



Disability History and Awareness Month 2023

John McCain

John McCain III was born on August 29, 1936, at Coco Solo Naval Air Station in the Panama Canal Zone. In 1951, McCain's family settled in Northern Virginia, and McCain attended Episcopal High School; while in High School, McCain joined the wrestling team. Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, McCain entered the United States Naval Academy, which he later graduated from in 1958. However, he often came into conflict with higher-ranking personnel and did not always obey the rules.



McCain began his military career when he started two and a half years of training at Pensacola to become a naval aviator and completed flight school in 1960. McCain was taken prisoner of war on October 26, 1967, when his plane was shot down by a missile over Hanoi. McCain fractured both arms and a leg when he ejected from the aircraft. McCain was a prisoner of war in North Vietnam for five and a half years until his release on March 14, 1973. His wartime injuries left him permanently incapable of raising his arms above his head. After serving as the Navy's liaison to the U.S. Senate, McCain retired from the Navy as a captain on April 1, 1981. His numerous military decorations and awards include the Silver Star, two Legion of Merits, Distinguished Flying Cross, three Bronze Star Medals, two Purple Hearts, two Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, and the Prisoner of War Medal.

McCain's career in congress began after a narrow win in Arizona's 1st district. During his time as a Congressman, McCain voted mainly in step with the Regan Administration; he was later elected to the senate. During his time in the Senate, McCain developed an independent streak, often taking on his party leadership. In January 1988, McCain voted in favor of the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, championed campaign finance reform, took on big tobacco, and was a significant sponsor of indigenous people's legislation. Over his six terms in congress, McCain was sometimes a champion of bipartisanship and, at others, a staunch party loyalist. McCain was an avid supporter of protections and expanded care for civilians and veterans with disabilities; perhaps his most famous vote was his decisive vote against the Republicans' final proposal to repeal the ACA.

Profiles by Andrew Caruana, Policy and Research Intern, Office of Senator Sara Gelser Blouin

Andrew is a Junior at Willamette University studying philosophy. He is a lifelong Oregonian and has cerebral palsy.

Sen.SaraGelser@OregonLegislature.Gov

503-986-1708