



Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL)

Lincoln Diaz-Balart is a senior member of the House Rules Committee, the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Legislative and Budget Process, and the Co-Chairman of the Florida Congressional Delegation. He is also the Chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute.

Mr. Diaz-Balart attended public elementary schools in South Florida and high school at the American School of Madrid, Spain. Subsequently, he received a degree in international relations from New College of Florida, in Sarasota, and obtained a diploma in British politics in Cambridge, England. He received his law degree from Cleveland, Ohio's, Case Western Reserve University.

Mr. Diaz-Balart practiced law in Miami, where he worked for "Legal Services of Greater Miami," providing free legal services to the poor. He was subsequently an Assistant State Attorney in Miami and a partner in the law firm of Fowler, White.

Lincoln Diaz-Balart was first elected to the Florida Legislature in 1986 by the largest margin of victory of any state representative in Florida and was chosen "best in debate" by colleagues during his freshman term. In 1989, Mr. Diaz-Balart successfully ran in a special election for an open seat in the Florida Senate and was reelected in 1990.

In 1992, Mr. Diaz-Balart was elected to the United States House of Representatives from Florida's 21st Congressional District. He served as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee during his first term, and retains his seniority in that important committee.

In 1994, Lincoln Diaz-Balart became the first Hispanic in history to be named to the powerful House Rules Committee. The Rules Committee decides which legislation may reach the House Floor and what amendments may be debated.

In 1996, Lincoln Diaz-Balart drafted much of the legislation that strengthened the embargo against the Cuban dictatorship. Mr. Diaz-Balart was specifically responsible for codifying the embargo, making the lifting of sanctions contingent upon the liberation of all political prisoners and the scheduling of multiparty elections in Cuba.

In 1997, Mr. Diaz-Balart successfully carried out efforts to restore SSI, also known as "disability" benefits, and food stamps to legal immigrants who were denied aid by the Welfare Reform Law of 1996. On May 15, 1997, Mr. Diaz-Balart took to the Floor of the House and achieved the passage of his amendment to continue SSI benefits to legal immigrants by a vote of 345 to 74. Mr. Diaz-Balart was the author of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997, which granted legal residency to hundreds of thousands of immigrants in the United States.

As a member of the House Rules Committee, on September 14, 2001, Lincoln Diaz-Balart took to the floor of the House the Joint Resolution authorizing the use of the United States Armed Forces against those in Afghanistan responsible for the attacks of September 11, 2001 against the United States. On November 13, 2002, he took to the Floor the historic legislation creating the "Department of Homeland Security."

For his extraordinary work on behalf of Nicaraguan immigrants in the United States, Lincoln Diaz-Balart received the "Order of Ruben Dario in Great Cross Grade" medal from the President of Nicaragua on February 23, 2003. On April 13, 2004, due to his work on behalf of Colombian immigrants in the U.S., Lincoln Diaz-Balart received the highest medals awarded by the Senate and the House of Representatives of Colombia. On November 9, 2005, Lincoln Diaz-Balart was awarded the "Commander of the Ouissam Alaouite Order" of Morocco, for his efforts to help win the release of the final 404 Moroccan prisoners of war, most of whom were held for more than 20 years, by the Polisario Front in southern Algeria. For his work on behalf of Salvadoran immigrants in the United States, Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart received the highest Medal granted by El Salvador, the "Orden Nacional José Matías Delgado en Grado de Plata" from the President of El Salvador on May 3, 2008. Due to his work on behalf of handicapped Ukrainian children and the deepening of relations between Ukraine and the United States, he was awarded the "Order of Merit" by the Republic of Ukraine on December 2, 2009.

On February 4, 2009, legislation sponsored by Mr. Diaz-Balart, the Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act (ICHIA), became law as part of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Reauthorization Act of 2009. ICHIA authorizes the states to provide healthcare coverage to legal immigrant children and pregnant women without the previous 5-year delay under the Medicaid program and CHIP. Mr. Diaz-Balart repeatedly called for the issuance of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitian nationals in the United States. On January 15, 2010 the Obama Administration granted TPS to Haitians in the United States.

Congressman Diaz-Balart lives in Miami with his wife, Cristina, and their two sons, Lincoln and Daniel.