McCarthyism is the term describing a period of intense anti-[Communist](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist) suspicion in the [United States](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) that lasted roughly from the late [1940s](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/1940s) to the mid to late [1950s](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/1950s).

The term gets its name from [U.S. Senator](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Senate) [Joseph McCarthy](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_McCarthy), a [Republican](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Republican_Party) of [Wisconsin](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisconsin).

The period of McCarthyism is also referred to as the Second Red Scare. It happened at the same times as increased fears of Communist influence on American institutions, [espionage](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Espionage) by [Soviet](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) agents such as the Rosenbergs, heightened tension from Soviet control over Eastern Europe, the success of the [Chinese Communist revolution](https://simple.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chinese_Communist_revolution&action=edit&redlink=1) ([1949](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949)) and the [Korean War](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_War) ([1950](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/1950)-[1953](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/1953)).