

## Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE) — Congressional Activity Brief

### TOP STORY

#### APPROPRIATIONS / DEFENSE

### Coons Expected to Lead Democratic Pushback on DOGE-Driven Defense Budget Cuts as FY2027 Appropriations Season Opens

As March opens, Sen. Coons is positioning himself as a central Democratic voice against proposed DOGE-aligned spending reductions that could affect Pentagon civilian workforce and Delaware military installations. In late February statements, Coons warned that indiscriminate federal workforce cuts threaten readiness at Dover Air Force Base and across the defense industrial base. The Senate Appropriations Committee is expected to begin markup discussions in the coming weeks, with Coons leveraging his Defense Subcommittee Ranking Member role to shape Democratic priorities.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz can agree on protecting Dover AFB and Delaware defense jobs while pivoting to fiscal responsibility — drawing on his Delaware Senate record of proposing a Five Year Plan to Restructure and Reorganize State Government, Katz can argue that smart government reform and eliminating genuine waste is not the same as cutting readiness. 'I've actually written legislation to reform bloated government — Coons just defends the status quo.'

### DEFENSE & PENTAGON

#### DEFENSE WORKFORCE

### [STAFF VERIFY] Coons Statements on Pentagon Civilian Workforce Reductions

Reports indicate Coons has been vocal in opposing DOGE-recommended reductions in force (RIFs) at Defense Department agencies, particularly those with Delaware footprints including the Defense Logistics Agency and DISA operations. Staff should verify whether Coons released a formal statement or signed a letter with other appropriators in the final days of February 2026 opposing specific Pentagon RIF targets.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's platform commitment to strong defense and veterans' well-being (per his veterans platform calling for 'unwavering commitment to safeguarding their health'), Katz can support retaining essential defense personnel while calling

out Coons for never proposing structural reforms to non-defense federal bureaucracy. Katz authored a bill to restructure Delaware state government — he's not afraid of reform.

DOVER AFB

### [STAFF VERIFY] Dover Air Force Base — C-5M / KC-46 Transition Updates

Dover AFB remains central to Delaware's defense economy. Staff should check whether Coons made any late-February announcements regarding military construction funding, KC-46A tanker basing decisions, or mortuary affairs facility upgrades at Dover. Coons typically uses his Appropriations Defense Subcommittee seat to secure MILCON earmarks for the base.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz should publicly and consistently champion Dover AFB funding — per his veterans and defense platform emphasizing 'sustaining a robust military force' — while noting that Coons's 15+ years in the Senate haven't prevented Delaware from facing repeated base realignment anxieties. A senator with executive and business management skills (Katz's background as a business owner and Georgetown MBA) would proactively build coalition support rather than react.

RECENT LEGISLATION

LEGISLATIVE TRACKER

### [STAFF VERIFY] Coons Cosponsorship Activity — Late February 2026

Staff should pull the latest Congress.gov cosponsorship records for Coons from the past two weeks. Historically, Coons is active on international affairs, intellectual property, and judiciary-related bills. His legislative profile shows 27% of bills related to International Affairs and 21% to Commerce. Check for any new bills related to AI governance, CHIPS Act implementation oversight, or judicial nominations.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Coons's legislative focus skews heavily toward international affairs and corporate/IP law — areas that don't directly lower grocery prices or fix healthcare access for Delawareans. Per Katz's economy and cost of living platform calling for 'tax reforms that spur economic growth' and 'reducing the corporate tax burden,' Katz should contrast his kitchen-table focus with Coons's Davos-class priorities.

IMMIGRATION

### [STAFF VERIFY] ICE Oversight / Immigration Enforcement Legislation

Staff should verify whether Coons has signed onto any Democratic legislation in the 119th Congress seeking to limit ICE enforcement authorities or impose additional oversight on immigration detention. Coons has historically positioned himself as a moderate on immigration but has voted with the Democratic caucus on key enforcement-limiting amendments. Check for any recent floor statements or press releases on border policy.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's platform supporting secure borders and strong ICE enforcement, this is a clear contrast area. If Coons has supported any measure weakening ICE authority, Katz can draw a bright line: 'As a physician, I took an oath to protect life. As your senator, I'll take an oath to protect our borders. Senator Coons votes to handcuff the men and women who keep Delaware safe.'

#### APPROPRIATIONS & DELAWARE FUNDING

##### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

### **FY2026 Continuing Resolution Status — Delaware Federal Funding in Limbo**

The federal government is likely operating under a continuing resolution or recently passed omnibus as of March 1, 2026. Coons, as a senior appropriator, would be central to any negotiations. Staff should verify the current CR/omnibus status and identify specific Delaware earmarks Coons secured — historically these include MILCON at Dover AFB, Port of Wilmington infrastructure, and Delaware State University funding.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's fiscal responsibility platform and his Delaware Senate record proposing government restructuring (Five Year Plan bill), Katz can acknowledge that earmarks for Delaware are important while arguing the broader spending framework is broken. 'Senator Coons brings home some earmarks while voting for trillions in wasteful spending. That's not fiscal leadership — that's a participation trophy.'

##### HEALTHCARE FUNDING

### **[STAFF VERIFY] Delaware Healthcare Facility Grants or Community Project Funding**

Staff should check whether Coons secured any FY2026 Community Project Funding (earmarks) for Delaware healthcare facilities, community health centers, or mental health programs. Coons has previously directed federal dollars to ChristianaCare, Nemours, and Delaware community

health centers. These announcements often come during appropriations season or upon bill passage.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's extensive healthcare platform and his history developing the Delaware Health Information Network (DHIN), Katz can credit any federal healthcare dollars while arguing Coons lacks the clinical expertise to ensure funds are directed where they'll have the greatest patient impact. 'I built Delaware's health information network from scratch. I know where the system is broken — and where federal dollars actually save lives versus where they feed bureaucracy.'

#### FOREIGN POLICY & DIPLOMACY

##### FOREIGN RELATIONS

### **[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Foreign Relations Committee — Iran / Middle East Posture**

Staff should check for any Coons statements or committee activity related to Iran policy, particularly regarding the administration's posture on Iran's nuclear program and any Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) discussions. Coons has historically supported executive authority on Iran sanctions but has been more cautious on military authorization. His position on Commander-in-Chief war powers is a key area to track.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's platform supporting strong defense and Commander-in-Chief authority, any Coons hesitancy on military options against Iran can be framed as weakness. 'When American lives and our allies are at stake, the Commander-in-Chief needs a Senate that backs strength, not one that dithers. Senator Coons wants to be a diplomat — Delaware needs a senator who stands with our military.'

##### CHINA POLICY / CHIPS

### **[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Engagement on China / Taiwan Semiconductor Security**

Coons has been a leading Senate voice on the CHIPS and Science Act and semiconductor supply chain security. Staff should verify any late-February activity — hearings, statements, or oversight letters — related to CHIPS Act implementation, particularly regarding Delaware-based companies or facilities. Coons's Commerce Committee-adjacent interests and Foreign Relations seat make this a dual-track issue for him.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's economy platform calling for incentivizing 'private sector investment in research and innovation,' Katz can support the goal of semiconductor independence while questioning whether CHIPS Act taxpayer subsidies are being efficiently deployed. Drawing on his business ownership experience and Georgetown MBA, Katz can argue: 'I support American tech leadership, but I've run a business — I know the difference between smart investment and a government slush fund. Where's the accountability?'

## 2026 RACE CONTEXT

### CAMPAIGN INTELLIGENCE

#### **Race Snapshot: Coons vs. Katz (General: Nov. 3, 2026)**

Sen. Coons (D) is running for a third full term. Republican primary: Dr. Mike Katz vs. John Shulli — primary set for September 15, 2026. Delaware is historically Solid Democratic. Coons has missed 3.0% of Senate roll call votes since 2010. His legislative profile focuses on International Affairs (27%), Commerce (21%), and Labor (10%). Committees: Appropriations (Defense Subcommittee Ranking Member), Foreign Relations, Judiciary. Note: Sunday is a congressional recess day; no floor votes scheduled. Coons may be in Delaware for constituent events — staff should monitor local press and social media for any town halls or public appearances.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Strategic note for Katz: Coons is well-funded and active on national security. Key vulnerabilities: Iran war posture, DOGE/government spending debate, ICE oversight bill, healthcare policy (Katz's home turf as a physician and DHIN architect). March is a critical month to build earned media around Katz's healthcare expertise and government reform credentials (term limits bill SB 61, lobby reform bill SB 141, government restructuring plan) as the appropriations debate heats up. Katz should seek local Delaware press opportunities contrasting his reform record with Coons's 15-year incumbency.

Sources: [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) · [GovTrack](https://www.govtrack.us) · [NPR](https://www.npr.org) · [Coons.senate.gov](https://www.coons.senate.gov) · [Ballotpedia](https://www.ballotpedia.org) · C-SPAN

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