

## Committee Information

The Committee's hearings are available LIVE via audio at the time of the meeting, and also posted for replay within a few hours after completion (select the link for the hearing to access the replay). Opening statements of witnesses are posted during the hearing.

However, the written transcript of questions and answers is not available until posted by the Gov't Printing Office &mdash; according to Senate Rules.

For previous years' hearings, please review the listing of Archived Hearings.

Learn more about the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry through its history.

Committee Resources:

[Hearings](#)

[Subcommittees](#)

[Senators' web pages](#)

[Committee Rules](#)

More detail about the Senate's committee system is available from the U.S. Senate web site.

In summary, the Senate divides its tasks among committees, subcommittees, and joint committees.

Although the Senate committee system is similar to that of the House of Representatives, it has its own guidelines, within which each committee adopts its own rules. Standing committees generally have legislative jurisdiction. Subcommittees handle specific areas of the committee's work. The chair of each committee and a majority of its members represent the majority party. The chair primarily controls a committee's business. Each party assigns its own members to committees, and each committee distributes its members among its subcommittees.

The Senate places limits on the number and types of panels any one senator may serve on and chair. Several thousand bills and resolutions are referred to committees during each 2-year Congress. Committees select a small percentage for consideration, and those not addressed often receive no further action. The bills that committees report help to set the Senate's agenda.

When a committee or subcommittee favors a measure, it usually takes four actions. First it asks relevant executive agencies for written comments on the measure.

Second, it holds hearings to gather information and views from non-committee experts. At committee hearings, these witnesses summarize submitted statements and then respond to questions from the senators.

Third, a committee meets to perfect the measure through amendments, and non-committee members sometimes attempt to influence the language.

Fourth, when language is agreed upon, the committee sends the measure back to the full Senate, usually along with a written report describing its purposes and provisions.