



## ROY BLUNT



Building on a background as a public servant, university president, and teacher, Roy Blunt was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1996 and the U.S. Senate in 2010. Roy was elected by his colleagues to serve as the Majority Whip earlier in his career than any Member of Congress in eight decades and was elected to the Senate Republican leadership during his first year in the Senate. He served as Chairman of the Republican Policy Committee, the fourth highest ranking leadership position in the Senate Republican Conference. He also served as the Chairman and top Republican on the Rules Committee and the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor/HHS). Throughout his career, Roy has developed long-lasting,

bipartisan partnerships that have led to major legislative achievements in health care, infrastructure, and national security.

As Labor/HHS Chairman, Roy led the largest non-defense discretionary funding bill in the Congress. During his eight years on the subcommittee, Roy worked across the aisle to focus resources and awareness on issues that impact millions of Americans, increasing funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by nearly 60 percent and quintupling funding for Alzheimer's disease research. Speaking on the Senate floor, Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (Ill.) said of Roy's work on NIH, "Senator Blunt honored his commitment to medical research and made a difference in America. He has pursued our shared goal with decency, genuine curiosity, and a vision for the promise of medical discovery. There are people today in America, and around the world, who are going to have better lives because of Roy Blunt's commitment."

In September 2022, NIH dedicated the Roy Blunt Center for Alzheimer's and Related Dementias on its main campus in Bethesda, Maryland. Speaking at the dedication event, former NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins credited Roy with spearheading the effort to establish a pattern of "steady, predictable growth" in NIH funding, saying, "I knew we had a champion, somebody who was able to ask hard questions and wasn't going to be a pushover. ... Sen. Blunt has the kind of character we need more of in our world—intelligence, curiosity, integrity, dedication, compassion, and selflessness."

Roy's efforts have been recognized by numerous leading health advocacy groups nationwide, including ACT for NIH, the Alzheimer's Association and the Alzheimer's Impact Movement, the American Association for Cancer Research, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, the American Medical Association, the One Voice Against Cancer Coalition, UsAgainstAlzheimer's, Research!America, and United for Medical Research.

Roy worked with U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (Mich.) to get their Excellence in Mental Health Act, the most transformative mental health legislation in 50 years, signed into law by President Obama in 2014. After a decade of proven success in expanding access to mental and behavioral health care, the senators secured the nationwide expansion of the program in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act in 2022. Coupled with Roy's efforts to expand the program through the Labor/HHS appropriations bill, there are now more than 500 community mental health clinics operating in 46 states and the District of Columbia. The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act also included significant funding for school safety programs, including school-based mental health services.

Blunt and Stabenow also served as co-chairs of the Community Health Centers Caucus. Together, they worked to reauthorize and increase mandatory funding for community-based clinics that provide quality medical, dental,



vision, and behavioral health care, especially in underserved areas. Reflecting on their longstanding partnership, Stabenow told *The Missouri Times* in 2021, “He and I work together very closely and share a very strong vision in making sure that we fund behavioral health, mental health, and addiction the same way we fund physical health and really take away the stigma for folks that are needing to reach out and get help.”

Roy co-chaired the Senate Law Enforcement Caucus with U.S. Senator Chris Coons (Del.). They worked together to reauthorize the Victims of Child Abuse Act in 2014, 2018, and 2022. The law, first enacted in 1990, provides the only dedicated source of funding for Children’s Advocacy Centers, which bring together teams of law enforcement, medical personnel, and service providers to ensure the best outcome for child victims and help hold perpetrators responsible for their crimes. In 2021, Children’s Advocacy Centers served nearly 10,000 of Missouri’s most vulnerable children.

As a former high school history teacher and university president, Roy has worked to support students from pre-kindergarten through college and career. Roy prioritized the Childcare and Development Block Grant in the Labor/HHS bill to expand working families’ access to high-quality childcare, more than tripling funding for the program. He also increased funding for Head Start programs; for Title I formula grants to school districts to help children meet state academic standards; for IDEA grants to support the educational needs of students with disabilities; and for 21st Century Community Learning Centers for before- and after-school programs. The Missouri Department of Education honored Roy with their Pioneer in Education Award in 2022.

As a first-generation college graduate, Roy has worked to make higher education more affordable and to strengthen federal support for colleges and universities nationwide. On the Labor/HHS subcommittee, Roy restored year-round Pell Grants and secured six consecutive Pell Grant increases. Roy focused support on programs like TRIO and campus-based student aid to help low-income and first-generation students get into college and succeed when they are there.

To help ensure Missouri colleges and universities remain on the cutting edge of research and innovation, Roy worked to prioritize federal support for major projects across the state. These projects include the Roy Blunt NextGen Precision Health Building, a state-of-the-art facility at the University of Missouri-Columbia, which will not only accelerate innovations in precision health, but will also house a first-of-its-kind Department of Veterans Affairs research partnership with a public research university to further the discovery and application of precision medicine therapies. At Missouri State University, Roy secured funding for the Ozarks Health and Life Science Center to support STEM, health, and life sciences research and academic programs. In addition, Roy secured funding for: the Missouri S&T Manufacturing Technology and Innovation Campus in Rolla; a new University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine campus in St. Joseph; a Southeast Missouri State University health science building in Cape Girardeau; a STEM building at Harris-Stowe State University in St. Louis, a health science building at Saint Louis University, and numerous other projects that will help Missouri institutions attract and retain exceptional students, faculty, and researchers. From 2015-2021, NIH funding to Missouri institutions increased by more than \$314 million or nearly 67%.

As the Chairman and top Republican on the Senate Rules Committee, Roy was responsible for an extensive portfolio of issues critical to the daily management of Senate businesses and all the agencies that support its work. He partnered with his Democrat counterpart, U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (Minn.), to reform the process for pursuing claims of sexual harassment or other workplace discrimination experienced on Capitol Hill. Their Congressional Accountability Reform Act, signed into law in 2018, marked the most significant overhaul of Congressional anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policy in more than 25 years

Drawing on two decades of experience as an election official, including twelve years as Greene County Clerk and



eight as Missouri Secretary of State, Roy helped lead the effort to get the Electoral Count Reform Act signed into law in December 2022. He and Klobuchar also held numerous Rules Committee hearings to ensure states had the support they needed to run fair, safe, and accessible elections.

In addition to their work on the Rules Committee, Blunt and Klobuchar partnered on efforts to support the travel and tourism industry and co-chaired the Adoption Caucus, the largest bipartisan, bicameral caucus in the Congress. In remarks on the Senate floor, Klobuchar said of Blunt, “He works day and night. When he says he is going to do something, he does it. When he commits to something, he sees it through. That certainly has been my happy experience with him.”

In conjunction with his leadership on the Rules Committee, Roy served as Chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies for both the 2017 and 2021 presidential inaugurations. In that role, he successfully managed complex health, safety, and logistical challenges while developing innovative ways for hundreds of millions of viewers to experience Inauguration Day across the country and the world.

As a member of both the Intelligence Committee and the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Roy worked to ensure the U.S. military and intelligence community had the tools and resources they needed. Roy was instrumental in securing funding for the new National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency West headquarters, the largest federal investment project in the history of St. Louis. He also successfully secured resources for a new hangar at the Roy Blunt Aviation Logistics Facility in Springfield, the new General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital, and defense priorities at military installations across Missouri. Roy teamed up with U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (N.Y.) to get the Military Family Stability Act signed into law in 2017, providing military families with more flexibility as they navigate frequent relocations.

Roy made veterans issues a priority in the Congress, helping to lead the Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act, signed into law in 2017, and the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act, signed into law in 2014. Both laws are aimed at increasing accountability at the VA and ensuring veterans received access to the care and benefits they have earned. Under Roy’s leadership on the Labor/HHS subcommittee, funding for homeless veterans at the Department of Labor increased 72% in eight years.

As a member of the Veterans Jobs Caucus, Roy and U.S. Senator Joe Manchin (W.Va.) worked together to get the HIRE Vets Act, which established a tiered recognition program within the Department of Labor to award employers that make veterans hiring, retention, and career development a priority, signed into law in 2017. The Missouri Veterans of Foreign Wars honored Roy with their Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016.

Recognizing the unique advantage that Missouri’s central location affords as a hub for the nation’s highways, railways, waterways, and airways, Roy successfully worked with Democrat and Republican administrations to secure federal support for critical infrastructure and economic development projects. Roy worked in partnership with state and local officials to establish a reservoir in North Central Missouri that will serve 12 counties with persistent drought issues; to advance the South Loop Link in Kansas City; to replace several major bridges, including the Champ Clark, Buck O’Neil, and Rocheport Bridges; to complete a critical stretch of the 1-49 Arkansas-Missouri Connector; to continue navigation improvements and ecosystem restoration for the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterways; to strengthen flood protection along the Missouri River, and more. In December 2022, the Springfield-Branson National Airport terminal was renamed the Roy Blunt Terminal in recognition of Roy’s support for airport improvement projects across the state.

Roy’s leadership in advancing critical infrastructure projects has been an important part of his broader efforts on behalf of Missouri’s ag economy and rural communities. The American Farm Bureau Federation and Missouri



Farm Bureau honored Roy with the Golden Plow award in 2020, the highest recognition given to a sitting Member of Congress. As a member of both the Senate Commerce and Appropriations Committees, Roy advocated for the ReConnect Pilot program to target federal investment toward areas that currently lack access to broadband, while preventing overbuilding existing infrastructure. The ReConnect Program has provided more than \$250 million in funding to Missouri since 2019, amounting to more than 8% of all the support provided nationwide, the third largest amount any state has received since the start of the program. Missouri was also awarded \$42 million from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Broadband Infrastructure Program, the largest state-wide award from that program, representing more than 15% of total funding available.

Given Missouri's leading role in ag and food science research, Roy successfully worked with his colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and on both sides of the Missouri-Kansas border, to make the case for the relocation of USDA's Economic Research Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture to Kansas City. Roy also secured funding for research at the University of Missouri's Delta Research, Extension, and Education Center in Southeast Missouri and supported nationwide investments in ag research to help meet the significant increase in world food demand.

Roy's unique appreciation for Missouri and the nation's history has informed several successful legislative efforts. Roy worked with U.S. Congressman Jason Smith (Mo.) to establish the Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park, Missouri's first National Historical Park. As Rules Committee leaders, Blunt and Klobuchar worked together and with a bipartisan group of their colleagues to pass legislation to establish the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum and the National Museum of the American Latino. Roy partnered with U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (Va.) and U.S. Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, II (Mo.) to get the Negro Leagues Baseball Centennial Commemorative Coin Act, which commemorated the Centennial of Negro Leagues Baseball and provided support for the National Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, signed into law in 2020. In 2019, Roy worked with U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen (Md.) to get the World War I Valor Medals Review Act signed into law. The law requires the Department of Defense to undertake a review of valor medals awarded to minority veterans during World War I to determine whether any should receive the Medal of Honor, helping to ensure that minority veterans who served during World War I get the recognition they deserve.

Roy is a longtime advocate for Special Olympics. As a Congressman in the House, Roy wrote the original bill that created the Healthy Athletes program, which is part of Special Olympics events, and sponsored legislation extending the program in the Senate. In a *Kansas City Star* op-ed titled, "Sen. Roy Blunt is Special Olympics' biggest ally in Congress," Special Olympics Chairman Tim Shriver praised Roy for the creation of the Unified Schools program, writing, "Though much progress had been made since our founding, we needed leadership to make it possible for our work in schools to be recognized and to grow, so in 2004, then-U.S. Rep. Roy Blunt was the lead sponsor of legislation to build a state of the art school-based program to teach the power of inclusion. We now call those schools Unified Champion Schools, and there are more than 200 in Missouri today." Roy was selected to be part of the U.S. Delegation to the Special Olympics World Games in 2019.

Roy is married to Abigail Blunt, who serves as a trustee of the Children's Inn at NIH, a leader on the Executive Council of the Prevent Cancer Foundation's Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program, a board member of Ford's Theatre Society, and a member of the Economic Club of Washington.