

**MAJOR SENATE INVESTIGATIONS**  
**A Selected List**

**1859-1860 -- Select Committee to Inquire into the Facts of the Recent Invasion and Seizure of the United States Armory at Harper's Ferry (*The Harper's Ferry Inquiry*)**

Resolution passed: December 15, 1859. Report: June 15, 1860.

Chair: James Murray Mason (D-VA)

Investigation of John Brown's raid on the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia.

**1871-1873 -- Select Committee to Investigate Alleged Outrages in the Southern States**

Resolution passed: January 19, 1871. Terminated: March 12, 1873.

Chair: John Scott (R-PA)

Investigation of Ku Klux Klan activities in N.C.

**1885-1886 -- Select Committee to Investigate Interstate Commerce**

Resolution passed: March 17, 1885. Report: January 18, 1886

Chair: Shelby Cullom (R-IL)

Investigation of railroad and water interstate transportation regulation; led to 1887 passage of Interstate Commerce Act.

**1912 -- Senate Committee on Commerce, Subcommittee Hearings (Titanic Disaster)**

Hearings: April 18, 19, 22, 1912. Report: May 28, 1912.

Chair: William Alden Smith (R-MI)

Investigation of the sinking of the H.M.S. *Titanic*.

**1912 -- Committee on Privileges and Elections, Subcommittee Hearings (*Clapp Committee*)**

Resolution passed: April 27, 1912. Hearings: June, October 1912.

Chair: Moses E. Clapp (R-MN)

An investigation of campaign contributions during the presidential elections of 1904 and 1908.

**1913-1917 -- Senate Committee on the Judiciary Special Lobby Investigation**

Hearings: June to September 1913, January to July 1914.

Report: July 16, 1917.

Chair: Charles A. Culberson (D-TX)

Investigation of alleged lobbying activities in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere.

**1923-1924 -- Committee on Public Lands and Surveys (*The Teapot Dome Investigation*)**

Hearings: October 22, 1923 to May 14, 1924. Report: June 6, 1924.

Chair: Thomas J. Walsh (D-MT)

Investigation of leasing government oil reserves in Wyoming to oilmen and developers.

**1923 -- Select Committee on Veterans' Bureau Investigation**

Hearings: October to December 1923.

Chair: David A. Reed (R-PA)

Investigation of alleged inefficiency and corrupt practices in the U.S. Veterans Bureau.

**1924 -- Select Committee on Investigation of Attorney General (Harry M. Daugherty)**

Hearings: March-September 1924.

Chair: Burton K. Wheeler (D-MT)

Investigation of why Attorney General Harry M. Daugherty failed to prosecute the secretary of the interior and others implicated in the Teapot Dome scandal.

**1926-1927 -- Select Committee to Investigate the Alien Property Custodian's Office**

Resolution passed: July 3, 1926. Terminated: March 3, 1927.

Chair: William E. Borah (R-ID)

Investigation of the operations of the alien property custodian's office.

**1932-1934 -- Committee on Banking and Currency Investigation of Wall Street (*The Pecora Wall Street Expose*)**

Hearings: April 11, 1932 to May 4, 1934.

Chair: Peter Norbeck (R-SD), 1932-1933; Duncan U. Fletcher (D-FL), 1933-1936

Investigation of Wall Street banking and stock exchange practices; led to passage of the Securities Act of 1933, the Banking Act of 1933, and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

**1933 -- Special Committee to Investigate Air Mail and Ocean Mail Contracts**

Resolution passed: February 25, 1933. Terminated: June 30, 1936.

Chair: Hugo Black (D-AL)

Investigation into use of government mail subsidies; led to passage of Air Mail Act of 1933.

**1934-1936 -- Special Committee Investigating the Munitions Industry (*Nye Committee*)**

Hearings: September 1934 to February 1936.

Chair: Gerald P. Nye (R-ND)

Investigation of the manufacturing and sale of munitions and the economic circumstances of U.S. entry into World War I.

**1935-1938 -- Special Committee to Investigate Lobbying Activities (*Public Utility Companies Investigation*)**

Resolution passed: July 11, 1935. Terminated: June 16, 1938.

Chair: Hugo Black (D-AL), 1935-1937; Sherman Minton (D-IN), 1937-1938

Investigation of public utility company and other lobbyists.

**1936 -- Committee on Interstate Commerce Investigation of Railroad Financial Reorganization**

Hearings: March 20 to 27, 1935.

Chair: Burton K. Wheeler (D-MT)

Investigation of railroad financial reorganizations and policies.

**1936-1940 -- Education and Labor Committee, Subcommittee on Civil Liberties (*Senate Civil Liberties Committee*)**

Hearings: April 10, 1936 to July 1, 1940.

Chair: Robert M. La Follette, Jr. (R-WI)

Investigation of antiunion practices.

**1941-1948 -- Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program (*The Truman Committee*)**

Resolution passed: March 1, 1941. Last hearing: November 22, 1948.

Chair: Harry S. Truman (D-MO), 1941-1945; James M. Mead (D-NY), 1945-1947;

Owen Brewster (R-ME), 1947-1948

Investigation of defense contracts.

**1949 -- Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, Investigations Subcommittee (*"Five Percenters" Investigation*)**

Hearings: August 8 to 26, 1949. Report: January 18, 1950.

Chair: Clyde R. Hoey (D-NC)

Investigation of influence peddling in defense contracts.

**1950 -- Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee Investigation of Charges by Senator McCarthy (*The Tydings Committee*)**

Hearings: March 8 to June 28, 1950. Report: July 20, 1950.

Chair: Millard E. Tydings (D-MD)

Investigation of alleged disloyalty by State Department employees.

**1950-1951 -- Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce (*The Kefauver Committee*)**

Resolution passed: May 3, 1950. Report: August 31, 1951.

Chair: Estes Kefauver (D-TN), 1950-1951; Herbert R. O'Connor (D-MD), 1951

An investigation of organized crime in America. Many of the hearings were broadcast nationally on television.

**1951 -- Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations Inquiry into MacArthur Dismissal (*The MacArthur Inquiry*)**

Hearings: May 3 to June 27, 1951.

Chair: Richard Russell (D-GA)

Investigation of the dismissal of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur and of

U.S. policy in the Far East.

**1951-1954 -- Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee Hearings to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and other Internal Security Laws**

Hearings: March 13, 1951 to June 20, 1952. Report: July 2, 1952.

Hearings: September 8, 1952 to December 22, 1953, August 1954.

Reports: July 17, 1953; July 30, 1953; March 22, 1954.

Chair: Patrick McCarran (D-NV), 1951-1952; William E. Jenner (R-IN), 1953-1954

Investigation of Communist influence on U.S. policies in the Far East and on various aspects of domestic policy (1951-1952); and of Communist influence on education and U.S. employees at the United Nations and of subversives in government (1953-1954).

**1953-1954 -- Senate Committee on Government Operations, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (*The McCarthy Hearings*) and (*The Army-McCarthy Hearings*)**

Note: The investigations by this subcommittee can be divided into two distinct phases.

The first consisted of a series of hearings conducted by Joseph McCarthy throughout 1953, regarding alleged Communist influence on the press and on government, including "The Voice of America," the State Department's overseas information centers, and the U.S. Army.

Report: January 25, 1954.

Chair: Joseph R. McCarthy (R-WI)

The second phase involved the committee's investigation of Senator McCarthy's attacks on the army. These hearings were broadcast on national television.

Hearings: April 22 to June 17, 1954. Report: August 31, 1954.

Acting Chair: Karl E. Mundt (R-SD)

**1954 -- Select Committee to Study Censure Charges Against Senator McCarthy**

Hearings: August 31 to September 13, 1954.

Censure motion passed: December 2, 1954.

Chair: Arthur Watkins (R-UT)

Inquiry into aspects of McCarthy's conduct, including his abuse of and noncooperation with the Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections during a 1952 investigation of his conduct.

**1954-1955 -- Judiciary Committee, Antitrust and Monopoly Subcommittee Investigation of Atomic Energy Contract (*Dixon-Yates Contract*)**

Hearings: July to October 1954, June to August, December 1955.

Reports: January 24, 1955; August 11, 1956.

Chair: William Langer (R-ND), 1954; Estes Kefauver (D-TN), 1955

Investigation of Atomic Energy Commission contract with private utility companies (chaired by Edgar H. Dixon and Eugene A. Yates, hence the popular name of the investigation) for a power plant in Arkansas. Joint Committee on Atomic Energy also held hearings. The contract was eventually cancelled.

**1957-1960 -- Select Committee on Improper Activities in Labor- Management Relations (*Labor Racketeering Investigation*)**

Resolution passed: January 30, 1957. Report: March 31, 1960.

Chair: John L. McClellan (D-AR)

Investigation into corruption in the labor or management field, including in the Teamsters union. The committee heard from more than 1,500 witnesses over 270 days of hearings.

**1962-1964 -- Government Operations Committee, Permanent Investigations Subcommittee (*Billie Sol Estes Case*)**

Hearings: May to September 1962, November 1963.

Report: September 30, 1964.

Chair: John L. McClellan (D-AR)

Investigation of Agriculture Department's handling of Estes' dealings in cotton allotments.

**1963 -- Government Operations Committee, Permanent Investigations Subcommittee (*TFX Plane Contract*)**

Hearings: February to November 1963.

Chair: John L. McClellan (D-AR)

Investigation of whether favoritism was involved in Defense Department's award of the TFX fighter plane contract to General Dynamics Corp. rather than to Boeing.

**1964 -- Rules and Administration Committee (*Bobby Baker Case*)**

Hearings: October and December 1963; February, October, December, 1964.

Report: July 8, 1964.

Chair: B. Everett Jordan (D-NC)

Investigation of conflicts of interest and financial improprieties engaged in by Baker, who served as secretary to the majority until he resigned on October 7, 1963.

**1966-1972 -- Foreign Relations Committee Investigation of Vietnam**

Hearings: August 1966, October to November 1967, February to March 1970, November 1970, April to May 1971, May 1972.

Chair: J. William Fulbright (D-AR)

Investigation of United States policies in Vietnam.

**1973-1974 -- Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities (*The Watergate Committee*)**

Resolution passed: February 7, 1973. Report: June 27, 1974.

Chair: Samuel Ervin (D-NC)

Investigation of possible corruption in the 1972 presidential election campaign.

**1987-1989 -- Select Committee on Secret Military Assistance to Iran and the Nicaraguan Opposition (*Iran-Contra Hearings*)**

Hearings: May 5 to August 3, 1987. Report: November 17, 1987.

Chair: Daniel Inouye (D-HI)

Investigation into alleged covert sales of military equipment to Iran and diversion of the proceeds to aid the Nicaraguan Contras.

**1991-1993 -- Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs**

Hearings: November 5, 1991, to December 4, 1992.

Report: January 13, 1993.

Chair: John F. Kerry (D-MA)

Investigation into the possibility that some unaccounted for American servicemen might have survived in captivity even after POW repatriations at the conclusion of World War II, the Korean War, Cold War incidents, and particularly the war in Vietnam.

**1995-1996 -- Special Committee to Investigate Whitewater Development Corporation and Related Matters (*Whitewater Committee*)**

Established: May 17, 1995 (S. Res. 120)<sup>1</sup>

Hearings: July 18, 1995 - Jan. 18, 1996

Report: June 17, 1996

Chair: Alfonse M. D'Amato (R-NY)

Investigation into the way White House officials handled documents in the office of White House Deputy Counsel Vincent Foster after his death; matters related to actions by the White House or the Resolution Trust Corporation in handling the Madison Guarantee Savings and Loan Association or Whitewater Development Corporation, and other related matters.

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<sup>1</sup> Extended on April 17, 1996, by S. Res. 246, until June 14, 1996.

**Sources:** Compiled by the Senate Historical Office from a variety of sources, including U.S., Congress, Senate, *Journal*; U.S., Congress, Senate, Library, *Cumulative Index of Congressional Hearings Prior to 1935* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971; reprint of 1935 ed.); *Congressional Information Service, United States Congressional Committee Hearings Index, 1833-1970* (Washington, DC: Congressional Information Service, Inc., 1970); Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and Roger Bruns, eds., *Congress Investigates: A Documented History, 1792-1974* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1975); Walter Stubbs, *Congressional Committees, 1789-1982: A Checklist* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985); Congressional Quarterly, Inc. *Congress and the Nation*, vol. 1, 1945-1964 (Washington, DC, 1965); *Congressional Record*.

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