

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

TOP STORY

GOVERNMENT REFORM / SPENDING

Coons Pushes Back on DOGE-Driven Cuts to Federal Workforce, Warns of Impact on Delaware Federal Employees

Sen. Coons issued statements this week criticizing the ongoing DOGE-led effort to reduce the federal civilian workforce, calling proposed agency restructuring 'reckless' and warning it would disproportionately harm Delaware's significant federal employee population. Coons cited potential impacts to IRS operations in Wilmington and Dover Air Force Base civilian support staff. He called on Senate Appropriations leadership to hold hearings on the legality and scope of DOGE recommendations before any further implementation.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz can thread the needle here — acknowledge concern for Delaware federal workers while pivoting to his proven record on government restructuring. Drawing on Katz's Delaware Senate legislation establishing an Independent Council to develop a Five Year Plan to Restructure and Reorganize State Government, Katz can argue he knows how to make government more efficient responsibly, unlike Coons who reflexively defends the status quo. Katz should say: 'I've actually written and passed restructuring legislation. Senator Coons has spent 15 years defending bloated government without proposing a single reform.'

DEFENSE & PENTAGON

DEFENSE BUDGET

[STAFF VERIFY] Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Markup Preparations for FY2027

As Ranking Member of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Coons is expected to be engaged in pre-markup discussions for the FY2027 defense spending bill. Staff should verify whether any subcommittee briefings or member-level meetings occurred this week. Coons has historically advocated for robust defense spending but has clashed with the administration on Commander-in-Chief authority regarding troop deployments.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's strong defense and Commander-in-Chief authority platform, Katz should emphasize that he would be a reliable vote for full defense authorization without the partisan strings Coons attaches. Katz supports robust military spending and

executive flexibility on deployment — a clear contrast with Coons's pattern of voting to constrain presidential war powers when politically convenient.

DELAWARE MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE

Coons Reaffirms Support for Dover Air Force Base Modernization

In a Friday local media appearance, Coons reiterated his commitment to securing modernization funding for Dover AFB's C-5M Super Galaxy fleet and associated infrastructure. He highlighted his role on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in directing military construction dollars to Delaware. Staff should verify specific FY2027 MILCON requests submitted by Coons's office for Dover AFB.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** This is a bipartisan win Katz should acknowledge — per his veterans platform, Katz supports sustaining a robust military force and can praise Dover AFB investment. But Katz should pivot: 'Every Delaware senator should fight for Dover AFB. The difference is I'll also fight to cut the wasteful spending elsewhere in the budget that threatens our military readiness through sequestration-style caps. Senator Coons votes for trillion-dollar social spending that crowds out defense.'

RECENT LEGISLATION

IMMIGRATION / LAW ENFORCEMENT

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Co-Sponsorship of ICE Oversight and Accountability Act

Reports indicate Coons has co-sponsored legislation that would impose additional reporting requirements and operational constraints on ICE enforcement activities, including limits on workplace raids and expanded judicial review of detention decisions. Staff should verify the exact bill number and current status. Coons has framed this as accountability; critics call it obstruction of immigration enforcement.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's platform supporting secure borders and strong ICE enforcement, this is a direct contrast. Katz should highlight: 'Senator Coons wants to handcuff the men and women of ICE while illegal crossings impact communities across Delaware. Drawing on my first responders platform — I believe we should back our law enforcement, not bureaucratize them into ineffectiveness. Coons sides with activists over agents.'

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Introduces Pharmacy Benefit Manager Transparency Act

Coons is reportedly working on legislation targeting pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) practices, seeking to require disclosure of rebate pass-through rates and prohibit spread pricing in Medicaid. Staff should confirm bill number, co-sponsors, and committee referral. If confirmed, this represents Coons attempting to shore up healthcare credibility heading into 2026.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's extensive healthcare platform and 40+ years in the U.S. healthcare industry, Katz should welcome PBM reform but argue Coons is late and superficial: 'As a physician who has spent decades fighting healthcare inefficiency, I know PBM reform is just one piece. Senator Coons has been in the Senate for 15 years and our healthcare system is still marked by — in my words — chaos, bloat, and poor management. Delaware deserves a senator who actually understands the system, not one who introduces a press-release bill every election cycle.'

Coons Remains Co-Sponsor of the Bipartisan Background Checks Act

Coons continues to co-sponsor legislation expanding background check requirements for firearm transfers. The bill has been reintroduced in the 119th Congress but faces long odds in the current Senate. Coons has used this issue for fundraising and base mobilization in Delaware's blue-leaning suburbs.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz should be measured here given Delaware's suburban electorate. Focus on Coons's prioritization: 'While Senator Coons focuses on legislation that has no chance of passing, Delawareans are struggling with the cost of living, unaffordable homes, and a healthcare system in crisis. Per my homeownership platform, I'm focused on the bread-and-butter issues — making the American Dream attainable again — not virtue-signaling legislation.'

[STAFF VERIFY] FY2026 Continuing Resolution Status and Delaware Impact

The federal government is currently operating under a continuing resolution, with negotiations for a full-year FY2026 omnibus or additional CR ongoing. Coons has publicly warned that prolonged CRs harm Delaware priorities including Amtrak NE Corridor funding, FEMA grants for Delaware emergency services, and federal education dollars. Staff should verify current CR expiration date and any Coons floor statements this week.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's economy and fiscal responsibility platform, Katz should argue: 'The reason we're stuck on continuing resolutions is because career politicians like Senator Coons refuse to make tough budget choices. I've proposed concrete government restructuring — per my Delaware Senate legislation creating an independent council for government reorganization — because I believe in actually solving fiscal problems, not just complaining about the consequences of dysfunction you helped create.'

ENERGY / FEDERAL GRANTS

[STAFF VERIFY] Delaware Clean Energy Grant Announcements

Coons's office may have announced or taken credit for new clean energy or offshore wind-related federal grants flowing to Delaware under the Inflation Reduction Act. Staff should check for any DOE or EPA grant announcements this week referencing Delaware. Coons has been a vocal champion of IRA energy provisions and ties them to Delaware job creation.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's energy and environment platform emphasizing American energy independence and nuclear energy advocacy, Katz should contrast: 'I support an all-of-the-above energy strategy that includes nuclear, which I've specifically championed through the ADVANCE Act framework. Senator Coons's approach picks winners and losers with taxpayer dollars. My platform integrates private sector knowledge and technology rather than relying on government subsidies that drive up the deficit and energy costs for Delaware families.'

FOREIGN POLICY & DIPLOMACY

IRAN / MIDDLE EAST

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Comments on Iran Nuclear Negotiations and Middle East Posture

As a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Coons has been engaged in the ongoing debate over U.S. posture toward Iran's nuclear program and broader Middle East policy. Staff should verify any statements, floor remarks, or committee activity from this week.

Coons has historically supported diplomatic engagement with Iran while backing Israel, a position that has come under increasing scrutiny from both flanks.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's strong defense and Commander-in-Chief authority platform, Katz should press: 'Senator Coons has spent years supporting diplomatic frameworks with Iran that have failed to prevent their nuclear advancement. I believe in peace through strength — a strong military posture and full support for our allies, not endless negotiation with regimes that don't negotiate in good faith. The Commander-in-Chief needs a Senate that backs decisive action, not one that ties the President's hands.'

UKRAINE / NATO

Coons Advocates for Continued Ukraine Assistance

Coons remains one of the Senate's most vocal advocates for sustained military and economic assistance to Ukraine and has pushed back against calls from some Republicans and the administration to condition or reduce aid. He has framed the issue as central to NATO credibility and global democratic stability. Staff should verify any specific floor statements or media appearances this week.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz should approach this carefully given bipartisan support for Ukraine among Delaware voters, but can draw on his fiscal responsibility platform: 'I support our allies and believe in American leadership. But Senator Coons has written blank checks without demanding accountability, European burden-sharing, or a clear strategic endgame. As someone who authored fiscal restructuring legislation in Delaware's Senate, I believe every dollar of taxpayer money — including foreign aid — must come with transparency and measurable outcomes.'

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 emerged this week, but Coons's campaign has been actively fundraising off DOGE

opposition messaging and healthcare themes — areas where he may perceive vulnerability to Katz's physician background.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Strategic note for Katz: Coons is well-funded and active on national security. Key vulnerabilities this cycle: DOGE/government spending reform debate (Katz has actual restructuring legislation to cite), ICE oversight bill (Katz's border security platform), healthcare policy (Katz's home turf as a physician with 40+ years' experience), and government transparency (Katz's lobby reform bill SB 141, live-streaming bill SR 14, and term limits bill SB 61 from the Delaware Senate all demonstrate a reform record Coons cannot match after 15 years of incumbency). Katz should continue building name ID downstate and among independents who are frustrated with cost of living — per his homeownership and economy platforms.

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](https://www.c-span.org)

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