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Joe Lieberman

Joseph Isadore Lieberman (/ˈliːbərmən/; born February 24, 1942) is an American politician, lobbyist, and attorney who served as a United States senator from Connecticut from 1989 to 2013. A former member of the Democratic Party, he was its nominee for Vice President of the United States in the 2000 U.S. presidential election. During his final term in office, he was officially listed as an independent Democrat and caucused with and chaired committees for the Democratic Party.

Lieberman was elected as a Reform Democrat in 1970 to the Connecticut Senate, where he served three terms as Majority Leader. After an unsuccessful bid for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1980, he served as the Connecticut Attorney General from 1983 to 1989. He narrowly defeated Republican Party incumbent Lowell Weicker in 1988 to win election to the U.S. Senate and was re-elected in 1994, 2000, and 2006. He was the Democratic Party nominee for Vice President in the 2000 presidential election, running with presidential nominee and then Vice President Al Gore, and becoming the first Jewish candidate on a U.S. major party presidential ticket.^{[1][2]}

In the 2000 presidential election, Gore and Lieberman won the popular vote by a margin of more than 500,000 votes but lost the deciding Electoral College to the Republican George W. Bush/Dick Cheney ticket 271–266. He also unsuccessfully sought the Democratic nomination in the 2004 U.S. presidential election. During his Senate re-election bid in 2006, Lieberman lost the Democratic primary election but won re-election in the general election as a third party candidate under the Connecticut for Lieberman party label. Never a member of that party, he remained a registered Democrat while he ran.^[3]

Lieberman was officially listed in Senate records

Joe Lieberman
 <div>Official portrait, 2005</div>
United States Senator from Connecticut
In office January 3, 1989 – January 3, 2013
Preceded by <u>Lowell Weicker</u>
Succeeded by <u>Chris Murphy</u>
Chair of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
In office January 3, 2007 – January 3, 2013
Preceded by <u>Susan Collins</u>
Succeeded by <u>Tom Carper</u>
In office June 6, 2001 – January 3, 2003
Preceded by <u>Fred Thompson</u>
Succeeded by <u>Susan Collins</u>
In office January 3, 2001 – January 20, 2001
Preceded by <u>Fred Thompson</u>
Succeeded by <u>Fred Thompson</u>
21st Attorney General of Connecticut


for the 110th and 111th Congresses as an Independent Democrat,^[4] and sat as part of the Senate Democratic Caucus. After his speech at the 2008 Republican National Convention in which he endorsed John McCain for president, he no longer attended Democratic Caucus leadership strategy meetings or policy lunches.^[5] On November 5, 2008, he met with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to discuss his future role with the Democratic Party. Ultimately, the Senate Democratic Caucus voted to allow him to keep the chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. Subsequently, he announced that he would continue to caucus with the Democrats.^[6] Before the 2016 election, he endorsed Hillary Clinton for president and in 2020 endorsed Joe Biden for president.

As senator, Lieberman introduced and championed the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010 and legislation that led to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. During debate on the Affordable Care Act (ACA), as the crucial 60th vote needed to pass the legislation, his opposition to the public health insurance option was critical to its removal from the resulting bill signed by President Barack Obama.^[7]

Early life

Lieberman was born in Stamford, Connecticut, the son of Henry, who ran a liquor store, and Marcia (*née* Manger) Lieberman.^[8] His family is Jewish; his paternal grandparents emigrated from Congress Poland and his maternal grandparents were from Austria-Hungary.^[9] He received a B.A. in both political science and economics from Yale University in 1964 and was the first member of his family to graduate from college. At Yale he was editor of the Yale Daily News and a member of the Elihu Club. While at Yale Lieberman was introduced to conservative thinker William F. Buckley Jr., who was also editor of the Yale Daily News; Buckley and Lieberman maintained social relationship.^[10] His roommate was Richard Sugarman, a Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Vermont and advisor to 2016 presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.^[11] Lieberman later attended Yale Law School, receiving his LLB degree in 1967. After graduation from law school, Lieberman worked as a lawyer for the New Haven-based law firm Wiggin & Dana LLP.

A spokesperson told the Hartford Courant in 1994 that Lieberman received an educational deferment from the Vietnam War draft when he was an undergraduate and law student from 1960 to 1967. Upon graduating from law school at age 25, Lieberman qualified for a family deferment because he was already married and had a child.^[12]

	In office
	January 5, 1983 – January 3, 1989
Governor	<u>William O'Neill</u>
Preceded by	<u>Carl R. Ajello</u>
Succeeded by	<u>Clarine Nardi Riddle</u>
	Member of the Connecticut State Senate
	In office
	January 1971 – January 1981
Preceded by	<u>Edward L. Marcus</u>
Succeeded by	<u>John C. Daniels</u>
Constituency	<u>11th district</u> (1971–1973) <u>10th district</u> (1973–1981)
	Personal details
Born	<u>Joseph Isadore Lieberman</u> <div>February 24, 1942</div> <div> <u>Stamford, Connecticut, U.S.</u></div>
Political party	<u>Democratic</u> (until 2006) <u>Independent</u> (since 2006)
Other political affiliations	<u>Connecticut for Lieberman</u> (2006)
Spouse(s)	<u>Betty Haas</u> <div>(<u>m.</u> 1965; <u>div.</u> 1981)</div> <div><u>Hadassah Freilich</u> (<u>m.</u> 1982)</div>
Children	3
Education	<u>Yale University</u> (BA, LLB)
Signature	

Early political career



Lieberman with President Ronald Reagan in 1984



Lieberman with President George H. W. Bush in 1991

Lieberman was elected as a "reform Democrat" to the Connecticut Senate in 1970, where he served for 10 years, including the last six as Majority Leader. He suffered his first defeat in Connecticut elections in the Reagan landslide year of 1980, losing the race for the Third District Congressional seat to Republican Lawrence Joseph DeNardis, a state senator from suburban Hamden with whom he had worked closely on bipartisan legislative efforts. In 1981 he wrote an admiring biography of long-time Connecticut and national Democratic leader John Moran Bailey, reviewing also in the book the previous 50 years of Connecticut political history.^[13] From 1983 to 1989, he served as Connecticut Attorney General.^[14] Lieberman argued one case before the United States Supreme Court, *Estate of Thornton v. Caldor, Inc.*, a free exercise case involving Connecticut's repeal of its blue laws.^[10] In the 1986 general election, Lieberman won more votes than any other Democrat on the statewide ticket, including Governor William O'Neill.^[15] As Attorney General, Lieberman emphasized consumer protection and environmental enforcement.

U.S. Senate

Tenure

Lieberman was first elected to the United States Senate as a Democrat in the 1988 election, defeating liberal Republican Lowell Weicker by a margin of 10,000 votes. He scored the nation's biggest political upset that year, after being backed by a coalition of Democrats and unaffiliated voters with support from conservative Republicans, most notably including *National Review* founder and *Firing Line* host William F. Buckley, Jr. and his brother, former New York Senator James L. Buckley,^[16] who were disappointed in three-term Republican incumbent Weicker's liberal voting record and personal style. During the campaign, he received support from Connecticut's Cuban American community which was unhappy with Weicker. Lieberman has since remained firmly anti-Castro.^[17]

Shortly after his first election to the Senate, Lieberman was approached by incoming Majority Leader George Mitchell who advised him, "Pick out two or three areas that you're really interested in and learn them so that your colleagues know what you're talking about [...] You're going to have more influence even as a freshman than you think because you know there's hundreds of issues and inevitably we rely on each other."^[18] Recalling the conversation, Lieberman has said, "that was true when I first came in, although you could see partisanship beginning to eat away at that. But at the end of my 24 years, it was really so partisan that it was hard to make the combinations to get to 60 votes to break a filibuster to get things done."^[18]

Lieberman's initiatives against violence in video games are considered the chief impetus behind the establishment of an industry-wide video game rating system during the early 1990s.^[19]

In 1994, Lieberman made history by winning by the largest landslide ever in a Connecticut Senate race, drawing 67 percent of the vote and beating his opponent by more than 350,000 votes. Like Bill Clinton and Dick Gephardt, Lieberman served as chair of the Democratic Leadership Council from 1995 to 2001. In 1998, Lieberman was the first prominent Democrat to publicly challenge Clinton for the judgment exercised in his affair with Monica Lewinsky.^[20] However, he voted against removing Clinton from office by impeachment.

Of his criticism of Bill Clinton, Lieberman said in 2014:

It was a very hard thing for me to do because I liked him but I really felt what he did was awful and that unless I felt myself if I didn't say something, I'd be a hypocrite. I also felt that if somebody who was supportive of him didn't say something, it would not be good. And so it got a lot of attention. I got a call from Erskine Bowles who was Chief of Staff about three or four days later saying that he was going to express an opinion which wasn't universally held at the White House – he thought I helped the president by bursting the boil, that was the metaphor he used. The following Sunday morning, I'm at home and the phone rings, it's the White House. And it's now about a week and a couple of days since I made the speech. The president says, it was the president, "I just want you to know that there's nothing you said in that speech that I don't agree with. And I want you to know that I'm working on it." And we talked for about forty-five minutes. It was amazing.^[18]

In spring 2000, Lieberman among other centrist Democrats founded the Senate New Democrat Coalition. In the same year, while concurrently running for the vice presidency, Lieberman was elected to a third Senate term with 64 percent of the vote easily defeating the Republican Philip Giordano.

2006 Senate election



Lieberman (second from the left) and Senate colleagues with President Bill Clinton and his national security team on Air Force One to Bosnia in 1997