

By the Numbers: Getting to Know Your Members of Congress

Written by Jeff Ignatius
Thursday, 26 April 2012 06:00

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Most people know that there's a wealth of information available online about members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. But while it's not hidden, it's often scattered among several Web sites, and it's hard to make head-to-head comparisons without a lot of clicking and note-taking.

Here is our attempt to bring some of the available data together in one place for members of Congress representing the Quad Cities. We include Representative Bruce Braley (a Democrat who currently represents Scott County in the House), Representative Dave Loebsack (a Democrat whose redrawn district will include Scott County beginning next year), Representative Bobby Schilling (a Republican representing the Illinois Quad Cities), and four U.S. Senators: Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Dick Durbin (D-Illinois), and Mark Kirk (R-Illinois). All the information was drawn from four Web sites: [OpenSecrets.org](#), [Legistorm.com](#), [GovTrac](#), and [VoteSmart.org](#).

Beyond the basics – their ages and professions, how long they've been in office, and when their terms end – we include information on committee assignments and leadership, how many roll-call votes they've missed, personal net worth and investments, earmarks (and earmarks that went to campaign contributors), aggregate staff compensation, top-paid staffers, how campaign contributions break down from individuals and political action committees (PACs), whether they completed Project Vote Smart's survey of candidates, and assessments from various interest groups.

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Note that these charts just scratch the surface. For instance, Legistorm.com includes not just salaries but the personal financial disclosures of each member of Congress and staff member. Durbin, for example, lists residences in Springfield (worth \$250,000) and Chicago (\$283,000) ... and a 1996 Ford truck with an estimated value of \$2,500. David Edmund Young, chief of staff for Grassley, owns rental properties in the Washington, D.C., area valued at \$500,000 to \$1 million and \$1 million to \$5 million, and he owns stock in Casey's General Stores, Wells Fargo, and Bank of America.

OpenSecrets.org allows you to see individual earmarks, and those that went to campaign contributors. GovTrack.us lets you look at members' legislative histories – the bills they sponsored and what happened to them. And VoteSmart.org features interest-group ratings and policy positions in a wide variety of areas, and it also tracks key votes and public statements.

Certain stereotypes of Congress hold true with the Quad Cities delegation. They're all white men. Three of the four senators are at least 67 years old, and among all seven elected officials, only Schilling is south of 52. Durbin, Harkin, and Grassley are career politicians, having served continually in Congress for at least 29 years apiece. Four of the seven are attorneys.

Are they wealthy? Certainly not by congressional standards. Only Harkin, with a net worth between \$10 million and \$23 million, ranks in his chamber's top 40 percent. Senators Durbin and Kirk and Representatives Loeb sack and Braley sit in their chambers' bottom halves. (That's a fairly high bar, however. Outside of Kirk, all of these members of Congress have net worths higher than the American median for their age groups.)

From the earmark information, it's obvious that our members of Congress – particularly Grassley and Harkin – are pretty good at bringing home the bacon ... or, from a different perspective, loading the federal budget with dubious pork. (Note that the Fiscal Year 2009 earmarks for the Iowa delegation are abnormally high, a result of federal spending for disaster aid stemming from flooding.)

We plan to revisit this information annually, so if there's something that's not here that you'd like to see included, please e-mail jeff@rcreader.com.

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Click on any chart below for a larger version.

Biographical and Personal Information

Member	Age	Education	Profession	Political Party	Year Elected	Number of Terms	Current Office	Home State	Spouse	Children	Religion	Political Party	Political Party	Political Party
Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL)	67	attorney	1967	2004	2004	1	Senator	Illinois	Patricia	3	Catholic	Democrat	Democrat	Democrat
Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL)	52	attorney	2010	2010	1	1	Senator	Illinois	Michelle	2	Catholic	Republican	Republican	Republican
Rep. Bobby Schiavone (R-IL)	48	business exec	2011	2011	1	1	Representative	Illinois	Michelle	2	Catholic	Republican	Republican	Republican
Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)	72	attorney	1980	2004	2004	1	Senator	Iowa	Debra	3	Catholic	Democrat	Democrat	Democrat
Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA)	79	sp/teacher	1980	2004	2004	1	Senator	Iowa	Barbara	3	Catholic	Republican	Republican	Republican
Rep. Dave Loebsack (D-IA)	59	politician	2007	2012	2012	1	Representative	Iowa	Michelle	2	Catholic	Democrat	Democrat	Democrat
Rep. Bruce Braley (D-IA)	54	attorney	2007	2012	2012	1	Representative	Iowa	Michelle	2	Catholic	Democrat	Democrat	Democrat

Note: Spouse information includes all spouses from 1980-1986, 1990-1994, 2000-2004, 2008-2010, 2010-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019. Children information includes all children from 1980-1986, 1990-1994, 2000-2004, 2008-2010, 2010-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019. Political Party information includes all political parties from 1980-1986, 1990-1994, 2000-2004, 2008-2010, 2010-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019. Political Party information includes all political parties from 1980-1986, 1990-1994, 2000-2004, 2008-2010, 2010-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019.

Campaign-Committee Contributions: 2007-12 (Senators), 2011-12 (Representatives)

Member	Total Contributions	Individual Contributions	Small Individual Contributions	Large Individual Contributions	Top 5 Contributors	Top 5 Contributor Categories	Quality Score
Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL)	\$9,791,421	\$8,828,078	\$388,931	\$56,389	\$2,726,094	Lawyers, Health Professionals, Business Executives, Real Estate	99
Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL)	\$10,867,689	\$12,242,472	\$1,247,879	\$10,814,593	\$1,822,362	Health Professionals, Business Executives, Real Estate	96
Rep. Bobby Schiavone (R-IL)	\$1,335,848	\$577,362	\$110,885	\$466,477	\$481,281	Lawyers, Health Professionals, Business Executives, Real Estate	99
Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)	\$8,571,659	\$5,666,078	\$1,021,129	\$4,644,949	\$2,417,287	Lawyers, Health Professionals, Business Executives, Real Estate	98
Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA)	\$7,281,389	\$3,749,655	\$683,893	\$3,065,762	\$1,395,994	Health Professionals, Business Executives, Real Estate	97
Rep. Dave Loebsack (D-IA)	\$815,143	\$151,797	\$84,537	\$67,260	\$487,281	Health Professionals, Business Executives, Real Estate	95
Rep. Bruce Braley (D-IA)	\$1,422,775	\$583,845	n/a	n/a	\$481,718	Lawyers, Health Professionals, Business Executives, Real Estate	100

Note: Quality score is based on the number of contributors, the number of small individual contributions, and the number of large individual contributions. Quality score is based on the number of contributors, the number of small individual contributions, and the number of large individual contributions.

Remarks: Fiscal Years 2008-2010

Member	Fiscal Year 2008 Remarks	Fiscal Year 2009 Remarks	Fiscal Year 2010 Remarks
Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL)	\$98,146,969.79	\$103,278,969.79	\$103,278,969.79
Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL)	\$26,132,768.00	\$26,132,768.00	\$26,132,768.00
Rep. Bobby Schiavone (R-IL)	\$1,335,848.00	\$1,335,848.00	\$1,335,848.00
Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)	\$8,571,659.00	\$8,571,659.00	\$8,571,659.00
Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA)	\$7,281,389.00	\$7,281,389.00	\$7,281,389.00
Rep. Dave Loebsack (D-IA)	\$815,143.00	\$815,143.00	\$815,143.00
Rep. Bruce Braley (D-IA)	\$1,422,775.00	\$1,422,775.00	\$1,422,775.00

Note: Remarks information includes the following (2007-2010):

Interest-Group Ratings

Member	National Journal of Public Choice Score (2010)	American Conservative Score (2010)	AFL-CIO (2010)	National Taxpayers Union (2010)	ACLU (2010)	GovTrack.us Sponsorship Analysis
Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL)	78	6	100	6	93	"far left Democratic leader"
Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL)	39	58	27	68	67	"centrist Republican"
Rep. Bobby Schiavone (R-IL)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	"centrist Republican follower"
Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)	77	8	100	5	92	"moderate Democratic leader"
Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA)	24	84	17	91	7	"centrist Republican"
Rep. Dave Loebsack (D-IA)	76	1	100	6	94	"rank-and-file Democrat"
Rep. Bruce Braley (D-IA)	81	1	100	4	94	"rank-and-file Democrat"

Note: Interest-Group Ratings information includes the following (2007-2010):

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Staff Compensation: Fiscal Years 2010-2011

	Fiscal Year 2010 Staff Compensation	Fiscal Year 2011 Staff Compensation	Number of Paid Staff*	Highest-Compensated Staffers†
Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL)	\$3,193,742	\$2,883,155	63	Mike Day (senior advisor, \$169,476); Bill Houston (Downstate director, \$142,457); Dana S. Morris (legislative director, \$140,000)
Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL)	\$946,317	\$2,727,000	53	Lee Mackenzie II (Washington chief of staff, \$145,000); Eric E. EA (chief of staff, \$156,000); Kate Dickens (policy and communications director, \$148,000)
Rep. Bobby Schilling (R-IL)	n/a	\$481,077	17	Betsy Wright Hawkins (chief of staff, \$168,811); Bobby Frederick (legislative director, \$90,000); Bill Bloom (district director, \$62,000)
Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)	\$2,867,141	\$2,814,112	52	Brian Richard Helberg (chief of staff, \$169,499); Mark B. Halverson (senior counsel, \$169,499); Kate Lynn (communications director, \$142,079)
Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA)	\$2,639,596	\$2,621,853	51	David Edmund Young (chief of staff, \$169,499); Rodney Lee Whitlock (health-policy director, \$142,000); Penne S. Starke (administrative director, \$128,825)
Rep. Dave Loebsack (D-IA)	\$1,018,412	\$999,795	20	Eric Todd White (chief of staff, \$141,733); Rob Sussner (district director, \$48,305); Morgan Sarah L. Lynn (legislative director, \$65,000)
Rep. Bruce Braley (D-IA)	\$994,169	\$1,056,428	20	John R. Davis (chief of staff, \$163,523); Mike Goodman (legislative director, \$132,887); Pete DeRock (district director, \$110,880)

Source: Legistorm.com

Notes:
 *Numbers represent the number of people receiving any compensation from the elected official's office for the period of April through September 2011 for senators and October through December 2011 for representatives.
 †Salaries were annualized based on compensation for the period of April through September 2011 for senators' staffs and October through December 2011 for representatives' staffs.
 *Kirk's staff salary information includes his tenure in the House (2001-2010)
 †Schilling's Fiscal Year 2011 staff-salary information includes only three quarters; he took office in the second quarter of the fiscal year.