

Foreword

The Committee on the Judiciary was established within the U.S. House of Representatives in December of 1813. Today, the Committee remains one of the oldest standing committees in Congress, with a jurisdiction that encompasses an expansive list of subject matters.

In its nearly 200 year history, the Committee has played a central role in the deliberation of many of the most consequential issues facing our Nation. The Committee last released a historical overview of its legislative and oversight activities 25 years ago. As the following pages will detail, the past 25 years have posed significant challenges and opportunities, which have shaped the Committee's legislative and oversight priorities.

Over the last quarter century, the collapse of Soviet communism resulted in an increased sense of security for many Americans. However, as old threats receded, new challenges emerged. On September 11, 2001, foreign terrorists murdered over three thousand innocent civilians by hijacking four passenger jets and using them as weapons to destroy the World Trade Center in New York City, attack the Pentagon in Washington, DC, and crash United Flight 93 into the fields of Shanksville, PA.

In the wake of these attacks, the Committee took steps to ensure that U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies were provided the necessary tools and resources to prevent additional attacks upon our soil. At the same time, the Committee has exercised rigorous oversight to ensure that efforts to protect the security of Americans are consistent with the values and constitutional liberties that distinguish us.

It is my hope that this publication will highlight the manner in which this Committee has met its mandate to advance the national interest and promote the justice that is the cornerstone of America's legal system and the democracy it serves as Americans.

It has been a privilege to serve as Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary during this crucial period in America's history, and an honor to have served on the Committee since being elected to Congress in 1978.

Sincerely,

F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.
Chairman (2001–2007)