

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

TOP STORY

GOVERNMENT REFORM / SPENDING

Coons Leads Democratic Push Against DOGE-Driven Cuts to Federal Workforce, Calls Reductions 'Reckless'

Sen. Coons held a press conference on March 10 alongside federal employee unions criticizing the ongoing DOGE-inspired reductions-in-force across multiple agencies, including the Social Security Administration and the IRS. Coons called the cuts 'a wrecking ball aimed at the services Delaware families depend on' and announced he is circulating a letter among Democratic senators demanding GAO audits of DOGE-recommended restructuring. He specifically cited potential impacts to the Wilmington VA Medical Center and Delaware's IRS processing operations. Staff should verify whether the GAO letter has formally been submitted.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz can pivot here carefully — acknowledge that federal workers in Delaware deserve stability while arguing that government restructuring is long overdue. Drawing on Katz's Delaware Senate legislation establishing an independent council to evaluate state services and develop a five-year restructuring plan (see drmikkekatz.com), Katz can argue he has a proven reform model: 'I've done this before in Dover — you can make government leaner and more effective without chaos, but you need a plan, not political theater from either side. Coons has had 16 years to reform government spending and has done nothing but grow it.'

DEFENSE & PENTAGON

DEFENSE SPENDING

Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing on FY2027 Pentagon Budget Request Scheduled

As Ranking Member on the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Coons is expected to participate in upcoming hearings on the FY2027 DoD budget request, which the Administration is expected to transmit to Congress this week or next. Coons's office previewed his priorities in a March 9 newsletter, emphasizing military readiness, shipbuilding, and continued support for Dover Air Force Base operations. He has signaled he will press Secretary of Defense on troop quality-of-life issues, including military housing.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Dover AFB is a bipartisan priority — Katz should acknowledge Coons's support for the base while pivoting to broader defense posture. Per Katz's veterans platform, which calls for a robust military force and a new VA advanced medical facility in southern Delaware, Katz can argue: 'I'll fight just as hard for Dover AFB, but I'll also fight for the service members Coons has neglected — our Kent and Sussex County veterans who still lack advanced VA medical care close to home.'

WAR POWERS

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

Reports indicate Coons may have joined a bipartisan letter or made floor remarks this week regarding congressional oversight of potential military operations related to Iran. Coons has historically supported a balance between executive authority and congressional authorization under the War Powers Act. Staff should verify whether Coons made specific statements or signed any letters this week on Iran or broader AUMF reform.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's strong defense and Commander-in-Chief authority platform, Katz should frame any Coons equivocation on Iran as weakness: 'Our adversaries respect strength, not Senate letters. I support the President's constitutional authority as Commander-in-Chief to defend Americans and our allies — Chris Coons has spent years trying to tie our military's hands with bureaucratic restrictions while Iran grows more dangerous.'

RECENT LEGISLATION

IMMIGRATION / LAW ENFORCEMENT

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

Coons is reported to have co-sponsored legislation that would impose additional reporting requirements and oversight mechanisms on Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations, including restrictions on enforcement actions near schools, hospitals, and courthouses. The bill number and exact co-sponsor list should be verified by staff. Coons framed his support as ensuring 'humane enforcement consistent with American values' in a statement circulated to Delaware media.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's platform supporting secure borders and strong ICE enforcement, this is a clean contrast: 'Chris Coons wants to handcuff ICE while illegal immigration continues to strain Delaware communities. I support our border agents and ICE

officers — they need more resources and support, not more Washington red tape. As a physician, I've seen firsthand in emergency rooms the consequences of a broken border on our healthcare system.'

TECHNOLOGY / COMMERCE

Coons Reintroduces Bipartisan AI Research and Innovation Act

On March 7, Coons reintroduced legislation aimed at increasing federal investment in artificial intelligence research, establishing safety benchmarks, and creating a public-private AI research consortium. Coons has been a consistent advocate for AI governance through his work on the Judiciary Committee. The bill would authorize \$2.5 billion over five years for AI safety research through NSF and NIST. Staff should confirm bill number and Republican co-sponsors.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz should not oppose AI investment outright but should pivot to fiscal responsibility and private-sector primacy. Drawing on Katz's economy platform calling for incentivizing private sector investment in research and innovation: 'I support American leadership in AI, but the private sector — not Washington bureaucrats — should lead innovation. Coons's instinct is always more government spending. My approach is to incentivize private investment and get government out of the way, while ensuring commonsense safety standards.'

FISCAL POLICY

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Votes on Continuing Resolution or Spending Package

Staff should verify whether any CR or spending package came to a vote this week. If the government is operating under a continuing resolution, Coons likely voted in favor of extended spending levels. His public posture has been to criticize Republican-led budget cuts while supporting baseline federal spending. Any specific vote should be documented with roll call number.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's fiscal responsibility platform and his Delaware Senate record of proposing a five-year government restructuring plan, Katz should hammer the dysfunction: 'After 16 years in the Senate, Chris Coons still can't pass a real budget. He votes for one continuing resolution after another — that's not governing, it's kicking the can. In Dover, I introduced a five-year plan to restructure and reorganize government. Washington needs that same discipline.'

EARMARKS

[STAFF VERIFY] FY2026 Earmark Tracker: Coons Delaware Project Funding

Coons's office has been publicizing earmark requests secured in FY2026 appropriations for Delaware projects, including infrastructure improvements at the Port of Wilmington, environmental restoration along the Delaware River, and broadband expansion in Sussex County. Staff should compile the full list of Coons earmarks from his website and cross-reference with actual enacted funding to identify any that were cut or reduced.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz should selectively credit legitimate infrastructure investments while questioning the overall spending trajectory. Drawing on Katz's economy platform supporting public-private partnerships for infrastructure modernization: 'Some of these investments are good for Delaware — but Chris Coons treats taxpayer money like it's unlimited. I'll fight for Delaware funding too, but through public-private partnerships that leverage private capital, not just blank checks from Washington that add to our \$36 trillion national debt.'

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION

Dover AFB Military Construction Funding in FY2027 Request

The FY2027 budget request is expected to include military construction funding for facilities upgrades at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware's largest military installation. Coons has historically secured MILCON funding for Dover AFB through his position on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. Staff should verify specific dollar amounts and project descriptions when the budget request is publicly released.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** This is a 'match and exceed' opportunity. Per Katz's veterans and defense platform: 'Dover Air Force Base is the pride of Delaware and I will fight for every dollar it needs. But unlike Senator Coons, I will also push for a new advanced VA medical facility in southern Delaware — our Kent and Sussex County veterans have waited too long for the care they've earned. Coons has ignored this need for over a decade.'

UKRAINE / NATO

Coons Presses for Continued Ukraine Aid in Foreign Relations Committee

In a March 10 Senate Foreign Relations Committee session, Coons pressed administration officials on the status of U.S. military and economic assistance to Ukraine, arguing that continued support is essential to European security and NATO credibility. Coons has been among the most vocal Senate Democrats on Ukraine, having visited Kyiv multiple times. He warned that any pullback in support would embolden Russia and China. Staff should verify exact hearing title and witnesses.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz should frame this through fiscal responsibility and priorities at home. Drawing on Katz's economy and defense platforms: 'I support our allies and a strong NATO, but after tens of billions sent overseas, Delawareans deserve to know the endgame. Chris Coons has been to Kyiv more than he's been to Kent County. I'll ensure any aid comes with strict oversight, clear objectives, and doesn't come at the expense of securing our own border and rebuilding our own communities.'

CHINA / TRADE

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Comments on China Trade and Technology Competition

Coons has been active on China-related technology competition issues through both the Foreign Relations and Judiciary Committees. Staff should check whether Coons made any public statements this week regarding semiconductor export controls, TikTok enforcement, or the broader US-China economic relationship. His general posture has been hawkish on technology transfers but supportive of diplomatic engagement.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's economy platform emphasizing energy independence and American competitiveness: 'Chris Coons talks tough on China but supports policies that keep America dependent on Chinese supply chains. I'll fight for true energy independence and incentivize American manufacturing so we never have to rely on adversaries for the resources that power our economy and our military. As a physician and business owner, I understand supply chains — Coons understands talking points.'

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, though Coons's campaign reported a Q1 2026 fundraising haul expected to exceed \$2 million. Coons has been increasing his Delaware media presence, suggesting internal polling shows a need to shore up home-state visibility.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Strategic note for Katz: Coons is well-funded and active on national security. Key vulnerabilities for the spring: (1) DOGE/government spending — Coons is defending the status quo while voters want reform, and Katz has a proven restructuring plan from his Delaware Senate tenure; (2) ICE oversight bill — clean contrast on border security; (3) Healthcare policy — Katz's home turf as a physician with 40+ years of healthcare experience, including founding the DHIN; (4) Government reform — Katz's Delaware Senate record on term limits (SB 61), lobby reform (SB 141), live-streaming government (SR 14), and transparent redistricting (SR 9) gives him a concrete 'clean up Washington' narrative that Coons, as a 16-year incumbent, cannot match. Focus spring messaging on 'Coons = career politician, Katz = citizen servant leader.'

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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