

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

TOP STORY

GOVERNMENT SPENDING / DOGE

Coons Expected to Lead Democratic Opposition to DOGE-Driven Cuts to Federal Workforce at Appropriations Hearing

Sen. Coons is anticipated to use his position as Ranking Member on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee to challenge proposed workforce reductions driven by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) initiative, particularly as they affect federal employees at Delaware installations including Dover Air Force Base and the New Castle Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) center. Coons has publicly warned that indiscriminate cuts threaten national security readiness and Delaware jobs. Staff should verify whether a formal hearing or floor statement is scheduled for this week.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz can thread the needle here — support fiscal responsibility and government restructuring (drawing on his Delaware Senate legislation establishing an independent council to develop a five-year plan to restructure and reorganize state government) while insisting that cuts must be strategic, not reckless. Frame it as: 'Unlike Senator Coons, who reflexively defends the bloated status quo, I've actually written legislation to restructure government efficiently — protecting essential services and taxpayer dollars at the same time.'

DEFENSE & PENTAGON

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

[STAFF VERIFY] FY2027 Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Markup Timeline

As Ranking Member on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Coons is expected to begin shaping Democratic priorities for the FY2027 defense spending bill. Early signals suggest Coons will push for increased funding for military family housing and readiness accounts, particularly relevant to Dover AFB's C-5M Super Galaxy mission and the 436th/512th Airlift Wings. Staff should verify specific markup dates and any Coons-submitted programmatic requests.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's veterans platform and his call for a VA Advanced Medical Facility in Southern Delaware, Katz should affirm strong defense spending —

especially for Dover AFB and Delaware military families — while pivoting: 'I'll fight for every dollar Dover needs, but I'll also demand accountability for how the Pentagon spends taxpayer money. Senator Coons has been on the Appropriations Committee for years, yet our veterans in Kent and Sussex still lack advanced medical care close to home.'

WAR POWERS / IRAN

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Statement on Commander-in-Chief Authority and Iran Posture

With ongoing tensions related to Iran's nuclear program and regional proxy operations, Coons has historically supported constraining presidential use of military force through War Powers Resolution enforcement. Staff should monitor for any new Coons statements or co-sponsored resolutions seeking to limit executive military authority in the Middle East theater this week.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's strong defense and Commander-in-Chief authority positioning, this is a clear contrast. Katz should assert: 'Our adversaries don't wait for Senate committee approval before threatening American lives. I trust our military commanders and our President to act decisively to protect Americans — Senator Coons's approach of tying the Commander-in-Chief's hands emboldens Iran and endangers our troops.'

RECENT LEGISLATION

IMMIGRATION / BORDER SECURITY

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Co-Sponsorship of ICE Oversight and Immigration Enforcement Reform Bill

Coons has previously aligned with Democratic efforts to impose additional oversight requirements on ICE enforcement operations and restrict certain interior enforcement actions. Staff should verify whether Coons has co-sponsored or made statements on any new legislation in the 119th Congress that would limit ICE detainer authority or restrict cooperation between local law enforcement and federal immigration agents.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's platform supporting secure borders and strong ICE enforcement, this is a fundamental contrast. Katz message: 'As a physician, I've treated patients from every walk of life — I believe in compassion AND the rule of law. Senator Coons wants to handcuff ICE agents while our border remains in crisis. Delaware families deserve a Senator who backs our law enforcement, not one who undermines them.'

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Healthcare Legislation Activity — Prescription Drug Pricing or ACA Expansion

Coons has historically supported ACA expansion and federal prescription drug pricing interventions. Staff should check for any new healthcare-related bills or co-sponsorships filed in late February or early March 2026, particularly any measures that expand government control over healthcare markets or pricing.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's extensive healthcare platform and his 40+ years in the U.S. healthcare industry, Katz should lean into his physician credibility: 'Senator Coons is a lawyer who votes on healthcare bills he doesn't fully understand. I've spent decades in operating rooms and health system management — I know our system needs a paradigm shift from treating illness to preventing it, not more Washington mandates that drive up costs and reduce access. I created Delaware's Health Information Network; Senator Coons has created more red tape.'

Coons Likely to Support Corporate Tax Increase Proposals in Budget Resolution Debate

As the Senate begins positioning around the FY2027 budget resolution, Coons is expected to support Democratic proposals to raise the corporate tax rate and increase taxes on high earners to fund expanded social programs. Coons has consistently voted against the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act provisions and their extensions. Staff should confirm specific budget framework proposals Coons endorses.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing directly on Katz's Delaware Senate bill repealing the corporate income tax (Katz SB 100, 146th General Assembly) and his economy platform calling for reducing the corporate tax burden and incentivizing business investment, Katz should hammer this: 'I wrote legislation to eliminate the corporate income tax in Delaware because I know lower taxes create jobs. Senator Coons wants to raise taxes on the businesses that employ Delawareans — that's not economic policy, it's economic sabotage.'

[STAFF VERIFY] FY2026 Continuing Resolution Status and Impact on Delaware Federal Installations

Congress is likely still operating under a Continuing Resolution or recently passed omnibus for FY2026. Coons would be expected to highlight any Delaware-specific earmarks secured through his Appropriations Committee seat, including funding for Dover AFB military construction, Delaware State University research grants, and Army Corps of Engineers projects for Delaware coastal resilience. Staff should pull specific dollar figures from the most recent appropriations vehicle.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz can acknowledge Delaware funding wins — 'I'll always fight for Dover Air Force Base and Delaware's fair share' — while pivoting to fiscal responsibility per his economy platform: 'But Senator Coons votes for trillion-dollar spending packages stuffed with waste. As someone who authored legislation to restructure government operations (Katz's five-year restructuring plan), I'll fight for Delaware's priorities AND demand Washington stop spending money it doesn't have.'

ENERGY / INFRASTRUCTURE

[STAFF VERIFY] Delaware Infrastructure and Energy Project Funding Updates

Coons has promoted offshore wind investment and clean energy projects in Delaware through his Appropriations role and IIJA implementation. Staff should check for any recent announcements of federal grants for Delaware energy infrastructure, transit projects, or broadband expansion that Coons may claim credit for in early March 2026.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's energy and environment platform supporting American energy independence and nuclear energy (including the ADVANCE Act), Katz should contrast: 'Senator Coons bets Delaware's energy future on mandates and subsidies for technologies that can't yet reliably power our grid. I support an all-of-the-above strategy anchored in nuclear energy — safe, clean, and reliable — along with innovation that makes America energy independent, not dependent on foreign supply chains for solar panels and rare earth minerals.'

FOREIGN POLICY & DIPLOMACY

FOREIGN RELATIONS / UKRAINE

[STAFF VERIFY] Senate Foreign Relations Committee — Coons Activity on Ukraine and NATO Funding

As a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Coons has been among the most vocal advocates for sustained U.S. military and economic assistance to Ukraine. Staff should check for any scheduled SFRC hearings this week, as well as any Coons statements or co-sponsored legislation related to continued Ukraine aid packages or NATO alliance commitments in early March 2026.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz can frame this through fiscal responsibility and strong defense priorities: 'I support our NATO allies and standing up to Russian aggression, but Senator Coons writes blank checks to foreign governments while Delaware veterans can't get timely healthcare. Per my platform, I'll demand accountability for every dollar spent abroad and prioritize building a VA Advanced Medical Facility in Southern Delaware for the heroes who served right here at home.'

AFRICA / SFRC

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Engagement on Africa Policy and Global Development

Coons has long served as a leading Senate voice on U.S.-Africa policy, previously chairing the SFRC Africa subcommittee. He has championed development aid, AGOA trade preferences, and democracy promotion across the continent. Staff should verify if any SFRC Africa-related hearings or Coons floor statements are expected this week, particularly regarding competition with China for African partnerships.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz should acknowledge the importance of countering Chinese influence globally but redirect to domestic priorities: 'Senator Coons has spent 15 years focused on foreign policy while Delaware families struggle with housing costs that jumped 53% in five years. Per my homeownership platform, I'll fight for tax incentives and discounted rates for first-time homebuyers — putting Delawareans first, not last.'

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. No new public polling has been released in the past 48 hours. Staff should monitor for any Q1 2026 FEC filing previews from the Coons campaign, which may indicate early fundraising totals and burn rate.

⚡ **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 health system architect). Katz should continue building name ID through earned media on healthcare costs, homeownership affordability, and government reform — issues where his Delaware Senate legislative record (SB 61 term limits, SB 141 lobby reform, SB 100 corporate tax repeal, DHIN creation, SR 14 transparency) gives him concrete credibility that career politicians like Coons cannot match. March priority: secure endorsements from Delaware first responder and veterans organizations, drawing on Katz's first responders and veterans platform planks.

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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