

Congressman John D. Dingell, Jr.

John David Dingell, Jr. (born July 8, 1926) represented Michigan in the United States House of Representatives from December 13, 1955 to January 3, 2015, serving for more than 59 years, the longest uninterrupted Congressional tenure in U.S. history. His first fights were for civil rights, clean water, Medicare, and American workers' rights and he continued to fight throughout his career for protecting American jobs, improving the safety of our food and drug supply, strengthening consumer product safety, implementing pipeline safety measures, and scores more. He was also one of the final two World War II veterans to serve in Congress.

Dingell was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the son of Grace (née Bigler) and John D. Dingell, Sr. (1894–1955), who represented Michigan's 15th district from 1933 to 1955. In Washington, DC, John, Jr. attended Georgetown Preparatory School and then the House Page School when he served as a page for the U.S. House of Representatives from 1938 to 1943. He was on the floor of the House when President Roosevelt gave his famous speech after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In 1944, at the age of 18, Dingell joined the United States Army. He rose to the rank of Second Lieutenant and received orders to take part in the first wave of a planned invasion of Japan in November 1945.

He then attended Georgetown University in Washington, DC, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry in 1949 and a J.D. in 1952. He was a lawyer in private practice, a research assistant to U.S. Circuit Court judge Theodore Levin, a forest ranger, and assistant prosecuting attorney for Wayne County until 1955.

In 1955, John, Sr. died and John, Jr. won a special election in December to succeed him. Weeks later, he was sworn in by Speaker Rayburn. He won a full term in 1956 and has been reelected 29 times, including runs in 1988 and 2006 with no Republican opponent.

An avid conservationist and outdoorsman, Dingell wrote the Endangered Species Act, the 1990 Clean Air Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and legislation to build North America's first international wildlife refuge. As a lifetime advocate for protecting public health, he authored the Affordable Care Act, the Patient's Bill of Rights, the Children's Health Insurance Program, the Mammography Quality Standards Act, the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, the Prescription Drug User Fee Act, and others. Dingell was a champion of working across the Congressional aisle.

Dingell has been married to his wife, Debbie Insley Dingell, for more than thirty years. He has four grown children and several grandchildren.