

## Brady won't seek re-election in 2022

With his time as the top Republican on the House Ways and Means Committee drawing to a close, Rep. Kevin Brady of Texas announced April 14 that he will retire from Congress at the end of his current term. His decision officially sets off a race among the panel's senior GOP members to take his spot atop the dais beginning in 2023, when Republicans hope to regain the House majority.

"In the end, I'll leave Congress the way I entered it, with the absolute belief that we are a remarkable nation: the greatest in history," Brady said in his announcement.

Brady was first elected to Congress in 1996, joined the Ways and Means Committee in 2001, and took the gavel in 2015 when his predecessor, Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, became House speaker. He led the panel during his party's work on the most significant tax legislation of the past several decades, 2017's Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. In announcing his retirement, he noted that GOP rules limiting committee leaders to six years played a role in his decision, since he would not be able to chair the taxwriting panel "in the next session when Republicans win back the majority." (House Democrats currently hold a six-seat majority in the chamber and because the president's party historically has lost seats in the first midterm election of a new administration, the GOP is optimistic about its ability to pick up the necessary seats to reclaim control in 2022.)

But Brady also said that term limits for committee leaders are "a good thing," noting that they "ensure lawmakers who work hard and who work effectively someday have the opportunity to lead, to bring fresh, new ideas to every committee we have."

Current Ways and Means Chairman Richard Neal, D-Mass., called Brady's decision "a loss for both the Ways and Means Committee and Congress."

"Our working relationship has always been predicated on doing our best for this country we both love so dearly, and I respect his commitment to the people of Texas's 8th Congressional District," Neal said. "From the Family First Prevention Services Act to the SECURE Act, Ranking Member Brady and I have been able to overcome ideological differences time and time again to partner on behalf of the American people."

Brady's departure from the top Republican spot on Ways and Means will open up one of the most coveted positions in Congress. The next most senior GOP member of the panel is Rep. Devin Nunes of California, who currently serves as the ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee. (Although in terms of seniority he was next in line for the top spot on Ways and Means when Paul Ryan became speaker in 2015, he stayed on as Intelligence Committee chairman at Ryan's behest.) Next in the GOP seniority chain is Rep. Vern Buchanan of Florida, who reportedly is "aggressively pursuing" the chairmanship with members of the Republican Steering Committee that make leadership recommendations, followed by Reps. Adrian Smith of Nebraska, Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania, and Jason Smith of Missouri. (Rep. Tom Reed of New York, another of the panel's senior members, has already announced he will not run for re-election next year.)

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