

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

TOP STORY

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS / FY2027 BUDGET **UPDATED**

FY2027 Defense Appropriations Hearings Resume — Coons Returns to Ranking Member Spotlight as Pentagon Budget Takes Center Stage

The Senate reconvenes Monday with the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee expected to continue its FY2027 budget hearing series this week. Coons, as Ranking Member, is positioned to shape Democratic messaging on readiness accounts, force structure, and civilian workforce levels amid ongoing DOGE-driven reduction proposals. The hearings are expected to feature senior Pentagon officials defending the Administration's budget request, with Coons likely to press on the impact of civilian workforce cuts on military readiness and Delaware-based installations including Dover AFB.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz supports strong defense and Commander-in-Chief authority — he can praise fiscal discipline at the Pentagon while noting that Coons has spent 15 years on the Appropriations Committee yet has presided over ballooning defense overhead without demanding structural reform. Drawing on Katz's platform commitment to fiscal responsibility and public-private partnerships (per his economy platform), Katz can argue Delaware's military installations need a Senator who fights for efficient modernization, not bureaucratic bloat.

• TALKING POINTS

- Coons has been on Defense Appropriations for over a decade — where are the results for Dover AFB modernization?
- I support a strong military AND fiscal discipline — you can have both if you demand accountability
- DOGE is identifying waste Coons should have flagged years ago as Ranking Member
- Dover AFB families deserve a Senator who fights for readiness, not Washington turf wars
- As a physician, I know you can't fix a broken system by just throwing more money at it — the Pentagon needs the same diagnostic approach

SOURCES: Senate Appropriations Committee · C-SPAN

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

Multiple reports indicate the Department of Defense is proceeding with DOGE-aligned civilian workforce reductions affecting installations nationwide. Coons, as Defense Appropriations Ranking Member, has been vocal in opposing these cuts, arguing they undermine military readiness. Staff should verify whether Coons issues a formal statement or requests a hearing specifically focused on civilian workforce impacts at the start of this legislative week. Delaware-specific impact data remains unconfirmed — Dover AFB and other federal facilities in the state employ thousands of civilian workers.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's Delaware Senate legislation establishing an independent council to restructure state government (Katz's Five Year Plan legislation), Katz can argue he has a proven record of demanding government efficiency through structured, transparent review — not blind opposition to reform. Coons reflexively opposes all workforce reductions without offering his own plan to eliminate waste.

• TALKING POINTS

- In the Delaware Senate, I introduced legislation to create an independent council to restructure government — Coons just says 'no' to every reform
- Protecting Delaware jobs means making government work better, not protecting every bureaucratic position in Washington
- Where is Coons's own plan for Pentagon efficiency? Fifteen years and no alternative.
- I'll fight for Dover AFB jobs that support readiness — and cut the Washington overhead that doesn't

SOURCES: Senate Appropriations Committee · Department of Defense

[STAFF VERIFY] Coons Statements on National Guard Border Deployment Expansion

Staff should verify whether Coons has issued any formal statement, floor remarks, or social media posts this week regarding the Administration's expanded National Guard deployment authorization along the southern border. Previous briefs flagged this as a pending item. Coons's position on military use at the border would be a significant contrast opportunity given Katz's strong border security stance.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's platform supporting secure borders and strong ICE enforcement, any Coons opposition to National Guard border deployments is a direct contrast. Katz can frame this as Coons prioritizing foreign aid (tropical forests, coral reefs) over securing America's own borders.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- Coons wants to fund coral reef conservation overseas but opposes National Guard troops protecting our own border
- Delaware families want secure borders — Coons wants to tie the Commander-in-Chief's hands
- I support strong ICE enforcement and using every legal tool to stop illegal crossings
- A Senator who fights harder for foreign aid than border security has his priorities backwards

SOURCES: Coons Senate Website · C-SPAN

RECENT LEGISLATION

JUDICIARY / LAW ENFORCEMENT / DISABILITY RIGHTS **UPDATED**

S. 4089 — Blue Envelope Act Enters First Full Legislative Week in Committee

Coons's Blue Envelope Act (S. 4089), introduced March 12, begins its first full week in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill authorizes DOJ grants to state and local governments to implement blue envelope programs that help individuals with disabilities communicate with law enforcement during traffic stops. The bill generated significant media attention and disability advocacy group support over the weekend. No Republican cosponsors have been announced, and no committee markup has been scheduled.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** This bill addresses a real concern, but Katz — drawing on his platform's strong support for first responders (per his First Responders platform plank) — can note that better law enforcement training and community engagement, not new federal grant programs, is the more effective approach. Katz can also point to Coons's simultaneous ICE Accountability Act (S. 3891) as evidence that Coons's pattern is always more federal oversight and regulation rather than empowering local law enforcement.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- Protecting people with disabilities during traffic stops is important — but the solution is better training, not another Washington grant program
- I've championed first responders my entire career — they need support and resources, not unfunded federal mandates

- Coons's pattern is clear: more bureaucracy, more oversight, more Washington control over local police
- Let's invest in our local officers and give them the tools they need, not create another federal program to manage

SOURCES: [Congress.gov](#) — S. 4089 · [Coons Senate Website](#)

ENVIRONMENT / FOREIGN AID

S. 4011 — Tropical Forest and Coral Reef Conservation Act Reauthorization — No New Movement

Coons's reauthorization of the 1998 Tropical Forest and Coral Reef Conservation Act (S. 4011), introduced March 5, remains in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with no new cosponsors or committee action as of Monday morning. The bill provides debt-for-nature swap authority allowing developing countries to redirect U.S. debt payments toward conservation programs. No hearing has been scheduled.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's energy and environment platform — which emphasizes leveraging private sector knowledge and technology to address environmental challenges domestically — Katz can contrast his approach of protecting Delaware's own beaches and open spaces (citing his Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway legislation, SB 241) with Coons's focus on sending conservation dollars to foreign countries. American taxpayers shouldn't be forgiving foreign debt for overseas environmental projects when Delaware's own coastline and natural resources need investment.

• TALKING POINTS

- I authored Delaware's National Scenic Byway legislation to protect our open spaces — Coons is focused on tropical forests overseas
- Why are we forgiving foreign debt for conservation when Delaware beaches and wetlands need protection?
- Private sector solutions, not foreign aid giveaways, are the path to real environmental progress
- Coons's environmental priorities start everywhere but Delaware

SOURCES: [Congress.gov](#) — S. 4011 · [Senate Foreign Relations Committee](#)

IMMIGRATION / OVERSIGHT

S. 3891 — ICE Accountability Act — Still Stalled in Judiciary Committee

Coons's ICE Accountability Act (S. 3891), introduced February 12, remains stalled in the Senate Judiciary Committee with no new cosponsors or committee action. The bill would impose additional reporting requirements and oversight mechanisms on ICE operations. The bill has attracted no Republican support and appears unlikely to advance in the current Congress.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's platform supporting secure borders and strong ICE enforcement, this bill is a prime contrast. Coons wants to handcuff ICE with bureaucratic reporting mandates while illegal border crossings continue. Katz should frame this as Coons siding with open-border advocates over law enforcement officers who are putting their lives on the line to protect American communities.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- Coons wants to drown ICE in paperwork instead of letting them do their job
- I support strong ICE enforcement — period. Our border agents need backup, not bureaucracy.
- This bill has zero Republican support because it's designed to weaken enforcement, not improve it
- Delaware communities deserve a Senator who backs law enforcement, not one who writes bills to hamstring them
- Coons co-sponsors bills to restrain ICE and constrain the military — who exactly is he fighting for?

SOURCES: [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) — S. 3891 · [Coons Senate Website](https://www.coons.senate.gov)

APPROPRIATIONS & DELAWARE FUNDING

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION / DELAWARE

Dover AFB FY2027 Military Construction Request — Critical Week for Budget Details

The FY2027 budget request is expected to include military construction funding for Dover Air Force Base, home to the 436th and 512th Airlift Wings and Delaware's largest military installation. As Defense Appropriations Ranking Member, Coons is positioned to advocate for Dover AFB MILCON priorities. Staff should monitor this week's hearing schedule for any Dover-specific line items or testimony. Any Coons-secured funding for Dover AFB will be a bipartisan talking point he uses heavily in the 2026 race.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Katz can acknowledge Dover AFB funding as important to Delaware while pivoting — per his veterans platform calling for a VA Advanced Medical Facility in Southern Delaware — to note that Coons has failed to deliver comparable investment in

veteran healthcare infrastructure downstate. Supporting the base is table stakes; Katz's vision includes building out the entire military community ecosystem.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- Dover AFB funding is the bare minimum — I'm fighting for a full VA medical facility in Sussex County too
- Coons takes credit for Dover AFB spending that any Delaware Senator would secure
- Our veterans in Kent and Sussex counties are driving hours for specialty care — that's Coons's failure after 15 years
- I'll fight for Dover AND for the veterans who served there and now can't get care close to home

SOURCES: Senate Appropriations Committee · Dover Air Force Base

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 earmarks or community project funding requests were included and their dollar amounts. This data is critical for both contrast messaging (earmark scrutiny) and for acknowledging any legitimate Delaware wins.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's fiscal responsibility platform and his Delaware Senate record of pushing for government restructuring and transparency (Five Year Plan legislation, lobby reform SB 141), Katz can scrutinize whether Coons's earmarks represent genuine Delaware priorities or Washington logrolling. Every earmark should be evaluated against Delaware's actual needs — housing affordability, healthcare access, infrastructure.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- Every federal dollar Coons brings home should be measured against what Delaware actually needs — not what Washington lobbyists want
- I introduced comprehensive lobby reform in the Delaware Senate — I'll bring that same transparency to federal spending
- Earmarks aren't charity — they're taxpayer money, and Delawareans deserve accountability for every dime
- Fiscal responsibility means spending smart, not just spending more

SOURCES: Senate Appropriations Committee · Congress.gov

ExxonMobil Texas Redomiciliation Spotlights Delaware Business Climate Erosion — Coons Remains Silent

ExxonMobil's board unanimously recommended redomiciling from New Jersey to Texas — not Delaware — with CEO Darren Woods praising Texas's pro-business environment. This is a significant signal that Delaware's historic dominance as America's corporate domicile state may be eroding. For decades, Delaware's Chancery Court and business-friendly legal framework attracted corporate incorporations that generate hundreds of millions in franchise tax revenue annually. Coons has not issued any public statement addressing the trend or defending Delaware's competitive position. Staff should monitor whether Coons addresses this in any floor remarks or Delaware media appearances this week.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing directly on Katz's Delaware Senate bill repealing the corporate income tax (Katz SB 100, 146th General Assembly) and his economy platform emphasizing reduced corporate tax burden and incentivizing business investment, Katz should aggressively own this issue. Coons has been in the Senate for 15 years while Delaware's business competitive advantage has quietly deteriorated — and he hasn't said a word about ExxonMobil choosing Texas over Delaware.

• TALKING POINTS

- I introduced a bill to repeal Delaware's corporate income tax to make our state the most competitive in America — Coons has watched our advantage slip away in silence
- When a \$623 billion company picks Texas over Delaware, that's a five-alarm fire for our economy — and our Senator hasn't even acknowledged it
- Delaware's franchise tax revenue is the lifeblood of our state budget — if companies stop incorporating here, every Delawarean pays the price
- Coons talks about the economy in Washington but won't defend Delaware's business brand at home
- As a business owner, I know companies go where they're welcome — we need a Senator who fights to keep them here

SOURCES: Reuters · Delaware Division of Corporations

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 cited long drive times for veterans seeking specialty care as justification. No new funding announcements or construction timeline updates have been reported. Staff should verify whether any FY2027 VA MILCON request includes Sussex County facility funding.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's veterans platform, he has specifically called for a 'VA Advanced Medical Facility in Southern Delaware' — this is a shared priority, but Katz can note that Coons has been advocating for this for years with no concrete results. As a physician with 40+ years in healthcare (per Katz's healthcare platform), Katz can credibly argue he understands what a modern veterans' medical facility actually needs — clinical integration, mental health services, operational efficiency — in ways a career politician cannot.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- I've been inside operating rooms and ICUs for decades — I know what a modern VA facility needs, not just how to write a press release about one
- Coons has been talking about Sussex County VA care for years — our veterans are still driving hours for appointments
- As a physician, I'll bring clinical expertise to the design and oversight of veterans' healthcare facilities
- Talk is cheap — our Kent and Sussex veterans need a Senator who delivers results, not promises

SOURCES: Coons Senate Website · U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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. Staff should verify whether any Delaware-specific federal workforce impact numbers have been released or reported by local media — including impacts at Dover AFB (civilian employees), IRS facilities, USDA offices, and other federal installations in Delaware. This data is essential for calibrating Katz's messaging: defending efficiency reforms broadly while showing concern for affected Delaware workers specifically.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's Five Year Plan legislation for restructuring Delaware state government, Katz has a track record of supporting thoughtful government reform

that protects essential services while eliminating waste. He can say he understands workforce transitions because he's managed them — both as a business owner and as a legislator. The key message: reform is necessary, but it must be done with a plan, not a hatchet — and Coons offers no alternative vision, only obstruction.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- I introduced legislation in the Delaware Senate to create an independent council to restructure government responsibly — I believe in reform with a plan
- Coons's answer to every efficiency proposal is 'no' — that's not leadership, that's obstruction
- As a business owner, I've managed workforce transitions — you protect people by making organizations work better, not by refusing to change
- Delaware federal workers deserve a Senator with a reform vision, not just a reflexive defender of the status quo

SOURCES: Coons Senate Website · Delaware News Journal

FOREIGN POLICY & DIPLOMACY

WAR POWERS / IRAN / FOREIGN RELATIONS

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 use his Foreign Relations Committee seat and media appearances to argue that any military action against Iran requires explicit congressional authorization. Staff should monitor for any new floor activity or committee hearings on Iran this week.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's platform supporting strong defense and Commander-in-Chief authority, Katz should frame Coons's war powers push as dangerously tying the President's hands against a nuclear-threshold adversary. Katz can argue that a Commander-in-Chief needs flexibility to protect American lives and interests — and that Coons's approach broadcasts weakness to Tehran at precisely the wrong moment.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- Coons wants to broadcast to Iran that America's hands are tied — that's not diplomacy, that's an invitation for aggression
- I support strong Commander-in-Chief authority to protect American lives — the President needs flexibility, not handcuffs

- Iran is closer to a nuclear weapon than ever — this is not the time for congressional micromanagement
- Strength deters war; weakness invites it. Coons gets that backwards.

SOURCES: Senate Foreign Relations Committee · C-SPAN

GOVERNMENT REFORM / FOREIGN AFFAIRS

DOGE Cuts to State Department / USAID — Coons Opposition Continues Into New Week

Coons delivered floor remarks last week criticizing DOGE-driven workforce reduction plans targeting the State Department and USAID, calling the reductions 'reckless' and arguing they undermine American diplomacy and national security. He is expected to continue pressing this issue in Foreign Relations Committee proceedings this week. Staff should monitor for any new Coons statements or Dear Colleague letters on State/USAID funding levels.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Per Katz's fiscal responsibility platform, Katz can argue that USAID has long been plagued by waste and mismanagement — and that Coons's reflexive defense of every foreign aid dollar reveals misplaced priorities. Drawing on Katz's economy platform emphasizing investment in education, workforce development, and infrastructure at home, Katz can ask: why is Coons fighting harder to preserve USAID bureaucracy than to address Delaware's own housing affordability crisis or healthcare access gaps?

• TALKING POINTS

- Coons calls USAID cuts 'reckless' — but reckless is spending billions overseas while Delawareans can't afford homes
- Foreign aid needs the same accountability we demand of every other taxpayer dollar
- I'll prioritize Delaware's needs — affordable housing, healthcare access, good jobs — over Washington's foreign policy establishment
- Reform isn't reckless — what's reckless is a Senator who's been in office 15 years and never questioned a single USAID expenditure

SOURCES: Coons Senate Website · Senate Foreign Relations Committee

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 or whether Coons has made new floor or media statements on

Ukraine funding. Also verify whether any amendments related to Ukraine aid have been filed in connection with the FY2027 defense authorization or appropriations process.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Drawing on Katz's fiscal responsibility platform and his emphasis on American economic competitiveness, Katz can advocate for rigorous accountability and a clear endgame for Ukraine aid — not an open-ended commitment with no metrics for success. Katz supports strong defense but insists that every dollar in foreign military aid must serve a defined American strategic interest and be subject to transparent oversight.

• **TALKING POINTS**

- I support standing with allies — but Delawareans deserve to know where their tax dollars are going and when the commitment ends
- Coons writes blank checks for Ukraine while Delaware roads, schools, and veterans' care go underfunded
- Strong defense means strategic spending, not unlimited foreign aid with no accountability
- Where is Coons's plan for a diplomatic resolution? Writing checks isn't a strategy.

SOURCES: Senate Foreign Relations Committee · Coons Senate Website

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.

⚡ **KATZ CONTRAST POINT:** Strategic note for Katz: This week's key messaging opportunities: (1) ExxonMobil choosing Texas over Delaware — Coons's silence on business climate erosion is a top-tier vulnerability, especially given Katz's SB 100 to repeal corporate income tax; (2) FY2027 defense hearings give Coons media oxygen on national security — Katz must counter by owning the 'strong defense + fiscal discipline' lane; (3) Blue Envelope Act gives Coons a sympathetic media narrative — Katz should acknowledge the goal while pivoting to his first responder support platform and questioning whether another federal grant program is the answer. Healthcare remains Katz's strongest differentiator per his 40+ years of clinical and health system experience.

- **TALKING POINTS**

- Coons has been in Washington 15 years — Delaware's business brand is eroding, housing is unaffordable, and veterans still can't get care downstate
- I'm a physician, business owner, and former State Senator — I've actually built things, not just voted on them
- Patients Over Politics isn't a slogan — it's how I've lived my entire career
- Delaware deserves a Senator who shows up for Delaware, not one who's more focused on tropical forests overseas than our own communities
- September 15 primary — we need every Republican and independent ready to send a doctor to Washington

SOURCES: Dr. Mike Katz Campaign · GovTrack — Sen. Coons

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

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