POSITION DESCRIPTION

**assistant secretary for legislative 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 of State is the president’s principal foreign policy advisor. |
| Position Overview | The Assistant Secretary coordinates legislative activity and matters for the department and advises the Secretary and other department principals on legislative strategy. This individual is the department’s principal point of contact with Congress and facilitates effective communication between the department and members of Congress and their staffs. |
| Compensation | Level IV $158,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of the Department of State |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | In fiscal 2020, the Department of State had $34,803 million in outlays, and 77,000 total global employment. The Bureau of Legislative Affairs is headed by the Office of the Assistant Secretary and three deputy assistant secretaries. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Serves as an important advisor to the Secretary.
* Acts as the “diplomat to Congress” for the Department of State.
* Educates Congress on what the Department of State does and why it matters, and vice versa.
* Works closely with authorizing, appropriations and oversight committees and with individual members who have an interest in department or foreign policy issues.
* Manages testimony before congressional hearings, organizes member and staff briefings and facilitates congressional travel for members and staff throughout the year.
* Reviews proposed legislation and foreign policy statements.
* Seeks passage of foreign policy legislation and appropriations and obtains advice and consent to treaties and confirmation of the president's nominees.
* Manages the Bureau of Legislative Affairs and coordinates closely with the six regional assistant secretaries, the legal advisor, the assistant secretary for public affairs, the director of budget and planning, and with senior officials at the White House and other departments and agencies.
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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.
* Is management focused.
* Has knowledge of foreign policy.
* Understands politics as well as policy.
* Understands the appropriations process.
* Has a record of working with both Republicans and Democrats.
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| Competencies | * Strong public speaking and negotiating skills.
* Can work across agencies and understands cross-team dynamics.
* Ability to work across party lines.
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |

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| Mary Elizabeth Taylor (2018 to 2020) – Special Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs, the White House; Aide, Office of Senator Mitch McConnell |
| Mary Kirtley Waters (2017 to 2018) – President, North American Millers Association; Vice President of Corporate Relations, Farmer Mac; Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, Department of Agriculture |
| Julia Frifield (2013 to 2017) – Chief of Staff, Office of Senator Barbara Mikulski; Legislative Director and Legislative Assistant, Office of Senator Barbara Mikulski, Legislative Assistant, Office of Senator Harris Wofford |

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. If you are selected for this position, please consult the agency’s HR representative for further guidance on compensation. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)