

The Merit and Reputation of an Administration: Presidential Appointees on the Appointments Process

A Report on a Survey
Conducted by Princeton
Survey Research Associates on
Behalf of the Presidential
Appointee Initiative

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INTRODUCTION

American government was designed to be led by citizens who would step out of private life to serve their nation, then return to their communities enriched by that service and ready to recruit the next generation of citizen servants. The Founding Fathers understood that the quality of a president's appointments was as important to the public's confidence in government as the laws that its elected leaders would enact. "There is nothing I am so anxious about as good nominations," Thomas Jefferson wrote at the dawn of his presidency in 1801, "conscious that the merit as well as reputation of an administration depends as much on that as on its measures."

Two hundred years later, the Founders' model of presidential service is near the breaking point. Not only is the path into presidential service getting longer and more tortuous, it leads to ever-more stressful jobs. Those who survive the appointments process often enter office frustrated and fatigued, in part because they get little or no help, and in part because the process has increasingly become a source of confusion and embarrassment.

The evidence comes from a survey conducted for the Presidential Appointee Initiative, which is a project of the Brookings Institution funded by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The telephone survey of 435 senior-level appointees who served in the second Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations was co-sponsored by the Brookings Institution and Heritage Foundation,

and was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates between December 1999 and February 2000.¹ Because the sample was designed to produce roughly equal numbers of appointees per term, not administration, the Clinton administration supplied roughly half of all respondents. (The survey methodology is discussed in Appendix II of this report, and the survey results are presented in Appendix III).

The following report is not meant to be taken as the definitive analysis of the survey. That work will come from a team of scholars assembled from the nation's leading policy institutes, including the Brookings Institution, Heritage Foundation, Baker Institute at Rice University, Bush Institute at Texas A & M University, and Dole Institute at the University of Kansas.

Rather, this report is designed to provide a broad assessment of the current state of the presidential appointments process. At least according to those who have experienced the frustrations firsthand as nominees, it is safe to conclude that the presidential appointments process now verges on complete collapse. Designed to recruit talented Americans for service, while making sure they are fit to serve, the process no longer does either job particularly well. Consider the following facts drawn from the survey:

★ **DELAYS ARE INCREASING.** More than half of the appointees confirmed between 1984 and

¹ The survey was restricted to Executive Level I (secretary rank), II (deputy secretary rank), III (under secretary rank), and IV (assistant secretary rank).

1999 waited five months or more to enter office, compared with just a sixth of the appointees who were confirmed between 1964 and 1984.²

- ★ **CONFUSION AND EMBARRASSMENT ARE ALSO INCREASING.** Two-fifths of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees described the current process as confusing, and a quarter called it embarrassing. Half of the Clinton appointees described the process as confusing, compared with just a third of the Bush and Reagan appointees.
- ★ **ALL STAGES OF THE PROCESS TAKE LONGER THAN NECESSARY.** The Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees believe the process took longer than necessary at every turn, from the president's personal approval of their nomination to Senate confirmation.
- ★ **BOTH THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE DELAYS.** Nearly half of the appointees said that the Senate has made the process an ordeal, and almost a third said the same thing about the White House.
- ★ **THE PROCESS FAVORS PEOPLE WITH PRIOR GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE.** Presidential

appointees with no prior government experience knew less about the process going in, needed more help during the process, and entered office with less mastery of their jobs.

The following pages will examine these and other measures of the state of the presidential appointments process in five sections. The first section will ask what might make talented individuals want to be a presidential appointee, and will answer that the commitment to making a difference is still alive and well. The second section will ask how well the current process works in fulfilling its primary mission, and will answer that the process is failing on three different measures of effectiveness. The third section will look more closely at the causes of the crisis, looking first at the White House and Senate as a whole, then focusing more specifically on the financial disclosure process, the White House Office of Presidential Personnel, divided party control of government, and the peculiar problems of the Clinton administration. The fourth section will examine several possible consequences of the current crisis, most notably the narrowing of the talent pool. The fifth and final section will briefly examine suggested reforms in the process. (Appointee suggestions for reform are presented in Appendix I).

² The 1964-1984 figures in this report are drawn from a survey of 532 Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, and first-term Reagan appointees interviewed by the National Academy of Public Administration. That survey, conducted in 1985, involved interviews with 532 Executive Level I-IV appointees.



THE COMMITMENT TO SERVE

Although this report presents a harsh portrait of the presidential appointments process, the survey does contain some good news for the nation. Simply stated, no matter how angry they were about their own experiences, surprisingly high numbers of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees said they would strongly recommend a presidential appointment to a good friend.³

RECOMMEND POST TO OTHERS

	Total	Reagan	Bush	Clinton
Strongly recommend	54%	53	52	55
Somewhat recommend	29	19	35	29
Somewhat discourage	7	8	5	8
Strongly discourage	1	3	0	*4
Don't know/Refused	10	17	8	7
N	435	107	127	201

This commitment to service is also clear in what the appointees identified as the most satisfying part of their work. Meeting and working with stimulating people topped the list among the 1984-1999 appointees (19%), followed by the chance to accomplish important public tasks (15%) and serving a president they admired (14%).

Much as one can admire this overall commitment to public service, it is also important to note the increasing link between civic duty and personal

advancement among appointees. Four out of ten (39%) appointees who served between 1964 and 1984 said that accomplishing important public objectives was the most satisfying part of their job. Few mentioned enhancing long-term career opportunities (2%) or learning new skills (1%). By contrast, recent appointees placed a much higher emphasis on personal and career development as the most satisfying parts of their job. Indeed, recent appointees ranked the opening of career doors (10%) and learning new skills (9%) almost as highly as a source of satisfaction as accomplishing important public objectives (15%).

MOST SATISFYING PART OF THE JOB

	1964-1984	1984-1999
Meeting and working with stimulating people	7%	19
Accomplishing important public objectives	39	15
Serving a president you admired	11	14
Participating actively in important historical events	8	12
Dealing actively with challenging and difficult problems	26	10
Helping to save taxpayer's money	1	11
Enhancing your long-term career opportunities	2	10
Learning new skills	1	9
N	532	435

³ Percentages in all of the tables presented in this report sometimes do not add to 100 percent because of rounding or because "don't know" and "refused" responses are not presented.

⁴ Indicates that less than 1% of the respondents answered the question.

Despite these changes, most appointees continue to derive great satisfaction from serving their nation in a presidential appointment. They are invited to work for a limited time toward defined goals, and then they must make way for new people with new ideas. Consider the following remarks made by appointees drawn from the survey itself.

I had intended to never spend more than four years in the job. I viewed it as a tithe of my working life, and when the four years were up I wanted to go home. (Reagan administration)

People need to come in and they need to bring in their fresh ideas and approach and then they need to move on. (Clinton administration)

I also feel philosophically that people ought to come into Washington, do their thing with some intensity, and then leave and go back home and get real jobs, not become part of the Washington establishment and bureaucracy, and that was a motivating factor for coming in the first place. (Bush administration)

What is also clear is that few appointees serve for the money. Half of the appointees reported that they earned the same amount of money or less as a presidential appointee than they had earned in their previous positions. The other half reported an increase in salary, with 30 percent saying their salary increased a lot, and 16 percent reporting a slight increase.

CHANGE IN SALARY ONCE APPOINTED

A lot more	30%
Somewhat more	16
Roughly the same	25
Somewhat less	20
A lot less	6
N	435

This does not mean money does not matter to appointees, particularly to those who lived outside of Washington before accepting their appointment. Almost half of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees had lived outside of Washington before their appointment, and many reported that expenses such as rent or mortgage payments, property taxes and other direct housing costs were somewhat (24%) or a lot more (36%) expensive in DC. One in five (21%) said it was equally expensive, and just one in ten said it was somewhat (11%) or a lot (2%) less expensive.

COST OF LIVING FOR NEW DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA RESIDENTS

A lot more expensive	36%
Somewhat more	24
Equally expensive	21
Somewhat less	11
A lot less expensive	2
N	168



MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

The presidential appointments process exists to recruit and confirm talented citizens for presidential service. As such, it is relatively easy to describe the components of a successful process. It should give nominees enough information so they can act in their best interest throughout the process, move fast enough to give departments and agencies the leadership they need to faithfully execute the laws, and be fair enough to draw talented people into service, while rigorous enough to assure that individual nominees are fit for their jobs. Unfortunately, as the following pages suggest, today's presidential appointments process may be failing in all aspects.

INFORMATION

Appointees can hardly act in their own interest if they simply do not know the rules and obligations of service. Unfortunately, many Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees reported that they did not receive enough information on the process. As a result, many sought outside help.

When asked about the adequacy of the information they received from the White House or other official sources, just over half (56%) said they received enough (40%) or more than enough (16%) information about the process. That leaves roughly four in ten (39%) who said they did not get enough (28%) or got no information at all (11%). Women (51%) were more likely than men (37%) to report that they did not get enough information from the White House.

INFORMATION FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

	Total	Reagan	Bush	Clinton
Enough Information	56%	57	65	51
Not enough information	28	22	22	34
No information at all	11	13	9	11
N	435	107	127	201

Lacking access to information, many appointees turned to other sources of advice. Six in ten sought advice from someone other than a presidential personnel staff member about the legal aspects of the process (62%), and nearly half consulted with an outside source about the accounting or financial aspects (48%).

AID FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES

	Total	Reagan	Bush	Clinton
For the legal aspects	62%	50	59	71
For financial aspects	48	40	46	53
N	435	107	127	201

The cost of outside help is not insignificant. One-fifth of appointees reported spending more than \$6,000 on hired help, while another fifth spent between \$1,000 and \$5,000.

SPEED

A nomination and confirmation process lasting more than six months was nearly unheard of between 1964 and 1984. Just 5 percent of those appointees reported that more than six months elapsed from the time they first were contacted by the White House to when they were confirmed by the Senate. But times have changed. Nearly a third (30%) of the appointees who served between 1984 and 1999 said the process took more than six months. By the same token, while almost half of the 1964-1984 cohort said the process took one to two months, only 15 percent of the 1984-1999 cohort could say the same.

LENGTH OF PROCESS		
	1964-1984	1984-1999
1 or 2 months	48%	15
3 or 4 months	34	26
5 or 6 months	11	26
More than 6 months	5	30
N	532	435

LENGTH OF PROCESS BY ADMINISTRATION				
	Total	Reagan	Bush	Clinton
1-2 months	15%	21	23	7
3 or 4 months	26	36	25	21
5 or 6 months	26	29	24	26
More than 6 months	30	11	25	44
N	435	107	127	201

The delays did vary by the level of the position, with higher-level positions moving through the process faster than lower-level positions. Nearly two-thirds of appointees (63%) in Executive Level IV (assistant secretary) positions waited five or more months between the time they were first informed by the White House that they were being considered for appointment and the day of their confirmation, compared with just a third of appointees in Executive Level I-III (secretary, deputy secretary, and under secretary) positions.

Regardless of level, however, appointees were both surprised and frustrated by the delays:

I assumed that this was going to be a reasonably expeditious process and assumed that other people were working the issue on a very regular and ongoing basis. Had I known that I was going to be a ship adrift in the sea, I probably would have taken more personal initiative to ensure that the matter was being pushed along. (Bush administration)

The biggest mistake I made was thinking that it would take a relatively reasonable period of time. Two to three months. In fact, it took 16. (Clinton administration)

I expected the timing to be what people said it would be. And it turned out to be quite otherwise. And I'm assuming that the people who gave me the optimistic dates were not stupid or dishonest. It's just that they didn't — I think they didn't appreciate the workload and the system. So, it was totally unrealistic, the dates I was given. (Bush administration)

Although the delays have increased in each administration since 1960, the jump was particularly significant during the Clinton administration. On average, it took Clinton appointees two months longer to enter office than Reagan or Bush appointees.

TALENT

It is difficult, if not impossible, to know whether the quality of presidential appointments has changed with the passage of time. The Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations all had their fair share of highly talented appointees. Nevertheless, there is at least some evidence in the survey to suggest that the appointees themselves wonder about the quality of their colleagues. Although they rarely disparage their colleagues — just one in ten (8%) said that their Senate-confirmed colleagues were not very talented — few had high praise either. Just one in ten (11%) said their peers represented the best and brightest America has to offer. The vast majority gave their colleagues mixed grades.

VIEW OF SENATE-CONFIRMED APPOINTEES

They are not the most talented Americans, but they are adequate to perform the tasks assigned to them	8%
They represent the best and brightest America has to offer	11
They are a mixed lot: Some are highly talented, while others do not have the skills and experience their positions require	79
N	435

The Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees had a much more positive image of the career government officials with whom they worked, and were as impressed with their civil service colleagues as the appointees who served under Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter. Contrary to conventional wisdom, however, Clinton appointees were somewhat less impressed with the responsiveness of career officials than either Reagan or Bush appointees. Seventy-eight percent of the Clinton appointees rated career officials as medium to highly responsive, compared with 83 percent of the Bush appointees and 87 percent of the Reagan appointees.

VIEW OF SENIOR CAREER EMPLOYEES

	1964-1984	1984-1999
Responsiveness		
Low responsiveness	1%	1
Low / medium	5	3
Medium responsiveness	12	11
Medium / High	40	39
High responsiveness	42	42
Competence		
Low competence	1	1
Low / medium	3	1
Medium competence	12	13
Medium / high	45	46
High competence	37	37
N	532	435

Asked to assess the balance between presidential appointees and senior executives, half of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees were satisfied with the status quo, while the rest divided between saying that fewer or more positions should be filled by appointees.

NUMBER OF POSITIONS THAT SHOULD BE HELD BY APPOINTEES

	1964-1984	1984-1999
More positions held by appointees	32%	22
Neutral	41	46
Fewer positions held by appointees	27	27
N	532	435

HOW APPOINTEES RATE THE PROCESS

Beyond these three simple tests of information, speed, and talent, the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees were also asked their own impressions of the process. A quarter (23%) were so unhappy with the nomination and confirmation process that they called it embarrassing, and two-fifths said it was confusing (40%). Although 71 percent called the process fair, almost half described it as “a necessary evil.”

DESCRIBING THE PROCESS

% Saying Somewhat or Very Well

	Total	Reagan	Bush	Clinton
Fair	71%	72	76	67
A “necessary evil”	47	40	47	51
Confusing	40	29	33	49
Embarrassing	23	14	27	25
N	435	107	127	201

Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees were equally likely to evaluate the system as fair, a necessary evil, or even embarrassing. However, more Clinton appointees (49%) thought the system was confusing than Bush (33%) or Reagan (29%) appointees.

How these appointees felt about the process at the end actually relates to how much information

they were given at the beginning. Those who knew what was coming were less likely to be embarrassed or confused. Appointees who said they did not get enough information from the White House or other official sources were more likely to describe the process as an embarrassment (31%) and a necessary evil (57%) than those who were well briefed (embarrassing 17%, necessary evil 29%).

Similarly, well-informed appointees (80%) were more likely than their less-informed colleagues (59%) to say the process was fair. The amount of information received has little impact on the perceived clarity of the process. Even those who said they got what they needed from the White House say nomination and confirmation can be confusing. In short, giving appointees basic knowledge about how the system works appears to have a significant impact on their overall ratings. Forewarned is forearmed, it appears.

DESCRIBING THE PROCESS

% Saying Somewhat or Very Well

	Enough information	Not enough information
Fair	80%	59
A “necessary evil”	29	57
Confusing	45	53
Embarrassing	17	31
N	247	171



THE CAUSES OF CRISIS

As the following pages will note, the presidential appointments process is broken in several places. Although the Clinton administration brought much of the current delay on itself through early stumbles and later scandals, the process has been weakening for three decades, and will not improve merely because the Clinton administration leaves office.

As the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees agreed, the breakdowns have occurred at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. Nearly a third of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees said the White House has become too demanding and makes the nomination process an ordeal (30%), and nearly half said the same of the Senate (46%). The frustration was not equal across administrations, however. Clinton appointees were simultaneously much more critical of the White House (40%) than Bush (24%) and Reagan (17%) appointees, and much more critical of the Senate (57%) than Bush (40%), and Reagan (35%) appointees.

PROCESSING POTENTIAL NOMINEES

The White House	Total	Reagan	Bush	Clinton
Is too demanding, making process an ordeal	30%	17	24	40
Acts reasonably and appropriately	64	78	72	51
<hr/>				
The Senate	Total	Reagan	Bush	Clinton
Is too demanding, making process an ordeal	46	35	40	57
Acts reasonably and appropriately	46	56	54	35
N	435	107	127	201

Although these two questions were not asked in the earlier survey of Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, and first-term Reagan appointees, there is evidence of declining confidence in the Senate. Asked to give an open-ended assessment of the Senate's role in the process, just over half of the 1964-1984 appointees (56%) offered a favorable response. The favorable responses ranged from those who said that "The Senate does a very good job of reviewing candidates" to "The Senate does a perfunctory, fair or satisfactory job reviewing candidates." Just under a third (30%) of the 1964-1984 appointees were critical of the Senate, arguing, for example, that "The Senate is too lax examining qualifications of candidates," "Senators and staff were poorly prepared," "The Senate is too slow" and "The Senate is more con-

cerned with politics than competence.” It is highly unlikely that the 1984-1999 appointees would have been so generous if they had been asked the same question.

STAGES OF DELAY

The first step in fixing the presidential appointments process is to identify the stages that are most likely to create delay. Unfortunately, as the following discussion suggests, all of the stages have become more cumbersome over the decades. Consider how the appointees described the problems when asked for broad comments on how to make the process easier:

I do think that the Senate confirmation part of the process would be greatly improved by rules in which members of the Senate who place a hold on a nominee would have to be public about their concerns. In my experience the major holdup is often that a member of the Senate or members of the Senate oppose the nomination, but it's very difficult to determine who is opposing the nomination and for what reason. (Clinton administration)

From what I have understood, there have been delays in the White House in getting the information processed through the system to the Senate. Then, of course, there are problems in the Senate and with the staff in the Senate, who are reluctant to move quickly, and so forth. So the whole process, in general, is a very cumbersome one. (Reagan administration)

I think the most important thing would be for the incoming president to hire competent people for the White House personnel office. And by competent I mean experienced in personnel management and having the basic skills necessary to manage presidential appointments. (Clinton administration)

Committees have very lengthy forms to be filled out and of course you also have the FBI clearances and other things with very long forms that have to be filled out. None of this is coordinated, so they are all asking the same questions. But

there are about 30 pages of information that you have to supply each one. But they're in a different format so that you have to go through this process. It's a very redundant thing. It is a very cumbersome, drawn-out process of just filling out paperwork, answering the same questions in different ways and in different order. (Clinton administration)

More than any other facet of the process, Senate confirmation was identified as taking an unreasonable amount of time. Two-fifths of the appointees (39%) who served between 1984 and 1999 said the Senate confirmation process was too lengthy, an increase from 24 percent in 1964 and 1984.

The Senate was hardly the only problem, however. A third of the more recent appointees also complained that filling out the financial disclosure and other personal information forms (34%), the FBI full investigation (30%), and White House review (not including the president's personal approval) (27%) took too long. Women (45%) were more likely than men (31%) to say that filling out financial disclosure forms took longer than necessary.

PHASES OF THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

% Saying It Took Longer Than Necessary

	1964-1984	1984-1999
The Senate confirmation process	24%	39
Filling out financial disclosure and other information forms	13	34
The FBI field investigation	24	30
Other White House review of your nomination	15	27
The initial clearance of your selection with members of Congress	7	18
The conflict of interest review	6	17
The president's personal approval of your nomination	NA	10
N	532	435

Although the process was burdensome for all three recent administrations, Clinton appointees were particularly troubled by unnecessary delays. Two in five Clinton appointees said that the White House review of their nominations took longer than necessary while slightly higher numbers reported that the financial disclosure process was unnecessarily long.

IIIs versus 43% for IVs). Coupled with similar findings elsewhere in the survey, one can argue that there are actually two presidential appointee systems: one for the most senior appointees, who get most of the attention, help, and support, and the other for lower-level appointees and advisory board members, who get most of the frustration.

PHASES OF THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

% Saying It Took Longer Than Necessary,
by Administration

	Total	Reagan	Bush	Clinton
The Senate confirmation process	39%	32	39	44
Filling out financial disclosure and other information forms	34	24	31	41
The FBI field investigation	30	24	27	35
Other White House review of your nomination	27	14	21	38
The initial clearance of your selection with members of Congress	18	15	16	20
The conflict of interest reviews	17	7	20	21
The president's personal approval of your nomination	10	6	8	13
N	435	107	127	201

The delays do not affect all levels of the appointments process equally, however. Higher-level appointees (Executive Levels I-III, which cover secretary, deputy secretary, and under secretary ranks) reported fewer frustrations than lower-level appointees (Executive Level IV, which covers assistant secretary rank). The higher one goes in the federal hierarchy, the less likely appointees were to say that White House review of their nominations took longer than necessary (19% for I-IIIs versus 31% for IVs).

Higher-level appointees were also less likely to complain about their initial clearance with members of Congress (10% for I-IIIs versus 20% for IVs) or the Senate confirmation process (28% I-

PHASES OF THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

% Saying It Took Longer Than Necessary, by Level

	Levels I-III	Level IV
Other White House review of your nomination	19%	31
The initial clearance of your selection with members of Congress	10	20
The Senate confirmation process	28	43
The conflict of interest reviews	15	17
The President's personal approval of your nomination	9	11
Filling out financial disclosure and other information forms	41	31
The FBI field investigation	33	31
N	88	266

Given these patterns, the question is just where to turn for solutions. The answer appears to be everywhere. Financial disclosure requirements, the White House personnel process, divided government, and the special problems of the Clinton administration all provide some explanation for the breakdown of the appointments process.

THE IMPACT OF FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

The Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees were divided over the problems associated with financial disclosure requirements and conflict of interest laws. On the one hand, two in five appointees (41%) saw the laws as reasonable measures to protect the public interest, while almost as many (37%) think they are not very reasonable or go too far. When compared with

the 1964-1984 opinions, these numbers appear to signal a growing acceptance of financial disclosure as a part of the process.

On the other hand, nearly a third of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees described the financial disclosure process as somewhat or very difficult, a near doubling of difficulty from the 1964-1984 appointees. Reasonable or not, filling out the forms takes time and resources, driving many appointees to hire help.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST REVIEW

	1964-1984	1984-1999
The Reasonability		
Go too far	21%	18
Not very reasonable	21	19
Neither	10	19
Somewhat reasonable	14	14
Reasonable measures	19	27
The Difficulty		
Not difficult at all	43%	23
Not very difficult	22	22
Neither	17	24
Somewhat difficult	14	20
Very difficult	3	12
N	532	435

Although there were frustrations in all three administrations, Clinton appointees were much more likely than either Reagan or Bush appointees to view financial disclosure as somewhat or very difficult (38%), perhaps because many were new to the government process, and in part because of new rules regarding tax payments on behalf of domestic employees.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST REVIEW

Difficulty by administration

	Total	Reagan	Bush	Clinton
Not difficult at all	23%	30	25	17
Not very difficult	22	23	20	22
Neither	24	24	25	23
Somewhat difficult	20	15	20	22
Very difficult	12	7	9	16
N	435	107	127	201

GRADING THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENTIAL PERSONNEL

The White House Office of Presidential Personnel plays a central role in the appointments process. It is often the first point of contact for lower-level appointees, and handles most of the paperwork at key points in the process. If it is not working well, the entire process suffers.

Unfortunately, the office received mixed grades from their primary customers, the appointees themselves. Asked to grade the helpfulness of the White House presidential personnel staff on a range of issues from competence to staying in touch during the process, half or fewer awarded As or Bs. Although appointees gave the office high grades for both competence (50% give As or Bs) and personally caring whether the appointee was confirmed (46%), half gave the office a C (21%) or lower (30%) for staying in touch during what has become a long relationship.

WHITE HOUSE PERSONNEL REPORT CARD

	A Excellent	B Good	C Average	D Poor	E Very Poor
Caring whether you personally were confirmed	26%	20	18	13	7
Competence	21	29	23	9	3
Responding quickly to your questions	20	23	20	12	4
Devoting enough time to your appointment	19	24	23	11	6
Staying in touch with you during the process	13	21	21	21	9

There were significant differences in performance across the three administrations, however.

Clinton appointees were much more critical of the personnel office than either Reagan or Bush appointees, giving the office average or below average grades on all of the questions asked, and more than 40 percent of the Clinton appointees gave the office a D or F on staying in touch with them during the process.

THE IMPACT OF DIVIDED GOVERNMENT

The Founding Fathers did not intend the presidential appointments process to be easy. Otherwise, they would not have required Senate confirmation as part of their complex system of checks and balances. The question is whether the recent increase in appointee complaints is an appropriate expression of such constitutional obligations or a sign that the presidential appointments process has become a hostage in disputes that are better resolved through other means.

This report cannot offer a definitive answer, if only because the impact of divided control from 1984-1999 has been decidedly mixed. In fact, appointees reported that some delays were actually longer when the Democrats controlled both the presidency and the Senate, in part because the only moment of unified control during the period happened to come during one of the most haphazard presidential transitions in recent history.

WHITE HOUSE PERSONNEL REPORT CARD

% Giving Average or Below Average Grades,
by Administration

	Total	Reagan	Bush	Clinton
Staying in touch with you during the process	51%	41	46	61
Competence	35	24	28	46
Responding quickly to your questions	36	27	27	47
Devoting enough time to your appointment	40	30	29	51
Caring whether you personally were confirmed	38	30	23	51
N	435	107	127	201

PHASES OF THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

% Saying It Was Not Longer Than Necessary

	Divided 1984-1986	Divided 1987-1992	One Party 1993-1994	Divided 1995-1999
The President's personal approval of your nomination	73%	79	59	71
Other White House review of your nomination	69	68	47	50
Filling out financial disclosure and other information forms	70	68	67	50
The initial clearance of your selection with Congress	78	75	71	63
The conflict of interest reviews	84	78	86	66
The Senate confirmation process	67	59	59	50
The FBI full field investigation	67	68	57	57
N	67	123	58	102

Just because divided government did not have a strong impact on delays does not mean the Senate confirmation process is working well. To the contrary, it suggests that the delays may have become part of the institutional norms within the Senate that will govern future presidential appointments regardless of party control.

THE CLINTON EFFECT

Clinton appointees bore the consequences of two events that were unique to their administration. First, the initial Clinton appointees entered office following an extraordinarily difficult transition. Whereas appointees from the second Reagan

administration benefited from administrative smoothing that occurred in the first, and the Bush appointees benefited from a same-party transition, the first wave of Clinton appointees bore the brunt of one of the most confusing transitions in recent history.

Second, the last wave of Clinton appointees entered office during a period of intense scandal, including an impeachment trial and an ongoing campaign finance investigation. As the following table suggests, these two events created a roller coaster of inefficiency in the presidential appointments process.

PHASES OF THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS

% Saying It Was Not Longer Than Necessary

	1984-1992 Before Clinton	1993-1994 Clinton's Transition	1995-1997 Some Stability	1998-1999 Scandal
The President's personal approval of your nomination	77%	59	81	63
Other White House Review of your Nomination	68	47	62	42
The FBI full field investigation	68	57	69	48
Filling out financial disclosure and other information forms	68	67	64	40
The initial clearance of your selection with Congress	76	71	57	67
The conflict of interest reviews	80	86	67	65
The Senate confirmation process	62	59	40	57
N	190	58	42	60

Thus, nearly four out of five appointees (77%) who served between 1984 and 1992 thought the president's personal approval of their nomination was handled efficiently, compared with three in five (59%) during the Clinton transition, four in five (81%) during 1995-1997, and three in five (63%) again during 1998-1999. A notable decline in the perceived timeliness of the FBI full field investigation also occurred during the latter part of Clinton's administration.

It would be a mistake to assume that Clinton's departure from office will make all of the delays

or frustrations cited above disappear. Although Clinton's departure will no doubt improve White House and Senate relations, it will not make the financial disclosure forms easier to master, the FBI field investigations shorter, or the Senate review more efficient. Nor will it do anything to make information more available to appointees, or reduce the need for outside help. The delays have been increasing since 1960, and will continue to increase in the future.



CONSEQUENCES

As the presidential appointments process has become more difficult, it has come to favor nominees with Washington experience. Over half of the 1984-1999 (58%) appointees worked inside the Beltway at the time of their nomination, and over a third actually held another position in the federal government (35%). Others came from a law firm (17%), a business or corporation (18%), or an educational institution or research organization (14%), while relatively few had positions in state or local government (8%) or in charitable or nonprofit organizations (4%). Virtually none held a position with a special interest group or a labor union.

PRIOR INDUSTRY	
The federal government	35%
State or local government	8
A business or corporation	18
An educational institution or research organization	14
An interest group	1
A law firm	17
A labor union	*
A public relations firm	*
A charitable nonprofit organization	4
Some other place	3
N	435

The advantage to living inside-the-Beltway involves experience and information. Roughly half of the Washington residents (52%) said they knew a great deal about the process at the outset, compared with just a third (31%) who lived outside Washington. Those whose most recent job was in the federal government (49%) were more than twice as likely to say they knew a great deal about the process as those coming from other industries (23%).

APPOINTEES WHO KNOW A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE PROCESS

Prior Job Location		N
Inside the Beltway	52%	129
Outside the Beltway	31	55

Prior Job Industry		N
In the federal government	49	165
Not in the federal government	23	22

The good news of a sort is that all appointees, regardless of their prior work experience, were equally likely to consult an outside source, particularly hired help. The bad news is that appointees who did not hold a government position immediately prior to their appointment spent much more on outside help. Two in ten spent more than \$10,000 (17%), compared with just 2 percent of those who transitioned to appointive service from within government.

Washington experience also affects the ability to skillfully and smoothly take control of the functions of government.

Today's presidential appointments process creates a troubling trade-off. On the one hand, presidents know that people from inside the Beltway and with prior government experience are the most likely to survive the presidential appointments process and to take hold of government quickly. On the other hand, those individuals may not represent the kind of citizen servants the Founders hoped would lead government.

MASTERING JOB TASKS

% Saying It Was Not Difficult to Master

	Prior job located inside the Beltway	Prior job located outside the Beltway
The substantive details of the policies you dealt with	32%	23
The federal budget process	25	14
Directing career employees	40	31
The decision making procedures of your department or agency	26	21
The informal political networks that affected the work of your agency or department	21	18
Dealing successfully with Congress	19	12
Dealing successfully with the White House	24	26
Managing a large government organization or program	24	21
N	247	180



IMPROVING THE PROCESS

The presidential appointees interviewed for this report offered a number of suggestions for improving the process, from streamlining the financial disclosure process to helping appointees cover the costs of entering one of the nation's most expensive real estate markets. Asked for one idea that might improve the process, 37 percent of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees focused on ways to streamline information collection and 28 percent suggested ways to speed up the process.

MAKING THE PROCESS EASIER

Make information collection more efficient and details of process clearer	37%
Speed up the process	28
Make the process less partisan, less confrontational, and less political	11
Improve communication with both White House and congressional staff	7
Improve coordination between White House and Senate	2
Other	15
Don't know / Refused	17
N	435

No recommendation is more easily met than providing more information about all phases of the nomination and confirmation process. Not only would such information help appointees discharge their legal obligations more effectively, it

would actually improve their own impressions of the process, reducing both embarrassment and confusion.

At the same time, it is important to note that providing information alone will not make the delays and frustrations go away. It will not reduce the number of data points and forms, or the requirement that the forms be filled out by hand or on a typewriter. "Most people don't have typewriters," one appointee argued. "Most people don't have printers at home, so you can't put the form on a machine. So you're left either printing this all by hand or trying to find somebody who has a typewriter, which is like asking somebody whether they have a horse and carriage."

Unless something is done soon to streamline the process and restore comity between the two branches, the next administration will be lucky to have its cabinet and sub-cabinet in place by November 1, 2001, nine months into the term. Thus, the true first step toward fixing the presidential appointments process is to admit that it is broken. The Founding Fathers expected presidents to make speedy nominations and the Senate to give its advice-and-consent function, aye or nay, quickly. That was part of what Alexander Hamilton called a "government well executed." Two hundred years later, neither branch is doing its job well. Unless the two branches come together soon to work out their differences, the next administration could well be unpacking when its first term is ending.



APPENDIX I: APPOINTEE SUGGESTIONS FOR REFORM

Asked what one thing could be done to make the appointments process easier, the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees were unmistakably clear: streamline the process. Three in ten appointees complained about the timeliness of the process and said it was too lengthy both overall and for particular stages (28%).

There are a couple of things. One is more realism about how much time it takes. Everybody says, "Oh, it's two months maximum." Turned out to be six months. And that's pretty off-putting because your whole private life is on hold kind of while this is going on. And it's also kind of nerve-racking because you really want to get on with it and you want to get on with the job. One dimension which I find really bizarre is the special security clearances. I came to the offer, to the Presidential offer, with a lot of security clearances already granted me, including access to very sensitive material. I did not believe it was necessary to go over the whole thing again — as if I were a total unknown to the system. That was stupid and took a large amount of time. And I don't think it was done very well. My sense of how the White House clearance job was done was perfunctory. (Bush administration)

I think that the FBI check needs to be shortened, consolidated, and made more rational. It is a very prolonged process and seemed to be the reason why things took as long as they did during the middle of this process. (Clinton administration)

I think that at this stage there are too many people, particularly from the State Department, who need confirmation. I think that when someone has been confirmed once, there ought to be a simpler process for confirmation the second time unless something similar has been brought up or there's some change in the performance or something like that. But the whole process takes so long. They go through so much stuff. I think many of us felt that we would be more than willing to turn over our income tax records. There's nothing to hide in that. But something should be done to speed the process up, because it detracts from the orderly process of government. (Clinton administration)

I think they need to somehow speed up the FBI background check. Between the time that you're more or less designated and by the time they get that done, weeks, if not months, can go by. And I realize it's a resource issue because particularly at the beginning of an administration you have literally hundreds of appointments that need to be vetted. But if they're going to insist on that process, they've got to at least find a way to do it in a timely way. (Bush administration)

Four in ten appointees suggested a more efficient system for collecting information from nominees (37%). Many wanted to simplify financial disclosure and other personal information forms. More importantly, appointees want the redundancy in data collection to stop. Appointees recommend that data be collected in a standardized manner and shared across departments and agencies.

I think that you need to have one set of forms that you go through. Basically, the questions which are asked by the White House and by the Senate, by the agency involved, are basically the same questions. But they are all asked in a little different form. And they have to be done in duplicate time. So it would certainly streamline the process if you could have an agreed-upon set of questions and inquiries. (Clinton administration)

One thing that could be done for all appointees would be to harmonize as much as possible the various documentation requirements that are imposed by the White House, the Office of Government Ethics, and the Senate. In many cases the three bodies are asking for very similar information but they do not ask for it in precisely the same way and that imposes a substantial paperwork burden, I believe, on nominees. (Bush administration)

Well, I think there should be a way to avoid the duplication that takes so much time between the department and the White House. The financial reporting system is checked three times over. You are asked exactly the same question at each stage in the process. They all go through the same paperwork. They repeat it. It takes months for them

to finish. That could be really narrowed down to one good review. (Clinton administration)

There could be a significant reduction in the amount of information that the appointee is required to provide. (Reagan administration)

During the Bush appointment process the financial review was excruciating. Even though my financial holdings are fairly minimal, it was very difficult to get through that review and to make sure that everybody at the various levels of review understood, for instance, what some of the stranger stock options were, and that sort of thing. So I think that would be the one thing that dogged my tracks the most. And then much to my dismay, after having gotten through that, one year later they changed the form and made it all worse. (Bush administration)

A central part of a more efficient system for collecting information is knowing up-front what is expected of them, and being given clear instructions about how to meet these expectations. This involves the implementation of some kind of formal orientation effort. A better flow of information throughout the process would improve the system.



APPENDIX II: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This survey is based on interviews with 435 presidential appointees who served between 1984 and 1999 in an Executive Level I-IV position requiring Senate confirmation. Interviewing was conducted December 10, 1999, through February 28, 2000. The margin of error for results based on the full sample is ± 5 percentage points. For results based on the sample of 201 Clinton appointees, ± 7 ; 127 Bush appointees, ± 9 ; 107 Reagan appointees, ± 10 .

Included are only appointees who served 1984-1999 in either a cabinet department or one of six independent agencies: the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Small Business Administration (SBA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States Information Agency (USIA). (These six agencies were selected to make the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton sample parallel to the National Academy of Public Administration survey in 1985.)

Princeton Survey Research Associates identified the population of 1984-1999 appointees in three stages: First, using the list of presidential appointments published every four years in *U.S. Government Policy and Supporting Positions*, PSRA culled the titles of Executive Level I-IV presidential appointee positions requiring Senate confirmation. Again, this was limited to cabinet

departments and the six independent agencies. Second, using the *U.S. Government Manual*, PSRA matched these titles with the names of those who held them. Third, using a variety of search strategies, including *Who's Who* and Internet directories, PSRA matched names with addresses and telephone numbers.

PSRA culled titles at four points: 1984, 1988, 1992 and 1996. To yield names, PSRA matched 1984 titles with the 1984-85 through 1987-88 *U.S. Government Manual*. PSRA then matched 1988 titles with 1988-89 through 1991-92 manuals, 1992 titles with 1992-93 through 1995-96 manuals and 1996 titles with 1996-97 through 1999-2000 manuals.

From 3598 title-name matches, PSRA identified 1298 unique individuals, of whom 15 were deceased. In turn, PSRA was able to locate an address for 854 (66%), which prompted a letter from the two co-authors of this report introducing the study prior to an effort to schedule and conduct an interview.

PSRA completed 435 interviews from the 929 names that were matched with working, but not necessarily correct, telephone numbers. Of the 494 who did not complete an interview, 29 started an interview but did not finish and 90 refused. In addition, 185 appointments could not be scheduled and kept during the field period. The remaining 190 phone numbers were incorrect.

The questionnaire asked respondents about their most recent presidential appointment that required Senate confirmation. In the analysis, respondents are divided into Clinton, Bush and Reagan appointees based on the administration they last served. Of the 435, 201 (46%) are currently serving or last served in the Clinton administration, 127 (29%) served under Bush and 107 (25%) served under Reagan. The skew toward Clinton reflects that nearly eight years of his administration were sampled, compared with just four for Bush and Reagan. Also, slightly more titles were identified for the Clinton years.

Basic biographical information about the respondents is based on appointees' answers during the interview. At the outset of each interview, we confirmed with the respondent how many appointments he or she has held, whether he or

she is currently serving, the department or agency of the most recent appointment, the title of the most recent appointment and the administration most recently served. Other biographical information — for example, the year of appointment to the most recent position — is derived from the title and name lists compiled to identify the sample. However, this information is subject to at least two limitations. First, because it was compiled primarily for sampling, it dates only from 1984 to 1999 and includes only appointments to cabinet departments or the six independent agencies studied. Second, PSRA knows the source documents are not perfect.

Biographical information is imputed from the title-name lists only when the details of the most recent appointment match those given by the respondent in the interview. This is the case for 80 percent of the sample.



APPENDIX III: SURVEY RESULTS

PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEE SURVEY, 1999-2000, TOPLINE 3.3.00

Prepared by Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Presidential Service Initiative

Sample: n = 435 adults currently serving or who have served as a Senate confirmed presidential appointee¹

Interviewing dates: 12.10.99 – 2.28.00

Margin of error: Total sample ±5%
Reagan appointees ±10%; Bush appointees ±9%; Clinton appointees ± 7%

Q1 Thinking about your (current/most recent) appointment, let's begin with your general impressions of the nomination and confirmation process.

How well does (Insert) describe the process? Does this describe the process very well, somewhat well, not too well or not well at all?

	Very Well	Somewhat Well	Not Too Well	Not Well at All	Don't Know/Refused
a. Fair	36	35	13	11	5
b. Confusing	18	22	23	37	1
c. A "necessary evil"	18	29	17	31	5
d. Embarrassing	7	16	22	53	3

Q2 How much did you know about the presidential appointments process when you began the process? A great deal, a fair amount, not too much or nothing at all?

%	43	Great deal
	31	Fair amount
	18	Not too much
	7	Nothing at all
	*	Don't know/Refused

¹ Trend data are from the National Academy of Public Administration, Presidential Appointee Project, 1985. The sample was 532 adults currently serving or who have served as a Senate confirmed presidential appointee.

Q3 How much information about the presidential appointments process did you receive from the White House or other official sources at the beginning of the process? More than enough, just enough, not quite enough, not enough or no information at all?

%	16	More than enough
	40	Just enough
	13	Not quite enough
	15	Not enough
	11	No information at all
	4	Don't know/Refused

Q4 Now let's turn to the White House presidential personnel staff who helped you through the process for your (current/most recent) appointment.

What grade would you give them for (Insert)? A means excellent, B good, C average, D poor and F very poor.

	A Excellent	B Good	C Average	D Poor	F, Very Poor	Don't Know/ Refused
a. Competence	21	29	23	9	3	15
b. Responding quickly to your questions	20	23	20	12	4	21
c. Staying in touch with you during the process	13	21	21	21	9	15
d. Devoting enough time to your appointment	19	24	23	11	6	17
e. Caring whether you personally were confirmed	26	20	18	13	7	16

Q5 For your (current/most recent) appointment did you consult with or seek assistance from anyone besides the presidential personnel staff helping you with (Insert) of the process?

	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Refused
a. The legal aspects	62	37	1
b. The accounting aspects	48	51	1

Q6 Who did you talk to about (Insert)? Other White House staff such as the counsel's office, a friend or relative, a current or former appointee, an expert who volunteered time to assist you, an expert you hired or someone else?

Based on those who sought help with legal aspects or sought help with accounting or financial aspects. Multiple mentions accepted.

	Agency Personnel	Other White House Staff	Friend or Relative	Current or Former Appointee	Expert Who Vol. Time	Expert You Hired	Senators or Senate Staff	Someone Else	Don't Know/Refused
a.The legal aspects (n=270)	59	16	12	20	11	13	3	4	0
b.The accounting aspects (n=208)	41	5	6	7	9	34	2	9	1

Q7 Did you talk to anyone besides the presidential personnel staff that was helping you about any other aspects of the process?

%	81	Yes
	13	No
	6	Don't know/Refused

Q8 Who did you talk to? Other White House staff, a friend or relative, a current or former appointee, an expert who volunteered time to assist you, an expert you hired or someone else?

Based on those who sought help with other aspects. Multiple mentions accepted.

%	58	Agency personnel ²
	20	Someone else
	17	Current or former appointee
	15	Senators or staff
	10	Friend or relative
	6	Other White House staff
	4	Expert you hired
	1	Expert who volunteered time
	1	Don't know/Refused
n=	352	

Q9 Roughly how much did you spend total on outside hired advice? Less than \$1000, between \$1000 and \$5000, between \$6000 and \$10,000 or more than \$10,000?

Based on those who hired outside help.

%	42	Less than \$1000
	15	Between \$1000 and \$5000
	10	Between \$6000 and \$10,000
	6	More than \$10,000
	10	Nothing
	18	Don't know/Refused
n=	84	

² 'Agency personnel' and Senators of 'Senate staff' were extracted from verbatim responses.

Q10 In your opinion, what one thing could be done to make the appointment process easier?³

Multiple mentions accepted

%	37	More efficient information collection; Clearer idea of what the process entails; Better instructions and assistance
	28	Speed up the process; Too lengthy overall and for particular stages
	11	Nonpartisan process; Less confrontational and less political process
	7	Better communication with both White House and Congressional staff
	2	Better coordination between White House and Senate
	17	Don't know / Refused
	15	Other

Q11 For your (current/most recent) appointment, roughly how many months elapsed between the time you were first informed by the White House you were being considered and the day of your confirmation by the Senate?⁴

	1984-1999	1964-1984
1 or 2 months	15	48
3 or 4	26	34
5 or 6	26	11
More than 6 months	30	5
Don't know/Refused	2	2

Q12 We are interested in whether you think any aspects of your appointment could have been processed more quickly.

What about (Insert)? Did this take longer than necessary or not?⁵

	Yes, Longer Than Necessary		Not Longer Than Necessary		Don't Know/Refused	
	1984-1999	1964-1984	1984-1999	1964-1984	1984-1999	1964-1984
a. the President's personal approval of your nomination ⁶	10	NA	74	NA	16	NA
b. other White House review of your nomination ⁷	27	15	60	85	13	1
c. the initial clearance of your selection with members of Congress	18	7	71	93	12	1
d. the FBI full field investigation	30	24	62	75	8	1
e. filling out financial disclosure and other information forms	34	13	62	87	4	1
f. the conflict of interest reviews	17	6	77	94	6	1
g. the Senate confirmation process	39	24	57	75	3	1

3 Responses recorded verbatim.

4 In the 1964-1984 data Q11 was worded as follows: How many weeks elapsed between the time you were first informed by the White House that you were being considered for your most recent full-time, Senate confirmed presidential appointment and the day of your confirmation by the Senate?

5 In the 1964-1984 data Q12 was worded as follows: Thinking about your most recent confirmation as a full-time, Senate-confirmed presidential appointee, which of the following steps, if any, seemed to you to have taken longer than necessary to complete?

6 The President's personal approval of your nomination was not asked about in 194-1984.

7 In the 1964-1984 data item b was worded as follows: The White House's choice among final candidates.

Q13 On a 1 to 5 scale, how difficult was it to collect and report the information necessary to complete the financial disclosure forms for your (current/most recent) appointment? One means not difficult at all, and 5 means very difficult.⁸

	1984-1999	1964-1984
1, Not difficult at all	23	43
2	22	22
3	24	17
4	20	14
5, Very difficult	12	3
Don't know/Refused	*	2

Q14 Thinking generally about the financial disclosure requirements and conflict of interest laws, on a 1 to 5 scale, what is your view of them? One means the current requirements go too far, and 5 means the current requirements are reasonable measures to protect the public interest.⁹

	1984-1999	1964-1984
1, Go too far	18	21
2	19	21
3	19	10
4	14	14
5, Reasonable measures	27	19
Don't know/Refused	2	16

Q15 Some people think the White House as a whole acts reasonably and appropriately in the way it processes potential presidential nominees. Others think it has become too demanding and thus makes the nomination process an ordeal. Thinking about your own personal experiences, which statement do you agree with more?

%	64	Acts reasonably and appropriately
	30	Is too demanding, making process an ordeal
	6	Don't know/Refused

Q16 Now thinking about the Senate, does the Senate as a whole act reasonably and appropriately in the way it processes presidential nominees or has it become too demanding and thus makes the confirmation process an ordeal? Which statement do you agree with more?

%	46	Acts reasonably and appropriately
	46	Is too demanding, making process an ordeal
	8	Don't know/Refused

⁸ In the 1964-1984 data Q13 was worded as follows: At the time of your most recent full-time, Senate confirmed presidential appointment, how much difficulty, if any, did you have in collecting or reporting the information necessary to complete the financial disclosure forms? (scale of 1 to 5)

⁹ In the 1964-1984 data Q14 was worded as follows: Based on your own individual experience in dealing with the issues of financial disclosure and conflict of interest and disclosure) requirements?

Q17 Which Senate committee or committees had jurisdiction over your (current/most recent) appointment?

Multiple mentions accepted

%	15	Foreign Relations
	13	Commerce, Science and Transportation
	13	Finance
	12	Armed Services
	10	Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs
	9	Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
	7	Judiciary
	6	Energy and Natural Resources
	6	Environment and Public Works
	5	Governmental Affairs
	4	Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
	4	Veterans Affairs
	1	Small Business
	*	Indian Affairs
	2	Other
	*	Don't know
	0	Refused

Q18 What was the biggest mistake you made during the appointment or confirmation process?¹⁰

%	56	Didn't make a mistake
	9	Unprepared for length of process/Bad timing to move to Washington
	8	Problems related to confirming committee
	7	Lack of assertiveness/ Too trusting or naive
	6	Didn't realize process was so political
	5	Problems related to finances or administrative hassle
	3	Problems related to department of appointment
	2	Other
	4	No answer

Q19 Next I have a few questions about your experiences working as a presidential appointee.

Compared with other places you have worked, on a 1 to 5 scale, how would you rate the stress level of your (current/most recent) work as a presidential appointee? One means not stressful at all, and 5 means very stressful.¹¹

	1984-1999	1964-1984
1, Not stressful at all	2	10
2	7	10
3	20	18
4	32	37
5, Very stressful	36	24
Don't know/Refused	2	1

¹⁰ Response recorded verbatim.

¹¹ In the 1964-1984 data Q19 was worded as follows: Thinking about your most recent service as a full-time, Senate-confirmed presidential appointee, how would you describe the impact of the demands of your work on your private life and your family? Compare with other employment experiences you have had, to what extent did your work as a presidential appointee create stress in you personal life or in relations with your family (scale of 1 to 5)

Q20 In your (current/most recent) job, how difficult (do/did) you find it to master (Insert)? (Is/Was) it very difficult, somewhat, not too or not difficult at all to master this part of your job?

	Very Difficult	Somewhat Difficult	Not Too Difficult	Not Difficult at All	Don't Know/Refused
a.the substantive details of the policies you (deal/dealt) with	5	26	39	28	2
b.the decision making procedures of your department or agency	9	31	35	24	1
c. the informal political networks that affect(ed) the work of your agency or department	11	31	36	20	3
d.the federal budget process	19	32	24	20	4
e.directing career employees	5	20	37	36	3
f. dealing successfully with Congress	11	38	32	16	3
g.dealing successfully with the White House	8	28	32	25	7
h.managing a large government organization or program	9	34	32	23	3

Q21 And thinking about all these aspects of the job, which one (do/did) you find most difficult to master?

%	17	Managing a large government organization or program
	12	The decision making procedures of your department or agency
	12	The federal budget process
	12	Dealing successfully with Congress
	11	The informal political networks that affected the work of your agency or department
	11	Directing career employees
	9	Dealing successfully with the White House
	6	The substantive details of the policies you dealt with
	8	Don't know/Refused

Q22 Thinking about the senior career employees in your agency or department, how responsive (are/were) these career officials to your decisions and suggestions? On a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 not responsive and 5 very responsive, how would you rate the responsiveness of career officials?¹²

	1984-1999	1964-1984
1, Not responsive	1	1
2	3	5
3	11	12
4	39	40
5, Very responsive	42	42
Don't know/Refused	2	1

¹² In the 1964-1984 data Q22 was worded as follows: Thinking about your interactions with the senior career employees of your agency or department during your most recent service as a full-time, Senate-confirmed presidential appointee, how would you characterize the responsiveness of those career officials to your decisions and suggestions? (scale of 1 to 5)

Q23 And on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 low competence and 5 high competence, how would you rate the competence of senior career officials with whom you (work/worked)?¹³

	1984-1999	1964-1984
1, Low competence	1	1
2	1	3
3	13	12
4	46	45
5, High competence	37	37
Don't know/Refused	1	2

Q24 Some people think the number of federal executive positions filled by presidential appointees has grown too large, that some of those positions should be filled by senior career employees. Others think some of the positions currently held by senior career employees should be filled instead by presidential appointees. On a 1 to 5 scale, how would you assess the number of positions filled by presidential appointees? One means fewer positions should be filled by presidential appointees, and 5 means more positions should be filled by presidential appointees.

	1984-1999	1964-1984
1, Fewer positions should be filled by appointees	11	12
2	16	15
3	46	41
4	9	18
5, More positions should be filled by appointees	13	13
Don't know/Refused	5	2

Q25 Now here is a list of some satisfying aspects of an appointee's job. Thinking about all these experiences, which one (is/was) the most satisfying to you (in your current appointment/in your most recent appointment)?¹⁴

	1984-1999	1964-1984
Meeting and working with stimulating people	19	7
Accomplishing important public objectives	15	39
Serving a President you admired	14	11
Participating actively in important historical events	12	8
Helping to save taxpayers' money	11	1
Dealing with challenging and difficult problems	10	26
Enhancing your long-term career opportunities	10	2
Learning new skills	9	1
Don't know/Refused	1	2

13 In the 1964-1984 data Q23 was worded as follows: Thinking about your opportunities to observe directly the work of the senior career employees in your department or agency during your most recent service as a full-time, Senate-confirmed presidential appointee, overall how would you evaluate their competence? (scale of 1 to 5)

14 In the 1964-1984 data Q25 was worded as follows: What were the three (3) greatest satisfactions you derived from your most recent service as a full-time, Senate-confirmed presidential appointee? (in the space provided, please write the number 1 next to your greatest satisfaction, the number 2 next to your second greatest satisfaction, and the number 3 next to your third greatest satisfaction.)

Q26 And which (is/was) second most satisfying?

Based on those who named most satisfying aspect.

%	11	Meeting and working with stimulating people
	13	Accomplishing important public objectives
	12	Serving a President you admired
	14	Participating actively in important historical events
	13	Helping to save taxpayers' money
	14	Dealing with challenging and difficult problems
	12	Enhancing your long-term career opportunities
	12	Learning new skills
	0	Don't know/Refused
	430	=n

Q27 Thinking about the Senate-confirmed appointees you have known and observed, which of the following statements seems most accurate to you?

%	11	They represent the best and brightest America has to offer
	8	They are not the most talented Americans, but they are adequate to perform the tasks assigned them
	79	They are a mixed lot: Some are highly talented, while others do not have the skills and experience their positions require
	1	Overall, their talents are not adequate to the demands of their positions
	2	Don't know/Refused

Q28 How many years (have you served in your current appointment/did you serve in your appointment)?

%	12	1
	25	2
	23	3
	21	4
	6	5
	5	6
	6	7
	1	8
	0	9
	1	10 or more
	0	Don't know/Refused

Q29 Now I would like to ask you a few questions about why you left your (most recent) position as a presidential appointee and your experiences after leaving your position. Here is a list of reasons why people have left their position as an appointee, and we would like to know which apply to you. You can name more than one. Did you leave your (most recent) position because (Insert), or not?¹⁵
Based on those who are not currently an appointee.

	Yes		Not		Don't Know/ Refused	
	1984- 1999	1964- 1984	1984- 1999	1964- 1984	1984- 1999	1964- 1984
a.the President's term ended	41	31	58	68	1	1
b.you had a fixed-term appointment that had ended	5	5	94	94	1	1
c.you had accomplished all you could	19	17	81	83	*	1
d.you took a different position in the federal government	7	5	92	94	*	1
e.you disagreed with a specific policy or policies	4	4	95	96	1	1
f.you were asked to leave by a higher ranking official or by the President	8	4	92	95	*	1
g.you were seeking a better paying job in the private sector	20	19	80	81	*	1
h.of burnout or personal or family stress	19	10	81	90	*	1
			1984-1999 n=324	1964-1984 n=532		

Q30 Is there any other reason why you left?¹⁶

%	11	Timing seemed right
	6	Wanted to continue private sector career; Other opportunity arose
	8	Department or agency personnel changed
	6	Other
	69	No/ Elaborated on answer to Q29; No answer

¹⁵ In the 1964-1984 data Q29 was asked of the full sample as follows: Why did you leave your most recent position as a full-time, Senate-confirmed presidential appointee when you did?

¹⁶ Responses recorded verbatim.

Q31 What type of organization did you work for immediately after leaving your (most recent) position as a Senate-confirmed presidential appointee?¹⁷

	1984-1999	1964-1984
A business or corporation	34	32
A law firm	21	18
An educational institution or research organization	16	16
The federal government	13	4
A charitable or non-profit organization	7	NA ¹⁸
State or local government	2	2
An interest group	2	2
A labor union	0	*
A public relations firm	1	2
Some other place	4	7
Don't know/Refused	*	18

Q32 On a 1 to 5 scale, how much impact did your service as a presidential appointee have on your earning power over the rest of your career? One is a significant decrease in earning power, and 5 is a significant increase in earning power.¹⁹

	1984-1999	1964-1984
1, Significant decrease in earning power	5	1
2	3	3
3	43	31
4	26	22
5, Significant increase in earning power	10	11
Don't know/Refused	12	32

Q33 If you had a good friend who was considering an appointment, would you strongly recommend, somewhat recommend, somewhat discourage or strongly discourage your friend from considering it?

%	54	Strongly recommend
	29	Somewhat recommend
	7	Somewhat discourage
	1	Strongly discourage
	10	Don't know/Refused

Q34 Have you held other Senate-confirmed presidential appointments? Could you tell me the other appointments you held? We would like the department or agency, the title and the administration under which you served.*

* Answers not provided in order to protect the confidentiality of the respondents.

17 In the 1974-1984 data Q31 was asked as follows: Please name the organization in which you were first employed full-time after leaving your most recent position as a full-time, Senate-confirmed presidential appointee? Which of the following best describes the character of that organization

18 Charitable or non-profit Organization was not asked in the 1964-1984 data.

19 In the 1964-1984 data Q32 was asked as follows: To what extent did your services as a presidential appointee affect your earning power over the rest of your career up to the present time? (scale of 1 to 5)

Q35 Have you held any non-Senate-confirmed positions in the federal government?

%	78	Yes
	22	No
	*	Don't know/Refused

Q36 Lastly, we are interested in your work experiences prior to your appointive service in the administration. What type of organization did you work for immediately prior?²⁰

	1984-1999	1964-1984
The federal government	35	40
A business or corporation	18	20
A law firm	17	12
An educational institution or research organization	14	16
State or local government	8	6
A charitable nonprofit organization	4	NA ²¹
An interest group	1	2
A labor union	*	1
A public relations firm	*	NA ²²
Some other place	3	3
Don't know/Refused	0	*

Q37 To the best of your recollection, how did your annual salary before appointive service in the administration compare to your salary as a presidential appointee? Was your salary before a lot more than your salary as an appointee, somewhat more, roughly the same, somewhat less or a lot less? Include only your personal salary and other cash benefits such as bonuses.

%	30	A lot more
	16	Somewhat more
	25	Roughly the same
	20	Somewhat less
	6	A lot less
	2	Don't know/Refused

Q38A In what city and state did you work before you began appointive service with the administration?

%	98	Gave a city
	1	Foreign location
	*	Don't know / Refused

²⁰ In the 1974-1984 data Q36 was asked as follows: Which of the following best describes the character of the organization, business, government agency for which you worked immediately prior to your most recent service as a full-time, Senate-confirmed presidential appointee?

²¹ Charitable or non-profit Organization was not asked in the 1964-1984 data.

²² Public relations firm was not asked in the 1964-1984 data.

Q38B (In what city and state did you work before you began appointive service with the administration?)
Based on those who worked in US before appointment.

		1984-1999	1964-1984 ²³
%	Alabama	0	1
	Alaska	*	0
	Arizona	*	*
	Arkansas	*	0
	California	8	9
	Colorado	1	0
	Connecticut	1	1
	Delaware	*	0
	District of Columbia	50	46
	Florida	1	*
	Georgia	0	1
	Hawaii	*	0
	Idaho	0	*
	Illinois	2	3
	Indiana	*	1
	Iowa	0	*
	Kansas	1	*
	Kentucky	*	*
	Louisiana	*	*
	Maine	*	*
	Maryland	3	2
	Massachusetts	2	3
	Michigan	1	2
	Minnesota	1	1
	Mississippi	0	*
	Missouri	1	1
	Montana	0	*
	Nebraska	*	1
	Nevada	*	*
	New Hampshire	1	1
	New Jersey	1	1
	New Mexico	1	*
	New York	7	8
	North Carolina	1	1
	North Dakota	0	0
	Ohio	1	1
	Oklahoma	*	*
	Oregon	1	1
	Pennsylvania	2	3
	Rhode Island	0	1
	South Carolina	*	*
	South Dakota	0	0
	Tennessee	1	*
	Texas	3	3
	Utah	0	*
	Vermont	*	*
	Virginia	5	2
	Washington	1	1
	West Virginia	0	*
	Wisconsin	*	1
	Wyoming	*	*
	Puerto Rico	NA	*
	Virgin Island	NA	0
	Foreign country	NA	3
	Don't know/Refused	0	1
	n=	427	532

23 In the 1964-1984 data Q38B was asked of the full sample Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and a foreign country were listed as answer categories.

Q39 Do you happen to remember the Zip code?*

%	60	Yes
	40	Don't know/ Refused
	427	=n

Q40 Did you move to a new home or apartment in the Washington, DC, area?
Based on those who were not living in the DC area prior to appointment.

%	89	Yes
	6	No
	5	Don't know/Refused
	188	=n

Q41 Considering only such factors as rent or mortgage payments, property taxes and other direct housing costs, how much more or less expensive was it for you to live in the Washington, DC area than in your former place of residence? Was it a lot more expensive, somewhat more, equally expensive, somewhat less or a lot less expensive?
Based on those who moved to DC.

%	36	A lot more expensive
	24	Somewhat more
	21	Equally expensive
	11	Somewhat less
	2	A lot less expensive
	4	Don't know/Refused
	168	=n

Q42 Before you were confirmed for your (current / most recent) appointment, did you serve in an acting or consulting capacity with your department or agency?

%	48	Yes
	51	No
	1	Don't know/Refused

Q43 Do you recall how long you served in an acting or consulting capacity?
Based on those who served in acting consulting capacity before confirmation.

%	56	1 – 4 months
	42	5 months or more
	2	Don't know/Refused
	209	=n

Q44 (Respondent's sex)

%	81	Male
	19	Female

* Complete answers not provided in order to protect the confidentiality of the respondents.

Q45 What is your age?

%	2	40 and younger
	21	41-50
	44	51-60
	22	61-70
	10	71 and older
	1	Don't know/ Refused



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