

HENRY BONILLA

PARTNER, THE NORMANDY GROUP | UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN, 1993–2007

Henry Bonilla is in his 28th year working in Washington D. C. with key players on Capitol Hill and in the Executive Branch to affect public policy and regulatory issues. He served as a Member of Congress (1993–2007) and is currently a consultant and federal lobbyist with The Normandy Group, a government relations firm. Prior to his career in federal policy, Henry had a successful career in television news.



Henry was the first Hispanic Republican ever elected to Congress in Texas (1992). After his election, Henry served as a major player on the powerful Appropriations Committee. He specifically worked on subcommittees that funded a wide range of major federal agencies, including the Defense Department, CIA, Food and Drug Administration and Agriculture Department. For six years, he chaired the Subcommittee on Agriculture and was responsible for its entire annual budget. This experience led President Donald Trump to interview Henry for the position of Secretary of Agriculture. Henry was given strong consideration as a finalist until the President selected former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue for the position. In addition, Henry's 12 years of leadership on defense issues allowed him to interact with U. S. military and intelligence leaders around the world. In his last term in Congress, Henry was rated by Congress.org as the seventh most influential member of Congress in its Power Rankings.

Henry became a national figure during his time in Congress. Time Magazine chose him as one of America's Top 50 Young Leaders in 1993. In 2000, Presidential Candidate George W. Bush chose him as one of the original 10 members of his Steering Committee to launch his campaign. President Bush later chose Henry as a co-chair of the GOP conventions in 2000 and 2004. His responsibilities included regularly appearing on all major television networks as a surrogate. Henry's history in television news made him a huge asset in this effort.

After his last term in Congress, Henry was nominated to be the U. S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS). The OAS includes 35 countries in North America and promotes economic and political projects among participating countries. Henry was approved to move forward for U. S. Senate confirmation in 2007. However, tensions between the White House and Senate leadership halted all ambassador confirmations for several months, leading Henry to withdraw his nomination and join The Normandy Group.

At The Normandy Group, Henry works with a variety of clients to address their issues before the federal government. Clients have included Fortune 500 companies, universities, cities and nonprofits. His long history working in the federal space has allowed him to navigate complex issues through federal agencies and the ever changing political leadership on Capitol Hill.

In addition, Henry served on Microsoft President Brad Smith's Advisory Council for three years, beginning in 2017. Council meetings with Smith were held quarterly to discuss political and public relations strategies involving issues of concern to Microsoft.

Aside from Henry's most recent consideration for a Cabinet position, Henry's views remain prominent in Washington. In past years his op-eds have appeared on the FOX news website and The Hill on subjects ranging from the Puerto Rican financial crisis to missile defense.

Henry's strong communication and public relations skills were developed during his first career out of college as a producer in broadcast news. At his peak in that career, he was the producer of the 11 PM news at WABC-TV in New York City, the flagship station for the ABC television network when the show's audience each night ranged between two and twelve million viewers.

Henry serves as Honorary Chairman of the board of trustees for the nonprofit BCFS, a global system of health and human services (bcfs.net); and serves on the board of Southwest General Hospital in San Antonio (southwestgeneralhospital.org). He earned a Bachelor of Journalism degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 1976 and was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of the Incarnate Word in 2002. He speaks Spanish. His wife Sheryl is a recently retired corporate vice-president with UPS. He has two adult children, Alicia Wieser, residing with her family in Hong Kong, and Austin Bonilla, residing in Houston.