# PattyMurray

**United States Senator (D-Washington)**

## Biography

Patty Murray never planned to enter politics, but today she is serving her fourth term in the U.S. Senate as a member of the Democratic Leadership. From the classroom to the Congress, Patty Murray has been an effective and tireless advocate for Washington's working families. Originally known for her work on education and children's issues, Murray has become a leading figure on transportation, border and port security, healthcare, economic development and veteran's issues.

In the 1980's, when a state politician told her she "couldn't make a difference," Murray led a grassroots coalition of 13,000 parents to save a local preschool program from budget cuts. She went on to serve on the local school board, and in 1988 was elected to the Washington State Senate.

In 1992, Murray ran for the United States Senate as a voice for Washington families who were not being heard in the Senate. Dramatically outspent, Murray 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 and become the first woman to represent Washington state in the U.S. Senate. In 1998 and 2004, she was re-elected by a wide margin and is currently Washington's senior Senator.

Murray is a unique voice in the United States Senate, where she 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. Senator Murray is often looked to by colleagues and the media in Washington D.C. for her ability to articulate how complex issues affect everyday American families.

Patty Murray has drawn on her experience as a PTA member and a school board president to make education a national priority. She successfully sponsored the bill to help schools hire new, qualified teachers to reduce class size. She has worked to increase Pell grants to make college more affordable, is a national advocate for disadvantaged, homeless, and migrant students, and has fought for improvements to "No Child Left Behind."

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**http://murray.senate.gov**

Senator Murray is a recognized champion for Washington's 670,000 veterans and veterans throughout the country. Murray is the daughter of a disabled World War II veteran and is the first woman to serve on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. Murray's work in a physiological ward at the Seattle VA hospital as a college student led her to become a leading voice in Congress for veterans suffering from the mental wounds of war.

Senator Murray has worked tirelessly to ensure that service members with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury are receiving quality care and are not falling through the cracks when they return home. She has helped to pass the Dignified Treatment of Wounded Warriors Act, the Joshua Omvig Suicide Prevention Act, and veterans spending and budget bills that make record investments in veterans care.

In Washington state, Murray has worked with the VA to open community based health clinics all throughout the state and has worked to expand services at existing VA facilities. Senator Murray has been honored for her work by the Vietnam Veterans of America, American Ex-POWs, the VFW, the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.

Senator Murray serves as the chair of the Senate Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations subcommittee, which oversees the nation's transportation and housing budget. Murray has advocated for increases in highway funding to help alleviate the transportation problems facing Washington state and communities around the country. She has helped Washington state address its transportation woes by dramatically increasing the annual funding the state receives for specific projects including roads, bridges, railways, airports, and ferries in every corner of the state.

In her role overseeing the Department of Housing and Urban Development's budget, Murray has worked to increase free, effective housing counseling services and increase funding for Community Development Block Grants, HOPE VI and section 8 housing initiatives, and homeless veterans housing.

Senator Murray is also a staunch advocate for America's aerospace industry and has been a leading critic of the Air Force's decision to give a $35 billion air tanker refueling contract to Airbus - a foreign-owned and subsidized company.

Senator Murray has also focused on keeping Washington state's communities, economy and families safe in an increasingly dangerous world. Senator Murray co-authored the landmark SAFE Ports Act which makes dramatic improvements to port and cargo security. Senator Murray has also worked to provide federal support to expand local law enforcement and emergency preparedness grants and is currently working to bring more FBI agents to Washington state to aid in prosecuting crimes including bank robbery and white collar crime.

Senator Murray has also made access to quality health care a top priority. As doctors in Washington state have started closing their practices or refusing to see

new Medicare patients, Patty Murray has worked to increase payments to doctors to reverse the trend. Murray has also supported funding for rural health clinics, co-sponsored the Nurse Reinvestment Act, introduced legislation to support trauma care facilities, and supported expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program. Senator Murray is currently working to expand the healthcare workforce in Washington state to meet growing needs.

The first woman elected to the Senate from Washington state, Murray has been a champion for women and families. She has spearheaded efforts to close the pay gap, protect women in retirement, and increase access to child care. Murray helped write and pass the historic Violence Against Women Act of 1994 and helped reauthorize it in 2000 and 2005.

Murray has also worked to improve opportunities for Washington's rural communities. She has worked to open new agricultural trade markets overseas, to strengthen the farm safety net and to assist farm workers. She was instrumental in passing the 2008 Farm Bill that invests in rural jobs, ensures more families put a nutritious meal on their table, and for the first time provides meaningful support for Washington state fruit and vegetable growers. Murray has also initiated an effort to bring hi-speed Internet access to rural areas that commercial providers have neglected.

Senator Murray is a strong advocate for protecting our environment. She has increased funding for environmental programs, repeatedly opposed harmful, anti-environmental riders to appropriations bills, and sponsored several pieces of environmental legislation. In May 2008, Senator Murray completed a nine-year legislative effort when her Wild Sky Wilderness Act was signed into law. Wild Sky protects more than 106,000 acres of low-elevation old growth forest in Snohomish County, Washington and is the state's first new wilderness land in more than two decades. Wild Sky will preserve the pristine nature of the land, protect wildlife, promote clean water, enhance and protect recreational opportunities for the region, and contribute to the local economy.

Senator Murray has been a long-time advocate for increased resources at the Northern Border and worked to provide funding to triple the number of border agents to help keep communities along the Northern Border and across America safe. Murray is also working to create and fund the Northern Border Prosecution Initiative which will reimburse Northern Border communities for the costs of prosecuting border-related crimes.

Murray is a leading voice in Congress to protect a woman's right to choose and her efforts to hold the Food and Drug Administration accountable were essential in their approval of the contraception drug Plan B.

Senator Murray is a proven leader on labor issues and is currently working to identify solutions to build "multiple pathways" for high school students to obtain long-term, family-wage jobs in the globally competitive market through training and education efforts. Senator Murray also continues to use her oversight role as

Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pension Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety to protect workers at the workplace and to continue to fight for workers' rights to organize and collectively bargain.

Born in Bothell, Washington, Murray is one of seven children. Her father earned the Purple Heart as one of the first G.I.'s to land on Okinawa. He returned home to run a local five and ten cents shop on Main Street in Bothell. Her mother was a homemaker and accountant. Murray is a graduate of Washington State University. She is married to Rob Murray and has two grown children, Sara and Randy. Randy and his wife Erin have a son, Aidan, the Murrays' first grandchild. Patty Murray enjoys fishing, exploring Washington state's great outdoors and spending time with her family.

**Sen. Murray's committee assignments include:**

- Appropriations
- Budget
- Health, Education, Labor and Pension
- Rules and Administration
- Veterans Affairs

Within the Appropriations Committee, **Murray is Chairman of the Transportation, Treasury, Judiciary, and Housing and Urban Development**.

She also serves on the following Appropriations subcommittees:

- Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee
- Energy and Water Development Subcommittee
- Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Defense
- Financial Services and General Government
- Homeland Security
- Transportation, Housing and Urban Development

Within the HELP Committee, **Murray is Chairman of the Employment and Workplace Safety Subcommittee.**

She also serves on the following HELP subcommittee:

- Children and Families