

CRS Report for Congress

Received through the CRS Web

Senate Administrative Officers and Officials

Lorraine H. Tong
Analyst in American National Government
Government and Finance Division

Article I, Section 3 of the U.S. Constitution authorizes the Senate to choose its officers, but does not specifically identify them by title. The officers currently elected by the Senate are the President Pro Tempore, Secretary of the Senate, Sergeant at Arms, Chaplain, Secretary for the Majority, and Secretary for the Minority. The Senate has also established appointive offices to handle certain other administrative functions that are under the direction of the Legal Counsel, Legislative Counsel, and Parliamentarian. In addition, the Architect of the Capitol, an officer of Congress, is appointed by the President, subject to Senate confirmation. (This report does not include the President Pro Tempore, who is a member of the Senate.) For more information on legislative process, see [<http://www.crs.gov/products/guides/guidehome.shtml>].

Elected by the Senate

Secretary of the Senate. Sometimes called the Senate's "city manager," the Secretary of the Senate is the chief administrative and budgetary officer of the Senate. The Secretary manages the functions that support the legislative process of the Senate. Administrative functions include management of documents, election certifications, administering oaths, housekeeping and record keeping services, and registration of lobbyists. Legislative functions include the supervision of work performed by the offices of the Parliamentarian, journal clerk, legislative clerk, executive clerk, bill clerk, *Daily Digest*, and official reporters of debates. (See CRS Report 98-747, *Secretary of the Senate: Fact Sheet on Legislative and Administrative Duties*.)

Sergeant at Arms. The Senate Sergeant at Arms is the chief protocol, law enforcement, and administrative support officer of the Senate. The Sergeant at Arms is responsible for the security of the Senate, as well as the enforcement of its rules and regulations. Offices under the Sergeant at Arms are responsible for the Senate's computer system, postal services, recording and photographic studios, telecommunications, media facilities, furniture and furnishings, beauty and barber shops, parking facilities, and financial management services. The Sergeant at Arms also serves with the House Sergeant at Arms and the Architect of the Capitol on the Capitol Police Board and Capitol Guide Board. (See CRS Report 98-748, *Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate: Fact Sheet on Legislative and Administrative Duties*.)

Chaplain. The Chaplain of the Senate opens each session with a formal prayer. The Chaplain serves as minister and pastoral counselor to Senators, their families, and

staffs. The Chaplain neither represents nor is selected based on affiliation to a particular denomination. Guest chaplains of various denominations offer the opening prayer.

Nominated by Majority or Minority Leader

Secretary for the Majority/Secretary for the Minority. The Secretary for the Majority and Secretary for the Minority are approved by the respective party conferences and then elected by the Senate. The Secretaries coordinate scheduling and the dissemination of information between party floor leaders and individual Senators. The Secretaries also organize conference matters, oversee party activities in the Senate chamber, supervise the cloakrooms, brief Senators on votes and pending legislation, and, at the leadership's request, poll Senators. In addition, they also assist the Majority and Minority Leaders, respectively, in determining the best day to schedule a particular vote.

Appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate

Senate Legal Counsel. The Senate Legal Counsel represents the Senate, individual Senators, officers, committees, and their staff in litigation relating to their official duties (Senate access only: [<http://webster.senate.gov/other/legal>]). This official is appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate from among recommendations submitted by the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Senate Legislative Counsel. The Senate Legislative Counsel provides legislative counseling and drafting assistance to any Senator, committee, or office of the Senate. The Office of the Legislative Counsel routinely assists in drafting original measures and is often asked to review drafts of bills originating from the executive branch or elsewhere (Senate access only: [<http://webster.senate.gov/other/sole/index.htm>]).

Appointed by Secretary of the Senate with Majority Leader Approval

Senate Parliamentarian. The Senate Parliamentarian functions under the direction of the Secretary of the Senate, and advises the presiding officer of the Senate on matters related to procedure. He refers measures to committees on behalf of the presiding officer, analyzes Senate proceedings, and maintains and publishes precedents (see *Riddick's Senate Procedure*). The Parliamentarian also ensures that consideration of bills, resolutions, treaties, nominations, and trials of impeachment are in compliance with Senate rules, constitutional provisions, and public law. In addition to advising Senators, committees, and staff, the Parliamentarian also provides information on Senate legislative procedure to officers of the federal government, the press, and the general public.

Appointed by the President

Architect of the Capitol. As an officer of Congress, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is charged with the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the U.S. Capitol and adjacent buildings and grounds. The AOC also performs certain administrative functions affecting the Senate and House. A bicameral congressional advisory commission conducts a search for an Architect, who is then nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate for a tenure limited to 10 years. (See [<http://www.aoc.gov>].)