

July 12, 2026

Sen. Lindsey Graham's Death Underscores Urgency of Aortic Dissection Awareness, Says The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health

LOS ANGELES — The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health (JRF) extends its condolences to the family of U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), who died July 11, 2026, at age 71. The D.C. Medical Examiner preliminarily attributed his death to aortic dissection — the same underlying emergency that took the life of Representative Doug LaMalfa (R-Calif) earlier this year.

KEY FACTS

- Aortic dissection is a tear in the wall of the body's main artery and can strike suddenly, even in seemingly healthy people.
- Warning signs: sudden, severe “tearing” chest or back pain, shortness of breath, or fainting. Often mistaken for a heart attack.
- Risk factors: high blood pressure, family history, and age over 60.
- It's frequently misdiagnosed; early imaging and recognition are critical to survival.
- Deaths due to dissection are preventable if individuals at risk are identified prior to the dissection.

ABOUT JRF

Established in 2003 by Amy Yasbeck after John Ritter's death, JRF funds research and education to prevent deaths from aortic dissection.

The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health

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