

Murkowski eyes HELP chair

By: Amanda Friedman | 06/10/2026 04:30 PM EDT

HELP CHAIR SEARCH — Sen. [Lisa Murkowski](#) (R-Alaska) — who has vocally opposed aspects of the Trump administration's health agenda — suggested she's interested in serving as chair of the Senate's health panel once Sen. [Bill Cassidy](#) (R-La.) leaves office, POLITICO's Jordain Carney reports.

"If I am most senior I would certainly welcome the opportunity," she told reporters on Capitol Hill today, clarifying that her interest depends on whether other senior Republicans want the job.

Discussions about who will be the next chair of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee emerge as the end of Cassidy's time in Congress looms after he lost the midterm GOP Senate primary for his seat last month. A primary runoff between the President Donald Trump-endorsed GOP Rep. [Julia Letlow](#) and Louisiana Treasurer John Fleming is slated for later this month.

Background: The White House [launched an aggressive campaign](#) against Cassidy's reelection bid after a series of situations that strained the relationship between Cassidy and the Trump administration, most notably Cassidy's vote to impeach the president following the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot. Cassidy, a liver doctor, has also positioned himself as a foil to Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., frequently blasting the health official's vaccine policy moves.

Why it matters: If Murkowski were to succeed Cassidy, it's possible her approach wouldn't be far from his. She too has publicly criticized Kennedy's vaccine views. Murkowski also [played a key role in sinking the nomination](#) of Casey Means, a close ally to Kennedy, for surgeon general after scrutinizing the wellness influencer's stance on immunization.

The majority party chooses every committee chair, a role that traditionally goes to the longest-serving panel member within the majority party. Each party's steering committee, made up of party leaders, helps review nominations, which must be approved by the full chamber.

Brewing competition: HELP Sen. [Roger Marshall](#) (R-Kansas.), a Make America Healthy Again movement ally and doctor, [recently signaled he wants the job as well](#).