development Programs of the United States Intelligence Community	P.L. 107-306, §1002; 116 Stat. 2437 (2002)
National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States	P.L. 107-306, §601; 116 Stat. 2408 (2002)
National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission	P.L. 107-106; 115 Stat. 1009 (2001)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 14. Congressional Commissions Created During the 106th Congress

Commission	Authority
Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission	P.L. 106-173; 114 Stat. 14 (2000)
Commission on Affordable Housing and Health Care Facility Needs in the 21 st Century	P.L. 106-74, §525; 113 Stat. 1106 (1999)
Commission on Indian and Native Alaskan Health Care	P.L. 106-310, §3307; 114 Stat. 1216 (2000)
Commission on Ocean Policy	P.L. 106-256, §3; 114 Stat. 645 (2000)
Commission on the Future of the United States Aerospace Industry	P.L. 106-398, §1092; 114 Stat. 1654A-300 (2000)
Commission on the National Military Museum	P.L. 106-65, §2901; 113 Stat. 880 (1999)
Commission on Victory in the Cold War	P.L. 106-65, §1053(e); 113 Stat. 765 (1999)
Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Attack	P.L. 106-398, §1401; 114 Stat. 1645A-345 (2000)
Commission to Assess United States National Security Space Management and Organization	P.L. 106-65, §1621; 113 Stat. 813 (1999)
Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission	P.L. 106-79, §8162; 113 Stat. 1274 (1999)
Forest Counties Payments Committee	P.L. 106-291, §320(b); 114 Stat. 991 (2000)

Commission	Authority
James Madison Commemoration Commission	P.L. 106-550; 114 Stat. 2745 (2000)
Judicial Review Commission on Foreign Asset Control	P.L. 106-120, §810; 113 Stat. 1633 (1999)
Lands Title Report Commission	P.L. 106-568, §1001; 114 Stat. 2923 (2000)
	P.L. 106-569, §501; 114 Stat. 2959 (2000)
Millennial Housing Commission	P.L. 106-74, §206; 113 Stat. 1070 (1999)
National Commission for the Review of the National Reconnaissance Office	P.L. 106-120, §701; 113 Stat. 1620 (1999)
National Commission on the Use of Offsets in Defense Trade	P.L. 106-113, §1247; 113 Stat. 1501A-502 (1999)
National Commission to Ensure Consumer Information and Choice in the Airline Industry	P.L. 106-181, §228; 114 Stat. 105 (2000)
National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Commission	P.L. 106-408, §303; 114 Stat. 1783 (2000)
Public Interest Declassification Board	P.L. 106-567, §701; 114 Stat. 2856 (2000)
Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel	P.L. 106-170, §101(f); 113 Stat. 1878 (1999)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 15. Congressional Commissions Created During the 105th Congress

Commission	Authority
Advisory Commission on Electronic Commerce	P.L. 105-277, §1102; 112 Stat. 2681-722 (1998)
Amtrak Reform Council	P.L. 105-134, §203; 111 Stat. 2579 (1997)
Census Monitoring Board	P.L. 105-119, §210; 111 Stat. 2483 (1997)
Commission on Military Training and Gender-Related Issues	P.L. 105-85, §561; 111 Stat. 1750 (1997)
Commission on Online Child Protection	P.L. 105-277, §1405; 112 Stat. 2681-739 (1998)
Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering, and Technology Development	P.L. 105-255; 112 Stat. 1889 (1998)
Independent Panel to Evaluate the Adequacy of Current Planning for United States Long-Range Air Power and the Requirement for Continued Low-Rate Production of B-2 Stealth Bombers	P.L. 105-56, §8131; 111 Stat. 1249 (1997)
National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare	P.L. 105-33, §4021; 111 Stat. 347 (1997)
National Commission on Terrorism	P.L. 105-277, §591; 112 Stat. 2681-210 (1998)
National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education	P.L. 105-18, §40002; 111 Stat. 207 (1997)
National Health Museum Commission	P.L. 105-78, §704; 111 Stat. 1525 (1997)
Parents Advisory Council on Youth Drug Abuse	P.L. 105-277, §710; 112 Stat. 2681-689 (1998)
Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States	P.L. 105-186; 112 Stat. 611 (1998)
Trade Deficit Review Commission	P.L. 105-277, §127; 112 Stat. 2681-547 (1998)
Twenty-First Century Workforce Commission	P.L. 105-220, §331; 112 Stat. 1087 (1998)

Commission	Authority
United States Commission on International Religious Freedom	P.L. 105-292, §201; 112 Stat. 2797 (1998)
Web-Based Education Commission	P.L. 105-244, §851; 112 Stat. 1822 (1998)
Women's Progress Commemoration Commission	P.L. 105-341; 112 Stat. 3196 (1998)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 16. Congressional Commissions Created During the 104th Congress

Commission	Authority
Commission on 21 st Century Production Agriculture	P.L. 104-127, §181; 110 Stat. 938 (1996)
Commission on Consensus Reform in the District of Columbia Public Schools	P.L. 104-134, §2851; 110 Stat. 1321-151 (1996)
Commission on Maintaining United States Nuclear Weapons Expertise	P.L. 104-201, §3162; 110 Stat. 2843 (1996)
Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance	P.L. 104-275, §701; 110 Stat. 3346 (1996)
Commission on the Advancement of Federal Law Enforcement	P.L. 104-132, §806; 110 Stat. 1305 (1996)
Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States	P.L. 104-201, §1321; 110 Stat. 2711 (1996)
Commission to Assess the Organization of the Federal Government to Combat the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction	P.L. 104-293, §711; 110 Stat. 3470 (1996)
National Civil Aviation Review Commission	P.L. 104-264, §274(b); 110 Stat. 3241 (1996)
National Commission on Restructuring the Internal Revenue Service	P.L. 104-52, §637; 109 Stat. 509 (1995)
National Gambling Impact Study Commission	P.L. 104-169; 110 Stat. 1482 (1996)
Water Rights Task Force	P.L. 104-127, §389(d); 110 Stat. 1021 (1996)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 17. Congressional Commissions Created During the 103rd Congress

Commission	Authority
Advisory Board on Welfare Indicators	P.L. 103-432, §232(c); 108 Stat. 4463 (1994)
Commission on Leave	P.L. 103-3, §301; 107 Stat. 23 (1993)
Commission on Protecting and Reducing Government Secrecy	P.L. 103-236, §901; 108 Stat. 525 (1994)
Commission on the Roles and Capabilities of the United States Intelligence Community	P.L. 103-359, §901; 108 Stat. 3456 (1994)
National Bankruptcy Review Commission	P.L. 103-394, §601; 108 Stat. 4147 (1994)
National Commission on Crime Control and Prevention	P.L. 103-322, §270002; 108 Stat. 2089 (1994)
National Skill Standards Board	P.L. 103-227, §501; 108 Stat. 191 (1994)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 18. Congressional Commissions Created During the 102nd Congress

Commission	Authority
Commission on Broadcasting to the People's Republic of China	P.L. 102-138, §243; 105 Stat. 705 (1991)
Commission on Child and Family Welfare	P.L. 102-521, §5; 106 Stat. 3406 (1992)
Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Capitol	P.L. 102-392, §324; 106 Stat. 1726 (1992)
Commission on the Social Security "Notch" Issue	P.L. 102-393, §635; 106 Stat. 1777 (1992)
Commission to Promote Investment in America's Infrastructure	P.L. 102-240, §1081; 105 Stat. 2020 (1991)
Congressional Commission on the Evaluation of the Defense Industrial Base Policy	P.L. 102-558, §203; 106 Stat. 4220 (1992)
Glass Ceiling Commission	P.L. 102-166, §203; 105 Stat. 1082 (1991)
National Commission on Intermodal Transportation	P.L. 102-240, §5005; 105 Stat. 2160 (1991)
National Commission on Reducing Capital Costs for Emerging Technology	P.L. 102-245, §401; 106 Stat. 21 (1992)
National Commission on Rehabilitation Services	P.L. 102-569, §801; 106 Stat. 4473 (1992)
National Commission on the Future Role of United States Nuclear Weapons, Problems of Command, Control, and Safety of Soviet Nuclear Weapons, and Reduction of Nuclear Weapons	P.L. 102-172, §8132; 105 Stat. 1208 (1991)
National Commission to Ensure a Strong Competitive Airline Industry	P.L. 102-581, §204; 106 Stat. 4891 (1992)
National Education Commission on Time and Learning	P.L. 102-62, §101; 105 Stat. 305 (1991)
Thomas Jefferson Commemoration Commission	P.L. 102-343; 106 Stat. 915 (1992)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Table 19. Congressional Commissions Created During the 101st Congress

Commission	Authority
Civil War Sites Advisory Commission	P.L. 101-628, §1205; 104 Stat. 4504 (1990)
Commission on Legal Immigration Reform	P.L. 101-649, §141; 104 Stat. 5001 (1990)
Commission on Management of the Agency for International Development Programs	P.L. 101-513, §557; 104 Stat. 2022 (1990)
Commission on State and Private Forests	P.L. 101-624, §1245; 104 Stat. 3548 (1990)
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission	P.L. 101-510, §2901; 104 Stat. 1808 (1990)
Independent Commission ^a	P.L. 101-121, §304(c); 103 Stat. 742 (1989)
Joint Federal-State Commission on Policies and Programs Affecting Alaska Natives	P.L. 101-379, §12(b); 104 Stat. 478 (1990)
National Advisory Council on the Public Service	P.L. 101-363; 104 Stat. 424 (1990)
National Commission on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing	P.L. 101-235, §601; 103 Stat. 2052 (1989)
National Commission on Defense and National Security	P.L. 101-511, §3; 104 Stat. 1899 (1990)

National Commission on Financial Institution Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement	P.L. 101-647, §2551; 104 Stat. 4889 (1990)
National Commission on Judicial Discipline and Removal	P.L. 101-650, §408; 104 Stat. 5124 (1990)
National Commission on Manufactured Housing	P.L. 101-625, §943; 104 Stat. 4413 (1990)
National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing	P.L. 101-235, §501; 103 Stat. 2048 (1989)
National Commission on Wildfire Disasters	P.L. 101-286, §101; 104 Stat. 171 (1990)
National Commission to Support Law Enforcement	P.L. 101-515, §211(B); 104 Stat. 2122 (1990)
Preservation of Jazz Advisory Commission	P.L. 101-499, §4; 104 Stat. 1210 (1990)
Risk Assessment and Management Commission	P.L. 101-549, §303; 104 Stat. 2574 (1990)

Source: CRS analysis of commission legislation from Congress.gov.

Notes:

- a. The Independent Commission was created to review the National Endowment for the Arts' grant-making procedures and consider whether the standard for publicly funded art should be different than the standard for privately funded art.

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