

# ANALYSIS OF SELECT NEW LEADERSHIP OF THE 114<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS



ARAB AMERICAN INSTITUTE

January 2015

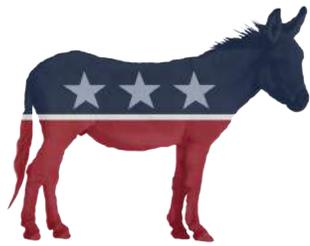


# 2015 CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP REPORT

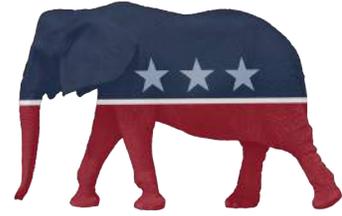
## 114<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

The following report analyzes many of the dynamics, themes, and changes that we anticipate will characterize the 114th session of Congress. The November 2014 mid-term election results ushered in Republican control of both Chambers of Congress, a ruling power that the Republican Party hasn't commanded in the last eight years. Some commentators posit that the GOP's mid-term gains reflected public disillusionment with President Obama, many of his policies, and public disgust with congressional gridlock that saw fewer bills passed than in any other session of Congress in the past six decades. Other analysts have pointed out that Democratic candidates did not run on any of President Obama's accomplishments therefore the results do not serve as an effective gage. Regardless, the end result is Republican dominance in congress. However, single party control of the Senate and House does not guarantee an easy road for Republicans in trying to get Washington back to work and deliver on key promises made during the campaign season.

Throughout this report, we highlight the many obstacles both Republicans and Democrats face in trying to advance their own agenda over the next two years while positioning their party for success in the 2016 presidential election. We have chosen to feature select committees that are pertinent to U.S.-Arab relations and the issues of greatest concern and impact for the Arab American community across the country.



## United States Senate



<i>115th Senate Leadership</i>		
<i>Position</i>	<i>113th Congress Outgoing</i>	<i>114th Congress Incoming</i>
Majority Leader	Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV)	Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)
President Pro Tempe	Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT)	
Majority Whip	Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL)	Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)
Democratic Caucus Chair	Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV)	
Conference Chair		Sen. John Thune (R-SD)
Democratic Policy Chair	Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY)	
Republican Senate Campaign Committee		Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY)
Minority Leader	Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)	Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV)
Minority Whip	Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)	Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL)
Republican Conference Chairman	Sen. John Thune (R-SD)	
Democratic Conference Chair		Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV)
Democratic Party Committee Chair		Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY)
Republican Party Committee	Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY)	
Democratic Conference Secretary		Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA)

Following the 2014 elections, the Republicans became the majority party in the U.S. Senate, which now stands at 54 Republicans, 44 Democrats, and 2 Independents who caucus with the Democrats.

The new Republican majority in the Senate was ushered in on a wave of anti-Obama sentiment that zeroed in on key policies regarding healthcare, immigration, and the economy as well as trying to shrug off the overwhelming disapproval of the “do-nothing Congress.” With Republicans in control of both chambers of Congress, President Obama no longer has the Senate to buffer bills passed in the House.

In addition to internal divisions within the Republican Party, there is a wide chasm between House and Senate Republicans, with House members staking out far more ideological positions and finding success early on in passing legislation, like the Keystone XL Pipeline, that have slim chances of passing in the Senate. Senate Republicans remain six votes shy of a filibuster-proof majority, forcing bipartisan cooperation on controversial bills. The challenge of coordination and compromise between the Chambers that faces the Republican Party and the 2016 election cycle will be the defining storylines of the 114th Congress.

Sessions of Congress which include presidential campaigns are beholden to the election cycle. With the field of candidates for the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination more clearly defined, there should be less in-fighting within the Democratic Party as the elections gain shape. The same cannot be said for the Republican Party, whose prospective candidate field is less clear and far more polarized. Members of Congress who might be candidates themselves are likely to deviate from the party line and stake out far-right positions on the most contentious issues facing the legislature. Prospective Republican candidates like Senator Rand Paul (KY), Senator Ted Cruz (TX), and Senator Marco Rubio (FL) have already begun to distance themselves from the party line by openly criticizing party leadership. Paul, Cruz, and Rubio lay bare the internal dynamics of a party which is learning to navigate the tension between the respected establishment and the rising influence of unrelenting, far-right, up-and-comers of the tea party.

<i>Senate Appropriations Committee</i>		
Oversees U.S. discretionary spending		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)	Sen. Thad Cochran (R-MS)
Ranking Member	Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL)	Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)
Outgoing Committee Members	Dem: Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), Sen. Tim Johnson (D-SD), Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Sen. Mark Pryor (D-AR), Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK)  GOP: Sen. Mike Johanns (R-NE), Sen. Dan Coats (R-IN)	
Incoming Committee Members		GOP: Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Sen. James Lankford (R-OK), Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT)  Dem: Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI), Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Sen. Christopher Murphy (D-CT)

<i>Senate Appropriations Subcommittees</i>		
Subcommittee	Chair	Ranking Member
Department of Defense	Sen. Thad Cochran (R-MS)	Sen. Richard Durban (D-IL)
Financial Services and General Government	Sen. John Boozman (R-AR)	Sen. Christopher Coons (D-DE)
Department of Homeland Security	Sen. John Hoeven (R-ND)	Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)
State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs	Sen. Lindsay Graham (R-SC)	Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT)

With Republicans gaining control of the Senate, former Chairwoman Sen. Mikulski will now serve as the Democratic Ranking Member and Republican Sen. Cochran has been tapped to serve as the committee’s Chairman.

As Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee during the 113th Congress, Rep. Mikulski oversaw the passage of several important bills relating to U.S. foreign relations. Under the Fiscal Year 2015 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs bill, the committee not only provided \$3.1 billion for military assistance to Israel, but also committed \$1 billion to the government of Jordan, in the form of economic, military, and humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, this specific bill provided Egypt with \$1 billion in military assistance, subject to a democracy and human rights promotion condition, except for any assistance that dealt with counter-terrorism and border security. Following Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi’s rise to power in 2014, there have been numerous cases of the government threatening, jailing, and intimidating critics of the state. The U.S. has made its assistance to Egypt contingent on President Sisi’s ability to uphold democratic values such as allowing critics to protest and voice their discontent with the government. Also under her tenure, Rep. Mikulski stridently supported the committee’s approval of a \$225 million package for Israel’s Iron Dome missile defense system.

During the 113th Congress, Sen. Cochran, now acting Chairman of the committee, was very supportive of Israel and concerned with maintaining Israel’s qualitative military edge. While serving as the Vice Chairman of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee (2012-2014), he consistently advocated for the development of technologies to bolster Israel’s missile defense systems, including joint U.S.-Israel programs such as Arrow and David’s Sling. It should be highlighted that Sen. Cochran’s home state of Mississippi is home to the companies that produce of the mid-tier Arrow system used by Israel. Conceivably, as Chairman of the committee in the 114th Congress, Cochran will continue to resolutely advocate for legislation that’s fortifies Israel’s missile defense system.

The Appropriations Committee will debate several key issues related to U.S. foreign policy towards Israel, the U.S. relationship with the Palestinian Authority (PA), and U.S. funding of a myriad of U.N. agencies like the International Atomic Energy

Agency (IAEA), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Given the backlash to the Palestinian bid to join the International Criminal Court (ICC), no congressional funding to the Palestinian Authority - or any United Nations body that the Palestinians join - is safe. In the past, the Appropriations Committees in both the House and the Senate have come close to cutting funding for all of these agencies based on displeasure with Palestinian actions. In the minds of many in the Senate, the Palestinians have crossed a red line by requesting to join the ICC, making it more plausible that the Members and lobbyists who have safeguarded appropriations to the Palestinians in the past may now be in favor of cutting all U.S. foreign assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

Chairman Cochran has yet to announce which Republican members will serve as subcommittee chairs. On the minority side, Sen. Patrick Leahy will serve as ranking member of the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs subcommittee. On issues related to the Middle East, Sen. Leahy is a peace process advocate who values U.S. regional allies- both Israel and Arab states. During the 113th Congress, Sen. Leahy proactively raised awareness about the need to provide Jordan and Lebanon with various forms of assistance, acknowledging that the governments of Jordan and Lebanon needed support given the influx of Syrian refugees into their countries.

<i>Senate Armed Services Committee</i>		
Jurisdiction over U.S. military, Department of Defense, military research and development, nuclear energy, military benefits for servicemen, and defense policy		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI)	Sen. John McCain (R-AZ)
Ranking Member	Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK)	Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI)
Outgoing Committee Members	Dem: Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI), Sen. Mark Udall (D-CO), Sen. Kay Hagan (D-NC)  GOP: Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Sen. David Vitter (R-LA), Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO)	
Incoming Committee Members		GOP: Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR), Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD), Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA), Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC), Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK)  Dem: Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM)

The Senate Armed Services Committee witnessed several noteworthy leadership position changes between the 113th and 114th Congress. First, Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan retired from Congress and was replaced on the committee by Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island who will now serve as Ranking Member for the Democrats. Sen. Reed is likely to position himself along the same lines as Sen. Levin, functioning as a moderate interventionist. The most noteworthy change in committee, however, occurred on the majority side where Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) was named Chairman. At 78 years old, Sen. John McCain is a senior member of Congress, a veteran, and an outspoken leader on the Republican Party’s foreign policy agenda. Sen. McCain’s appointment as Chairman of the committee is a position that he has long sought during his tenure in Congress.

Sen. McCain is known for being a vocal opponent of many of President Obama’s foreign and Middle East policies, especially with regard to Syria and Iraq. Sen. McCain contends that President Obama’s current policies not only endanger American citizens but reflect the President’s failure to grasp the intricacies of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. According to Sen. McCain, his disillusionment with the Obama Administration came to a head after a meeting in September 2013 where the President privately committed to intervene militarily in Syria, only to publicly announce policies that contradicted what his earlier statement. Sen. McCain has publicly voiced his belief that the U.S. should commit ground troops to Syria in order to mitigate the threat that the ongoing conflict poses to American national security. Predictably, Sen. McCain’s policy recommendations on Syria are based on the need for military intervention that ultimately results in regime change.

Sen. McCain’s solution to most U.S. foreign policy conundrums is the use of U.S. military forces. The Senator has opposed President Obama’s decision to withdraw troops from Afghanistan and Iraq. A staunch advocate for the 2003 Iraq war, a position he still defends, Sen. McCain portrayed himself as the brainchild of the successful surge strategy used in 2006. The incoming Chairman was also a leading proponent of intervening in the Libyan Revolution and continues to advocate for more U.S. military action in Syria. Sen. McCain’s one-size-fits-all foreign policy prescriptions are bound to set the agenda in his new Commit-

tee Chairmanship.

As Chairman of this committee, Sen. McCain can use his new appointment to either dismantle President Obama’s foreign policy agenda or assist the Administration in formulating a coherent policy that bolsters U.S. national security. Additionally, Sen. McCain’s interventionist foreign policy outlook may lead him to clash with members of the committee who are opposed to entangling the U.S. in foreign crises. Interestingly, three of the freshman Senators joining Chairman McCain on the committee are also veterans. Sen. Tom Cotton served in the U.S. Army, with deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan; Sen. Joni Ernst was a member of the U.S. Army Reserves; and Sen. Sullivan served in the U.S. Marine Corps.

<i>Senate Energy &amp; Natural Resources Committee</i>		
Jurisdiction over energy and nuclear waste policy, territorial policy, native Hawaiian matters, and public lands		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA)	Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
Ranking Member	Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)	Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA)
Outgoing Committee Members	Dem: Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Sen. Tim Johnson (D-SD), Sen. Mark Udall (D-CO), Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI)  GOP: Sen. Dean Heller (R-NV), Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC)	
Incoming Committee Members		GOP: Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO), Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT)  Dem: Sen. Angus King (I-ME), Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI)

Under the leadership of Chairwoman Murkowski, we can expect to see the committee pushing forward more legislation that would increase the U.S.’ ability to export more liquefied natural gas (LNG). As GOP Ranking Member in the 113th Congress, Sen. Murkowski repeatedly called on the Obama Administration to take advantage of the nation’s abundance of natural resources and expand U.S. energy exports. According to Sen. Murkowski, expanding U.S. energy exports would not only generate significant economic benefits but would provide the Administration with greater leverage in the geopolitical arena. In various media statements, Sen. Murkowski has voiced her hope that by 2020 the U.S. will be completely free of importing oil from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Sen. Murkowski drew significant attention for her remarks on the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)’s oil production revenue in Syria and Iraq. Sen. Murkowski contends that although there is no clear data on the scale of ISIL’s oil operations, depriving ISIL of this revenue by recapturing or destroying the oil fields in its control is essential to placing a significant strain on a critical source of its revenue. Furthermore, Sen. Murkowski suggests that a byproduct of destroying ISIL’s oil production is that the production vacuum left behind in global oil markets can be filled by the U.S. oil industry.

On the minority side, Democratic Sen. Landrieu left the Committee after serving as its Chairwoman in the 113th Congress. During her tenure as Chairwoman, Sen. Landrieu was a longtime leader in the effort to bolster U.S.-Israeli cooperation on energy development. Sen. Landrieu believed that U.S. assistance to Israel in becoming energy independent would increase Israeli security. With the departure of Sen. Landrieu from Congress, Senate Democrats appointed Sen. Cantwell to serve as ranking member in the new Congress.

<i>Senate Foreign Relations Committee</i>		
Oversees foreign policy legislation and debate within the Senate		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ)	Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN)
Ranking Member	Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN)	Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ)
Outgoing Committee Members	Dem: Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) GOP: Sen. John McCain (R-AZ)	
Incoming Committee Members		GOP: Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO), Sen. David Perdue (R-GA), Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-GA)  Dem: None

<i>Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittees</i>		
Subcommittee	Chair	Ranking Member
Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs	Sen. James Risch (R-ID)	Sen. Christopher Murphy (D-CT)

With Democrats deposed from Senate leadership positions, the Chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee is being turned over to Senator Bob Corker (R-TN). Sen. Corker has served on the Committee since 2011, and was the Committee’s Ranking Member in the 113th Congress. Corker entered his leadership post promising to complete a thorough review and reauthorization of the State Department – which the Committee is responsible for overseeing. If Sen. Corker is successful in pushing for a reauthorization bill, it would mark a level of congressional oversight that hasn’t been seen in over 13 years.

Corker has blocked several key actions that would have uncritically benefitted Israel financially (S.2265 - Sen. Rand Paul’s “Stand with Israel” bill to provide military aid) and diplomatically (S.462 - Sen. Boxer’s “U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act” to elevate the status of the U.S.-Israel cooperation on a number of fronts) on the grounds that the two separate bills should not be brought to the floor for a vote without first being considered by the Foreign Affairs Committee. However, Sen. Corker has staked out his leadership by heading the Senate fight to implement severe sanctions against Iran if the P5+1 negotiations fail – a bill that is expected to derail the negotiations upon passage. The Iran sanctions bill is just one example of how the Senate, now under control of the Republican Party, will adopt a much more adversarial approach to the Obama Administration’s foreign policy leadership. Whereas the slim Democratic majority in previous Congresses challenged but never overruled President Obama’s actions across the globe, the new Senate is much more likely to derail key Obama policy initiatives and narrow the President’s executive authority throughout the remainder of his term.

The Committee has two notable losses entering the 114th session. The first is Sen. John McCain – a longtime Committee member and outspoken foreign policy hawk. Sen. McCain is replaced by one Senior and two Junior Senators, one of whom is Sen. Cory Gardner from Colorado who “turned a blue state red,” for which he is likely to become a Republican favorite. The other Junior Senator, David Perdue (R-GA) was actually hindered by his pro-Israel, anti-Iran negotiations stance during his Senate race. Neither has any notable foreign policy experience and both are likely to toe the party line given their career forecast.

Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) is a significant loss on the Democrat’s reduced Foreign Affairs Committee bench. Longtime Assistant Majority Leader for Senate Democrats, Sen. Durbin has served on the Foreign Affairs Committee since 2011. Sen. Durbin approached Middle East policy issues with nuance, and was a leader in the Senate’s support of John Kerry’s peace process, dealing with the humanitarian crisis caused by the Syrian conflict, and a myriad of other issues.

The first weeks of the 114th session have seen two Palestine-related bills referred to the Foreign Affairs Committee by the Senate, one to defund the PA as well as a bi-annually introduced bill to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. Neither bill was introduced by a Foreign Affairs Committee member, nor does either bill have any cosponsors. The lack of action on this legislation might indicate a continued hesitancy among Senators to wrestle control of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the Administration or weigh in on issues that have far-reaching consequences on the conflict and how the U.S. conducts foreign policy. However, new Senate leadership might change prevailing calculations concerning U.S. support of the Palestinian government.

It is also worth noting that Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) is an active and important foreign policy antagonist in the Republican Party— though not on the Foreign Affairs Committee. Sen. Paul is positioning himself as a strong contender for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination, which likely means that he will be even more outspoken on pressing foreign policy concerns. Sen. Paul’s views are not in line with mainstream Republican foreign policy. With broad backing from tea party activists, Sen. Paul is decidedly isolationist, having crusaded against the 2003 Iraq war and, more recently, military intervention in Syria. Sen. Paul has made a name for himself by suggesting that the U.S. ends all of its foreign aid programs to allies around the world – a suggestion that included ending the annual aid package to Israel. In a disappointing move, Sen. Paul reversed his position by making an exception for the Israeli aid package in 2014, claiming to have never suggested ending that program in particular. In an obvious attempt to hone his pro-Israel position moving into the 2016 elections, Sen. Paul went as far as introducing the “Stand With Israel Act” on the floor of the Senate last year.

On Syria and ISIL, the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Corker has been critical of the Obama Administration’s policy. Sen. Corker suggests that the rise of ISIL could have been avoided if the President had left a residual force in Iraq and articulated a clear strategy for Syria. Sen. Corker has been insistent that President Obama request an Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) from Congress. While Sen. Corker acknowledges that the President maintains the ability to protect the nation from imminent threats, he strongly feels that in order to conduct a multi-year military campaign against ISIL, Congress must provide legal authorization. Furthermore, Sen. Corker has struck a cooperative tone regarding the AUMF – asking the White House on multiple occasions to send over recommended language for the authorization. Although supportive of such efforts, Sen. Corker is skeptical that the program to train and equip elements of the moderate Syrian operation will work.

Sen. Robert Menendez, the leading Democrat on the committee, has maintained relatively similar positions as Sen. Corker on Syria and ISIL related issues. During his tenure as Chairman, Sen. Menendez oversaw the committee’s passage of an AUMF which authorized the President to use military force against ISIL for up to three years, but limited U.S. troops from participating in ground combat operations. However, the bill never made its way to the Senate floor for consideration. Chairman Corker has recently announced that the committee is once again drafting language for an AUMF to present to the President. While Sen. Menendez is supportive of the current airstrike campaign being conducted against ISIL, he believes that long term success will only be achieved after there are established and effective forces on the ground. Distinctly, Sen. Menendez not only sees these trained moderate forces as an answer to the threat posed by ISIL, but also a force that can ultimately turn its attention to fighting Assad’s security forces. Sen. Menendez has also been the leading Democratic figure supporting legislation on Iran. He partnered with Sen. Kirk (R-IL) to author the “Menendez-Kirk” bill that is currently being considered by the Senate, and increasingly panned by his Democratic colleagues. If passed, the Menendez-Kirk bill will put a high price on failed negotiations by promising even more sanctions on Iran if the P5 + 1 talks fail. Democrat members of Congress and President Obama have consistently and urgently argued that passing such legislation will surely derail negotiations. Sen. Menendez is still pushing for his bill to pass.

<i>Senate Homeland Security &amp; Governmental Affairs Committee</i>		
Jurisdiction over Department of Homeland Security, homeland security issues, and functions of the Federal government		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Sen. Thomas Carper (D-DE)	Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI)
Ranking Member	Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK)	Sen. Thomas Carper (D-DE)
Outgoing Committee Members	Dem: Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI), Sen. Mark Pryor (D-AR), Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK)  GOP: Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK)	
Incoming Committee Members		GOP: Sen. James Lankford (R-OK), Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA), Sen. Ben Sasse (R-NE)  Dem: Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI)

Senate Republicans on the Homeland Security and Government Affairs committee witnessed a change in leadership due to the retirement of Sen. Tom Coburn from Congress. Replacing Sen. Coburn as Chairman of the committee is Republican Sen. Ron Johnson. Current Chairman Johnson views ISIL and the Syrian conflict from a completely different perspective than his predecessor. To Chairman Johnson, ISIL and the Syrian conflict pose a significant threat to U.S. national security because

some foreign fighters engaged in these conflicts hold western passports. To counteract this threat, the Chairman is working to provide the DHS with all the tools it needs to protect American citizens. Although Chairman Johnson supports policies that would establish a robust intelligence gathering capability, he has stated that intelligence practices must be balanced against the need to protect civil liberties. In order to mitigate the threat posed by foreign fighters, Chairman Johnson contends that degrading and ultimately defeating ISIL will stem the flow of foreign fighters joining the Syrian conflict.

<i>Senate Judiciary Committee</i>		
Oversight of the Department of Justice, FBI, and Department of Homeland Security, and confirmation of executive nominations		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT)	Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA)
Ranking Member	Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA)	Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT)
Outgoing Committee Members	Dem: Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI) GOP: None	
Incoming Committee Members		GOP: Sen. David Vitter (R-LA), Sen. David Perdue (R-GA), Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC) Dem: Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI)

<i>Senate Judiciary Subcommittees</i>		
Subcommittee	Chair	Ranking Member
Constitution	Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)	Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL)
Immigration and the National Interest	Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL)	Sen. Charles Schumer (R-NY)
Crime and Terrorism	Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC)	Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)

There are two noteworthy changes to the Senate Judiciary Committee. First, under Republican leadership an important subcommittee was overhauled. Previously named the “Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights” – it is now simply the “Subcommittee on the Constitution.” It would appear that this subcommittee has a much narrower focus than in previous sessions; and we might lose an important forum for the discussion of how civil and human rights actor in to our national security interests.

The second significant change occurred at the leadership level where Sen. Patrick Leahy and Sen. Charles Grassley switched roles. As Chairman of the committee in the 113th Congress, Sen. Leahy confronted a vast array of civil liberties issues. Since his election to Congress in 1974, Sen. Leahy has been a stalwart champion of protecting the civil rights and liberties of the American people from federal infringement.

The Senate Judiciary Committee will likely see Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Leahy square off over a key sunset provision of the USA Patriot Act. Section 215 of the bill grants the National Security Agency broad surveillance powers; with the provision needing to be reauthorized this year, Chairman Grassley has actively urged his colleagues to extend the surveillance powers while Ranking Member Leahy is a public champion of curtailing the NSA’s ability to freely collect data on American citizens.

During the 113th Congress, Sen. Leahy introduced the USA Freedom Act of 2014, a bill that sought to limit the powers of the USA Patriot Act, specifically the ability of intelligence agencies to indiscriminately collect data on American citizens in the name of national security. The bill received rare bipartisan support and even gained the votes of noteworthy members of the intelligence community such as the Director of National Intelligence and the Attorney General. The bill failed to pass the Senate because opponents, such as former ranking member Sen. Grassley, contended that the approval of such a bill would fetter intelligence agencies’ ability to protect American citizens from organizations such as ISIL. With Section 215 of the USA Patriot Act set to expire in 2015, the Senate will need to write a bill similar to Sen. Leahy’s USA Freedom Act of 2014. If the Senate Judiciary Committee attempts to write a passable bill similar to Sen. Leahy’s, current Chairman Grassley will play a decisive role

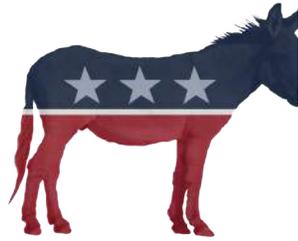
in its development.

Despite pressing intelligence agencies to release more information about their surveillance practices, Chairman Grassley voted against Sen. Leahy's USA Freedom Act of 2014. Chairman Grassley opposed Sen. Leahy's bill on the grounds that the proposed bill hindered the ability of intelligence agencies to effectively perform their duties. Like Leahy, Chairman Grassley believes that there is a very delicate balance between protecting civil liberties and providing intelligence agencies the ability to uphold U.S. national security, but they arrive at different conclusions. The rise of Sen. Grassley to the position of Chairman may pose a noteworthy setback for civil liberties advocates, both within and outside of Congress.

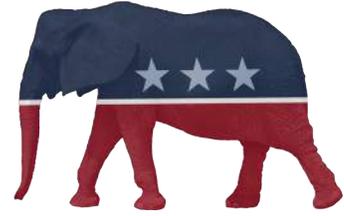
One of the most pressing challenges facing the Senate Judiciary Committee in the 114th Congress is reforming the country's broken immigration system. In 2013, a group of bi-partisan Senators known as the "gang of eight," successfully passed in the Senate, S.744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act. This landmark bill specifically alters the family and employment-based visa categories for immigrants, provides vital due-process protections, expands the availability of nonimmigrant workers to supplement all sectors of the workforce, and provides legal status to 11 million undocumented immigrants within the United States. To the frustration of the bill's supporters, House Republican leadership refused to take the bill up for consideration and stymied any progress made in the Senate.

In response to the House's inability to consider S.744 or propose new legislation that attempted to provide a comprehensive solution to fixing the nation's immigration system, President Obama announced that he would use his executive powers to temporarily address the issue. Sen. Leahy has been supportive of the President's actions and believes that President Obama was forced into action because of Congress' inability to address the issue. Importantly, Sen. Leahy continues to believe that it is ultimately congressional action that will resolve the nation's longstanding immigration issue.

On the other hand, Chairman Grassley unequivocally opposes President Obama's executive actions. According to Chairman Grassley, the President's actions violate the Constitution. While Chairman Grassley recognizes that the nation's immigration system must be reformed, his solution differs significantly from both the President's and Senator Leahy's. In a press release following the President's executive actions, Chairman Grassley argued that real immigration reform should begin with reinforcing border security, and asserted his belief that the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act would have failed to resolve the country's immigration problems. Chairman Grassley has even gone so far as to say that American "liberty is now at stake." There is no doubt that immigration will continue to be a hot button issue, especially with 2016 presidential election. The differences of opinion between Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Leahy are stark and are sure to manifest themselves within the committee.



## United States House of Representatives



Title	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Speaker	Rep. John Boehner (R OH-2)	Rep. John Boehner (R OH-2)
Majority Leader	Rep. Eric Cantor (R VA-7) (Until August 1, 2014) Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R CA-23) (from August 1, 2014)	Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R CA-23)
Majority whip	Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R CA-23) (until August 1, 2014) Rep. Steve Scalise (R LA-1) (from August 1, 2014)	Rep. Steve Scalise (R LA-1)
Deputy Majority Whip	Rep. Patrick McHenry (R NC-10)	Rep. Patrick McHenry (R NC-10)
Conference Chair	Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R WA-5)	Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R WA-5)
Conference Secretary	Rep. Virginia Foxx (R NC-5)	Rep. Virginia Foxx (R NC-5)
Republican Congressional Campaign Committee	Rep. Greg Walden (R OR-2)	Rep. Greg Walden (R OR-2)
Minority Leader	Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D CA-12)	Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D CA-12)
Minority Whip	Rep. Steny Hoyer (D MD-5)	Rep. Steny Hoyer (D MD-5)

Following the 2014 midterm elections, the Republicans retained and strengthened their majority leadership in the House of Representatives, which now stands at 246 Republicans, 188 Democrats, and 1 vacancy.

The onus is now on House Republicans to deliver on their key campaign promise to “make Washington work” by overcoming the congressional gridlock that led pundits to dub the 113th the “do-nothing Congress.” Having gained 16 new seats in the House, Republicans must create a narrative of success as the nation moves toward the 2016 presidential elections. Arguably, the biggest obstacle for Republicans to overcome is intra-party tensions between rival factions, most notably between the tea party caucus – who dominated the recent elections – and the GOP’s official leadership. The rebellious tea party activists are far more conservative than the traditional Republican Party, and feel far less obliged to pivot from campaign rhetoric to a governing strategy.

This division is already making itself apparent in the new congress. What should have been a routine reelection for Rep. John Boehner to remain the Speaker of the House became a showcase of Republican disunity when 24 members of his own party voted against him. Tea party activists vocally argued that Boehner had failed to uphold Republican principles and compromised too much with the Obama Administration. Key issues, such as immigration, that defined the 2014 midterm success of many Republicans will also determine the Republican Party’s future. In one of their first actions during the 114th Congress, House Republicans allowed a vote on a measure that eliminated a program to defer deportations for “Dreamers” - children who entered the U.S. with their parents and, through no fault of their own, are out of status. A group of 26 House Republicans opposed the measure, with many saying the proposal went too far. The division among House Republicans will force the Party to coordinate and compromise, or else further splinter. Across the aisle, House Democrats are in a fight to remain relevant. With a diminished party presence in the House, and the loss of the majority in the Senate, House Democrats will be hard pressed to find points of leverage.

Key members in House leadership have already positioned themselves on the major issues that Congress is expected to take up over the next two years, including U.S. policy in Syria, U.S. policy towards combatting the self-proclaimed “Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant” (ISIL), and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Republican Party leader and Speaker of the House John Boehner (OH-8) has not yet articulated a clear position on what he believes the U.S. should be doing to combat ISIL and end the conflict in Syria, but in general prescribes a more active U.S. role. Speaker Boehner has not offered any specific policy recommendations to the Obama Administration, but frequently reiterates his opinion that Syria’s Bashar al Assad must be removed

from power. On diminishing the threat posed by ISIL, Speaker Boehner is more assertive in what he sees as the Obama Administration’s flawed policy. Rep. Boehner initially supported President Obama’s decision to launch airstrikes against ISIL in light of the threat ISIL posed to U.S. national security. However, he reversed his support of the President’s policies, arguing that the current plan would take too long to develop when “ISIL’s momentum and territorial gains must be halted and reversed immediately.” Speaker Boehner is critical of the Obama Administration’s promise to keep troops out of Syria and Iraq to avoid a ground assault on ISIL, a policy option which Speaker Boehner believes must be left on the table.

Contrary to the Speaker’s position, the leader of the House Democrats - Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (CA-12) - has been supportive of President Obama’s strategy. Rep. Pelosi differs from Speaker Boehner on two specific points. First, like President Obama, Rep. Pelosi does not see a current or future role for U.S. combat troops in the fight against ISIL. Second, Rep. Pelosi trusts that the current strategy in place will ultimately succeed in “degrading and destroying” ISIL. The differences between Rep. Boehner and Rep. Pelosi are significant in that as leaders of their respective parties, both members play a significant role in staking out their party’s position on important issues. Moreover, highlighting the differences between Rep. Boehner and Rep. Pelosi provides insight into possible areas of future contention.

While their views may differ on how the Obama Administration is handling the current campaign against ISIL, both Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi are staunch supporters of Israel. With a GOP controlled House already voicing a willingness to cut off funding to the Palestinian Authority, it will be interesting to see what stance Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi will take on the issue. To the dismay of many, the U.S.-Israel relationship has become an increasingly partisan issue with Republicans and Democrats portraying their counterparts as either supporters or opponents of Israel. This issue came to a head in early 2015 with Boehner’s invitation to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin “Bibi” Netanyahu to address a joint session of Congress. In the face of criticism that the invitation, which was made without consulting the White House, represents a breach of protocol, Boehner has stood his ground. Pelosi and other Democrats have hinted that they may skip the speech.

<i>House Appropriations Committee</i>		
Responsible for passing appropriations bills and regulating U.S. government expenditures		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Rep. Harold Rogers (R KY-5)	Rep. Harold Rogers (R KY-5)
Ranking Member	Rep. Nita Lowey (D NY-17)	Rep. Nita Lowey (D NY-17)
Outgoing Committee Members	GOP: Rep. Frank Wolf (R VA-10), Rep. Jack Kingston (R GA-1), Rep. Tom Latham (R IA-3)  Dems: Rep. James Moran (D VA-8), Rep. Ed Pastor (D AZ-7), Rep. Bill Owens (D NY-21)	
Incoming Committee Members	GOP: Rep. David Jolly (R FL-13), Rep. Scott Rigell (R VA-2), Rep. Evan Jenkins (R WV-3), Rep. David Young (R IA-3)  Dem: Rep. Steve Israel (D NY-3), Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger (D MD-2), Rep. Derek Kilmer (D WA-6)	

<i>House Appropriations Subcommittees</i>		
Subcommittee	Chair	Ranking Member
Defense	Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ)	Rep. Pete Visclosky (IN-1)
Financial Services	Rep. Ander Crenshaw (R-FL)	Rep. Jose Serrano (NY-15)
Homeland Security	Rep. John Carter (R-TX)	Rep. David Price (NC-4)
State, Foreign Operations	Rep. Kay Granger (R-TX)	Rep. Nita Lowey (NY-17)

Chairman Harold Rogers (R-KY) and Ranking Member Nita Lowey (D-NY) remain in control of the Appropriations Committee, and will once again be responsible for overseeing the passage of the 12 appropriations bills that govern the allocation of all U.S. domestic and international spending. Foreign assistance bills will be inevitably linked to concerns regarding U.S. foreign

policy, including U.S. policy towards Israel, the U.S. relationship with the Palestinian Authority (PA), and U.S. funding to United Nations (UN) agencies such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Previous Palestinian initiatives and applications to the UN have brought the U.S. close to cutting its funding to the PA and U.N. agencies, but with the recent backlash to the Palestinian bid to join the International Criminal Court (ICC), congressional funding of the PA and UN agencies is facing credible threats of being slashed. Palestinian actions on the international stage, coupled with another round of failed peace negotiations and the increasing discontent with PA governance, will threaten the U.S. historic aid to the PA – and consequently any UN agency that accepts Palestine as a member.

A few major – and controversial – bills that passed the Appropriations Committee last year will resurface again. This includes H.J.Res. 124 proposed by Chairman Rogers that included an amendment authorizing the training and equipping of moderate Syrian rebels to fight against ISIL. Ongoing funding for this program will be under consideration again this year with non-lethal aid to Syria contingent on Congress being briefed on how recipients were vetted. Under the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill, the committee promised to provide Israel with \$3.1 billion in security assistance with no oversight. This same bill established several oversight mechanisms for U.S. funding to Egypt, Syria, and the Palestinian Authority. Specifically, the bill states that economic and security assistance to Egypt is contingent upon Egypt sustaining a strategic partnership with the U.S. and continuing to honor the 1978 Camp David Accords. Many Members argue that Egypt is in contempt of these obligations given the current Egyptian regime's human rights violations and suppression of democratic protests. Following the summer war in Gaza, the committee also renewed a measure that would preclude the Palestinian Authority from receiving U.S. assistance if Hamas joined a unity government.

Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey's voting records during the 113th Congress reveal that we can continue to expect the Appropriations Committee bills to be supportive of Israel, concerned with protecting the rights of religious minorities in Syria and Iraq, and amenable to arming and training Syrian rebels against ISIL. However, their voting records show important distinctions between their views. For example, Chairman Rogers voted in favor of most bills that rhetorically and fiscally reasserted the United States' unique relationship with Israel. Unlike Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey voted against H.J.Res.76, a resolution which provided the Department of Defense supplemental funds to help Israeli operations during this summer's Operation Protective Edge mission in Gaza. Additionally, Ranking Member Lowey cosponsored a resolution that commended U.S. efforts to find a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while Chairman Rogers did not.

In highlighting Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey's voting record, it is evident that the Ranking Member is sometimes willing to stand up to Israel's unwavering congressional allies in both parties. Moreover, Rep. Lowey's stance on this issue may also reveal her willingness to echo the position of the Obama Administration. As relations between the Palestinian Authority and Israel continue to deteriorate, it will be interesting to see how Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey assert their differing opinions on how Congress should allocate government funds.

President Obama's efforts to close the U.S. detention facility in Guantanamo Bay are also impacted by the Appropriations Committee. Since President Obama took office, he has consistently promised to shut down the detention facility and firmly believes that its continued operation tarnishes U.S. standing in the world. Over the course of his Administration, President Obama has successfully, albeit gradually, decreased the number of detainees held at Guantanamo and has claimed that doing so will be one of the lasting legacies of his time in office. Despite the President's wholehearted commitment to following through on his promise, some members of the House believe that closing the detention center at Guantanamo Base will hinder U.S. counterterrorism efforts and have acted to block such moves.

Over the past few years, Republicans and Democrats in Congress have, through the channel of the House Appropriations Committee, attempted to block the President's ability to close Guantanamo. President Obama's prisoner exchange with the Taliban, which resulted in the transfer of five Taliban detainees from Guantanamo to Qatar for the release of U.S. Army Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, outraged Congress. Many Members believed the President exceeded his constitutionally outlined executive powers by failing to notify Congress in advance of the transfer. In response to the President's actions, the Appropriations committee included language in the FY 2015 Defense Appropriations bill that placed several new restrictions on the President's ability to transfer detainees. The language blocked the funds from being used to transfer prisoners out of Guantanamo – which means prisoners are unable to be released or transferred, effectively eliminating any possibility of shutting down the detention center.

Looking ahead, President Obama will undoubtedly continue to work towards his goal of shutting down the detention facility before his term ends. During the 114th Congress, we can expect the committee to continue to obstruct the President's efforts to close Guantanamo.

<i>House Armed Services Committee</i>		
Responsible for funding and oversight of Department of Defense and US Armed forces, as well as portions of the Department of Energy		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon (R CA-25)	Rep. Mac Thornberry (R TX-13)
Ranking Member	Rep. Adam Smith (D WA-9)	Rep. Adam Smith (D WA-9)
Outgoing Committee Members	GOP: Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon (R CA-25), Rep. Jon Runyan (R NJ-3)  Dem: Rep. Mike McIntyre (D NC-7), Rep. Colleen Hanabusa (D HI-1), Rep. Ron Barber (D AZ-2), Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (D NH-1), Rep. Daniel Maffei (D NY-4), Rep. William Enyart (D IL-12), Rep. Pete Gallego (D TX-23)	
Incoming Committee Members	GOP: Rep. Sam Graves (R MO-6), Rep. Ryan Zinke (R MT- At-large), Rep. Elise Stefanik (R NY-21), Rep. Martha McSally (R AZ-2), Rep. Steve Knight (R CA-25), Rep. Tom MacArthur (R NJ-3)  Dem: Rep. Tim Walz (D MN-1), Rep. Beto O’Rourke (D TX-16), Rep. Don Norcross (D NJ-1), Rep. Ruben Gallego (D AZ-7), Rep. Mark Takai (D HI-1), Rep. Gwen Graham (D FL-2), Rep. Brad Ashford (D NE-2), Rep. Seth Moulton (D MA-6)	

The House Armed Service Committee (HASC) of the 114th Congress will feature 14 new members. The most significant change is the replacement of Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon (R-CA) with Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-TX) as Chairman of the committee. Rep. McKeon did not seek reelection in 2014 thereby leaving the Chairmanship vacant.

During his Chairmanship, Rep. McKeon was very active on issues relating to U.S. strategy against ISIL, U.S. policy in Iraq and Syria, and funding for Israel’s Iron Dome System. In regard to the U.S. strategy for defeating ISIL, Rep. McKeon indicated it “demands a comprehensive strategy combining diplomatic, political and military efforts, and the contributions from a broad coalition of countries.” Rep. McKeon supported the decision to train and equip Syrian rebels, but made statements expressing his view that President Obama needed to develop a more comprehensive strategy to degrade and destroy ISIL. Chairman Thornberry has maintained an identical position as former Chairman McKeon, stating that “training Syrians is only one part of what must be a larger strategy.”

Both former Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Adam Smith called on former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada to pass the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) because of the role it played in supporting Israel. In a press release on the 2015 NDAA, Ranking Member Smith urged former Senate Majority Leader Reid to bring the bill to the Senate floor reasoning that doing so would help protect Israeli lives. In a press release on his website, Rep. McKeon criticized Sen. Reid for failing to provide Israel with millions of dollars in assistance at a critical moment.

<i>House Energy and Commerce Committee</i>		
Oversees legislation relating to telecommunications, consumer protection, food and drug safety, public health, air quality and environmental health, the supply and delivery of energy, and interstate and foreign commerce in general		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Rep. Fred Upton (R MI-6)	Rep. Fred Upton (R MI-6)
Ranking Member	Rep. Henry Waxman (D CA-33)	Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (R NJ-6)

Outgoing Committee Members	<p>GOP: Rep. Ralph Hall (R TX-4), Rep. Lee Terry (R NE-2), Rep. Mike Rogers (R MI-8), Rep. Phil Gingrey (R GA-11), Rep. Bill Cassidy (R LA-6), Rep. Cory Gardner (R CO-4)</p> <p>Dem: Rep. Henry Waxman (D CA-33), Rep. John Dingell (D MI-12), Rep. Jim Matheson (D UT-4), Rep. John Barrow (D GA-12), Rep. Donna Christensen (D VI), Rep. Bruce Braley (D IA-1)</p>	
Incoming Committee Members		<p>GOP: Rep. Larry Bucshon (R IN-8), Rep. Bill Flores (R TX-17), Rep. Susan Brooks (R IN-5), Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R OK-2), Rep. Richard Hudson (R NC-8), Rep. Chris Collins (R NY-27), Rep. Kevin Cramer (R ND At-large district)</p> <p>Dem: Rep. John Yarmuth (D KY-3), Rep. Yvette Clarke (D NY-9), Rep. David Loebsack (D IA-2), Rep. Kurt Schrader (D OR-5), Rep. Joseph Kennedy III (D MA-4), Rep. Tony Cardenas (D CA-29)</p>

In a significant move for Arab Americans, Rep. John Dingell of Michigan retired, leaving his spot as the ranking Democratic member on the Energy and Commerce Committee (ECC) open. Rep. Dingell was a vocal and staunch advocate of the Arab world – specifically Lebanon and Palestine. As the representative of Michigan’s 12th district, which includes the Detroit suburb of Dearborn, a city that hosts the highest concentration of Arab Americans in the U.S., Rep. Dingell worked tirelessly to protect the civil liberties of Arab Americans. The Democrats also lost Rep. Henry Waxman of California, who was a veteran leader of the ECC. In total, the committee lost 12 members and will introduce 13 new members in the upcoming year. Rep. Fred Upton of Michigan will continue to serve as committee Chairman and will be joined by Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. of New Jersey as the Ranking Member.

During the 113th Congress, Rep. Cory Gardner of Colorado introduced, and the House passed, HR.6, the Domestic Prosperity and Global Freedom Act. This particular legislation expedited the Department of Energy’s approval of liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports, which would have created a significant number of jobs domestically and increased energy security abroad. By increasing the quantity of LNG exports, the bill sought to reduce U.S. reliance on foreign oil, thereby increasing American energy security abroad and providing the U.S. greater leverage in the global geopolitical arena. This bill would have specifically impacted U.S. dependence and relations with various governments in the Middle East. The bill did not pass in the Senate; however, current Chairman Upton may consider reintroducing a similar form of legislation in the 114th Congress. Chairman Upton voted in favor of HR.6, while newly elected Ranking Member Pallone Jr. voted against the measure. Rep. Cory Gardner, the bill’s original author, now serves in the U.S. Senate.

<i>House Homeland Security Committee</i>		
Oversees U.S. security legislation and Department of Homeland Security		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Rep. Michael McCaul (R TX-10)	Rep. Michael McCaul (R TX-10)
Ranking Member	Rep. Bennie Thompson (D MS-2)	Rep. Bennie Thompson (D MS-2)
Outgoing Committee Members	<p>GOP: Rep. Paul Broun (R GA-10), Rep. Pat Meehan (R PA-7), Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R UT-3), Rep. Chris Stewart (R UT-2), Rep. Keith Rothfus (R PA-12), Rep. Richard Hudson (R NC-8), Rep. Steve Daines (R MT At-large), Rep. Susan Brooks (R IN-5), Rep. Mark Sanford (R SC-1)</p> <p>Dem: Rep. Ron Barber (D AZ-2), Rep. Steven Horsford (D NV-4), Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D HI-2)</p>	

Incoming Committee Members	<p>GOP: Rep. Curt Clawson (R FL-19), Rep. John Katko (R NY-24), Rep. Will Hurd (R TX-23), Rep. Earl “Buddy” Carter (R GA-1), Rep. Mark Walker (R NC-6), Rep. Barry Loudermilk (R GA-11), Rep. Martha McSally (R AZ-2), Rep. John Ratcliffe (R TX-4)</p> <p>Dem: Rep. Bonnie Coleman (D NJ-15), Rep. Kathleen Rice (D NY-4), Rep. Norma Torres (D CA-35)</p>
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<i>Homeland Security Subcommittees</i>		
Subcommittee	Chair	Ranking Member
Counterterrorism and Intelligence	Rep. Pete King (R-NY)	Rep. Brian Higgins (D-NY)

There are no significant changes in the House Homeland Security Committee between the 113th and 114th Congresses. Rep. McCaul will continue to serve as Chairman and Rep. Thompson will maintain his position as the committee’s highest ranking Democrat. Republicans lost nine members but replaced them with eight new members, of whom seven are freshman. Among the incoming Republican freshman, Rep. John Katko previously served as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Eastern District of Virginia; Rep. Will Hurd operated as a undercover CIA officer in South Asia and the Middle East; Reps. Barry Loudermilk and Martha McSally served in the U.S. Air Force; and Rep. John Ratcliffe served as Chief of Anti-Terrorism and National Security for the Eastern District of Texas from 2004 to 2007. Considering the past professional experiences of these new members, it is evident that Chairman McCaul saw tremendous value in the expertise they would bring to the committee.

During the 113th Congress, Chairman McCaul and other members of the committee held numerous hearings on the potential threat that foreign fighters returning from Syria and Iraq pose to the United States. Chairman McCaul suggested that the threat posed by ISIL, and especially its role in inspiring homegrown terrorism, creates a significant security challenge for the U.S. His view was that a broader military strategy in Syria, one that goes beyond airstrikes, would be the only way to ultimately destroy ISIL and mitigate the threat it poses to U.S. homeland security.

During multiple hearings, Chairman McCaul admitted that he was increasingly concerned with the security threat that foreign fighters posed because of their military training, extremist ideology, knowledge of the West, and their ability to cross western borders. Subsequent committee hearings analyzed whether or not programs such as the Visa Waiver Program put U.S. security in greater risk. Some committee members argued that foreign fighters holding passports from allied countries such as Great Britain and France could use the program to enter the U.S. and cause harm to American citizens. Rather than undoing a critical transatlantic immigration program, Ranking Member Bennie Thompson suggested that the best strategy to safeguard our nation’s security involved greater information sharing within domestic agencies as well as between the U.S. government and its allies.

Former Chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security Rep. Pete King (R-NY) will now serve as Chairman of the Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee. An outspoken Islamophobe, Rep. King was one of the most vocal supporters of the New York Police Department’s controversial surveillance program of New York’s Muslim community and held a series of congressional hearings that focused on Arab Americans and American Muslims as suspicious and untrustworthy communities that warrant heightened security. Additionally, after the recent attack on the French satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, Rep. King reiterated his support for the targeted surveillance of American Muslim communities. As Chairman of the Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee, we can expect Rep. King’s Islamophobic inclinations to result in increased committee activity that challenges the equal protection of civil rights and civil liberties in the name of safeguarding U.S. national security.

<i>House Foreign Affairs Committee</i>		
Oversees legislation relating to U.S. foreign affairs		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Rep. Edward Royce (R CA-39)	Rep. Edward Royce (R CA-39)
Ranking Member	Rep. Eliot Engel (D NY-16)	Rep. Eliot Engel (D NY-16)

Outgoing Committee Members	GOP: Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R IL-16), Rep. Tom Cotton (R AR-4), Rep. George Holding (R NC-13), Rep. Steve Stockman (R TX-36), Rep. Doug Collins (R GA-9), Rep. Sean Duffy (R WI-7)  Dem: None	
Incoming Committee Members		GOP: Rep. Darrell Issa (R CA-49), Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R TN-4), Rep. Reid Ribble (R WI-8), Rep. Dave Trott (R MI-11), Rep. Lee Zeldin (R NY-1), Rep. Tom Emmer (R MN-6)  Dem: Rep. Robin Kelly (D IL-2), Rep. Brendan Boyle (D PA-13)

<i>Foreign Affairs Subcommittees</i>		
Subcommittee	Chair	Ranking Member
Middle East and North Africa	Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)	Rep. Theodore E. Deutch (D-FL)
Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations	Rep. Chris Smith (D-NJ)	Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA)

There were no significant changes to committee leadership for the Foreign Affairs Committee, although many senior GOP committee members have left for higher ranking positions. The Republican Party selected six new members, three of which (Reps. Trott, Zeldin, and Emmer) are freshman and two of which (Reps. DesJarlais and Ribble) are entering their second term. On the Middle East and North Africa subcommittee, expect to see veteran Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) go unchallenged in her leadership and bully-pulpit stewardship. The subcommittee Chairwoman is a longstanding and vociferous pro-Israel advocate, having curated the House’s skeptical, then outwardly critical, stance on Secretary of State John Kerry’s peace negotiations over the past two years.

Rep. Darrell Issa’s contributions to the House Foreign Affairs Committee will be worth keeping an eye on. Rep. Issa is an Arab American Member known for his aggressive Chairmanship of the House Oversight Committee in the 113th Congress, a post he left when he term-limited out. Rep. Issa is no co-Chair of the recently reconstituted Lebanon Caucus. Freshman Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-NY), who has been appointed to the Committee, is now the only serving Republican Jewish Member of the House of Representatives following Rep. Eric Cantor’s departure, and has already been appointed as co-chair to the House Republican Israel Caucus. With his singular status on the GOP side and his resolute support for Israel, Rep. Zeldin is one to watch.

The Arab-Israeli conflict will undoubtedly continue to preoccupy Committee members. The political grandstanding and lack of legislative action that typified the 113th Congress might, however, give way to punitive action against the Palestinian Authority. GOP leaders are even less concerned with the positions of the Obama Administration than they were over the past two years, in which another round of negotiations failed (for which Congress blames the Palestinians) and renewed confrontations across the Palestinian territories further distracted congressional attention from the continued settlement expansion and the cost of the occupation on Palestinian lives.

Since the opening sessions of the 114th Congress, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas applied to join multiple international treaties, including the Rome Statute, which established International Criminal Court. The congressional response has been the introduction of several bills threatening to cut funding to the Palestinian Authority if legal proceedings against Israel are initiated in any international body. At least two bills have already been introduced to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem thereby recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, a move which has serious implications for U.S. foreign policy and commitments to the Palestinians.

Beyond Palestinian Authority initiatives at the start of 2015, several factors suggest that the House is likely to seriously consider cuts to the PA: the lack of opposition from Israeli actors who typically advocated for the status quo (i.e. not cutting aid to the Palestinians because of the potential ramifications of PA collapsing on Israel’s security); and, the unknown future of peace negotiations. It is also worth noting that Israel-related legislation is becoming an increasingly partisan issue, with Republicans seemingly adopting a stronger pro-Israel position as part of its party platform over the past decade. In the 114th Congress we can expect the same partisan trend to hold true, with Democratic and Republican Senate leadership –reluctantly putting necessary restraints on legislation that appears to be pro-Israel but has serious implications for the peace process and U.S. involvement in the region.

The Iranian negotiations have become the primary litmus test for the fidelity of House members to the U.S.-Israel special relationship. From the time the Obama Administration announced the P5 + 1 negotiations with Iran in April 2012, congressional disapproval of these talks served as an indication of blind loyalty to Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has reiterated this message to Congress on numerous occasions. There will undoubtedly be attempts to implement new sanctions against Iran in an effort to derail the talks.

Other major issues facing the committee will be U.S. foreign policy in Syria and confronting ISIL. Current Chairman Royce and current Ranking Member Engel share many of the same viewpoints on strategy and policy. Both members support the Obama Administration’s campaign to launch airstrikes against ISIL; however they have both expressed reservations about effectiveness of this tactic in eradicating the threat posed by ISIL. Both assert that in this year’s Congress the committee will consider a new Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF). Their statements to the press and on the floor indicate that at some point the Executive Branch will not be able to continue handling the Syrian conflict alone, and that the President will have to bring Congress into the fold. These views are echoed by several of their colleagues. Chairman Royce and Ranking Member are calling for greater congressional oversight over the President’s actions in Syria.

Ranking Member Engel has maintained a vested interest in discussing Syria’s political climate for several years. As early as 2003, Rep. Engel has drafted legislation related to Syria such as the 2013 Free Syria Act, which would authorize the President to provide lethal assistance to vetted members of the moderate Syrian opposition. Rep. Engel not only supports this initiative, but believes that arming moderate Syrian opposition members could be an effective means to confront the Syrian regime. On multiple occasions, Rep. Engel has expressed his strongly held belief that there is no place for Assad in Syria’s future. Although Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel support American leadership on issues related to Syria and ISIL, both have consistently stated that Arab governments can and should play a leading role.

Aside from the political and military dimensions of U.S. policy towards the Syrian Crisis, both Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel have addressed the worsening humanitarian situation. In April 2014, the committee’s leadership unsuccessfully attempted to pass HRES 520, a resolution that calls on international donors and aid agencies to implement humanitarian relief and longer-term development programs to address the protracted Syrian crisis, and urges the President to submit a strategy to Congress for U.S. engagement, with a specific focus on humanitarian assistance and protecting human rights. Other than articulating repeated requests for increased humanitarian assistance to Syria, Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel have held committee hearings on the human rights violations perpetrated by the Assad regime. As the death toll in Syria continues to climb, the committee leadership can be expected to continue to call on the Obama Administration, international organizations, and allied governments to increase the amount of humanitarian assistance provided to Syria and neighboring nations such as Lebanon and Jordan, who are bearing the brunt of Syria’s humanitarian crisis.

<i>House Judiciary Committee</i>		
Oversees federal courts, administrative agencies, and Federal law enforcement entities		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R VA-6)	Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R VA-6)
Ranking Member	Rep John Conyers Jr. (D MI-13)	Rep John Conyers Jr. (D MI-13)
Outgoing Committee Members	GOP: Rep. Howard Coble (R NC-6), Rep. Spencer Bachus (R AL-6) Dem: Rep. Joe Garcia (D FL-26)	
Incoming Committee Members	GOP: Rep. Mike Bishop (R MI-8), Rep. Ken Buck (R CO-4), Rep. John Ratcliffe (R TX-4), Rep. Dave Trott (R MI-11), Rep. Mimi Walters (R CA-45) Dem: Rep. Scott Peters (D CA-52)	

<i>Judiciary Subcommittees</i>		
Subcommittee	Chair	Ranking Member
Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations Subcommittee	Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI)	Rep. Robert Scott (D-VA)

Under the leadership of Republican Chairman Bob Goodlatte and Democratic Ranking Member John Conyers Jr., the House Judiciary Committee tackled several important issues in the 113th Congress. Leadership positions within the committee will remain unchanged, as will assignments, both Chair and Ranking Member, as well as the Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations subcommittee and the Immigration and Border Security Subcommittee. As a result, Republican Chairman Goodlatte and Democratic Ranking Member Conyers Jr. will continue to assert a similar leadership style in the 114th Congress that allowed for them to tackle several important issues during the 113th.

Now with the Senate under Republican control, Chairman Goodlatte might be able to seriously curtail what he perceives as Executive overreach. As Chairman, Rep. Goodlatte has made it a priority to rollback on what he perceives to be the President's disregard for the Constitution. He lambasted President Obama for his decision to use his executive authority on immigration. He argues that the President's policy provides amnesty to individuals who unlawfully immigrated to the U.S., and points to reinforcing border security and enforcing existing immigration laws as effective solutions to addressing flaws of the current system.

Chairman Goodlatte has advanced several positive, and somewhat progressive, discussions and initiatives related to civil liberties. Unlike their colleagues in the Senate Judiciary Committee, Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers have worked together to roll back the broad surveillance powers that Section 215 of the USA Patriot Act grants the NSA. Both Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers have consistently voiced their view that the bulk collection of data infringes on the civil liberties that each American citizen is entitled to. With Section 215 of the Patriot Act requiring reauthorization this year, we hope to see the bipartisan support for surveillance reform hold true.

Alongside Ranking Member Conyers, Chairman Goodlatte was a major supporter of the USA Freedom Act (HR 3361) that was drafted to limit the effects of the Patriot Act - it passed the House with bipartisan support in May 2014. Both members felt that the passage of the USA Freedom Act in the House was a significant step in safeguarding the civil liberties of American citizens and rebuilding trust between intelligence gathering agencies and the American people. The USA Freedom Act is

Ranking Member Conyers was also very active on civil liberties matters. Not only did Ranking Member Conyers vote in favor of the USA Freedom Act, he also called on the Department of Justice (DOJ) to further revise the 2003 Racial Profiling Guidance, which was then released in December 2014. While applauding the DOJ for their efforts, Conyers expressed his views that the new guidance failed to adequately address the fundamental issues around profiling complaints from minority communities.

In addition to his consistent support of civil liberties, Rep. Conyers has also been an ardent opponent of profiling. During the 113th Congress, Rep. Conyers introduced HR 2851, the End Racial Profiling Act (ERPA) of 2013, a bill that would prohibit profiling by federal, state, local and Indian tribal law enforcement authorities on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity or national origin and authorizes the DOJ to offer grants for the development of best practices to discourage racial profiling and withholding grants from law enforcement agencies that do not comply with ERPA. Originally introduced to Congress in 2001 by former Sen. Russell Feingold (D-WI) and Rep. Conyers, the ERPA has been introduced five different times and has gained bipartisan support over the course of its existence. Although the bill died in the 113th Congress, we can expect to see the ERPA reintroduced in the new Congress, especially in light of the growing tension between law enforcement officials and minority communities. Lastly, Ranking Member Conyers supported the release of the Senate Select Committee findings on the CIA's "enhanced interrogation" techniques – commonly referred to as the "Torture Report" – and has pressed for further investigation and accountability.

At the DOJ, Attorney General Eric Holder announced his resignation earlier this year but will remain in his position until his successor is approved by Congress. President Obama has appointed Loretta Lynch, the Attorney General for the Eastern District of New York, to succeed Eric Holder as Attorney General but the new Congress has yet to confirm her appointment.

<i>House Ways &amp; Means Committee</i>		
Oversees all taxation, tariffs, and revenue-raising measures		
Position	113th Congress <i>Outgoing</i>	114th Congress <i>Incoming</i>
Chair	Rep. Dave Camp (R MI-4)	Rep. Paul Ryan (R WI-1)
Ranking Member	Rep. Sander Levin (D MI-9)	Rep. Sander Levin (D MI-9)
Outgoing Committee Members	GOP: Rep. Dave Camp (R MI-4), Rep. Jim Gerlach (D PA-6), Rep. Tim Griffin (R AR-2) Dem: Rep. Allyson Schwartz (D PA-13)	

Incoming Committee Members	<p>GOP: Rep. Patrick Meehan (R PA-7), Rep. Kristi Noem (R SD At-large), Rep. George Holding (R NC-13), Rep. Jason Smith (R MO-8)</p> <p>Dem: None</p>
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<i>House Ways &amp; Means Subcommittees</i>		
Subcommittee	Chair	Ranking Member
Trade Subcommittee	Rep. Pat Tiberi (R-OH)	Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY)

The House Ways and Means Committee will be impacted by a leadership change this year. House Republican committee term limits forced Rep. Dave Camp of Michigan to retire from his position as Chairman. Replacing Rep. Camp as Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee is Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin. Rep. Ryan is a former vice-presidential running mate of former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney. Unlike other members of the Republican Party, Rep. Ryan is respected by both tea party activists and mainstream Republicans. His new Chairmanship of the Ways and Means Committee will give Rep. Ryan greater power through the funding of U.S. government initiatives. The Ways and Means Committee is a historically powerful committee because issues such as the tax code, trade agreements, Social Security, Medicare, welfare programs, unemployment compensation and health care fall within its jurisdiction. Now that Rep. Ryan is Chairman of the committee, it is believed that he will not run for President in the 2016 presidential election.

Under Rep. Ryan’s supervision, the Committee is expected to tackle several looming economic issues including restructuring the nation’s tax code, defining what role the committee would play if House GOP members rewrote President Obama’s health law, and resolving a potential financial crisis stemming from Social Security’s disability program. Recently, Chairman Ryan announced that the first issue he will tackle is the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA). Under the TPA, commonly referred to as the fast track authority, Chairman Ryan is hoping to provide Congress the ability to establish negotiation goals for trade agreements as well as the ability to conduct an up or down vote on any international trade deals that reach Capitol Hill. Ultimately the TPA assures that Congress will be able to hold the Obama Administration accountable on trade agreements.

