

## LEGISLATOR

US Senator

**PATTY MURRAY (D-WA)****IN OFFICE**

Up for re-election in 2016

**LEADERSHIP POSITION**Senate Democratic Secretary  
Senate Democratic Conference  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Secretary for the Majority**4th Term**

Re-elected in 2010

**SENIORITY RANK**

12

Out of 100

**CONTACT****Email** [Contact Form](http://www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contactme)  
<http://www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contactme>**Web** [www.murray.senate.gov/public](http://www.murray.senate.gov/public)  
<http://www.murray.senate.gov/public>**Twitter** [@pattymurray](https://twitter.com/pattymurray)  
<https://twitter.com/pattymurray>**DC Office** 154 Russell Senate Office Building**BGOV BIOGRAPHY**

By Brian Faler, Bloomberg News

When she took the gavel of the Senate Budget Committee in January 2013, Patty Murray made it clear from her very first hearing that she was going to be a different kind of chairman --and not just because she's the first woman to head the panel.

The Democrat from Washington state opened the session with a five-minute critique of Republican tax-and-spending policies, denouncing decisions made over two decades, while emphasizing that she is concerned with more than just making budget numbers add up.

"I feel very strongly that it doesn't make sense to replace our budget deficits with deficits in education and infrastructure and research and development," she said.

It's a sharp contrast from previous chairmen, such as North Dakota Democrat Kent Conrad and New Mexico Republican Pete Domenici, who have tended to be earnest deficit hawks dutifully warning their colleagues of the budgetary consequences of their decisions.

A 20-year veteran of the panel, Murray took over the committee for the 113th Congress, though it wasn't her first time with a starring role in Washington, D.C.'s budget wars. She was tapped in 2011 by Majority Leader Harry Reid for a high-profile job as co-chairman of the so-called supercommittee that was created as part of a 2011 deal to raise the debt limit. The supercommittee was charged with working on an agreement on tax increases and entitlement cuts.

**Fiscal Cliff**

The panel's inability to reach a deal after months of negotiations left the government with the fallback alternative of billions of dollars in automatic spending cuts, known as sequestration. Those cuts, combined with the simultaneous expirations of George W. Bush-era tax cuts, a payroll-tax reduction, jobless benefits and other changes in fiscal policies, became known as the fiscal cliff.

Even as Federal Reserve Chairman Ben S. Bernanke and other experts warned of the effects on the economy of going over the cliff, Murray led Democrats in threatening to agree to that if Republicans didn't agree to raise taxes on the wealthy.

Democrats ultimately won some increases, though not as much as some had sought, as part of a New Year's Eve deal that postponed the start of the sequester.

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As Budget Committee chairman, Murray has promised to seek increases in revenue, saying Congress ought to further limit the ability of the wealthy to tap individual tax breaks beyond what lawmakers already agreed to. Deficit reduction ought to draw equally from tax increases and spending cuts, she says.

"We simply cannot solve this problem on the spending side alone," Murray wrote in a January 2013 memo to colleagues. "It would be tremendously unfair and unbalanced to ask further sacrifice from the middle class while the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations continue to benefit disproportionately from the countless preferences in the tax code."

That stance has pitted her against House Budget Committee Chairman -- and 2012 Republican vice presidential candidate -- Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, who is equally adamant that lawmakers eschew tax increases.

### Leadership Roles

The Senate Budget gavel is the latest in a series of Senate leadership roles for Murray, who was named conference secretary in 2007, making her the chamber's fourth-ranking Democrat. She has previously headed the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and the Committee on Veterans Affairs, and she continues to run the Appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over transportation and housing programs.

She's a reliable liberal who has backed all of the signature accomplishments of President Barack Obama's first term: his economic-stimulus package, his health-care overhaul, the rewrite of financial-industry regulations, both of his Supreme Court nominations, the repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy restricting military service by openly gay individuals, and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which made it easier for women to sue for pay discrimination. She's also a faithful backer of Boeing Co., a major employer in her state.

Her defense of federal spending is personal, Murray says. Her father was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when she was 15 and within a few years was unable to work. That left her mother to fend for the family.

"She found some work, but it didn't pay enough to support me and my six brothers and sisters and a husband with growing medical bills," Murray said in July 2012. "Without warning, my family had fallen on hard times."

### Government Assistance

The government helped the family pull through. Her father, a World War II veteran, got help from the VA. Her mother received aid from the government to get a degree in accounting. For several months, Murray says, the family received food stamps. She later received federal grants to go to college.

"The support we got from our government was the difference between seven kids who might not have graduated from high school or college and the seven adults that we came to be: all college graduates, all working hard, all paying taxes," she said. "This is the primary prism that I view our nation's budget through, and it's what guides me as I work in the Senate."

She says she first got involved in politics when a local preschool program was targeted for budget cuts. After organizing parents to save the program, she won a seat on a suburban Seattle school board. She also taught at a community college.

She served four years in the state Senate before running for the U.S. Senate in 1992. In that race, Murray cast herself as an outsider -- a self-described "mom in tennis shoes" -- and won, becoming part of the "Year of the Woman" that increased the number of female senators to seven from three.

Updated March 1, 2013

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## BIO FROM REPRESENTATIVE'S WEBSITE

### From the Senator's Website

As Washington state's senior Senator, Patty Murray has a proven track record spanning more than two decades of fighting for Washington state families in the United States Senate. Serving as a member of Senate Democratic leadership since 2007, Patty has established herself as a tireless and effective leader on education, transportation, budget issues, port security, healthcare, women, and veterans issues. In addition to being the first female Senator from Washington state, Patty served as the first female Chair of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee during the 112th Congress and currently serves as the first female Chair of the Senate Budget Committee.

Patty was raised in Bothell, Washington. Her dad ran a five and dime store on Main Street, where she and her siblings all worked growing up. As a twin and one of seven children, she quickly learned the value of a strong work ethic and a country that supports those who fall on hard times when her father fell ill when she was 15. Patty's father ^ a World War II veteran and a Purple Heart recipient ^ was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and in a few short years, his illness got so bad he couldn't work anymore. Pattv's mother. who had staved home to raise their familv. had to take care of him while also

## Bloomberg GOVERNMENT

working to support their family. She found some work, but it didn't pay enough to support Patty and her six brothers and sisters^and a husband with growing medical bills. Thankfully, they lived in a country where the government didn't just say 'tough luck.'

Patty's family received some help from the VA for their father's medical care, but for several months her family had to rely on food stamps. However, thanks to a program established by the federal government, Patty's mother was able to go back to school in order to find a better paying job. And thanks to federal grants and student loans, Patty and her siblings were all able to attend college. While attending Washington State University, Patty took an internship in the psychiatric ward of the Seattle VA. It was there she personally witnessed the sacrifices of young Vietnam War veterans.

Never planning to enter politics, in the 1980's a state politician told her she 'couldn't make a difference' when she went to Olympia as a parent to advocate for a local preschool program targeted by state budget cuts. Patty responded by organizing a grassroots coalition of 13,000 parents that fought successfully to save the program. Patty went on to serve on the Shoreline School Board, and in 1988 was elected to the Washington State Senate. In 1992, she ran for the United States Senate as a voice for Washington families who were not being heard. Dramatically outspent, Patty ran a grassroots campaign of family, friends, supporters, and public interest groups to beat a 10-year veteran of the U.S. House of Representatives. Patty was re-elected in 1998, 2004, and 2010.

As a unique voice in the United States Senate, Patty is known for her down-to-earth, determined style. She's been called 'a workhorse, not a show horse' by the Seattle Post-Intelligencer for her intense, behind-the-scenes efforts to get the job done. She has also been described as "tenacious" in her work to address Washington state's needs by the Seattle Times. Patty is often looked to by colleagues and the media in Washington D.C. for her ability to articulate how complex issues affect every day American families. Recently, Patty reflected on her life experiences and how that impacts the decisions she makes as a U.S. Senator today-

'I know the support we got from our government was the difference between seven kids who might not have graduated from high school or college^and the seven adults we've grown up to be today^all college graduates, all working hard and paying taxes, and all doing our best to contribute back to our communities. So this is the primary prism I view our nation's budget through. And it's what guides me as I work in the Senate to impact the choices we make. Not that government can or should solve every problem^of course it shouldn't, and it can't. But that we are a nation that has always come together to stand with families like mine. To invest in our people, our communities, our future^and to build the most robust middle class the world has ever seen.'

Patty met her husband of over 40 years, Rob Murray, while attending Washington State University. They have two grown children, Sara and Randy. Patty enjoys fishing, exploring Washington state's great outdoors and spending time with her family.

## PERSONAL PROFILE

### COMMITTEES

[Senate Committee on Appropriations](#)

[Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions](#)  
Ranking Member

[Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#)

[Senate Committee on Budget](#)

### CAUCUSES

[Senate Nuclear Waste Cleanup Caucus](#)

[Senate Aerospace Caucus](#)

[Senate Nuclear Cleanup Caucus](#)

Birthdate 10/11/1950

Birthplace Seattle, WA

Political Party Democratic Party

Marital Status Married

Spouse Rob Murray

Family 2 children

### PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

#### Education

Washington State University  
Graduated 1972

1984 - 1987 Instructor, Shoreline Community College  
1988 - 1992 State Senator, (WA) Senate  
1992 - Present D Conf Secy/Senator: Washington, (US) Senate

