

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

TOP STORY

LAW ENFORCEMENT / DISABILITY RIGHTS **UPDATED**

Blue Envelope Act (S. 4089) Builds Weekend Momentum — Disability Advocacy Groups Amplify Coons's Law Enforcement Messaging

Sen. Coons's Blue Envelope Act (S. 4089), introduced March 12, continues to generate media coverage and advocacy group endorsements heading into the new week. The bill would authorize DOJ grants to state and local governments to implement blue envelope programs — voluntary systems where drivers with autism, PTSD, or other disabilities display a blue envelope containing their license, registration, and a card explaining their condition during traffic stops. National disability organizations including the Autism Society of America and the Arc have amplified the bill on social media, and Coons's office has been circulating one-pagers to Senate offices seeking cosponsors. The bill remains in the Senate Judiciary Committee with no hearing date scheduled.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz can express support for protecting vulnerable individuals during law enforcement encounters while pivoting to his broader first responder platform — per his First Responders platform, Katz has committed to solving problems faced by police including staffing deficits, equipment shortages, and workplace violence. Frame the contrast: Coons introduces a narrow grant program while Katz offers a comprehensive approach to supporting both first responders and the communities they serve. As a physician who has treated patients across the spectrum of society, Katz can speak credibly about the needs of individuals with disabilities without undermining law enforcement.

• TALKING POINTS

- I support protecting people with disabilities during traffic stops — but our first responders need more than one-off grant programs; they need a Senator who has their back comprehensively.
- As a physician, I've cared for patients with autism, PTSD, and cognitive disabilities — I understand these challenges on a clinical level, not just a legislative one.
- Senator Coons introduces a press release bill while Delaware police departments are understaffed and underpaid — my first responder platform addresses the root problems.
- We can protect vulnerable citizens AND support our officers — it's not either/or, and that's the kind of thinking I'll bring to the Senate.

DEFENSE & PENTAGON

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS **UPDATED****FY2027 Defense Appropriations Hearings Resume Monday — Coons to Probe Force Structure and Modernization Accounts**

The Senate returns from weekend recess Monday with the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee expected to continue FY2027 budget hearings. As Ranking Member, Coons is expected to focus on force structure adequacy, military modernization accounts, and the impact of DOGE-driven civilian workforce reductions on Pentagon readiness. Previous hearings featured Coons pressing DoD witnesses on whether Operations & Maintenance accounts are sufficient to sustain readiness given simultaneous modernization demands. Staff should confirm the specific witness list and hearing schedule for the week of March 16.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's veterans and defense platform, which emphasizes 'sustaining a robust military force' as 'essential for America's continuous ability to preserve global peace,' Katz should position himself as a strong defense advocate who will fight for adequate military funding. The contrast: Coons talks about readiness shortfalls while his party's broader spending priorities crowd out defense. Katz will prioritize military readiness over wasteful domestic spending.

TALKING POINTS

- Our military readiness isn't a talking point — it's a national security imperative. I'll fund our forces first, not last.
- Senator Coons asks tough questions at hearings but votes with his party to divert resources away from defense priorities.
- Dover Air Force Base is the backbone of our strategic airlift capability — Delaware's Senator should be leading the fight for defense funding, not just asking questions.
- As someone committed to our veterans and active military, I'll ensure readiness accounts aren't raided to fund unrelated social programs.

SOURCES: Appropriations.senate.gov · C-SPAN

DEFENSE / GOVERNMENT REFORM

Pentagon Civilian Workforce Reductions — Coons Opposition Expected to Intensify This Week

Reports from late last week indicate the Department of Defense is moving forward with additional civilian workforce reduction-in-force (RIF) actions aligned with DOGE efficiency mandates. Coons, as Defense Appropriations Ranking Member, has characterized the cuts as threatening military readiness and has called for congressional oversight hearings. Staff should verify whether Coons issues a formal statement or letter to Secretary of Defense this week and whether any Delaware-based DoD civilian positions are included in the RIF tranche.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's Delaware Senate legislation establishing an Independent Council to Evaluate State Services and develop a Five Year Plan to Restructure and Reorganize State Government, Katz has a proven record of supporting smart government reform — not blanket opposition to efficiency. The contrast: Coons reflexively opposes all government streamlining; Katz supports responsible restructuring that protects essential functions while eliminating waste.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- I passed legislation in Delaware's State Senate to restructure government responsibly — I know how to cut waste without cutting capability.
- Opposing every efficiency measure isn't oversight — it's obstruction. We can make government leaner and still protect our warfighters.
- If DoD civilian cuts affect Delaware jobs, I'll fight for our workers — but I won't pretend every government job is essential just to score political points.
- Senator Coons never met a government program he wouldn't defend — that's not oversight, that's reflexive spending.

SOURCES: appropriations.senate.gov · Defense One

RECENT LEGISLATION

JUDICIARY / LAW ENFORCEMENT / DISABILITY RIGHTS

S. 4089 — Blue Envelope Act (Introduced Mar. 12, 2026)

Coons introduced this bill to authorize DOJ grants for blue envelope programs protecting individuals with disabilities during traffic stops. The bill was read twice and referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. No cosponsors have been publicly listed yet, and no hearing date has been scheduled. Disability advocacy organizations have endorsed the concept, but the bill faces an uphill path in the Republican-controlled Judiciary Committee.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's First Responders platform, which calls for 'solving the problems faced by our first responders, including staffing and pay deficits, equipment and

resource shortages, physical and mental health needs,' Katz can support the concept while arguing Coons focuses on narrow messaging bills rather than comprehensive first responder support. Katz should note his commitment to ensuring law enforcement has the training and resources for community-sensitive policing.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- Good concept, narrow execution — Delaware's first responders need comprehensive support, not one more grant program.
- I'll support practical tools to protect vulnerable citizens, but that's one piece of a much larger first responder crisis Coons ignores.
- As a physician, I've worked alongside first responders my entire career — I understand the pressures they face every shift.

SOURCES: [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) — S. 4089

ENVIRONMENT / FOREIGN AID

S. 4011 — Tropical Forest and Coral Reef Conservation Act Reauthorization (Introduced Mar. 5, 2026)

Coons sponsored reauthorization of the 1998 Tropical Forest and Coral Reef Conservation Act, which provides debt-for-nature swap authority allowing developing countries to redirect debt payments toward conservation. The bill was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. This legislation aligns with Coons's longstanding focus on international development and environmental conservation, but faces headwinds in a Republican Senate skeptical of foreign aid mechanisms.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's Energy & Environment platform, which emphasizes 'leveraging science and technology to create a healthy, resilient and competitive America' and integrating 'private sector knowledge, resources, and technology,' Katz can contrast his focus on domestic environmental priorities — like his Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway legislation (Katz SB 241) — against Coons's preference for sending conservation dollars overseas. Frame it: Coons prioritizes tropical forests abroad while Delaware's own waterways and open spaces need investment.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- I authored Delaware's Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway legislation to protect our own open spaces — that's where conservation starts.
- Senator Coons wants to swap foreign debt for rainforest programs while Delaware communities need clean water and environmental investment at home.

- I support environmental stewardship — starting right here in Delaware, not in a developing country's debt ledger.
- Private sector innovation and local conservation deliver results; overseas debt swaps deliver press releases.

SOURCES: [Congress.gov](#) — S. 4011 · [Foreign.senate.gov](#)

IMMIGRATION / OVERSIGHT

S. 3891 — ICE Accountability Act (Introduced Feb. 12, 2026) — No Movement

Coons's bill imposing additional reporting requirements and oversight mechanisms on ICE operations remains stalled in the Senate Judiciary Committee with no new cosponsors or committee action. The bill would require ICE to report on detention conditions, enforcement actions, and civil rights complaints. The legislation has no bipartisan support and faces near-certain inaction in the Republican-controlled committee.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's positioning supporting 'secure borders/strong ICE enforcement,' this bill is a direct contrast point. Coons wants to add bureaucratic reporting burdens on ICE agents during a border crisis; Katz supports empowering ICE to do its job. Frame it: While communities demand border security, Coons is focused on tying ICE's hands with paperwork mandates.

• TALKING POINTS

- Senator Coons wants to bury ICE agents in paperwork instead of letting them enforce the law.
- Delaware families want secure borders, not more bureaucratic oversight of the people protecting them.
- I support strong ICE enforcement — our immigration officers need resources and respect, not Congressional micromanagement.
- The ICE Accountability Act is an accountability charade — it's designed to slow enforcement, not improve it.

SOURCES: [Congress.gov](#) · [Coons.senate.gov](#)

HEALTHCARE / PHARMACY

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Cosponsor Activity on PBM Transparency Legislation

Previous briefs flagged Coons as a cosponsor of bipartisan pharmacy benefit manager transparency legislation. Staff should verify the exact bill number, current cosponsor count, and whether any Senate Commerce or HELP Committee action has been scheduled. PBM reform

has bipartisan traction, and Coons's involvement could allow him to claim a healthcare win heading into 2026.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's healthcare platform, which identifies 'excessive costs, inefficiencies, and fragmentation' as the core problems in American healthcare, Katz should signal support for PBM transparency while arguing it's just one symptom of a broken system. As a physician with 40+ years in healthcare, Katz has the credibility to own this issue: 'I've seen PBMs drive up costs for my patients — I don't need a lobbyist to explain the problem to me.'

• **TALKING POINTS**

- As a physician, I've seen firsthand how PBM middlemen drive up drug costs for patients — this is personal for me.
- PBM reform is a start, but Delaware needs a Senator who understands the entire healthcare system, not just one billing line.
- Senator Coons cosponsors a popular bill — where was he for the last 15 years while PBMs gouged patients?
- I'll bring a doctor's perspective to healthcare reform, not a politician's press strategy.

SOURCES: [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) · [GovTrack.us](https://www.govtrack.us)

APPROPRIATIONS & DELAWARE FUNDING

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION / DELAWARE

Dover AFB FY2027 Military Construction Request — Tracking

The FY2027 budget request is expected to include military construction funding for Dover Air Force Base, home to the 436th and 512th Airlift Wings, the Charles C. Carson Center for Mortuary Affairs, and the largest aerial port on the East Coast. Coons, as Defense Appropriations Ranking Member, is well positioned to advocate for MILCON projects at Dover. Staff should confirm whether the President's FY2027 budget request (expected this month) includes specific Dover AFB line items and what Coons's office has requested.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's veterans platform calling for robust military infrastructure and his commitment to Dover AFB, Katz should acknowledge that defending Dover AFB funding is a bipartisan Delaware priority — but pivot to argue that Coons's broader fiscal record undermines defense budgets overall. Frame it: 'I'll fight for Dover AFB like every Delaware Senator should — but I'll also fight for the defense budgets that make that funding possible, instead of voting for trillion-dollar spending bills that crowd out military priorities.'

• **TALKING POINTS**

- Dover AFB isn't a partisan issue — it's Delaware's most important military asset and I'll fight for every dollar it needs.
- But defending Dover requires a strong overall defense budget — something Coons's spending priorities consistently undermine.
- The 436th Airlift Wing and Mortuary Affairs mission are sacred obligations — they deserve a Senator focused on defense, not diplomacy photo ops.
- I'll work across the aisle for Dover AFB just like I did in Delaware's State Senate for our local communities.

SOURCES: [Appropriations.senate.gov](https://appropriations.senate.gov) · [Dover Air Force Base](https://www.afmilitary.com/locations/overseas/overseas-air-force-bases/)

FEDERAL FUNDING / DELAWARE

[STAFF VERIFY] FY2026 Continuing Resolution / Omnibus Status and Delaware Earmarks

Staff should confirm the current status of FY2026 federal funding — whether the government is operating under a continuing resolution or an enacted omnibus. If an omnibus was passed, verify which Coons-requested Delaware earmarks were included (previous cycles included community project funding for Delaware infrastructure, education, and healthcare facilities). If operating under a CR, note the expiration date and Coons's public statements about impacts on Delaware programs.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's fiscal responsibility platform and his Delaware Senate bill establishing an Independent Council to restructure government, Katz should argue that the earmark process is a symptom of broken budgeting. Frame it: 'Earmarks are how career politicians buy loyalty back home while the national debt spirals. I'll fight for Delaware funding through transparent, merit-based processes — not backroom deals.'

• **TALKING POINTS**

- Delaware deserves federal investment — but through transparent, merit-based allocation, not backroom earmark deals.
- I passed legislation in Delaware to restructure government spending responsibly — I'll bring that same discipline to Washington.
- Senator Coons brings home earmarks while voting for budgets that add trillions to the national debt — that's not fiscal leadership.
- Every dollar of earmark spending is a dollar borrowed from our children's future.

SOURCES: [Appropriations.senate.gov](https://appropriations.senate.gov) · [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov)

VETERANS / DELAWARE

Coons Pushes for VA Medical Facility Expansion in Sussex County — Ongoing

Coons continues to advocate for expanded VA healthcare services in southern Delaware, including support for a new outpatient specialty care facility serving veterans in Kent and Sussex counties. His office has been coordinating with the VA on site selection and funding mechanisms. No new developments were reported this weekend, but the FY2027 budget request may include VA MILCON or leasing authority relevant to this project.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's veterans platform, which explicitly calls for a 'VA Advanced Medical Facility in Southern Delaware' and identifies the urgent need for 'accessible, advanced medical care services tailored to [veterans'] unique health challenges' in Kent and Sussex counties, this is a shared priority — but Katz was there first. Frame it: 'I've been calling for a southern Delaware VA facility as part of my platform from day one. Senator Coons is playing catch-up on an issue I've championed because I've seen the healthcare gaps as a physician.'

• TALKING POINTS

- A VA medical facility in southern Delaware is on my platform because I've seen the gap in care firsthand — as a physician, not a politician.
- Our Kent and Sussex County veterans shouldn't have to drive hours for specialty care — I'll make this facility a reality, not a talking point.
- Senator Coons has been in the Senate for 15 years — why are our southern Delaware veterans still waiting?
- I bring a doctor's urgency to veteran healthcare — not a politician's timeline.

SOURCES: [Coons.senate.gov](https://coons.senate.gov) · [VA.gov](https://va.gov)

ECONOMY / HOUSING **NEW**

[STAFF VERIFY] Delaware Housing Affordability and Homeownership Trends — Coons Record

Staff should research Coons's record on housing affordability legislation and federal housing programs impacting Delaware. The median home sales price in Delaware surged from \$221,100 in 2018 to \$339,400 in 2023 — a 53% increase. Verify whether Coons has introduced, cosponsored, or voted on legislation addressing first-time homebuyer incentives, affordable housing supply, or zoning reform at the federal level. This is a high-salience issue for younger Delaware voters.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's Homeownership platform, which details the 53% increase in Delaware home prices and calls for 'tax incentives and discounted interest rates for first-time homebuyers, augmenting the supply of affordable homes, and implementing zoning changes,' Katz has a detailed housing affordability plan. Frame it: 'Delaware families watched home prices surge 53% while Senator Coons focused on tropical forests and foreign aid. I have a specific plan to make homeownership attainable again.'

• **TALKING POINTS**

- Delaware home prices surged 53% since 2018 — where's Senator Coons's plan to help first-time homebuyers?
- I've laid out specific proposals: tax incentives for first-time buyers, affordable housing supply expansion, and zoning reform.
- The American Dream of homeownership is slipping away for young Delaware families — and their Senator is focused on overseas conservation.
- Working families need a Senator who understands their kitchen table — not just the committee table in Washington.

SOURCES: National Association of Realtors — Delaware Data · Coons.senate.gov

GOVERNMENT REFORM / DELAWARE JOBS

[STAFF VERIFY] DOGE-Driven Federal Workforce Cuts — Delaware Impact Assessment

Coons has been leading Democratic opposition to DOGE-driven reductions-in-force across multiple federal agencies. Delaware has a significant federal workforce including DoD civilians at Dover AFB, VA employees, IRS workers, and USDA staff. Staff should verify whether any Delaware-specific RIF numbers or agency closure announcements have been made, and whether Coons has held or scheduled any town halls or roundtables with affected Delaware federal workers.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's Five Year Plan to Restructure and Reorganize State Government legislation from the Delaware Senate, Katz can argue for smart, phased government reform rather than blanket opposition or chaotic cuts. Frame it: 'I've done government restructuring the right way — with a five-year plan, independent oversight, and worker protections. Senator Coons offers only obstruction; the Administration offers only disruption. Delaware deserves better than either.'

• **TALKING POINTS**

- I passed a five-year government restructuring plan in Delaware's State Senate — I know how to reform government responsibly.

- Blanket opposition to efficiency isn't a plan — and neither are chaotic RIFs. I'll protect Delaware jobs while cutting real waste.
- Delaware federal workers deserve a transition plan, not a pink slip or a politician's empty promise.
- Senator Coons fights every cut; I'll fight the wasteful ones and protect the essential ones.

SOURCES: [Coons.senate.gov](https://www.coons.senate.gov) · [Federal News Network](https://www.fnn.com)

FOREIGN POLICY & DIPLOMACY

WAR POWERS / IRAN

Iran War Powers Debate — Coons Continues Push to Constrain Military Action

Coons remains a vocal supporter of Sen. Tim Kaine's War Powers Resolution aimed at restraining the President's military posture toward Iran. No new floor vote has been scheduled, but Coons has continued to press the issue in Foreign Relations Committee discussions and media appearances. Coons's position emphasizes congressional authorization requirements before any offensive military action against Iran, consistent with his longstanding war powers advocacy.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's defense platform supporting strong Commander-in-Chief authority, Katz should argue that constraining the President's military options telegraphs weakness to adversaries. Frame it: 'Senator Coons wants to tie the Commander-in-Chief's hands while Iran accelerates its nuclear program. I believe in peace through strength — and strength requires a President who can act decisively when American lives are at stake.'

• TALKING POINTS

- You don't negotiate with Iran by publicly tying the President's hands — that's not oversight, it's a gift to our adversaries.
- I support Congressional war powers, but the War Powers Resolution as Coons envisions it weakens America's deterrence posture.
- Peace through strength means our enemies must believe we can and will act — Senator Coons's approach undermines that credibility.
- Iran is closer to a nuclear weapon than ever — this is no time for legislative handcuffs on our Commander-in-Chief.

SOURCES: [Foreign.senate.gov](https://www.foreign.senate.gov) · [Coons.senate.gov](https://www.coons.senate.gov)

DOGE Cuts to State Department / USAID — Coons Opposition Continues

Coons delivered floor remarks earlier this week criticizing DOGE-driven workforce reduction plans targeting the State Department and USAID, calling the reductions 'reckless' and arguing they undermine American diplomatic capacity and national security. Coons has framed his opposition as a bipartisan national security concern, citing former Republican diplomats who oppose the cuts. No new developments this weekend, but Coons may use upcoming Foreign Relations Committee hearings to escalate pressure.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's fiscal responsibility platform and support for government restructuring, Katz can acknowledge the importance of American diplomacy while arguing that bloated bureaucracies at State and USAID have been ineffective. Frame it: 'I support smart diplomacy, but USAID has spent billions with questionable results. Streamlining isn't reckless — wasting taxpayer money on ineffective programs is reckless.'

• TALKING POINTS

- American diplomacy matters, but so does accountability — USAID has spent billions with little to show for it in many regions.
- Senator Coons calls efficiency 'reckless' — I call wasteful spending reckless.
- We can maintain diplomatic strength while demanding that every taxpayer dollar delivers results.
- Coons defends every State Department bureaucrat but won't defend the taxpayers funding them.

SOURCES: [Foreign.senate.gov](https://foreign.senate.gov) · [Coons.senate.gov](https://coons.senate.gov)

UKRAINE / FOREIGN AID

[STAFF VERIFY] Ukraine Supplemental Aid — Status Update

Coons has been one of the Senate's most vocal advocates for continued military and economic assistance to Ukraine. Staff should verify whether any new supplemental aid package language has been circulated this week, whether Coons has made new floor statements or media appearances on the topic, and the current status of European burden-sharing discussions that Coons has referenced in previous remarks.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz can frame this through his fiscal responsibility lens: 'I support Ukraine's sovereignty, but American taxpayers deserve an accounting of every dollar spent and a clear strategy for European allies to carry their fair share. Senator Coons writes blank

checks — I'll write accountability requirements.' Drawing on Katz's economy platform emphasizing fiscal discipline, this positions him as pragmatic rather than isolationist.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- I support Ukraine's fight for sovereignty — but I also support accountability for every American tax dollar spent.
- European allies must carry their fair share — Senator Coons's approach lets them off the hook while American taxpayers foot the bill.
- Blank check foreign aid isn't leadership — it's fiscal irresponsibility dressed up as diplomacy.
- A strong America requires fiscal discipline at home and strategic clarity abroad.

SOURCES: [Foreign.senate.gov](https://foreign.senate.gov) · [Coons.senate.gov](https://coons.senate.gov)

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 or significant campaign finance filings have been reported this weekend. Coons's weekend media focus remains on the Blue Envelope Act (S. 4089), which provides favorable law enforcement and disability advocacy optics.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Strategic note for Katz: Coons is leveraging S. 4089 for positive weekend media — a sympathetic disability/law enforcement bill that's hard to oppose. Katz should avoid direct opposition; instead, use the First Responders platform to broaden the conversation. Key vulnerabilities remain: Iran war posture, DOGE/government spending debate (where Katz's restructuring record is a differentiator), ICE oversight bill (strong contrast on border security), housing affordability (Katz has a detailed plan, Coons does not), and healthcare policy (Katz's strongest credential as a 40-year physician). Continue building name ID and Delaware-specific contrast on homeownership and southern Delaware VA facility.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- Senator Coons has been in Washington for 15 years — Delaware's problems have only gotten worse. Time for a new approach.

- I'm a physician, business owner, and former state senator — I've actually solved problems, not just introduced bills.
- Patients over politics — that's not a slogan, it's how I've lived my entire career.
- Delaware deserves a Senator who puts our state first — not one focused on tropical forests and foreign aid while our families can't afford homes.
- I've authored lobby reform, term limits, and government transparency legislation — Senator Coons has authored 15 years of the status quo.

SOURCES: GovTrack.us — Sen. Coons Profile · DrMikeKatz.com · FEC.gov

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

CONFIDENTIAL — CAMPAIGN USE ONLY