

Senate Republican Minority Leader Mitch McConnell

Mitch McConnell is the longest-serving U.S. Senator in Kentucky's history, is the Senate Republican Leader in the 111th Congress. Elected to that position unanimously by his colleagues on November 18, 2008, he is the 15th Senate Republican Leader and only the second Kentuckian to lead his party in the Senate. The first, Alben Barkley, led the Democrats from 1937 to 1949.

Leader McConnell previously served, again by the unanimous vote of his colleagues, as the Republican Leader in the 110th Congress and the Majority Whip in the 108th and 109th Congresses. McConnell also served in leadership as chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee during the 1998 and 2000 election cycles. First elected to the Senate in 1984, McConnell made history that year as the only Republican challenger in the country to defeat a Democrat incumbent and as the first Republican to win a statewide Kentucky race since 1968. McConnell's victory in 2008 is also one for the record books: On November 4, he won nearly a million votes, the most ever received for a Kentuckian in a statewide race. On January 10, 2009, McConnell became the longest-serving Senator from Kentucky, surpassing the tenures of his predecessor as leader, Alben Barkley; his former colleague, Wendell Ford; and his friend and mentor, John Sherman Cooper.

Born on February 20, 1942, and raised in south Louisville, McConnell graduated in 1964 with honors from the University of Louisville College of Arts and Sciences, where he served as student body president. In 1967, he graduated from the University of Kentucky College of Law, where he was elected president of the Student Bar Association. McConnell worked as an intern on Capitol Hill for Senator John Sherman Cooper before serving as chief legislative assistant to Senator Marlow Cook and as deputy assistant attorney general to President Gerald Ford. Before his election to the U.S. Senate, he served as judge-executive of Jefferson County, Kentucky, from 1978 until he commenced his Senate term on January 3, 1985.

McConnell currently serves as a senior member of the Appropriations, Agriculture and Rules Committees.

Married to Elaine L. Chao, who served as President George W. Bush's U.S. Secretary of Labor and as former president of the United Way of America and director of the Peace Corps, he is the proud father of three daughters.