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Harry Reid's new normcore glasses draw praise from style experts



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS / AP

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid speaks to reporters on Capitol Hill on Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2015, in Washington.

By Megan Messerly

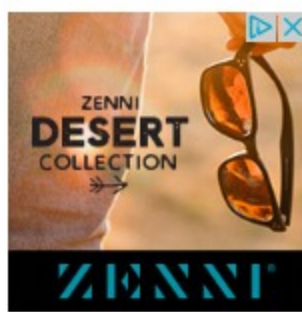
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They're retro. They're normcore. They're what your cool eighth-grade algebra teacher would have worn.

No, they aren't the latest men's frames from the runway at New York's Fashion Week. They're Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid's new glasses.

Harry Reid, fashion icon?

Though he was busy rallying Democratic Senators to support the nuclear deal with Iran last week, Reid took a few moments out of his busy schedule to debut his new chunky, clear eyewear [during a speech](#) to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on Tuesday.



And although foreign policy experts may be divided on the Iran deal, men's fashion mavens are raving about the new frames.

"They're cool for an old guy," said New York-based model and [fashion blogger Colby DeMarco](#). "He probably just found them, but who knows? Maybe he's a super stylish guy."

The round lenses are right in line with current eyewear trends that stress bold shapes — circles and squares — and retro looks.

"The classic round frame fits well with any face shape," said fashion blogger Tommy Lei of [My Belonging](#). "If you're in front of a camera a lot you want to frame your face well."

Reid has been wearing sunglasses in public since he [injured his right eye](#) while exercising on New Year's Day earlier this year.

He has said that he's been "basically blind" in that eye ever since. Now, his recovery is going well enough that Reid is experimenting with glasses with clear lenses in both eyes.

"We'll see how it works. The light here seems to be just about right," Reid said during the speech, [taking off his shades](#). "If I have to go back to my dark glasses, you'll know why."

Celebrity accessory stylist and CEO of eyewear boutique OPTX [Lynne Diamante](#) said it's difficult to tell whether the new glasses serve a specific medical function. "It's very common for people to with traumatic injury to the eye to be light sensitive," she said.

Reid's new glasses feature clear frames with round lenses and metal piping over the ear. In the past, Reid has sported thin, rimless glasses with rectangular frames — which, though popular in the early 2000s, are now considered dated.

Fashion experts say Reid's new glasses embrace the [normcore trend](#) and the recent popularity of so-called "[nerd glasses](#)," which celebrities like Kim Kardashian and Justin Bieber have donned either with prescription or nonprescription lenses.

Reid's glasses serve a medical function, but fashion experts say it's hard to tell whether the senator is throwing back to an older style or being deliberately trendy.

For someone in their twenties or thirties, the glasses would almost certainly be seen as a calculated fashion choice. But at 75, the minority leader is finishing up the end of his term, and may be paying attention to other things — like an unexpectedly tight race to replace him in the Senate.

But fashionistas agree that Reid — or his stylist — made a good choice in picking out the glasses, particularly because they transition seamlessly between the younger and older generations.

"Round glasses have always been a thing among the hipster crowd," DeMarco said. "But they're a timeless thing, too because older people like to wear them. They're always going to be around."

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