

Encyclopedia of Politics of the American West

Kyl, Jon

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Jon Kyl (1942–) is an Arizona Republican legislator who served in the House of Representatives from 1987 to 1994 and in the U.S. Senate from 1995 to 2013. Born in Oakland, Nebraska, on April 25, 1942, he received a BA from the University of Arizona in 1964, an LLB from the same institution in 1966, and worked as a Phoenix attorney between 1966 and 1986 before being elected to Congress. During his congressional tenure he became an effective behind-the-scenes leader for his state and conservative Republicans on a number of public policy issues. He served as Senate Republican Policy Committee chair from 2003 to 2007; his Republican colleagues elected him Senate minority whip in December 2007, and they also appointed him to serve on the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction in August 2011.

Key public policy issues Kyl emphasizes include national defense and economics. He is known for his opposition to arms control treaties, including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which would have prohibited nuclear weapons testing but was not ratified by the U.S. Senate because of the opposition of Kyl and other senators, and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) II, which passed the Senate in December 2010. Other important national security topics Kyl emphasizes include promoting ballistic missile defense, modernizing the U.S. nuclear weapons arsenal, promoting passage of the Military Commissions Act to try terrorists in military courts, and supporting USA PATRIOT Act provisions.

Economic issues stressed by Kyl include opposition to the estate tax; pursuing pro-growth policies, including low income, capital gains, and dividend tax rates; and seeking spending reductions to balance the federal budget. He seeks health care reform solutions that strive to improve access to health care, lower costs, and maintain the doctor-patient relationship. He also supports crime victims' rights, opposes illegal immigration, and advocates conservative positions on social issues.

He served on the House Armed Services Committee when he was in that legislative body, and his Senate [p. 432 ↓] committee service includes the Finance Committee, Select Intelligence Committee, Judiciary Committee, and Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. This last group was established in August 2011 to achieve federal budget reductions of \$1.5 trillion over the next ten years through spending

reductions or tax revenue increases by November 23, 2011, in order to have a final congressional vote by December 31, 2011. Kyl announced his retirement on February 10, 2011, effective with the conclusion of his third Senate term. He became one of the most influential Republican senators during his tenure in office and was known as a thoughtful and intellectually substantive senator who sought (often successfully) to influence policymaking behind the scenes instead of through regular television appearances.

Albert Chapman

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See also

Further Readings

Cadel, Emily. "Measuring Kyl's Clout ." *CQ Weekly* , vol. 68 (2010): pp. 2800–2806.

Garrett, Major. "Kyl Driving Dems to Distraction ." *National Journal* , vol. 42 , no. 51–52 (2010): pp. 12.

"Kyl's Consequences: How to Be an Effective Senator ." *Wall Street Journal* , February 11, 2011, Sec. A12.

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