

NEWS & INSIGHTS



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Senator Roy Blunt: Why Truman Was Right About the Most Important Title

Senator **Roy Blunt** represented Missouri in Congress for 26 years – 14 in the U.S. House of Representatives, including six years as Republican Whip, and 12 in the U.S. Senate. He is one of only two Americans in congressional history elected to leadership positions by his colleagues in both the House and the Senate. He knows what it means to walk into the Capitol as a new member, and he knows what it means to walk out for the last time. With 2026 bringing one of the largest waves of congressional and gubernatorial departures in recent memory, he offers the following perspective as Chairman of **HBS Leadership Strategies Advisory Services**.

Why Truman Was Right About the Most Important Title

By Senator Roy Blunt, Chairman, HBS Leadership Strategies Advisory Services

The next year will bring significant transition. In 2026, there will be 36 gubernatorial elections with 18 incumbent governors stepping aside, either because they're term-limited or choosing not to run again. In Congress, 57 House members are retiring or pursuing another office and 14 senators are retiring or running for Governor.

That's a lot of experience leaving Congress in a short period of time.

When it comes to public service, how we leave matters just as much as how we serve. Leadership isn't only about the decisions made while you're in the room. It's about whether the institution, the office, and the people you serve are stronger when you step away than when you arrived.

The truth is, service is defined by responsibility – by being willing to speak up, offer perspective, and help where you can. That responsibility doesn't end when an election certificate expires.

I thought about that on January 3, 2023, when my Chief of Staff Stacy McHatton McBride and I were walking out of the Russell Senate Office Building, through the tunnel to the garage, and I noticed the clock read 12:20 p.m. I had not been a United States senator for exactly twenty minutes. For the first time in a very long time, I was no longer in an elected position. No gavel. No vote.

To those stepping away from elected positions this year I offer this thought: your title may change, but your obligation doesn't. The country needs your experience, your judgment, and your willingness to stay engaged. The work continues, even when the office doesn't.

That's what public service really means. Not the position you hold, but the commitment you keep. President Truman reminded us that the most important title of all was "citizen."

Titles change. Responsibilities don't.

