

The Modern Era, 1947–present

The death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt on April 12, 1945, sent Vice President Harry S. Truman to the White House, only months into Roosevelt's fourth term. Truman would serve for three and a half years without a vice president, until the 1948 election. Under the law of presidential succession, the next in line to the presidency was Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, Jr., who had not held an elective office. Truman believed it was wrong for anyone to step into the presidency who had never been elected by a vote of the people. In the short run, he solved this dilemma by replacing Stettinius with former Senator James F. Byrnes. In the long run, he asked Congress to revise the order of succession to place the Speaker of the House and president pro tempore of the Senate ahead of the cabinet members in line of succession to the presidency.

Previously, when the Speaker and president pro tempore had stood in the line of succession, the president pro tempore came first, based on the concept of the president pro tempore as the stand-in for the vice president. Truman thought the Speaker of the House, the chosen leader of the “elected representatives of the people,” ought to be placed first. (Since the 1913 ratification of the Constitution's 17th Amendment, providing for direct popular election of senators, the same argument could be made on behalf of the president pro tempore.) Personalities likely influenced his thinking as well. In 1945, 76-year-old Senator Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee served as president pro tempore. The cantankerous McKellar had dissented from much of Roosevelt's and Truman's social welfare programs. By contrast, 63-year-old House Speaker Sam Rayburn,

a staunch supporter of the administration, better fit Truman's image of a successor. An alternative to McKellar might have been the Senate majority leader, a post then held by Kentucky Senator Alben Barkley. Since the 1886 act of succession, the Senate had also established the positions of majority and minority leaders, and the Senate majority leader had evolved into a role that was the equivalent of Speaker—someone who represented both his party and the Senate. The majority leader, however, was not a constitutional officer like the president pro tempore.

Truman's proposed change in presidential succession passed the House of Representatives but stalled in the Senate during the 79th Congress (1945–1947). After Republicans won control of the 80th Congress (1947–1949), Truman resubmitted the idea, which was now seen as an extraordinary gesture for the president of the United States to recommend a change in the system that could elevate a leader of the opposition party to



President pro tempore Arthur Vandenberg became second in the line of presidential succession after the new Presidential Succession Act became law in 1947.

succeed him. At the time, Michigan Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg served as president pro tempore. Vandenberg also chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and as a principal architect of the bipartisan foreign policy of the early Cold War had earned respect from both sides of the aisle. Congressional Republicans were therefore receptive to placing Vandenberg and House Speaker Joseph Martin in the line of succession. The Senate passed the bill on June 27 by a vote of 50 to 35, with Republicans voting in favor and Democrats opposed. The House followed on July 10, and Truman signed it into law on July 18.

The 1940s also marked a change in the functioning of the vice presidency and, thus, the president pro tempore. Both Vice Presidents Henry Wallace and Alben Barkley spent much time traveling across the country and around the world on missions for the president, and were frequently absent from the Senate. In the 1950s, Vice President Richard Nixon spent only about half his time at the Senate, choosing instead to focus his duties in the executive branch. In 1961, Lyndon Johnson became the first vice president to have an office near the White House—a suite in the Old Executive Office Building. Walter Mondale, who served from 1977 to 1981, became the first vice president to occupy an office in the West Wing. As vice presidents became less a part of the legislative branch and more an assistant president, the presidents pro tempore spent more time presiding, or assigning others to preside in their absence.

Aided by the majority party floor staff during these years, the president pro tempore often assigned junior senators to preside over the Senate as acting presidents pro tempore, each taking an hour at a time in rotating order. Given the senators' crowded schedules, frequent travel, and last-minute cancellations, this process added to the president pro tempore's burden of duties. Freshmen senators of the majority party were called upon to spend many hours as presiding officer, justified as a means of learning the Senate's parliamentary procedure. It was easier for the president pro tempore to find senators to preside when there was a large class of freshmen. When elections did not produce large freshmen classes, the pool of potential presiding officers dwindled. The election of 1966, for example, produced only two new majority senators, which meant

that preceding freshmen senators, who normally would have seen the bulk of their presiding duties assumed by the incoming freshmen, were still being called upon to carry the load. Majority leader Mike Mansfield appealed to all Democratic senators, including senior members, to take turns presiding.

In June of 1967, after freshman Senator Ernest F. Hollings of South Carolina had completed 100 hours presiding over the Senate in a single session, Senator Mansfield presented him with the first "Golden Gavel" award, beginning another Senate tradition. Throughout 1967, Senator Hollings spent 180 hours and 7 minutes presiding, while the other freshman Democrat, William Spong of Virginia, spent 114 hours and 47 minutes. Next in the amount of time spent in the chair was a more senior senator—Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia—who clocked 95 hours and 35 minutes.

Arranging for senators to preside over the Senate became such a persistent problem that the majority party sought cooperation from the minority. In 1969, Senate Republicans agreed to fill the chair for a minimum of two hours each day, from three to five in the afternoon. For seven years this arrangement facilitated matters, until it spectacularly crashed on July 18, 1975. The maverick Republican Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, while presiding, ignored the majority leader, who was seeking recognition. Instead, Helms called on a senator who was trying to delay action on a bill. This move infuriated Senator Mansfield, who pointed out that he had "asked the Senator from North Carolina, sitting in that Chair, to recognize me, as the majority leader, which is the custom in this body." Senator Mansfield was referring to the leadership's "right of first recognition." As a result of this breach of comity, from then on only majority party senators would preside.

When Senator Robert C. Byrd assumed the post in 1989, he presided long enough to become the first president pro tempore to receive the Golden Gavel award. But for the most part, recent presidents pro tempore have chosen only to preside at the opening of the day's proceedings or in



The Golden Gavel award was created in 1967 to honor senators who presided over the Senate for 100 hours or more in a single session.

moments of complex parliamentary wrangling, when the floor leadership seeks their procedural expertise. Presidents pro tempore have a variety of other functions to perform, including chairing a major Senate committee. When the Democrats have held the majority, they made the president pro tempore an ex officio member of their party's conference, policy committee, and steering committee, while Republican presidents pro tempore have served as ex officio members of their policy committee. Various laws have assigned authority to the presidents pro tempore to make appointments to an assortment of national commissions, usually with the advice of the majority leader, or the minority leader for minority appointments. Together with the Speaker of the House, the president pro tempore also appoints the director of the Congressional Budget Office. In the absence of the vice president, the president pro tempore may administer all oaths required by the Constitution, may sign legislation, and may preside with the Speaker of the House over joint sessions or joint meetings. The president pro tempore also works closely with the secretary of the Senate and the sergeant at arms to direct the enforcement of the rules governing the Capitol and the Senate office buildings.

After the expansion of the Capitol Building in 1962, two rooms on the east front of the Capitol were reserved for the use of the president pro tempore. (The space has since shifted to different locations.) In addition to office space, additional staff, and higher salary, presidents pro tempore have the use of an official car and driver. While Senator Warren G. Magnuson, a Democrat from Washington, served as president pro tempore in 1979, the office adopted the first official seal of the president pro tempore, featuring the gavel used by presiding officers in the Senate Chamber. Commenting on the varied responsibilities of the office, Senator Magnuson's staff assistant, Warren Featherstone Reid, observed that the occupant of the office "makes more or less out of it," with its purely legal powers being mostly in reserve, for use when necessary.

Since Senate tradition now dictates that the office go to the most senior member of the majority party, it has become usual for presidents pro tempore to be in their 70s, 80s, and 90s. At different times, the age or infirmity of the president pro tempore has spurred the creation of several new positions. When the Senate entered into a lengthy debate on civil rights legislation in 1964, it created the office

of permanent acting president pro tempore, to assist President pro tempore Carl Hayden, an 86-year-old Arizona Democrat. Majority leader Mike Mansfield expressed concern over whether Senator Hayden still had the stamina to preside during the expected filibuster, which could last for several months. Mansfield prevailed on his junior colleague, Senator Lee Metcalf of Montana, to become the first permanent acting president pro tempore. Since Metcalf lived near the Capitol, he was willing to preside over late-night sessions and otherwise be on call. Metcalf retained the responsibility until his death in 1978. Since then, no other senator has held this title.

In 1977, following Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey's unsuccessful bid to become Senate majority leader, the Senate created the new post of deputy president pro tempore. The resolution provided that any senator who had previously held the post of president or vice president would serve as deputy president pro tempore, with a staff and salary increase, and the authorization to preside over the Senate and sign legislation in the absence of the vice president and



President pro tempore Carl Hayden signed legislation as one of his duties as presiding officer of the Senate.



Lee Metcalf served as the first—and to date only—permanent acting president pro tempore.

the president pro tempore. Humphrey held the post until his death the following year. In 1987, when President pro tempore John Stennis of Mississippi was in poor health, the Senate elected a younger senator, George J. Mitchell of Maine, to serve as deputy president pro tempore and to handle the functions of the office during Senator Stennis' absences. Mitchell performed those duties until his election as majority leader the next year, after which the post has remained vacant.

In 2001, the Senate was equally divided between Democrats and Republicans. During the period from January 3 to January 20, Vice President Al Gore presided and his tie-breaking vote gave the Democrats the majority, with Senator Robert C. Byrd serving as president pro tempore. With the inauguration of President George W. Bush, Dick Cheney became

vice president and his vote turned the majority over to the Republicans, making South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond president pro tempore. In June 2001, Vermont Senator Jim Jeffords resigned from the Republican party and caucused with the Democrats, giving them the majority once again. Senator Byrd again became president pro tempore, and the Senate voted to designate Senator Thurmond as president pro tempore emeritus.

The office of president pro tempore remains one of the Senate's highest honors, a recognition of long and distinguished service. The president pro tempore plays an integral role in the day-to-day functioning of the Senate and stands in the line of presidential succession. A direct-access telephone to the White House symbolizes the special nature of the office and its significance for the nation.



75. Arthur Hendrick Vandenberg (*Michigan*)

President Pro Tempore: 1947–1949

Senate Service: March 31, 1928, to April 18, 1951

Party: Republican

Born: Grand Rapids, Michigan, March 22, 1884

Died: Grand Rapids, Michigan, April 18, 1951

Education: Attended the public schools; studied law at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

Non-Senate Career: Between 1906 and 1928, Arthur H. Vandenberg was editor and publisher of the *Grand Rapids Herald* and the author of several books. During his Senate career, he was a delegate to the United Nations Conference at San Francisco in 1945 and also a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly at London and New York in 1946. That same year, he was United States adviser to the Council of Foreign Ministers at London, Paris, and New York. He served as a delegate to Pan American Conference at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1947.

Senate Offices: Republican Conference chairman (1945–1947)

Committee Chair: Enrolled Bills (1931–1933); Foreign Relations (1947–1949)

Observations: “Arthur Vandenberg achieved a position of distinction in the Republican Senate, in the 80th Congress, so that he was looked upon as the leader in the field of foreign policy, while Bob

Taft was looked upon as the leader in the Senate on the Republican side in domestic affairs. They got along really quite well. But Senator Vandenberg’s attitude toward the Senate generally was that they were entitled to know everything that he knew, that they could not make up their minds unless they were fully informed, so he did his best to keep them fully informed. It was a remarkable thing that usually when he spoke there were sixty or so senators on the floor to hear him. This is, of course, quite unusual in the Senate because normally people aren’t interested in hearing what senators have to say—unless they themselves are making a speech.”

~ Francis O. Wilcox, *Chief of Staff, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1947–1955*, Oral History Interviews, Senate Historical Office (Washington, D.C., 1984), 50.

Further Reading: Tompkins, C. David. *Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg: The Evolution of a Modern Republican, 1884–1945*. Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1970; Vandenberg, Arthur H., Jr., and Morris, Joe Alex., eds. *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*. 1952. Reprint. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974.



76. Henry Styles Bridges (*New Hampshire*)

President Pro Tempore: 1953–1955

Senate Service: January 3, 1937, to November 26, 1961

Party: Republican

Born: West Pembroke, Washington County, Maine, September 9, 1898

Died: East Concord, New Hampshire, November 26, 1961

Education: Attended the public schools; graduated from the University of Maine at Orono in 1918.

Non-Senate Career: Styles Bridges was an instructor at Sanderson Academy in Ashfield, Massachusetts, from 1918 to 1919, and then a member of the extension staff of the University of New Hampshire at Durham from 1921 to 1922. He was secretary of the New Hampshire Farm Bureau Federation from 1922 to 1923, editor of the *Granite Monthly* magazine from 1924 to 1926, and director and secretary of the New Hampshire Investment Co. from 1924 to 1929. In 1930, he became a member of the New Hampshire Public Service Commission, serving until 1934, when he became governor of New Hampshire. From 1925 to 1937, he was a lieutenant in the United States Army Reserve Corps.

Senate Offices: Minority leader (1952–1953); Republican Policy Committee chairman (1955–1961)

Committee Chair: Joint Committee on Foreign Economic Cooperation (1947–1949); Joint Committee on Inaugural Arrangements (1951–1953, 1955–1957); Appropriations (1947–1949, 1953–1955)

Observations: “While [Robert] Taft kept too busy with legislation to bother with routine political touches, Styles Bridges specialized in them. He was a prototype of the back-room politician who spoke out of the corner of his mouth, but he was a well-informed Senator and

one of the very few who had known in advance about the Manhattan Project that produced the atomic bomb. When Bridges stepped up to the ceremonial office of President Pro Tem, it left the position of Leader open to Taft in January 1953, as the new Eisenhower administration got underway.”

~ Richard Langham Reidel, *Halls of the Mighty: My 47 Years at the Senate* (Washington, D.C.: R. B. Luce, 1969), 148–49.

“Senator Bridges, as much as any man I have known and served with, understood government. He knew it as a method of order in man’s affairs. He rejected it as a means of ordering men. He served in government as a citizen duly elected to represent his fellow citizens. He rejected and opposed those who see in such service an opportunity to rule, regulate, or regiment. His life was dedicated to the central lesson, to the vital genius of the freedom which is the meaning of the American revolution, the essence of the American experience and the life of the American people.”

~ Senator Barry Goldwater, 1961, U.S. Senate Historical Office.

Further Reading: Kiepper, James J. *Styles Bridges: Yankee Senator*. Sugar Hill, NH: Phoenix Publishing, 2001; U.S. Congress. *Memorial Services for Henry S. Bridges*. 87th Cong., 2nd sess., 1962. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1962.



77. Walter Franklin George (*Georgia*)

President Pro Tempore: 1955–1957

Senate Service: November 22, 1922, to January 2, 1957

Party: Democrat

Born: Near Preston, Webster County, Georgia, January 29, 1878

Died: Vienna, Georgia, August 4, 1957

Education: Attended the common schools; graduated from Mercer University, Macon, Georgia, in 1900 and from its law department in 1901.

Non-Senate Career: Walter F. George was admitted to the bar in 1901 and practiced law in Vienna, Georgia. He served as solicitor general of the Cordele judicial circuit of Georgia from 1907 until 1912 and then as judge of the superior court of the Cordele judicial circuit from 1912 until 1917. He was a judge of the state court of appeals from January to October 1917 and an associate justice of the state supreme court from 1917 until 1922. Following his Senate service, George served as President Dwight Eisenhower's special ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1957.

Committee Chair: Privileges and Elections (1933–1941); Foreign Relations (1939–1943, 1955–1957); Finance (1941–1947, 1949–1953); Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation (1949–1953); Select Committee on Case Influence (1955–1957); Special Committee on Foreign Assistance (1955–1957)

Observations: “I would say he did not have a commanding presence, but he had a commanding voice. When Walter George spoke, senators listened. They came to the floor to hear what he had to say. I did not have much experience with him in the way of drafting statements or making suggestions. George was his own man. He commanded the respect of other senators.”

~ Carl M. Marcy, *Chief of Staff, Foreign Relations Committee, 1955–1973*, Oral History Interviews, Senate Historical Office (Washington, D.C., 1983), 69.

Further Reading: Mellichamp, Josephine. “Walter George.” In *Senators From Georgia*. Huntsville, AL: Strode Publishers, 1976: 230–39; Zeigler, Luther. “Senator Walter George’s 1938 Campaign.” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 43 (December 1959): 333–52; Fleissner, James P. “August 11, 1938: A Day in the Life of Senator Walter F. George.” *Journal of Southern Legal History* 9 (2001): 55–101.



78. Carl Trumbull Hayden (*Arizona*)

President Pro Tempore: 1957–1969

Senate Service: March 4, 1927, to January 3, 1969

Party: Democrat

Born: Hayden's Ferry (now Tempe), Maricopa County, Arizona, October 2, 1877

Died: Mesa, Arizona, January 25, 1972

Education: Attended the public schools; graduated from the Normal School of Arizona at Tempe in 1896; attended Leland Stanford Junior University, California 1896–1900.

Non-Senate Career: Carl Hayden helped run his father's business in Tempe, Arizona, from 1900 to 1904. He was a member of Tempe's town council from 1902 to 1904, and served as treasurer of Maricopa County from 1904 to 1906. He became sheriff of Maricopa County in 1907 and served until 1912, when he successfully ran for election to the U.S. House of Representatives. He served in the House from February 19, 1912, to March 3, 1927, before becoming a U.S. senator. During the First World War, Hayden was commissioned a major of infantry in the United States Army.

Committee Chair: Printing (1933–1947); Rules and Administration (1949–1953); co-chairman, Joint Committee on Printing (1949–1953, 1955–1969); co-chairman, Joint Committee on Inaugural Arrangements (1947–1949, 1951–1953); Appropriations (1955–1969)

Observations: “When Sheriff [Carl] Hayden arrived in Washington as Arizona's first Representative, he early established himself as a faithful party man; from Wilson's New Freedom, through F.D.R.'s New Deal and Harry Truman's Fair Deal to John Kennedy's New Frontier, Carl Hayden generally voted straight down the Democratic line. Most of his work is in committee—and in taking care of the folks back home in Arizona. He has a reputation for quick, effective replies to constituents'

letters. Through his efforts and influence on the Appropriations Committee, Arizona has received vast federal funds for dams and irrigation projects, military bases and airfields, Indian school construction, special social-security payments and fish hatcheries. Says Vice President Lyndon Johnson: ‘Carl Hayden has smiled through untold millions for the people of Arizona.’”

~ “Old Frontiersman,” *Time Magazine* (February 9, 1962): 15.

Further Reading: August, Jack L., Jr. *Vision in the Desert: Carl Hayden and Hydropolitics in the American Southwest*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1998; Rice, Ross R. *Carl Hayden: Builder of the American West*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994.



79. Richard Brevard Russell, Jr. (Georgia)

President Pro Tempore: 1969–1971

Senate Service: January 12, 1933, to January 21, 1971

Party: Democrat

Born: Winder, Barrow County, Georgia, November 2, 1897

Died: Washington, D.C., January 21, 1971

Education: Attended the public schools; graduated from the Seventh District Agricultural and Mechanical School, Powder Springs, Georgia, in 1914; from the Gordon Institute, Barnesville, Georgia, in 1915; and from the law department of the University of Georgia at Athens in 1918.

Non-Senate Career: Richard B. Russell served in the United States Naval Reserve in 1918. Admitted to the bar in 1919, he then practiced law in Winder, Georgia. Russell was a member of the Georgia state house of representatives from 1921 until 1931, serving as speaker from 1927 until 1931. He was governor of Georgia, from 1931 until 1933, prior to his U.S. Senate service.

Committee Chair: Immigration (1937–1947); Manufactures (1945–1947); Armed Services (1951–1953, 1955–1969); Appropriations (1969–1971)

Observations: “Senator Russell was a patrician type, respected for his knowledge of the rules and precedents and for his enduring good judgment. Never going out of his way to develop a friendship of acquaintance, he, nevertheless, was easy to talk with. I would sometimes ask him about the rules or customs of the Senate and would seek his judgment on some key issues. Urbane and scholarly, he was not an orator. He was courtly and polite, never overly partisan.”

~ U.S. Congress, Senate, *The Senate, 1789–1989, Addresses on the History of the United States Senate*, by Robert C. Byrd, vol. 2, S. Doc. 100–20, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 1991, 559.

Further Reading: Fite, Gilbert C. *Richard B. Russell, Jr., Senator From Georgia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991; Goldsmith, John A. *Colleagues: Richard B. Russell and His Apprentice, Lyndon B. Johnson*. Washington, D.C.: Seven Locks Press, 1993.



80. Allen Joseph Ellender (*Louisiana*)

President Pro Tempore: 1971–1972

Senate Service: January 3, 1937, to July 27, 1972

Party: Democrat

Born: Montegut, Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, September 24, 1890

Died: Bethesda Naval Hospital, Bethesda, Maryland, July 27, 1972

Education: Attended the public and private schools; graduated from St. Aloysius College, New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1909, and from the law department of Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1913.

Non-Senate Career: Allen Ellender was admitted to the bar in 1913 and practiced law in Houma, Louisiana. He was city attorney of Houma from 1913 to 1915 and district attorney of Terrebonne Parish from 1915 to 1916. During the First World War, he served as a sergeant in the Artillery Corps, United States Army, from 1917 to 1918. He was a delegate to the constitutional convention of Louisiana in 1921 and a Democratic national committeeman from Louisiana in 1939–1940. He was a member of the state house of representatives from 1924 to 1936, serving as floor leader from 1928 to 1932, and as speaker from 1932 to 1936.

Committee Chair: Claims (1943–1947); Agriculture and Forestry (1951–1953, 1955–1971); Appropriations (1971–1972)

Observations: “He was a Senator of the old school. He believed in our seniority system. He believed that a freshman Senator should start at the bottom and spend some time there before he undertook to educate his colleagues. . . . In that fashion he proceeded to serve on the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry until he became its chairman. After 12 years in this body he sought, in his turn, membership on the Committee on Appropriations, and he served there until he became chairman of the committee. He served in this body until by right of seniority he became President pro tempore.”

~ Senator Russell Long, U.S. Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, 92nd Cong., 2d sess., 25815–16.

Further Reading: Becnel, Thomas A. *Senator Allen Ellender of Louisiana: A Biography*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996; U.S. Congress. *Memorial Services*. 92nd Cong., 2d sess. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1974.



81. James Oliver Eastland (*Mississippi*)

President Pro Tempore: 1972–1978

Senate Service: June 30, 1941, to September 28, 1941; January 3, 1943, to December 27, 1978

Party: Democrat

Born: Doddsville, Mississippi, November 28, 1904

Died: Doddsville, Mississippi, February 19, 1986

Education: Attended the public schools, the University of Mississippi at Oxford, Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, and the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: James O. Eastland was admitted to the Mississippi bar in 1927 and practiced law in Forest, Mississippi, while also engaging in agricultural pursuits. He was a member of the state house of representatives from 1928 until 1932, prior to his U.S. Senate service.

Committee Chair: Judiciary (1955–1978)

Observations: “In quiet recognition of the new times, Eastland has abandoned most of the old powers of his committee chairmanship, leaving subcommittee chairmen . . . freedom to do most of what they

liked. In a similar way, Eastland chose not to make much out of his ceremonial post as president pro tempore of the Senate. What prerogatives that position did provide he generally shared with the majority leader and others. Eastland has remained a living caricature of the southern senator: white hair, stooped shuffle, everpresent big cigar. He still speaks with one of the thickest accents in town, talking recently, for example, of the ‘Panydaw Canal.’”

~ *Washington Post*, March 23, 1978.

Further Reading: Schlauch, Wolfgang. “Representative William Colmer and Senator James O. Eastland and the Reconstruction of Germany, 1945.” *Journal of Mississippi History* 34 (August 1972): 193–213; Zellner, Dorothy M. “Red Roadshow: Eastland in New Orleans, 1954.” *Louisiana History* 33 (Winter 1992): 31–60.



82. Warren Grant Magnuson (*Washington*)

President Pro Tempore: 1979–1981

Senate Service: December 14, 1944, to January 3, 1981

Party: Democrat

Born: Moorhead, Clay County, Minnesota, April 12, 1905

Died: Seattle, Washington, May 20, 1989

Education: Attended the public schools, the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks, and North Dakota State College; graduated from the University of Washington in 1926, and from the law school in 1929.

Non-Senate Career: Warren Magnuson practiced law in Seattle, Washington, and served as secretary of the Seattle Municipal League in 1930 and 1931. He was special prosecuting attorney of King County, Washington, in 1931 and a member of the state house of representatives from 1933 to 1934. In 1933, he was a delegate to the state constitutional convention. He was appointed United States district attorney in 1934 and served as prosecuting attorney of King County, Washington, from 1934 to 1936. He successfully ran for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1936 and served from January 3, 1937, to December 13, 1944. During the Second World War, he served in the U.S. Navy, attaining the rank of lieutenant commander.

Committee Chair: Interstate and Foreign Commerce (1955–1963); Commerce (1963–1949); Commerce, Science and Transportation (1977–1979); Appropriations (1977–1981)

Observations: “Within the Democratic Party structure of the Senate, the President Pro Tem had been included as part of the ‘leadership.’ The Democratic Caucus has a steering committee that performs many of the functions that the Rules Committee on the House side performs, of scheduling legislation and making up priorities. Well, Magnuson had been on the steering committee of the Senate for quite some time, about twenty years or better. So when he became President Pro Tem there was some debate as to whether he would get two votes or what the deal would be. It was more than pro forma because there were other interests within the Democratic membership of the Senate that wanted to add another member if they could. So that was another function that the President Pro Tem might have.”

~ Warren Featherstone Reid, *Assistant to Warren G. Magnuson*, Oral History Interviews, Senate Historical Office (Washington, D.C., 1981), 172.

Further Reading: Magnuson, Warren G., and Elliot A. Segal. *How Much for Health?* Washington, D.C.: R. B. Luce, 1974; Scates, Shelby. *Warren G. Magnuson and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century America*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997.



83. Milton Ruben Young (*North Dakota*)

President Pro Tempore: 1980

Senate Service: March 12, 1945, to January 3, 1981

Party: Republican

Born: Berlin, La Moure County, North Dakota, December 6, 1897

Died: Sun City, Arizona, May 31, 1983

Education: Attended the public schools of La Moure County; attended the North Dakota State Agricultural College at Fargo and Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa.

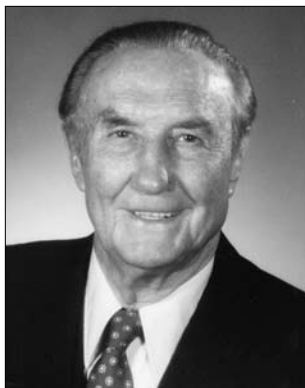
Non-Senate Career: Milton R. Young engaged in agricultural pursuits near Berlin, North Dakota. In 1932, he was elected to the North Dakota house of representatives, and in 1934, he was elected to the state senate, where he served until he was appointed to the U.S. Senate in 1945.

Observations: “In a body where so much substantial activity is accompanied by a carnival of contention with a spotlight on discord, Milton Young deserves special credit for utilizing his influence as the longest-seated member on both the Appropriations and Agriculture Committees to accomplish so much with a minimum of disruption. During his tenure

as ranking Republican on these committees his experience and leadership served as a pillar of strength to his constituents and congressional colleagues. He has a great sense of what is right for this country and the success of his legislation is a further reflection of the high degree of respect his convictions receive from both sides of the aisle.”

~ Senator Bob Dole, U.S. Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, 96th Cong., 2d sess., 52424.

Further Reading: U.S. Congress. *Memorial Addresses and Other Tributes in the Congress of the United States on the Life and Contributions of Milton R. Young*. 98th Cong., 1st sess. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983.



84. James Strom Thurmond (*South Carolina*)

President Pro Tempore: 1981–1987, 1995–2001

Senate Service: December 24, 1954, to January 3, 1955; November 7, 1956, to January 3, 2003

Party: Democrat, Republican

Born: Edgefield, South Carolina, December 5, 1902

Died: Edgefield, South Carolina, June 26, 2003

Education: Attended the public schools; graduated from Clemson College in 1923; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Strom Thurmond taught in South Carolina high schools from 1923 to 1929. He was Edgefield County superintendent of education from 1929 to 1933. After he was admitted to the South Carolina bar in 1930, he served as city and county attorney until 1938, and simultaneously served in the state senate from 1933 to 1938. He was appointed circuit judge in 1938, serving until 1946, and served in the U.S. Army from 1942 to 1946, in Europe and in the Pacific. Following the war, he became a major general in the U.S. Army Reserve. Thurmond was governor of South Carolina from 1947 to 1951. He ran unsuccessfully for president of the United States in 1948 as a States Rights candidate, and was an unsuccessful candidate for the Democratic nomination for U.S. senator in 1950. He practiced law in Aiken, South Carolina, from 1951 to 1955, before successfully winning election to the U.S. Senate.

Senate Offices: President pro tempore emeritus (2001–2003)

Committee Chair: Judiciary (1981–1987); Armed Services (1995–1997)

Observations: “When I served with him on the Judiciary Committee I found him to be very wise. One of the comments he made soon after I joined the committee, when a judge was up for confirmation, was asking the nominee if the nominee promised to be courteous. You thought that was sort of a meaningless question until Senator Thurmond followed up after the nominee said yes by saying, ‘The more power a person has the more courteous that person should be.’ There is a lot of wisdom in that short statement. Whenever Senator Thurmond is not present and I am, I make that statement to the nominees.”

~ Senator Arlen Specter in U.S. Senate, Office of the Secretary, *Tributes Delivered in Congress: Strom Thurmond, United States Senator*, S. Doc. 105–9, 105th Cong., 1st sess., 5.

Further Reading: Cohodas, Nadine. *Strom Thurmond & the Politics of Southern Change*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1994.



85. John Cornelius Stennis (*Mississippi*)

President Pro Tempore: 1987–1989

Senate Service: November 5, 1947, to January 3, 1989

Party: Democrat

Born: Near De Kalb, Kemper County, Mississippi, August 3, 1901

Died: Jackson, Mississippi, April 23, 1995

Education: Attended the county schools; graduated from Mississippi State College in 1923; graduated from University of Virginia Law School in 1928.

Non-Senate Career: John C. Stennis was admitted to the bar in 1928 and practiced law in De Kalb, Mississippi. He served as a member of the Mississippi state house of representatives from 1928 until 1932. He was elected district prosecuting attorney in 1932 and was a circuit judge from 1937 until 1947.

Committee Chair: Select Committee on Standards and Conduct (1965–1975); Armed Services (1969–1981); Appropriations (1989–1989)

Observations: “Now 85 and the last of the old southern Democratic barons in the Senate, the gentle Mississippian is the chamber’s dean and will be its president pro tempore and chairman of its Appropriations Committee when the Senate convenes next month under Democratic control. His weathered face is drawn now and his body is frail, but his eyes still dance brightly as he talks of his love for the Senate and his hopes for its future. ‘Every day is a new challenge. . . . You move ahead as best you can,’ he said from the wheelchair to which he has been confined since the amputation of a cancerous leg a year ago. . . . But he has lost none of his prodigious zest for work, which means arriving at the office around 8 a.m. and staying until the Senate shuts down, which can be late at night. In respect for Senate tradition and decorum, he tries to stand to address the chamber, difficult as it is to do.”

~ *Washington Post*, December 23, 1986.

Further Reading: Downs, Michael Scott. “Advice and Consent: John Stennis and the Vietnam War, 1954–1973.” *Journal of Mississippi History* 55 (May 1993): 87–114; Allen, William C. “Senators Poindexter, Davis, and Stennis: Three Mississippians in the History of the United States Capitol.” *Journal of Mississippi History* 65 (2003): 191–214.



86. Robert Carlyle Byrd (*West Virginia*)

President Pro Tempore: 1989–1995, 2001–2003, 2007–present

Senate Service: January 3, 1959, to present

Party: Democrat

Born: North Wilkesboro, Wilkes County, North Carolina, November 20, 1917

Education: Attended West Virginia public schools; student at Beckley College, Concord College, Morris Harvey College, and Marshall College, all in West Virginia, and George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C.; graduated, American University Law School, 1963; received bachelor's degree in political science from Marshall University, 1994.

Non-Senate Career: Robert Byrd served in the West Virginia house of delegates from 1947 to 1950. Following one term in West Virginia's state senate, from 1951 to 1952, he ran successfully for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, where he served from January 3, 1953, to January 3, 1959.

Senate Career: Senator Robert Byrd is currently the longest serving senator in U.S. history.

Senate Offices: Secretary, Senate Democratic Conference (1967–1971); Democratic whip (1971–1977); majority leader (1977–1980, 1987–1988); minority leader (1981–1986)

Committee Chair: Committee on Appropriations (1989–1995, 2001–2003, 2007–)

Observations: “As I said in 1980, long before I attained the post myself, ‘the election of a senator to the office of the president pro tempore has always been considered one of the highest honors offered to a senator by the Senate as a body.’ As I trust my remarks have indicated, that honor has been bestowed upon a colorful and significant group of senators during the past two centuries—men who stamped their imprint upon the office and upon their times. I am proud to join their ranks and to perform the duties of president pro tempore of the United States Senate.”

~ Senator Robert C. Byrd, U.S. Congress, Senate, *The Senate, 1789–1989, Addresses on the History of the United States Senate*, by Robert C. Byrd, vol. 2, S. Doc. 100–20, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 1991, 183.

Further Reading: U.S. Congress. Senate. *The Senate, 1789–1989*, 4 vols., by Robert C. Byrd. S. Doc. 100–20, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 1989–1994. Vols. 1 and 2, *Addresses on the History of the United States Senate*; Vol. 3, *Classic Speeches, 1830–1993*; Vol. 4, *Historical Statistics, 1789–1992*; U.S. Congress. Senate. *The Senate of the Roman Republic: Addresses on the History of Roman Constitutionalism*, by Robert C. Byrd. S. Doc. 103–23, 103rd Cong., 2d sess., 1995; Byrd, Robert C. *Child of the Appalachian Coalfields*. Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2005.



87. Theodore F. (Ted) Stevens (*Alaska*)

President Pro Tempore: 2003–2007

Senate Service: December 24, 1968, to present

Party: Republican

Born: Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana, November 18, 1923

Education: Attended Oregon State College and Montana State College; graduated from University of California, Los Angeles, in 1947; graduated from Harvard Law School in 1950.

Non-Senate Career: During the Second World War, Ted Stevens served in the United States Army Air Corps in China. He was admitted to the bar in California in 1950, to the District of Columbia bar in 1951, and to the Alaska bar in 1957. He practiced law in Fairbanks, Alaska. In 1956, he became a legislative counsel in the Department of Interior in Washington, D.C. He was assistant to the secretary of the interior in 1958 and chief counsel in the Department of the Interior in 1960. Prior to his U.S. Senate service, Stevens was a member of the Alaska state house of representatives from 1964 until 1968, serving as speaker pro tempore and majority leader.

Senate Offices: Republican whip (1977–1985); chair, Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee (1975–1977)

Committee Chair: Select Committee on Ethics (1983–1987); Rules and Administration (January 3, 1995–September 12, 1995); Governmental Affairs (September 12, 1995–January 2, 1997); Appropriations (1997–2001; January 20, 2001–June 6, 2001; 2003–2005); Commerce, Science and Transportation (2005–2007)

Observations: “Senator Stevens and I have worked together in the Senate since 1968, and we have been on the Senate Appropriations Committee together since 1972. In all this time together, I have always known Senator Ted Stevens to be an outstanding Senator, a great colleague, and a trusted friend. Oh, I realize he may grumble every now and then. He is getting a little bit grumbly. But you can forgive him for that. You never have to be concerned about turning your back on him. He is honest. He is straightforward. And his word is his bond. Over the years we have had our spats, but never once did I doubt our friendship, our admiration for this country, its flag, each other, and our ability to work together.”

~ Senator Robert C. Byrd, U.S. Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., S13311.

