# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs, Department of Transportation

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Senate Committee | Commerce, Science and Transportation |
| Agency Mission | To ensure a fast, safe, efficient, accessible and convenient transportation system that meets our vital national interests and enhances the quality of life of the American people, today and into the future |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary for aviation and international affairs is responsible to the secretary for analyzing, developing, articulating and reviewing policies and plans for economic issues in domestic and international transportation. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Transportation |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | The assistant secretary for aviation and international affairs oversees the Office of Aviation Analysis; the Office of International Aviation; the Office of International Transportation and Trade; and the Working Group on Improving Air Service to Small Communities.[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Analyzes, develops, articulates and reviews policies and plans for aviation and international transportation * Provides departmental leadership and coordination on international surface transportation policy issues, including trade, technical assistance and cooperation programs * Develops, coordinates and carries out public policy related to economic regulations governing U.S. and foreign carrier economic authority to engage in air transportation, and represents the public interest in formal hearings instituted by the department in regulating the airline industry * Formulates, coordinates and executes departmental international civil aviation transportation policy, and negotiates bilateral and multilateral international aviation matters * Renders decisions in all formal hearings instituted by the department for aviation and economic regulatory matters[[3]](#endnote-3) * Provides departmental leadership for and develops, coordinates and carries out public policy related to the airline industry * Works with other federal agencies on initiatives related to aviation and international transportation * Administers the laws and regulations governing U.S. and foreign carrier economic authority to engage in air transportation * Renders decisions in all aviation economic regulatory matters instituted by the department * Administers regulatory programs for small community transportation, including the Essential Air Service Program and the Small Community Air Service Development Pilot Program * Develops, coordinates and carries out public policy and regulatory actions on establishing mail rates within Alaska and in the international market * Develops, coordinates and carries out public policy and certain regulatory actions with respect to access at U.S. airports[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Previous government experience (helpful) * Background in air transportation * Knowledge of legislative and federal budget process * Extensive management experience |
| Competencies | * Track record of collaboration * Ability to work in a matrixed environment; strong coordination skills * Strong negotiation and diplomacy skills * Ability to work under high pressure * Energy for frequent travel |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Susan L. Kurland (2009 to 2016): Managing Director, Jefferies & Company; Vice President and Deputy General Counsel, U.S. Airways; Associate Administrator for Airports, Federal Aviation Administration[[5]](#endnote-5) | |
| Andrew B. Steinberg (2006 to 2008): Chief Council, Federal Aviation Administration; Partner, Jones Day Law Firm; Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, SABRE and Travelocity[[6]](#endnote-6) | |
| Karan K. Bhatia (2003 to 2005): Deputy Undersecretary and Chief Counsel, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce; Partner, Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering[[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://lo.bvdep.com/OrgChart.asp?curp=1&LDIBookId=19&LDISectionId=180&LDIOrgId=154155 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.transportation.gov/policy/assistant-secretary-aviation-international-affairs [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.uschina.org/assistant-secretary-transportation-susan-kurland [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. http://hls.harvard.edu/dept/alumni/alumni-news/honoring-donors/a-living-tribute-to-andrew-b-steinberg-84/ [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/government/kbhatia-bio.html [↑](#endnote-ref-7)