

# Elijah Cummings

**Elijah Eugene Cummings** (born January 18, 1951) is an American politician and the U.S. Representative for Maryland's 7th congressional district serving since 1996.<sup>[1]</sup> The district includes just over half of Baltimore City, several other precincts of Baltimore County, as well as most of Howard County. He previously served in the Maryland House of Delegates. He is a member of the Democratic Party.

## Contents

**Early life, education and career**

**U.S. House of Representatives**

Committee assignments

Caucus memberships

Legislation

**Political campaigns**

**Electoral history**

**Personal life**

**See also**

**References**

**External links**

## Early life, education and career

Cummings was born on January 18, 1951, in Baltimore, the son of Ruth Elma (*née* Cochran) and Robert Cummings.<sup>[2]</sup> He was the third child of seven. Cummings graduated with honors from the Baltimore City College high school in 1969.<sup>[3][4]</sup> He later attended Howard University in Washington, D.C.,<sup>[4]</sup> where he served in the student government as sophomore class president, student government treasurer and later student government president. He became a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society and graduated in 1973 with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science.<sup>[4][5]</sup>

Cummings graduated from law school at the University of Maryland School of Law, receiving his J.D. in 1976.<sup>[6]</sup> He was admitted to the Maryland Bar in December 1976. He practiced law for 19 years before first being elected to the House in the 1996 elections.

Also after graduating from law school, Cummings received 12 honorary doctoral degrees from different universities across America, most recently an honorary doctorate of public service from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2017.<sup>[7][8]</sup>

For 14 years, Cummings served in the Maryland House of Delegates. His predecessor, Lena King Lee, raised funds and campaigned for him; years later, Cummings credited her with launching his political career.<sup>[9][10]</sup> In the Maryland General Assembly, he served as Chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland and was the first Black man in Maryland history to be named *Speaker Pro Tempore*, the second highest position in the House of Delegates.

Cummings also serves on many different boards and commissions both inside and outside of Baltimore City. Some of those include SEED Schools of Maryland Board of Directors and the University of Maryland Board of Advisors. He is a member of Phi Beta Sigma fraternity.

## U.S. House of Representatives

### Committee assignments

- Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**
  - Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
  - Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials
- Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**(Ranking Member)
  - Subcommittee on Domestic Policy
  - Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Post Office, and District of Columbia
- Select Committee on Benghazi**(Ranking Minority Member)

In December 2010 Edolphus Towns announced that he would not seek the position of Ranking Minority Member of the Oversight Committee in the next Congress, even though his seniority and service as Chair would typically result in him filling this post. Reportedly, Towns withdrew because of a lack of support from Nancy Pelosi who feared that he would not be a sufficiently aggressive leader of Democrats in an anticipated struggle with incoming committee chair Republican Darrell Issa.<sup>[11]</sup> Reportedly, the White House also wanted Towns to be replaced.<sup>[12]</sup> Cummings defeated Carolyn Maloney in a vote of the House Democratic Caucus.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Caucus memberships

- Task Force on Health Care Reform

Elijah Cummings	
<span></span> <div>Elijah Cummings</div>	
Chair of the House Oversight Committee	
<div><b>Incumbent</b></div>	
<div><b>Assumed office</b></div>	January 3, 2019
<div><b>Preceded by</b></div>	Trey Gowdy
Member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Maryland's 7th district	
<div><b>Incumbent</b></div>	
<div><b>Assumed office</b></div>	April 16, 1996
<div><b>Preceded by</b></div>	Kweisi Mfume
Member of the Maryland House of Delegates from the 39th district	
<div><b>In office</b></div>	January 12, 1983 – January 10, 1996
<div><b>Preceded by</b></div>	Lena King Lee
<div><b>Succeeded by</b></div>	Sterling Page
Personal details	
Born	<div>Elijah Eugene Cummings</div> January 18, 1951 <div>Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.</div> <span></span>
Political party	Democratic
Spouse(s)	Maya Rockeymoore (m. 2008)
Education	Baltimore City College <div>Howard University (BA)</div> <div>University of Maryland, Baltimore (JD)</div>
Signature	<span></span>
Website	House website

- Co-founder and Chairman of the Congressional Caucus on Drug Policy
- Congressional Arts Caucus<sup>[13]</sup>
- Afterschool Caucuses<sup>[14]</sup>

Cummings is a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.<sup>[15]</sup> He served as Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus<sup>[16]</sup> during the 108th United States Congress

Cummings received praise and a boost in notoriety following the Congressional panel hearings on steroids in March 2005. While investigating the use of steroids in sports, the panel called numerous baseball players to testify, including former single season home run record holder Mark McGwire. After McGwire answered many questions in a vague fashion, Cummings demanded to know if he was "taking the Fifth", referring to the Fifth Amendment. McGwire responded by saying, "I am here to talk about the future, not about the past." The exchange came to epitomize the entire inquiry

## Legislation

Cummings introduced the Presidential and Federal Records Act Amendments of 2014, a bipartisan bill signed into law by President Barack Obama in December 2014. The bill, which Cummings cosponsored with Representative Darrell Issa, Republican of California, is a set of amendments to the Federal Records Act and Presidential Records Act. Among other provisions, the bill modernizes the definition of a federal record to expressly include electronic documents.<sup>[17][18]</sup>

Cummings supported the Smart Savings Act, a bill that would make the default investment in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) an age-appropriate target date asset allocation investment fund (L Fund) instead of the Government Securities Investment Fund (G Fund).<sup>[19]</sup> Cummings called the bill a "commonsense change" and argued that the bill "will enable workers to take full advantage of a diversified fund designed to yield higher returns."<sup>[20]</sup>

Cummings introduced the All Circuit Review Extension Act, a bill that would extend for three years the authority for federal employees who appeal a judgment of the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) to file their appeal at any federal court, instead of only the U.S. Court of Appeals.<sup>[21]</sup> Cummings said that this program is important to extend because it "allows whistleblowers to file appeals where they live rather than being limited to the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals".<sup>[22]</sup> He also said that the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals has "an abysmal track record in whistleblower cases".<sup>[22]</sup>

In remarks at the 2016 Democratic National Convention, Cumming declared: "Our party does not just believe, but understands, that Black Lives Matter. But we also recognize that our community and our law enforcement work best when they work together!"<sup>[23][24]</sup>

## Political campaigns

Five-term Congressman Kweisi Mfume resigned in February 1996 to take the presidency of the NAACP. Cummings won a crowded seven-way Democratic primary—the real contest in this heavily Democratic, black-majority district—with 37.5% of the vote. In the special election, he defeated Republican Kenneth Kondner with over 80 percent of the vote. He defeated Kondner again in November by a similar margin to win the seat in his own right.

Cummings has been reelected nine times since then with no substantive opposition, never dropping below 69% of the vote and even running unopposed in 2006.

## Electoral history



Cummings' official photo in 2012



Cummings speaking at the 2008 Democratic National Convention

Year	Election	Subject	Party	Votes	%	Opponent	Party	Votes	%	Opponent	Party	Votes	%
1996	Special	<b>Elijah Cummings</b>	<u>Democratic</u>	18,870	80.9%	<u>Kenneth Kondner</u>	<u>Republican</u>	4,449	19.1%				
1996	General	<b>Elijah Cummings</b>	<u>Democratic</u>	115,764	83.5%	<u>Kenneth Kondner</u>	<u>Republican</u>	22,929	16.5%				
1998	General	<b>Elijah Cummings</b>	<u>Democratic</u>	112,699	85.7%	<u>Kenneth Kondner</u>	<u>Republican</u>	18,742	14.3%				
2000	General	<b>Elijah Cummings</b>	<u>Democratic</u>	134,066	87.0%	<u>Kenneth Kondner</u>	<u>Republican</u>	19,773	12.8%				
2002	General	<b>Elijah Cummings</b>	<u>Democratic</u>	137,047	73.5%	<u>Joseph E. Ward</u>	<u>Republican</u>	49,172	26.4%				
2004	General	<b>Elijah Cummings</b>	<u>Democratic</u>	179,189	73.4%	<u>Tony Salazar</u>	<u>Republican</u>	60,102	24.6%	<u>Virginia Rodino</u>	<u>Green</u>	4,727	1.9%
2006	General	<b>Elijah Cummings</b>	<u>Democratic</u>	158,830	98.1%					<u>Write-in candidates</u>		3,147	1.9%
2008	General	<b>Elijah Cummings</b>	<u>Democratic</u>	227,379	79.5%	<u>Michael Hargadon</u>	<u>Republican</u>	53,147	18.6%	<u>Ronald Owens-Bey</u>	<u>Libertarian</u>	5,214	1.8%
2010	General	<b>Elijah Cummings</b>	<u>Democratic</u>	152,669	75.2%	<u>Frank Mirabile</u>	<u>Republican</u>	46,375	22.8%	<u>Scott Spencer</u>	<u>Libertarian</u>	3,814	1.9%
2012	General	<b>Elijah Cummings</b>	<u>Democratic</u>	247,770	76.5%	<u>Frank Mirabile</u>	<u>Republican</u>	67,405	20.8%	<u>Ronald Owens-Bey</u>	<u>Libertarian</u>	8,211	2.5%
2014	General	<b>Elijah Cummings</b>	<u>Democratic</u>	144,639	69.9%	<u>Corrogan Vaughn</u>	<u>Republican</u>	55,860	27.0%	<u>Scott Soffen</u>	<u>Libertarian</u>	6,103	3.0%
2016	General	<b>Elijah Cummings</b>	<u>Democratic</u>	238,838	74.9%	<u>Corrogan Vaughn</u>	<u>Republican</u>	69,556	21.8%	<u>Miles B. Hoenig</u>	<u>Green</u>	9,715	3.0%

## Personal life

Cummings serves on numerous Maryland boards and commissions including the Board of Visitors (BOV) to the United States Naval Academy and the Elijah Cummings Youth Program in Israel (ECYP). He is an honorary member of the Baltimore Zoo Board of Trustees.<sup>[27]</sup>

In addition to his many speaking engagements, he writes a biweekly column for the *Baltimore Afro-American* newspaper. He currently lives in the Madison Park community in Baltimore, and is an active member of the New Psalmist Baptist Church.

He is married to Maya Rockeymoore Cummings. They have three children.<sup>[28]</sup>

In June 2011, his nephew Christopher Cummings, son of his brother James, was murdered at his off-campus house near Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, where he was a student.<sup>[29]</sup>

Cummings underwent surgery to repair his aortic valve in May 2017 and was absent from Capitol Hill for two months. In July he said that he had developed an infection but that he would be returning to work.<sup>[30]</sup>

## See also

- List of African-American United States Representatives

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**External links**

- [Congressman Elijah E. Cummings](#) official U.S. House site
- [Elijah Cummings for Congress](#)
- [Elijah Cummings](#) at Curlie
- [Appearances on C-SPAN](#)
- [Biography at Maryland Manual](#)
- [Congressional Quarterly Voting and Elections Collection.](#)

<b>U.S. House of Representatives</b>		
Preceded by <b><u>Kweisi Mfume</u></b>	<b>Member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Maryland's 7th congressional district</b> 1996–present	<b>Incumbent</b>
Preceded by <b><u>Eddie Bernice Johnson</u></b>	<b>Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus</b> 2003–2005	Succeeded by <b><u>Mel Watt</u></b>
Preceded by <b><u>Trey Gowdy</u></b>	<b>Chair of the House Oversight Committee</b> 2019–present	<b>Incumbent</b>
<b>U.S. order of precedence (ceremonial)</b>		
Preceded by <b><u>Mac Thornberry</u></b>	<b>United States Representatives by seniority</b> 56th	Succeeded by <b><u>Earl Blumenauer</u></b>

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