

# KYRGYZSTAN PROGRAM PROFILE



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## History of Partnership

The House Democracy Partnership approved a legislative strengthening partnership with Kyrgyzstan in February 2012. The program is designed to focus on strengthening the unicameral Jogorku Kenesh (Supreme Council) in the areas of committee operations, budget analysis, and constituent outreach.

## Accomplishments

- Peer-to-peer assistance to Kyrgyz legislators in Bishkek.
- Concurrent training program for staff of the Jogorku Kenesh.
- Formal visit by U.S. legislators to the Jogorku Kenesh.

## Background

Nationwide demonstrations in the spring of 2005 resulted in the ouster of President Askar Akaev, who had run the country since 1990. Subsequent presidential elections in July 2005 were won overwhelmingly by former prime minister Kurmanbek Bakiev. Over the next few years, the new president manipulated the parliament to accrue new powers for himself. In July 2009, after months of harassment against his opponents and media critics, Bakiev won re-election in a presidential campaign that the international community deemed flawed. In April 2010, nationwide protests led to the resignation and expulsion of Bakiev. His successor, Rosa Otunbaeva, served as transitional president until Almazbek Atambaev was inaugurated in December 2011.

The most recent elections for the Jorgorku Kenesh, in October 2010, resulted in a narrow plurality of seats (28) for the Ata-Jurt party, 26 seats for the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, 25 for the Ar-Namys party, 23 for Respublika, and 18 for Ata-Meken. Ata-Jurt currently serves as the opposition party against a coalition of the remaining parties.

The Jorgoku Kenesh is comprised of 120 members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms.

## Congressional Delegations

A delegation of five Members of Congress, led by House Democracy Partnership Chairman David Dreier, inaugurated HDP's partnership with Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek on February 20-22, 2012. The delegation met with Speaker Asilbek Jeenbekov to formally open the partnership between HDP and the Jogorku Kenesh and spent a full day in parliament. In addition to meeting with faction leaders and members of the opposition, the delegation hosted a discussion on committee oversight with committee chairs from the Jogorku Kenesh. Concurrent staff training was held for the staff of the Jogorku Kenesh on the topic of constituent outreach.

## **MP Seminars**

The Jogorku Kenesh sent a delegation of five Members of Parliament to Washington in September 2012, for a seminar on committee operations. They met with active and retired Members of the U.S. Congress, members of the Congressional Research Service, and Congressional Budget Office. The focus was on oversight and legislative hearings, as well as constituent service and ethics.

## **Staff Seminars**

In December 2012, two staff members from the Kyrgyz Supreme Council participated in a staff institute focused on committee operations. The seminar, which included participants from 12 HDP partner countries, was focused on developing the capacity of legislative committee staff and expanding the use of public hearings and committee oversight. The delegates met with representatives from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Congressional Research Service (CRS), and former Members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Sessions were held on coordination between different committees, developing a committee agenda, nominations and confirmations, coordination with the executive branch, utilizing press to advance committee agendas, and legislative drafting.

In October 2012, two staff members from the Kyrgyz Supreme Council participated in a staff institute to strengthen legislative budget analysis. Twenty-three staff from twelve partner countries participated in the program, which included meetings with officials from the Congressional Budget Office, the Congressional Research Service, and staff from the House Budget, Appropriations, Agriculture, and Ways and Means Committees. Participants also met with representatives from the Government Accountability Office, the World Bank Institute and the International Budget Partnership.