



## NOMINEE CHECKLIST FOR SENATE-CONFIRMED POSITIONS

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### THE GOLDEN RULES:

- Thank the president for the honor of being nominated.
- Do not presume confirmation. Use the phrase “If I am confirmed.”
- While you do not need to be an expert, demonstrate familiarity with the position and agency to which you are being nominated.
- Be polite and respectful in all dealings with Senators and their staffs.
- Respond quickly and accurately to appropriate Senate questions.
- Make no commitments that bind the federal government. You do not have the authority. You can, however, make commitments of your time and energy. (For example, you can say “if confirmed, I will look into that matter,” “I will be briefed,” “knowing of your interest, I will carefully study that issue” or “I will travel to your state.”)
- Until you are confirmed, you should not have access to internal documents or make decisions.
- Work closely with the team assigned to your confirmation, including your Sherpa, as well as public affairs and legislative experts.
- Recognize that committee chairs, ranking members and their staffs are vital to the confirmation process.
- To the extent possible, avoid discussing your nomination with the media. The appropriate time to answer questions is usually in a confirmation hearing.
- Share with the point person responsible for your confirmation contacts who may be helpful in a confirmation hearing, your fears, your worries and potential schedule conflicts (like “my son is getting married in three weeks so don’t let a hearing get scheduled before then.”)
- Even when the going gets tough, have fun going through the confirmation process. Realize few Americans get the opportunity.

### PREPARATION

- Know the President’s policy commitments and be prepared to defend them.
- Know your agency – be prepared for questions related to the key issues that it is facing.
- Know what each committee member is interested in.
  - What have the members asked about previously?
  - What have the agency’s responses been in the past?
- Understand the landscape: which stakeholders care about the work of the agency and have the ear of Congress?
- Conduct multiple “murder board” or simulated hearing sessions to test run your responses.

## PROTOCOL

- Thank the Chair and Ranking Member for holding the hearing and inviting you to testify.
- Recognize other members who are in attendance in your opening remarks.

## FORM

- Speak slowly.
- Avoid obscure acronyms.
- Show deference to Senators and their staff.
- Be confident but not overconfident.

## STRATEGY

- When questioning gets tense, try to find common ground.
- Keep your composure. Try not to take questions too personally.
- Be responsive but bring the discussion back to your main points.
- Don't make up an answer if you don't know the answer – take the question for the record.

## FOLLOW-UP

- Thank the committee for their consideration.
- Respond to follow up questions in a timely manner.