

U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul briefly detained after appearing intoxicated at airport

A nervous flier, the House Foreign Affairs chief said he made a “poor decision” to mix Ambien and alcohol before his flight home to Texas on Nov. 4.

BY [KAYLA GUO](#) NOV. 13, 2024 17 HOURS AGO

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U.S. Rep. [Michael McCaul](#), R-Austin, the chair of the powerful House Foreign Affairs Committee, was briefly detained at Dulles International Airport outside Washington, D.C. on Nov. 4, in an incident he called “the result of a poor decision” to mix Ambien and alcohol.

McCaul, who was on his way home to Texas, was charged with being drunk in public around 9 p.m. on Nov. 4 and released shortly after, according to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

A nervous flier, McCaul had taken Ambien to help him sleep on his flight, his spokesperson said, confirming a [report by Semafor](#).

Mixing the medication with alcohol made him dazed and disoriented, leading him to miss his flight and lock himself out of his phone, according to his spokesperson. Airport police officers then detained him, assuming he was intoxicated.

He was released shortly after being detained when a family member picked him up.

“Two weekends ago, I made a mistake — one for which I take full responsibility,” McCaul said in a statement. “I missed a flight to Texas and found myself disoriented in the airport. This was the result of a poor decision I made to mix an Ambien — which I took in order to sleep on the upcoming flight — with some alcohol.”

“I have nothing but respect and gratitude for the officers who intercepted me that evening,” he said. “This incident does not reflect who I am and who I strive to be. As a human, I am not perfect. But I am determined to learn from this mistake and, God willing, make myself a better person.”

McCaul is term-limited in his coveted position atop the House Foreign Affairs Committee, for which he regularly travels to meet with world leaders. He has said he will seek [special permission](#) from GOP leaders to continue serving as the committee's top Republican beyond his six-year term limit next year, when the new Congress begins.

As chairman of the committee, McCaul was [instrumental in pushing](#) a fresh infusion of aid to Ukraine over the finish line this year, in the face of fierce opposition from the party's right wing and President-elect Donald Trump. He also has been a vocal China hawk, leading the effort to force the sale of TikTok to an American company.

If allowed to retain his committee gavel, McCaul [pledged to continue](#) supporting key US allies around the globe and keeping pressure on adversaries like Russia and China — even as a second Trump administration ushers in a redefined, isolationist view of foreign policy.

He is one of the most seasoned members of the Texas delegation, having also served as the top Republican on the Homeland Security Committee from 2013 to 2019.

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