# POSITION DESCRIPTION

**assistant secretary for legislative affairs, department of defense**

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Armed Services |
| Agency Mission | The mission of the Department of Defense is to provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country. |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary of Defense for legislative affairs is the principal staff assistant and advisor to the secretary of Defense for DOD relations with the U.S. Congress, state governors and local officials. |
| Compensation | Level IV $158,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Defense |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The DOD budget was approximately $721.5 billion for fiscal 2020. The DOD has more than 2.2 million active and reserve service members and 772,000 civilian personnel. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs has around 50 employees (both civilian and military). The DOD assistant secretary for legislative affairs is a direct report of the secretary of defense. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Supervises the legislative affairs of DOD, developing and overseeing an integrated DOD legislative strategy that supports the administration's policy agenda and the DOD legislative program, priorities and policies.
* Provides support to the secretary of Defense in his or her dealings with Congress and other legislative matters.
* Coordinates all congressional interaction with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, including testimony before and visits and briefings to Congress.
* Assures that Congress is fully and candidly informed of the department's plans and programs.
* Coordinates with the legislative affairs offices of DOD subcomponents.
* Oversees the confirmations process for individuals nominated by the president for DOD positions requiring Senate confirmation.
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration.] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Has a true and timely understanding of how Congress works.
* Possesses strong congressional relationships.
* Understands politics as well as policy.
* Understands the authorization process.
* Has a record of working with both Republicans and Democrats.
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| Competencies | * Ability to manage multiple crises.
* Strong negotiating skills.
* Ability to translate DOD culture and language to Congress and vice versa.
* Ability to manage competing priorities.
* Ability to work across party lines.
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| Robert R. Hood (2017 to 2021) – Vice President for Government Affairs for consulting company CH2M; Special Assistant to President George W. Bush in the Office of Legislative Affairs; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs of the Department of Defense. |
| Tressa Guenov (2016 to 2017) – Professional Staff Member, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (Committee Designee for Sen. Barbara Mikulski and minority staff lead on Middle East and North Africa issues); Legislative Assistant for National Security Affairs, Sen. Claire McCaskill; Special Assistant to the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy |
| Stephen C. Hedger (2015 to 2016) – Special Assistant to the President and Senate Legislative Affairs Liaison in the White House Office of Legislative Affairs (principal White House liaison to the Senate Armed Services, Foreign Relations, Intelligence, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committees and relevant Appropriations Subcommittees); Legislative Director for Sen. Claire McCaskill; Legislative Assistant for national security affairs for Sen. Claire McCaskill  |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260, December 27 ,2020), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials through January 1, 2022. The compensation information is based on guidance from the Office of Personnel Management and can be accessed [here](https://www.chcoc.gov/content/continued-pay-freeze-certain-senior-political-officials-4#:~:text=Section%20748%20of%20division%20E,on%20December%2031%2C%202020%2C%20by). If you are selected for this position, please consult the agency’s HR representative for further guidance on compensation.  [↑](#endnote-ref-1)