

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

TOP STORY

GOVERNMENT SPENDING / DOGE

Coons Clashes with DOGE Over Proposed Cuts to Federal Workforce Programs

Sen. Coons issued a statement on Tuesday criticizing the Department of Government Efficiency's latest round of proposed workforce reductions, specifically targeting the Social Security Administration and EPA regional offices that serve Delaware. Coons called the cuts 'reckless austerity that will leave Delawareans without critical services' and announced he would introduce an amendment to the upcoming continuing resolution to shield affected agencies. He cited potential impacts to the SSA field office in Wilmington and the EPA Region 3 office in Philadelphia that handles Delaware environmental enforcement. [STAFF VERIFY: Confirm exact DOGE announcements from March 2-3 and whether Coons filed a specific amendment.]

⚡ KATZ CONTRAST POINT: Dr. Katz can acknowledge the need to protect essential Delaware services while pivoting to fiscal responsibility — drawing on his Delaware Senate legislation establishing an Independent Council to restructure and reorganize state government (Katz's Five Year Plan initiative). Katz should frame this as: 'I've actually done the hard work of restructuring government to be more efficient. Senator Coons just wants to protect the bloated status quo. We can serve Delawareans better while spending less — I've proven that in Dover.'

DEFENSE & PENTAGON

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Holds Hearing on FY2027 Budget Priorities

As Ranking Member of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Coons is expected to participate in early FY2027 budget posture hearings this week. Coons has historically used these hearings to advocate for Dover Air Force Base funding, C-5M Super Galaxy sustainment, and the National Guard Cyber Mission. He has also pushed for increased funding for allied security assistance, particularly for NATO eastern flank nations. [STAFF VERIFY: Confirm whether the March 4 hearing occurred and identify specific Coons questions or statements.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Dr. Katz should affirm strong support for Dover AFB and Delaware's military installations, consistent with his veterans platform calling for robust defense and a VA Advanced Medical Facility in southern Delaware. The pivot: 'I'll fight for Dover Air Force Base just as hard as anyone — but I'll also fight for the men and women who serve there. Senator Coons votes for weapons systems but hasn't delivered the advanced VA medical facility that Kent and Sussex County veterans desperately need.' Per Katz's veterans platform, this is a key Delaware-specific gap.

WAR POWERS / IRAN

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Position on Commander-in-Chief War Powers Amid Iran Tensions

Amid ongoing tensions with Iran, Coons has historically supported constraining executive war powers through legislation like the 2020 Iran War Powers Resolution (S.J.Res.68). Staff should monitor whether Coons has made recent statements on the Administration's posture toward Iran or any new AUMF-related debates in the Foreign Relations or Appropriations committees. Coons has generally favored Congressional authorization requirements before military action.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's strong defense and Commander-in-Chief authority positioning, this is a clear contrast. Katz believes the President must have the authority to act swiftly to protect American lives and interests. Messaging: 'Senator Coons wants to tie the Commander-in-Chief's hands while our adversaries don't wait for committee hearings. I trust our military leaders and support their ability to defend America without bureaucratic delays.'

RECENT LEGISLATION

TECHNOLOGY / AI REGULATION

Coons Reintroduces AI Accountability and Transparency Act

Sen. Coons, a longtime advocate for AI governance, has been expected to reintroduce legislation requiring transparency in federal agency use of artificial intelligence systems, building on his prior efforts with the AI ACCOUNTABILITY Act. The bill would mandate algorithmic impact assessments for high-risk AI deployments in government. Coons has positioned himself as a leading Democratic voice on AI regulation through his Judiciary Committee seat. [STAFF VERIFY: Confirm bill number and cosponsors for the 119th Congress version.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's platform emphasis on incentivizing private sector investment in research and innovation (per his Economy & Cost of Living

platform), Katz should frame this as overregulation stifling American competitiveness. Messaging: 'I support responsible AI development, but Senator Coons's approach is regulation-first, innovation-second. As a physician who helped build Delaware's Health Information Network from scratch, I know technology thrives when government partners with the private sector — not when it buries innovators in red tape.'

INFRASTRUCTURE / PERMITTING

Coons Cosponsors Bipartisan Infrastructure Permitting Reform Bill

Coons has been working on bipartisan permitting reform to accelerate infrastructure project approvals, building on provisions from the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act and 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. He has advocated for streamlining NEPA review timelines for energy and transportation projects while maintaining environmental safeguards. This effort aligns with his Appropriations Committee role in directing infrastructure dollars to Delaware. [STAFF VERIFY: Confirm specific bill number, co-lead senator, and March 2026 status.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's energy and environment platform supporting efficient project permitting (including his explicit support for the ADVANCE Act for nuclear energy permitting), Katz can claim this ground credibly. Messaging: 'I'm glad Senator Coons is finally catching up on permitting reform — but where was he for the past 15 years while projects sat in regulatory limbo? I've supported the ADVANCE Act for nuclear energy and real permitting reform from the start. Delaware can't wait another decade for Senator Coons to follow where conservatives have led.'

IMMIGRATION / BORDER SECURITY

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Activity on ICE/Immigration Enforcement Legislation

Staff should verify whether Coons has made any recent floor statements or committee actions regarding ICE enforcement authorities, particularly in the context of the ongoing FY2026 DHS funding debate. Coons has historically supported immigration reform with a path to citizenship while opposing expanded ICE detention mandates. He voted against amendments to increase ICE detention beds in prior appropriations cycles.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** This is a top-tier contrast area. Per Katz's platform supporting secure borders and strong ICE enforcement, messaging should be direct: 'Senator Coons has spent his career weakening the tools that keep Delaware families safe. I support our ICE officers, strong border security, and the rule of law — full stop. Delaware communities near

I-95 know the consequences of an open border, and they deserve a Senator who backs law enforcement, not one who votes to cut their resources.'

APPROPRIATIONS & DELAWARE FUNDING

FEDERAL BUDGET / DELAWARE FUNDING

FY2026 Continuing Resolution Status and Delaware Earmark Implications

With the federal government operating under a continuing resolution, Coons's FY2026 earmark requests for Delaware remain in limbo. In prior cycles, Coons has secured Congressionally Directed Spending for Delaware projects including Port of Wilmington improvements, University of Delaware research facilities, and water infrastructure upgrades in Sussex County. A full-year CR would freeze these at FY2025 levels. [STAFF VERIFY: Confirm current CR expiration date and whether Coons has publicly listed his FY2026 earmark requests.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's platform supporting infrastructure modernization through public-private partnerships (per his Economy & Cost of Living platform), Katz can argue: 'Senator Coons loves announcing earmarks, but after 15 years in office, Delaware's infrastructure is still crumbling. I'll bring a business owner's approach — leveraging private investment alongside federal dollars to actually get projects completed, not just announced at press conferences.'

MILCON / DOVER AFB

[STAFF VERIFY] Dover AFB Military Construction Funding in FY2027 Request

Staff should track whether the FY2027 President's Budget Request (expected in coming weeks) includes military construction funding for Dover Air Force Base. Coons typically advocates for MILCON projects at Dover and has secured funding for facility upgrades and the base's mortuary affairs mission. Any gaps in the request would present an opportunity to question Coons's effectiveness. [STAFF VERIFY: Monitor DoD budget rollout for Dover AFB line items.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's veterans platform and support for robust defense, Katz should be prepared to immediately respond to the FY2027 MILCON request. If Dover AFB funding is strong, Katz acknowledges bipartisan support while pivoting: 'Dover AFB is Delaware's pride, and I'll always fight for it. But I'll also fight for the VA Advanced Medical Facility in

southern Delaware that Senator Coons has failed to deliver for Kent and Sussex County veterans.' This is directly from Katz's veterans platform calling for a VA facility in southern Delaware.

FOREIGN POLICY & DIPLOMACY

FOREIGN RELATIONS / UKRAINE

Coons Engages on Ukraine Aid Sustainability Amid European Security Debates

As a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Coons has been a vocal proponent of sustained military and economic assistance to Ukraine. He has participated in multiple European security discussions and has argued that U.S. credibility with NATO allies depends on continued support. Recent Senate debate has focused on whether additional Ukraine supplemental funding should be tied to border security provisions or standalone. [STAFF VERIFY: Confirm any Coons statements or SFRC hearings from March 2-4 on this topic.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz should frame this through fiscal responsibility and priorities. Messaging: 'I support our allies, but Senator Coons has voted to send over \$100 billion overseas while Delawareans struggle with rising costs at home. Before we write another blank check, I want to see accountability for every dollar spent and a clear strategy for victory — not an endless commitment with no endgame. Drawing on Katz's fiscal responsibility platform, every foreign aid dollar must be justified against domestic needs.'

FOREIGN RELATIONS / AFRICA POLICY

Coons Pushes Africa Trade and Investment Framework

Coons, who chairs or holds senior positions on the Africa-focused subcommittee of Senate Foreign Relations, has been a leading Senate voice on U.S.-Africa engagement. He has previously championed the Prosper Africa initiative and AGOA reauthorization. Coons views Africa policy as a counter to Chinese influence on the continent and has framed trade engagement as both a security and economic imperative. [STAFF VERIFY: Confirm any recent Africa-related hearings, statements, or legislation from Coons in February-March 2026.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** This is an area where Katz can pivot to economic competitiveness. Per Katz's Economy & Cost of Living platform emphasizing American competitiveness and trade: 'I agree we need to counter China in Africa, but Senator Coons has spent more time on foreign trade frameworks than on fixing Delaware's economy. His focus

should be creating jobs in Wilmington and Dover — not Nairobi and Lagos. I'll put Delaware workers first while still standing up to China globally.'

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 this cycle as of this briefing date. Coons's Q4 2025 FEC filing showed a significant cash-on-hand advantage. [STAFF VERIFY: Monitor FEC filings and any new polling data.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Strategic note for Katz: Coons is well-funded and active on national security. Key vulnerabilities for the week: DOGE/government spending debate (Katz's government restructuring record from Dover is a credible contrast), ICE oversight and immigration enforcement (strong Katz platform position), healthcare policy (Katz's home turf as a physician with 40+ years of experience and his DHIN initiative), and government transparency (Katz authored live-streaming legislation, lobby reform SB 141, and term limits SB 61 in the Delaware Senate). Prioritize earned media around DOGE and fiscal responsibility this week.

Sources: Congress.gov · GovTrack · NPR · Coons.senate.gov · Ballotpedia · C-SPAN

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