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Updated November 16, 2026

Administration of the House of Representatives: Actions Taken During a New Congress and Following a Majority Change

As seen in **Table 1,** majority party control in the House of Representatives has switched 12 times since 1910, most recently in 2023 (beginning of the 118th Congress). The results of the November 2026 elections have created another anticipated switch in the majority party in the House for the 120th Congress beginning in January 2027.

Table 1. Changes in Majority Party Control in the House of Representatives, 1910-2026

Congress (Years)	New Majority
118th (2023-2024)	Republican
116th (2019-2020)	Democratic
112th (2011-2012)	Republican
110th (2007-2008)	Democratic
104th (1995-1996)	Republican
84th (1955-1956)	Democratic
83rd (1953-1954)	Republican
81st (1949-1950)	Democratic
80th (1947-1948)	Republican
72nd (1931-1933)	Democratic[a]
66th (1919-1921)	Republican
62nd (1911-1913)	Democratic

Source: Office of History, Art and Archives, United States House of Representatives, "Majority Changes in the House of Representatives, 1856 to Present", https://history.house.gov/Institution/Majority-Changes/Majority-Changes/. See also https://history.house.gov/Institution/Party-Divisions/Party-Divisions/.

a. A Republican majority was elected to the 72nd Congress. Prior to the convening of Congress, several Representatives-elect died, leaving a Democratic majority to organize the House.

During the period between the November elections and when the new Congress convenes (at noon on January 3, unless a different day is designated by law during the preceding Congress, pursuant to the Twentieth Amendment to the Constitution), a new incoming House majority lacks official institutional authority to implement any changes beyond procedures governing the activities of its conference or caucus. Matters relating to chamber rules, officers, staff, office space, and administrative practices remain under the direction of the outgoing majority.

While a new incoming majority may lack formal authority to undertake administration of the House prior to the formal convening of the chamber, discussions related to a transition may need to occur prior to the formal assumption of majority status. Decisions about the transition may be made at various times, from the first meetings on early organization of the chamber soon after the general election through the first several weeks of a new Congress.

Finally, on the first day of a new Congress, many activities and decisions are required and occur routinely, regardless of whether there was a change in party control.

Adoption of Rules Affecting Administrative Issues

The majority party routinely takes up adoption of the rules of the House for the new Congress as one of its first actions. Typically, the package of rules and separate orders is similar to the one adopted in the previous Congress, with certain amendments to previous practices and procedures.

In addition to rules and separate orders related to floor and committee procedures, recent changes have also addressed more administrative or operational changes—for example, related to access or use of the Hall of the House, Member records, access to the floor by staff and former Members, use of electronic devices on the floor, public availability of certain documents, employment policies (including those related to shared staff), and the use of artificial intelligence.

Election of Officers and Appointment of Officials

A change in majority party control may result in a change in some of the officers and other officials of the House, who are elected or appointed in accordance with House Rule II.

Officers elected by the House currently include the Clerk, Sergeant at Arms, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chaplain. These officers are typically elected at the beginning of each Congress to serve until their successors are chosen. In recent practice, the election process has commonly entailed the offering of one resolution containing the majority slate of officers. A member of the minority party often then offers an amendment to the resolution offering a separate slate of candidates for positions other than the Chaplain.

The Parliamentarian, General Counsel, Legislative Counsel, Law Revision Counsel, head of the Office of Interparliamentary Affairs, and Historian are each appointed by the Speaker. The head of the Office of the Whistleblower Ombuds is also appointed by the Speaker, in consultation with other specified chairs and ranking minority members. The Inspector General is jointly appointed by the Speaker and majority and minority leaders. Although some of these positions have been characterized by the lengthy tenure of the incumbents, others have experienced more frequent turnover; but they all serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority.

Following some prior transitions, the House has also added or eliminated offices and considered changes to existing office names, organization, structure, or duties.

Overall House Staffing Levels and Departing Staff

Congressional leadership has long influenced the size of the House workforce. In a new Congress, leaders may provide overall direction in the area of staffing—particularly for leadership, committee, and support offices. This directional focus may follow a majority transition—for example, overall cuts in internal House budgets were adopted at the start of the 112th Congress when the House agreed to H.Res. 22—although it may happen at any time.

In at least one prior instance when the majority party changed, legislation was considered in December of the lame duck session to provide severance for certain staff "separated from employment solely and directly as a result of a change in the party holding the majority of the membership of the House." The resolution (H.Res. 1104, 109th Congress) was not agreed to.

Committee Funding, Staffing, and Records

Under House Rule X, clause 7, committees have interim funding authority through March 31 of the first session of a new Congress. During the interim period following a change in party control, the payment of committee expenses is approved "by the ranking member of the committee, as it was constituted at the expiration of the preceding Congress who is a member of the majority party in the present Congress" (clause 7(e)). Early in the new Congress, the House considers an omnibus committee funding resolution reported from the Committee on House Administration establishing funding levels for committees for each session.

Although the details have varied over time, the principle of a two-third, one-third split between majority and minority funding and staffing on committees dates to the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970. The fair treatment of the minority is also addressed in House Rule X, clauses 6 and 9, and it has been discussed during committee funding request hearings in recent Congresses.

Prior transitions have resulted in changes to, for example, authorization and oversight plans and office transfers between the incoming majority and minority.

House Rules VII and XI govern the preservation of committee records, in paper and electronic form, and the transfer of any noncurrent committee records to the Clerk of the House for transfer to the National Archives and Records Administration. While these rules are long-standing, they may bear particular importance when committee leadership changes.

Members' Representational Allowance

House staff, supplies, and district office rental costs are provided through funds appropriated annually and allocated to Representatives according to the formulas established under the Members' Representational Allowance (MRA). The 2026 MRA is available through January 2, 2027. The incoming Committee on House Administration will be responsible for communicating to Members of the 120th Congress their MRA for 2027 (January 3, 2027, through January 2, 2028). Travel and staff expenses for Members-elect attending organizational caucus or conference meetings are governed by 2 U.S.C. 29a and 5343.

Member Office Space and Moves

Prior to the beginning of a new Congress, the superintendent of House Office Buildings, an employee of the Architect of the Capitol, supervises office moves and officiates the office lottery under the direction of the House Office Building Commission (HOBC). Members wishing to move office suites, returning Members who served only in a portion of the 119th Congress and are required to move for the 120th Congress, and Members-elect may participate. The lottery is conducted once per Congress and according to a policy first addressed in an act approved in 1908 (2 U.S.C. 2004). The HOBC has periodically issued updates to the regulations. Current regulations require departing Members to vacate their offices by November 25 following the election. Departing Members are to be provided small temporary workspaces for the remainder of the 119th Congress. The regulations also state that any Member elected to a vacant seat will temporarily occupy the predecessor's office until the next regular lottery. Certain costs associated with voluntary office moves are charged to individual 2026 MRA accounts.

Other Administrative Considerations

Prior incoming majorities have also considered House policies and actions related to technology and cybersecurity; transparency initiatives; the organization of support offices; the House schedule (e.g., weekly meetings and recesses); and House-wide contracts. A majority change will also change the membership of internal entities that are comprised of House Members, like the HOBC and the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group. Other boards led by persons elected by the House or appointed by its Members (e.g., the Capitol Police Board, the board governing the Office of Congressional Ethics, the board of directors of the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights, the Congressional Accessibility Services Board) may be impacted.

Assignment and Administration of Other House Office Space

Decisions made during prior transitions have affected the assignment and use of space on the House side of the Capitol (e.g., room locations for leadership, committees, and support offices; smoking policies; the provision of various convenience services).

For Additional Information (House access only)

- Transition Website: https://housetransition.aoc.gov/
- HouseNet's 120th Transition Library
- https://www.aoc.gov/what-we-do/projects/congressional-office-moves/house

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IF11028

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