

What are the leadership positions in Congress?

The Speaker of the House

The Speaker is the official leader of the House of Representatives. Though the Constitution does not specify who can or cannot hold the position, the Speaker is typically also an elected representative, and a member of the majority party. The Speaker's duties, regulated by House rules and customs, include administering the proceedings of the floor, recognizing Members to speak, and appointing Members to conference committees. Typically the Speaker delegates many of his day to day functions, including presiding over debate on the floor. The Speaker is also the chair of the majority's Steering Committee, which chooses the leadership of each House committee.

The current Speaker of the House is Nancy Pelosi (D-CA).

The House Majority and Minority Leaders

Each party elects a floor leader, who works to decide what legislation their party should support, and also is highly involved in choosing committee leadership. The Majority Leader is second in command to the Speaker, but the Minority Leader is the head of his/her party.

The current Majority Leader is Steny Hoyer (D-MD); the current Minority Leader is John Boehner (R-OH).

The House Majority and Minority Whips

Parties also elect Whips, who are deputies to the party Leaders and work to ensure that party members vote the way the party leadership intends.

The current Majority Whip is James E. Clyburn (D-SC); the current Minority Whip is Roy Blunt (R-MO).

The President of the Senate

The President of the Senate is the Vice President of the United States. Unlike the Speaker of the House, he is not an

elected member of the Senate, and he cannot vote, except to break a tie.

The current President of the Senate and Vice President of the United States is Richard Cheney.

The President Pro Tempore of the Senate

In the absence of the President of the Senate (the Vice President), the President Pro Tempore is the official head of the Senate. He represents the Senate at formal events, and with the Speaker of the House, presides over the joint sessions of Congress. He is typically the most senior member of the majority party

The current President Pro Tempore of the Senate is Robert C. Byrd (D-WV).

The Senate Majority and Minority Leaders

The Senate Majority and Minority Leaders are similar to their counterparts in the House, but the Senate Majority Leader plays a larger role in determining the chamber's agenda and the leadership of committees than the Majority Leader in the House does.

The current Senate Majority leader is Harry Reid (D-NV); the current Senate Minority Leader is Mitch McConnell (R-KY).

The Senate Majority and Minority Whips

Like the House Majority and Minority Whips, the Whips in the Senate are deputies to their party Leaders and work to ensure party cohesiveness in votes.

The current Senate Majority Whip is Richard Durbin (D-IL); the current Senate Minority Whip is Trent Lott (R-MS).