ML STRATEGIES

House Energy Committee Leadership Post Opens as Top Republican Announces Retirement

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Start of Election Season Triggers Many Retirements

With the elections nine months away, 43 members of the House have announced they will not seek reelection. An additional three seats will need to be filled due to resignations. In the upper chamber, the Senate will have at least seven new members.

House Energy & Commerce Chair Makes Surprise Announcement

Last week, House Energy and Commerce (E&C) Committee Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers surprised everyone in Washington by announcing that she will not seek reelection. She joins the 23 Democrats and 20 Republicans in the House who have shared their plans to retire at the end of the current Congress. Besides McMorris Rodgers, seven Republican members of the committee have announced retirements or resignations: Reps. Michael Burgess (R-Tex.), Larry Bucshon (R-Ind.), Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.), John Curtis (R-Utah), Greg Pence (R-Ind.), Kelly Armstrong (R-N.D.), and Bill Johnson (R-Ohio).

McMorris Rodgers' announcement has touched off a race to succeed her as the Republican lead on the powerful committee. This adds to the intrigue surrounding this and other key House committees as members jockey to fill seats vacated by retiring members. Should the Republicans keep control of the House, McMorris Rodgers' successor will serve as chair of the committee, and likely, each of the seats vacated by Republicans will be filled. If Democrats take the majority, the race will be to serve as Ranking Member or the Republican leader of the committee. The balance of the committee dais depends on the margin of control of the House chamber.

Why It Matters

E&C has the most expansive **jurisdiction** in all of Congress and is the oldest standing legislative committee in the House. Republicans currently hold a slim majority, and many are predicting the House will flip in the upcoming elections. However, even if that happens, who is in leadership for each party will have a strong impact on moving or blocking important legislation. House Republicans can be expected to continue to selectively push back against the Democrats' "Green New Deal" while putting forward their own version of "American energy dominance," with both sides finding potential common ground around such issues as supporting a revitalized US nuclear industry. The ML Strategies team in Washington works closely with E&C members and staff on policies related to energy, health care, technology and innovation, climate science, data privacy and cybersecurity, consumer product safety, motor vehicle safety, and others. ML Strategies Senior Vice President **Christian Fjeld** spent ten years with the committee as a Democratic legislative staffer.

Current Contenders For Republican Leadership Post

Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH) is next in line of seniority after Rep. Burgess and has indicated he will pursue the leadership post. Latta represents Ohio's fifth district, which touches the Indiana border and includes the

town of Lorain as its largest population center. Currently, he is chair of the Subcommittee on Telecommunications & Technology. During his tenure on E&C, Latta has prioritized increasing rural broadband access, combatting the opioid crisis, and improving water infrastructure. Along with seven others, he is a co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Rural Broadband Caucus. Given his past commitment to these issues, it's likely that he will continue to focus on them in the future.

On energy policy, Latta has pressed the Biden administration to reverse its decision banning LNG exports and is a vocal advocate for nuclear energy. E&C recently advanced his bipartisan Nuclear Fuel Security Act, which would establish and expand US nuclear fuel programs to boost domestic uranium mining, production, enrichment, and conversion capacity. He also supports the natural gas industry and currently co-chairs the Congressional Propane Caucus. He and other Republicans have vocalized opposition to the Biden administration's proposed Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for passenger cars and light trucks, arguing they aim to enforce mass production of electric vehicles and impose a climate agenda on American families. He champions preserving consumers' freedom to choose their vehicles and supports bipartisan efforts to advance a federal framework for autonomous vehicles. He has consistently called for US energy independence and opposed Chinese competition.

Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY) has also announced he will seek the full committee leadership position. Guthrie represents Kentucky's second district, which includes Bowling Green and a portion of Eastern Louisville. Guthrie currently serves as chairman of the Subcommittee on Health. During his tenure on E&C, Guthrie has prioritized increasing broadband access, lowering health care costs, and supporting the integration of technologies such as artificial intelligence into the health care system. Together with Rep. Doris Matsui (D-Calif.), Guthrie is co-chair of the Congressional Spectrum Caucus.

On energy policy, Guthrie describes himself as an advocate for an "all-of-the-above energy strategy" to preserve American energy independence and lower energy costs. He has vocally opposed the Biden administration's energy proposals and expressed that the federal government should not impose any restrictions on the export of crude oil or other petroleum products. He is an advocate for nuclear energy, and his bill, the Nuclear for Brownfields Site Preparation Act, was just recently passed by E&C. He is also a member of the Conservative Climate Caucus and states that he believes climate change is a "real and serious threat."

ML Strategies is closely monitoring developments as the race for Republican leadership of the Energy & Commerce committee gets underway. We welcome the opportunity to answer any questions about how the change in leadership may impact your organization.

Authors



Alexander Hecht, Executive Vice President & Director of Operations

Alex Hecht is a trusted attorney and policy strategist with over 20 years of experience advising clients across a broad range of industries on how to navigate complex policy environments. His strategic insight and hands-on experience in both legislative and regulatory arenas empower clients to advance their priorities with clarity and confidence in an evolving policy landscape.



John Lushetsky, Senior Vice President

John Lushetsky draws on over 30 years of experience in government and industry to help clients identify strategic opportunities, secure federal funding, and position innovative technologies for success within evolving energy and infrastructure policy landscapes. He has successfully helped clients navigate complex issues through a variety of federal agencies.



Frank C. Guinta, Senior Vice President

Former US Congressman Frank Guinta advises clients on federal policy and legislative strategy, drawing on a distinguished career in public service and private sector leadership. His extensive experience allows him to provide a well-rounded perspective to clients pursuing federal engagement.



Christian Tamotsu Fjeld, Senior Vice President

Christian Tamotsu Fjeld draws on two decades of Capitol Hill experience to support clients in building relationships, shaping policy, and engaging effectively with the federal government. His experience working with Congress and his insights help clients anticipate federal developments and advance their priorities with clarity and confidence.



Anthony M. DeMaio, Senior Vice President

Anthony DeMaio is a federal strategist with strong relationships throughout House Democratic Caucus, especially the New England delegation. With over 15 years of experience, he helps a broad range of organizations navigate Congress, federal agencies, and the administration.



R. Neal Martin, Senior Director of Government Relations

Neal Martin brings more than two decades of experience in government and federal relations to his work, helping clients navigate a wide range of issues. He provides strategic guidance to organizations seeking to advance their legislative priorities and enhance their visibility before Congress and federal agencies.

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