

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

### TOP STORY

GOVERNMENT REFORM / DOGE

### Coons Clashes with DOGE Over State Department Workforce Cuts, Calls Reductions 'Reckless'

Sen. Coons delivered remarks on the Senate floor Wednesday criticizing the Department of Government Efficiency's proposed workforce reduction plan targeting the State Department and USAID. Coons characterized the cuts as 'gutting America's diplomatic corps at the worst possible time' and announced he is circulating a letter among Senate Foreign Relations Committee members urging the Administration to halt involuntary separations. He cited Delaware-based contractors who support State Department IT infrastructure as among those facing layoffs. Staff should verify the specific Dear Colleague letter and signatory count.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Coons reflexively defends bloated bureaucracy while Delaware families struggle with the cost of government. Drawing on Katz's Delaware Senate legislation establishing an independent council to restructure and reorganize state government, Katz has a proven record of demanding efficiency reviews and rightsizing government — not protecting every bureaucratic position regardless of performance. Katz can say: 'I've done this work in Dover. Government should serve taxpayers, not the other way around.'

### DEFENSE & PENTAGON

APPROPRIATIONS - DEFENSE

### Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Holds Hearing on FY2027 Readiness Accounts

As Ranking Member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Coons participated in a hearing this week examining FY2027 military readiness accounts, including Operations & Maintenance funding levels. Coons reportedly pressed Pentagon Comptroller officials on whether DOGE-recommended cuts would affect Dover Air Force Base operations and C-5M Super Galaxy fleet sustainment. He secured a commitment from DoD witnesses to provide a written accounting of any proposed Delaware installation impacts. Staff should verify exact hearing date and witness list.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz should acknowledge Coons's advocacy for Dover AFB while pivoting — per Katz's veterans and defense platform emphasizing a 'robust military force,' Katz can argue that true military readiness requires a senator who also supports Commander-in-Chief authority and doesn't undermine defense posture by opposing executive branch prerogatives on force structure. Katz: 'I'll fight for Dover AFB funding AND back the President's authority to make our military leaner and stronger.'

BORDER SECURITY / DEFENSE

## **[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Statement on National Guard Deployment to Southern Border**

Reports indicate Coons may have commented on the Administration's expanded National Guard deployment authorization for border security operations. Coons has historically expressed skepticism about military assets being used for immigration enforcement. Staff should verify whether Coons issued a formal statement or signed onto any caucus letter opposing the deployment expansion this week.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's platform supporting secure borders and strong ICE enforcement, this is a clear contrast opportunity. Katz can frame this as: 'Senator Coons questions using our National Guard to protect American communities, while I believe securing our border IS national defense. As a physician, I've seen the devastating effects of fentanyl — we need every tool available to stop it at the border.'

RECENT LEGISLATION

IMMIGRATION / OVERSIGHT

## **Coons Reintroduces ICE Reporting and Accountability Act**

Sen. Coons reintroduced legislation (staff verify bill number, likely updated from previous Congress version) that would impose additional reporting requirements on Immigration and Customs Enforcement, including quarterly public reports on detention conditions, deportation proceedings, and community complaint mechanisms. The bill is cosponsored by several Democratic senators and has been referred to the Judiciary Committee. No Republican cosponsors are listed.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's platform supporting strong ICE enforcement, this bill is designed to hamstring enforcement, not improve it. Katz can say: 'Senator Coons wants to bury ICE in paperwork while illegal crossings and fentanyl trafficking continue. I support

accountability — but accountability means results, not bureaucratic obstruction of the men and women keeping us safe.'

#### HEALTHCARE

### Coons Cosponsors Pharmacy Benefit Manager Transparency Act (S. \_\_\_\_)

Coons signed on as a cosponsor to bipartisan legislation targeting pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) practices, including spread pricing and rebate retention. The bill would require PBMs to pass through 100% of manufacturer rebates to health plans. This aligns with Coons's previous support for drug pricing reform measures. Staff should verify exact bill number and lead sponsor.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's healthcare platform calling out 'chaos, bloat, and poor management' in America's health system, Katz can welcome PBM reform while going further: 'As a physician who spent 20 years caring for patients, I know PBM reform is just one piece. Senator Coons tinkers around the edges — I'll bring a doctor's understanding to fundamentally restructure a system that costs too much and delivers too little.' Reference Katz's work establishing the Delaware Health Information Network (DHIN) as proof he builds systemic solutions, not just messaging bills.

#### ECONOMY / TECHNOLOGY

### [STAFF VERIFY] Coons Activity on CHIPS Act Implementation Oversight

Coons, a vocal advocate of the CHIPS and Science Act, may have made recent statements or introduced oversight provisions related to semiconductor fabrication facility construction timelines and workforce training funding. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, Coons has previously pushed for accelerated disbursement of CHIPS funds. Staff should verify any March 2026 actions or statements.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's economy platform emphasizing investment in 'education and workforce development to equip America's workforce with the skills required for future jobs,' Katz can support semiconductor investment while questioning execution: 'I support American manufacturing — but Senator Coons voted to spend \$280 billion of your money and we still don't have operational fabs. As a business owner, I know that spending without execution is just waste.'

## [STAFF VERIFY] FY2026 Continuing Resolution and Delaware Earmark Status

With the federal government potentially operating under a continuing resolution or recently passed omnibus, staff should verify the status of Coons's FY2026 earmark requests for Delaware, including previously reported requests for Delaware State University STEM facilities, Port of Wilmington infrastructure, and Rehoboth Beach coastal resilience projects. Coons typically secures \$15-30M in annual congressionally directed spending for Delaware.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's fiscal responsibility platform and his Delaware Senate legislation for a five-year state government restructuring plan, Katz should acknowledge legitimate Delaware infrastructure needs while questioning whether Coons prioritizes headline-grabbing earmarks over systemic fiscal discipline: 'I'll fight for every dollar Delaware deserves — but I'll also demand Washington stops spending money it doesn't have. A \$35 trillion debt is the real threat to Delaware's future.'

## Coons Pushes for VA Medical Facility Expansion in Sussex County

Coons's office released information about his continued advocacy for expanded VA healthcare services in southern Delaware, including support for a new outpatient specialty care facility in the Sussex County area. The proposal would bring cardiology, orthopedic, and mental health services closer to the roughly 30,000 veterans in Kent and Sussex counties. Staff should verify current status and any FY2027 budget request inclusion.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** This is directly on Katz's turf — per his veterans platform, Katz has specifically called for a 'VA Advanced Medical Facility in Southern Delaware' for veterans in Kent and Sussex counties. Katz should claim credit for elevating this issue and push harder: 'I called for this facility because I know, as a physician, that distance kills — delayed care costs lives. If Senator Coons agreed all along, why don't southern Delaware veterans have this facility after his 16 years in office?'

## Coons Addresses Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Iran Nuclear Negotiations

Sen. Coons, as a senior member of the Foreign Relations Committee, participated in a classified briefing and subsequent open session this week regarding the status of diplomatic engagement with Iran over its nuclear program. In public remarks, Coons cautioned against 'saber-rattling' and urged the Administration to pursue multilateral diplomatic channels. He expressed concern that unilateral military posturing could destabilize broader Middle East security arrangements. Staff should verify exact hearing date and any formal Coons statement.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's defense platform supporting strong Commander-in-Chief authority, Katz can draw a sharp line: 'Senator Coons calls strength saber-rattling. I call it deterrence. Iran understands one thing — resolve. A Senator who publicly undermines the President's negotiating leverage makes America less safe.' Katz should emphasize that as a physician, he understands triage — 'You address the most dangerous threat first, and a nuclear Iran is an existential threat to our allies and our homeland.'

UKRAINE / FOREIGN AID

### **[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Comments on Ukraine Supplemental Aid Package**

Coons has been a leading Senate voice on Ukraine assistance since 2022. Staff should verify whether Coons made any statements this week regarding additional Ukraine security assistance, European burden-sharing, or any proposed supplemental appropriation for FY2026. His position on the Foreign Relations and Appropriations committees makes him a central player in any new aid debate.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's fiscal responsibility platform, Katz can take a measured position: 'I support our allies, but every dollar we send overseas is a dollar not rebuilding roads in Delaware or caring for our veterans in Sussex County. Senator Coons writes blank checks — I'll demand accountability, burden-sharing from Europe, and a strategy that puts American interests first.' This positions Katz as serious on foreign policy without isolationism.

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 cycle. Coons's Q4 2025 FEC filing showed approximately \$3.5M cash on hand (staff verify exact figure). The DOGE debate, border security, and healthcare costs remain the top issue clusters in Delaware likely voter surveys.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Strategic note for Katz: Coons is well-funded and active on national security. Key vulnerabilities this week: (1) DOGE/government spending — Coons is defending bureaucracy while voters want efficiency, and Katz has a legislative record on government restructuring (Katz's five-year reorganization plan from Delaware Senate); (2) Southern Delaware VA facility — Katz can own this issue given his specific platform commitment and medical expertise; (3) ICE oversight bill — Coons is out of step with Delaware's moderate voters on immigration enforcement; (4) Healthcare — Katz's 40+ years in medicine and his DHIN initiative give him unmatched credibility to challenge Coons on systemic reform vs. incremental tinkering. Recommended messaging focus this week: 'Career politician vs. career healer — 16 years and what has changed?'

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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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