

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye

United States Senator

Daniel K. Inouye, the second most senior member of the U.S. Senate, is known for his distinguished record as a legislative leader, and as a World War II combat veteran with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, who earned the nation's highest award for military valor, the Medal of Honor.

Although he was thrust into the limelight in the 1970s as a member of the Watergate Committee and in 1987 as Chairman of the Iran-Contra Committee, he has also made his mark as a respected legislator able to work in a bipartisan fashion to enact meaningful legislation.

As Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Inouye has been able to focus on defense matters that strengthen national security, and enhance the quality of life for military personnel and their families. This reflects his hope for a more secure world, and his desire to provide the best possible assistance to the men and women who put their lives at risk to protect the United States.

Early in his tenure in the Senate, Senator Inouye delivered the keynote address at the 1968 Democratic National Convention, and was under consideration to become Hubert Humphrey's vice-presidential running mate that same year. He became the first Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in 1976, served as the third-ranking leader among Senate Democrats as Secretary of the Democratic Conference from January 1979 through 1988. He chaired the Senate Democratic Central America Study Group to assess U.S. policy and served as Senior Counselor to the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America (also known as the Kissinger Commission).

Senator Inouye has championed the interest of Hawaii's people throughout his career. With his support, Hawaii's infrastructure has been strengthened, its economy diversified, and its natural resources protected and restored. For local residents, particularly Native Hawaiians, whose history and welcoming culture give the state its defining characteristics, Senator Inouye has increased job training and employment opportunities, provided more community healthcare, and provided support services and research to help small businesses and diverse sectors, from agriculture to high technology.

His imprint is seen on all of the state's islands through initiatives such as Honolulu and Neighbor Island bus service, steady construction jobs in support of military infrastructure, the diversification of agriculture, the birth of the Kauai High Technology Center and the rise of the Pacific Missile Range Facility, the launch of the Maui supercomputer, the expansion of national parks and wildlife refuges in Hawaii, and the protection of Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, the alala (Hawaiian crow), the nene goose and coral reefs.

Senator Inouye got his start in politics in 1954 when he was elected to the Territorial House of Representatives; soon after his election, his Democratic colleagues, well aware of Inouye's leadership abilities, selected him as their Majority Leader. In 1958 he was elected to the Territorial Senate. When Hawaii became a state in 1959, he was elected the first Congressman from the new state, and was re-elected to a full term in 1960. He was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 1962 and is now serving his eighth consecutive term.

On May 24, 2008, Senator Inouye married Irene Hirano, who is President of the U.S.-Japan Council. He was married for nearly 57 years to Margaret Awamura Inouye, a former instructor at the University of Hawaii, who passed away on March 13, 2006. He has a son, Ken, who is married to Jessica Carroll from Rochester, New York.

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