

John McCain Biography

Senator John McCain has a remarkable record of leadership and experience that embodies his unwavering lifetime commitment to service. First elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Arizona in 1982, John has led the fight for reforming Washington, eliminating wasteful government spending, and strengthening our nation's armed forces.

Senator McCain's reform agenda to reduce federal spending and lower taxes quickly elevated him to statewide office and he was elected to the United States Senate in 1986, after serving two terms in the U.S. House.

In the Senate, he continued to demand that Congress put an end to loopholes for special interests and fix the broken system in Washington that too often allows lobbyists to write legislation and members of Congress to waste taxpayer money. In November 2004, Senator McCain was overwhelmingly reelected with nearly 77 percent of the vote.

As the son and grandson of distinguished Navy admirals, John McCain deeply values duty, honor and service of country. John attended college at the United States Naval Academy, and launched a 22-year career as a naval aviator upon his graduation.

On July 29, 1967, John narrowly survived the first of many near-death experiences during his lifetime while preparing to take off on a bombing mission over North Vietnam from his ship, the USS Forrestal. A missile accidentally fired from a nearby plane struck the fuel tanks on his plane.

Instead of taking the option to return home after the Forrestal disaster, Senator McCain volunteered for more combat duty – a fateful decision that stopped the clock on his life and separated him from his family, and country, for five and a half years.

During his 23rd bombing mission on October 26, 1967, a missile struck his plane and forced him to eject, knocking him unconscious and breaking both his arms and his leg. John was then taken as a prisoner of war into the now infamous "Hanoi Hilton," where he was denied necessary medical treatment and often beaten by the North Vietnamese. He spent much of his time as a prisoner of war in solitary confinement, aided by his faith and the friendships of his fellow POWs. When he was finally released and able to return home years later, Senator McCain continued his service by regaining his naval flight status.

Senator McCain's last Navy duty assignment was to serve as the naval liaison to the United States Senate. He retired from the Navy in 1981. His naval honors include the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Legion of Merit, Purple Heart, and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Senator McCain currently serves on the following Senate Committees during the 111th Congress: Ranking Member on the Senate Armed Services Committee; Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and Committee on Indian Affairs.

Senator McCain has seven children and four grandchildren, and currently lives in Phoenix, Arizona with his wife Cindy.