

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 sharp floor statement on March 4 criticizing the Department of Government Efficiency's latest round of recommended cuts, which reportedly target federal workforce training programs and several Small Business Administration regional offices — including one serving Delaware. Coons called the cuts 'reckless austerity dressed up as reform' and warned they would hollow out services Delaware small businesses depend on. He announced plans to introduce an amendment to the upcoming continuing resolution to restore SBA funding levels. [STAFF VERIFY exact floor statement text and amendment number.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Dr. Katz supports fiscal responsibility and government restructuring — drawing on his Delaware Senate legislation establishing an independent council to evaluate state services and develop a five-year plan to restructure and reorganize state government. Katz can say: 'I've actually written the playbook on smart government reform. Unlike Sen. Coons, who reflexively defends every dollar of bureaucratic spending, I know how to cut waste while protecting the services Delawareans actually need.'

DEFENSE & PENTAGON

DEFENSE / IRAN

Coons Participates in Classified Briefing on Iran Naval Posture in Persian Gulf

As Ranking Member on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Coons attended a classified briefing on March 4 regarding escalating Iranian naval activity in the Strait of Hormuz and implications for U.S. Fifth Fleet operations. Following the briefing, Coons told reporters that 'diplomatic channels must remain open' and cautioned against unilateral military escalation without Congressional consultation. [STAFF VERIFY exact quotes and whether Coons issued a formal press release.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's strong defense and Commander-in-Chief authority platform, Katz can push back: 'Our adversaries don't respect diplomats who beg — they respect strength. I support the President's authority to protect American service members and keep shipping lanes open. Sen. Coons' instinct to slow-walk every military response emboldens Iran and puts our troops at risk.'

DELAWARE MILITARY

[STAFF VERIFY] Dover AFB Military Construction Update — FY2027 Defense Approps Markup Timeline

Coons's office is expected to advocate for continued military construction funding at Dover Air Force Base in the upcoming FY2027 Defense Appropriations cycle. The subcommittee markup timeline has not been publicly announced but is anticipated for late spring. Staff should track whether Coons has submitted formal programmatic requests for Dover AFB or other Delaware installations.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz should proactively acknowledge Dover AFB's importance to Delaware, per his veterans platform commitment to sustaining a robust military force. He can say: 'I'll fight for Dover AFB just as hard as any Senator — but I'll also make sure every defense dollar is spent on readiness and warfighters, not on bloated Pentagon bureaucracy that Sen. Coons has done nothing to trim in 16 years.'

RECENT LEGISLATION

HEALTHCARE

Coons Cosponsors the Protecting America's Health Care Act (S. ____)

Coons was listed this week as a cosponsor of legislation aimed at preventing the rollback of ACA marketplace subsidies set to expire later this year. The bill would make enhanced premium tax credits permanent and expand Medicaid incentive payments to states. Coons framed the bill as essential for Delaware's 30,000+ marketplace enrollees. [STAFF VERIFY exact bill number, introduction date, and full cosponsor list.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's healthcare platform, which calls for a paradigm shift from treating illness to preventing it, Katz can argue: 'As a physician with 40 years in healthcare, I know throwing more subsidies at a broken system doesn't fix it — it just hides the bill. My plan focuses on driving down costs through efficiency, integration, and prevention. Sen.'

Coons has never treated a patient, never managed a health system, and his answer is always the same: spend more taxpayer money.'

FOREIGN AFFAIRS / ETHICS

Coons Reintroduces Global Anti-Corruption Sanctions Act

Sen. Coons reintroduced legislation to expand sanctions authority targeting foreign officials involved in significant corruption. The bill builds on previous Coons legislative efforts aligning with his Foreign Relations Committee portfolio. He argued on the Senate floor that corruption undermines democratic governance globally. [STAFF VERIFY bill number and any new provisions added since prior Congress versions.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's comprehensive lobby reform legislation (SB 141, 146th General Assembly) and his bill prohibiting registered lobbyists from performing official duties for state government, Katz can pivot: 'I'm glad Sen. Coons wants to fight corruption abroad — maybe he should start at home. I actually passed lobby reform and conflict-of-interest legislation in Delaware. Coons has been in Washington 16 years and hasn't cleaned up the pay-to-play culture in his own backyard.'

IMMIGRATION

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

Staff should monitor whether Coons has signed onto or spoken against recent legislation to expand ICE enforcement authority and detention capacity. Multiple Senate Democrats have been pressured to respond to the administration's border enforcement executive orders. Coons's Judiciary Committee seat makes his positioning particularly relevant.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's secure borders and strong ICE enforcement positioning, Katz should be prepared to hit hard: 'Delawareans want safe communities and a secure border. If Sen. Coons votes to weaken ICE or block enforcement, he's choosing illegal immigration over the safety of Delaware families. I'll always stand with our border agents and law enforcement — not against them.'

APPROPRIATIONS & DELAWARE FUNDING

APPROPRIATIONS

[STAFF VERIFY] FY2026 Continuing Resolution Status and Delaware Earmarks at Risk

Congress continues to operate under a continuing resolution with FY2026 full-year appropriations unresolved. Coons previously secured Delaware-specific earmarks in the Senate version of several spending bills, including funding for Delaware State University research programs and Wilmington waterfront infrastructure. Staff should verify which Coons earmarks survive in any final CR or omnibus vehicle.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's economy and cost of living platform emphasizing fiscal responsibility and public-private partnerships for infrastructure, Katz can say: 'I support smart federal investment in Delaware — but Sen. Coons has been part of a Congress that can't even pass a budget on time. His earmarks are nice press releases, but they mean nothing when the government lurches from one CR to the next. Delaware deserves a Senator who demands fiscal discipline, not one who enables dysfunction.'

ENVIRONMENT / DELAWARE

Coons Touts \$4.2M Federal Grant for Delaware Coastal Resilience

Coons's office announced a \$4.2 million NOAA grant for Delaware coastal resilience and beach replenishment projects in Sussex County, part of a broader federal coastal adaptation initiative. Coons credited his Appropriations Committee position for steering resources to Delaware's vulnerable coastline. [STAFF VERIFY grant announcement date, specific project details, and whether this is new or previously announced funding.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's energy and environment platform — which emphasizes protecting Delaware's beaches and open spaces, as demonstrated by his Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway legislation (SB 241, 146th General Assembly) — Katz should acknowledge the funding positively while pivoting: 'Protecting Delaware's coastline is critical, and I've got a track record of actually passing conservation legislation. But we also need an energy policy that makes America independent, creates jobs, and doesn't sacrifice our economy for Washington's green mandates. I support nuclear energy expansion under the ADVANCE Act — Sen. Coons talks environment but hasn't championed the energy independence Delaware businesses need.'

FOREIGN POLICY & DIPLOMACY

UKRAINE / FOREIGN AID

Coons Presses for Continued Ukraine Aid in Foreign Relations Hearing

In a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on March 4, Coons questioned administration officials about the status of U.S. military and economic assistance to Ukraine. Coons argued that cutting aid would cede strategic advantage to Russia and undermine NATO credibility. He pressed for full transparency on how previously appropriated funds have been disbursed. [STAFF VERIFY hearing title, witnesses, and exact Coons statements.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz can take a measured position grounded in his strong defense platform: 'I believe in supporting our allies, but Delawareans deserve accountability for every dollar sent overseas. Sen. Coons writes blank checks to foreign governments while our veterans in Kent and Sussex counties still lack an advanced VA medical facility — which is a priority I've committed to fighting for. America's generosity must start with taking care of Americans first.' This draws directly on Katz's veterans platform calling for a VA advanced medical facility in southern Delaware.

CHINA / INDO-PACIFIC

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Statements on China Trade / Taiwan Strait Tensions

Staff should monitor Coons's recent statements or committee activity related to rising U.S.-China trade tensions and any Taiwan Strait developments. Coons has historically supported a strong posture on Taiwan while backing multilateral trade engagement with China. His Foreign Relations seat makes him a key voice on Indo-Pacific policy.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's economy platform emphasizing American competitiveness and reducing corporate tax burdens (see his Delaware Senate bill SB 100 repealing the corporate income tax), Katz can argue: 'We need a Senator who understands that competing with China starts with making America the best place to do business. I've championed pro-growth tax reform. Sen. Coons talks tough on China in hearings but supports tax and regulatory policies that drive American businesses offshore.'

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 this week. Coons's campaign filings show continued strong fundraising from corporate and legal sector PACs. [STAFF VERIFY latest FEC filings and any Q1 2026 fundraising reports.]

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Strategic note for Katz: Coons is well-funded and active on national security. Key vulnerabilities this cycle: DOGE/government spending debate (Katz has real restructuring credentials from his Delaware Senate service), Iran war posture (Katz's strong defense stance resonates with veterans-heavy lower Delaware), ICE oversight positioning (Katz's border security stance appeals to moderate swing voters), and healthcare policy – Katz's strongest differentiator as a physician with 40+ years of experience vs. a career politician. Katz's government transparency record (live-streaming the Delaware Senate via SR 14, open redistricting via SR 9, term limits via SB 61) provides a powerful reform contrast against a 16-year incumbent.

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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