

 DATA FOR *PROGRESS*

# Progressive Cabinet Project:

## Shaping a Progressive Administration

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Secretary of Education

Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Secretary of Homeland Security

EPA Administrator

Ambassador to the United Nations

Chair of the Council of  
Economic Advisors

Trade Representative

SBA Administrator

Director of the Office of  
Management & Budget

CIA Director/Director  
of National Intelligence

National Security Advisor

Director of the Consumer Financial  
Protection Bureau

Director of the National  
Economic Council

Director of the Domestic Policy Council

# INTRODUCTION

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For the first time in generations, the American Left has a real chance at winning power. Since the election of Donald Trump, progressive, grassroots-funded candidates have seen success in elections at every level of government. Should Trump be defeated in November, progressives should be prepared for the task of working with Joe Biden's team to curate the most progressive administration in history. This will be a challenge given that progressives have long been excluded from high positions in government, think tanks, and elsewhere in civil society. This document will try to ease the challenge by providing an in-depth analysis of what qualifies an individual to hold a particular cabinet office as well as a list of suitable names for them who align with the progressive movement on matters of policy.

There is no doubt that sketching out a progressive administration that looks like and is representative of America is a challenging task. The purpose of this document is to make this task less difficult and prepare the progressive movement for the realities of government.

This memo will explore the potential appointees to the following cabinet offices:

- ▶ Secretary of State
- ▶ Secretary of Defense
- ▶ Attorney General
- ▶ Secretary of the Treasury
- ▶ Secretary of the Interior
- ▶ Secretary of Agriculture
- ▶ Secretary of Commerce
- ▶ Secretary of Labor
- ▶ Secretary of Health and Human Services
- ▶ Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
- ▶ Secretary of Transportation
- ▶ Secretary of Energy
- ▶ Secretary of Education
- ▶ Secretary of Veterans Affairs
- ▶ Secretary of Homeland Security

Additionally, this memo will explore the potential appointees to the following federal offices, all of which are generally designated “cabinet-rank” by the White House. Every administration makes a few changes to which offices will receive the cabinet-rank for organizational purposes, but the following in recent years have generally been designated as such:

- ▶ Trade Representative
- ▶ Director of National Intelligence
- ▶ Director of the Central Intelligence Agency
- ▶ Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency
- ▶ Administrator of the Small Business Administration
- ▶ Director of the Office of Management and Budget
- ▶ Ambassador to the United Nations
- ▶ Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors

Finally, the memo will explore potential appointees to the following federal offices, none of which have earned the designation of “cabinet-rank” but perform crucial functions:

- ▶ National Security Advisor
- ▶ Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
- ▶ Director of the National Economic Council
- ▶ Director of the Domestic Policy Council

The memo released by Data for Progress in June that outlines the ways past administrations have staffed the cabinet, and how a progressive administration can improve upon this, can be found [here](#).



# CATEGORIZING THE BACKGROUNDS OF ADMINISTRATION APPOINTEES

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By using this rough framework to categorize the backgrounds of administration officials prior to their appointments, we can imagine what the administration of a progressive cabinet might feasibly look like.

## Senate:

The Senate is a prestigious enough institution that the elevation of a Senator to anything other than the “big four” of cabinet positions (Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Treasury, and Attorney General) may be considered a demotion. It is very common for presidents to appoint Senators to their cabinet as a result of the high profiles they tend to have as well as the fact that Senators, even controversial ones, often face less opposition in the confirmation process seeing as how the body they’re from is the one that approves them.

Naturally, the committee experience or prior political activities and interests of a Senator is taken into consideration when deciding what administrative position they will be appointed to. When Senator Ken Salazar took the arguable demotion to the position of Secretary of the Interior, he did so as a result of his experience on the Natural Resources Committee and position as a Senator from a western state, a popular source of officials in the department. When Senator Jeff Sessions took the high-profile position of Attorney General, he did so given his position on the Judiciary Committee and enthusiasm for draconian crime and immigration policies. And while Senator Hillary Clinton had no formal experience on the Foreign Relations Committee at the time of her appointment as Secretary of State, her very high-profile stature as a presidential candidate and experience traveling around the world as First Lady made her a viable choice for the most powerful cabinet office.

## House of Representatives:

This is rather self-explanatory. As with their colleagues in the upper chamber, members of the House of Representatives are commonly chosen for administration posts. Given their lower profiles, however, congresspeople are typically *not* chosen for any of the “big four” of cabinet positions, with members of the lower chamber typically chosen for less prominent administrative offices. As with Senators, members of the House of Representatives chosen for the cabinet are usually assigned roles relating to their own political interests, history, and committee assignments.

For example, when Congressman Mike Espy was chosen as Secretary of Agriculture, it was as a result of him representing a rural district in Congress and his position on the Agriculture

Committee. When Congressman Ryan Zinke was chosen as Secretary of the Interior, it was as a result of his position on the Natural Resources Committee and the fact he represented a western state. Being the head of a committee or holding significant seniority is an additional boon to a Congressman's viability as a prospective cabinet appointee, too. It's very unlikely that a backbench congressman would be chosen for a position as prestigious as Secretary of Defense, but despite being a member of the lower chamber of Congress, eleven-term Representative Les Aspin's national stature and position as Chair of the Armed Services Committee made him an uncontroversial choice to lead the Pentagon.

### **Governorship:**

It's unsurprising that presiding over a cabinet department is a natural fit for those with executive experience at the state level. When Governors are chosen for administrative positions, they may be in the midst of their political prime looking to increase their national stature or well past it and in need of a job. Many instances of the first description can be found in recent times. When Arizona's Janet Napolitano and Kansas's Kathleen Sebelius were chosen as Secretary of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services, respectively, they were major national players speculated on as future presidential candidates in their own right. Examples of the other kind are equally common. When Richard Riley was chosen as Secretary of Education, he was six years out of his post as Governor of South Carolina and had no obvious alternatives for political office. When Sonny Perdue was chosen as Secretary of Agriculture, he was six years out of his post as Governor of Georgia and had already resigned himself from active politics. An unspoken tradition of cabinet politics for both major parties is that governors of western states are often (but certainly not always) chosen to lead the Departments of the Interior and/or Agriculture.

### **State-Level Position:**

It's not surprising that presidents often look to state-level executive positions to fill positions dealing with similar portfolios at the national level. Whether the positions these officials hold at the state level were achieved via gubernatorial appointment or election down-ballot, every cycle of cabinet speculation includes the names of some of these officials. When Carol Browner was chosen to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, it was because of her experience at the helm of the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation. When Hershel Gober was chosen as Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs (which later led to him serving as acting secretary), it was because he served as Director of the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs. When Lisa Jackson was chosen as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, it was as a result of her service as Commissioner of Environmental Protection in New Jersey.

### Lower Bureaucratic Position:

Various deputy secretaries, assistant secretaries, or “under secretaries” within cabinet departments are often considered for the top positions in their respective agencies during cycles of cabinet speculation. When Warren Christopher was chosen as Secretary of State, it was as a result of his prior experience as Deputy Secretary of State. When Ashton Carter was chosen as Secretary of Defense, it was as a result of his experience as Deputy Secretary of Defense, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs. When Dan Brouillette was chosen as Secretary of Energy, it was as a result of his prior service as Deputy Secretary of Energy and Assistant Secretary of Energy for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs. The partisan lean of a presidency may determine what type of under-secretarial position is considered to be preferred experience in the hunt for a suitable cabinet secretary. When searching for a Secretary of State, a Democratic president may prefer someone with experience as, say, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, while a Republican president may prefer someone who served at the helm of the Department of State’s Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism.

### Academia:

Holding an academic position at a well-renowned university is another way for individuals to establish themselves as viable choices for cabinet office. Henry Kissinger’s position as a high-profile Harvard professor allowed him to endear himself to the Republican intellectual establishment enough to wind up as National Security Advisor and Secretary of State under the Nixon and Ford Administrations. Robert Reich’s position as a Harvard academic allowed him to serve as Secretary of Labor despite having never held public office beforehand. During the Obama Administration, both of his Secretaries of Energy were trained physicists, with Steven Chu having been a professor at both U.C. Berkeley and Stanford and Ernest Moniz having been a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (it should be noted that the latter had also served as Under Secretary of Energy prior, which was also a result of his academic position).

### Municipal Office:

It is very common for presidents, particularly those from the Democratic Party given the party’s reliance on votes in urban areas as part of its coalition, to appoint mayors of major cities to cabinet positions. Just as it is an unspoken tradition for governors of western states to be appointed to head the Interior and Agriculture departments, it is very common for mayors of large cities to be chosen to lead either the Department of Transportation or Housing and Urban Development. During the presidency of Bill Clinton, Mayors Henry Cisneros and Federico Peña of San Antonio, Texas and Denver, Colorado were chosen as Secretaries of Housing and Urban Development and

Transportation, respectively. During the presidency of Barack Obama, Mayors Julián Castro and Anthony Foxx of San Antonio, Texas and Charlotte, North Carolina were chosen as Secretaries of Housing and Urban Development and Transportation, respectively. Mayors are not the only municipal officers to sometimes be appointed to national office. When Arne Duncan was chosen as Secretary of Education, it was as a result of his experience as Superintendent of Chicago Public Schools. A more peculiar example is when Bill Clinton, in an effort to find a female Attorney General after his two nominees were rejected, ended up choosing the District Attorney of Miami-Dade County, Janet Reno, as Attorney General, a remarkable example of a municipal officer being elevated to a very powerful national position.

### **Business:**

Being a titan of industry and donating to a presidential candidate's campaign is a very common background of cabinet officials, including those whose business experience does not relate to the portfolio of their position. When Henry Paulson was chosen as Secretary of the Treasury by George W. Bush, he was serving as CEO of Goldman Sachs, a position relevant to the portfolio of the cabinet office. On the other hand, when Bob McDonald was chosen as Secretary of Veterans Affairs by Barack Obama, he was CEO of Procter & Gamble, a corporation with no obvious links to the welfare of military veterans.

### **Civil Society:**

Serving at the helm of a think tank, advocacy organization, or prominent non-profit is a common background for someone chosen as a cabinet official. When Jesse Brown was chosen as Secretary of Veterans Affairs, it was because he served as executive director of Disabled American Veterans. When Donna Shalala was chosen as Secretary of Health and Human Services, it was as partially a result of her position as head of the Children's Defense Fund in addition to her experience as president of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. While Hillary Clinton never ended up in the White House, it was heavily rumored that she was planning on choosing Neera Tanden, the head of the powerful Center for American Progress think tank who had previously advised former Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, as Secretary of Health and Human Services.



### Other Administration Position:

There was no possibility of Mike Pompeo, then a three-term backbench congressman, being chosen for Secretary of State at the time of Trump's inauguration. However, running the CIA following his House Intelligence Committee, however, it gave him the legitimacy needed to be a serious choice for Secretary of State. A similar situation happened in the case of Leon Panetta, a congressman from California whose experience in the Clinton and Obama Administrations as Chief of Staff and as CIA Director, respectively, allowed him to be a plausible choice for Secretary of Defense. Sometimes administrative positions accumulate cross-agency: Elaine Chao served as Deputy Secretary of Transportation, then Secretary of Labor, and finally Secretary of Transportation, in order but not immediately after one another.

Other common positions held by those chosen for administrative offices include being military officers or issue advisors on a presidential campaign, the latter of which is typically a result of experience in academic settings, civil society, or government.

## BUILDING AN ADMINISTRATION THAT LOOKS LIKE AMERICA

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It's no surprise that the U.S. cabinet has long been far too white, far too male, and far too wealthy. Progress has been made in this field in recent decades, with multiple women and people of color serving as Secretary of State, the most powerful cabinet office. This progress has been largely reversed in the past few years, however. In the Trump Administration, only two women hold cabinet office: Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao. Only one, Secretary of Education Ben Carson, is an African-American, and only one, Chao, is an immigrant. In addition to being disproportionately white and male, the members of Trump's cabinet come from disproportionately wealthy backgrounds: The wealthiest cabinet in history, his administration has been nicknamed the "Gold-Plated cabinet" as a result. For a progressive administration to be able to truly tackle the underlying structural problems of American society, it is necessary that it is composed of individuals from all walks of life, which means including marginalized individuals in key positions. Lived experience matters, and appointing people from marginalized backgrounds to cabinet offices means it's more likely that the needs of underserved communities receive attention from the federal government. Additionally, just as it's important to appoint individuals from marginalized backgrounds to lead cabinet departments, it's also crucial to diversify the personnel and staff of each department down to the Assistant Secretary level.

# SECRETARY OF STATE

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Department of State is perhaps the most visible and prestigious of any cabinet departments. The department presides over a wide array of tasks relating to the United States's external affairs, including representing America abroad and advising the President on matters of foreign policy. Whoever is chosen for the role under a progressive administration must prioritize multilateralism, non-interventionism, and a commitment to arms control and climate change alleviation. Choosing a Secretary of State will be a difficult task for any left-wing President compared to appointing heads of agencies with domestic purviews. This is because anti-interventionist stalwarts have been largely absent in diplomatic circles and in top foreign policy think tanks such as the Council on Foreign Relations, whose membership are often chosen for State Department positions.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Russ Feingold

Former Senator from Wisconsin

Former Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes  
and the Congo-Kinshasa, Department of State

**Benefits:** Russ Feingold is clearly the most logical choice to be Secretary of State under a progressive administration. The Senator from Wisconsin from 1993 to 2011 was considered to be one of the most progressive members of the Democratic caucus, famously being the sole member of the body to vote against the PATRIOT Act. In his position as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Feingold voted against the Iraq War and fought to end the conflict at virtually every opportunity, proposing an amendment to an appropriations bill in 2006 that would have required immediate withdrawal of all troops from the country. Following his defeat for reelection in 2010, Feingold joined the Department of State as Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes and the Congo-Kinshasa. This position was far from a sinecure or symbolic post. In this capacity, it was noted in 2014 that “Feingold has undertaken a dizzying round of talks in at least eight different African capitals, cajoling leaders face to face, negotiating with skittish rebels late into the night and strategizing with fellow diplomats, all in a very uphill effort to stop a long-running conflict in a region littered with failed peace deals”. Feingold combines anti-interventionist politics (and a record to back it up) with a pedigree tailor-made for the role of Secretary of State.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Ro Khanna

U.S. Representative, California's 17th district

**Benefits:** First elected to Congress in 2016, Ro Khanna, who represents Silicon Valley in Washington, has emerged as one of the leaders of the party's progressive wing. An early supporter of Bernie Sanders's 2020 presidential campaign, Khanna is a leader among the party's left flank on foreign policy, being one of the most high-profile voices to end the War in Yemen. Khanna, who already has executive office experience from his experience as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the United States Department of Commerce, combines progressive politics with a pedigree that would make him a reasonable choice for the position. Khanna is a member of the House Armed Services Committee and in 2019 provided a framework for a progressive foreign policy, which he explained would entail a commitment to multilateralism and engagement with the rest of the world without the use of military intervention. If appointed, Khanna would be the first Asian-American to serve as Secretary of State. While Khanna would surely face opposition from right-wing groups were he to be nominated due to his anti-interventionist views, he is nonetheless one of the most viable progressive choices for Secretary of State.



## Potential Secretaries

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### Jeff Merkley

Senator from Oregon

**Benefits:** Besides Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, the junior Senator from Oregon is arguably the most progressive member of the Senate. Combining a progressive stance on foreign and domestic policy with experience in the nation's most prestigious legislative body, Merkley is an obvious progressive choice for a cabinet position. Given his position on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the position of Secretary of State may very well be the best fit for his talents. During the Obama Administration, Merkley was one of the most vocal advocates in Congress to remove American troops from Afghanistan. Merkley has been a national leader in the battle to end mass surveillance, notably pressing the Director of the National Security Agency in 2013 over what he deemed “unrecognizable” legal practices. Merkley has been an outspoken opponent of U.S. support for the Saudi-led War in Yemen that has proven to be a humanitarian catastrophe. Having a progressive like Merkley represent America on the world stage would signal to allies a progressive administration's willingness to reaffirm the United States's commitments abroad.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Tom Perriello

Former U.S. Representative, Virginia's 5th congressional district

Former Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes and the Congo-Kinshasa, Department of State

**Benefits:** Long a favorite of the progressive Left and more mainstream Democrats alike following his courageous campaign for reelection in 2010, Perriello has served in both diplomatic and domestic policy capacities since leaving Congress in 2011. Perriello was appointed Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes and the Congo-Kinshasa to replace Russ Feingold, a position he held for approximately a year and a half. While Perriello's congressional record wasn't particularly notable on the subject of foreign policy, since leaving office he's been a vocal supporter of ending the War in Yemen and has spoken favorably about the foreign policy program of Bernie Sanders. Additionally, Perriello has served as Special Representative for the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review in the Department of State and as Special Advisor to the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Perriello has experience within the State Department and would surely excel at representing the United States on the world stage as Secretary of State.

# SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The powerful Department of Defense is the most prestigious of agencies with tasks related to national security. Constituting the single largest employer in the world, “the Pentagon” supervises America’s armed forces and advises the president on issues relating to military intervention. Whoever is chosen for the role under a progressive administration must be committed to a principle of non-interventionism, diplomacy over brute strength, and the disarmament of nuclear and hypersonic weapons. As with choosing a Secretary of State, choosing a Secretary of Defense will be a challenge for a left-wing president since ideological non-interventionists are largely absent in top military capacities or even among elected officials qualified for the position.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Kirsten Gillibrand

Senator from New York

**Benefits:** A former Representative from upstate New York, Kirsten Gillibrand has served as a member of the Senate since 2009. During her tenure in the upper body, Gillibrand has been noted for her tireless advocacy on behalf of survivors of sexual assault, and has been particularly vigilant in her legislative efforts to hold sexual predators in the military accountable. A member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Gillibrand has been a leader in the effort to end the Saudi War in Yemen and to restore the AUMF to prevent unilateral declarations of war by the executive office. In 2011, Gillibrand called for the Obama Administration to immediately withdraw from Afghanistan, stating that “America cannot afford an endless war in Afghanistan”. If chosen for the position, Gillibrand would be the first woman to serve as Secretary of Defense. Given her experience on the Senate Armed Services Committee, Gillibrand has the pedigree for the role and would be sure to excel in it.



## Potential Secretaries

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### Ro Khanna

U.S. Representative, California's 17th district

**Benefits:** First elected to Congress in 2016, Ro Khanna, who represents Silicon Valley in Washington, has emerged as one of the leaders of the party's progressive wing. An early supporter of Bernie Sanders's 2020 presidential campaign, Khanna has used his position on the House Armed Services Committee to lead the party's left flank on foreign policy, being one of the most high-profile voices to end the War in Yemen. During his time in Congress, Khanna has also been vocal on the issue of Afghanistan, calling in 2019 for an end to U.S. military engagement in the country. Khanna, who already has executive office experience from his position as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the United States Department of Commerce, combines a progressive policy outlook with a pedigree that would make him a reasonable choice for the position. Khanna is a member of the House Armed Services Committee and in 2019 provided a framework for a progressive foreign policy, which he explained would entail a commitment to multilateralism and engagement with the rest of the world without the use of military intervention. If appointed, Khanna would be the first Asian-American to serve as Secretary of Defense.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Thomas Countryman

Former Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation

Former Acting Under Secretary of State for International Security Affairs

Chair, Arms Control Association

**Benefits:** Thomas Countryman is a career diplomat and national security official who most notably served as Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation during the Obama Administration. Prior to holding this office, Countryman served in a variety of diplomatic and national security capacities, most notably as special advisor to U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs, and Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs with a speciality in Balkan affairs. Countryman is a critic of Saudi and Israeli influence on U.S. foreign affairs and has consistently opposed efforts to spark war with Iran. Given that the Trump Administration's abandonment of arms control efforts may very well prove to be the most disastrous consequence of his presidency in the realm of foreign policy, having a Secretary of Defense with an intimate understanding of arms control policies may prove crucial. Notably, Countryman was a supporter of Bernie Sanders's 2020 presidential run.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Barbara Lee

U.S. Representative, California's 13th district

U.S. Congressional Representative to the United Nations, 74th General Assembly

**Benefits:** Representative Barbara Lee has long been a legend in progressive circles, and in recent years has even become respected among more moderate members of the party's apparatus. The only congressional opponent of the authorization of force following the September 11th, 2001 attacks, the fiercely anti-war Lee has been an often lone voice against U.S. interventions abroad. In 2010 and 2011, Barbara Lee voted in favor of U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan. Lee also notably voted in favor of U.S. troop withdrawal from Pakistan as well as Libya. While most members of Congress voted to condemn the United Nations's Goldstone Report, Lee was one of just 36 to not do so. Lee displayed a willingness to break with party leadership when she voted in favor of limiting U.S. military funds in Libya, being one of just three dozen Democratic members of Congress to do so, and was among a minority of House Democrats to vote against authorization of force in Libya. During the Trump era, Lee spoke out against Trump's dangerous brinkmanship in the Korean Peninsula, stating that Trump's "saber-rattling is putting the world at risk". In 2018, Lee emerged as one of the most vocal advocates of ending U.S. support for the War in Yemen. If appointed, Lee would be the first woman and African American to serve as Secretary of Defense. In 2019, Lee was appointed to serve as a United States Congressional Representative to the 74th United Nations General Assembly by Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

# ATTORNEY GENERAL

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

Headed by the Attorney General, the Department of Justice is the chief federal law enforcement agency. With a purview that includes governance of the federal prison system, reviewing the conduct of local law enforcement agencies, and investigating cases of fraud, the department's enviable prestige is proportionate to its range of responsibilities. Whoever is chosen as Attorney General under a left-wing president must come into office with a serious commitment to criminal justice reform and a will to prosecute cases of fraud in the financial sector.



## Potential Attorneys General

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### Doug Jones

Senator from Alabama

Former U.S. Attorney from the Northern District of Alabama

**Benefits:** First receiving national recognition for prosecuting the Ku Klux Klan members responsible for the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, former U.S. Attorney Doug Jones was elected Senator from Alabama in a 2017 special election. Known for his defense of civil rights, during his time in the Senate Jones has been at the forefront in the fight to end police violence, protecting and expanding voting rights, and to curb the excesses of the drug war. As Senator, Jones has been a supporter of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to restore the crucial provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 rendered obsolete by the right-wing majority on the Supreme Court. Given that the Department of Justice is currently in the process of suing Google for violating antitrust law, it's crucial that the next Attorney General be a firm supporter of enforcing competition law. In consideration of this, Jones, who has been a leader on the issue of curbing price-fixing, would be an excellent choice for the position of Attorney General, especially since he is already set to leave the Senate in January after losing reelection.

## Potential Attorneys General

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### Maura Healey

Attorney General of Massachusetts

**Benefits:** In 2014, Maura Healey made history as the first openly LGBTQ+ state attorney general in American history. Prior to her election, she served in a variety of roles in the state attorney general's office, including in the civil rights division and the labor bureau. Throughout the Trump era, Healey has been at the forefront of the fight to hold the administration accountable at the state level, filing suits against the administration to protect immigrants, reproductive rights, the trans community, and the Affordable Care Act in conjunction with several other state attorneys general. Breaking with the tough-on-crime policies of many of her predecessors, Healey has endorsed a number of crucial criminal justice reform proposals, including an end to mandatory sentences for nonviolent drug offenders, and has spoken in support of federal legislation to legalize cannabis banking. As Attorney General of Massachusetts, Healey has fought to hold predatory student loan debt-relief companies accountable, and has made ending wage theft a top priority in the post. Healey is more than qualified for the position of Attorney General of the United States and would be a firm advocate for civil rights, labor protections, and corporate accountability in the role.

## Potential Attorneys General

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### Vanita Gupta

Former Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights

Former Deputy Legal Director, American Civil Liberties Union

**Benefits:** Vanita Gupta is a widely respected career civil rights attorney and former Department of Justice official who currently serves as President and CEO of The Leadership Council on Civil and Human Rights. Prior to her appointment in the Obama Administration, Gupta served as a staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, successfully suing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for inhumane conditions for detainees in 2007. While in the Department of Justice, Gupta prosecuted hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ community and people of color and defended the rights of people with disabilities. Given that Trump's Department of Justice has failed to protect and has actively harmed marginalized communities, having someone with experience protecting the civil rights of the vulnerable as Attorney General would be a good first step in undoing the damage of the past four years. Should Democrats control the Senate come 2021, Gupta would likely be confirmed to the position.

## Potential Attorneys General

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### Larry Krasner

District Attorney, Philadelphia

**Benefits:** A civil rights lawyer whose victory in the Philadelphia District Attorney race in 2017 marked one of the first high-profile victories of the “progressive prosecutor” movement, Larry Krasner’s tenure in office has largely been consistent with his campaign rhetoric. Since entering office on a platform of criminal justice reform, Krasner has ended the District Attorney office’s practice of prosecuting marijuana possession offenses, reformed the bail system, instructed prosecutors in the office to offer shorter prison sentences in plea deals, and filed a motion in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to declare the death penalty unconstitutional. The elevation of a District Attorney to the role of Attorney General is not unprecedented, seeing as how Miami-Dade County prosecutor Janet Reno was directly elevated to the post in 1993. Having Krasner as Attorney General would have the potential to transform the way America approaches criminal justice policy for good.

## Potential Attorneys General

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### Keith Ellison

Attorney General of Minnesota

Former U.S. Representative, Minnesota's 5th district

Former Deputy Chair, Democratic National Committee

**Benefits:** During his time in Congress representing Minneapolis, Keith Ellison, the first Muslim ever elected to Congress, became nationally known for his progressive stances on matter of economic, social, and foreign policy. One of the most left-wing members of the House of Representatives in recent memory, Ellison was elected Attorney General of Minnesota in the 2018 election, winning on a progressive populist campaign in a swing state almost won by Donald Trump two years prior. As Attorney General, Ellison has not deviated from his progressive record in Congress, choosing the head of the Immigrant Law Center as his deputy, securing \$1.14 million in a settlement with Comcast, and has used his position to advocate for the end of non-compete clauses. While Ellison was intermittently mentioned as a wildcard choice for Secretary of State in the Obama Administration, his experience as Minnesota's top prosecutor makes him a more logical choice for Attorney General. If appointed, Ellison would be the first Muslim to serve in a cabinet position. In the aftermath of the George Floyd protests, Ellison gained increased national attention for charging Derek Chauvin and the three officers who stood by as he murdered Floyd.

## Potential Attorneys General

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### Jenny Yang

Former Chair, US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

**Benefits:** Jenny Yang is an attorney and civil administrator who served as a member and as chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a federal agency tasked with enforcing anti-discrimination ordinances. Currently a professor at Georgetown Law, Yang is a former Department of Justice senior trial attorney who is now using her talent as a fellow at the Urban Institute. During her tenure at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Yang was a favorite of civil rights groups who saw her as a champion of protecting the rights of the marginalized. Under Yang's leadership, the commission introduced a rule mandating that employers report what they pay their employees by gender, race, and ethnicity to the federal government. Yang combines a progressive policy background with formal governmental and policymaking experience that would make her a solid choice for the position. While Yang's background qualifies her for a wide array of positions in the federal government, her background at the Department of Justice and commitment to civil rights makes her an obvious choice for the position of Attorney General.

## Potential Attorneys General

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### Barbara Underwood

Solicitor General of New York

Former Attorney General of New York

Former Acting Solicitor General of the United States

**Benefits:** Briefly serving as the first female Attorney General of New York in 2018, Barbara Underwood was appointed Solicitor General of New York in 2007, a position she currently serves in. Prior to this, Underwood served as Principal Deputy Solicitor General and later acting Solicitor General of the United States. During her brief tenure as Attorney General, Underwood received national attention for her crusade for corporate and public accountability. Underwood won an agreement to dissolve the Trump Foundation, won a lawsuit against the federal government that mandated that the EPA complies with Clean Air Act guidelines, and achieved a record \$174 million settlement with Charter Communications in response to Time Warner Cable committing fraud. Additionally, under Underwood's leadership the State of New York filed suit against ExxonMobil for intentionally downplaying the effects of climate change and Target and WalMart selling toys allegedly contaminated with lead. As Attorney General, Underwood was an advocate for survivors of sexual abuse, creating a clergy abuse hotline and achieved a settlement with seven hospitals that illegally billed survivors for their rape kits. Underwood has an extensive history in the justice system at both the state and federal levels and is a natural choice for the position of Attorney General.



# SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Department of the Treasury is legally authorized to collect government revenue, advises the president on and gives suggestions to Congress about fiscal policy, and manages U.S. debt instruments. Whoever serves as Secretary of the Treasury under a left-wing administration must be committed to the use of government intervention in the economy to prevent recessions and alleviate inequality.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Janet Yellen

Former Chair of the Federal Reserve

Former Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers

**Benefits:** Janet Yellen is a career economist who served at the helm of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors from 2014 to 2018. Prior to this, Yellen served in a variety of economic roles, including as President of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco and as Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors under President Bill Clinton. Yellen is a staunch critic of widening income inequality, stating in 2014 that it is “appropriate to ask whether this trend [of widening inequality] is compatible with values rooted in our nation’s history, among them the high value Americans have traditionally placed on equality of opportunity.” Yellen is a supporter of a carbon tax to tackle the climate crisis and has indicated that she would favor increased federal spending on climate and education programs. Yellen is more than qualified for the position of Secretary of the Treasury and in the role would be an advocate of increased state investment to tackle socio-economic inequalities.

**NOTE:** Yellen’s name was not included in the original list. Nonetheless, her choice for the position by Biden is a welcome one given her strong record, especially on state investment in response to the climate crisis.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Elizabeth Warren

Senator from Massachusetts

Former Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

**Benefits:** Elizabeth Warren needs no introduction. Initially gaining prominence as one of America's foremost experts in bankruptcy law, Warren emerged as a key player in economic policy in the late 2000s and famously led the drive to create the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. After serving at the helm of the agency, Warren successfully ran for Senate in Massachusetts in 2012 and has since emerged as one of the leaders of the American progressive movement and as one of the Democratic Party's most recognizable faces. Warren has been credited with bringing key progressive policies, particularly the wealth tax, into public discourse. As Secretary of the Treasury, Warren would surely be a strong voice in favor of expansive state intervention to secure a just recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic-induced economic crisis. Warren has long been mentioned as a potential Secretary of the Treasury, and for good reason: Few combine experience, expertise, and progressive bonafides in the way she does.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Raphael Bostic

President and CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

Former Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for Policy Development and Research

**Benefits:** Raphael Bostic is a career economist and policy advisor who currently serves as the 15th President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, one of the twelve constituent banks of the national Federal Reserve system. Prior to serving in this capacity, Bostic held an array of governmental and academic posts, including as an economist at the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, as Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for Policy Development and Research, and as an economics professor at the University of Southern California. Bostic's work primarily focuses on community development with a particular focus on combating systemic racism. If confirmed, Bostic would be the highest-ranking openly LGBTQ executive branch official in American political history. It is crucial that the next Secretary of the Treasury be a supporter of progressive economic policies with the experience needed to be effective in the role, and Bostic has proven himself on both counts.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Sarah Bloom Raskin

Former Deputy Secretary of the Treasury

Former Member, Federal Reserve Board of Governors

**Benefits:** During the Obama Administration, Sarah Raskin was one of the most high-profile Treasury officials aligned with the progressive wing. Noted for her dedication to consumer protection and alleviating income inequality, Raskin served as chief financial regulator of Maryland prior to her appointment to the Federal Reserve Board of Governors. From 2014 to 2017, Raskin served as Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, the second highest position in the department. Raskin has spoken favorably about the creation of community banks in rural areas to end the phenomena of banking deserts. Given the scope of the climate crisis, having someone like Raskin who has spoken about the need for regulators to address climate risk at the helm of the Department of the Treasury would be welcome. Raskin has an obvious pedigree for the position of Secretary of the Treasury and would surely be a staunch advocate for working families in the role. Were she to be confirmed as Secretary of the Treasury, she would be the first woman to hold the office.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Richard Cordray

Former Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Former Attorney General of Ohio

**Benefits:** Richard Cordray is a longtime Ohio politician who served as the first Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, an independent agency responsible for consumer protection in the financial sector, from 2012 to 2017. An ally of progressive Senator Elizabeth Warren, Cordray is a critic of corporate power and saw his jurisdiction as Director be minimized over time following various court battles. Cordray has notably stated that America “must supplement [its] base political and legal equality with some more robust measures of economic equality and economic rights as well”. As Secretary of the Treasury, Cordray would surely be sympathetic to progressive economic initiatives: In 2018, Cordray ran for Governor of Ohio on a platform of universal pre-K and raising the minimum wage. In the wake of the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Cordray has sounded the alarm on both the current and impending consumer debt crisis and proposed measures to rein in what he describes as “vehement” debt collectors.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Robert Reich

Former Secretary of Labor

**Benefits:** A former economist who became Secretary of Labor during the Clinton Administration, Robert Reich was regularly mentioned for the role of Secretary of the Treasury under a Bernie Sanders Administration throughout the 2016 election cycle. A rare progressive in high office during the height of the New Democrat era, Reich's greatest accomplishment in office was the implementation of the Family and Medical Leave Act. Reich is a supporter of the labor movement, raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, higher taxes on the wealthy, increased spending on social services such as education, and a universal basic income. During the Trump era, Reich has been outspoken against the administration's economic policies, having argued that the 2017 tax cuts plan amounted to little more than a giveaway to corporations. Given his experience as Secretary of Labor and as a high-profile economic analyst, Reich remains one of the most logical choices for the position of Secretary of the Treasury under a progressive administration.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Jeffery Sachs

Former Special Advisor to the United Nations Secretary-General

Director, United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network

**Benefits:** Jeffrey Sachs is one of the most prolific macroeconomists and experts on economic development on the planet. Initially gaining prominence for helping to devise economic liberalization plans in formerly communist countries in the 1990s, Sachs's work transitioned to poverty alleviation in under-developed countries in the 2000s. In the 2010s, Sachs's politics shifted sharply leftward, becoming a critic of the predatory International Monetary Fund (IMF), collaborating with left-wing economist Thomas Piketty in penning an open letter to Germany during the Greek debt crisis, and endorsing Senator Bernie Sanders's campaigns for president in both 2016 and 2020. Additionally, Sachs in 2013 helped to found the Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project that seeks to limit global warming to under two degrees celsius or less. On domestic economic issues, Sachs is a supporter of raising the minimum wage and a single-payer healthcare system. Sachs has spoken out against the "crooks" on Wall Street, stating that bankers "...have no responsibility to pay taxes. They have no responsibility to their clients. They have no responsibility to people, counterparties in transactions. They are tough, greedy, aggressive, and feel absolutely out of control, you know, in a quite literal sense." As Secretary of the Treasury, Sachs would likely oppose austerity proposals in the aftermath of the 2020 economic crisis.



# SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

Sometimes sardonically referred to as “the Department of Everything Else” owing to its wide array of responsibilities, the Department of the Interior is primarily tasked with the conservation of America’s natural resources. The department oversees about three quarters of American federal land and additionally serves to provide crucial programs to Native American communities. The Secretary of the Interior is typically a politician hailing from a state west of the Mississippi River, and it is particularly common for the secretary to have prior experience as Governor. Under a progressive administration, the primary task of the Secretary of the Interior should be to halt any plans for the privatization of America’s national parks and other federally-owned lands.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Deb Haaland

U.S. Representative, New Mexico's first district

Former Chair, New Mexico Democratic Party

**Benefits:** First elected in 2018, Deb Haaland represents central New Mexico in Washington as one of the first two Native American women in Congress. After graduating with a JD in Indian law from the University of New Mexico School of Law, Haaland became tribal administrator for the San Felipe Pueblo. Haaland's entrance into Democratic party politics came in 2012, where she assisted the Obama campaign's efforts in New Mexico, and later became Chair of the New Mexico Democratic Party in 2015. Following Representative Michelle Lujan-Grisholm's decision to retire from Congress to run for Governor, Haaland ran for her seat and won decisively in the general election for the safely Democratic seat. Haaland is one of the most progressives members of Congress, being a steadfast supporter of policies such as the Green New Deal and Medicare for All, and indicated her support for abolition of ICE in 2018. A member of the Natural Resources Committee, her congressional work is closely related to the portfolio she'd be given as Secretary of the Interior. If chosen for the position, Haaland would be the first person of Native American descent to hold the office most intimately concerned with protecting Native American land rights.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Jay Inslee

Governor of Washington

Former Representative, Washington's 1st and 4th districts

**Benefits:** A former member of the House of Representatives, Jay Inslee received national attention for his dark horse presidential run in 2020. Inslee ran an issue-focused campaign prioritizing climate policy, arguably the first of its kind on the national stage, that raised the governor's profile and has led to speculation that he will be considered for a role in a future administration. Given that he governs a western state and has fought attempts to impose cost barriers to accessing national parks, Inslee heading the Department of the Interior makes perfect sense from a progressive point of view. During his tenure as Governor, Inslee has made the protection of Washington's clean water a priority. Before he was elected Governor in 2012, Inslee was named as a potential choice for the position in 2008. Inslee combines support for progressive environmental policies with a pedigree reminiscent of past Secretaries of the Interior. Should Democrats control the Senate, Inslee would likely have very little trouble being confirmed for the position.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Raúl Grijalva

U.S. Representative, Arizona's 3rd district

**Benefits:** Raúl Grijalva is a long-time U.S. Representative from Tucson who has become something of a legend in progressive circles for his steadfast commitment to progressive politics. Grijalva is a member of the House Natural Resources Committee and became chair of the committee in 2019. Deeply interested in conservation since his years on the Pima County Board of Supervisors where he proposed the ambitious Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, the one-time member of the radical Raza Unida is a natural choice to lead the Department of the Interior. There were widespread pushes in both 2009 and 2012 for Barack Obama to nominate Grijalva to the position and he was considered a finalist for the post in Obama's first term, though he ended up not getting appointed. In addition to being a fierce advocate for conservation and against the privatization of national parks, Grijalva is a strong supporter of Native American rights. Grijalva authored the RESPECT Act in 2010, designed to prevent the federal government from taking various actions related to indigenous affairs without tribal consultation.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Fawn Sharp

President of the National Congress of American Indians

Former President of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians

Former Chair, National Commission on Indian Trust Administration and Reform

**Benefits:** A member of the [Quinault Indian Nation](#), [Fawn Sharp](#) is an indigenous leader and political figure who serves as president of the [Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians](#) and as vice president of the [National Congress of American Indians](#). Sharp previously served as Chair of the [National Commission on Indian Trust Administration and Reform](#), a position within the Department of the Interior created in 2011 to evaluate the Indian trust system. Sharp, who holds an advanced certificate in International Human Rights Law from Oxford, previously served as an administrative judge in her home state of Washington. Sharp is deeply interested in climate policy and is a self-described “climate activist” who would be sure to be an advocate for America’s natural resources were she to be selected for the position.

# SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

As its name suggests, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) is primarily tasked with the development and execution of laws pertaining to agricultural activity. A progressive approach to federal agriculture policy would include challenging agricultural monopolies and promoting sustainable agribusiness programs, among other initiatives. What often goes without mention, however, is that 80% of the department's funding goes toward the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), a sub-cabinet agency responsible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or "food stamp" program). As such, it is imperative that a Secretary of Agriculture under a progressive administration will be as committed to preserving and expanding the welfare state as they are to taking on agricultural monopolies that have devastated rural communities across the country.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Marcia Fudge

Representative from Ohio's 11th district

**Benefits:** Marcia Fudge currently serves as U.S. Representative for the 11th district of Ohio. During her tenure, Fudge has served in the crucial House Committee on Agriculture, which has general jurisdiction over agriculture policy at the federal level. Given that the administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is among the Department of Agriculture's most crucial functions, having Fudge, who has been a leader in the fight against the Trump Administration's sabotage of the SNAP program, would be a good first step in reversing the damage of the past four years. Food insecurity in the United States, already at unacceptably high levels prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, have skyrocketed in 2020. Having a Secretary of Agriculture who has made fighting the scourge of food insecurity a priority during her time in Congress is crucial as the next administration works to secure a just economic recovery post-COVID. Fudge is more than qualified for the position of Secretary of Agriculture owing to her experience in the House Committee on Agriculture and would be a strong advocate of revitalizing rural America and alleviating food insecurity in the role.

## Potential Secretaries

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### David Zuckerman

Lieutenant Governor of Vermont

**Benefits:** A member of the Northeast Organic Farming Association, David Zuckerman is an organic farmer and politician who has served in both houses of Vermont's state legislature and currently serves as the state's Lieutenant Governor. While affiliated with the Democratic Party for ballot purposes, Zuckerman is the first member of the Vermont Progressive Party to win statewide office. Said to have been inspired to enter politics by then-Congressman Bernie Sanders in the 1990s, Zuckerman is a left-winger who served four years as chair of the Vermont House of Representatives's Agriculture Committee. In this capacity Zuckerman supported the labelling of GMOs and legalization of cannabis. The appointment of Zuckerman to the position would elevate the public standing of one of the most progressive statewide officeholders in the United States and might even prepare him for future national office. More importantly, however, is that it would result in the Department of Agriculture being led by someone committed to sustainable agricultural practices.



## Potential Secretaries

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### Jim McGovern

Representative from Massachusetts's 2nd district

**Benefits:** Jim McGovern has served Worcester, Massachusetts in Congress since his initial election in 1996. A protégé of 1972 presidential candidate George McGovern (to whom he has no relation), McGovern is a political progressive who is generally considered to be one of the most progressive members of Congress. A member of the House Committee on Agriculture, McGovern has taken progressive stances on issues of agricultural policy. McGovern supports a major expansion of the Department of Agriculture's child nutrition programs, and took part in the "food stamp challenge" that required living on a \$21 food budget to highlight how the program fails to provide enough for recipients. A supporter of environmental causes, McGovern supports sustainable agricultural policies to combat the climate crisis, increased investment in protecting the health of soil, and opposed Trump's tariffs in part because of their negative impact on America's farmers.

## Potential Secretaries

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### John Boyd

Founder, National Black Farmers Association

**Benefits:** John Boyd is a former and civil rights activist from Virginia who founded the National Black Farmers Association. In 2008, Boyd was a runner-up in Obama's search for a Secretary of Agriculture, which ultimately went to former Governor of Iowa Tom Vilsack. In the vetting process, he was supported heavily by members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Boyd has long been involved in electoral politics, helping to organize Barack Obama's 2008 campaign in Virginia. In 2008, Boyd helped secure what is considered to be the greatest victory for Black farmers in American history, a \$100 million line item in that year's farm bill that reopened the government's discrimination settlement with black farmers. As a result, in 2010, Boyd secured \$1.15 billion in funds to resolve these cases. Boyd has aligned himself with the left-wing of the Democratic Party, supporting and campaigning for democratic socialist Senator Bernie Sanders in his 2016 bid for President. Black farmers in the United States have lost nearly 90% of their farmland in the past century, an enormous loss. Rectifying this injustice requires approaching agricultural policy from the lens of racial justice. As such, Boyd should be seriously considered for the position of Secretary of Agriculture under a progressive administration.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Peter Welch

U.S. Representative, Vermont's at-large district

**Benefits:** Peter Welch is a Vermont politician who currently serves as the state's lone representative in the House of Representatives. Welch is a progressive with a strong record on various left-wing causes such as labor rights, universal healthcare, and environmental preservation. Representing a rural state in Congress, Welch is a member of the House Agriculture Committee. In this capacity, Welch has sponsored various pieces of progressive legislation relating to the Department of Agriculture. These include the Improving Access to Nutrition Act of 2019 that expands SNAP benefits to non-employed workers, the Ban Toxic Pesticides Act of 2019 that prohibits the use of the toxic substance chlorpyrifos in agriculture, and the Invasive Species Prevention and Forest Restoration Act, which allows the Department of Agriculture to award grants to promote the restoration of tree species affected by pests and noxious weeds. Should Democrats control the Senate, Welch would likely be confirmable, and would surely be an advocate of sustainable farming practices in the position.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Chellie Pingree

U.S. Representative, Maine's 1st district

**Benefits:** Chellie Pingree has served as Representative from the 1st district of Maine since 2009. A member of the House Agriculture Committee, Pingree has devoted much of her time in office to issues of rural revitalization. A former organic farmer, Pingree introduced the Agriculture Resilience Act. The legislation aims for net-zero emissions in the agriculture industry by 2040. Pingree supports increased investment in the USDA's Regional Climate Hubs and initiatives to protect soil health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Pingree used her position to draw special attention to insecurity in the food supply system, calling for an increased investment in local farms and food producers as a result. In 2020, Pingree joined a coalition in Congress to push for an increased investment in the SNAP program in response to a rise in food insecurity during the pandemic. While Pingree is a progressive, she would not be particularly difficult to confirm as Secretary of Agriculture owing to her generally non-controversial tenure in Congress and experience in the field of agriculture.

# SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Department of Commerce is responsible for setting industrial standards, curating some vital economic statistics, and promoting sustainable economic growth. In past administrations, choices to lead the department have generally been major donors to presidential campaigns without any prior public experience: Billionaire Hyatt heiress Penny Pritzker, Edison International CEO John Bryson, Kellogg CEO Carlos Gutierrez, and WL Ross & Co. founder Wilbur Ross are among the list of recent Secretaries of Commerce with no public experience prior to their appointments. Given that any left-wing president is unlikely to have won with the backing of titans of industry, choosing a Secretary of Commerce will presumably be based on other criteria, such as commitment to sustainable growth policies that result in less economic inequality.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Tom Steyer

Founder, NextGen America

**Benefits:** Tom Steyer is a prolific environmentalist and businessman who notably mounted a campaign for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination. A partner at Hellman & Friedman since 1986, Steyer founded NextGen America, a progressive advocacy group and political action committee (PAC), in 2013. Steyer is primarily known for his interest in environmental policy, believing that a massive investment in green energy is necessary for both the purpose of saving the planet and stimulating the economy. During the 2020 presidential campaign, Steyer's climate plan included support for a federal “buy clean” standard and transitioning to a 100% clean energy economy. Given that the Department of Commerce wields surprising influence in the realm of environmental policy, with crucial agencies like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration being part of the department, having someone with Steyer's experience and dedication to climate policy as Secretary of Commerce would prove beneficial to a federal effort to meaningfully tackle the climate crisis.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Jan Schakowsky

Representative, Illinois's 19th district

**Benefits:** Long considered to be one of the most progressive members of the House of Representatives, Jan Schakowsky has represented Chicago's North Side in Washington since the 1998 election. Schakowsky currently serves on the Committee on Energy and Commerce, where she serves as the chair of the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection & Commerce. Long an advocate for consumer protection policies, Schakowsky has spent much of her career pushing for stricter regulations and oversight of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Given that the Department of Commerce has long been treated as little more than an afterthought, having someone like Schakowsky who is dedicated to inclusive economic development and consumer protection at the helm of the agency could prove monumental.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Rohit Chopra

Member, Federal Trade Commission

Former Special Advisor to the Secretary,  
Department of Education

**Benefits:** Rohit Chopra is a public official and consumer advocate who has served as a member of the Federal Trade Commission, a powerful independent agency of the U.S. government tasked with enforcing civil antitrust law, since 2018. A protégé of progressive Senator Elizabeth Warren, Chopra served as Assistant Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau from 2010 to 2015 and as a special advisor to the Secretary of Education in 2016, where he advised on student loan debt issues. Chopra is a critic of corporate power and is generally considered one of the most left-wing members of the Federal Trade Commission. Despite his history of consumer advocacy and opposition to corporate power, Chopra has a solid reputation on both sides of the partisan divide and was confirmed unanimously for the position of commissioner in 2018. At the helm of the Department of Commerce, Chopra would surely be an advocate of sound industrial policy aimed at shared prosperity.



## Potential Secretaries

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### Richard Cordray

Former Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Former Attorney General of Ohio

**Benefits:** Richard Cordray is a longtime Ohio politician who served as the first Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, an independent agency responsible for consumer protection in the financial sector, from 2012 to 2017. An ally of progressive Senator Elizabeth Warren, Cordray is a critic of corporate power and saw his jurisdiction as Director be minimized over time following various court battles. As Secretary of the Commerce, Cordray would surely be sympathetic to progressive economic initiatives: In 2018, Cordray ran for Governor of Ohio on a platform of universal pre-K and raising the minimum wage. For far too long, the Department of Commerce’s crucial functions have largely been ignored by the White House. Having someone like Cordray with an intimate understanding of sustainable economic development and a commitment to shared prosperity at the helm of the Department of Commerce would be a major victory for working families.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Susan Helper

Former Chief Economist, Department of Commerce

Former Member, Council of Economic Advisors

**Benefits:** Susan Helper is an economist who served in the Council of Economic Advisors and as Chief Economist of the Department of Commerce during the Obama Administration. Affiliated with the left-wing Economic Policy Institute, Helper is primarily interested in industrial development and policies seeking to revive the American manufacturing sector. Helper has been a visiting scholar at numerous academic institutions, including Harvard University, the University of Oxford, U.C., Berkeley, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Helper considers free trade policies such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to have contributed to the collapse of the American manufacturing sector. She has proposed the creation of a National Laboratory for Advanced Manufacturing that includes an advisory committee featuring manufacturers, academics, and labor union representatives to coordinate and cultivate sound industrial policy. Additionally, she has proposed greater investment in the Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) program in addition to providing state benefits to firms that pay American workers high wages and don't outsource. Helper has a sophisticated grasp of industrial policy and the inner-workings of the Department of Commerce, making her an obvious choice to lead the department.

# SECRETARY OF LABOR

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Department of Labor is tasked with executing laws related to worker safety and employment rights, as well as administering unemployment benefits and presiding over the curation of economic statistics. Under a progressive administration, the Secretary of Labor should be very friendly towards organized labor, committed to protecting the rights of working people, and in support of the expansion of the welfare state to support impoverished workers and those faced with unemployment.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Patrick Gaspard

Former Ambassador to South Africa

Former Executive Vice President for Politics and Legislation,  
1199SEIU

Former White House Director of Political Affairs

**Benefits:** Patrick Gaspard is a former labor official and political figure who is noted for his years of experience at 1199SEIU, the largest healthcare worker union in the United States. Gaspard previously served in the Obama Administration as White House Director of Political Affairs and as Ambassador to South Africa. Since leaving government, Gaspard has served at the helm of the Open Society Foundations. In this time, Gaspard has continued to advocate for workers' rights, endorsing the 2019 General Motors Strike and the Strike for Black Lives in 2020. In an article in July 2020 for *ColorLines* endorsing the Strike for Black Lives, Gaspard criticized exorbitant income inequality, stating “[w]hen the CEO of McDonald’s is making more than \$18 million dollars a year—2,000 times what the average worker makes—and an employee is sleeping in her car, something is fundamentally broken.”. In the same article, Gaspard identified redlining, anti-migrant policies, and anti-union laws in particular as contributing to deeply-ingrained intergenerational poverty in the United States. As Secretary of Labor, Gaspard would be a stalwart advocate of workers’ rights in a time when the labor movement needs it most.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Andy Levin

U.S. Representative, Michigan's 9th district

Former Deputy Director, Michigan Department of Energy, Labor, and Economic Growth

**Benefits:** From the prominent Levin family that has represented Michigan in both houses of Congress, Andy Levin was elected to replace his father Sander in the 2018 election in this Metro Detroit district. In contrast to other members of his family, Levin is on the left-wing of the Democratic Party. Despite his low profile, Levin is one of the most progressive members of the freshman caucus: Levin is an unwavering supporter of Medicare for All as defined by Pramila Jayapal and was one of the earliest supporters of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Green New Deal. A former staff attorney for the U.S. Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations, Levin is also notable for being one of the few members of Congress who has worked as a labor organizer. A former director of Voice@Work, an organization with a focus on expanding trade union membership, Levin has been a steadfast advocate of workers as a member of the House Education and Labor Committee. Between his left-wing credentials, focus on labor rights, experience as a labor organizer and as a deputy director of the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor, and Economic Growth, Levin would be an incredible Secretary of Labor.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Bernie Sanders

Senator from Vermont

Former Representative, Vermont's at-large district

Former Mayor of Burlington

**Benefits:** Bernie Sanders needs no introduction. Sanders's presidential campaigns in 2016 and 2020 changed the face of American politics, helping to push issues like single-payer healthcare, tuition-free public college, and the movement for a \$15 minimum wage into the mainstream. One would be pressed to find a more reliable ally of the labor movement in D.C. than Bernie Sanders, a staunch opponent of anti-worker "right-to-work" laws and one of the foremost advocates of protecting collective bargaining rights on Capitol Hill. In 2018, Sanders introduced the historic Workplace Democracy Act, one of the most comprehensive pieces of pro-labor legislation in recent memory. If enacted, the Workplace Democracy Act would expand the definition of "employee" to protect workers not currently protected by present labor law, strengthen pension protections and collective bargaining rights, and repeal "right-to-work" laws. Though Vermont is currently governed by Republican Governor Phil Scott, Scott has pledged to appoint a Democratic-affiliated independent to succeed him, meaning that a Sanders appointment would not jeopardize the Democrats' chances in the Senate.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Jenny Yang

Former Chair, US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

**Benefits:** Jenny Yang is an attorney and civil administrator who served as a member and as chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a federal agency tasked with enforcing anti-discrimination ordinances. Currently a professor at Georgetown Law, Yang is a former Department of Justice trial lawyer who is now using her talent as a fellow at the Urban Institute. Yang combines a progressive policy background with formal governmental and policymaking experience that would make her a solid choice for the position. Much of Yang's work focuses on labor law, particularly with regards to eliminating non-compete clauses, and would be sure to be a steadfast advocate of workers' rights were she to serve in the position. At the Center for Labor, Human Services, and Population, Yang's work has been particularly considerate of the conditions of gig workers and subcontractors. Yang is well-qualified for the position of Secretary of Labor and would surely be an advocate for working families in the position.

## Potential Secretaries

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### William Spriggs

Chief Economist, AFL-CIO

Former Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy

**Benefits:** William Spriggs is a progressive economist and labor official who served as Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy during the Obama Administration and is currently the AFL-CIO's Chief Economist. Formerly a fellow of the left-wing Economic Policy Institute and the Director of the National Urban League, Spriggs has chaired the economics department of Howard University since 2005. Spriggs is a supporter of the labor movement and advocates for the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), legislation that would lead to a sharp increase in union density, indicating that he would be a strong ally of labor as Secretary of Labor. Spriggs supports a large increase in the minimum wage, advocating for the federal minimum wage to be tied proportionately to the median wage. Should Democrats control the Senate, Spriggs would likely be confirmable given his experience in the Department of Labor.



## Potential Secretaries

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### Sharon Block

Executive Director, Labor and Worklife Program, Harvard Law School

Former Member, National Labor Relations Board

Former Senior Counselor to the Secretary of Labor

**Benefits:** In a sense, Sharon Block is perhaps the optimal choice for Secretary of Labor in a Democratic Administration. Block served in the Obama Administration in the Department of Labor’s Policy Office and as Senior Counselor to Secretary of Labor Tom Perez. In 2012, Block was appointed to the National Labor Relations Board, an independent agency that primarily enforces labor law relating to collective bargaining, by President Obama. Since leaving the Obama Administration, Block has returned to academia, becoming executive director of the Labor and Worklife Program at Harvard Law School. In addition to having a resume that almost seems “too-perfect” for the position, Block is staunchly supportive of left-wing economic policies. Block is the co-founder of the Clean Slate Project for Worker Power that seeks to radically rewrite existing U.S. labor law. Citing the fact that it would take the average Amazon worker “3.8 million years, working full time, to earn what CEO Jeff Bezos now possesses”, Block has proposed that labor law be reformed so as to “save American democracy”. Her radical ideas for rewriting labor law include the legalization of sectoral bargaining, the end of at-will employment, works councils in every workplace, and members-only unions.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Heidi Shierholz

Former Chief Economist, Department of Labor

**Benefits:** Heidi Shierholz is a labor market economist who served as Chief Economist of the Department of Labor from 2014 to 2017. Prior to and following her service in the Department of Labor, Shierholz served as a senior economist at the left-wing Economic Policy Institute. Shierholz advised Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez on various initiatives to protect workers' rights, safety on the job, wages and benefits. Additionally, Shierholz provided analysis of the labor market during the recovery years following the 2008 recession. Shierholz is an advocate of guaranteed paid leave and overtime pay for workers. Labor reforms supported by Shierholz include fair scheduling laws, initiatives to boost union density, limiting the ability of employers to require non-compete clauses, and making W-2 the primary employment status for American workers. In addition to being ideologically aligned with the progressive movement, Shierholz understands the gritty details of the Department of Labor bureaucracy and has the potential to be an extremely effective Secretary.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Julie Su

Secretary of the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, California

Former Labor Commissioner, California

**Benefits:** Julie Su is an attorney and civil administrator who serves as California's Secretary for the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA). Prior to serving in this role, Su served as the state's Labor Commissioner. In addition to serving in these two capacities at the state government level, Su served as litigation director of non-profit civil rights organization Asian Americans Advancing Justice's Los Angeles chapter. Additionally, Su co-founded Sweatshop Watch, a corporate accountability project aimed at stopping inhumane practices in the workplace. During her time in government, Su has led the state's effort to combat wage theft, taking a particular aim at wage theft against migrant workers. As a result of Su's work, more than \$185 million in unpaid worker compensation was identified by 2013. The daughter of Chinese immigrants, Su is a staunch progressive and ally of the labor movement who would likely bring to the position a focus on protecting the most vulnerable of workers, particularly migrants. Su is an obvious choice for the role given her experience at the helm of the labor department of the nation's largest state.

# SECRETARY OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Department of Health and Human Services is tasked with the administration and provision of public health services. Component agencies include the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (which administers the Medicaid and Medicare programs), the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (which serves to protect public health and safety), and the Food and Drug Administration (which controls and supervises food and drug safety standards). Under a progressive administration, the department will be given the crucial task of implementing a national healthcare service.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Xavier Becerra

Attorney General of California

Former Representative from California's 34th district

**Benefits:** Currently serving as Attorney General of California, Xavier Becerra previously served as a member of the House of Representatives, where he represented a constituency centered in Downtown Los Angeles. Throughout his career, Becerra has been a staunch advocate of health justice, being noted for his support of single-payer healthcare in particular. In 2005, Becerra signed onto H.R. 676, introduced by John Conyers, which would've enacted single-payer healthcare at the federal level. In 2017, Becerra reiterated his support for Medicare for All, indicating he believed it was the best way to achieve an equitable healthcare system in the United States. As California's Attorney General, Becerra has used his platform to hold predatory actors in the private healthcare system accountable, securing a massive \$575 million settlement with Sutter Health following revelations of abusing its market power. A supporter of aggressive oversight of the pharmaceutical industry, Becerra would surely champion the interests of both patients and healthcare workers alike in the position of Secretary of Health and Human Services.

**NOTE:** Becerra's name was not included in the original list. Nonetheless, his choice for the position by Biden is a welcome one given his strong record on health justice.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Abdul El-Sayed

Former Health Officer and Executive Director of the Detroit Health Department

**Benefits:** It would be impossible to discuss who might serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services in a progressive administration without mentioning Abdul El-Sayed. Famous for his insurgent gubernatorial run in 2018, El-Sayed was made Health Officer and Executive Director of the Detroit Health Department at age 30, the youngest chief health executive of any major American city at the time of appointment. A Rhodes Scholar, El-Sayed previously taught at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. During his tenure as head of Detroit's health department, he coordinated efforts to test students in Detroit for lead poisoning following the poisoning of Flint, Michigan. Following his display of leadership in this capacity, he was appointed to the Michigan Public Health Advisory Commission and the Advisory Committee to the US Secretary of Health & Human Services for Healthy People 2030. El-Sayed is ideologically a member of the Democratic Party's left-wing, having been endorsed by Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in his gubernatorial run. If appointed to the position, El-Sayed would be the first Muslim to hold cabinet office.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Donald Berwick

Former Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

**Benefits:** Donald Berwick is a Harvard-educated pediatrician who served as Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, often considered to be the most crucial position within the Department of Health and Human Services besides the Secretary, from 2010 to 2011. A staunch supporter of single-payer healthcare who has appeared with Bernie Sanders to promote Medicare for All, Berwick was knighted in 2005 for his work in new care models for the British National Health Service. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Berwick has been vocal in his assessment that lack of universal healthcare in the United States has resulted in the pandemic hitting marginalized communities, particularly communities of color, the hardest. Berwick is one the most logical choices for the position under a progressive administration given his experience in the field of medicine and healthcare policy.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Pramila Jayapal

U.S. Representative, Washington's 7th district

**Benefits:** First elected to the House of Representatives representing Seattle in 2016, Pramila Jayapal has quickly emerged as one of the most visible figures on the American left. Considered to be a *de facto* mentor to young progressives in Congress such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar, Jayapal has been noted for leading the fight for Medicare for All in the lower house of Congress. Currently the Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Jayapal serves as a member of the Committee on Education and Labor in the House of Representatives. Jayapal's framework for Medicare for All is perhaps the most ambitious healthcare plan put forward by a sitting member of Congress. Under this plan, the United States would transition to a single-payer system that would cover hospital visits, maternity care, vision and dental care, prescription medications, and reproductive healthcare services for all Americans. Having Jayapal at the helm of the Department of Health and Human Services would be monumental in the struggle for health justice.



## Potential Secretaries

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### Georges Benjamin

Former Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland

Former Acting Commissioner of Health, District of Columbia

**Benefits:** Georges Benjamin is a prominent public health official who has served at the helm of the public health departments of both the State of Maryland and the District of Columbia. Currently the Executive Director of the American Public Health Association, Benjamin is an advocate of universal healthcare and takes an intersectional approach to public health issues, considering issues such as climate change to be detrimental to public health. In 2016, Benjamin was appointed by President Barack Obama to serve on the National Infrastructure Advisory Council, a federal body tasked with advising the White House on the security of information systems. Benjamin has praised single-payer healthcare and notably defended Bernie Sanders's Medicare for All proposal in the face of attacks by Trump appointee Seema Verma. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Benjamin has been vigilant in pointing out the racial disparities regarding which communities are getting hit hardest by the virus. With experience as a state and district-level health executive, a policy advisor at the federal level, and as head of the American Public Health Association, Benjamin is well-qualified for the position of Secretary of Health and Human Services.

# SECRETARY OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Department of Housing and Urban Development is primarily concerned with the regulation of affordable and supportive housing programs. Under a progressive administration, the department should be committed to ending the national housing crisis via increased funding for affordable housing and via zoning reform.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Marcia Fudge

Representative from Ohio's 11th district

**Benefits:** Marcia Fudge currently serves as U.S. Representative for the 11th district of Ohio. In this capacity, Fudge has made securing increased federal funds for public housing in her district a top legislative priority. In 2015, Fudge notably helped secure a \$3 million federal grant for a Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) program, and during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a stalwart advocate of a year-long eviction moratorium to protect vulnerable tenants. In the aftermath of the 2009 financial crisis, Fudge pushed to hold predatory mortgage lenders accountable, introducing the Predatory Mortgage Lending Practices Reduction Act of 2009 to curb unfair mortgage lending practices. Despite the agency's crucial functions, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has long been treated as an afterthought by the federal government. It's important that the next Secretary of Housing and Urban Development is a staunch advocate of increased investment in public housing, and Fudge is more than qualified for the position.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Diane Yentel

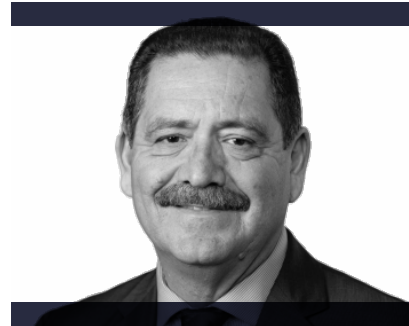
President, National Low Income Housing Coalition

Former Director, Public Housing Management and Occupancy Division, Department of Housing and Urban Development

**Benefits:** Diane Yentel is a career policy analyst who leads the National Low Income Housing Coalition and previously served in the Department of Housing and Urban Development as Director of the Public Housing Management and Occupancy Division. Yentel is a respected affordable housing expert who has worked with Oxfam America and the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless in devising housing policy. Yentel is an advocate of zoning reform, increased investment in affordable housing, increased funding for McKinney-Vento grants to end homelessness, the ability of formerly incarcerated people to receive public housing, and a national right to counsel for tenants facing eviction. Yentel has experience in both the Department of Housing and Urban Development and in civil society where she helps formulate housing policy. As such, she would be a non-controversial, highly-qualified choice for the position.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Chuy García

U.S. Representative, Illinois's 4th district

**Benefits:** Chuy García is a longtime fixture of Chicago politics who was elected to represent the state's 4th district in the House of Representatives in 2018. First achieving national attention following his ill-fated challenge to incumbent Rahm Emanuel from the left in the 2015 mayoral race, García is considered to be a progressive and supported the presidential campaigns of Bernie Sanders in 2016 and 2020. A member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, García is one of the foremost advocates of housing for all in Congress. In 2019, García became one of the few cosponsors of H.R.5244, the Homes for All Act of 2019 introduced by Ilhan Omar. This legislation revolutionizes the American housing market by making public housing operating and capital expenses mandatory spending to circumvent investment bias, invests \$200 billion in the Housing Trust Fund, and \$200 billion in a newly created Community Control and Anti-Displacement Fund to stop gentrification. Given his position on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and position as a Representative from a major city, García is an obvious choice to lead the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Rashida Tlaib

Representative from Michigan's 13th district

**Benefits:** One of the first two Muslim women to be elected to Congress, [Rashida Tlaib](#) has represented Detroit in the House of Representatives since 2019. A democratic socialist, Tlaib is a member of the “[Squad](#)”, an informal group of four progressive women of color in the House of Representatives. While Tlaib is progressive on issues across the board, it is the issue of housing justice where she has made the biggest impact. A member of the [House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development and Insurance](#), Tlaib is a supporter of the [People's Housing project](#), a housing policy project with the aim of ending homelessness and treating housing as a human right. During her tenure on the Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development and Insurance, Tlaib has heavily [scrutinized](#) Trump's Department of Housing and Urban Development for its neglect of low-income tenants. Given that the Department of Housing and Urban Development has long been an afterthought for most administrations, having someone as dedicated to housing justice as Tlaib in the position would be a huge step in the fight for housing justice.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Maria Foscarinis

Executive Director, National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

Professor, Columbia Law School

**Benefits:** Maria Foscarinis is generally considered to be one of the most prolific and effective anti-homelessness advocates in the United States. Originally an attorney at BigLaw firm Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, Foscarinis left the firm to direct the Washington, D.C. branch of the National Coalition for the Homeless and later founded the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. At the helm of this organization, Foscarinis successfully lobbied for the passage of the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which she played a major role in crafting. The legislation remains the primary federal legislation dealing with homelessness and authorizes the federal government to fund homeless shelters. Foscarinis is an ideological progressive who praised the People’s Housing Platform pushed by democratic socialist Representative Rashida Tlaib, supports Medicare for All, and supports putting an end to exclusionary zoning. Foscarinis additionally serves in an academic capacity at Columbia Law School, where she teaches a course on homelessness policy and law.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Chokwe Antar Lumumba

Mayor of Jackson, Mississippi

**Benefits:** Elected on a progressive platform pledging to make Jackson, Mississippi the “most radical city on the planet”, Chokwe Antar Lumumba has served as Mayor of Mississippi’s capital since 2017. In 2019 Lumumba contributed to “A Road Map to Winning the South” distributed to Democratic presidential hopefuls seeking their endorsements. This document placed particular emphasis on housing reform, including demands for increased funding for Section 8 vouchers, the National Housing Trust Fund, McKinney-Vento grants to decrease homelessness, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, and the Capital Magnet Fund. Under his leadership, the City of Jackson secured \$1.3 million in grant money to target lead paint poisoning in low-income housing units in the city. The elevation of big-city mayors to the position of Secretary of Housing and Urban Development is a common practice and Lumumba serving in the capacity would give him a higher profile should he ever want to mount a bid for national office.



# SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Department of Transportation is concerned with all matters related to transportation, from providing support to local transit systems, enforcing rail safety laws, and regulating the construction of highways. Under a progressive administration, the department should place particular emphasis on investing in local transit systems and rebuilding antiquated transport infrastructure. Traditionally, the post has often (but far from exclusively) been held by municipal officials in Democratic administrations.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Earl Blumenauer

U.S. Representative, Oregon's 3rd district

Former Transportation Commissioner, City of Portland

**Benefits:** Earl Blumenauer has represented Portland in Congress since his initial election in 1996. Previously a member of the Portland City Commission, Blumenauer served at the helm of the Portland Bureau of Transportation and as the city's Commissioner of Public Works before being elected to Congress. While not a member of the House Transportation Committee, transportation is arguably Blumenauer's biggest interest as a legislator. Known as Congress's most avid bicyclist, Blumenauer is known to ride his bike from his Washington residence to the capitol building (or, on occasion, the White House) regularly and founded the Congressional Bike Caucus. Blumenauer is a supporter of increased investment in public transit more generally, supporting in his home city the MAX Light Rail and the Portland Streetcar programs. While not a member of the House Transportation Committee, he is a member of the Future of Transportation Caucus launched in 2019.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Beth Osborne

Director, Transportation for America

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy

**Benefits:** Beth Osborne is a career policy advisor and transportation advocate who served in the Department of Transportation as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy and currently serves as director of Transportation for America, a policy organization that advocates for increased investment in public transit infrastructure. Osborne has also served as policy director of Smart Growth America, a coalition of organizations favoring sustainable urban development policy and critical of sprawl. Osborne is a critic of car culture, particularly with regards to how mass automobile usage affects both the environment and public safety. Osborne supports the Transportation Climate Initiative adopted by twelve states that serves as a regional cap-and-invest initiative to reduce carbon emissions and increase investment in climate-friendly transit infrastructure. Given her experience in the Department of Transportation and general alignment with progressive policy goals, Osborne would be a solid choice for Secretary of Transportation.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Ayanna Pressley

Representative from Massachusetts's 7th district

**Benefits:** Ayanna Pressley has represented Boston in the House of Representatives since 2019. Prior to this, Pressley served as a member of the Boston City Council from 2010 to 2019. Pressley is a progressive and member of the 'Squad', an informal caucus of four left-wing women of color in Congress. Pressley is a co-founder of the Future of Transportation Caucus, a caucus dedicated to ending inequities in transit access and promoting sustainable modes of transportation. Pressley has partnered with Senator Ed Markey on a proposal to eliminate public transit fares. This proposal entails the creation of a federal grant program to encourage local governments to create fare-free transit systems. Given that Pressley has long been passionate about transit access, having someone of her expertise in the position of Secretary of Transportation would be a major boon to transit advocates given that the post has often been overlooked.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Phil Washington

CEO, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Authority

Former CEO, CEO of Denver Regional Transportation District

**Benefits:** Phil Washington is a career public transit official who currently serves at the helm of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Authority (“Metro”). In this capacity, Washington has taken on the challenge of promoting public transit initiatives in a region notorious for its reliance on car culture. Washington was a key leader of the successful effort to pass Los Angeles County Measure M, a 2016 initiative that enacted a half-cent sales tax to fund transportation projects in the county. Washington is a supporter of congestion pricing and free public transit in order to promote sustainable transportation methods and ease Los Angeles County off its reliance on automobiles. During his prior tenure at the helm of Denver’s Regional Transportation District, Washington oversaw the development of the multi-billion dollar FasTracks Plan that has been said to have had a transformative effect on Denver and its surrounding region. Described as a “rock star” in the field of transit, Washington is undeniably qualified for the position and would be a major asset to the movement to promote public transit.

## Potential Secretaries

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### R.T. Rybak

Former Mayor of Minneapolis

Former Vice Chair, Democratic National Committee

**Benefits:** R. T. Rybak is the former Mayor of Minneapolis, serving from 2002 to 2014. During his mayoralty, Rybak promoted a sustainable transportation policy. Currently a member of the board of Nice Ride Minnesota, a non-profit bicycle sharing system operating in Minneapolis and surrounding areas, Rybak is a supporter of automobile alternatives. Rybak's signature Access Minneapolis transportation plan endorsed bringing streetcars back into Minneapolis and investment in bike-friendly transportation infrastructure. When the I-35W bridge collapsed, Rybak won the praise of transit advocates by demanding that the replacement bridge include a light rail line. Rybak was regularly mentioned for the position of Secretary of Transportation during the Obama era and was appointed Vice Chair of the Democratic National Committee in 2011. Should Democrats control the Senate, Rybak would likely be easy to confirm owing to his experience as a municipal executive and his keen interest in transportation policy.

# SECRETARY OF ENERGY

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Department of Energy presides over a wide array of crucial functions related to the regulation of America's energy systems. The often-overlooked agency is responsible for the regulation of the federal nuclear weapons program in addition to presiding over research and policy recommendations related to domestic energy production.

In a progressive administration, the Secretary of Energy should be tasked first and foremost with coordinating efforts to respond to the climate crisis with other department heads and prioritizing the use of department funds to support research into alternative energy sources.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Arun Majumdar

Former Director of Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), Department of Energy

Former Acting Under Secretary of Energy

**Benefits:** Arun Majumdar is a scientist, engineer, and academic who specializes in the field of materials science. Majumdar currently serves on the faculty of Stanford University in the Department of Mechanical Engineering and previously served as a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley. At the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (“Berkeley Lab”), Majumdar headed the Environmental Energy Technologies Division, where he presided over the division’s research into energy efficiency and environmental quality. In the Obama Administration, Majumdar served as Director of Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), a division of the Department of Energy tasked with research into advanced energy technology, and additionally served as acting Under Secretary of Energy. Majumdar has been known for his leadership on green energy, with his work at the helm of ARPA-E to push renewable energy solutions inspiring similar efforts worldwide. Given the Trump Administration’s full-on assault on the scientific community and environmental protection these past four years, having a career scientist who has dedicated his career to renewable energy at the helm of the Department of Energy come 2021 is crucial.



## Potential Secretaries

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### Jay Inslee

Governor of Washington

Former Representative, Washington's 1st and 4th districts

**Benefits:** Jay Inslee received national attention for his dark horse presidential run in 2020. Inslee ran an issue-focused campaign prioritizing climate policy, arguably the first of its kind on the national stage, that raised the governor's profile and has led to speculation that he will be considered for a role in a future administration. Inslee is a supporter of the Green New Deal, advocating for a \$9 trillion dollar investment plan for an "evergreen economy" and a bold plan to phase out fossil fuel consumption. Formerly a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Inslee has been mentioned for the position of Secretary of Energy in various media outlets. Indeed, even prior to his 2020 presidential run Inslee was mentioned for the position, being named as a potential choice for Secretary of Energy in 2008. Inslee combines executive experience with support for transformative green energy policies and would be an obvious choice for the position of Secretary of Energy.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Andy Levin

U.S. Representative, Michigan's 9th district

Former Deputy Director, Michigan Department of Energy, Labor, and Economic Growth

**Benefits:** From the prominent Levin family that has represented Michigan in both houses of Congress, Andy Levin was elected to replace his father Sander in the 2018 election in this Metro Detroit district. In contrast to other members of his family, Levin is on the left-wing of the Democratic Party. Despite his low profile, Levin is one of the most progressive members of the freshman caucus: Levin is an unwavering supporter of Medicare for All as defined by Pramila Jayapal and was one of the earliest supporters of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Green New Deal. Levin has been intimately involved in the field of energy production, being the former deputy director of the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor, and Economic Growth as well as a clean energy businessman in his own right. His firm Levin Energy Partners LLC administers the Lean & Green Michigan PACE program that assists green commercial activity. Levin's background combines business, congressional, civil society, and statewide executive experience and is thus an obvious choice for cabinet office.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Daniel Kammen

Former Science Envoy, Department of State

Former Chief Technical Specialist for Renewable Energy, World Bank

**Benefits:** Daniel Kammen is a career physicist specializing in energy consumption who served as Science Envoy for the Department of State. Kammen served as a senior advisor to Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, where he worked on energy and environmental policy. Kammen is a distinguished academic who is currently Professor of Energy in the Energy and Resources Group at the University of California, Berkeley. Kammen has collaborated with scientists and policy experts across the world during the course of his career, contributing to the Nobel Peace Prize-winning *Climate Change 2007* curated by the United Nations's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and previously served as chief technical specialist for renewable energy at the World Bank. In 2020, Kammen signed onto the Green New Deal proposal as advocated for by Senator Bernie Sanders. Kammen has a virtually perfect pedigree for the position given his experience in academia, civil society, and government.

# SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Department of Education presides over the highly decentralized U.S. education system, administering pell grants and the Federal Direct Student Loan Program among other programs. Whoever serves as Secretary of Education in a progressive administration must be committed to protecting public education and ending the student loan debt crisis.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Carol Burris

Executive Director, Network for Public Education Foundation

**Benefits:** A former teacher and principal, [Carol Burris](#) currently serves as Executive Director of the Network for Public Education Foundation, an education policy think tank. Burris is a staunch opponent of pro-charter school policies favored by both Republican and some Democratic politicians. Burris founded the organization with [Diane Ravitch](#), a progressive education reformer who served as an Assistant Secretary of Education. An alum of [Teachers College](#) at Columbia University, Burris [considers charter schools](#) to be a tool of re-segregation in the American education system. During her tenure as a principal at South Side High School in Rockville Centre, New York, Burris was a [vocal opponent](#) of Governor Andrew Cuomo’s proposal to make student performance count for half of a teacher’s rating. In 2020, Burris and Ravitch [penned](#) a collaborative letter panning the Trump Administration’s education policies and urging an end to standardized testing, which both consider to “reserve privilege for affluent students, who more typically excel on standardized tests”. A career educator with a long length of service in civil society, Burris is an obvious choice for the position of Secretary of Education.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Zakiya Smith Ellis

Former Secretary of Higher Education, New Jersey

Former Senior Advisor, Department of Education

**Benefits:** Zakiya Smith Ellis is a career education policy advisor who served as Secretary of Higher Education in the state of New Jersey. Prior to this, Ellis served in a wide array of capacities in the federal government, including as a senior advisor within the Department of Education and at the department's Advisory Committee on Student Finance Assistance. During her time in the White House, Ellis was one of the major education policy officials to sound the alarm on the student debt crisis, where she concluded that half-measures to make college more affordable would fail to actually put a dent in the crisis. Ellis is particularly interested in higher education policy and pushed for tuition-free community college as well as for public universities for students from low-income families. Ellis is clearly qualified for the position and would likely face little trouble getting confirmed should Democrats control the Senate. Given the scope of the student debt crisis, having someone in the position of Secretary of Education whose primary interest is relieving the burden of student debt faced by millions of Americans could be a game-changer.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Randi Weingarten

President, American Federation of Teachers

**Benefits:** Randi Weingarten is a career education and union leader who serves as president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), an extremely powerful labor organization affiliated with the AFL-CIO that has over 1.7 million members. Previously the president of the New York-based United Federation of Teachers, the appointment of Weingarten to the position would further ingratiate a progressive president with the labor movement. Long discussed as a possible candidate for the position, Weingarten has generally opposed “school choice” measures to increase the number of charter schools. On matters of tertiary education, Weingarten has spoken in favor of Senator Elizabeth Warren’s plan for student loan debt forgiveness. Under the leadership of Weingarten, the AFT has battled attempts by Secretaries of Education from both parties to further the spread of charter schools. Were she to be chosen for the position, she would be the first LGBTQ+ individual to hold cabinet office in the United States. Weingarten has been mentioned for the position for a long time and would bring a lot to the table in the battle to protect America’s public schools if confirmed.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Kathy Hoffman

Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction

**Benefits:** A career educator and speech pathologist, first-time candidate Kathy Hoffman was elected as Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction after upset victories in both the Democratic primary and general elections. Powered by support from the grassroots #RedForEd movement ran by Arizona teachers, Hoffman ran on a left-wing platform that stressed support for full funding of education and paid maternity and paternity leave for teachers. Hoffman is a supporter of increased funding for special education programs and paid maternity and paternity leave for teachers. Given that the Trump administration has routinely neglected the needs of immigrant students, having someone like Hoffman who strongly supports multilingual education as Secretary of Education would be welcome. During her tenure as Superintendent of Public Education, Hoffman has spoken out against the Trump Administration's irresponsible plans to reopen public schools in the midst of a historic pandemic. Hoffman has the pedigree for the job as a state executive official whose portfolio encompasses a similar range of responsibilities as the federal Department of Education. If confirmed, Hoffman would surely be a stalwart ally of public schools in the face of privatization efforts.



## Potential Secretaries

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### Lily Eskelsen Garcia

President, National Education Association

**Benefits:** A native of Utah, Lily Eskelsen Garcia was elected president of the National Education Association, the largest labor union in the United States, in 2014. In her capacity as a labor leader, Garcia has partnered with union leaders and progressive organizations to oppose various right-wing initiatives such as the No Child Left Behind Act and a 2009 proposal to tax healthcare benefits, the latter of which prompted her to state “We should tax the millionaires, not teachers and bus drivers”. Garcia is an opponent of current Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos’s plans to further subsidize for-profit charter schools and other attempts by the Trump Administration to knee-cap public education. Appointing Garcia would further ingratiate a progressive administration’s ties with organized labor. On matters of tertiary education, Garcia has sounded the alarm on the student debt crisis and urged Congress to act to protect borrowers. While Garcia would surely face opposition from supporters of charter schools in both parties, she would likely be confirmable in the event of a Democratic Senate and would be a formidable Secretary of Education in her own right.

# SECRETARY OF VETERAN AFFAIRS

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Department of Veterans Affairs is the department involved with administering healthcare and other benefits to veterans of the armed forces. Perpetually in a state of crisis, a Secretary of Veterans Affairs in a progressive administration will be tasked with fighting attempts to privatize various functions of the constituent Veterans Health Administration in the face of Republican onslaught.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Mark Takano

Representative, California's 41st district

**Benefits:** Formerly a member of the Riverside Community College Board of Trustees, Mark Takano was elected to Congress to represent the 41st district of California in 2012. The first openly gay Asian American member of Congress, Takano currently serves as chair of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. A member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Medicare for All Caucus, Takano is generally considered to be a member of the party's left-wing, and notably endorsed the presidential campaign of Bernie Sanders in 2020. In his capacity at the helm of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Takano has emerged as a staunch opponent of the Trump Administration's efforts to privatize the Veterans Health Administration, one of the most crucial agencies within the Department of Veterans Affairs. In 2020, Takano introduced the Veterans' Acute Crisis Care For Emergent Suicide Symptoms Act ("Veterans' ACCESS Act"). This historic piece of legislation would guarantee emergency mental healthcare to all veterans, including those who don't regularly receive care at V.A. hospitals. Were he to be confirmed, Takano would be the first openly LGBTQ+ person to serve as a member of the cabinet. Given his position as chair of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Takano is an obvious choice for the position.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Carolyn Clancy

Deputy Under Secretary for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks,  
Veterans Health Administration

Former Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence,  
Veterans Health Administration

**Benefits:** Carolyn Clancy is an internal medicine specialist and career healthcare administrator who has served in a variety of administrative posts within the Department of Veterans Affairs. A former president of Physicians for a National Health Program, one of the most prominent single-payer advocacy groups in the United States, Clancy is a respected healthcare professional who opposes proposed efforts to privatize Veterans Health Administration services. Initially an employee of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality within the Department of Health and Human Services, Clancy has amassed a long tenure in the Veterans Health Administration assisting in the treatment of America's veterans. Regardless of the composition of the Senate, it is unlikely that she would fail to be confirmed given her respect across partisan lines. Clancy's background as a respected healthcare professional and Veterans Health Administration official makes her an obvious and uncontroversial choice for the position of Secretary of Veterans Affairs. If confirmed for the position, Clancy would be the first woman to serve as Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Holly Petraeus

Former Assistant Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Office of Servicemember Affairs

**Benefits:** Holly Petraeus is a career administrator who served in the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau under Elizabeth Warren as Assistant Director for the Office of Servicemember Affairs. Serving from 2011 to 2017, Petraeus advocated for the rights of veterans and against the exploitation of student veterans by for-profit colleges, who she alleges sees young veterans as “dollar signs in uniform”. As a result of her advocacy, the Department of Defense expanded the provisions of the Military Lending Act. Petraeus stems from a military family, being the daughter of General William Knowlton and the wife of retired General and CIA Director David Petraeus. If appointed, she would be the first woman to hold the office of Secretary of Veterans Affairs. While Petraeus has never formally served within the Department of Veterans Affairs, having someone intimately concerned with the welfare of veterans at the helm of the agency would be welcome given that the department has long been an afterthought in the cabinet selection process.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Tammy Duckworth

Former Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

**Benefits:** A disabled combat veteran who became the first female double amputee and first Thai-American in the body, Tammy Duckworth currently serves as Senator from Illinois. Previously a member of the House of Representatives, Duckworth has intimate experience from her pre-electoral career as a veterans affairs administrator. Duckworth previously served as Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs from 2009 to 2011. Prior to serving in this role, Duckworth served as Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs. Long speculated to be a future Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Duckworth has been mentioned as a likely candidate for the position on two occasions: In 2008 during the Obama transition period, and in the run-up to the 2016 election. If appointed, she would be the first woman to hold the office of Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Should she be nominated to the position, Duckworth would almost certainly be confirmed, even in the event of a closely-divided Senate.

# SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The newest of all cabinet departments, the Department of Homeland Security is the paramount anti-terrorism agency in the federal government. While many progressives would like the department to be done with altogether, in the meantime a progressive administration's Secretary of Homeland Security should be someone committed to upholding privacy laws and cracking down on the abuse of detainees. Furthermore, as it administers the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) sub-cabinet agency, a Secretary of Homeland Security in a progressive administration should be committed to ending the abuse of detained migrants.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Vanita Gupta

Former Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights

Former Deputy Legal Director, American Civil Liberties Union

**Benefits:** Vanita Gupta is a widely respected career civil rights attorney and former Department of Justice official who currently serves as President and CEO of The Leadership Council on Civil and Human Rights. Prior to her appointment in the Obama Administration, Gupta served as a staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, successfully suing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), one of the most notorious agencies of the Department of Homeland Security, for inhumane conditions for detainees in 2007. While in the Department of Justice, Gupta prosecuted hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ community and people of color and defended the rights of people with disabilities. Going from Assistant Attorney General within the Department of Justice to leading a different department is quite common. For example, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights (the position Gupta acted in) Tom Perez became Secretary of Labor, and former Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division Michael Chertoff became Secretary of Homeland Security in 2005. As such, the appointment of Gupta to the position would be one aligned with precedent. Respected by liberals and many conservative reformers in Washington, Gupta's pedigree and support for ending the cruel treatment of detainees by ICE makes her an obvious choice for the position.



## Potential Secretaries

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### Julián Castro

Former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

Former Mayor of San Antonio

**Benefits:** Long considered to be a rising star in the Democratic Party, Julián Castro served as Mayor of San Antonio followed by a stint as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the Obama Administration. While he did not achieve significant success in national polling, Castro's 2020 presidential run, which featured perhaps the most ambitious and progressive immigration reform platform in the field, allowed him to emerge as a serious power-player in Democratic politics. This platform includes support for decriminalizing migration, a pathway to citizenship for most undocumented residents, expanding the visa system and ending the backlog of visa applicants, increasing refugee admissions, and strengthening labor rights for guest workers. Given that he has already served in a cabinet capacity as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, he has the experience to serve as an effective head of the Department of Homeland Security. Having someone as committed to the rights of migrants and refugees at the helm of the Department of Homeland Security would be a turning point for an agency noted for neglecting the human rights of the most vulnerable.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Ron Wyden

Senator from Oregon

**Benefits:** Ron Wyden has served as Senator from Oregon since 1996. While generally considered relatively moderate on economic policies, Wyden is considered to be a civil libertarian on issues of surveillance. A member of the Select Committee on Intelligence that deals with oversight of the United States Intelligence Community, Wyden has generally opposed mass surveillance, signing onto a bipartisan bill in 2019 to end the National Security Agency's practice of surveilling phone records. Generally progressive on immigration issues, Wyden supports a ban on the Department of Homeland Security's practice of passing along confidential information related to DREAMERS to other law enforcement agencies in order to protect undocumented immigrants. Intimately interested in issues of technology, Wyden was one of the first major politicians to oppose the infamous Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and PROTECT IP Act (PIPA) legislative pair and played a crucial role in their defeats. Recently, Wyden has emerged as a leader in the battle against racial bias in tech company algorithms. Wyden is an obvious choice for the position of Secretary of Homeland Security, and given that Oregon is governed by a Democrat, his elevation to the position would not jeopardize the Democratic majority in the Senate.

## Potential Secretaries

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### Pramila Jayapal

U.S. Representative, Washington's 7th district

**Benefits:** First elected to the House of Representatives representing Seattle in 2016, [Pramila Jayapal](#) has quickly emerged as one of the most visible figures on the American left. Considered to be a *de facto mentor* to young progressives in Congress such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar, Jayapal has been noted for [leading the fight](#) to abolish the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency in Congress. Currently the [Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus](#), Jayapal, while not serving on the Committee on Homeland Security, is a member of the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security. Jayapal has long been an advocate for immigrant rights, being the founder of the Seattle-based organization [OneAmerica](#) (previously "Hate Free Zone") that was created in the aftermath of 9/11 to fight xenophobia. [Under her leadership](#), OneAmerica successfully sued Immigration and Naturalization Services (the precursor to ICE) to prevent the deportation of more than 4,000 Somalis residing in the United States. Now in Congress, Jayapal introduced the [Establishing a Humane Immigration Enforcement System Act](#), which would abolish ICE within one year of its implementation. Jayapal serving at the helm of the Department of Homeland Security would have the potential to transform the way the United States approaches immigration and refugee policy.

# EPA ADMINISTRATOR

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

Designated a “cabinet-level” agency, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) presides over environmental research and has the ability to penalize and sanction polluters. Under a progressive administration, the Administrator of the EPA should be tasked with enforcing harsh sanctions against polluters, prioritizing environmental justice, and reforming the Superfund program that has failed marginalized communities. Should they command a significant congressional majority, the next progressive president will ideally propose the creation of a formal Department of Environmental Protection led by a Secretary of Environmental Protection.

## Potential Administrators

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### Collin O'Mara

President and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation

Former Secretary, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

Co-Chair of the Natural Resources and Agriculture Subcommittee, President's Task Force on Climate Adaptation and Preparedness

**Benefits:** Collin O'Mara is a distinguished leader in the conservationist movement who currently serves at the helm of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). Prior to this, O'Mara served in government at the helm of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. Additionally, O'Mara previously served on President Obama's Task Force on Climate Adaptation, where he helped lead the Natural Resources and Agriculture Subcommittee. O'Mara is representative of a new generation of climate leaders who grasp the extent to which the climate crisis poses an existential threat to the United States and the world. In 2020, the NWF under O'Mara's leadership convened a historic summit with over 124 grassroots climate organizations that emphasize the role protecting frontline communities must play in any climate justice plan. Notably, during the COVID-19 pandemic, O'Mara penned an op-ed arguing that the United States should create an agency akin to the Franklin Delano Roosevelt-era Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to promote environmental conservation while tackling rampant youth unemployment in the process.

## Potential Administrators

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### Maia Bellon

Former Secretary of Ecology, Washington

**Benefits:** Maia Bellon served as Secretary of Ecology in the State of Washington from 2013 to 2020. The portfolio she was tasked with during her years in the office included protection of the state's air, water, and land resources, a position with functions similar to both the national Department of the Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency. Bellon, who is Native American, would be the first EPA Administrator of indigeneous descent. Bellon took an active role in her position, testifying before congress on water quality standards to the detriment of Washington Republican Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rogers. The longest serving Secretary of Ecology in the State of Washington's history, Bellon currently works in the field of environmental policy development and as an attorney at Cascadia Law Group, a major environmental law firm. As the elevation of state executive officials to national positions is well within precedent, Bellon is a reasonable choice to lead the Environmental Protection Agency.

## Potential Administrators

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### Mary Nichols

Chair, California Air Resources Board

Former Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation, Environmental Protection Agency

Former Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency

**Benefits:** Mary Nichols has been one of the most visible fighters in the environmental justice to hold government office for almost fifty years. An attorney by profession, Nichols made a name for herself by suining the federal government over poor air quality in Los Angeles. Initially appointed to the California Air Resources Board in 1972, Nichols currently serves at the helm of the board as chairwoman, a position she has used to fight the Trump Administration's disastrous environmental policies at every turn. Known as the "Queen of Green", Nichols has fought tooth-and-nail to stop the federal government from rolling back previously negotiated fuel efficiency standards. Nichols has previously served as an Assistant EPA Administrator at the Office of Air and Radiation and as Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency under Governor Gray Davis. Nichols has long been mentioned as a possible EPA Administrator and would be a major asset for a progressive administration's environmental policy efforts in the role.

## Potential Administrators

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### Heather McTeer Toney

Former EPA Regional Administrator, Southeast Region

Former Mayor, Greenville, Mississippi

**Benefits:** Toney’s story is a remarkable one that has captured national attention. The first woman and youngest person ever to be elected Mayor of Greenville, Mississippi, Toney was appointed by Barack Obama to serve as EPA Regional Administrator for the Southeast Region. In her capacity, Toney prioritized “environmental inclusivity” and took an intersectional approach to environmental justice, seeing the fight for clean air and water as a social justice cause. Hailing from the Mississippi Delta, Toney is keenly aware of the disproportionate effects of climate change on poor communities of color. Since leaving her position, Toney has become a Green New Deal advocate. She currently heads the advocacy organization Moms Clean Air Force. Between experience in a high capacity within the department, as a municipal executive, and in civil society at the helm of Moms Clean Air Force, Toney is well-qualified for the role of EPA Administrator.



## Potential Administrators

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### Jay Inslee

Governor of Washington

Former Representative, Washington's 1st and 4th districts

**Benefits:** Jay Inslee received national attention for his dark horse presidential run in 2020. Inslee ran an issue-focused campaign prioritizing climate policy, arguably the first of its kind on the national stage, that raised the governor's profile and has led to speculation that he will be considered for a role in a future administration. Inslee is a supporter of the Green New Deal, advocating for a \$9 trillion dollar investment plan for an “evergreen economy” and a bold plan to phase out fossil fuel consumption. During his presidential campaign, Inslee released his plan for “community climate justice”, a platform that aims to end environmental racism. Policies included in this program include a directive to make the EPA require buffer zones to keep hazardous chemical facilities away from homes and schools. Inslee also called for the EPA to partner with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to monitor toxic substances released during natural disasters. The elevation of a Governor to the position of EPA Administrator is hardly unprecedented: In the presidency of George W. Bush alone, former New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman and former Utah Governor Mike Leavitt served in the position.

## Potential Administrators

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### Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

Representative from New York's 14th district

Co-Chair, Climate Change Committee, 2020  
Democratic Party Unity Taskforce

**Benefits:** Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez needs no introduction. First elected in an upset victory in 2018, the freshman Representative has emerged as one of the biggest names in American politics. A key power player in the progressive wing of the Democratic Party, the self-proclaimed democratic socialist has been credited for bringing the Green New Deal proposal into mainstream political discourse. One of Bernie Sanders's most high-profile surrogates in the 2020 election, Ocasio-Cortez has been tasked with co-chairing the climate change committee on the Biden-Sanders unity task force. In 2019, Ocasio-Cortez collaborated with Senator Kamala Harris on the Climate Equity Act legislation. This legislation aims at protecting frontline communities, those most harmed by environmental racism, in the face of increasing environmental degradation. While Ocasio-Cortez is qualified for a multitude of administration roles, her focus on climate justice means that an appointment to lead the EPA might make the most sense should she be interested in an executive position.

# AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

Formally titled the “Permanent Representative to the United Nations”, the U.N. Ambassador serves as the United States’s day-to-day representative to the U.N. Security Council and General Assembly. A highly prestigious post, the position of U.N. Ambassador is typically designated at cabinet-level rank by the Executive Office, even though it is a position within the Department of State and not a position that leads its own agency. Famous U.N. Ambassadors in modern times include Bill Richardson, who later became Governor of New Mexico, Madeleine Albright, who later became Secretary of State, Susan Rice, who later became National Security Advisor, John Bolton, who later became National Security Advisor, and Nikki Haley, who is a leading prospective Republican presidential candidate in the 2024 election. The position of U.N. Ambassador is typically given to a foreign policy professional with experience within civil society (such as a position at a prestigious foreign policy think tank) or an elected official with some degree of knowledge in foreign affairs.

## Potential Ambassadors

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### Tom Perriello

Former U.S. Representative, Virginia's 5th congressional district

Former Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes and the Congo-Kinshasa, Department of State

**Benefits:** Long a favorite of the progressive left and more mainstream Democrats alike following his courageous campaign for reelection in 2010, Perriello has served in both diplomatic and civil capacities since leaving Congress in 2011. Perriello was appointed Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes and the Congo-Kinshasa to replace Russ Feingold, a position he held for approximately a year and a half. While Perriello's congressional record was not particularly impressive on issues of foreign policy seeing as how he supported maintaining a U.S. presence in Afghanistan, since leaving office he's been a vocal supporter of ending the War in Yemen and has spoken favorably about the foreign policy program of Bernie Sanders. Additionally, Perriello has served as Special Representative for the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review in the Department of State and as Special Advisor to the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. As such, Perriello is well qualified for the role of Ambassador to the United Nations and would surely represent the United States well on the world stage.

## Potential Ambassadors

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### Heather Hurlburt

Former Member, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State

Former Special Assistant to the President

**Benefits:** Heather Hurlburt is an experienced foreign policy expert who has served in a wide array of advisory capacities on matters of national security. Currently a senior advisor at National Security Action and a staffer at New America, Hurlburt served as a member of the Department of State's Policy Planning Staff during the 1990s and later as a special assistant to President Bill Clinton. Hurlburt possesses a pedigree that makes her a solid choice for the position in addition to being ideologically aligned with the progressive movement on foreign policy, being a general critic of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the United States's unconditional support for the Saudi government, and regime change as a tool of U.S. policy more generally. Given Hurlburt's foreign policy experience and generally progressive policy outlook, she would be an excellent choice for Ambassador to the United Nations.

## Potential Ambassadors

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### Salih Booker

President, Center for International Policy

Former Advisor, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

**Benefits:** Salih Booker is a career foreign policy advisor who currently serves at the helm of the Center for International Policy, a foreign policy think tank based in Washington, D.C. Prior to this Booker worked at the United Nations in Addis Ababa, where he advised the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Throughout his career, Booker has held a wide array of positions in civil society, including as the head of the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions in Geneva. Booker is a political progressive with a particular interest in Africa policy, serving as Director of Africa Studies at the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations and has served as a consultant to a wide array of international organizations of note, including the United Nations Development Program, the Carnegie Corporation, and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Booker is a critic of militarization and has spoken out extensively against institutional racism in American foreign policy. Booker has described the world order as one of global apartheid and has written for the progressive think tank Institute for Policy Studies. Given his experience as a foreign policy advisor, including his work at the United Nations, Booker is an obvious choice for the position of Ambassador to the United Nations.

## Potential Ambassadors

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### Ilhan Omar

Representative, Minnesota's 5th district

**Benefits:** First elected to Congress representing Minneapolis in 2018, Ilhan Omar has become one of the most well-known political figures on the American Left in the span of less than two years. An ideological progressive, Omar's is primarily noted for her positions on foreign policy. A critic of the U.S. foreign policy establishment and what she sees as "perpetual war", Omar supports reducing the number of military bases abroad, ending the drone program, and allowing Congress to have the power to authorize decisions of force abroad. Omar has criticized the United States's alliances with nations she perceives to be human rights abusers, such as Israel and Saudi Arabia, and supports diplomacy over military force when dealing with the United States's rivals on the world stage, such as Iran. A refugee born in Somalia, Omar would be the second Muslim American to hold the office of Ambassador to the United Nations, after Zalmay Khalilzad. Given the United States's drift towards nationalism and isolationism during the Trump era, the appointment of a former refugee with ideals rooted in the principle of international solidarity would signal to the rest of the world that a progressive administration is willing to make a clean break with the past. It should be noted that Omar is a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, making Ambassador to the United Nations an obvious fit for her should she be interested in a federal office.

# CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS

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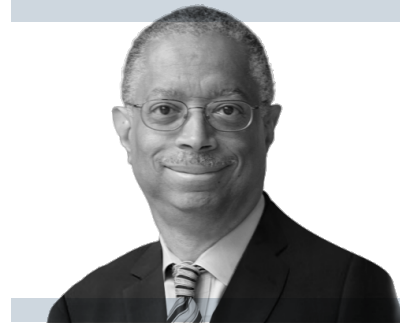
## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Council of Economic Advisors is a federal agency composed of eighteen staffers that advises the President on economic policy. The agency is headed by a chair who is subject to confirmation by the Senate. The chairmanship is a prestigious position and holders of the office often go on to be appointed to higher executive office. Recent alumni of the office include Alan Greenspan, who later became Chair of the Federal Reserve, Janet Yellen, who later became Chair of the Federal Reserve, Joseph Stiglitz, who later became Chief Economist of the World Bank, Glenn Hubbard, who later became Dean of the Columbia University Graduate School of Business, and Ben Bernanke, who later became Chair of the Federal Reserve.



## Potential Chairs

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### William Spriggs

Chief Economist, AFL-CIO

Former Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy

**Benefits:** William Spriggs is a progressive economist and labor official who served as Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy during the Obama Administration and is currently the AFL-CIO's Chief Economist. Formerly a fellow of the left-wing Economic Policy Institute and the Director of the National Urban League, Spriggs has chaired the economics department of Howard University since 2005. Spriggs is a supporter of the labor movement and advocates for the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), legislation that would lead to a sharp increase in union density, indicating that he would be a strong ally of labor as Secretary of Labor. Spriggs supports a large increase in the minimum wage, advocating for the federal minimum wage to be tied proportionately to the median wage. Particularly given the depths of the current crisis, it is imperative that the next Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors be a staunch advocate for workers and state intervention to secure a just recovery.

## Potential Chairs

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### Lisa Cook

Professor of Economics and International Relations, Michigan State University

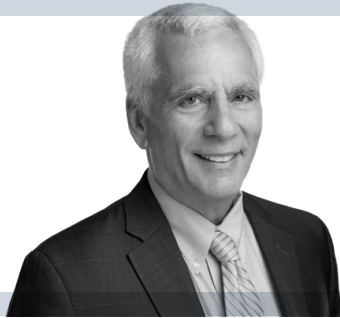
Former Senior Economist, Council of Economic Advisors

Former Senior Advisor on Finance and Development, Department of the Treasury

**Benefits:** Lisa Cook is a career economist who specializes in the field of international development. Currently serving in an academic capacity at Michigan State University, where she is a Professor of Economics and International Relations, Cook previously served on the faculties of both the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and Harvard Business School. During her career, Cook has served in an array of advisory capacities, including as a senior advisor on finance and development at the Department of the Treasury and as a senior economist at the Council of Economic Advisors. As an economist, Cook has written extensively on the effects of systemic racism on economic outcomes. As Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors, Cook would surely be at the forefront of making sure that the upcoming administration's recovery plan serves to advance the cause of racial justice by combatting the stark racial wealth gap.

## Potential Chairs

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### Jared Bernstein

Former Economic Advisor to the Vice President

Former Deputy Chief Economist, Department of Labor

Former Senior Economist, Economic Policy Institute

**Benefits:** Currently at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), where he serves as a Senior Fellow, Jared Bernstein is a career economist who has been a stalwart advocate of workers throughout his career. Formerly of the Economic Policy Institute, a left-wing economic think tank, Bernstein most notably served in the office of Vice President Joe Biden in an advisory capacity. Described as “a strong advocate for workers” when he was chosen for the aforementioned position in 2008, Bernstein has long been an advocate of key progressive policy priorities, including raising the minimum wage, paid family and medical leave, and the Earned Income Tax Credit. As Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors, Bernstein would surely push back upon calls for austerity measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and would be a strong voice in favor of substantial federal investment to achieve a just recovery.

## Potential Chairs

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### Heather Boushey

President and CEO, Washington Center for Equitable Growth

Former Chief Economist, Hillary Clinton 2016 Presidential Campaign Transition Team (Designated)

Former Economist, United States Congress Joint Economic Committee

**Benefits:** Heather Boushey is a decorated economist whose work focuses on the intersection of economic growth and combating inequality. A labor economist by training, Boushey has worked at numerous think tanks and policy organizations, including the Center for American Progress, the Economic Policy Institute, and the Center for Economic and Policy Research. Currently President and CEO of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, Boushey has testified before Congress about the harmful effects of the 1996 welfare reform bill and worked for the United States Congress Joint Economic Committee, one of the four standing joint committees of Congress. In 2016, she was designated by Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign staff as the Chief Economist of her planned transition team. Boushey's talent may prove invaluable in a progressive administration and her work is widely respected among both left-wing and moderate lines. Widely respected in Washington, Boushey's appointment would likely satisfy both left-wingers and moderate liberals in the Democratic camp. Should Democrats control the Senate, Boushey would likely be confirmable.

## Potential Chairs

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### Sandy Darity

Former President, Southern Economic Association

Former Visiting Scholar, Board of Directors, Federal Reserve

**Benefits:** Sandy Darity is a macroeconomist whose work primarily deals with the labor market, the effects of social stratification, and the intersection of class and race. Currently a professor of public policy at Duke University, Darity has served as president of both the Southern Economic Association and the National Economist Association. A Marshall Scholar who studied for two years at the London School of Economics and received his doctorate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Darity began his career as a staff economist at the National Urban League and later became a visiting scholar at the Federal Reserve Board of Governors. Darity takes an intersectional approach to economic analysis, focusing much of his work on the effects of financial crises in developing countries and the modern economic ramifications of slavery. The field of economics is notorious for its lack of Black representation and there has never been a Black Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors. Darity's appointment would thus signal that a progressive administration is serious about tackling racial disparities. Following the 2008 recession, Darity criticized the Obama Administration for effectively "bribing" the private sector to employ people and advocated for a national jobs program in which the government would directly employ people. A political progressive who supported Bernie Sanders's 2016 presidential campaign, Darity is a noted proponent of a federal jobs guarantee. Darity is a decorated economist widely respected for his analysis on social stratification and could certainly be confirmed as Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors should Democrats control the Senate.

## Potential Chairs

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### Sandra Black

Former Member, White House Council of Economic Advisors

Former Economist, Federal Reserve Bank of New York

**Benefits:** Sandra Black is a career labor economist who served as a member of the Council of Economic Advisors from 2015 to 2017 during Barack Obama's second term. Currently a professor of economics at Columbia University, Black has served in a variety of academic capacities after receiving her doctorate at Harvard, including working as a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles and the University of Texas at Austin. Formerly an economist employed by the Federal Reserve of New York, Black's research primarily focuses on social stratification with an emphasis on the role gender discrimination plays in inequality. Black is a political progressive who supports Medicare for All, paid family leave, tuition-free college, and an expansion of labor rights. Given her experience on the Council of Economic Advisors, Black is an obvious choice to serve as chair of the body.

## Potential Chairs

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### Heidi Shierholz

Former Chief Economist, Department of Labor

**Benefits:** Heidi Shierholz is a labor market economist who served as Chief Economist of the Department of Labor from 2014 to 2017. Prior to and following her service in the Department of Labor, Shierholz served as a senior economist at the left-wing Economic Policy Institute (EPI). Shierholz advised Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez on various initiatives to protect workers' rights, safety on the job, wages and benefits. Additionally, Shierholz provided analysis of the labor market during the recovery years following the 2008 recession. In 2014, Shierholz contributed to the EPI's report The Weak Economy Is Idling Too Many Recent Graduates. This report provided substantial evidence that the economy is increasingly failing graduates and young people more generally, a trend that has only exacerbated in the six years since the report was released.. Shierholz is an advocate of guaranteed paid leave and overtime pay for workers, among other initiatives aimed at increasing the worker power. Shierholz is an obvious choice for Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors given her experience in the federal government as an economic advisor.

## Potential Chairs

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### Darrick Hamilton

Director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

**Benefits:** Darrick Hamilton is an economist who currently serves as Director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University. In recent years, Hamilton has ascended to national prominence as one of the foremost experts in the field of stratification economics. In 2019, Hamilton's proposal for "baby bonds" to close the racial wealth gap achieved national attention and was endorsed by multiple Democratic presidential candidates. Coming from a field noted for its lack of Black representation, having someone whose work focuses on closing the racial wealth gap at the helm of the Council of Economic Advisors would be welcome. To alleviate unemployment and poverty in the United States, Hamilton in 2018 signed onto a proposal for a federal jobs guarantee released by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Under this arrangement, every adult in the United States would be provided employment at non-poverty wages upon request in order to achieve full employment. Hamilton is a decorated economist who would surely be an advocate for progressive economic policies as chair of the Council of Economic Advisors.



# TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Office of the United States Trade Representative is an agency designated as cabinet-level by the Executive Office that is responsible for curating the development of trade policy to recommend to the President. Trade Representatives often go on to see appointments to higher executive office: Trade Representative Bill Brock later became Secretary of Labor, Trade Representative Mickey Kantor later became Secretary of Commerce, and Trade Representative Robert Zoellick later became Deputy Secretary of State and President of the World Bank Group, for example. Under a progressive administration, the Trade Representative should be tasked with developing a trade policy that eschews the disastrous policies of the Trump Administration without falling back to the neoliberal, pro-unregulated trade status quo.

## Potential Representatives

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### Katherine Tai

Former Chief Counsel for China Trade Enforcement, Office of the Trade Representative

Lead Advisor on Trade, Democratic Members of the Ways and Means Committee

**Benefits:** Katherine Tai is an attorney and public servant with a specialty in international trade policy. Formerly the Chief Counsel for China Trade Enforcement at the Office of the Trade Representative and Trade Counsel, Tai is currently at the House Ways and Means Committee, where she serves as the leading advisor on trade policy for Democratic members of the committee. Given the poor state of U.S. - China trade relations, it makes sense for the Trade Representative to be someone intimately familiar with the field. During the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) negotiation process, Tai played a key role in the drafting of the financial legislation, where she has been credited for securing additional labor protections. If chosen for the position of Trade Representative, Tai would be the first woman of color to hold the role.

## Potential Representatives

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### Jimmy Gomez

U.S. Representative, California's 7th congressional district

**Benefits:** Former a member of the California State Assembly, Jimmy Gomez was elected to represent much of Los Angeles, including Downtown L.A., in Congress in a 2017 special election. Since his election to the House, Gomez has generally taken a progressive line on policy matters, being a firm supporter of Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, and the Raise the Wage Act to increase the federal minimum wage to \$15. A former political director for the United Nurses Association of California, Gomez has generally prioritized labor issues in Congress. In 2019, Gomez was chosen by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to lead the labor group on the House Democrats' Trade Working Group in order to secure labor protections in the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) trade legislation. Gomez is evidently qualified for the position given his experience in the realm of trade policy in the House and would bring a much-needed pro-labor perspective to an office that has long neglected the interests of workers.

## Potential Representatives

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### Tom Perriello

Former U.S. Representative, Virginia's 5th congressional district

Former Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes and the Congo-Kinshasa, Department of State

**Benefits:** Long a favorite of the progressive Left and more mainstream Democrats alike following his courageous campaign for reelection in 2010, Perriello has served in both diplomatic and domestic policy capacities since leaving Congress in 2011. Perriello was appointed Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes and the Congo-Kinshasa to replace Russ Feingold, a position he held for approximately a year and a half. Additionally, Perriello has served as Special Representative for the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review in the Department of State and as Special Advisor to the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. In 2020, Perriello, who is a strong critic of current U.S. trade policy, emerged as a favorite among progressives groups for the position of Trade Representative. Given his experience in both Congress and the Department of State and keen interest in changing the way the U.S. approaches trade policy in order to benefit workers, Perriello would be a solid choice for the position of Trade Representative in a progressive administration.

## Potential Representatives

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### Lori Wallach

Director, Global Trade Watch, Public Citizen

**Benefits:** Described in The Atlantic as the “Trade Debate’s Guerilla Warrior” and by the Wall Street Journal as “Ralph Nader with a sense of humor”, Lori Wallach has been arguably the most prolific left-wing advocate of fair trade and critic of NAFTA for almost two decades. Wallach is the founder of Global Trade Watch, a project by progressive watchdog group Public Citizen. Wallach has been called to testify before Congress on numerous occasions on the negative effects of free trade agreements on American industry. During the height of the debate over the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), Wallach stood in opposition to the agreement, arguing that it would result in decreased wages for American workers and an increase in outsourcing. During the USMCA trade deal negotiation in 2019, Wallach stated that “Fixing the existing, damaging NAFTA is not the same as negotiating a truly progressive trade agreement from scratch”. Given her expertise on the subject of trade and alignment with progressives on matters of policy, Wallach would be a reasonable choice for the position of Trade Representative in a progressive administration.

## Potential Representatives

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### Michael Wessel

Commissioner, United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission

Former Commissioner, United States Trade Deficit Review Commission

**Benefits:** A longtime associate and ally of former House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt, Michael Wessel has served as a member of the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission, a statutory body created by congressional mandate, since 2001. Prior to this, Wessel served as a member of the United States Trade Deficit Review Commission, another federal body created by congress where he contributed to a congressional report on the ramifications of America's trade policy in 2000. Additionally, Wessel served as an advisor on John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign and Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign. Wessel is a critic of free trade who cosigned progressive Senator Elizabeth Warren's concerns about the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and was brought onto Clinton's trade policy team to give credibility to her stated opposition to the TPP. Wessel is a former employee of the left-wing Economic Policy Institute think tank and is currently affiliated with the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations. Wessel has also served as staff chair of the Labor Advisory Committee, which advises the Office of the Trade Representative and the Department of Labor on matters of trade policy.

## Potential Representatives

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### Susan Helper

Former Chief Economist, Department of Commerce

Former Member, Council of Economic Advisors

**Benefits:** Susan Helper is a career economist who served in the Council of Economic Advisors and as Chief Economist of the Department of Commerce during the Obama Administration. Affiliated with the left-wing Economic Policy Institute, Helper is primarily interested in industrial development and policies to revive the American manufacturing sector. Helper has been a visiting scholar at numerous academic institutions, including Harvard University, the University of Oxford, U.C., Berkeley, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Helper considers free trade policies such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to have contributed to the collapse of the American manufacturing sector. She has proposed the creation of a National Laboratory for Advanced Manufacturing that includes an advisory committee featuring manufacturers, academics, and labor union representatives to coordinate and cultivate industrial policy. Additionally, she has proposed greater investment in the Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) program in addition to providing state benefits to firms that pay American workers high wages and don't outsource. At the helm of the Office of the Trade Representative, Helper would surely be an advocate of pro-worker trade policy.

# SBA ADMINISTRATOR

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is a federal agency responsible for giving loans to small businesses and producing statistics on small business. Long neglected by both administrations of both parties, the agency has often been staffed with wealthy donors with no obvious interest in investing in America's small businesses. Examples of this include Hector Barreto, a former Vice Chair of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce who served in the position under George W. Bush, Steve Preston, who served as Barreto's successor in the role and was criticized for having no experience running a small business, and Linda McMahon, the former CEO of WWE who served under Donald Trump. Progressive groups have noted that the often overlooked agency wields significant regulatory power and, if wielded correctly, could be used as a vehicle against corporate consolidation. For that reason, a progressive administration should appoint an SBA Administrator supportive of economic interventionist policies to curb consolidation efforts.



## Potential Administrators

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### **Mark Pocan**

Representative from Wisconsin's 2nd district

**Benefits:** Mark Pocan currently represents Madison, Wisconsin and its surrounding areas in the House of Representatives. First elected in 2012, Pocan is a political progressive who currently serves as Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. A supporter of Bernie Sanders' 2020 presidential campaign, Pocan is a supporter of progressive economic policies and served on the Wisconsin Assembly Joint Finance Committee prior to getting elected to Congress. Pocan is a small business owner himself, having founded a printing company in his hometown of Madison. Given his experience in the field of small business and progressive policymaking, Pocan is a natural choice for the position of Administrator of the Small Business Administration. Should Democrats control the Senate, Pocan would likely be confirmable.

## Potential Administrators

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### Chokwe Antar Lumumba

Mayor of Jackson, Mississippi

**Benefits:** Elected on a progressive platform pledging to make Jackson, Mississippi the “most radical city on the planet”, Chokwe Antar Lumumba has served as Mayor of Mississippi’s capital since 2017. In 2019 Lumumba contributed to “A Road Map to Winning the South” distributed to Democratic presidential hopefuls seeking their endorsements. Under his leadership, Lumumba has supported city investment in small businesses, particularly cooperatives, to promote the revitalization of economically deprived areas. Given his executive experience at the helm of a large city and support for sustainable economic development by way of investing in small businesses, Lumumba would be a solid choice for the position of Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

## Potential Administrators

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### Raphael Bostic

President and CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

Former Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for Policy Development and Research

**Benefits:** Raphael Bostic is a career economist and policy advisor who currently serves as the 15th President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, one of the twelve constituent banks of the national Federal Reserve system. Prior to serving in this capacity, Bostic held an array of governmental and academic posts, including as an economist at the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, as Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for Policy Development and Research, and as an economics professor at the University of Southern California. Bostic's work primarily focuses on community development with a particular focus on combating systemic racism. If confirmed as would be practically guaranteed in the event of a Democratic Senate, Bostic would be the highest-ranking openly LGBTQ executive branch official in American political history.

## Potential Administrators

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### **Sameera Fazili**

Former Senior Advisor, National Economic Council

Director of Engagement, Community and Economic Development Department,  
Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

Former Chief of Staff to the Undersecretary of the Treasury for International Affairs

**Benefits:** A graduate of Yale Law School, Sameera Fazili has emerged as one of America's leading experts on community development finance. Formerly a senior adviser at the National Economic Council where she tackled issues of consumer finance and community development, Fazili is currently director of engagement at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's Community and Economic Development (CED) department. Fazili has experience within the Department of the Treasury, where she advised primarily on matters of housing finance. Notably, Fazili helped start a CDFI (Community Development Financial Institutions Fund) bank.

# DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is a cabinet-level office primarily responsible for production of the federal budget as proposed by the Executive Office. The position of Director of the Office of Management and Budget is a prestigious one and holding the post often leads to promotion down the line. In recent years, former Directors of the Office of Management and Budget who went on to be promoted to higher federal office include Leon Panetta (who eventually became White House Chief of Staff, Director of Central Intelligence, and Secretary of Defense), Jack Lew (who became White House Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Treasury), and Sylvia Mathews Burwell (who became Secretary of Health and Human Services).

## Potential Directors

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### **Ann O'Leary**

Chief of Staff to the Governor of California

Former Senior Policy Advisor, Hillary Clinton Presidential Campaign, 2016

Former Executive Director, Center on Health, Economic & Family Security,  
University of California, Berkeley School of Law

**Benefits:** Ann O'Leary is an attorney and career policy advisor who currently serves as Chief of Staff to Governor of California Gavin Newsom. Prior to this, O'Leary served in a variety of policy advisory roles, including as senior policy advisor to Hillary Clinton during her 2016 presidential campaign, as legislative director to Hillary Clinton during her Senate career, and in the White House Domestic Policy Council under President Bill Clinton. Over the course of her career, O'Leary has been an advocate on an array of progressive issues, such as LGBTQ+ rights, alleviating economic inequality, and combating the climate crisis. Given her experience in the realm of policy matters both in and outside the Executive Office, O'Leary would be a natural choice for the position of Director of Office of Management and Budget.

## Potential Directors

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### Pramila Jayapal

U.S. Representative, Washington's 7th district

**Benefits:** First elected to the House of Representatives representing Seattle in 2016, Pramila Jayapal has quickly emerged as one of the most visible figures on the American left. Considered to be a *de facto* mentor to young progressives in Congress such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar, Jayapal serves as Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. While speculation surrounding Jayapal's political future often mentions her as a possible choice for Secretary of Health and Human Services, the office of Director of the Office of Management and Budget is another she would excel in. Jayapal is a member of the House Budget Committee, a powerful standing committee responsible for oversight of the federal budget process. In recent years, multiple members of the House Budget Committee have served as Directors of the Office of Management and Budget, including Leon Panetta and Rob Portman. Jayapal is a highly talented political actor who could be trusted to coordinate efforts to curate a federal budget that includes increased social service spending and higher rates of taxation for the wealthy. Should Democrats control the Senate, Jayapal would likely be a confirmable nominee to the position.

## Potential Directors

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### **Jan Schakowsky**

Representative, Illinois's 19th district

**Benefits:** Long considered to be one of the most progressive members of the House of Representatives, Jan Schakowsky has represented Chicago's North Side in Washington since the 1998 election. Schakowsky currently serves on the Committee on the Budget. Long an advocate for consumer protection policies, Schakowsky has spent much of her career pushing for stricter regulations and oversight of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Putting Schakowsky in the position of Director of the Office of Management and Budget would give the progressive wing of the party a great deal of influence when it comes to budget matters. Schakowsky is a high-profile congressional supporter of the Green New Deal and having her at the helm of the Office of Management and Budget would signal the federal government's willingness to respond to the existential threat climate change poses.



## Potential Directors

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### **Jay Inslee**

Governor of Washington

Former Representative, Washington's 1st and 4th districts

**Benefits:** Jay Inslee received national attention for his dark horse presidential run in 2020. Inslee ran an issue-focused campaign prioritizing climate policy, arguably the first of its kind on the national stage, that raised the governor's profile and has led to speculation that he will be considered for a role in a future administration. Inslee is a supporter of the Green New Deal, advocating for a \$9 trillion dollar investment plan for an “evergreen economy” and a bold plan to phase out fossil fuel consumption. Having Inslee at the helm of the Office of Management and Budget would be a strong signal that the White House is committed to tackling the climate crisis, and Inslee certainly has the chops to run an office of the OMB's size given his experience as Governor. Inslee would be a solid choice for Director of the Office of Management and Budget and would be confirmable should Democrats control the Senate.

## Potential Directors

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### Barbara Lee

U.S. Representative, California's 13th district

U.S. Congressional Representative to the United Nations,  
74th General Assembly

**Benefits:** Barbara Lee has long been a legend in progressive circles, and in recent years has even become respected among more moderate members of the party's apparatus. Famous for being the only congressional opponent of the authorization of force following the September 11th, 2001 attacks, Lee is just as progressive on domestic economic policy as she is on issues of foreign policy. A member of the House Committee on the Budget, Lee voted in favor of anti-recession stimulus spending and mortgage relief efforts following the 2008 financial crisis. Lee is a supporter of Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, and the elimination of student debt. The appointment of Lee, who supports significant cuts to the Department of Defense's budget, to serve as Director of the Office of Management and Budget would also serve as a good first step to reigning in the Pentagon's bloated budget.

## Potential Directors

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### **Josh Bivens**

Director of Research, Economic Policy Institute

**Benefits:** Josh Bivens is a macroeconomist who currently serves as Director of Research at the progressive Economic Policy Institute. As part of his work at the Economic Policy Institute, Bivens has conducted analysis of the Trump Administration’s budget, which he determined in 2017 to be detrimental to the American economy. Bivens contributed to the Economic Policy Institute’s “Budget for Shared Prosperity” project. This budget includes progressive taxation initiatives to alleviate income inequality, a fully-financed proposal for single-payer healthcare, and the abolition of tax expenditures aside from the Earned Income Tax Credit. While Bivens’s expertise could prove valuable in a variety of positions within a progressive administration, his intimate knowledge of federal budget-making makes the position of Director of the Office of Management and Budget perhaps the most logical placement for him.

# CIA DIRECTOR/ DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The positions of Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and Director of National Intelligence (DNI) are generally considered to be the two most important positions relating to intelligence. The portfolios of the two positions differ, of course: The former administers the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) while the latter oversees the National Intelligence Program as well as the United States Intelligence Community, which oversees seventeen agencies including the CIA (Though the DNI is not necessarily more powerful than the CIA Director). For the purpose of analyzing who might fit the bill for these posts in a progressive administration, the two have been consolidated into one given that the holders of these posts generally have the same backgrounds: Politicians with a specialty in intelligence affairs or bureaucrats within these agencies.

## Potential Directors

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### Jackie Speier

Representative, California's 14th district

**Benefits:** Jackie Speier has represented parts of the San Francisco Bay Area in Washington since her initial election to Congress in 2008. A member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and formerly the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism, Counterintelligence and Counterproliferation, Speier has generally taken progressive stances on matters of intelligence policy. Speier has taken a strong stance against so-called “enhanced interrogation techniques” (torture) and in the wake of the 2013 National Security Agency (NSA) leaks called for greater congressional oversight of the agency as well as increased protections for whistleblowers. Given her tenure on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Speier would be a reasonable choice for either position.

## Potential Directors

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### Ron Wyden

Senator from Oregon

**Benefits:** Ron Wyden has served as Senator from Oregon since 1996. While generally considered relatively moderate on economic policies, Wyden is considered to be a civil libertarian on issues of surveillance. A member of the Select Committee on Intelligence that deals with oversight of the United States Intelligence Community, Wyden has generally opposed mass surveillance, signing onto a bipartisan bill in 2019 to end the National Security Agency's practice of surveilling phone records. Generally progressive on immigration issues, Wyden supports a ban on the Department of Homeland Security's practice of passing along confidential information related to DREAMERS to other law enforcement agencies in order to protect undocumented immigrants. Intimately interested in issues of technology, Wyden was one of the first major politicians to oppose the infamous Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and PROTECT IP Act (PIPA) legislative pair and played a crucial role in their defeats. Recently, Wyden has emerged as a leader in the battle against racial bias in tech company algorithms.

## Potential Directors

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### Martin Heinrich

Senator from New Mexico

**Benefits:** Martin Heinrich has served as Senator from New Mexico since 2013. During his tenure, Heinrich has been one of the strongest members of the chamber on matters of civil liberties. In 2016, he publicly sounded the alarm on a provision within the 2017 Intelligence Authorization Act that served as a massive expansion of the federal government’s warrantless surveillance powers. Heinrich has been strongly opposed to “enhanced interrogation techniques” (state-sanctioned torture) and in 2019 demanded the full release of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence’s oversight study of the CIA’s Detention and Interrogation Program. While Heinrich is not a radical and is unlikely to shake up the U.S. Intelligence Community, he is strong on many of the issues civil liberties advocates care about. While not a member of the Select Committee on Intelligence, his membership in the Senate Armed Forces Committee provides him with a background in national security that would bolster his nomination to either Director of National Intelligence or Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

# NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

While not given the formal designation of cabinet-level, the position of National Security Advisor is an unmistakably crucial one, serving as both the President's in-house advisor on national security issues and as a participant in National Security Council meetings. Given the position's prestige, it should come as no surprise that holding the post of National Security Advisor often functions as a springboard toward higher administrative office, namely the position of Secretary of State. Indeed, Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger, Colin Powell, and Condoleezza Rice all served in the capacity. It is worth noting that in spite of the power wielded by the position, the office of National Security Advisor is not subject to Senate confirmation, meaning that the President may appoint who they wish to the position at their own discretion.



## Potential Advisors

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### Robert Malley

Former White House Coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf Region

Former Director for Democracy, Human Rights, and Humanitarian Affairs, National Security Council

Former Special Assistant to the President for Arab-Israeli Affairs

**Benefits:** Robert Malley is a career national security strategist who has served in a variety of national security roles in both the Clinton and Obama Administrations. Malley served as Director for Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in the National Security Council during the Clinton years, where he helped coordinate the administration's refugee and Cuba policy. In the final three years of the Clinton Administration, Malley served as Special Assistant to President Clinton for Arab-Israeli Affairs, a capacity that led to him helping to organize the 2000 Camp David summit between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. During the Obama Administration, Malley rejoined the National Security Council as the administration's point man on combating ISIS, and in 2015 served as a negotiator during the Iran Deal's formulation process. In addition to his career in government, Malley has served in a variety of prestigious positions in civil society, serving as a former fellow on the Council of Foreign Relations and as the current President and CEO of the International Crisis Group. Malley is generally considered to be a member of the political left, being one of the few high-profile American foreign policy professionals to lend sympathy to the cause of Palestinian freedom. In 2000, he was a lone voice against blaming the failure of the Camp David summit on the Palestinian Authority, and has more recently advocated for including representatives from Hamas in Israel-Palestine peace negotiations as the Palestinian Liberation Organization lacks legitimacy. As President and CEO of the Crisis Group, Malley has been a vocal critic of the Saudi-led War in Yemen and supports the War Powers resolution.

## Potential Advisors

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### Matt Duss

Foreign Policy Advisor, Bernie Sanders  
Presidential Campaign, 2020

Former President, Foundation for Middle East Peace

**Benefits:** An alum of the liberal think Center for American Progress, [Matt Duss](#) currently serves as the in-house foreign policy advisor on Bernie Sanders's 2020 presidential campaign. Duss is a critic of the pro-intervention foreign policy establishment that holds power in Washington and previously served as president of the [Foundation for Middle East Peace](#), which seeks a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. [Often compared to Ben Rhodes](#), the former speechwriter who became one of the most crucial foreign policy figures in the Obama Administration, Duss's lack of a traditional foreign policy-making background has not stopped him from being recognized for his talents by his peers. Duss's expertise in the realm of foreign policy is difficult to challenge and he would surely prove formidable in the role of National Security Advisor.

## Potential Advisors

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### Sasha Baker

Foreign Policy Advisor, Elizabeth Warren  
Presidential Campaign, 2020

Former Deputy Chief of Staff to the Secretary of Defense

**Benefits:** Sasha Baker is a career national security official who notably served as the principal foreign policy advisor to Elizabeth Warren’s 2020 presidential campaign. Formerly the deputy chief of staff to Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, Baker was tapped by Warren to lead her team’s effort to bring “big, structural change” to the realm of foreign policy. With the assistance of Baker, Warren’s campaign was able to produce a substantive foreign policy agenda that prioritized rebuilding the Department of State and ending the “endless war”.

## Potential Advisors

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### Loren DeJonge Schulman

Former Senior Advisor, National Security Advisor Susan Rice

Former Director of Defense Policy, National Security Council

**Benefits:** Loren DeJonge Schulman is a career national security official who served as a senior advisor to National Security Advisor Susan Rice during the Obama Administration. Prior to serving in this capacity, Schulman served in a variety of national security capacities, including Chief of Staff to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Director for Defense Policy on the National Security Council staff, and as an advisor to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. Schulman combines an almost-perfect pedigree for the position with a generally progressive worldview, currently serving as a foreign policy advisor to Elizabeth Warren. Schulman has sardonically referred to Saudi Arabia as “our partner in peace”. Having someone generally skeptical of military intervention as National Security Advisor would decrease the chance that the United States finds itself in another major military entanglement in the near future.

# DIRECTOR OF THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

Created in response to the 2008 financial crisis, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) is a crucial independent federal agency that serves to protect consumers from abuse in the financial sector. Often considered the brainchild of Elizabeth Warren, the CFPB has been a top target of Republicans and their judicial allies since its inception. Since the election of Donald Trump, the agency's responsibilities have only been further chipped away. It is imperative that the next Democratic President fills the agency with the most vigilant of anti-corporate crusaders and consumer rights advocates.

## Potential Directors

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### **Rohit Chopra**

Member, Federal Trade Commission

Former Special Advisor to the Secretary,  
Department of Education

**Benefits:** Rohit Chopra is a public official and consumer advocate who has served as a member of the Federal Trade Commission, a powerful independent agency of the U.S. government tasked with enforcing civil antitrust law, since 2018. A protégé of progressive Senator Elizabeth Warren, Chopra served as Assistant Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau from 2010 to 2015 and as a special advisor to the Secretary of Education in 2016, where he advised on student loan debt issues. Chopra is a critic of corporate power and is generally considered one of the most left-wing members of the Federal Trade Commission. Despite his history of consumer advocacy and opposition to corporate power, Chopra has a solid reputation on both sides of the aisle and was confirmed unanimously for the position of commissioner in 2018.

## Potential Directors

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### **Kara Stein**

Former Member, Securities and Exchange Commission

**Benefits:** Kara Stein is an attorney and policymaker who served as a member of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), a federal agency responsible for enforcing federal securities law, from 2013 to 2019. Prior to serving in this capacity, Stein helped write the 2010 Dodd-Frank Act that created the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Stein was considered one of the most progressive members of the Securities and Exchange Commission during her time in the position, famously receiving applause from progressive Senators Elizabeth Warren and Sherrod Brown for her fiery dissent in the SEC case that granted a corporate waiver to the Royal Bank of Scotland Group. Known as “Elizabeth Warren’s ally on the inside”, Stein combines a solid pedigree for the position with a progressive policy outlook sure to please consumer advocates.

## Potential Directors

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### **Morgan Harper**

Former Senior Advisor, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

**Benefits:** Morgan Harper is an attorney and career consumer advocate who served as senior advisor to CFPB Director Richard Cordray from 2014 to 2017. Harper is a political progressive who mounted a congressional campaign in 2020 in support of Medicare for All, a Green New Deal, and tuition-free public college. In her capacity at the CFPB, Harper took a particular interest in protecting consumers from predatory lenders and later worked at the Location Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), a non-profit dedicated to development in economically deprived areas. Harper is well-qualified for the position and is ideologically aligned with the consumer advocacy movement.



## Potential Directors

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### Deepak Gupta

Former Senior Counsel for Enforcement Strategy,  
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

**Benefits:** Deepak Gupta is a prominent attorney, legal academic, and consumer advocate who served as senior counsel within the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Described as “one of the emerging giants of the appellate and the Supreme Court bar”, Gupta was an attorney for the Consumer Justice Project and a Supreme Court Fellow at progressive group Public Citizen Litigation Group. Gupta is an aggressive defender of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and its functions and was the lawyer who represented former CFPB official Leandra English in the famous English v. Trump lawsuit. Gupta is a political progressive with established experience within the CFPB and an intimate understanding of how to combat the Republican Party’s frivolous legal challenges to the agency’s established authority. As such, he is an obvious choice for the role.

## Potential Directors

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### **Katie Porter**

Representative from California's 45th district

**Benefits:** Anyone who says that progressives can't get elected in swing districts clearly has never heard of Katie Porter. Elected in 2018 to represent Orange County in Congress, Porter is one of Washington's foremost advocates for economic justice and corporate accountability. During her tenure, Porter has received national attention for being unafraid to scrutinize the likes of Wells Fargo CEO Tim Sloan and JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon. A law professor by profession, Porter is the author of the textbook *Modern Consumer Law* that addresses the function of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Porter has been described as a protégée of Elizabeth Warren, one of the architects of the agency, and has executive experience from her time at the California Attorney General's office where she monitored banks in a multi-billion dollar mortgage settlement. In many ways, Porter is perhaps the most obvious choice for the job.

# DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

Often confused with the Council of Economic Advisors, the National Economic Council (NEC) is the White House's principal forum for considering economic policy initiatives. Serving at the helm of the NEC often leads to holding or at least being considered for a higher future role, with NEC Director Robert Rubin famously going on to serve as Secretary of the Treasury. The Director of the National Economic Council is often, but not necessarily, a career economist. Whoever serves in the role in a progressive administration will bear the responsibility of coordinating the president's economic policy initiatives. Crucially, the position does not require Senate confirmation, meaning that even in the event of a Republican-controlled Senate a Democratic President can afford to appoint a progressive to the role.

## Potential Directors

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### **Lily Batchelder**

Former Deputy Director, National Economic Council

**Benefits:** Lily Batchelder is a renowned taxation expert and legal professor who served as Deputy Director of the National Economic Council under Barack Obama. Prior to serving in this role, Batchelder was majority chief tax counsel for the Senate Finance Committee. During the 2020 Democratic primary, Batchelder was one of the foremost academic proponents of the proposed wealth tax supported by progressive presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren. Additionally, Batchelder is a staunch supporter of a “silver spoon” tax to mitigate generational inequality. Batchelder combines holding an obvious qualification for the position as former Deputy Director of the National Economic Council with a pro-redistribution economic policy outlook.

## Potential Directors

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### **Bharat Ramamurti**

Member, Congressional Oversight Commission

Former Economic Advisor, Senate Office of Elizabeth Warren

**Benefits:** Bharat Ramamurti is an attorney and career economic policy advisor who served in both Elizabeth Warren’s Senate office and her 2020 presidential campaign as a top advisor. Previously considered for a position on the Securities and Exchange Commission, a federal agency responsible for enforcing securities law, Ramamurti was chosen by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer to serve on the Congressional Oversight Commission overseeing the funds allocated by Congress for COVID-19 relief. In this capacity, Ramamurti has demanded that the Federal Reserve restrict stock buybacks and executive bonuses for corporates receiving loans. Affiliated with the progressive Roosevelt Institute where he serves as managing director of the Corporate Power program, Ramamurti is a political progressive who has played a major role in some of Warren’s most well-known crusades, such as her battle with Wells Fargo in the wake of the fake accounts scandal and the drafting of the Accountable Capitalism Act. In the 2020 Democratic primary, Ramamurti helped craft Warren’s wealth tax and student debt cancellation proposal. Ramamurti is well-qualified to serve as Director of the National Economic Council by any metric and would surely be the most progressive individual to serve in the position in its 27 year history if appointed.

## Potential Directors

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### Stephanie Kelton

Economic Advisor, Bernie Sanders Presidential Campaign, 2020

Former Economic Advisor, Bernie Sanders Presidential Campaign, 2016

Former Chief Economist, Senate Budget Committee, Democratic Minority Staff

**Benefits:** Named in 2016 by *Politico* magazine's as one of the 50 most important "thinkers" in American politics, Stephanie Kelton is a left-wing economist who has become increasingly prominent in recent years. Kelton served on the Senate Budget Committee as Chief Economist for the Democratic Minority Staff from 2015 to 2016. After serving in the position, Kelton was appointed by Bernie Sanders as his 2016 presidential campaign's in-house economic advisor, a position she has reprised in his 2020 presidential campaign. Kelton is considered to be the face of Modern Monetary Theory (MMT), an alternative economic theory that has become increasingly popular among progressives. Kelton is a top proponent of a federal jobs guarantee and is supportive of other top left-wing priorities, such as Medicare for All and a Green New Deal. While Kelton may be difficult to confirm to a role requiring Senate confirmation such as Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors, no such requirement exists for serving in the position of Director of the National Economic Council.

## Potential Directors

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### **Dean Baker**

Senior Economist, Center for Economic and Policy Research

**Benefits:** Dean Baker is a macroeconomist who co-founded and serves as a senior economist at the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), a D.C.-based think tank that includes Nobel Memorial Prize recipients Joseph Stiglitz and Robert Solow among their advisory board. Baker is best-known as being one of the first prominent economists to identify the 2007 housing bubble that culminated in the catastrophic 2008 recession. During the course of Baker's career, Baker has consulted with the World Bank on economic policy and testified before various governmental bodies, including Congress's Joint Economic Committee. Baker is a progressive who criticized the bank bailout following the 2008 crash, and supports major left-wing policy goals, such as Medicare for All and the Green New Deal. Baker endorsed progressive presidential candidate Bernie Sanders in the 2016 election and progressive Elizabeth Warren in 2020. Given the present dire economic situation, it would be beneficial to have someone with an expertise in handling and responding to economic crises in a top advisory position.

# DIRECTOR OF THE DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Domestic Policy Council is a crucial forum within the Executive Office tasked with the consideration of domestic policy (sans matters of economic policy) matters. Noteworthy individuals who served at the helm of the Domestic Policy Council who went on to serve in other capacities include David McIntosh, who later became a Representative from Indiana, Bruce Reed, who later became Chief of Staff to the Vice President, and Margaret Spellings, who later became Secretary of Education. The position does not require Senate confirmation, meaning that a Democratic President has the luxury of choosing who they want for the role without the threat of intervention from Senate conservatives.



## Potential Directors

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### **Julie Margetta Morgan**

Vice President of Research, Roosevelt Institute

**Benefits:** Julie Margetta Morgan is a career policy advisor who currently serves as Vice President of Research at the Roosevelt Institute, a progressive think tank. Prior to this, she served as a senior program officer at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and at the liberal think tank Center for American Progress. Formerly an advisor to progressive Senator Elizabeth Warren’s presidential campaign, the bulk of Morgan’s work has centered on alleviating inequality via education policy reform. Morgan is a staunch advocate of student debt cancellation, arguing that the student debt crisis is one of the biggest obstacles to economic prosperity. At the helm of the Domestic Policy Council, Morgan would surely be a much needed progressive voice in the White House.

## Potential Directors

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### Ganesh Sitaraman

Former Policy Director, Elizabeth Warren 2012 Senate campaign

Former Chief Counsel, Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren

**Benefits:** There's a reason why Ganesh Sitaraman, a legal scholar and policy professional, has been anointed as the incoming "chief ideologue" of the Democratic Party. A long-time associate of Elizabeth Warren who has lent his advice to her various political campaigns and served as chief counsel for her Senate office, Sitaraman's intellectual expertise encompasses a wide range of topics. Sitaraman's work has touched upon everything from developing a progressive foreign policy, particularly with regards to counterinsurgency (Sitaraman is the author of *The Counterinsurgent's Constitution: Law in the Age of Small Wars*), to advancing an alternative economic model to the neoliberal project. Sitaraman currently serves as a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, a Democratic think tank, and on the advisory board of Foreign Policy for America.

## Potential Directors

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### Heather McGhee

Former President, Demos

**Benefits:** Heather McGhee is a career public policy analyst and political advisor who served as president of Demos, a progressive think tank, from 2014 to 2018, and currently serves as a senior fellow in the organization. A longtime collaborator of progressive Senator Elizabeth Warren from her days as an academic, McGhee has devoted her professional life to fighting racial and economic inequality. McGhee notably co-chaired a task force with Americans for Financial Reform in 2008 that helped lead to many of the most important provisions of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. McGhee is highly qualified for the position and would be sure to use the post to advocate for progressive policies.

# OIRA ADMINISTRATOR

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## PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:

The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) is a crucial subagency falling under the purview of the Office of Management and Budget. Headed by an Administrator subject to Senate confirmation, OIRA is responsible for reviewing regulations implemented by the Executive Branch, coordinating the federal government's privacy policies, and approving information collections, among other tasks. Despite the importance of the position—the office has been described as wielding “enormous power” according to The Washington Post—the position has largely been under the radar in past administrations. Under a progressive administration, the office should be staffed with individuals committed to expanding the office's regulatory powers to make the Executive Office's policy interventions more effective. Since the subagency was formed, the position of OIRA Administrator has invariably been held by individuals with a background in law.

## Potential Administrators

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### Sharon Block

Executive Director, Labor and Worklife Program, Harvard Law School

Former Member, National Labor Relations Board

Former Senior Counselor to the Secretary of Labor

**Benefits:** Sharon Block is a career attorney and civil administrator who currently serves at the helm of the Labor and Worklife Program at Harvard Law School. Prior to serving in this capacity, Block held national office as a member of the National Labor Relations Board during the Obama Administration and as Senior Counselor to the Secretary of Labor. As Data for Progress noted in the *Progressive Cabinet Report - Shaping a Progressive Administrative* memo, Block's pedigree and support for progressive labor policies like the end of at-will employment makes her an obvious choice for a top position in the Department of Labor, such as serving as Secretary. Block has taken a keen interest in administrative law, having participated in *Rethinking Admin Law: From APA to Z*, a collaborative effort by progressive legal scholars seeking to safeguard the powers of federal regulatory bodies under attack by conservative forces. Ideas included in this effort include the creation of an ROTC program for civilian governance to foster a new generation of state administrators as well as mandating that the President of the United States is subject to Administrative Procedure Act guidelines. Block is highly-qualified for the position and would surely be an advocate of expanding the purview of OIRA in the role.

## Potential Administrators

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### Ganesh Sitaraman

Former Policy Director, Elizabeth Warren 2012 Senate campaign

Former Chief Counsel, Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren

**Benefits:** In recent years, Ganesh Sitaraman, a legal scholar and policy professional, has been anointed as the incoming “chief ideologue” of the Democratic Party. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Sitaraman currently serves as a Professor of Law at Vanderbilt University. In this capacity, the bulk of Sitaraman’s work focuses on administrative, constitutional, and international relations law, and unsurprisingly has taken a keen interest in improving the regulatory powers of OIRA and other agencies. Sitaraman has spoken extensively about what he refers to as “regulatory capture”, when state regulations are tilted in favor of wealthy interests. To respond to this and the issue of regulatory delay, Sitaraman has proposed a multitude of policy solutions. These include the creation of public advocates in regulatory agencies akin to public defenders in the legal system, having regulatory agencies engage the public in pre-proposal consultations, and statutory fail-safes to prevent regulatory delay. While Sitaraman’s talents make him suitable for a wide array of positions in the Executive Office, his legal background, progressive bonafides, and interest in regulatory reform makes the position of OIRA Administrator a particularly good fit for him.

## Potential Administrators

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### Rajesh Nayak

Fellow, Labor and Worklife Program, Harvard Law School

Former Deputy Executive Director, National Employment Law Project

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy

**Benefits:** Rajesh Nayak is a career attorney, civil administrator, and policy advisor who currently serves in a fellowship capacity at Harvard Law School's Labor and Worklife Program. Prior to this, Nayak worked at the National Employment Law Project (NELP), a pro-labor advocacy organization seeking stronger workplace protections, as the group's deputy executive director. Nayak spent seven years within the Department of Labor, serving in a variety of capacities such as as the agency's deputy chief of staff and as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy. In 2020, Nayak lent his insight to a historic study of how progressives should approach reforming the OIRA's regulatory functions to assist a Democratic White House's policy initiatives. A graduate of Yale Law School, Nayak has served as a staff attorney at both the NELP and the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law and as counsel for the Brennan Center for Justice. Given his progressive bonafides, legal background, federal government experience, and keen interest in the functions of the OIRA, Nayak is practically a perfect fit for the position.

## Potential Administrators

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### Kate Andrias

Professor of Law, University of Michigan Law School

Former Associate Counsel to the President

Former Chief of Staff, Office of the White House Counsel

**Benefits:** Kate Andrias is a celebrated attorney, legal scholar, and political figure who currently serves as a professor of law at University of Michigan Law School. In this capacity, the bulk of Andrias's work focuses on administrative and labor law. A former clerk for Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Andrias joined the Obama Administration, where she worked as an associate counsel to the President and as chief of staff at the office of the White House Counsel. Throughout her career, Andrias has devoted particular attention to issues of enforcement and how weak regulatory instruments pose a threat to the progressive agenda at the federal level. A supporter of the labor movement, Andrias has proposed greater collaboration between enforcement agencies and increased disclosure in order to make the enforcement process a less opaque and more accessible one. Given her legal bonafides, experience at the federal government, support for left-wing economic policies, and keen interest in matters of regulatory enforcement, Andrias is an obvious choice to head OIRA in a progressive administration.



## Potential Administrators

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### Lisa Heinzerling

Former Senior Climate Policy Counsel to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency

Former Associate Administrator for the Office of Policy, Environmental Protection Agency

Member of the 2009 Barack Obama Transition Team

**Benefits:** Lisa Heinzerling is an attorney and legal academic who currently serves as Professor of Law at the Georgetown University Law Center. Heinzerling's work primarily focuses on environmental, administrative, and regulatory law, and previously served as a visiting professor at Harvard Law School, Yale Law School, and Vermont Law School. In addition to her work in academia, Heinzerling notably served in the Environmental Protection Agency under President Barack Obama, serving as an Associate Administrator in the Office of Policy and as Senior Climate Policy Counsel for the Administrator. Heinzerling is noted for being a staunch opponent of the use of cost-benefit analysis, which has long been used by the political Right to push a deregulatory agenda, with regards to environmental policy. In the Obama Administration, Heinzerling was noted as an advocate of strengthening regulatory powers in the face of right-wing opposition. Additionally, Heinzerling previously served as a member of the Administrative Conference of the United States and on the board of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, where she once served as chair. Heinzerling combines experience in the federal government, a strong academic pedigree, and progressive views on administrative affairs, making her an obvious choice to lead OIRA.