



Tom Cole was elected to Congress in 2002 and is currently serving in his seventh term in the U.S. House of Representatives. Identified by Time Magazine as "one of the sharpest minds in the House," Cole is an advocate for a strong national defense, a tireless advocate for taxpayers and small businesses and a leader on issues dealing with Native Americans and tribal governments. At the outset of his service in the House, Cole was named as one of the "Five Freshmen to Watch" by Roll Call.

Since 2009, Cole has served on the House Appropriations Committee, where he is Chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies; he is also assigned to the Subcommittees on Defense and Interior.

In 2015, Cole was reappointed to the House Budget Committee for the third consecutive Congress. He serves on the panel as one of the three members of the majority party who also sits on the Appropriations Committee. He is currently considered the Senior Appropriator on the panel.

Cole was appointed in 2013 to serve on the House Rules Committee. In addition, Congressman Cole serves as a Deputy Whip for the Republican Conference and is a member of the Republican Steering Committee.

In October 2013, he was appointed to serve as one of four House Republicans on a House-Senate joint budget conference committee that negotiated a bipartisan budget deal for fiscal years 2014 and 2015.

Tom Cole has a significant background of service to his home state of Oklahoma. Before Congress, he served as State Chairman of the Oklahoma Republican Party, District Director to former Congressman Mickey Edwards and a member of the Oklahoma State Senate. Cole also served 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 literally 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; he has also received honorary degrees from Hillsdale Bible College in Moore and Oklahoma City University. He serves on the Smithsonian Institution Board of Regents, as well as the national board of the Fulbright Association. He is also a member of the Congressional Advisory Board to the Aspen Institute.

Tom Cole is a fifth generation Oklahoman and an enrolled member of the Chickasaw Nation. He is currently one of only two Native Americans currently serving in Congress. He was awarded the Congressional Leadership Award by the National Congress of American Indians in 2007 and 2011 and was inducted into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame in 2004. Cole's late mother, Helen, is also a member of the Chickasaw Hall of Fame and served as a state representative, state senator and 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 in Midwest City.

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