

## President pro tempore of the United States Senate



**Incumbent**

**[Orrin Hatch \(R\)](#)**

since January 6, 2015

Mr. President

(Informal and within the Senate)

The Honorable

(Formal)

### Style

**Appointer**

Elected by the [U.S. Senate](#)

### Term length

During the pleasure of the Senate and until another is elected or their term of office as a Senator expires

**Constituting instrument** [U.S. Constitution](#)

**Inaugural holder** [John Langdon](#)  
April 6, 1789

**Formation** March 4, 1789

**Succession** [Third](#)

**Deputy** Any senator, typically a member of the majority party, designated by the President pro tempore

The **president pro tempore of the United States Senate** (/ˌproʊ ˈtɛmpəriː/ or /ˌproʊ ˈtɛmpəreɪ/), also **president pro tem**, is the second-highest-ranking official of the [United States Senate](#). [Article One, Section Three](#) of the [United States Constitution](#) provides that the [Vice President of the United States](#) is, despite not being a senator, the [President of the Senate](#), and mandates that the Senate must choose a president *pro tempore* to act in the Vice President's absence. Unlike the vice president, the president pro tempore is an elected member of the Senate, able to speak or vote on any issue. Selected by the Senate at large, the president pro tempore has enjoyed many privileges and some limited powers. During the vice

president's absence, the president pro tempore is empowered to preside over Senate sessions. In practice, neither the vice president nor the president pro tempore usually presides; instead, the duty of presiding officer is rotated among junior senators of the majority party to give them experience in [parliamentary procedure](#).<sup>[4]</sup>

Since 1890, the most [senior senator](#) in the majority party has generally been chosen to be president pro tempore and holds the office continuously until the election of another. This tradition has been observed without interruption since 1949.<sup>[5]</sup> Since enactment of the current [Presidential Succession Act](#) in 1947, the president pro tempore is third in the [line of succession to the presidency](#), after the vice president and the [Speaker of the House of Representatives](#) and ahead of the [Secretary of State](#).<sup>[6]</sup>

The current President pro tempore of the Senate is [Utah Republican Orrin Hatch](#). Elected on January 6, 2015, he is the 90th person to serve in this office.