

## **Chairman Tom Cole Biography**

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Identified by Time Magazine as “one of the sharpest minds in the House,” Tom Cole is currently serving in his tenth term in the U.S. House of Representatives. At the outset of his service in Congress, Cole was named one of the "Five Freshmen to Watch" by Roll Call. In 2016, he was recognized by Newsmax as the “hardest working member in Congress.” He was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 2017.

Cole is recognized as a tireless advocate for taxpayers and small businesses, supporter of a strong national defense and leader in promoting biomedical research. He is considered the foremost expert in the House on issues related to Native Americans and tribal governments.

Since 2009, Cole has served on the powerful House Appropriations Committee, where he sits on the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (LHHS). While serving as LHHS Chairman during the 115th Congress, Cole shepherded completion of the subcommittee’s annual funding bill and participated in the bicameral conference committee that negotiated the final product for fiscal year 2019. When it was signed into law in September 2018, it marked the first time in 22 years that the bill was completed in full and on time.

Cole was appointed to the House Rules Committee in 2013 and has remained on the panel since then. He served as the Ranking Member during the 116th and 117th congresses and has since been made the Chairman. Cole also serves as a Deputy Whip for the Republican Conference and sits on the House Republican Steering Committee.

Cole has a significant background of service to his home state of Oklahoma. He has served as the State Chairman of the Oklahoma Republican Party, District Director to former Congressman Mickey Edwards, a member of the Oklahoma State Senate and as Oklahoma's Secretary of State. In this capacity, he served as former Governor Frank Keating's chief legislative strategist and liaison to the state's federal delegation. Keating tapped Cole to lead Oklahoma's successful effort to secure federal funds to assist in the rebuilding of Oklahoma City in the wake of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995.

Cole is widely regarded as one of the GOP's top political strategists. He served as Executive Director of the National Republican Congressional Committee in the 1992 cycle. He also served as Chief of Staff of the Republican National Committee during the historic 2000 cycle in which Republicans won the presidency, the Senate and the House for the first time in 48 years. In the 2008 cycle, Cole served as Chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee.

Cole is a founding partner and past president of CHS & Associates, a nationally recognized political consulting and survey research firm based in Oklahoma City. The firm has been named one of the top 20 in its field and has dozens of past and current clients scattered across the country.

A former college instructor in history and politics, Cole holds a B.A. from Grinnell College, an M.A. from Yale University and a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. Cole has been a Thomas Watson Fellow and a Fulbright Fellow at the University of London. Cole has also received honorary degrees from Randall University (formerly Hillsdale Bible College) in Moore, Oklahoma City University and Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. He previously served for six years on the Smithsonian Institution Board of Regents.

Cole is a fifth generation Oklahoman and an enrolled member of the Chickasaw Nation. He is one of only five Native Americans currently serving in Congress. Since 2009, he has served as the Republican Co-Chair of the Congressional Native American Caucus. The National Congress of American Indians has recognized Cole's distinguished service with the Congressional Leadership award on three different occasions (2007, 2011 and 2017), more than any other Member of Congress in the history of the organization. He was inducted into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame in 2004.

Cole's late mother, Helen, was also a member of the Chickasaw Hall of Fame and served as a state representative, state senator and the Mayor of Moore in her native state of Oklahoma. Cole's late father, John, served 20 years in the United States Air Force and worked an additional two decades as a civilian federal employee at Tinker Air Force Base.

Tom and his wife, Ellen, have one son, Mason, and reside in Moore, Oklahoma.