

JOHN SARBANES (D-MD-03)**IN OFFICE**

Up for re-election in 2016

5th Term

Re-elected in 2014

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By Brian Nutting, Bloomberg News

John Sarbanes is a low-key, policy-minded lawmaker, much in the mold of his father, Paul Sarbanes, who served in Congress for 36 years.

Just like his dad, Sarbanes casts a dependable Democratic vote, and espouses a vigorous role for the federal government in providing a social safety net, modern transportation infrastructure, education, job training and defense of the rights of all minorities.

Sarbanes has a seat on the Energy and Commerce Committee, where on the Health Subcommittee, he can weigh in on health-care issues that occupied much of his time in his previous career as an attorney in private practice.

He would have preferred a "public option" government-run health insurance scheme, however he has been a backer of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 that emerged when a public option became politically un-doable.

He's an advocate of improving preventive health by expanding the role and supply of primary-care doctors. He pushed to provide funds for school-based health clinics and community health centers and wrote the provision creating a commission to identify health-care workforce shortages.

Another Sarbanes priority is public education. He's got an education background as well, working part-time for seven years with the Maryland schools superintendent on behalf of Baltimore City public schools.

He got a seat on the Education Committee in his first term in the House and every two years he's introduced a "No Child Left Inside" bill that would establish an environmental education grant program for schools. The House passed his bill in 2008; since then he's had no success.

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A supporter of federal loans for college education, Sarbanes authored a law to forgive graduates' student-loan debt after 10 years of work in public service or the nonprofit sector.

Sarbanes commutes to work every day from his home in Baltimore, and has first-hand knowledge of the time that can be eaten up in a daily commute. In 2010 he was the principal sponsor of a bill, signed into law, to increase teleworking opportunities for federal workers.

He's able to point to a "good government" component in that and other priorities, such as his "government by the people" bill to give individuals more influence in the election process. His bill would provide a tax credit for individual campaign contributions and 6-to-1 matching funds for small donations of \$150 or less. It also would prohibit large contributions by political action committees to any candidate who participates in the matching-fund program.

Sarbanes is the co-chairman of the Public Service Caucus and, before coming to Congress, he was a board member of Baltimore's Public Justice Center, which works on behalf of low-income people in their dealings with the justice system and other public agencies.

He supports abortion rights, same-sex marriage, gun control and aggressive environmental protections -- focusing, as expected on the Chesapeake Bay.

His ratings from interest groups range from 6 percent from the Club for Growth and 2 percent from the American Conservative Union to 95 percent-plus from the AFL-CIO and the Americans for Democratic Action.

Early Years

Born and raised in Baltimore, Sarbanes grew up in a political household; he was 4 years old when his father was first elected to the state legislature and 8 when his dad was elected to Congress. His mother taught Latin, French and Greek at the same private high school in northern Baltimore that he attended.

Sarbanes graduated from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton, his father's alma mater. After a year in Greece on a Fulbright Scholarship, he got a law degree from Harvard, where he was co-chairman of the Law School Democrats.

He clerked for Judge J. Frederick Motz of the federal district court in Baltimore and practiced law at Venable LLP for 18 years, six of them as chairman of the firm's health-care practice.

During that same period, he was special assistant to the state superintendent of schools. As the liaison to Baltimore city public schools, one of his projects was to try to entice principals in neighboring districts to give the Baltimore City schools a try.

In 2006, when Democrat Ben Cardin gave up his 3rd District House seat in order to wage a bid to replace the retiring Paul Sarbanes in the Senate, the younger Sarbanes ran for the House. He won an eight-candidate Democratic primary with 32 percent, taking advantage of his name recognition in the district, which his father had represented in the House in the 1970s and then in the Senate for the next 30 years.

He easily won the general election by 30 percentage points, punching a ticket to Capitol Hill just as his father was leaving after 36 years.

Since then, his solidly Democratic district has re-elected him with little drama, giving him victory margins of at least 19 points.

He first got a seat on the Energy and Commerce Committee in 2009.

Big Democratic losses in the 2010 elections forced Democrats to reduce their committee roster and Sarbanes was among the low-seniority members forced to leave the committee. Barely more than a year later, however, in March 2012, Sarbanes rejoined the panel when Democrats had to fill a vacancy.

Updated Feb. 19, 2012

BIO FROM REPRESENTATIVE'S WEBSITE

From the Representative's Website

Congressman John Sarbanes has represented Maryland's Third Congressional District ^ which spans portions of Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Howard County ^ in the U.S. Congress since 2007. He currently serves on the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, in addition to its the Subcommittee on Health and its Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing and Trade.

Born and raised in Baltimore, Congressman Sarbanes has experience working in the private, public and nonprofit sectors. He and his family live in Towson, giving him the opportunity to drive home every night and hear from people he serves in Congress. Listening to their concerns allows him to better represent Maryland and has shaped his work in the House of Representatives.

Congressman Sarbanes is committed to reducing the influence of the wealthy and well-connected in politics. To this end, he has authored the Government By the People Act, which aims to empower everyday Americans by elevating their voices in Congress with a tax credit and matching fund.

As a Marylander, Congressman Sarbanes shares his state's strong tradition of environmentalism that is rooted in a passion for the Chesapeake Bay. He has led efforts in Congress to clean up the Chesapeake Bay with a particular focus on empowering residents of the Bay watershed to become citizen stewards of the Bay and give them an active role in restoring it. He has also worked to expand environmental education opportunities for children, authoring the No Child Left Inside Act to promote healthier children and communities.

Congressman Sarbanes has fought to expand higher education opportunities through financial assistance programs like the Pell Grant and has authored laws to help students repay their college loans after they graduate. In this effort, Congressman Sarbanes wrote a law to create the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Option, which provides graduates with forgiveness of remaining student loan debt after 10 years of work in public service or the non-profit sector. The new law helps teachers, nurses, first responders and other public servants pay for college. It allows more people to follow their dreams in careers that are important and rewarding, but not always particularly lucrative.

As part of the development and implementation of health care policy, Congressman Sarbanes has focused on ensuring there are enough doctors and nurses to provide quality care for all Americans. He has helped create new laws that address health care workforce shortages, especially in primary care, and has strengthened programs for physician scholarships, loan forgiveness and residency training.

Before coming to Congress, Congressman Sarbanes served for seven years with the Maryland State Superintendent as liaison to the Baltimore City Public Schools, working to make Maryland's public school system one of the best in the nation. Prior to his work for Baltimore City Public Schools, Congressman Sarbanes practiced law for eighteen years at Venable LLP. There, he led the firm's health care practice for six years, representing nonprofit hospitals and senior living providers in their mission to deliver high-quality health care to the people of Maryland. At Venable, Congressman Sarbanes also worked with public interest organizations in Maryland, like the Public Justice Center, where he championed efforts to protect consumers, provide decent public housing and ensure fair treatment in the workplace.

Congressman Sarbanes graduated from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and studied law and politics in Greece on a Fulbright Scholarship. After graduating from Harvard Law School, he returned to Baltimore, where he clerked for Judge J. Frederick Motz on the federal district court and the following year began his law practice at Venable.

Since childhood, Congressman Sarbanes has attended the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation in Baltimore and he has also been active with his wife and children in the Bolton Street Synagogue. For more than twenty years, he has served as a board member of the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies, which seeks to promote understanding and dialogue among people of different religious faiths.

PERSONAL PROFILE

COMMITTEES

[House Committee on Energy and Commerce](#)

CAUCUSES

Birthdate 05/22/1962

Birthplace Baltimore, MD

Political Party Democratic Party

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Education

Princeton University

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House Democratic Caucus

House Oceans Caucus

Congressional Dyslexia Caucus

Marital Status Married

Spouse Dina

Family 3 children

Religion Greek Orthodox

Bachelor's Degree 1984

Harvard Law School

JD 1988

Partner, Venable Llp Special Assistant,
State of Maryland 1988 - 1989 Law Clerk,
(US)Dist Court:MD 01-03-2007 - Present
Representative:Maryland, (US)House of
Representatives