Bob Menendez

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• Menendez is one of four Latinos in the Senate.

• Menendez has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

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Robert Menendez (/mɛˈnɛndɛz/; born January 1, 1954) is an American politician serving as the senior United States Senator from New Jersey, a seat he has held since 2006. A member of the Democratic Party, he was first appointed to the U.S. Senate by Governor Jon Corzine, and was later elected Chair of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in January 2013. He stepped down from that post in April 2015 upon being indicted on federal corruption charges.

In 1974, at the age of 20, he was first elected to the Union City School District's Board of Education. In 1986, he won the election for Mayor of Union City. In 1988, while continuing to serve as mayor, he was elected to represent the state's 33rd district in the General Assembly of New Jersey and, within three years, moved to the New Jersey State Senate, upon winning the March 1991 special election for the 33rd Senate district. The next year he won a seat in the Congress of the United States for the House of Representatives and represented New Jersey's 13th congressional district for six two-year terms, from 1993 to 2006. In January 2006, he was appointed to fill the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Jon Corzine (who had been elected 54th Governor of New Jersey), and was elected to a full six-year term in November; he was reelected in 2012 and 2018. Menendez is one of four Latinos in the Senate. In 2015, he was ranked #1 on The Hudson Reporter's annual Power List of the "Fifty Most Powerful Political Figures in Hudson County".

In 2015, Menendez was indicted on federal corruption charges in the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, related to alleged favors he did for Florida ophthalmologist Salomon Melgen and gifts he received from him, including campaign donations and private flights. Melgen was charged as well. Menendez has pleaded not guilty to all charges. His trial ended in a hung jury and a mistrial on November 16, 2017. On January 31, 2018, the Justice Department announced that it was dropping all charges against Menendez.

Early life

• Menendez was admitted to the New Jersey Bar in 1980 and became a lawyer in private practice.

• Robert Menendez was born on January 1, 1954 in New York City to Cuban immigrants who had left Cuba a few months earlier, in 1953.

• While at Union Hill, Menendez became the student body president.

• The family subsequently moved to neighboring New Jersey where he grew up in an apartment in Union City, New Jersey.

Robert Menendez was born on January 1, 1954 in New York City to Cuban immigrants who had left Cuba a few months earlier, in 1953. His father, Mario Menéndez, was a carpenter, and his mother, Evangelina, was a seamstress. The family subsequently moved to neighboring New Jersey where he grew up in an apartment in Union City, New Jersey. He attended Union Hill High School, where his speech teacher, Gail Harper, helped Menendez emerge as a public speaker. Menendez explains, "My mother and Miss Harper made me understand the power of education, what it means to put a premium on learning and working hard." While at Union Hill, Menendez became the student body president. He went on to become the first in his family to go to college, attending Saint Peter's College in Jersey City, where he became a member of the Lambda Theta Phi fraternity. He graduated with a B.A. in political science, and subsequently earned his Juris Doctor degree from Rutgers Law School in 1979 at the Newark campus. Menendez was admitted to the New Jersey Bar in 1980 and became a lawyer in private practice.

Early political career (1986–1993)

• Menendez was elected mayor of Union City, the state's 13th most populous locality, in 1986 after an unsuccessful run against the popular Musto in 1982.

• Menendez served as mayor until 1992 and, following election, in November 1987, to represent the state's 33rd district in General Assembly, continued to fulfill both elective offices until March 1991, when he moved from the General Assembly's 33rd district to the New Jersey Senate's 33rd district, upon winning the special election called following the death of State Senator Christopher Jackman.

He was elected to the Union City Board of Education in 1974, the youngest ever to do so.

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Representative Menendez in 2005

U.S. House of Representatives (1993–2006)

Elections

• Congressman Frank Guarini, of New Jersey's 14th congressional district, decided to retire after redistricting.

• Menendez decided to run in the primary—the real contest in this heavily Democratic district—and defeated Robert Haney Jr. in the Democratic primary 68%–32%.

• After that, he won re-election every two years with at least 71% of the vote until he was appointed to the U.S. Senate in January 2006.

In 1992, incumbent Democratic U.S. Congressman Frank Guarini, of New Jersey's 14th congressional district, decided to retire after redistricting. The district had been renumbered as the 13th district, and reconfigured as a Latino-majority district. Menendez decided to run in the primary—the real contest in this heavily Democratic district—and defeated Robert Haney Jr. in the Democratic primary 68%–32%. He won the general election with 64% of the vote, defeating New Jersey Superior Court Judge Fred J. Theemling Jr. in the general election. After that, he won re-election every two years with at least 71% of the vote until he was appointed to the U.S. Senate in January 2006.

Tenure

• Menendez maintains that he rented the property out below market-value because "he was supportive of its work".

• In 2005 a The New York Times Op-Ed characterized Menendez by stating, "Since entering politics as a corruption-fighting mayor of Union City, N.J., Mr. Menendez has become a proponent of business as usual.

• In 2001, Menendez voted in favor of the PATRIOT Act, and for its reauthorization in 2006.

Menendez, who is described as very close to Republicans on foreign policy voted for the failed Kosovo Resolution, authorizing the use of military force against Yugoslavia in the Kosovo War. He was an early advocate of preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear capabilities, sponsoring the Iran Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1998, which passed the House, but failed to pass in the Senate.

Menendez voted in favor of Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Terrorists, authorizing the President the use of military force in Afghanistan in response to the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks. In 2002, Menendez voted against the Iraq Resolution to authorize the invasion of Iraq.

Menendez voted against the United Nations Reform Act of 2005, cutting U.S. funding to the United Nations by 50% over 3 years, and was a sponsor of the Tsunami Orphans and Unaccompanied Children Act of 2005 to provide assistance to victims of the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami.

In 2001, Menendez voted in favor of the PATRIOT Act, and for its reauthorization in 2006.

In the 105th Congress, Menendez voted in favor of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, repealing provisions of the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, repealing provisions that limited Investment banks from acquiring Insurance companies or other Commercial banks, and voted in favor of the Commodity Futures Modernization Act of 2000. After the 2001 Enron scandal, Menendez voted with 333 other members of the House in favor of the Sarbanes–Oxley Act.

Although he had sometimes been portrayed as the political boss of Hudson County, he strongly dislikes this appellation, particularly because, according to an anonymous close source quoted in the December 11, 2005 Union City Reporter, "there is no boss of Hudson County". In 2005 a The New York Times Op-Ed characterized Menendez by stating, "Since entering politics as a corruption-fighting mayor of Union City, N.J., Mr. Menendez has become a proponent of business as usual. He has long been an entrenched de facto leader of the Hudson County Democratic machine."

On August 27, 2006, two Republican state lawmakers filed an ethics complaint against Menendez, alleging he broke conflict-of-interest rules when he rented property out to a nonprofit agency that receives federal funds. Menendez helped the organization win designation as a Federally Qualified Health Center in 1998. That designation allowed the agency to receive additional federal grants. Menendez allies noted that the organization in question, the North Hudson Community Action Corp., which provides social services and health care to the poor and was founded in 1960, had received federal funding for years before Menendez was in Congress, and receives its funding based on mathematical formulas. Menendez maintains that he rented the property out below market-value because "he was supportive of its work". The total rent collected over nine years was over $300,000.

In September 2006, just a few weeks before the 2006 senate elections, the office of the US District Attorney, Republican Chris Christie, began investigating the rental deal with NHCAC, subpoenaing records from them. Some Democrats criticized the investigation, particularly the timing of the investigation and news leaks, as being politically motivated.

On August 18, 2015, Menendez announced his opposition to the nuclear deal with Iran, saying "President Obama continues to erroneously say that this agreement permanently stops Iran from having a nuclear bomb, Let's be clear: What the agreement does is to recommit Iran not to pursue a nuclear bomb, a promise they have already violated in the past."

U.S. Senate (2006–present)

• Menendez was the sixth Latino to serve in the United States Senate.

• In January 2006, Menendez was appointed by Governor Jon Corzine to fill the remaining year in the Senate seat from which Corzine resigned upon being elected the previous month as Governor of New Jersey.

In January 2006, Menendez was appointed by Governor Jon Corzine to fill the remaining year in the Senate seat from which Corzine resigned upon being elected the previous month as Governor of New Jersey. While several other names had been mentioned, Menendez was the early favorite among pundits for Governor-elect Corzine's replacement to fill the vacancy that would be created when Corzine resigned from the Senate. Corzine's decision to appoint Menendez got the support of several Latino groups, including the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials. Menendez was the sixth Latino to serve in the United States Senate.

Senator Portrait of Robert Menendez

Elections

1996

• Senator, Democrat Frank Lautenberg, also announced his planned retirement, Menendez again decided not to run, with the Democratic nomination for the November 2000 race ultimately going to Goldman Sachs CEO Jon Corzine who won the general election.

• Senator Bill Bradley decided to retire in August 1995, Menendez made known his intention to run in the November 1996 election for the seat, but eventually dropped out of the race and endorsed Robert Torricelli, the Democrat representing New Jersey's 9th congressional district.

When incumbent Democrat U.S. Senator Bill Bradley decided to retire in August 1995, Menendez made known his intention to run in the November 1996 election for the seat, but eventually dropped out of the race and endorsed Robert Torricelli, the Democrat representing New Jersey's 9th congressional district. Similarly, in 1999, when the state's other U.S. Senator, Democrat Frank Lautenberg, also announced his planned retirement, Menendez again decided not to run, with the Democratic nomination for the November 2000 race ultimately going to Goldman Sachs CEO Jon Corzine who won the general election.

2006

• In the midterm elections held November 7, 2006, near the end of his one-year appointment, Menendez ran to retain his seat in the Senate.

• He defeated Republican Thomas Kean Jr., incumbent minority whip in the New Jersey Senate and son of former state governor Thomas Kean, with 53% of the vote to Kean's 45%.

• Menendez was endorsed by several newspapers including The New York Times, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Star-Ledger, and The Record.

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2012

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2018

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Committee assignments

• Menendez is on the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, Finance and Foreign Relations committees.

• Committee on Foreign Relations (Ranking Member)

As ranking member of the full committee, Menendez is an ex officio member of all subcommittees[59]

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Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development (Chairman)[53]

Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Protection[54]

Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment[55]

Committee on Finance

Subcommittee on Health Care

Subcommittee on Taxation, IRS Oversight, and Long-Term Growth

Subcommittee on International Trade, Customs, and Global Competitiveness

Committee on Foreign Relations (Ranking Member)

As ranking member of the full committee, Menendez is an ex officio member of all subcommittees[59]

Caucus memberships

• Narcotics Abuse and Control Caucus

• Afterschool Caucuses

• Friends of the Irish National Caucus

• Congressional Autism Caucus

• Human Rights Caucus

• International Conservation Caucus

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Friends of the Irish National Caucus

Afterschool Caucuses

Congressional Hispanic Caucus

Tenure

Immigration

• Menendez introduced the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2011.

• Menendez had introduced multiple pieces of legislation in attempts to overhaul what Menendez calls our "failed immigration system."

• Menendez voted against Senate Amendment 1151, declaring English as the national language of the Federal government of the United States.

Menendez is an "aggressive advocate" of immigration reform, calling it the "civil rights issue of our time". Menendez had introduced multiple pieces of legislation in attempts to overhaul what Menendez calls our "failed immigration system." Menendez introduced the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2011. It was seen[by whom?] as a sweeping overhaul of the U.S. Immigration System; the 697-page bill died in the Senate Judiciary Committee. In 2009 he introduced the Orphans, Widows, and Widowers Protection Act, granting a pathway to citizenship for the undocumented widowers and orphans of deceased U.S. Citizens.

Menendez is a strong supporter of the DREAM Act, saying that, "Children should not be punished for the actions of their parents. These kids have grown up as Americans, worked hard in school and now they want to serve our country in the military or pursue a college education. This is the only home many of them have known and they should be encouraged to pursue the American dream." He voted for the DREAM Act in 2007 and was a cosponsor along with 31 other members of the Senate in the Act's failed passage in 2010.

Menendez voted against denying legal status to illegal immigrants convicted of domestic violence, crimes against children and crimes relating to the illegal purchase or sale of firearms, but voted in favor of establishing a six-month to twenty-year ban for undocumented immigrants seeking citizenship who had been convicted for the same crimes along with of obstruction of justice, human trafficking and the participation of criminal gang activity.

Menendez has been a supporter of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006, and Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007, voting for both bills.

Menendez voted against Senate Amendment 1151, declaring English as the national language of the Federal government of the United States. He voted to continue federal funding for declared "sanctuary cities."

He voted for the Secure Fence Act of 2006, building 700 miles (1,100 km) of physical barriers and expanding surveillance at the Mexico-United States border, and was a supporter of Senate Amendment 4775, a provision Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2007 which would have appropriated $1.8 billion for the construction of 370 miles (600 km) of triple-layered fencing, and 461 miles (742 km) of vehicle barriers along parts of the Southwest.

On January 28, 2013, Menendez was a member of a bi-partisan group of eight Senators which announced principles for comprehensive immigration reform (CIR). Menendez was recognized in 2014 by the National Council of La Raza (America's largest Latino advocacy organization) for his work in supporting immigration reform as a member of the "Gang of Eight."

Disaster relief

• In April 2018, Menendez was one of five Democratic senators to sign a letter to FEMA administrator Brock Long calling on FEMA to enter an agreement with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development that would "stand up the Disaster Housing Assistance Program and address the medium- and longer-term housing needs" of evacuees of Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria.

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Environment

• In June 2019, Menendez was one of forty-four senators to introduce the International Climate Accountability Act, legislation that would prevent President Trump from using funds in an attempt to withdraw from the Paris Agreement and directing the president's administration to instead develop a strategic plan for the United States that would allow it to meet its commitment under the Paris Agreement.

Menendez introduced legislation that would give incentives for the conversion of vehicles to run on natural gas; the bill did not make it out of committee in its first incarnation, and failed to receive 60 votes required to pass in 2012.

In February 2019, in response to reports of the EPA intending to decide against setting drinking water limits for perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) as part of an upcoming national strategy to manage the aforementioned class of chemicals, Menendez was one of twenty senators to sign a letter to Acting EPA Administrator Andrew R. Wheeler calling on the agency "to develop enforceable federal drinking water standards for PFOA and PFOS, as well as institute immediate actions to protect the public from contamination from additional per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)."

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Education

• In 2012 Menendez received a 94% rating from the Human Rights Campaign.

• During a press conference about the Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act, Menendez claimed that New Jersey was facing a $10.5 billion shortfall in its 2012 fiscal budget that would lead to cuts in state spending on education.

• Menendez voted for the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr.

Menendez sponsored the Student Non-Discrimination Act, expanding Title IX of the Education Amendments Act to LGBT students, and the Safe Schools Improvement Act of 2011 which would also amend the Higher Education Act of 1965. Menendez voted for the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act in 2009 saying that: "When someone is harassed, assaulted or killed simply because of the type of person they are, it's a crime against an entire community and our nation's values."

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During a press conference about the Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act, Menendez claimed that New Jersey was facing a $10.5 billion shortfall in its 2012 fiscal budget that would lead to cuts in state spending on education. This statement was rated as "false" by Politifact because the 2012 budget was in fact balanced and increased funding for education.

LGBT policy

• Menendez voted for the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) as a congressman in 1996; on December 18, 2011, he came out in support, and is a cosponsor, of the Respect for Marriage Act, which would repeal DOMA.

• Menendez also voted for the U.S. Military's Don't ask, don't tell as a congressman, and was a cosponsor DADT repeal act in 2010.

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In 1999, Menendez voted against a proposed amendment which would have banned adoption in Washington D.C. by same-sex couples and other persons not related by blood or marriage. The amendment failed with 213 votes in favor and 215 votes against.

On the issue of gay rights Menendez said "Two people who want to be committed to each other should be able to enter into marriage, and they should receive the benefits that flow from that commitment."

Gun policy

• In January 2019, Menendez was one of forty senators to introduce the Background Check Expansion Act, a bill that would require background checks for either the sale or transfer of all firearms including all unlicensed sellers.

• Menendez has an "F" rating from the National Rifle Association and an "F-" rating from the Gun Owners of America due to his support of gun law reform.

Menendez has an "F" rating from the National Rifle Association and an "F-" rating from the Gun Owners of America due to his support of gun law reform. Specifically, he supports universal background checks and a ban on assault weapons.

In January 2019, Menendez was one of forty senators to introduce the Background Check Expansion Act, a bill that would require background checks for either the sale or transfer of all firearms including all unlicensed sellers. Exceptions to the bill's background check requirement included transfers between members of law enforcement, loaning firearms for either hunting or sporting events on a temporary basis, providing firearms as gifts to members of one's immediate family, firearms being transferred as part of an inheritance, or giving a firearm to another person temporarily for immediate self-defense.

In June 2019, Menendez was one of four senators to cosponsor the Help Empower Americans to Respond (HEAR) Act, legislation that would ban suppressors being imported, sold, made, sent elsewhere or possessed and grant a silencer buyback program as well as include certain exceptions for current and former law enforcement personnel and others. The bill was intended to respond to the Virginia Beach shooting where the perpetrator used a .45-caliber handgun with multiple extended magazines and a suppressor.

Healthcare

• In December 2018, Menendez was one of forty-two senators to sign a letter to Trump administration officials Alex Azar, Seema Verma, and Steve Mnuchin arguing that the administration was improperly using Section 1332 of the Affordable Care Act to authorize states to "increase health care costs for millions of consumers while weakening protections for individuals with pre-existing conditions."

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In January 2019, during the 2018–19 United States federal government shutdown, Menendez was one of thirty-four senators to sign a letter to Commissioner of Food and Drugs Scott Gottlieb recognizing the efforts of the FDA to address the effect of the government shutdown on the public health and employees while remaining alarmed "that the continued shutdown will result in increasingly harmful effects on the agency’s employees and the safety and security of the nation’s food and medical products."

Menendez with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, Kiev, Ukraine, September 2014

Foreign affairs

• In February 2006, Menendez cosponsored legislation with New York Senator Hillary Clinton to make it illegal for foreign governments to buy U.S. port operations.

• Menendez said, "Our ports are the front lines of the war on terrorism.

• In January 2019, Menendez opposed President Donald Trump's planned withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria and Afghanistan as a threat to U.S. national security.

In February 2006, Menendez cosponsored legislation with New York Senator Hillary Clinton to make it illegal for foreign governments to buy U.S. port operations. The legislation was a direct response to Dubai Ports World's efforts to purchase Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O) of the United Kingdom, which operates six major U.S. ports. Menendez said, "Our ports are the front lines of the war on terrorism. They are both vulnerable targets for attack and venues for smuggling and human trafficking. We wouldn't turn the Border Patrol or the Customs Service over to a foreign government, and we can't afford to turn our ports over to one either."

On April 25, 2008, a former undercover F.B.I. agent revealed in the book Ruse: Undercover with FBI Counterintelligence that Cuban diplomats approached freelance blogger and journalist Robert Eringer to investigate Menendez. It was suggested that the Cuban government was determined to generate derogatory information about the senator, along with Florida Representatives Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Lincoln Diaz-Balart, because of their anti-Castro lobbying efforts.

In October 2009, Menendez sent a strongly worded letter of protest to Cyprus President Dimitris Christofias, castigating him for his praise of Cuba's totalitarian system. Christofias, the leader of AKEL, Cyprus's Communist Party, from 1988 to 2009 and president from 2008 to 2013, had paid a state visit to Cuba in September 2009 for the opening of Cyprus's new embassy and, in his speech, made a number of anti-American embargo references, and spoke of the "common struggle of Cyprus and Cuba". In his letter to Christofias, Menendez stated "you cannot claim human rights violations by Turkey in your country and then ignore such violations in Cuba. Second, you cannot call for property rights for Greek Cypriots and then deny them on Cuba. Finally, you cannot take issue with the militarization of northern Cyprus and then ignore the state security apparatus that oppresses the Cuban people."

In December 2010, Menendez voted for the ratification of New Start, a nuclear arms reduction treaty between the United States and Russian Federation obliging both countries to have no more than 1,550 strategic warheads as well as 700 launchers deployed during the next seven years along with providing a continuation of on-site inspections that halted when START I expired the previous year. It was the first arms treaty with Russia in eight years.

In 2018, Menendez urged Vice President Mike Pence to enter talks with Ecuador about withdrawing its asylum for Julian Assange. His letter, signed by nine other senators alleged that it was Assange's goal to "undermine democratic processes globally". In March 2018, Menendez voted against Bernie Sanders' and Chris Murphy's resolution that would end U.S. support for the Saudi Arabian-led intervention in Yemen. However, Menendez criticized Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, saying "The Saudi Coalition bears significant responsibility for the magnitude of human suffering and scale of destruction in Yemen. Seventy five percent of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance and more than 8 million are on the brink of famine." Noting concerns with the language after voting for Bob Corker's resolution naming the Saudi crown prince as "responsible" for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, he stated: "regardless of all of my other concerns about language is the central essence of what the chairman is going to do. I think it's incredibly important for the Senate to speak on that issue and hopefully speak with one voice."

Menendez condemned the genocide of the Rohingya Muslim minority in Myanmar and called for a stronger response to the crisis.

Menendez raised the issue of Xinjiang re-education camps and described China’s treatment of Uyghur Muslim minority as "beyond abhorrent". Menendez said: "The President needs to have a clear and consistent approach to China, and not turn a blind eye as a million Muslims are unjustly imprisoned and forced into labour camps by an autocratic regime."

In January 2019, Menendez opposed President Donald Trump's planned withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria and Afghanistan as a threat to U.S. national security.

In April 2019, Menendez was one of thirty-four senators to sign a letter to President Trump encouraging him "to listen to members of your own Administration and reverse a decision that will damage our national security and aggravate conditions inside Central America", asserting that Trump had "consistently expressed a flawed understanding of U.S. foreign assistance" since becoming president and that he was "personally undermining efforts to promote U.S. national security and economic prosperity" through preventing the use of Fiscal Year 2018 national security funding. The senators argued that foreign assistance to Central American countries created less migration to the U.S., citing the funding's helping to improve conditions in those countries.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee

• Following his being indicted, Menendez stepped down as ranking member.

• Menendez became chairman of the prestigious Foreign Relations committee following John Kerry's confirmation as Secretary of State in January 2013.

• In the 114th United States Congress, as the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Menendez continues to be a leader on issues regarding Iran[clarification needed], supporting legislation that would take a "hard line" on that nation.

Menendez became chairman of the prestigious Foreign Relations committee following John Kerry's confirmation as Secretary of State in January 2013. His "Syria force resolution" was praised by President Obama and others. In the 114th United States Congress, as the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Menendez continues to be a leader on issues regarding Iran[clarification needed], supporting legislation that would take a "hard line" on that nation. Following his being indicted, Menendez stepped down as ranking member.

Foreign affairs legislation sponsored

• Organization of American States Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013 (S. 793; 113th Congress) – Menendez introduced this bill on April 24, 2013.

• The bill passed the Senate on January 27, 2014 and the House on January 28, 2014.

• Support for United States-Republic of Korea Civil Nuclear Cooperation Act – Menendez introduced this bill that would authorize the President to extend the term of the "Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Korea Concerning Civil Uses of Atomic Energy" to a date no later than March 19, 2016.

Organization of American States Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013 (S. 793; 113th Congress) – Menendez introduced this bill on April 24, 2013. The bill would require the Secretary of State to develop a multiyear strategy to bolster the Organization of American States (OAS) and improve the OAS's processes for managing its budget and personnel. The act would require the Secretary to provide quarterly briefings to the Congress on the progress of implementing that strategy.

Support for United States-Republic of Korea Civil Nuclear Cooperation Act – Menendez introduced this bill that would authorize the President to extend the term of the "Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Korea Concerning Civil Uses of Atomic Energy" to a date no later than March 19, 2016. The bill passed the Senate on January 27, 2014 and the House on January 28, 2014.

Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014 was introduced to the 113th Congress on September 16, 2014 to address pro-Russian unrest in Ukraine. The bill was signed into law by U.S. President Barack Obama on December 18, 2014.

Other issues

• Menendez denied personal motivation for the block.

• Menendez appealed the ruling.

• An effort to recall Menendez was launched in early 2010 by a group of New Jersey citizens.

• In 2009, Menendez succeeded Senator Chuck Schumer of New York as chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

• On September 28, 2006 Menendez voted for the Military Commissions Act.

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On June 12, 2007, Menendez endorsed Hillary Clinton's presidential bid and was given the position of National Campaign Co-Chair. Subsequently, he made numerous media appearances voicing his support for her campaign.

In 2009, Menendez succeeded Senator Chuck Schumer of New York as chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. Menendez's tenure, which has followed two straight election cycles of dramatic Democratic gains, has been marked by more troubled Democratic outlook. Critics of Menendez have pointed out the surprising Democratic loss in the 2010 Massachusetts Senate special election that followed the death of Sen. Ted Kennedy; Menendez's lower-key, more cautious management style; and Democratic problems caused by retirements in Indiana and elsewhere. Others, such as Schumer, have defended Menendez's performance, citing the negative political climate.

An effort to recall Menendez was launched in early 2010 by a group of New Jersey citizens. Although Article 1, Paragraph 2(b) of the New Jersey Constitution expressly authorizes such a recall, state officials fought the effort in court. On March 16, 2010, a State Appeals court ruled that the recall petition could go forward. Menendez said he was surprised that a group claiming to be true to the Constitution is trying now, in his words, "to undermine it". Menendez appealed the ruling. Legal experts have debated the constitutionality of a state recall of a federal officeholder. On November 18, 2010, the New Jersey Supreme Court found that the New Jersey provision violated the U.S. Constitution.

In 2010, The Wall Street Journal reported that Menendez had written to Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, asking him to approve an acquisition that would rescue from the prospect of receivership a New Jersey bank, First Bank Americano, operated by Menendez contributors. It was discovered that "eight of 15 directors, including the bank's chairman and vice-chairman, have been contributors to Menendez or his political action committee." Former federal bank regulator William K. Black called the letter "grotesquely inappropriate" and said that "the letter crossed an unofficial line by asking regulators to approve an application instead of simply asking that it be given consideration." An aide to the senator said that his decision to write the letter was not influenced by political contributions. A highly critical report by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation found that the institution had engaged in unsafe or unsound banking practices, including operating without adequate supervision by its board of directors, an excessive level of delinquent or bad loans, inadequate earnings and insufficient coverage of its assets.

On January 5, 2012 Menendez blocked Judge Patty Shwartz, an Obama administration nominee to a federal judgeship, drawing speculation that the block was placed because of Shwartz's relationship with the head of the public corruption unit for New Jersey's federal prosecutor who had investigated the senator during his 2006 election fight. Menendez denied personal motivation for the block. He has long contended that the corruption investigation was politically motivated. The investigation was closed in late 2011, with no charges filed.

On December 12, 2012 it was reported that the Senator's office had an unpaid intern volunteering who had let his visitor visa expire and who was a registered sex offender. The Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement had been aware of the man as early as October 2012 but according to the Associated Press, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) instructed their Federal agents not to arrest the man until after Election Day. Menendez denied knowing about the allegation of the directive to delay the arrest and only recently learned of the arrest. According to two federal officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the case, the intern was arrested in front of his home in New Jersey on December 6, 2012.

In May 2014, Menendz received an award for Political Courage at a gala organized by the American Friends of [Israeli political party] Likud, where he reaffirmed the strong alliance between the United States and Israel and stated, "several thousands of years of history lead to an undeniable conclusion, the reestablishment of the State of Israel in modern times is a political reality with roots going back to the time of Abraham and Sarah and historical texts and artifacts". He rejected the boycott Israel movements.

In February 2015, The Intercept published an investigative work by Ali Gharib and Eli Clifton, assisted in part by the work of independent researcher Joanne Stocker, indicating that Menendez has received at least two donations from the People's Mujahedin of Iran (MEK) before September 2012, when it was listed as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Menendez became an outspoken advocate of the MEK after it was delisted, taking more than $25,000 between 2013 and 2015.

Menendez spearheaded a nonbinding resolution in July 2018 "warning President Trump not to let the Russian government question diplomats and other officials". The resolution states the United States "should refuse to make available any current or former diplomat, civil servant, political appointee, law enforcement official or member of the Armed Forces of the United States for questioning by the government of Vladimir Putin". It passed 98-0.

In April 2019, Menendez was one of forty-one senators to sign a bipartisan letter to the housing subcommittee praising the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 4 Capacity Building program as authorizing "HUD to partner with national nonprofit community development organizations to provide education, training, and financial support to local community development corporations (CDCs) across the country" and expressing disappointment that President Trump's budget "has slated this program for elimination after decades of successful economic and community development." The senators wrote of their hope that the subcommittee would support continued funding for Section 4 in Fiscal Year 2020.

Attempted implication in prostitution scandal

• Menendez's office described the allegations as "manufactured" by a "right-wing blog" as a politically motivated smear.

• On March 18, 2013 police in the Dominican Republic announced that three women had said they had been paid $300–425 each to lie about having had sex with Menendez.

• One of the women who had accused Menendez stated that she had been paid to falsely implicate the Senator and had never met him.

In November 2012, the conservative political news and opinion website Daily Caller published allegations that Menendez had contact with underage prostitutes in the Dominican Republic. The allegations were promoted by Republican Party operatives, who arranged interviews for two women accusing Menendez of patronizing prostitutes with ABC News and the Daily Caller. However, ABC News and other news organizations such as The New York Times, and the New York Post declined to publish the allegations, viewing them as unsubstantiated and lacking credibility. One of the women who had accused Menendez stated that she had been paid to falsely implicate the Senator and had never met him. The Daily Caller says this woman was not interviewed for their story. Menendez's office described the allegations as "manufactured" by a "right-wing blog" as a politically motivated smear. On March 18, 2013 police in the Dominican Republic announced that three women had said they had been paid $300–425 each to lie about having had sex with Menendez.

2015 federal indictment on corruption charges

• On January 31, 2018, the Justice Department announced they were dropping all charges against Menendez.

• On April 1, 2015, the United States Department of Justice indicted both Menendez and Melgen, charging Menendez with—among other crimes—bribery, fraud, and making false statements.

• In April 2018, Menendez was "severely admonished" by the United States Senate Select Committee on Ethics in a letter.

In 2013, reports surfaced that a federal grand jury in Miami was investigating Menendez regarding his role in advocating for the business interests of Florida ophthalmologist Salomon Melgen, one of his close friends and major donors. On April 1, 2015, the United States Department of Justice indicted both Menendez and Melgen, charging Menendez with—among other crimes—bribery, fraud, and making false statements. According to the indictment Menendez asked top State Department officials to pressure the Dominican Republic's government into enforcing a port-security contract that would benefit Melgen's company while at the same time Melgen was promising to give $60,000 to Menendez's political campaign. Prosecutors also charged that Menendez acted as Melgen's "personal senator," helping obtain visas for several of Melgen's girlfriends.

In return, Menendez is accused of accepting a range of perks from Melgen, including trips on Melgen's private jet, three nights at a five-star Paris hotel, a round of golf at a private club in West Palm Beach and access to an exclusive Dominican resort - some of which Menendez allegedly didn't report on financial disclosure forms. Melgen also donated a substantial amount of money to benefit Menendez's political campaigns, and prosecutors claim that $750,000 of those contributions were tied to personal benefits Menendez accepted.

Menendez voluntarily stepped down as ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee after his indictment. Menendez's trial began on September 6, 2017, before Judge William H. Walls of the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey. On November 16, 2017, the judge declared a mistrial due to the jury's continuing inability to reach a unanimous verdict on any of the charges. On January 31, 2018, the Justice Department announced they were dropping all charges against Menendez. The Menendez case was strongly shaped by McDonnell v. United States, the 2016 Supreme Court decision to dismiss the corruption conviction of former Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell, which narrowed the legal definition of public corruption and made it harder for prosecutors to prove that a political official engaged in bribery.

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Awards and honors

• 3 after him.

• In December 2013 the town of West New York, New Jersey, which borders his childhood home of Union City to the north, honored Menendez by renaming its Public School No.

In December 2013 the town of West New York, New Jersey, which borders his childhood home of Union City to the north, honored Menendez by renaming its Public School No. 3 after him. The renaming of the elementary school was celebrated with a December 4, 2013, ceremony at that school at which city, county, state and federal dignitaries were present and spoke in various addresses of support and compliments.

Personal life

• Menendez currently lives in Paramus, New Jersey.

In 1976, Menendez married Jane Jacobsen, a teacher for the Union City Board of Education and Union City Public Schools. They had two children: a daughter Alicia (who is now a television commentator), and son Robert. They divorced in 2005.

Menendez currently lives in Paramus, New Jersey.

Electoral history

New Jersey Assembly

State Senate

House

• In 2000, Alina Lydia Fonteboa received 233 votes and Kari Sachs received 168 votes.

• In 2002, a candidate listed only as "Independent (The American Party)" received 34 votes; also, Herbert Shaw's full party name was "Politicians are Crooks – Politicos son Corruptos" (shortened for display purposes above).

• Write-in and minor candidate notes: In 1992, Donald K. Stoveken as an America First Populist received 682 votes.

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Senate

See also

• List of Hispanic and Latino Americans in the United States Congress

List of Hispanic and Latino Americans in the United States Congress

References

External links

• Senator Robert Menendez official U.S. Senate site

• New Jersey's New Senator, editorial, The New York Times, December 9, 2005

• Bob Menendez for Senate

• Bob Menendez at Curlie

Senator Robert Menendez official U.S. Senate site

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Bob Menendez at Curlie

Biography at the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress

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New Jersey's New Senator, editorial, The New York Times, December 9, 2005

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