



CRS Report for Congress

House Standing Committee Chairs and Ranking Minority Members: Rules Governing Selection Procedures

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Summary

House rules, Republican Conference rules, and Democratic Caucus rules each detail aspects of the procedures followed in selecting standing committee chairs and ranking minority members. This report summarizes those procedures and lists membership on each party's steering committee. The report will be updated if rules or procedures change.

House Rules

House Rule X, clause 5(c)(2), adopted in 1995 and effective immediately, limited committee (and subcommittee) chairs to three-terms of consecutive service. Service for less than a full session in a Congress is disregarded. A rules change adopted on January 7, 2003, pursuant to H.Res. 5, exempted the Intelligence Committee chair from the limit. A rules change adopted on January 4, 2005, pursuant to H.Res. 5, exempted the Rules Committee chair from the limit.

Republican Conference Procedures

Republican Conference rules delineate procedures for the selection of standing committee chairs and ranking minority members. The Speaker, with the Republicans in the majority, has the authority to nominate the chairs of the House Administration Committee and Rules Committee. In the minority, this is performed by the minority leader. He names the ranking minority members on these committees. The Speaker's or minority leader's nominations for these two positions are submitted directly to the full Republican Conference for ratification. If the conference rejects the leader's nominee, the Speaker or minority leader has the authority to submit another name to the conference.

All other standing committee chairs or ranking minority members are nominated by the Republican Steering Committee and ratified by the full Republican Conference. Pursuant to conference rules, the Member nominated to be chair or ranking minority member does not need to be the Member with the longest continuous service on the committee. In the 110th Congress, the Steering Committee “interviewed” prospective candidates for ranking slots. Some of the new ranking members were the most senior members of the committee, others were not.

The Steering Committee is composed of party leaders, selected committee leaders, class leaders, and regional representatives. The Steering Committee is reconstituted each Congress. Regions are restructured to reflect as closely as possible an equal number of Republican Members from each region. Each region elects its Steering Committee member. If Steering Committee members are elected from states that have four or more Republican members, a “small state” group is triggered to also elect a member to the Steering Committee; the small state group is composed of states that have three or fewer Republican members. **Table 1** depicts the current membership of the Republican Steering Committee.

Table 1. Republican Steering Committee

Designated Representative	Member Serving in 110 th Congress	Comments
Republican Leader	John Boehner	Has 5 votes in Steering Committee
Minority Whip	Roy Blunt	Has 2 votes
Chief Deputy Whip	Eric Cantor	
Republican Conference Chair	Adam Putnam	
Republican Conference Vice Chair	Kay Granger	
Republican Conference Secretary	John Carter	
Republican Policy Chair	Thad McCotter	
NRCC Chair	Tom Cole	
Appropriations Committee ranking member	Jerry Lewis	
Energy and Commerce Committee ranking member	Joe Barton	
Rules Committee ranking member	David Dreier	

Designated Representative	Member Serving in 110th Congress	Comments
Ways and Means Committee ranking member	Jim McCrery	
California Representative	Ken Calvert	
Texas Representative	Lamar Smith	
Region I Representative	Doc Hastings	Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico
Region II Representative	Lee Terry	Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Minnesota
Region III Representative	Ray LaHood	Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Arkansas
Region IV Representative	Dave Camp	Michigan, Pennsylvania, West Virginia
Region V Representative	John McHugh	New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Puerto Rico
Region VI Representative	Bill Young	Florida, South Carolina
Region VII Representative	Ralph Regula	Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee
Region VIII Representative	Hal Rogers	North Carolina, Kentucky, Virginia
Region IX Representative	John Linder	Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia
Small State Representative	Don Young	Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wyoming, Idaho, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Utah, Connecticut
109 th Class Representative	Cathy McMorris	
110 th Class Representative	Kevin McCarthy	

Democratic Caucus Procedures

Democratic Caucus rules address selecting committee chairs and ranking minority members. The Democratic leader nominates a chair/ranking member for the Committees on Rules and House Administration, who must be approved by the entire Democratic Caucus. The Budget Committee chair/ranking member is selected from among members choosing to run for the position. Other chair/ranking member nominations are made by the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee and voted on by the entire Democratic Caucus. In making selections, the Steering Committee considers, pursuant to caucus rules, “merit, length of service on the committee and degree of commitment to the Democratic agenda of the nominee, and the diversity of the Caucus.” The Steering Committee is reconstituted each Congress, and regions can be restructured to reflect equal Democratic representation among regions. The number of appointments made by the party leader can also change. **Table 2** depicts the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee as constituted at the beginning of the 110th Congress.

Table 2. Democratic Steering Committee

Designated Representative	Member Serving in the 110 th Congress	Comments
Steering Committee Chair	Nancy Pelosi	
Steering Committee Co-Chair	Rosa DeLauro	
Policy Committee Co-Chair	George Miller	
Vice-Chair	Marion Berry	
Vice-Chair	Hilda Solis	
Whip	James Clyburn	
Democratic Caucus Chair	Rahm Emanuel	
Democratic Caucus Vice-Chair	John Larson	
DCCC Chair	Chris Van Hollen	
Senior Chief Deputy Whip	John Lewis	
Chief Deputy Whip	Joe Crowley	
Chief Deputy Whip	Diana DeGette	
Chief Deputy Whip	G.K. Butterfield	
Chief Deputy Whip	Ed Pastor	

Designated Representative	Member Serving in the 110th Congress	Comments
Chief Deputy Whip	John Tanner	
Chief Deputy Whip	Maxine Waters	
Chief Deputy Whip	Debbie Wasserman Schultz	
Chief Deputy Whip	Jan Schakowsky	
Region I	Brad Sherman	Southern California: 23-53
Region II	Jerry McNerney	Northern California: 1-22; Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, Alaska
Region III	Tammy Baldwin	Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin
Region IV	Jan Schakowsky	Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma
Region V	Tom Udall	Arizona, Iowa, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Idaho
Region VI	Gene Green	Texas
Region VII	Jim Cooper	Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico
Region VIII	G.K. Butterfield	Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida
Region IX	Dutch Ruppersberger	Maryland, New Jersey, West Virginia, Virginia, D.C., Delaware
Region X	Robert Brady	Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky
Region XI	Gregory Meeks	New York
Region XII	John Tierney	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont
Appropriations Committee Chair	David Obey	
Budget Committee Chair	John Spratt	
Energy and Commerce Committee Chair	John Dingell	

Designated Representative	Member Serving in the 110 th Congress	Comments
Financial Services Committee Chair	Barney Frank	
Rules Committee Chair	Louis Slaughter	
Ways and Means Committee Chair	Charles Rangel	
Organization Study and Review (OSR) Chair	Mike Capuano	
Freshman Representative	Kathy Castor	
Members appointed by Democratic Leader	Dennis Cardoza Jerry Costello Artur Davis Lloyd Doggett Kirsten Gillibrand Rush Holt Doris Matsui Kendrick Meek Charlie Melancon Tim Ryan Loretta Sanchez Gene Taylor Mike Thompson Nydia Velazquez	