



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

CENTER *for* PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION

Message to White House Hopefuls: Start Your Transition Planning Early to Avoid Critical Missteps

An Open Letter from the Partnership for Public Service's Center for Presidential Transition Advisory Board

A year from now, a new president will take the oath of office and instantly assume responsibility for a wide range of critical domestic, economic and national security challenges. At the same time, the new chief executive will have to make 4,000 political appointments, oversee a budget of about \$3.7 trillion and manage a workforce of 2.1 million civilian employees and more than 2 million members of the armed forces and reserves.

All six of us—Democrats and Republicans—have been involved in planning, executing and closely observing presidential transitions, and our experience has made one point crystal clear: Assuming the reins of power of the most important government in the world is complicated and cannot be left to chance.

The presidential candidates must not wait for the 77 days after the November election or even the close of the party nominating conventions this summer to begin getting ready to run our nation's government.

While the candidates need to focus on campaigning and winning primaries and caucuses, they must simultaneously begin laying the groundwork for a disciplined, well-organized transfer of power. This means naming a transition chairman who can have an effective transition office up and running before the summer of 2016. It means beginning very early the process of formulating the new administration's policy agenda, devising a plan to steer the work of federal agencies and identifying top-level appointees.

Some may view such early preparation as presumptuous, but the days of candidates attacking each other for "measuring the drapes" should be over. The global security environment and wide range of domestic concerns demand that the next team start preparing as soon as possible. Failure to do so would be irresponsible, resulting in delays filling key jobs, embarrassing policy blunders, management missteps, and at worst, an administration unprepared to respond in a national or international emergency.

This is why we strongly support the Partnership for Public Service's Center for Presidential Transition, an ambitious and comprehensive initiative designed to provide critical assistance and information to presidential candidates to help them navigate the transition process and be ready to govern on day one.

The new center will provide the only existing repository for documentation from previous transitions, offer guidance on how to set up and execute a transition, work with the outgoing administration to encourage a smooth transfer of power, develop management recommendations for the new administration to address government's operational challenges, engage Congress to promote presidential transition reforms and train new political appointees to lead effectively.

The candidates still in the race by mid-March have an obligation and a duty to begin their transition activities early and to make it a high priority in their own self-interest and for the good of the nation.

Center for Presidential Transition Advisory Board

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