

Posts of Honor: How America's Corporate and Civic Leaders View Presidential Appointments

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

Paul C. Light
The Brookings Institution

Virginia L. Thomas
The Heritage Foundation



THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION



January 10, 2001

Published in January 2001 by
The Presidential Appointee Initiative
A Project of the Brookings Institution funded by
The Pew Charitable Trusts
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Suite 301
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 496-1330
www.appointee.brookings.org



INTRODUCTION

From its very beginnings as a war-weary republic, the United States has always depended on citizen servants to lead its government. The Founding Fathers believed their young nation would not long survive as a representative democracy without leaders whose patriotism and love of justice would allow the new government to rise above the partisan divisions of the day.

These hopes for virtuous, wise leaders extended to what Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin called the "posts of honor" in the executive branch. Worried about the bold and fractious individuals who might be drawn to government in search of profit, Franklin proposed that executive officers receive "no salary, stipend, Fee or reward whatsoever for their service." Although the Constitutional Convention quietly tabled his proposal without debate, Franklin expressed the young republic's desperate need for executives motivated by public interest, not private gain.

Two hundred years later, the nation still depends on public executives motivated by public interest. Although the nation's survival is obviously no longer in doubt, it has never asked more from the federal government and its 6,000 full- and part-time presidential appointees. Those appointees sit at the top of the world's most powerful government, overseeing a vast inventory

of endeavors designed to improve the quality of life in the nation and the world, and assuring democratic accountability to both the president and the public. As the federal agenda has expanded to keep pace with public demand, so has the need for presidential appointees committed to the idea of citizen service.

Yet, imagine for a moment the worst possible process for inviting those appointees to serve. It would begin with a 60-page stack of forms asking repetitive and intrusive questions to cover every possible embarrassment, continue with a White House review that can linger on for weeks, a Federal Bureau of Investigation full-field investigation that leaves no stone unturned in the search for past offenses, a financial disclosure review that can require extensive financial remedies before the process moves ahead, and a Senate confirmation process filled with partisan acrimony, uncertainty, and delay. It would, as one former White House chief counsel remarked last fall, assume that all appointees were "innocent until nominated."

It would also be a process that would favor people already living in Washington and working in government, not to mention those with the money to hire outside legal and financial advisers to complete the forms.

The problem, of course, is that this abusive process is not imaginary at all. It is the status quo. According to a survey of 435 appointees from the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations conducted on behalf of The Presidential Appointee Initiative, delays in the process are increasing, confusion and embarrassment are growing, and frustration is rampant at every stage of the nomination and confirmation process. As we reported last spring, nearly half of the appointees interviewed said the Senate had made the process an ordeal, while a third said the same of the White House.¹

This report is not about the views of past appointees, however, but about the readiness to serve among today's civic and corporate leaders. Simply asked, would America's most talented leaders take a presidential appointment if offered? The answer is "yes and no." Although they are overwhelmingly favorable to the prospect of service, America's civic and corporate leaders have been watching the presidential appointments process decay over the past two decades. At least according to a random sample telephone survey of 580 top corporate, academic, nonprofit, think tank, lobbying, and state and local leaders

who have never served as presidential appointees, these leaders worry about what they have seen.²

Consider the following conclusions drawn from the survey:

★ ***America's civic and corporate leaders are ready to serve.*** The vast majority of the 100 *Fortune 500* executives, 100 college and university presidents, 85 nonprofit executives, 95 think tank scholars, 100 lobbyists, and 100 state and local government officials interviewed for this report think serving as a presidential appointee would be an honor, and four in 10 feel very favorable toward accepting an appointment.

★ ***Many of the nation's civic and corporate leaders know little or nothing about the presidential appointments system.*** Nearly half of all respondents said they knew little or nothing about the system. Lobbyists, think tank scholars, and university presidents were the most knowledgeable, nonprofit executives were in the middle, and corporate CEOs and state and local government officials were the least informed.

1 Paul C. Light and Virginia L. Thomas, "The Merit and Reputation of an Administration: Presidential Appointees on the Appointments Process," The Presidential Appointee Initiative, April 28, 2000.

2 See Appendix I for an overview of the survey, which was conducted on behalf of The Presidential Appointee Initiative by Princeton Survey Research Associates, a nationally recognized opinion research firm. The 580 respondents came from six samples: (1) *Fortune 500* executives, (2) presidents of the nation's top 250 colleges and universities as rated by *U.S. News & World Report*, (3) chief executive officers of the nation's 250 largest nonprofits measured by donations, (4) scholars at the nation's nine most-respected think tank scholars, (5) lobbyists at the nation's 117 largest lobbying firms as measured by revenues, and (6) senior state and local government officials.

- ★ ***The nation's civic and corporate leaders see great benefits in presidential service and minimize the drawbacks of taking an appointment.*** Almost 100 percent of the respondents said they would make valuable contacts through presidential service, eight out of 10 said a presidential appointment would increase their future leadership possibilities, and six out of 10 said they would increase their future earning power, while few said they would lose valuable contacts, risk losing promotions, or be unable to return to their careers.
- ★ ***One of the biggest barriers to service is Washington, D.C., itself.*** Most respondents view living in Washington as somewhat or much less favorable than their current residences, almost half said relocating their spouse to Washington would be somewhat or very difficult, and more than two-thirds said a presidential appointment would create much or some disruption in their personal lives.
- ★ ***America's civic and corporate leaders view the current process as unfair, confusing, and embarrassing.*** They are more likely than people who have actually

served as appointees to see the process as an ordeal at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, yet they underestimate the burdens of filling out the financial disclosure forms and meeting the federal government's conflict-of-interest laws.

- ★ ***The path to service is easily improved.*** Roughly 70 percent of respondents said higher pay, the ability to return to their previous jobs, and a simpler appointments process would make presidential service more attractive, while just one in three emphasized the need for improvements in the financial disclosure forms and conflict-of-interest laws. The lack of employer support appears to be a significant barrier to service for corporate, university, and non-profit CEOs.

In summary, the survey shows that the spirit of service is willing, but the process for entry is weak. To the extent the nation wants presidential appointees who represent the talent and wisdom that resides across the sectors covered in this report, it must address the persistent strains it places on appointees as they enter office. Posts of honor merit no less.



HISTORIES AND KNOWLEDGE OF SERVICE

The Founders clearly did not believe that the wisdom to govern resided in any single sector of their young nation. Some had started their careers as shop owners, others as lawyers and publishers, still others as farmers, importers, bankers, and university professors. Although most had served in state and local government before being sent to Philadelphia to draft the new constitution, the Founders wanted their new government to be led by the nation’s most talented citizens regardless of geography or profession.

Unfortunately, there is compelling evidence that the appointments process now favors individuals who already live and work in and near Washington, D.C. More than a third of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees interviewed for The Presidential Appointee Initiative last winter were already working somewhere in the federal government before their appointment, half lived in

the Washington area, and three-quarters had held a non-Senate-confirmed position earlier in their careers. As we wrote last April, “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.”

This bias toward candidates who already live in the Washington area is confirmed among the civic and corporate leaders interviewed for this survey. Although a fifth of the 580 leaders said they had been considered as a candidate or possible candidate for a presidential appointment at some point in their careers, these calls to service were uneven across the six groups. Think tank scholars and lobbyists were by far the most likely to have been considered for an appointment, while corporate CEOs and state and local government officials were the least likely to have gotten the call. (See Table 1.)

Table 1
PAST SERVICE

	Total	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Considered for an appointment	20%	13	24	19	32	29	4
Live in Washington	31	7	5	14	59	91	7
N	580	100	100	85	95	100	100

Table 2
KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENTS SYSTEM

	Total	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Great deal or somewhat	53%	27	58	46	66	84	33
Not too much or hardly at all	47	73	42	52	31	16	66
N	580	100	100	85	95	100	100

Percents do not add to 100 in some columns due to rounding, refusals by respondents to answer the question, or answers of don't know.

This pattern is explained in part by simple geography. Nearly six out of 10 think tank scholars and nine out of 10 lobbyists were living in Washington at the time of this second Presidential Appointee Initiative survey. Think tank scholars and lobbyists are more likely to be in a position to make themselves visible to an incoming administration through their work.

The pattern is also explained in part by knowledge of the appointments process. To the extent the current process favors those with at least some knowledge of the basic mechanics involved in making contact, filling out the forms, and enduring the confirmation process, it also favors think tank scholars and lobbyists, both of whom have an edge in understanding something about how to seek information and survive in the increasingly contentious world of presidential appointments. (See Table 2.)

Not surprisingly, think tank scholars and lobbyists were much more likely to form their impressions of the system based on personal experiences than were corporate and nonprofit CEOs, university presidents, and state and local government officials. Think tank scholars and lobbyists also were much more likely than any other groups to draw upon the experiences of friends and colleagues who had gone through the process, again if only because their friends and colleagues were equally well positioned to be invited to serve. As a result, corporate CEOs, university presidents, nonprofit executives, and

state and local government officials were largely dependent on the media for their impressions of the system. Sixty percent of corporate CEOs said the media had a great deal or some influence over their views of the appointments process, for example, while only 31 percent said their personal experiences exerted a similar impact.

This is not to suggest that think tank scholars and lobbyists were not influenced by the media. Indeed, 70 percent of the former and 65 percent of the latter reported that the media had a great deal or some influence in forming their impressions of the process. But this media experience was either tempered or reinforced by a level of personal experience that other respondents simply could not bring to bear.

Before turning to the readiness to serve among these 580 potential appointees, it is important to consider two additional facts about the history of service.

- ★ First, 47 percent of the respondents who had been considered for an appointment either turned it down (21 percent) or said they would have turned it down had the conversation moved to a formal offer (27 percent). The number of respondents involved here, while small in absolute terms, speaks to broader concerns among all potential appointees about how their nominations would be handled at both

ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. Although one cannot know how they felt before their first contact, these respondents suggest that entering the appointments process can turn enthusiasm into confusion, embarrassment, and a sense of unfairness in short order.

★ Second, most of these respondents had substantial histories of voluntary service in their communities. Eighty-one percent said they volunteered their time for professional organizations, and even more, 85 percent, gave time to charitable, community service, or educational organizations.



THE READINESS TO SERVE

The Founders did more than just hope for a government led by the nation’s most talented leaders. They also accepted the call to service themselves. Most had served in public office before traveling to Philadelphia for the Constitutional Convention, and most served after. Having argued so passionately for a republic led by citizens, the Founders willingly left their farms, small businesses, law firms, newspapers, and colleges to bring their new government into being. In doing so, they gave up both time with their families and income from their businesses for a difficult journey to a muddy, mosquito-infested city-to-be on the banks of the Potomac.

The question is whether today’s civic and corporate leaders are ready to make similar sacrifices for the good of their country. The Washington of the early 2000s may be a much more elegant place to live than the Washington of the 1790s, but presidential service is still expensive, espe-

cially in a brutally competitive global economy and an over-heated real estate market. If taking a year or two for presidential service was difficult in the 1790s, it may seem nearly impossible now. Yet, as the following pages suggest, most of the civic and corporate leaders interviewed for this report seemed ready to serve.

Impressions of Service

The simplest way to measure the readiness to serve is to ask respondents what first comes to mind when they think about the possibility of serving as a presidential appointee. As Table 3 suggests, the 580 respondents were overwhelmingly favorable in their responses. Despite all the problems identified by these respondents, there appears to be a substantial readiness to say “yes” when the president calls, particularly among state and local officials, lobbyists, and nonprofit CEOs.

Table 3
FEELINGS ABOUT SERVING AS A PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEE

	Total	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Very favorable	41%	35	32	46	31	46	56
Somewhat favorable	42	45	42	47	43	42	35
Somewhat unfavorable	12	12	22	7	15	7	9
Very unfavorable	4	5	2	0	11	4	0
N	580	100	100	85	95	100	100

The readiness to serve varies in other respects as well. Younger respondents were the most likely to have a favorable impression toward service, in part because they have greater flexibility to restart their careers once their service is over, and possibly because they believe they have more to gain from service in the form of making valuable contacts and increasing their future earning power. Thus, 93 percent of respondents in their thirties said they had very or somewhat favorable impressions of service, compared with 74 percent of respondents over the age of 60.

General views of government also had an influence on impressions of presidential service. Forty-nine percent of the respondents who said they trusted the federal government to do the right thing just about always or most of the time had a very favorable impression of presidential service, compared with 32 percent of those who trusted the federal government only some or none of the time. A similar pattern held regarding views of the federal government's power. Forty-four percent of respondents who said federal government programs should be maintained to deal with important problems had a very favorable impression of service, compared with 35 percent of those who felt government programs should be cut back to reduce the power of government.

None of these respondents were less favorable toward presidential service than those who had been considered for an appointment and either turned it down or said they would have turned it down. Only 24 percent of these respondents were very favorable toward presidential service, compared with 42 percent of respondents who were never considered for service.

Respondents who had been offered a position and said "no" offered a variety of explanations for their decisions. When asked what happened, some simply reported bad timing:

- ★ "It's just that I was at a critical point in my prior company's development and I would have been leaving a bit of work in the

change of the company which I thought was quite important and I would have left it undone."

- ★ "It didn't make sense to come in during the last six months of an administration except maybe to build a resume."
- ★ "I was early in my tenure as a president of a university and it just didn't seem like it was the right thing at the right time."

Others pointed to family or financial issues:

- ★ "I had to move 29 times in 32 years with the military. Now my family is settled and we are established."
- ★ "I had a daughter entering high school, and I knew the time would be taken away from her."
- ★ "I didn't necessarily want to go through that with three small children and what it would take in terms of having to work not just a 60-hour week but a hundred-hour week."
- ★ "The salary was substantially lower than what I was making, and Washington is significantly more expensive than where I am living now."

Still others emphasized problems in the appointments process:

- ★ "It became clear to me that this process was going to be very complex and very invasive of my privacy."
- ★ "I didn't want to go through the nomination and confirmation process which I knew would be deadly and would probably fail. The threat of having your family vilified was too much for me."
- ★ "Life is short and I didn't want to worry about the political intrigue."

Finally, some emphasized the lack of fit with the particular post:

- ★ "It was very late in the administration and it was a position that was less senior than I thought."

Table 4
DESCRIBING PRESIDENTIAL SERVICE
% Who Say Word Describes Service as a Presidential Appointee Very Well

	Total	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Enjoyable	28%	21	21	26	18	28	52
An honor	72	68	67	84	60	64	92
Too political	20	23	16	13	32	16	18
N	580	100	100	85	95	100	100

★ “The particular appointment I declined was not what I originally sought, and, frankly, I spent so much time talking back and forth with [the White House] that I finally decided it was too much of a hassle.”

Sources of Commitment

Just because respondents were favorable toward being considered for an appointment does not mean they thought presidential service would be easy. As noted below, they had few illusions about the costs of service, whether in personal and career disruptions or the lower salaries of public service. At the same time, however, they clearly recognized the honor involved in being asked to serve. (See Table 4.)

Besides the continued enthusiasm of state and local government officials toward presidential service, there were few significant differences among the six sectors. Although women and nonwhites were more likely to describe service as an honor than men and whites, there were few other differences among demographic groups. Instead, the major differences came on ideology, where those who favored maintaining government programs were more likely to describe service as enjoyable than those who favored cutbacks, and where those who expressed lower trust in government employees were more likely to describe service as too political than those with higher trust.

The Benefits and Costs of Service

There are two ways to measure what respondents thought about the benefits of service: (1) in comparison to other senior positions available outside government in the present, and (2) in the estimated value to each respondent in the future. By either measure, America’s civic and corporate leaders saw both benefits and costs in presidential service.

There is no question, for example, that these respondents saw presidential service as less lucrative financially. Just 5 percent saw appointees’ salaries as much or somewhat better than a senior position outside government, and only 16 percent saw government employment benefits such as retirement and health insurance as an improvement over similar positions outside government. (See Table 5.) Corporate CEOs and university presidents were the least likely to see any financial gains from a presidential appointment, while state and local officials were the most likely to perceive financial and benefit improvements.

At the same time, there is also no question that these potential appointees saw presidential service as the place to earn greater respect from friends, family, and neighbors, as well as the place to increase one’s ability to make a difference. (See Table 5.) State and local government officials, think tank scholars, and lobbyists all perceived significantly higher respect and a much greater

Table 5
BENEFITS OF SERVICE COMPARED WITH A SENIOR POST
OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

% Who Say Presidential Service Would Be Much or Somewhat Better

	Total	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Salary	5%	0	0	2	7	0	21
Benefits	16	9	8	12	22	16	27
Respect from friends, family, and neighbors	57	45	36	45	71	67	78
Ability to make a difference	66	58	53	45	70	85	85
N	580	100	100	85	95	100	100

ability to make a difference through a presidential appointment, suggesting that perhaps they view their current postings as less prestigious and certainly more distant from the action.

stressful, demanding jobs in the world, saw presidential service as somewhat or much more burdensome than other senior posts they might be offered outside government. (See Table 6.)

Unfortunately, even as they saw the benefits of public service, these respondents clearly understood that a presidential appointment would be much more disruptive to their personal lives than other positions. Even corporate CEOs and university presidents, who occupy some of the most

Luckily, the call to service involves a blend of both present and future considerations. When asked about the benefits of service for their futures, respondents clearly saw great returns on their investments. The vast majority thought a presidential appointment would give them valuable

Table 6
DISRUPTION TO PERSONAL LIFE COMPARED WITH A SENIOR POSITION
OUTSIDE OF GOVERNMENT

	Total	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Much more	32%	29	25	29	47	29	31
Somewhat more	37	36	37	35	33	43	37
About the same	28	28	35	34	17	27	30
Somewhat less	2	2	3	1	2	1	1
Much less	<1	2	0	0	0	0	1
N	580	100	100	85	95	100	100

Table 7
BENEFITS AND COSTS OF SERVICE
% Who Agree/Strongly Agree That a Presidential Appointment Would Have the Following Impacts

	Total	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
<i>Benefits</i>							
Make valuable contacts	97%	95	96	94	99	98	99
Increase future leadership possibilities	83	73	80	73	84	95	93
Increase earning power	61	46	41	46	72	80	79
<i>Costs</i>							
Lose valuable contacts	10%	14	10	11	8	11	5
Risk losing promotions or other career advancement	23	43	19	19	24	22	13
Prevent a return to career	21	32	30	18	15	8	20
N	580	100	100	85	95	100	100

contacts, open future leadership opportunities, and increase their earning power. At the same time, only a handful said presidential service would cause them to lose contacts, cost them promotions, or prevent a return to their careers after an appointment. (See Table 7.)

All three sets of chief executive officers (corporate, academic, and nonprofit) saw less potential for increased earning power from a presidential appointment. After all, they were already at the top of the salary scales in their industries. In contrast, think tank scholars, lobbyists, and state and local government officials all saw future gains in salary through an appointment, whether because they would be more valuable to their home institutions or because they would be able to move on to other positions elsewhere in their fields.

CEOs were also more likely to perceive greater costs of service, with corporate and academic chiefs significantly more likely than other respondents to worry about the inability to return to their careers after a presidential appointment, and corporate CEOs by far the most likely to report con-

cerns about losing promotions and other opportunities for career advancement. Unlike most think tanks, which have long traditions of welcoming former colleagues home after presidential service, the corporate and academic doors tend to close immediately behind their departing chiefs.

These benefits and costs were not viewed equally across all demographic or political groups. Women and nonwhites tend to see greater benefits from a presidential appointment, as well as lower costs. Thus, 84 percent of women and 87 percent of nonwhites strongly agree that they would gain valuable contacts from an appointment, compared with 62 percent of men and 65 percent of whites. In addition, respondents with lower trust in government were less likely than those with higher trust to believe they would make valuable contacts through their service as appointees.

Finally, the more respondents knew about the presidential appointments system, the lower they rated present and future benefits and the more they worried about present and future costs. Thus, 9 percent of respondents who knew little

Table 8
LIVING IN WASHINGTON, DC COMPARED WITH CURRENT RESIDENCE

	Total	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Much or somewhat more favorable	14%	14	20	14	5	22	12
About the same	29	31	32	30	28	11	27
Somewhat or much less favorable	56	55	47	56	67	67	59
N	402	93	95	73	39	9	93

or nothing about the presidential appointments system said salaries would be much or somewhat better than other comparable senior positions, compared with just 2 percent of those who knew a great deal or something. These patterns were exacerbated for respondents who had been considered for an appointment and either turned it down or said they would likely have declined it if the offer had been made. Just 2 percent of these respondents said a presidential appointment would generate much greater respect from their friends, family, and neighbors, while 20 percent strongly agreed that a presidential appointment would reduce their ability to return to their careers at the end of their service.

By comparison, 23 percent of respondents who had never been considered saw much greater respect through service, and only 7 percent strongly agreed that they would have trouble returning to their careers at the end of their appointments. Familiarity with the process may not breed contempt, but it most certainly creates a greater sensitivity to the costs of service.

Problems on the Potomac

There is one final drawback of service that affected all respondents regardless of sector, demographics, or political views: living in Washington, D.C. More than half of the 402 respondents who were living outside Washington at the time of the survey rated Washington as a much or somewhat less favorable place to live. (See Table 8.)

Part of the problem appears to reside in difficulties relocating one's spouse to Washington. Forty-five percent of these respondents said that doing so would be very or somewhat difficult, with little significant difference across the sectors; another 45 percent said that relocating their spouse would not be difficult, and 10 percent said the question did not apply. Unfortunately, there was not enough time in the survey to explore the general resistance to moving in more detail. As a result, one cannot know whether the problem resides in the cost of living, commuting times, the football team, public schools, or the city's more general reputation as a company town.



VIEWS OF THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

The Founders would not be upset about the current condition of appointee salaries, benefits, and moving costs. Nor would they be particularly concerned, one imagines, about the problems on the Potomac. The Founders clearly expected government service to be inconvenient and a sacrifice, lest elected and appointed officials become so enamored of their jobs that they would never go home. “I will not say that public life is the line for making a fortune,” Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1808 just before leaving the presidency. “But it furnishes a decent and honorable support, and places one’s children on good grounds for public favor.”

At the same time, the Founders would likely take offense at the problems that face appointees as they enter office. Although they clearly expected the first president to worry about the merit and reputation of the people who would serve as the new government’s first Cabinet officers, and most certainly invited the first Senate to ask hard questions in the confirmation process, they also saw presidential appointees as a linchpin for faithfully executing the laws. The notion that a new administration might need nine months or more to secure the confirmation of its Cabinet and sub-Cabinet would likely strike the Founders as a threat to the faithful execution of the laws. As Alexander Hamilton explained in the *Federalist Papers*, a “government ill-executed, no matter what it may be in theory, must be in practice a bad government.”

Unfortunately, there is plenty of evidence that today’s presidential appointments process is failing at its most important jobs. As The Presidential Appointee Initiative noted last spring in its survey of 435 Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administration appointees, the current process is both slow and confusing, and is more likely to leave nominees exhausted and embarrassed than energized and enthusiastic.

Rating the Process

Those views are echoed by America’s civic and corporate leaders. Like the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees interviewed last year, these leaders view the process as needlessly cumbersome and time-consuming. Like the past appointees, they also see the results of the effort as decidedly mixed. Only 14 percent of the 580 leaders interviewed for this report said that today’s presidential appointees represent the best and the brightest America has to offer, while 75 percent said they are a mixed lot, views that are nearly identical to past appointees.

These corporate and civic leaders also have sharply negative views of the current process. When asked what words describe the process, they were uniformly harsh. Half or more said the words “confusing,” “embarrassing,” or “a necessary evil” fit the current process either very or somewhat well, compared with just 43 percent who said “fair” was an accurate description. (See Table 9.)

Table 9
DESCRIBING THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS
% Who Say Word Describes the Presidential Appointments Process
Very or Somewhat Well

	Total	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Fair	43%	35	50	41	31	45	58
Confusing	59	64	59	53	66	57	55
A necessary evil	57	59	59	48	59	64	50
Embarrassing	51	52	56	45	58	56	39
N	580	100	100	85	95	100	100

Looking just at those who said each term described the process very well, corporate leaders were significantly more likely to describe the appointments process as confusing. Thirty percent of the *Fortune 500* CEOs said the word “confusing” described the process very well, compared with just 15 percent of university presidents, and 13 percent of state and local officials.

Corporate CEOs were also significantly more likely to say that the words “embarrassing” and “a necessary evil” described the process very well, perhaps acknowledging that their financial holdings do create the need for tighter review that can create substantial embarrassment as the media cull through the required financial disclosure forms.

It is important to note that these respondents were significantly more negative toward the current process than those who served in the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations. Thus, 71 percent of past appointees described the process as fair, while just 47 percent described it as a neces-

sary evil, 40 percent as confusing, and 23 percent as embarrassing. At least for past appointees, familiarity breeds a certain level of understanding and acceptance that is harder to embrace from afar.

As noted in the final section of this report, perceptions of the process as unfair are a significant predictor of a reluctance to serve. At least according to advanced statistical analysis, these potential appointees appear willing to suffer through a process that is both confusing and embarrassing, but not one that they believe is fundamentally unfair.

The sample of civic and corporate leaders was also much more negative than past appointees toward both the White House and Senate in making the process an ordeal. Given their careers in public service, and, therefore, their understanding of politics, state and local government officials emerge as the most accepting of the White House and Senate process. (See Table 10.)

Table 10
HOW THE WHITE HOUSE AND SENATE PROCESS PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES
% Who Say Phrase Describes the Presidential Appointments Process

	Very or Somewhat Well						
	Total	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
<i>White House</i>							
Acts reasonably and appropriately	48%	40	48	59	38	37	67
Is too demanding, making process an ordeal	42	50	43	32	51	54	23
<i>Senate</i>							
Acts reasonably and appropriately	28%	25	27	22	23	33	36
Is too demanding, making process an ordeal	66	70	68	68	73	62	56
N	580	100	100	85	95	100	100

Conservatives and moderates were more likely than liberals to describe the current process as fair (53 percent for conservatives, 44 percent for moderates, and 34 percent for liberals), less likely to describe it as embarrassing (44 percent, 50 percent, and 57 percent respectively), and significantly more likely to describe the Senate as acting reasonably and appropriately toward nominees (40 percent, 29 percent, and 19 percent). All ideological groups were in agreement on problems at the White House, however, where four in 10 described the handling as too demanding.

Once again, the corporate and civic leaders were much less hopeful about the process than past appointees. Only 30 percent of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees interviewed last year described the White House process as an ordeal, while 46 percent described the Senate process as such. Both numbers were consider-

ably lower than among the civic and corporate leaders interviewed for this second Presidential Appointee Initiative study, which were 42 percent and 66 percent respectively.

Rating the Forms

Despite their dim views of the political process for entering office, the civic and corporate leaders were much less likely than actual appointees to rate the financial disclosure process as a burden. The vast majority do not believe it would be difficult to collect and report the information needed to complete the financial disclosure forms required for presidential appointments, relatively few believe the conflict-of-interest laws would have much of an impact, and the vast majority view the financial disclosure requirements and conflict-of-interest laws as reasonable measures. (See Table 11.)

Table 11
THE FORMS

	Total	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Filling out the financial disclosure forms would not be difficult (nos. 1 and 2 on a 5-pt. scale)	81%	84	85	89	68	65	94
Conflict-of-interest laws would have little or no impact at all (nos. 1 and 2 on a 5-pt. scale)	63	41	67	81	77	34	83
Financial disclosure requirements and conflict-of-interest laws are reasonable measures (nos. 4 and 5 on a 5-pt. scale)	57	48	60	71	59	34	71
N	572	97	99	83	94	99	100

Percentages are based on those aware of the conflict-of-interest laws.

The think tank scholars and lobbyists clearly understand enough about the disclosure forms to recognize the burdens involved, while the corporate CEOs sense the potential problems embedded in disclosing their financial holdings. State and local officials were unconcerned, one suspects, in part because they are governed by similar statutes that they already know well and have been spared the problems involved in the acquisition of great wealth.

As a group, these respondents clearly underestimate the difficulties embedded in completing the forms. By comparison, only 45 percent of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton appointees had little or no difficulty collecting the information for the forms, and only 41 percent viewed the overall disclosure process as being somewhat or mostly reasonable.

Mistaken Impressions

America's civic and corporate leaders err in two ways as they imagine the appointments process.

On the one hand, they clearly overestimate the unfairness, embarrassment, confusion, and ordeal of the appointments process, perhaps because so many depend on the views of others for information on how the process works. On the other, they underestimate the burdens of filling out the financial disclosure forms and meeting the federal government's conflict-of-interest laws, if only because so few have direct experience actually tackling the dense thicket of forms required to enter the appointments process.

The problem, of course, is that the negative views of the process may lead many of the nation's most talented leaders to exit the process even before it begins. Although the evidence presented here suggests the value of streamlining the disclosure forms and removing unnecessary bureaucracy, it also speaks to the need for an aggressive campaign to reduce the sense of unfairness and ordeal among potential appointees.



PATHS TO IMPROVEMENT

Once they remind potential appointees of the honor and positive impacts of public service, there is only so much the president and Congress can do to improve the odds that today's civic and corporate leaders will accept the call to service. They cannot move Washington, D.C., to, say, San Francisco, for example, and most certainly should not eliminate the constitutional requirements for Senate confirmation or the conflict-of-interest protections embedded in federal statutes.

This is not to suggest that Congress and the president are powerless to alter the odds of acceptance in the future. To the contrary, this survey suggests substantial opportunities for reform. Asked what might make a full-time position as a presidential appointee seem more attractive, respondents offered a mix of suggestions. (See Table 12.)

Table 12

IMPACT OF VARIOUS REFORM MEASURES ON CONSIDERING AN APPOINTMENT
% Who Say Change Would Make a Presidential Appointment Somewhat or Much More Attractive

	Total	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Better paid	71%	57	69	75	72	77	74
Could return to previous job	67	68	70	77	64	70	56
Simplify the process	73	80	74	72	78	79	58
Financial disclosure requirements easier to meet	35	47	33	24	34	46	23
Conflict-of-interest laws easier to meet	36	53	30	18	30	62	20
N	580	100	100	85	95	100	100

Where one stands on the five options for reform depends in part on the sector in which a potential appointee sits. Looking just at which changes would make a presidential appointment much more attractive, lobbyists were the most supportive of higher pay (41 percent said the change would make a presidential appointment much more attractive, compared with just 21 percent of corporate CEOs, 22 percent of university presidents and state and local officials, and 23 percent of think tank scholars), while nonprofit executives were the most supportive of return rights to their previous careers (46 percent said that option would make an appointment much more attractive, compared with just 26 percent of state and local government officials, and 29 percent of lobbyists).

Where one stands also depends in part on ideology and demographics. Conservatives were

more likely than moderates or liberals to favor easier financial disclosure and conflict-of-interest laws, while higher pay was an added plus for women and younger potential appointees, and return rights to previous careers was an advantage for women and middle-aged respondents. Thirty-seven percent of women said that higher pay would make a presidential appointment much more attractive, for example, compared with 25 percent of men.

Congress and the president are not the only actors who can help appointees, however. Given earlier concerns about returning to previous careers, employers have a significant role in making life easier for presidential appointees. Unfortunately, this survey suggests that employers may be reducing the odds of acceptance, particularly by not giving strong encouragement to their employees when the president calls. (See Table 13.)

Table 13
EMPLOYER SUPPORT FOR TAKING AN APPOINTMENT

	Total	Fortune 500	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEO	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Employer would strongly or somewhat encourage respondent to take a full-time presidential appointment	51%	41	30	46	75	65	52
Employer would strongly or somewhat encourage respondent to take a part-time presidential appointment	80	74	82	88	80	82	77
Respondent would strongly or somewhat support a key employee taking a full-time presidential appointment	93	92	91	95	90	96	96
Respondent would ensure that employee could return at same or higher level after appointment	56	56	54	44	62	62	56
N	580	100	100	85	95	100	100

These results suggest serious barriers to presidential service in the upper-reaches of the corporate, academic, and nonprofit sectors. The problem is particularly stark when one looks at strong encouragement, or the absence thereof. Only 10 percent of the corporate and university CEOs and 18 percent of the nonprofit CEOs interviewed for this report said their employers would strongly encourage them to take a full-time presidential appointment, compared with 44 percent of think tank scholars.

Luckily, these respondents do not visit this lack of encouragement on their own employees. Most would support their own employees who consider a presidential appointment, and surprisingly high numbers would make sure that an employee could return at the same or higher level after a tour of service.



THE CASE FOR SERVICE

Presidents can find ample cause for optimism as they review the findings of this report. America's civic and corporate leaders not only have a favorable view of service, they appear willing to accept the lower salaries and benefits, lost promotions and career uncertainty that so often come with a presidential appointment.

Given the costs of service outlined in this report, the question is how presidents can make the most persuasive case for service to America's civic and corporate leaders. Advanced statistical analysis of the survey results offers three simple answers.³

First, presidents should talk incessantly about the impact of presidential appointees on the life of the nation. Doing so emphasizes one of the great advantages of public versus private or non-profit service: It enhances the ability of one person to make a very large difference, indeed.

Second, presidents should constantly remind appointees of the honor involved in service to one's country. Old fashioned though it may seem, patriotism and the love of country are still powerful motivators for public service.

Third, presidents and the U.S. Senate should reassure candidates that they will do everything possible to ensure that the appointments process is both reasonable and fair, including visible, substantial reform in how the process works. These respondents are willing to accept a certain amount of confusion and embarrassment en route to service, but not unfairness.

Presidential service has other advantages, of course, not the least of which is the ability to make valuable contacts, enhance future earnings, and strengthen leadership prospects. Its most significant selling point rests in Benjamin Franklin's phrase. Presidential appointments are, indeed, posts of honor in which individual citizens can make a difference for their country. Presidents should never stop reminding the citizenry of that fact.

³ Regression analysis of the survey shows that the ability to make a difference, views of presidential service as an honor, and impressions of the appointments process as fair are significant predictors of a respondent's favorability toward the idea of serving as a presidential appointee. No other variables that were tested come close to this predictive power, including gender, age, fears of losing future promotions, ideology, salary, trust in government, or knowledge of the process.



APPENDIX I: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This report is based on a telephone survey of 580 leaders in business, academia, the nonprofit sector and government, conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA). The survey resulted in interviews with 100 *Fortune 500* executives, 100 university presidents, 85 nonprofit CEOs, 95 think tank scholars, 100 lobbyists and 100 state and local government officials. Interviewing was conducted July 18 through October 18, 2000. For results based on any of the samples of 95 or 100, the margin of error is ± 10 . For the sample of 85 nonprofit CEOs, the margin of error is ± 11 .

Interviews were conducted by executive interviewers trained in the questionnaire by PSRA. Respondents were sent advance letters explaining the purpose of the study and encouraging their participation. Interviewers made up to 20 calls to each sampled respondent to attempt to complete an interview. Interviewers were available to conduct interviews during the regular workday or in the evening and on weekends as necessary. Interviewers accommodated appointments. In addition, respondents were given an 800 number to call to schedule an appointment or complete an interview at their convenience.

At the start of each interview PSRA determined that the respondent had not served as a presidential appointee. Those who had served were not interviewed.

Fortune 500 Executives

The *Fortune 500* executives sample includes executives at *Fortune 500* corporations, as defined by the 2000 *Fortune* ranking. For each *Fortune 500* firm, PSRA identified names of top management by searching the *Leadership Directory*. Top management was defined as the following titles: chief executive officer, chief operating officer, chief financial officer, chairperson, vice chairperson, president, vice president. From the list of top managers, roughly two executives were sampled for each firm.

To achieve 100 completed interviews, PSRA sampled 973 *Fortune 500* executives, of whom 927 were found to be eligible for the survey. Of these, 330 refused to be interviewed. The remainder were unable to be contacted to complete an interview by the time the quota of 100 completes was reached.

University Presidents

The sample of university presidents was drawn from the nation's top colleges and universities, as defined by the 2000 *U.S. News & World Report* college and university rankings. *U.S. News* publishes two separate rankings: one of national schools and another of liberal arts schools. PSRA sampled presidents at the top 200 national schools and top 50 liberal arts schools.

To achieve 100 completed interviews, PSRA sampled 250 university presidents, of whom 229 were found to be eligible. Of these, 70 refused.

Nonprofit CEOs

The nonprofit CEOs sample includes chief executive officers at the nation's top nonprofit organizations, as defined by the *Chronicle of Philanthropy's* 1999 Philanthropy 400 ranking, which orders charitable groups by income raised. This list includes colleges and universities, but these were excluded from our sample (as they overlap with the university presidents sample). Of the 400 nonprofit organizations ranked, roughly 150 are colleges and universities, leaving 250 to be sampled for our study.

To achieve 85 completed interviews, PSRA sampled 245 nonprofit CEOs, of whom 230 were found to be eligible to participate. Of these, 62 refused.

Think Tank Scholars

The think tank sample includes scholars at nine of the nation's top think tanks: American Enterprise Institute, Brookings Institution, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, CATO Institute, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Council on Foreign Relations, Heritage Foundation and RAND. These nine organizations were chosen because they were ranked highest on impact and credibility in a 1998 survey of journalists (*Perceptions of Think Tanks in American Politics* by Andrew Rich). At each think tank, PSRA sampled names from the organization's directory of scholars. Scholars were sampled from the nine think tanks proportional to the number of scholars listed for each organization.

To achieve 95 completed interviews, PSRA sampled 247 think tank scholars, of whom 175 were found to be eligible to participate. Of these, 29 refused.

Lobbyists

The lobbyists sample includes executives at the nation's top lobbying firms, as defined by the Center for Responsive Politics 1999 *Influence, Inc.* ranking of the 117 lobbying firms with the greatest revenues. For each firm, PSRA identified names of top management by searching the *Leadership Directory*. Top management was defined as the following titles: chairperson, vice chairperson, president, vice president, director, principal, member, counsel, partner, lobbyist. From the list of top managers, roughly two executives were sampled for each firm.

To achieve 100 completed interviews, PSRA sampled 250 lobbyists, of whom 218 were found to be eligible. Of these, 34 refused to participate.

State and Local Government Officials

The sample of state and government officials includes selected top officials in state, county and city government. PSRA included economic development, education, environmental, health, public works and social services directors at the state, county and city levels. PSRA also included state attorneys general. These officials were sampled from all 50 states, the top 50 counties and top 75 cities, as listed in *Governing* magazine's state and local government directory.

To achieve 100 completed interviews, PSRA sampled 250 local government officials, of whom 238 were found to be eligible. Of these, 36 refused to participate.



APPENDIX II TOPLINE RESULTS

Why Don't More of the 'Best and Brightest' Consider Government Service?

Prepared by Princeton Survey Research Associates for The Presidential Appointee Initiative, a project of the Brookings Institution funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts

Fortune 500 Executives n=100, University Presidents n=100, Nonprofit CEOs n=85, Think Tank Scholars n=95, Lobbyists n=100, Government Officials n=100

Interviewing July 18 – Oct. 18, 2000

Margin of error ±10 for results based on samples of 95 or 100; ±11 for the sample of 85 nonprofit CEOs⁴

10.23.2000

Question 1 was used to screen out respondents who had already served as a presidential appointee.

Q2 Have you ever been considered as a candidate or possible candidate for any type of presidential appointment?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Yes	13%	24	19	32	29	4
No	84	65	80	64	69	94
Don't know	3	11	1	4	2	2
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0

⁴ Because results are rounded they may not total exactly 100.

Q3 Which one of the following best describes what happened?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
You were offered an appointment, but you declined it	23%	17	31	17	24	0
You were considered as a candidate but not offered a position	38	33	25	20	28	25
You were considered as a possible candidate, but it was not pursued further	31	38	19	50	38	50
Other	8	13	25	13	10	25
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0
Based on those who have been considered for an appointment, n=	13	24	16	30	29	4

Q4 What administration would the appointment have been with?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Clinton	38%	50	56	67	62	100
Bush	15	17	13	13	24	0
Reagan	8	13	6	13	14	0
Carter	15	13	13	0	0	0
Ford	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nixon	8	4	6	3	0	0
Other	8	0	0	3	0	0
Don't know	8	4	6	0	0	0
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0
Based on those who have been considered for an appointment, n=	13	24	16	30	29	4

Q5 If you had been offered the appointment, would you have taken it, or would you have said no? (If maybe) Is it more likely you would have accepted or declined?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Would have taken it	20%	35	27	56	55	75
Would have said no	40	30	55	20	32	25
Maybe/More likely would have accepted	10	10	18	16	5	0
Maybe/More likely would have declined	0	10	0	0	0	0
Don't know	30	15	0	8	9	0
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0
Based on those who have been considered for an appointment, n=	10	20	11	25	22	4

Q6 What is the main reason you (declined/would have declined) the appointment?

Responses to this open-ended question were transcribed for further analysis.

Q7 Overall, how much would you say you know about the presidential appointee system, such as how one becomes an appointee, what kinds of positions are available and what it is like to serve as a presidential appointee in the federal government? Would you say you know a great deal, somewhat, not too much or hardly anything at all?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Great deal	4%	14	11	19	36	4
Somewhat	23	44	35	47	48	29
Not too much	27	29	28	24	11	36
Hardly anything at all	46	13	24	7	5	30
Don't know	0	0	0	1	0	0
Refused	0	0	2	1	0	1

Q8 How much influence (Insert) had on your overall impression of the presidential appointee system? Would you say this has had a great deal, some, not too much or no influence at all? Or (haven't you had any personal experiences with/don't you know anyone who has had experiences with/haven't you heard or read anything about) the presidential appointee system?

	Great Deal	Somewhat	Not too much	No influence at all	No experience	Don't know	Refused
<i>a. have your personal experiences</i>							
Fortune 500 Execs	8%	23	14	7	47	1	0
Univ Pres	15	31	21	6	25	2	0
Nonprofit CEOs	15	24	27	11	22	1	0
Think Tank Scholars	33	20	14	6	27	0	0
Lobbyists	39	38	9	2	12	0	0
Govt Officials	11	31	9	5	44	0	0
<i>b. have experiences of friends and colleagues</i>							
Fortune 500 Execs	16%	39	12	11	21	1	0
Univ Pres	28	47	16	5	4	0	0
Nonprofit CEOs	28	41	14	6	9	1	0
Think Tank Scholars	40	43	13	2	1	1	0
Lobbyists	41	49	8	1	1	0	0
Govt Officials	15	33	22	12	18	0	0
<i>c. has what you heard or read in the media</i>							
Fortune 500 Execs	15%	45	21	12	7	0	0
Univ Pres	13	57	21	6	3	0	0
Nonprofit CEOs	13	47	24	15	1	0	0
Think Tank Scholars	18	52	20	7	2	1	0
Lobbyists	11	54	29	6	0	0	0
Govt Officials	15	38	31	11	5	0	0

As you may know, there are several different kinds of presidential appointments, including full-time positions in Washington, DC, as well as memberships on advisory boards and commissions that only require occasional visits to Washington. For the next few questions, I would like you to imagine that you were just asked to take a full-time position as a presidential appointee in Washington, DC, serving a president you admire.

Q9 What first comes to mind when you think about the possibility of serving as a presidential appointee? Is your initial impression very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Very favorable	35%	32	46	31	46	56
Somewhat favorable	45	42	47	43	42	35
Somewhat unfavorable	12	22	7	15	7	9
Very unfavorable	5	2	0	11	4	0
Don't know	2	2	0	1	1	0
Refused	1	0	0	0	0	0

Q10 How well does (Insert) describe what you think it would be like to be a presidential appointee? Very well, somewhat, not too well or not at all?

	Very well	Somewhat well	Not too well	Not at all	Don't know	Refused
<i>a. enjoyable</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	21%	56	15	5	3	0
Univ Pres	21	50	22	4	3	0
Nonprofit CEOs	26	49	21	4	0	0
Think Tank Scholars	18	49	18	12	3	0
Lobbyists	28	58	12	2	0	0
Govt Officials	52	38	8	2	0	0
<i>b. an honor</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	68%	25	4	2	0	1
Univ Pres	67	31	1	1	0	0
Nonprofit CEOs	84	14	0	1	1	0
Think Tank Scholars	60	34	4	2	0	0
Lobbyists	64	35	0	1	0	0
Govt Officials.	92	7	0	0	1	0
<i>c. too political</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	23%	40	23	10	3	1
Univ Pres	16	41	19	18	5	1
Nonprofit CEOs	13	44	24	14	4	2
Think Tank Scholars	32	39	15	14	1	0
Lobbyists	16	40	22	19	3	0
Govt Officials	18	46	14	20	2	0

Q11 Compared with a senior position outside government, do you think the (Insert) as a presidential appointee would be much better, somewhat better, about the same, somewhat poorer or much poorer?

	Much better	Somewhat better	About the same	Somewhat poorer	Much poorer	Don't know	Refused
<i>a. salary</i>							
Fortune 500 Execs	0%	0	2	18	72	8	0
Univ Pres	0	0	6	39	50	5	0
Nonprofit CEOs	1	1	6	49	33	9	0
Think Tank Scholars	2	5	26	42	18	6	0
Lobbyists	0	0	2	30	67	0	1
Govt Officials	5	16	23	30	8	18	0
<i>b. benefits</i>							
Fortune 500 Execs	2%	7	22	24	39	6	0
Univ Pres	1	7	26	32	27	7	0
Nonprofit CEOs	5	7	42	27	15	4	0
Think Tank Scholars	3	19	40	25	7	4	1
Lobbyists	5	11	31	27	23	2	1
Govt Officials	8	19	44	15	4	9	1
<i>c. respect you would receive from your friends, family and neighbors</i>							
Fortune 500 Execs	24%	21	43	8	3	0	1
Univ Pres	9	27	56	6	0	2	0
Nonprofit CEOs	14	31	48	6	0	0	1
Think Tank Scholars	26	44	26	2	0	1	0
Lobbyists	10	57	31	2	0	0	0
Govt Officials	36	42	21	1	0	0	0
<i>d. ability to make a difference through your work</i>							
Fortune 500 Execs	20%	38	14	19	7	2	0
Univ Pres	20	33	26	13	3	4	1
Nonprofit CEOs	11	34	33	15	2	4	1
Think Tank Scholars	22	47	14	13	2	1	1
Lobbyists	36	49	11	3	0	1	0
Govt Officials	44	41	10	2	1	2	0

Q12 Compared with senior posts that you might be offered outside government, do you think serving as a presidential appointee would be much more disruptive to your personal life, somewhat more, about the same, somewhat less or much less disruptive?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Much more	29%	25	29	47	29	31
Somewhat more	36	37	35	33	43	37
About the same	28	35	34	17	27	30
Somewhat less	2	3	1	2	1	1
Much less	2	0	0	0	0	1
Don't know	3	0	0	1	0	0
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0

Q13 For each of the following statements about the impact of serving as a presidential appointee please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Refused
<i>a. I would make valuable contacts</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	62%	33	3	2	0	0
Univ Pres	58	38	1	0	2	1
Nonprofit CEOs	69	25	6	0	0	0
Think Tank Scholars	62	37	1	0	0	0
Lobbyists	65	33	2	0	0	0
Govt Officials	80	19	1	0	0	0
<i>b. I would risk losing promotions or other career advancements</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	18%	25	25	29	2	1
Univ Pres	4	15	41	38	1	1
Nonprofit CEOs	4	15	32	44	5	1
Think Tank Scholars	4	20	29	42	3	1
Lobbyists	4	18	33	45	0	0
Govt Officials	1	12	44	42	1	0
<i>c. I would increase my earning power in future jobs outside government</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	9%	37	23	26	4	1
Univ Pres	6	35	39	11	8	1
Nonprofit CEOs	9	36	31	18	5	1
Think Tank Scholars	14	58	22	2	4	0
Lobbyists	15	65	17	1	1	1
Govt Officials	29	50	17	1	3	0
<i>d. I would be unable to return to my career after the appointment ended</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	15%	17	28	38	1	1
Univ Pres	10	20	25	41	1	3
Nonprofit CEOs	7	11	21	59	2	0
Think Tank Scholars	3	12	23	60	1	1
Lobbyists	5	3	19	71	1	1
Govt Officials	5	15	26	53	0	1
<i>e. I would be more attractive for future leadership posts in my profession</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	24%	49	14	11	1	1
Univ Pres	25	55	13	1	4	2
Nonprofit CEOs	29	44	20	4	2	1
Think Tank Scholars	40	44	12	0	4	0
Lobbyists	37	58	4	1	0	0
Govt Officials	57	36	7	0	0	0
<i>f. I would lose valuable contacts</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	3%	11	32	54	0	0
Univ Pres	3	7	31	57	1	1
Nonprofit CEOs	1	9	29	60	0	0
Think Tank Scholars	0	8	36	56	0	0
Lobbyists	1	10	25	64	0	0
Govt Officials	1	4	33	62	0	0

Q14 Given what you know about the nomination and confirmation process for presidential appointees, how well do you think (Insert) describes the process?

	Very well	Somewhat well	Not too well	Not well at all	Don't know	Refused
<i>a. fair</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	4%	31	35	18	11	1
Univ Pres	5	45	33	14	2	1
Nonprofit CEOs	6	35	35	12	11	1
Think Tank Scholars	2	28	42	21	5	1
Lobbyists	4	41	35	19	1	0
Govt Officials	8	50	23	11	8	0
<i>b. confusing</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	30%	34	21	7	8	0
Univ Pres	15	44	27	11	3	0
Nonprofit CEOs	16	36	21	6	8	1
Think Tank Scholars	23	43	22	8	3	0
Lobbyists	25	32	26	16	1	0
Govt Officials	13	42	30	9	6	0
<i>c. a "necessary evil"</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	25%	34	21	15	5	0
Univ Pres	19	40	18	21	2	0
Nonprofit CEOs	16	32	16	26	8	1
Think Tank Scholars	13	46	23	17	0	1
Lobbyists	18	46	19	16	1	0
Govt Officials	14	36	19	29	2	0
<i>d. embarrassing</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	19%	33	19	22	7	0
Univ Pres	11	45	28	13	3	0
Nonprofit CEOs	12	33	26	21	7	1
Think Tank Scholars	16	42	27	13	2	0
Lobbyists	10	46	29	13	1	1
Govt Officials	9	30	28	30	3	0

Q15 As you may know, the White House processes potential presidential nominees. Some people think the White House 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. From what you know, which statement do you agree with more?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Acts reasonably and appropriately	40%	48	59	38	37	67
Is too demanding, making process an ordeal	50	43	32	51	54	23
Don't know	10	9	9	11	7	10
Refused	0	0	0	1	2	0

Q16 The Senate is also sometimes involved in the presidential nomination process. Based on what you know, does the Senate 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?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Acts reasonably and appropriately	25%	27	22	23	33	36
Is too demanding, making process an ordeal	70	68	68	73	62	56
Don't know	5	4	7	4	5	7
Refused	0	1	2	0	0	1

Q17 Candidates for presidential appointments are required to file financial disclosure forms that report all their assets by dollar categories. If you were a candidate for a presidential appointment, on a 1 to 5 scale, how difficult do you think it would be for you to collect and report the information necessary to complete the financial disclosure forms? 1 means not difficult at all, and 5 means very difficult.

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
1, Not difficult at all	61%	60	66	39	42	71
2	23	25	24	29	23	23
3	7	9	7	16	18	6
4	3	6	1	11	12	0
5, Very difficult	5	0	2	5	5	0
Don't know	1	0	0	0	0	0
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0

Q18 Presidential appointees are bound by conflict of interest laws that may require appointees to divest certain financial holdings prior to taking the appointment as well as place restrictions on the kind of work they can do after they leave office. If you were a candidate for a presidential appointment, on a 1 to 5 scale, how much of a financial impact would these laws have on you personally? 1 means no impact at all and 5 means great deal of impact.

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
1, No impact at all	14%	33	42	42	12	57
2	27	34	39	35	22	26
3	32	19	12	15	29	12
4	16	7	5	6	25	4
5, Great deal of impact	9	6	0	1	11	1
Don't know	1	1	2	1	1	0
Refused	1	0	0	0	0	0

Q19 Thinking generally about the financial disclosure requirements and conflict-of-interest laws, on a 1 to 5 scale, what is your view of them? 1 means the current requirements go too far, and 5 means the current requirements are reasonable measures to protect the public interest.

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
1, Go to far	6%	4	0	10	10	2
2	19	7	10	13	29	7
3	27	29	16	16	21	20
4	24	35	35	34	13	22
5, Reasonable measures	25	24	36	24	21	49
Don't know	0	0	4	3	4	0
Refused	0	0	0	0	1	0
Based on those aware of financial disclosure forms and conflict of interest laws, n=	97	99	83	94	99	100

Q20 Question 20 was used to identify respondents who lived in Washington at the time of the survey.

Q21 Compared with where you currently live, would the Washington area be a much more favorable place for you and your family to live, somewhat more favorable, about the same, somewhat less favorable or much less favorable?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Much more favorable	2%	2	1	0	0	5
Somewhat more favorable	12	18	12	5	22	6
About the same	31	32	30	28	11	27
Somewhat less favorable	32	35	36	36	56	35
Much less favorable	23	13	21	31	11	24
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	2
Refused	0	1	0	0	0	0
Based on those who do not live in the DC area, n=	93	95	73	39	9	93

Q22 How easy or difficult would it be for your spouse or partner to relocate to the Washington area? Very easy, somewhat easy, somewhat difficult or very difficult? Or doesn't this apply to you?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Very easy	15%	19	18	3	33	15
Somewhat easy	33	26	27	23	33	31
Somewhat difficult	26	32	32	23	22	34
Very difficult	20	12	11	33	11	10
Doesn't apply	5	12	12	18	0	10
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0
Based on those who do not live in the DC area, n=	93	95	73	39	9	93

Q23 For each of the following, please tell me if it would make taking a full-time position as a presidential appointee seem much more attractive to you, somewhat more attractive or not really have an effect.

	Much more attractive	Somewhat more attractive	No effect	Don't know	Refused
<i>a. if the position paid better</i>					
Fortune 500 Execs	21%	36	42	0	1
Univ Pres	22	47	31	0	0
Nonprofit CEOs	33	42	24	1	0
Think Tank Scholars	23	48	24	4	0
Lobbyists	41	36	23	0	0
Govt Officials	22	52	24	2	0
<i>b. if you could return to the job you left at the same level or higher</i>					
Fortune 500 Execs	34%	34	32	0	0
Univ Pres	35	35	27	0	3
Nonprofit CEOs	46	31	24	0	0
Think Tank Scholars	34	31	36	0	0
Lobbyists	29	41	29	1	0
Govt Officials	26	30	43	0	1
<i>c. if the process of being appointed were simpler</i>					
Fortune 500 Execs	33%	47	19	1	0
Univ Pres	26	48	25	1	0
Nonprofit CEOs	31	41	27	1	0
Think Tank Scholars	29	48	20	2	0
Lobbyists	33	46	21	0	0
Govt Officials	24	34	38	4	0
<i>d. if the financial disclosure requirements were easier to meet</i>					
Fortune 500 Execs	11%	36	53	0	0
Univ Pres	4	29	67	0	0
Nonprofit CEOs	5	19	76	0	0
Think Tank Scholars	9	24	66	0	0
Lobbyists	15	31	54	0	0
Govt Officials	3	20	77	0	0
<i>e. if the conflict-of-interest laws were easier to meet</i>					
Fortune 500 Execs	14%	39	47	0	0
Univ Pres	9	21	69	1	0
Nonprofit CEOs	5	13	82	0	0
Think Tank Scholars	9	20	71	0	0
Lobbyists	22	40	38	0	0
Govt Officials	5	15	80	0	0

Q24 If you were offered a full-time presidential appointment, do you think your employer would strongly encourage you to take it, somewhat encourage, somewhat discourage or strongly discourage you? Or would your employer neither encourage nor discourage you?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Strongly encourage	10%	10	18	44	36	33
Somewhat encourage	31	20	28	31	29	19
Somewhat discourage	16	25	15	4	8	6
Strongly discourage	13	19	7	1	4	1
Neither encourage or discourage	28	24	26	15	18	37
Don't know	2	2	6	4	2	3
Refused	0	0	0	1	3	1

We have been talking about presidential appointments that are full-time positions. But some appointments are part-time volunteer positions, for example, memberships on advisory boards and commissions, that only require occasional visits to Washington.

Q25 If you were offered a part-time volunteer appointment on a presidential commission, would you consider taking it, or would you say no? (If would consider) How seriously would you consider it? Very seriously, somewhat seriously or not too seriously?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Would consider very seriously	71%	89	86	78	82	89
Would consider somewhat seriously	23	7	12	16	13	9
Would consider not too seriously	1	0	0	1	0	0
Would say no	2	2	0	4	3	1
Don't know	1	2	2	1	1	1
Refused	2	0	0	0	1	0

Q26 If you were offered a part-time volunteer appointment on a commission, do you think your employer would strongly encourage you to take it, somewhat encourage, somewhat discourage or strongly discourage you? Or would your employer neither encourage nor discourage you?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Strongly encourage	25%	48	60	48	54	53
Somewhat encourage	49	34	28	32	28	24
Somewhat discourage	5	1	0	2	0	3
Strongly discourage	2	0	1	1	1	1
Neither encourage or discourage	17	16	8	13	13	12
Don't know	2	1	2	3	1	6
Refused	0	0	0	1	3	1

Q27 These next few questions are about presidential appointees in general. In your opinion, which of these best describes most presidential appointees?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
They represent the best and the brightest America has to offer	6%	14	24	8	11	23
They are not the most talented Americans, but they are adequate to perform the tasks assigned to them	8	8	15	7	5	7
They are a mixed lot: Some are highly talented, while others do not have the skills and experience their positions require	84	75	59	79	83	68
Overall, their talents are not adequate to the demands of their positions	1	1	0	0	1	0
Don't know	1	1	1	3	0	2
Refused	0	1	1	2	0	0

Q28 Suppose one of the key people in your organization who now reports to you were considering a full-time presidential appointment. Would you strongly support him or her taking an appointment, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose it?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Strongly support	54%	53	60	60	76	81
Somewhat support	38	38	35	29	20	15
Somewhat oppose	3	4	0	4	1	0
Strongly oppose	1	0	0	0	0	0
Don't know	4	3	4	3	2	4
Refused	0	2	1	3	1	0

Q29 Most appointments are for a few years. If this person took an appointment, would you ensure that he or she could return at the same or higher level after the appointment? (If depends) Is it more likely you would or would not hold the job?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Yes	56%	54	44	62	62	56
No	30	28	31	21	15	30
Depends/More likely to hold job	4	6	7	6	11	6
Depends/More likely not to hold job	2	7	7	1	1	2
Don't know	8	4	11	7	10	6
Refused	0	1	1	2	1	0

Q30 Have you ever (Insert)?

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused	n
<i>a. served in any way as either an appointed or a public elected government official – please include federal, state and local government</i>					
Fortune 500 Execs	25%	75	0	0	100
Univ Pres	45	53	2	0	100
Nonprofit CEOs	34	64	1	1	85
Think Tank Scholars	24	74	2	0	95
Lobbyists	38	62	0	0	100
Govt Officials	–	–	–	–	–
<i>b. worked full- or part-time for government in any other capacity – again please include all levels of government, and count any type of employment, paid or unpaid, including internships</i>					
Fortune 500 Execs	34%	66	0	0	100
Univ Pres	71	28	1	0	100
Nonprofit CEOs	42	56	0	1	85
Think Tank Scholars	76	24	0	0	95
Lobbyists	91	9	0	0	100
Govt Officials	–	–	–	–	–

Based on all excluding local government

Q31 On another subject, do you currently volunteer your time or serve on committees for any (Insert)? For this question we are interested in volunteering time, not donating money.

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
<i>a. professional organizations</i>				
Fortune 500 Execs	76%	24	0	0
Univ Pres	96	4	0	0
Nonprofit CEOs	86	14	0	0
Think Tank Scholars	76	24	0	0
Lobbyists	60	39	1	0
Govt Officials	95	5	0	0
<i>b. charitable, community service or educational organizations</i>				
Fortune 500 Execs	91%	9	0	0
Univ Pres	97	3	0	0
Nonprofit CEOs	92	8	0	0
Think Tank Scholars	75	25	0	0
Lobbyists	73	26	1	0
Govt Officials	84	16	0	0
<i>c. political or advocacy organizations</i>				
Fortune 500 Execs	17%	83	0	0
Univ Pres	13	87	0	0
Nonprofit CEOs	24	76	0	0
Think Tank Scholars	22	78	0	0
Lobbyists	38	62	0	0
Govt Officials	32	68	0	0

Q32 About how many hours a month do you spend on this?

	1-2 hours	3-5 hours	6-10 hours	11-20 hours	More than 20	Don't know	Refused	n=
<i>a. professional organizations</i>								
Fortune 500 Execs	17%	29	36	11	7	1	0	76
Univ Pres	5	19	36	22	18	0	0	96
Nonprofit CEOs	10	29	42	14	4	1	0	73
Think Tank Scholars	17	29	36	11	3	4	0	72
Lobbyists	10	40	32	13	3	2	0	60
Govt Officials	5	24	43	24	3	0	0	95
<i>b. charitable, community service or educational organizations</i>								
Fortune 500 Execs	8%	42	31	14	3	2	0	91
Univ Pres	4	24	39	23	9	0	1	97
Nonprofit CEOs	4	33	32	18	9	3	1	78
Think Tank Scholars	13	31	35	14	4	3	0	71
Lobbyists	14	36	34	11	3	3	0	73
Govt Officials	4	36	37	17	7	0	0	84
<i>c. political or advocacy organizations</i>								
Fortune 500 Execs	24%	47	29	0	0	0	0	17
Univ Pres	38	46	8	0	8	0	0	13
Nonprofit CEOs	60	20	20	0	0	0	0	20
Think Tank Scholars	48	33	10	10	0	0	0	21
Lobbyists	13	32	21	24	8	3	0	38
Govt Officials	16	41	31	6	6	0	0	32

Based on those who volunteer

Q33 I have just a few last questions. How much of the time would you say you can trust (Insert) to do what is right? Just about always, most of the time or only some of the time?

	Just about the always	Most of the time	Only some of the time	None of the time	Don't know	Refused
<i>a. the federal government in Washington</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	2%	40	56	1	0	1
Univ Pres	5	57	36	1	0	1
Nonprofit CEOs	1	55	44	0	0	0
Think Tank Scholars	1	43	53	0	2	1
Lobbyists	7	47	44	0	2	0
Govt Officials	9	59	32	0	0	0
<i>b. federal government employees</i>						
Fortune 500 Execs	5%	54	40	0	1	0
Univ Pres	7	76	16	1	0	0
Nonprofit CEOs	5	65	28	0	2	0
Think Tank Scholars	9	60	28	0	2	0
Lobbyists	6	60	33	0	1	0
Govt Officials	9	77	14	0	0	0

Q34 Where on the following scale of 1 to 6 would you place yourself? If 1 represents someone who generally believes that on the whole federal government programs should be cut back greatly to reduce the power of government and 6 represents someone who feels that federal government programs should be maintained to deal with important problems, where on the scale of 1 to 6 would you place yourself?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
1, Programs should be cut back	8%	0	4	17	7	4
2	29	7	4	9	15	7
3	35	14	20	14	18	21
4	14	31	20	15	21	30
5	10	30	22	18	18	14
6, Programs should be maintained	3	17	31	26	21	23
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refused	1	1	0	1	0	1

D1 Sex

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Male	85%	90	75	81	79	77
Female	15	10	25	19	21	23

D2 What is your age?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
18-29	0%	0	0	1	1	0
30-39	2	0	4	20	20	2
40-49	29	4	25	29	36	31
50-59	47	53	48	32	33	54
60-69	21	43	21	12	10	11
70 or older	1	0	1	5	0	1
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refused	0	0	1	1	0	1

D3 In general, would you describe your political views as very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal or very liberal?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
Very conservative	1%	0	4	3	2	1
Conservative	33	4	7	17	25	14
Moderate	62	69	56	42	55	62
Liberal	2	26	31	23	13	19
Very liberal	1	0	2	7	5	1
Don't know	0	1	0	2	0	0
Refused	1	0	0	5	0	3

D4 Which of these best describes your race and ethnicity? White, black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or something else?

	Fortune 500 Execs	Univ Pres	Non- Profit CEOs	Think Tank Scholars	Lobbyists	Govt Officials
White	95%	95	91	89	99	80
Black or African American	1	1	7	2	1	13
Hispanic or Latino	2	0	0	1	0	3
Asian	1	1	1	3	0	1
Other	1	2	1	0	0	3
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refused	0	1	0	4	0	0



AUTHORS

Paul C. Light is a Brookings Vice President and Director of Governmental Studies.

Virginia L. Thomas is a Senior Fellow in Government Studies at The Heritage Foundation.