

Beat: Politics

Congressman John Dingell, longest-serving U.S. lawmaker, to retire

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USPA News - Congressman John Dingell, the longest-serving member in the history of U.S. Congress, announced Monday that he will not seek re-election and will retire at the end of his current term. "There is no greater privilege than a life spent in service, and I know how fortunate I have been to spend my life as a Member of Congress," Dingell said in his annual "State of the District" speech to the Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber of Commerce.

The 87-year-old Democrat has represented Michigan's 12th District in the House of Representatives for the last 58 years. After serving in the army during World War II, Dingell was first elected in 1955 - representing the people of southeastern Michigan in a seat that was previously held by his late father, John Dingell Sr. He has since been re-elected 28 times and became the longest serving member of Congress last June when he broke the record held by the late Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia. With about ten months left in his 29th term, Dingell said he will remain dedicated to his work for the people of Michigan. "I'm not going to waste a minute. There's still a lot to be done and a lot I want to do," he said. Responding to Monday's announcement, U.S. President Barack Obama praised the Michigan Democrat for his political work and his impact in Congress. "Today, the people of Michigan - and the American people - are better off because of John Dingell's service to this country, and (First Lady) Michelle and I wish him, his wife Debbie, and their family the very best," Obama said. U.S. Vice President Joe Biden added: "Through 59 years of public service, John fought for what he believed in, and got things done through relationships and his deep respect for others. And there was no one he respected more than his constituents. He respected their hopes, their dreams, and their values." During his lengthy term, Dingell supported the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and fought to pass Medicare in 1965. He signed legislation such as the Clean Air Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. An original author of the Affordable Care Act, Dingell continued to introduce health care legislation at the beginning of every session. "I have done my best for the people who live here - my neighbors, friends, those who supported me, and those who didn't. The fabric of Michigan is the fabric of my life, and it has never frayed," Dingell said.

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