

Biography of Representative Chris Van Hollen

Congressman Chris Van Hollen was elected to Congress in 2002 in a high-profile election that received national attention. He quickly earned a reputation as an active, engaged, and effective member of Congress, rising to become one of the youngest members of the Democratic leadership in 2008. In addition to representing the Eighth District of Maryland and serving in House leadership, Congressman Van Hollen was re-elected by his colleagues in 2012 to serve a second term as the top Democrat on the House Budget Committee. In this position, he serves as a key point person on budget and economic legislation in the House and is working to advance policies that support job creation and economic growth, reduce the deficit, and put America on a path to fiscal sustainability and broadly-shared prosperity.

The Washington Post described Congressman Van Hollen as a “bona fide budget expert” and the LA Times said he “is among his party's best budget minds.” Roll Call has noted that “Van Hollen gets near-universal respect from his colleagues for his intellectual firepower and combination of policy and political chops.”

Congressman Van Hollen is a tireless advocate for Maryland in Congress, and his leadership has helped to obtain funding for a wide range of critical investments in our community, including infrastructure, biotechnology, and education; public transportation in the Washington National Capital area; and anti-gang initiatives. Congressman Van Hollen was given the “Courageous Leadership Award” from The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee in 2012 and was recognized by Washingtonian Magazine as the ‘Best Metro Area Member of Congress’ and as the ‘Best Local Elected Official’ by Bethesda Magazine.

Throughout his career, Congressman Van Hollen has been a champion of education, energy, the environment, health care, and civil rights. He is a leader of efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay, and fought successfully to obtain a historic boost in federal funds for the Bay as part of the Farm Bill and to secure provisions in the Recovery Act that provided loan guarantees for renewable energy projects. He also played an integral role in the effort to pass comprehensive health care reform and fought to ensure that young adults receive expanded access to health insurance. He has been a staunch advocate for critical government reforms. He continues to lead the fight for the DISCLOSE Act to end secret money in elections, and championed bills on lobbying disclosure reform and whistleblower protections that were enacted into law. A former professional staff member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Congressman Van Hollen has a strong background in national security policy. The son of a Foreign Service officer, he lived and studied abroad for many years and has remained active in issues related to U.S. foreign policy and national security.

Congressman Van Hollen has received numerous leadership awards for his legislative activities, including the top award from the Maryland League of Conservation Voters for his work on environmental issues; the “Congressional Champion for Real and Lasting Change” award from Save the Children; the “Outstanding Legislative Leadership Award” from the Mattie Miracle Cancer Foundation for his work on childhood cancer; the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce’s “Legislator of the Year” award; the “Champion of Working Families” award from Progressive Maryland; the “Distinguished Service” award from the Committee for Education Funding; and the

“Champion Award” from the Veteran Institute for Procurement for his work to help veteran-owned businesses.

Before his election to the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman Van Hollen served 4 years in the Maryland House of Delegates and 8 years in the Maryland Senate. He also worked as an attorney in private practice for 10 years. He is a graduate of Swarthmore College, the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and Georgetown University Law Center. He lives in Kensington, Maryland with his wife, Katherine, and their three children, Anna, Nicholas, and Alexander.