# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, Department of state

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Senate Committee | Foreign Relations |
| Agency Mission | The Department of State is the lead institution for the conduct of American diplomacy, and the secretary is the president’s principal foreign policy advisor. |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary for consular affairs leads and manages the Bureau of Consular Affairs, which works to fulfill the department’s mandate to protect the lives and interests of U.S. citizens abroad and strengthen the security of U.S. borders at home. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Undersecretary for Management[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | The assistant secretary for consular affairs leads a team of 13,000 consular professionals in almost 300 locations across the U.S. and around the world.[[3]](#endnote-3) He or she manages a budget of approximately $4.3 billion. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Holds responsibility for the provision of services such as assisting next of kin following the deaths of Americans abroad; conducting searches for missing Americans; visiting U.S. citizens imprisoned abroad; providing repatriation loans to destitute Americans; providing directly to the American people, accurate and timely information on travel and conditions abroad; supporting the resolution of international child custody disputes and the development and implementation of international adoption policy; coordinating large-scale emergency evacuations and pursuing consular reciprocity with other nations * Administers the department’s visa and passport programs to protect our borders, while facilitating international travel and supporting the U.S. economy, without compromising security * Domestically, oversees the management of visa centers and regional passport offices as well as bureau staff and operations in Washington, D.C. * Testifies before congressional committees and appears in the media * Exercises strong management and provides guidance to thousands of U.S. consular officers at posts around the world and, domestically, in passport agencies across the country and at the Bureau of Consular Affairs * Liaises with other executive agencies and departments, including the Department of Homeland Security and its component agencies; the intelligence community and law enforcement agencies; the departments of Commerce, Labor, HHS, Treasury and Defense; the Bureau of Engraving and Printing; the Government Printing Office; the White House; and the Washington consular corps, and closely coordinates with senior State Department leadership and private sector stakeholders[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | The assistant secretary for consular affairs is critical to the security and safety of U.S. citizens and, in many ways, serves as the face of the State Department to Americans. The position therefore requires a high level of professionalism, including:   * Extensive management experience * Prior agency experience, both domestically and overseas, in order to understand both operating environments * In-depth knowledge of the Immigration and Nationality Act; U.S. Citizenship and Nationality Law; the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction; the Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption; and the Privacy Act * Has TS and SCI clearances, or has the ability to receive them * Willing to say no to a superior officer who makes an unlawful request |
| Competencies | * Strong communication skills and ability to appear before media * Strong interpersonal, diplomatic and negotiation skills * Strong leadership skills * Ability to multitask around the clock and around the calendar, handling multiple crisis situations simultaneously * Empathetic * Dedicated to public service * Apolitical/non-ideological/nonpartisan * Ability to inspire the team and model integrity, ensuring that laws and regulations are administered properly and that valuable assets, such as passports, visas and consular reports of birth abroad are protected from possible misuse |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Michelle Thoren Bond (2015 to 2017): Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Department of State; Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Overseas Citizens Services, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Department of State[[5]](#endnote-5) | |
| Janice L. Jacobs (2008 to 2014): Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Undersecretary for Management, Department of State; Ambassador, Office of the Ambassador to Senegal, U.S. Embassy, Senegal, Department of State; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Undersecretary for Management, Department of State[[6]](#endnote-6) | |
| Maura Ann Harty (2002 to 2008): Executive Secretary, Department of State; Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay, U.S. Embassy, Asuncion; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Consular Affairs[[7]](#endnote-7) | |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/99484.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/about/assistant-secretary.html [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/231694.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Leadership Directories [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Leadership Directories [↑](#endnote-ref-7)