

THE U.S. SENATE  
LEADERSHIP  
PORTRAIT  
COLLECTION



UNITED  
STATES  
SENATE

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## History of the Collection

Interest in memorializing Senate leaders was sparked by the Leader's Lecture Series, a program that presented outstanding former Senate leaders with the opportunity to share their insights about the Senate's recent history and long-term practices. Established by Senator Trent Lott of Mississippi, the series was developed "to foster a deeper appreciation of the Senate as an institution," and "to consider the wisdom—and enjoy the wit—of those who have been giants in our time."



Howard Baker, Jr., of Tennessee,  
Republican leader 1977–1985,  
by Herbert Abrams

To honor its past leaders, the United States Senate has established the Senate Leadership Portrait Collection. While the Senate has long honored vice presidents with marble portrait busts in the Capitol, this leadership series is the Senate's first effort to develop a

comprehensive portrait collection of presidents pro tempore and majority and minority leaders. Although several former leaders are already represented by paintings in the U.S. Senate Collection, a portrait of Majority Leader Howard Baker, Jr., of Tennessee by artist Herbert Abrams was the first piece acquired for the newly established Senate Leadership Portrait Collection. This painting was presented as a gift to the Senate by the Dirksen Congressional Center in Pekin, Illinois.

### Historical Highlights



Willie Person Mangum of North Carolina, president pro tempore 1842–1845, by James Lambdin

Who leads the Senate? The U.S. Constitution specifies that “the Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate.” It also provides that the Senate may elect one of its own members as president pro tempore to serve in the vice president’s absence. A statute in 1792 placed the

president pro tempore directly after the vice president in the line of presidential succession.

Within the broad outlines of the Constitution, the Senate over the years has developed its own system of leadership. Because senators have preferred to select their leaders from among their own colleagues rather than follow the lead of a vice president elected by others, the Senate has chosen to limit rather than expand its presiding officer’s leadership role. Early in the 19th century, when the office of vice president was vacant or inactive for extended periods, the Senate allowed the president pro tempore—one of its own members—to undertake the important power of appointing committee members.

With the return of an active vice president as presiding officer by 1826, the Senate quickly took measures to retain that appointment power.

By the 1840s, the process of choosing members of standing committees consumed increasing amounts of the Senate's time. To promote efficiency and focus responsibility, the two major political parties began submitting lists of committee assignments to the full Senate for approval. By taking on this crucial function, the Senate's parties established themselves as the central source of floor leadership. In the latter half of the 19th century, each party caucus routinely elected a chairman, who helped to set the party's legislative agenda and began to serve as party spokesman.

In 1890, the Senate also began electing a permanent president pro tempore, rather than selecting that officer only during the vice president's absence. Although the Senate has assigned the president pro tempore various legislative and administrative responsibilities over the years, it has reserved political power for members on the Senate floor rather than for the presiding officer at the rostrum. In 1886, Congress actually diminished the role of the president pro tempore when it changed the line of presidential succession, removing both the Senate president pro tempore and the Speaker of the House. (In 1947, Congress restored both officers to the succession plan, but placed the Speaker ahead of the president pro tempore.)

The early years of the 20th century brought to the White House chief executives who proved to be far more assertive than those with whom the Senate had worked with in the past. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson actively pursued their own legislative agendas. Dealing with these energetic presidents made senators realize the importance of having a more coordinated Senate

leadership than individual committee chairmen and other senior members could provide. The crisis of World War I and the battle over its concluding treaty further spurred the evolution of floor leadership, and in the 1920s Senate party caucuses began regularly designating their official floor leaders.



Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas, Democratic leader 1923–1937, by Nicholas R. Brewer

leaders in easy view of the presiding officer and led to another major milestone in the evolution of Senate leadership.

In 1927, Democratic Leader Joseph T. Robinson initiated the tradition of sitting at the front-row, center-aisle desk on his party's side of the Senate Chamber. Ten years later, his Republican counterpart, Charles McNary, took the corresponding front-row desk across the aisle. This prime location placed both



Senator Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois, Republican leader 1959–1969, by Richard Hood Harryman

Soon after both leaders had settled into their front-row seats, the Senate agreed to a procedure that effectively defined the position of floor leader as we know it today. Under a rule requiring the presiding officer to “recognize the Senator who shall first address him,” the Senate further required the presiding officer to

recognize first the majority leader and then the minority leader before allowing any other senator seeking recognition to speak. As Senator Howard Baker, Jr. once observed, this is one of the few tools with which a leader may try to make members “act in concert under rules that encourage polite anarchy.” The floor leaders’ strategic seating position evolved into a floor command post, as it placed the two leaders closer to the presiding officer than any other member and gave them easy access to party staff aides located at tables in front of the rostrum.



Mike Mansfield of Montana,  
Democratic leader 1961–1977,  
by Aaron Shikler

Today, the majority leader, in close consultation with the minority leader, is principally responsible for setting the Senate’s legislative agenda and speaking not only for his own party but for the entire Senate. The two leaders’ tasks require patience, diplomacy, and an acute sense of timing.

They must balance the conflicting demands for extended deliberation with calls for timely action. The evolution of these two vital positions can safely be considered the most significant institutional development of the Senate’s history.

## Republican Floor Leaders

<i>Name</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Years</i>
Charles Curtis	Kansas	1925–1929
James E. Watson	Indiana	1929–1933
Charles L. McNary <sup>1</sup>	Oregon	1933–1944
Wallace H. White, Jr.	Maine	1945–1949
Kenneth S. Wherry	Nebraska	1949–1951
Henry Styles Bridges	New Hampshire	1952–1953
Robert A. Taft	Ohio	1953
William F. Knowland	California	1953–1959
Everett M. Dirksen	Illinois	1959–1969
Hugh D. Scott, Jr.	Pennsylvania	1969–1977
Howard H. Baker, Jr.	Tennessee	1977–1985
Robert J. Dole <sup>2</sup>	Kansas	1985–1996
Trent Lott	Mississippi	1996–2002
William H. Frist, M.D.	Tennessee	2002–2007
Mitch McConnell	Kentucky	2007–present

## Democratic Floor Leaders

<i>Name</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Years</i>
Oscar W. Underwood	Alabama	1920–1923
Joseph T. Robinson	Arkansas	1923–1937
Alben W. Barkley	Kentucky	1937–1949
Scott W. Lucas	Illinois	1949–1951
Ernest W. McFarland	Arizona	1951–1953
Lyndon B. Johnson	Texas	1953–1961
Mike Mansfield <sup>3</sup>	Montana	1961–1977
Robert C. Byrd	West Virginia	1977–1988
George J. Mitchell	Maine	1989–1995
Thomas A. Daschle	South Dakota	1995–2005
Harry Reid	Nevada	2005–present

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(1) In 1940, at the request of Senator McNary, Senator Warren R. Austin of Vermont served as acting leader. In succeeding years, although McNary was still officially listed as minority leader until his death on February 25, 1944, Wallace White, Jr. served as acting leader.

(2) On December 22, 1995, Senator Robert Dole broke Charles McNary's record as the longest-serving Republican floor leader, having served since January 3, 1985, 10 years, 11 months, and 9 days.

(3) Senator Mike Mansfield holds the record as the longest-serving Democratic floor leader, having served 16 years.

## Presidents Pro Tempore from 1900–Present

<i>Name</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Years Served</i>
William P. Frye <sup>4</sup>	Maine	1900–1911
Augustus O. Bacon <sup>5</sup>	Georgia	1911
Charles Curtis	Kansas	1911
Jacob H. Gallinger	New Hampshire	1912
Frank B. Brandegee	Connecticut	1912
Henry Cabot Lodge	Massachusetts	1912
James P. Clarke	Arkansas	1913–1916
Willard Saulsbury, Jr.	Delaware	1916–1919
Albert B. Cummins	Iowa	1919–1925
George H. Moses	New Hampshire	1925–1933
Key Pittman	Nevada	1933–1940
William H. King	Utah	1940–1941
Byron P. (Pat) Harrison	Mississippi	1941
Carter Glass	Virginia	1941–1945
Kenneth D. McKellar	Tennessee	1945–1947
Arthur H. Vandenberg	Michigan	1947–1949
Kenneth D. McKellar	Tennessee	1949–1953
Henry Styles Bridges	New Hampshire	1953–1955
Walter F. George	Georgia	1955–1957
Carl T. Hayden <sup>6</sup>	Arizona	1957–1969
Richard B. Russell	Georgia	1969–1971
Allen J. Ellender	Louisiana	1971–1972
James O. Eastland	Mississippi	1972–1978
Warren G. Magnuson	Washington	1979–1981
Milton R. Young <sup>7</sup>	North Dakota	1980
James Strom Thurmond	South Carolina	1981–1987
John C. Stennis	Mississippi	1987–1989
Robert C. Byrd	West Virginia	1989–1995
James Strom Thurmond	South Carolina	1995–2001
Robert C. Byrd	West Virginia	1/3 to 1/20/2001*
James Strom Thurmond	South Carolina	1/20 to 6/6/2001*
Robert C. Byrd	West Virginia	6/6/2001 to 2003*
Ted Stevens	Alaska	2003–2007
Robert C. Byrd	West Virginia	2007–2010
Daniel K. Inouye	Hawaii	2010–present

(4) From 1789 to 1900, 60 senators served as president pro tempore.

(5) Senators Bacon, Curtis, Gallinger, Brandegee, and Lodge served as president pro tempore on numerous occasions between 1911 to 1913.

(6) Senator Carl Hayden holds the record as the longest-serving president pro tempore having served 12 years.

(7) Senator Milton Young was president pro tempore for one day, December 5, 1980.

\*From January 3 to January 20, 2001, with the Senate divided evenly between the two parties, the Democrats held the majority due to the deciding vote of outgoing Democratic Vice President Al Gore. Beginning on January 20, 2001, Republican Vice President Richard Cheney held the deciding vote, giving the majority to the Republicans. On May 24, 2001, Senator James Jeffords of Vermont announced his switch from Republican to Independent status, effective June 6, 2001. Jeffords announced that he would caucus with the Democrats, giving the Democrats a one-seat advantage, changing control of the Senate from the Republicans back to the Democrats for the remainder of the 107th Congress.

All portraits illustrated are from the U.S. Senate Collection

Prepared under the direction of the Secretary of the Senate by the Senate Historical Office and the Office of Senate Curator