

# CHUCK GRASSLEY (R-IA)

**IN OFFICE**

Up for re-election in 2016

**6th Term**


Re-elected in 2010

**SENIORITY RANK**


4

Out of 100


**CONTACT**

 **Email** [Contact Form](http://www.grassley.senate.gov/contact)  
<http://www.grassley.senate.gov/contact>

 **Web** [www.grassley.senate.gov](http://www.grassley.senate.gov)  
<http://www.grassley.senate.gov>

 **Twitter** [@chuckgrassley](https://www.twitter.com/chuckgrassley)  
<https://www.twitter.com/chuckgrassley>

 **Facebook** [View on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/grassley)  
<https://www.facebook.com/grassley>

 **DC Office** 135 Hart Senate Office Building

## BGOV BIOGRAPHY

By Brian Nutting and Greg Giroux, Bloomberg News

Charles Grassley, widely known as "Chuck," is one of the most durable and popular politicians in Iowa history. He was first elected to political office in 1958 and to Congress in 1974. If he serves out his current term, Grassley will have served longer in the Senate than any Iowan.

In the 114th Congress, Grassley, although he is not a lawyer, became chairman of the Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction over federal courts and judges, immigration and patent and copyright law.

He had been the ranking Republican on the panel in the two previous Congresses. During that period, Grassley and Chairman Patrick Leahy of Vermont tussled over the pace of action in dealing with judicial appointments, with Grassley saying that Democrats' complaints about "the so-called obstruction of nominees is a figment of the Democrats' imagination."

His interests include antitrust enforcement, changing tort laws, patent law updates and legal immigration. He has long been an advocate of permitting cameras in federal courtrooms. He and Illinois Democrat Dick Durbin in the 112th and 113th Congress joined to propose legislation requiring the Supreme Court sessions to be televised. He and Durbin also authored a proposal to require the Judicial Conference to draft guidelines to permit cameras in other federal courts.

Grassley was chairman of the Senate Finance Committee in the first half of 2001 and again from 2003 to 2007. He had a good working relationship with Max Baucus, who was chairman of the committee when Grassley wasn't, until the Montana Democrat's February 2014 resignation from the Senate. Together they worked to pass a 2001 tax-cut bill promoted by then-President George W. Bush and a 2003 Medicare prescription-drug plan. Grassley and Baucus didn't see eye-to-eye on the 2010 health-care law, however.

One of Grassley's long-standing interests has been government agency accountability and transparency. Over the years, he's taken on the FBI, Food and Drug Administration, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Agriculture

## Bloomberg GOVERNMENT

Department, Treasury Department and others. His complaints have ranged from the FBI's management of a computer modernization system, to the USDA's payment of farm subsidies to dead people, to Treasury's oversight of the federal bailout of General Motors Co. and the FDA's handling of drug approvals.

Hand-in-hand with his demand for government accountability is his defense of whistleblowers who bring agency misdeeds and foolishness to light. In the mid-1980s, Grassley's Judiciary subcommittee publicized the Air Force's purchase of a coffeemaker for \$7,600. He was the author of the 1989 Whistleblower Protection Act. His official website has a link where whistleblowers can contact him to report wrongdoing. In the 113th Congress, he introduced a bill to provide protections for private-sector whistleblowers.

He also was a driving force behind the 1986 legislation to update the False Claims Act, which authorizes monetary rewards to citizens who file and win lawsuits alleging fraudulent government payments to contractors. He says more than \$30 billion has been recovered on behalf of the taxpayer. "Plenty of crooked figures have found a way to pluck Uncle Sam's goose," Grassley said in 2014.

Grassley also serves on the Agriculture Committee, and on both that panel and Finance, Grassley has supported the use of ethanol as fuel for vehicles. "Ethanol is a renewable, sustainable, clean-burning fuel that helps run the nation's transportation fleet with less pollution," he says. A major component of ethanol is corn, and Iowa is the nation's leading corn producer.

Grassley is regarded as much more of a work horse than a show horse. In 2009, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell took to the Senate floor to praise Grassley, quoting the Des Moines Register as saying that Grassley was a man for whom the word "dogged" was invented.

To that end, Grassley is proud of his record of perseverance in making a point of not missing a roll-call vote on the floor. As the 114th Congress began, he hadn't missed a roll call since 1993.

Grassley has embraced, if not completely mastered, new technologies. He's well-known on Capitol Hill for expressing his candid thoughts on Twitter, ranging from his criticisms of President Barack Obama's health-care law to the scores of Iowa high school basketball games. He was an early mobile phone enthusiast -- he keeps one under his baseball hat while driving a tractor on his farm. He was embarrassed, however, in 2012, when his phone rang in his pocket while he was speaking on the Senate floor and he had difficulty silencing it.

Although his son and grandson run the day-to-day operations of the family farm of more than 700 acres, Grassley takes an active role whenever he can. According to the Des Moines Register, "If we've heard it once, we've heard it a thousand times from Grassley: 'I'm just a hog farmer from Butler County.'"

### Early Years

He grew up on the family farm in north central Iowa. As he told middle-school students during a 2012 visit, he loved politics when he was their age and recalls that his parents often talked politics at home.

After getting bachelor's and master's degrees in political science, he entered a Ph.D. program in political science at the University of Iowa. He aspired to be a teacher, and taught school part time while working as a sheet metal worker and then on a factory assembly line in Cedar Falls. He was a member of the Machinists union.

In 1956, at age 22, he decided to run for office, entering the race for the Iowa House. In the three-way Republican primary, he lost to the incumbent by 81 votes. Grassley tried again in 1958 and was successful. He served in the Iowa House for 16 years, earning a living by working on the assembly line and on the family farm. A measure of how long Grassley has been in public life is that his grandson, Pat, was elected to the Iowa House in 2006, representing much the same constituency.

Grassley won a U.S. House seat in 1974, even when his fellow Republicans fared poorly less than three months after President Richard Nixon's resignation in the Watergate scandal. Grassley was able to prevail by less than 2 percentage points.

In 1980, sharing a ticket with Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan helped Grassley unseat Democratic Senator John Culver, 54 percent to 46 percent, in a year in which Republicans won control of the Senate. Grassley's re-election contests since have been routine.

He won 64 percent of the vote in 2010 against wealthy Democratic lawyer and former federal prosecutor Roxanne Conlin.  
Updated Aug. 27, 2014

Updated Jan. 21, 2015

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## BIO FROM REPRESENTATIVE'S WEBSITE

From the Senator's Website

Senator Grassley has earned a reputation in Iowa for keeping in touch with the people he represents and in Washington for standing up for common sense and holding government accountable.

Chuck Grassley does his job with a work ethic that can be traced to the Butler County farm where he grew up and still lives today, and to his days as a young father of five who worked three jobs.

Today, Senator Grassley holds the record for the longest record of not missing a vote of any senator in office, showing respect for the public trust he holds. Senator Grassley also has conducted at least one meeting in each of Iowa's 99 counties every year that he's served in the United States Senate, to encourage participation in the process of representative government. Grassley stays connected by responding to every phone call, letter and email from Iowans, and by communicating with Iowans extensively online via Facebook, Twitter and his own website, as well.

In Washington, Senator Grassley has been a leader in shaping legislation to improve the quality of life for Americans and to expand the economic opportunities for individuals, families and communities.

Grassley serves as Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, where he works for a competitive marketplace with antitrust enforcement and tort reform, to reward innovation and invention with an updated patent system, and for legal immigration that will help America's economy grow. Grassley has led a campaign to open up the federal judiciary by allowing cameras in courtrooms, and he is unmatched in his legislative and oversight work to protect whistleblowers, both in and out of government, who speak up about wrongdoing for the public good. Grassley is an advocate for victims of crime and a leader in the fight to keep illegal drugs out of the hands of young people. He leads efforts to safeguard America's freedom with effective anti-terrorism and domestic security policies.

Previously, as Chairman of the Committee on Finance, Senator Grassley led through Congress \$2 trillion in tax cuts, leaving more money in workers' pockets, making the tax code more progressive, and spurring economic growth and activity. Grassley is an outspoken advocate for free trade agreements that expand opportunities for job-creating U.S. exports in manufacturing and agriculture. He's a leader in the development of wind, solar, biodiesel, biomass and ethanol as domestic, renewable energy sources to help fuel America's future. Senator Grassley authored the Senate bill that created the Medicare prescription drug benefit, bringing the program up-to-date with the practice of medicine and better enabling treatment outside of expensive hospital stays. He's a leading advocate to improve the foster care system and help more kids find permanent, loving homes through adoption.

Grassley also serves as a senior member of the Senate Committee on the Budget, where he applies his personal frugality to the public purse, and on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, where he brings real-life experience as a family farmer to farm policy.

Along with legislation, Senator Grassley commits tremendous time and energy to congressional oversight. He works to shed light on the federal bureaucracy. He champions transparency when it comes to the people's business. Whistleblower laws authored by Senator Grassley are the federal government's no. 1 anti-fraud tool. Thanks to Grassley's ongoing legislative victories to protect whistleblowers, taxpayers have gotten back more than \$28 billion that would otherwise have been lost to fraud. Grassley's congressional oversight holds accountable those who do business on the taxpayers' tab.

He's leading efforts to make sure the Securities and Exchange Commission protects investors and America's financial system. He weeds out fraudulent schemes that bilk billions of dollars from the Medicare program and rides herd on Medicare and Medicaid officials to ensure quality care in nursing homes and program accountability for both taxpayers and beneficiaries. He exposes federal farm payments made to deceased farmers and exorbitant payment mismanagement and oversight at the Pentagon.

Grassley also led efforts to oversee the unprecedented taxpayer-backed bailouts. It was Chuck Grassley who figured out that the now infamous claim by the Treasury Department and GM that a multi-billion dollar taxpayer loan that had been paid back in full and ahead of schedule was nothing more than a shell game being played with taxpayer dollars. Grassley's pursuit of accountability has crisscrossed virtually every federal agency. When a federal law enforcement agent on the Southwest border was killed on the job, Chuck Grassley demanded information and accountability from the Bureau of Tobacco, Alcohol, Firearms and Explosives about its high-risk program, which allowed guns into the hands of the illegal aliens shooting at our agents. Grassley has called attention to the FDA's approval of potentially unsafe foreign-made medical devices and refereed turf wars between federal agencies that compromise U.S. border security. He's examined abusive practices by tax-advantaged non-profits and shut down offshore tax shelters exploited by corporate elites.

Chuck Grassley's time-tested blend of pragmatism and integrity gives him a license simply to tell it like it is. He brings a refreshing, no-nonsense style that displaces Washington nonsense with Midwestern substance. Chuck Grassley served in the Iowa legislature and the U.S. House of Representatives before winning election to the Senate for the first time in 1980. Grassley's creed of ethics and accountability gives Iowans strong and effective leadership.

## PERSONAL PROFILE

### COMMITTEES

[Senate Committee on Finance](#)

[Senate Committee on the Judiciary](#)  
Chairman

[Senate Committee on Budget](#)

[Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry](#)

[Joint Committee on Taxation](#)

### CAUCUSES

[Whistleblower Protection Caucus](#)

[Senate Caucus on Foster Youth](#)

[Congressional Trademark Caucus](#)

Birthdate 09/17/1933

Birthplace New Hartford, IA

Political Party Republican Party

Marital Status Married

Spouse Barbara Speicher

Residence Cedar Falls, IA

Family 5 children

Religion Baptist

### PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

#### Education

University of Northern Iowa

Master's Degree 1956

University of Northern Iowa

Bachelor's Degree 1955

1959 - 1974 State Representative,  
(IA)House of Representatives 01-03-1975 -  
01-03-1981 Representative:Iowa,  
(US)House of Representatives 01-03-1981 -  
Present Senator:Iowa, (US)Senate