

CHARLES SCHUMER (D-NY)

**IN OFFICE**

Up for re-election in 2016

LEADERSHIP POSITION

Senate Democratic Policy and Communications Center
Senate Democratic Conference Committee
Senate Democratic Policy Committee

3rd Term


Re-elected in 2010

SENIORITY RANK


21


Out of 100


CONTACT

 **Email** [Contact Form](http://www.schumer.senate.gov/contact/email-chuck)
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 **DC Office** 322 Hart Senate Office Building

BGOV BIOGRAPHY

By Brian Nutting and Julie Hirschfeld Davis

Charles Schumer has spent four decades in politics, beginning as a 24-year-old state assemblyman and rising to the third-ranking slot in his party's Senate leadership. There, the Brooklyn native serves as his party's message maven and one of its keenest political strategists.

He's a triple threat: taking a leading role on many policy issues, raising loads of campaign cash for fellow Democrats, and appearing frequently before microphones as chairman of the Senate Democratic Policy and Communications Committee.

Schumer is known for relentlessly promoting his ideas and hammering the party's line on key issues through press statements and news conferences. Former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole once wisecracked that the most dangerous place to be in Washington was between Schumer and a television camera. His spokesman role contains an element of self-promotion noteworthy even on Capitol Hill.

As chairman of the party's campaign arm, Schumer was the architect of Democrats' successful 2006 drive to win control of the Senate and expand its majority in 2008 to 60 seats.

Schumer, who has spent more than half of his life in Congress, is a staunch defender of Democratic views and has been one of President Barack Obama's most dependable backers. His ratings from interest groups tell the tale: Ninety percent-plus from abortion rights groups, the AFL-CIO, the National Education Association and League of Conservation Voters; 4 percent from the Club for Growth, 5 percent from the American Conservative Union and grades of "F" from the National Taxpayers Union and the National Rifle Association.

Schumer is sometimes called the "senator from Wall Street" because of his prodigious fundraising from and defense of his hometown industry; he was a major player in the \$700 billion bailout for banks considered too big to fail.

He has broken with Wall Street at times. He voted for the Dodd-Frank financial-regulations law and pressed the Securities and Exchange Commission to curb so-called high-frequency trading, the practice of using mathematical algorithms for

computerized transactions.

"When Wall Street comes in conflict with Main Street, I tend to side with Main Street," he said in 2009.

"When Wall Street comes in conflict with other entities -- large entities, overseas or elsewhere -- I try to help New York, at least when I think they're right."

In the 114th Congress, seniority placed him in line to be ranking member of the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs panel, yet he passed up the chance, saying that his leadership responsibilities were too time-consuming. He remained on the panel, however.

In addition, he's a member of the Finance Committee and a long-time Judiciary Committee member, dating back to his first term in the Senate and before then serving on the counterpart panel when he was a member of the House of Representatives.

During his House days, Schumer was the chief sponsor of the 1993 Brady Bill that required background checks before a person could buy a gun. A year later, he played a key role in a major anti-crime bill that authorized 100,000 new police officers and banned so-called assault weapons.

Late in 1998 he was on the House Judiciary panel when it approved four articles of impeachment against President Bill Clinton, which Schumer opposed in committee and on the House floor. The action came in a lame-duck session, and the Senate didn't get around to trying the articles of impeachment until 1999, when Schumer had been sworn in as a new member of the Senate. That gave him the chance to participate in that portion of the process and enabled him to cast more votes against Clinton's impeachment and conviction than any other member of Congress.

In the 113th Congress, he was chairman of the Senate Judiciary panel's Immigration, Refugees and Border Security Subcommittee, and beyond that, was one of the bipartisan "Gang of Eight" lawmakers who met privately to develop the basis of a comprehensive immigration legislation that the Senate passed in 2013.

Overshadowed among Schumer's assignments is his membership on the Rules and Administration Committee, where in the 114th Congress he's the ranking member. He had been chairman from 2009 through 2014. Compared with the House Rules Committee, the Senate panel is much less powerful, dealing with such matters as Senate office space, federal elections, and oversight of such operations as the Senate restaurant.

Schumer pays close attention to issues that concern middle-class voters, such as increasing the tax-deductibility threshold for college tuition. In his 2007 book "Positively American: Winning Back the Middle-Class Majority One Family at a Time," he argued that his party's only path to lasting dominance lay in appealing to such voters.

He created a fictional middle-class couple from Long Island, Joe and Eileen Bailey, earning about \$70,000 annually and raising two kids. "They were the reason I had entered public service," Schumer wrote in the book. For several years after the book was published he continued to use the Baileys to personalize his views. He said he'd been using the Baileys in vetting policy ideas and testing messages for 20 years, and joked that his aides accused him of having imaginary friends.

Early Years

Schumer and his two siblings grew up in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn. His father was an exterminator and his mother was a homemaker. Schumer went to the same high school that produced Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, former Minnesota Senator Norm Coleman and Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

He says he wasn't all that interested in politics until his undergraduate days at Harvard University, where he worked on Eugene McCarthy's 1968 presidential bid.

After getting a law degree at Harvard, Schumer eschewed any job offers to join a law practice and instead decided to run for the New York state Assembly. His mother, perhaps only partly in jest, urged her friends to vote against him so that he could pursue a law career.

It was 1974, at the height of the Watergate scandal, and Democrats did well nationwide. Schumer was just 23 when he was elected, and he became the youngest member of the Assembly since Theodore Roosevelt.

In 1980, after three terms in the Assembly, he ran for the House seat that was left open when Democratic lawmaker Elizabeth Holtzman ran for the Senate. He took 77 percent, and in all his House elections, he never got less than 70 percent.

In 1998, he aimed for the Senate, mounting a challenge to the formidable three-term Republican Alfonse D'Amato. In one of the most expensive races of the year, Schumer bested D'Amato by more than 10 percentage points.

Personal Note

For more than three decades, Schumer roomed in a Capitol Hill rowhouse with California Representative George Miller and Illinois Senator Dick Durbin. The three were known for their messiness -- Miller told the Washington Post in 2013, "It's

now been more than 7,000 days that Chuck hasn't made his bed." -- and they were the inspiration for a show called Alpha House.

Miller retired at the end of the 113th Congress and sold the house. Schumer then rented an apartment in a building where one of his daughters lives, the New York Times reported.

Updated Dec. 31, 2014

BIO FROM REPRESENTATIVE'S WEBSITE

From the Senator's Website

Over the past three decades in public service, U.S. Senator Charles 'Chuck' Ellis Schumer has built a reputation as a leader in finding common-sense solutions to national issues and as a tireless fighter for New York.

Chuck was born in Brooklyn, NY on November 23, 1950 to parents Selma, a homemaker active in the community, and Abe, who owned a small exterminating business. Chuck grew up the Sheepshead Bay neighborhood and with his siblings, Fran and Robert, attended PS 197 and Madison High School. Chuck has two daughters, Jessica and Alison, and he still resides in Brooklyn with his wife, Iris Weinshall.

After graduating from Harvard College and Harvard Law School in 1974, Chuck returned home and ran for the New York State Assembly, becoming, at 23, the youngest member of the State Legislature since Theodore Roosevelt. He soon made his mark with his trademark vigor and tireless advocacy. In 1980, at 29, Chuck ran for and won the seat in the 9th Congressional District.

Chuck represented the 9th CD in Brooklyn and Queens for eighteen years, where he established his reputation as a pioneer in the fight against crime and as a consumer advocate. Chuck authored the Omnibus Crime Bill, which put 100,000 new cops on the street. He was the leading sponsor of the Violence Against Women Act, to combat domestic violence and sexual assault, and the Brady Bill, which instituted mandatory background checks for handgun purchases. He co-wrote the Assault Weapons Ban, and sponsored the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which organized data on crimes of bigotry and allowed federal authorities to prosecute these crimes. He also sponsored legislation that required banks and credit card companies to provide greater disclosure to consumers.

In 1998, Chuck was elected to the U.S. Senate; he became New York's senior senator when Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan retired in 2000. Chuck kicked off his first Senate term by announcing he would visit each of New York's 62 counties every year, a tradition he continues today. Doing so has enabled Chuck to keep in touch with voters from every corner of the state.

Throughout his time in the Senate, Chuck has made improving New York's economy his top priority, bringing affordable air service to Upstate New York and the Hudson Valley and delivering over \$20 billion in aid to New York City following the attacks on September 11, 2001. Chuck was the author of legislation that eliminated barriers that delay low-cost generic medications from entering the marketplace and led the charge to make college tuition tax deductible. He also aggressively championed agricultural measures to preserve vital market support programs for New York's dairy farmers and crop growers.

After New Yorkers re-elected him in 2004, Chuck was awarded two powerful posts by his colleagues. The first, a seat on the Senate Finance Committee, which oversees the nation's tax, trade, social security and health care legislation. The second honor was the Chairmanship of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC). Chuck successfully led the DSCC for two consecutive cycles before stepping down at the end of 2008.

Following the elections of 2006, Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) appointed Chuck to serve as Vice Chair of the Democratic Conference, the number three position on the Democratic Leadership team and a position he continues to hold. In 2009, Chuck was selected as the Chairman of the Senate Rules Committee, which oversees federal elections, voting rights, campaign finance, and the operation of the Senate complex. After New Yorkers re-elected him for a third term in 2010, Chuck took on an expanded role in the Senate as Chairman of the Democratic Policy and Communications Center.

Chuck also sits on the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; the Judiciary Committee, where he is Chairman of the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and Border Security; and the Joint Committee on the Library.

Bloomberg GOVERNMENT

PERSONAL PROFILE

COMMITTEES

[Senate Committee on Finance](#)

[Senate Committee on Banking,
Housing, and Urban Affairs](#)

[Senate Committee on the Judiciary](#)

[Senate Committee on Rules and
Administration](#)
Ranking Member

[Joint Committee on the Library](#)

[Joint Committee on Printing](#)
Ranking Member

CAUCUSES

[Senate Impact Aid Coalition](#)

[Senate Multiple Sclerosis Caucus](#)

[Senate Steel Caucus](#)

Birthdate 11/23/1950

Birthplace Brooklyn, NY

Political Party Democratic Party

Marital Status Married

Spouse Iris Weinshall

Residence Brooklyn, NY

Family 2 children

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Education

Harvard University
Bachelor's Degree 1971

Harvard Law Schl
JD 1974

1974 - 1980 State Assembly Member,
(NY)State Assembly 01-03-1981 - 01-03-
1999 Representative:New York, (US)House
of Representatives 01-03-1999 - Present
Senator:New York, (US)Senate