



Senators Lying in State in the U.S. Capitol

Updated December 8, 2021

On December 9, 2021, [Senator Robert Dole](#), who died on December 5, will lie in state in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. Traditionally an honor bestowed upon American political and military leaders, 35 individuals (not including Senator Dole) have [lain in state or honor](#) in the Capitol Rotunda. Additionally, [unknown soldiers](#) from World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam era have also lain in state in the Rotunda. Supreme Court Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Representative Elijah Cummings have lain in state in [National Statuary Hall](#).

Individuals who served as government officials (e.g., Member of Congress, President, Vice President) and as military leaders have traditionally lain in state, while private citizens have lain in honor. The most recent individual to lie in state was [Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg](#) on September 25, 2020. The most recent individual to lie in honor was United States Capitol Police Officer William “Billy” F. Evans on April 13, 2021. Prior to Senator Dole lying in state, [13 Senators have received that honor](#) (see **Table 1**). **Figure 1** shows [Senator John Alexander Logan](#) lying in state from December 30 to 31, 1886.

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Figure 1. Lying in State of Senator John Alexander Logan

December 30-31, 1886



Source: Library of Congress, "John Alexander Logan, 1826-1886: His Coffin in Capitol Rotunda," at <https://www.loc.gov/item/2006679098/>.

Since President Abraham Lincoln's death in 1865, the caskets of most individuals who have lain in state or honor have rested on the Lincoln catafalque. The [Lincoln catafalque](#) is a platform constructed in 1865 "to support the casket of Abraham Lincoln while the president's body lay in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda."

Authorization Process

The House of Representatives and the Senate jointly control the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. As a shared space, the use of the Rotunda often involves a concurrent resolution, agreed to by both the House and Senate, to authorize an individual lying in state or honor. For example, two concurrent resolutions to authorize Senate Dole lying in State have been introduced:

- S.Con.Res. 22 authorizes the use of the Lincoln catafalque for Senator Dole's memorial service in the Capitol Rotunda; and
- S.Con.Res. 23 authorizes the use of the Capitol Rotunda for Senator Dole to lie in state.

For more information on the use of the Capitol Rotunda, see CRS Report RL34619, *Use of the Capitol Rotunda, Capitol Grounds, and Emancipation Hall: Concurrent Resolutions, 101st to 116th Congresses*, by Jacob R. Straus.

When an individual lies in state or honor in the Rotunda, the Architect of the Capitol and the U.S. Capitol Police may issue special instructions about public access to the Capitol, public viewing hours, and other protocols. For example, for the lying in state of Senator Dole, the House Sergeant at Arms posted a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) to the internal House website announcing that access to the Capitol building would be restricted in the morning of December 9 prior to an arrival ceremony and congressional tribute at 10 a.m. In a [press release](#), House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer jointly announced that “due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ceremony will be open to invited guests only.” Following that service, the Capitol Rotunda will be open from 12 p.m. until 8 p.m. “to guests invited by the Dole family and to Members of Congress and Congressional staff to pay respects.”

Senators Lying in State

To date, 13 Senators have lain in state in the Capitol Rotunda, not including Senator Dole. Senator Henry Clay, who had also served as a Member of the House of Representatives, Speaker of the House, and Secretary of the State, was the first Senator to lie in state (July 1, 1852). The most recent Senator to lie in state, prior to Senator Dole, was Senator John McCain on August 31, 2018. **Table 1** lists the Senators who have lain in state.

Table 1. Senators Who Have Lain in State
(not all individuals were sitting Senators at the time of their death)

Senator	Date of Death	Date of Lying in State
Henry Clay (Kentucky)	June 29, 1852	July 1, 1852
Charles Sumner (Massachusetts)	March 11, 1874	March 13, 1874
Henry Wilson (Massachusetts) ^a	November 22, 1875	November 25-26, 1875
John Alexander Logan (Illinois)	December 26, 1886	December 30-31, 1886
Warren G. Harding (Ohio) ^b	August 2, 1923	August 8, 1923
Robert A. Taft (Ohio)	July 31, 1953	August 2-3, 1953
John Fitzgerald Kennedy (Massachusetts) ^c	November 22, 1963	November 24-25, 1963
Everett McKinley Dirksen (Illinois)	September 7, 1969	September 9-10, 1969
Lyndon Baines Johnson (Texas) ^d	January 22, 1973	January 24-25, 1973
Hubert H. Humphrey (Minnesota) ^e	January 14, 1978	January 14-15, 1978
Claude Denson Pepper (Florida)	May 30, 1989	June 1-2, 1989
Daniel K. Inouye (Hawaii)	December 17, 2012	December 20, 2012
John S. McCain (Arizona)	August 25, 2018	August 31, 2018
Robert J. Dole (Kansas)	December 5, 2021	December 9, 2021

Source: Compiled by CRS from U.S. Congress, Architect of the Capitol, “Those Who Have Lain in State or in Honor in the Rotunda,” April 2021, at https://www.aoc.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/lain_state_honor_2021-04.pdf.

- a. Henry Wilson also served as Vice President to President Ulysses S. Grant from March 1873 until his death.
- b. Warren G. Harding also served as President from March 1921 until his death.
- c. John F. Kennedy also served as President from January 1961 until his death.

- d. Lyndon Baines Johnson also served as Vice President to President John F. Kennedy from January 1961 until November 1963 and as President from November 1963 to January 1969.
- e. Hubert H. Humphrey also served as Vice President to President Lyndon Johnson from January 1965 until January 1969.

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