

DARRELL ISSA (R-CA-49)


**IN OFFICE**

Up for re-election in 2016


8th Term


Re-elected in 2014


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BGOV BIOGRAPHY

By Brian Nutting and Heidi Przybyla, Bloomberg News

Darrell Issa used his post as the top Republican on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee for the first six years of Barack Obama's presidency to become one of the biggest thorns in the side of his administration.

Issa's panel convened hearings to air grievances about administration actions and waged a war of words with congressional Democrats.

In the 114th Congress, Republican Party term limits forced Issa to step down as chairman, a post he had held for four years. He left Oversight and took the chairmanship of a Judiciary subcommittee with jurisdiction over the courts, intellectual property and the Internet. He also returned to the Foreign Affairs Committee, on which he had served for two terms earlier in his tenure.

On Judiciary, Issa criticized a 2015 Federal Communications Commission ruling on net neutrality, warning that it would "result in overregulation and years of fruitless litigation." He said that the regulations for Internet access were "attempting to fix something that is far from broken." He also favors reducing the patent term of auto parts needed for collision repair.

Oversight Record

As chairman of the oversight panel after the Republicans took control of the House in 2011, Issa probed a range of what he views as federal government misdeeds.

In 2012, Issa said the Obama administration was "the most corrupt government in history" -- a variation of a phrase he had often used.

That committee has wide authority, including subpoena power, and it has held hundreds of oversight hearings. The topics

Bloomberg GOVERNMENT

included implementation of the 2010 health-care law; allegations that the Internal Revenue Service targeted conservative organizations seeking tax-exempt status for special scrutiny; the terrorist attack on a U.S. diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya, and its aftermath; and the failed Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives sting operation that wound up supplying guns to Mexican drug dealers.

As the new chairman in the 112th Congress, Issa, who beat out more senior colleagues for the job, revamped the panel's structure, increasing the number of subcommittees to seven from five, including two subcommittees to scrutinize policies defining Obama's first two years in office -- the \$814 billion economic-stimulus plan and the bailouts of banks and automakers. For the 113th Congress, he reorganized the panel's subcommittee structure once again, with just five subcommittees, but with undiminished zeal "to hold those responsible for mismanagement accountable."

Issa has never been one to avoid confrontation, dating back to his days as a businessman and behind-the-scenes force in Republican Party politics. He bankrolled the 2003 California recall effort that unseated Democratic Governor Gray Davis and installed Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger in the governor's mansion. Before that he was a leader in the 1996 ballot initiative campaign to overturn racial and gender preferences in California government.

Issa also criticized President George W. Bush's 2008 financial industry bailout proposal. Issa twice voted no on the measure, and then proposed the creation of a commission to uncover the root causes of the crisis.

Issa's voting record is in line with the Republican Party position on most issues, both economic and social. He opposes abortion, gun control, same-sex marriage and legislation to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. He had posted a lifetime rating of 91 percent from the American Conservative Union through 2012 and scores of 10 percent or less from the AFL-CIO and League of Conservation Voters.

On the Judiciary Committee he has promoted legislation to provide green cards to foreign graduates of American universities in the so-called STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

In 2013, he signaled support for a broader immigration effort, telling RealClearPolitics, a political news website, "If somebody's going to spend the rest of their life in this country, I believe that we need to have a clear pathway to citizenship, and we shouldn't hide that."

Issa says, however, that border security must be improved and employers should use the E-verify system to determine prospective workers' status.

Issa, of Lebanese descent, has been outspoken in condemning terrorism sponsorship by Arab nations while urging the U.S. to reach out to friendly Arab nations. He has drawn the ire of some supporters of Israel. Yet in 2013, Issa issued a statement supporting an Israeli airstrike against Syria aimed at keeping weapons out of the hands of Hezbollah.

Early Years

Issa grew up in a working-class family in Cleveland. His grandparents were immigrants from Lebanon.

As a young man, Issa had a brush with the law when he and his brother were arrested in 1972 on charges of stealing a red Maserati from a Cleveland dealership. The charges were later dropped, with the brothers saying they were arrested because they were near the car and because Issa's brother, Bill, had a bad reputation with the police, according to a 1998 article in the Los Angeles Times.

Issa and his wife built a struggling Cleveland electronics business into a multimillion-dollar enterprise. They moved the business to the San Diego area, and the firm, Directed Electronics, became the nation's largest manufacturer of vehicle anti-theft devices, including the highly successful Viper system. He sold the company in 2000 and is one of the wealthiest members of Congress.

He first sought elective office in 1998, waging an unsuccessful bid for the Republican Senate nomination in which he outspent state treasurer Matt Fong by 3 to 1. Two years later, when Republican Ron Packard decided not to run for re-election to the House, Issa won a nine-way Republican primary and eased to victory in the reliably Republican district.

In the 2003 gubernatorial recall effort, Issa had harbored hopes of becoming Davis's replacement; he eventually stepped aside when Schwarzenegger emerged as a candidate.

Issa has generally had an easy time winning re-election; his closest contest came in 2012, when his victory margin was 16 percentage points.

BIO FROM REPRESENTATIVE'S WEBSITE

From the Representative's Website

Congressman Darrell Issa represents the people of California's 49th Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives, a seat he has held since 2001. The 49th District includes Camp Pendleton, the largest Marine Corps training facility in the United States, and the northern portions of San Diego County and southern Orange County. Congressman Issa and his wife Kathy live in Vista, CA. They have one son, William, and celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary in 2010.

As a senior in high school, Issa enlisted in the United States Army. Through his Army service, he received an ROTC scholarship and graduated with a degree in business from Sienna Heights University in Adrian, Michigan. Upon graduation, Issa was commissioned as an Army officer, and ultimately obtained the rank of captain. He completed his active-duty military service in 1980 and turned his interests to the private sector.

At the height of his career in business, Issa served as CEO of California-based Directed Electronics, a company that Issa founded and built in the mid-1990s to become the nation's largest manufacturer of vehicle anti-theft devices, including the highly-successful Viper system. In 1994, Issa was named Entrepreneur of the Year by Inc. Magazine, Ernst & Young and The San Diego Union Tribune. During his leadership of Directed Electronics, Issa served as chairman of the Consumer Electronics Association, an organization of 2000 companies within the consumer technology industry that hosts the annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. When he stepped down as CEO to serve as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Directed Electronics employed nearly 200 people.

As a Congressman and leader in California grassroots politics, Issa has championed the cause of smart, efficient government, and has pushed legislation to balance the federal budget and promote transparency across the federal bureaucracy. In 2003, Issa was the architect behind the successful popular uprising to recall former Democratic California Governor Gray Davis.

Issa currently is a member of the House Judiciary Committee and the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, where he serves as the Chairman. Previously, Issa served on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Energy & Commerce Committee, and the Small Business Committee. As the holder of 37 patents himself, Issa has been vigilant about protecting the intellectual property rights of artists and other entrepreneurs to help protect America's position at the forefront of innovation and creativity in the entertainment and technology industries. His successful efforts to fight human trafficking along the United States border has resulted in tougher laws, stiffer penalties, and more consistent enforcement. His watchful concern to guarantee that U.S. taxpayers receive the royalties they are owed from mineral interests on federal lands exposed fraud and mismanagement at the Mineral Management Service (MMS) in 2006.

In 2008, when Congress was asked to pass the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) in the wake of an historic financial crisis, Issa stood by his instincts as a businessman and opposed giving a blank-check bailout to Wall Street ^ he voted against all bailouts during the financial crisis. Refusing to give up and concede to those who favored a bailout-centered response to this and future financial failures, Issa put forward a proposal to create a bipartisan commission to uncover the root causes of the financial crisis. This idea was passed into law in early 2009 and the investigation commenced in January 2010. Issa expects the results will reveal government mistakes and protect U.S. taxpayers from future runaway government intervention in the financial and housing markets.

Recognizing his success as a Congressional watchdog of taxpayer dollars, at the beginning of the 111th Congress House Republicans tapped Issa to serve as the top Republican on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which is the main investigative committee of the United States House of Representatives charged with the protecting the interests of U.S. taxpayers and eliminating waste, fraud and abuse in the federal bureaucracy. In the first year of his leadership, the committee has undertaken numerous detailed investigations of the Countrywide Financial VIP Program that benefited government officials with special reduced-rate mortgage loans, the illegal use of taxpayer dollars by the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), the decades-old misplaced government agenda to manipulate the U.S. housing market through Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac that created the housing crisis, the politicization of science at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and a broad investigation into the financial crisis of 2008-2009.

As a fiscal conservative committed firmly to low taxes and free markets, Issa has opposed the rise of out-of-control government spending and fought tirelessly for the responsible, transparent use of taxpayer dollars. He's pushed to achieve more whistleblower protections for those who report waste, fraud and abuse in the federal bureaucracy. And he's offered

substantive reform initiatives to open up government so that Americans know what's happening in Washington and can become more democratically engaged in the day-to-day oversight of their government.

PERSONAL PROFILE

COMMITTEES

[House Committee on Foreign Affairs](#)

[House Committee on the Judiciary](#)

CAUCUSES

[Congressional Caucus on the European Union](#)

[Congressional Caucus on Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#)

[U.S.-Philippines Friendship Caucus](#)

Birthdate 11/01/1953

Birthplace Cleveland, OH

Political Party Republican Party

Marital Status Married

Spouse Kathy

Residence Vista, CA

Family 1 child

Religion Christian

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Education

Sienna Heights University

Bachelor's Degree

1970 - 1980 Captain, (US)Army 1982 - 12-2000 President/Ceo/Founder, Directed Electronics Inc 12-2000 - Present Founder, Directed Electronics Inc 01-03-2001 - Present Representative:California, (US)House of Representatives 11-18-2014 Chairman, (US)House of Representatives