



PRESIDENTIALLY APPOINTED POSITIONS

One of the most significant tasks for any president is staffing their administration. A president is responsible for about 4,000 political appointments, 1,200 of which require Senate confirmation. This document puts those numbers into context by providing a breakdown of the number of positions in key agencies, and the number of Senate confirmed appointments and nominations for each of the last five presidents during their first years in office.

SUMMARY

Presidential Appointment with Senate Confirmation (PAS)

- About 1,200 positions across the federal government.
- In the first 100 days in office, the Senate confirmed 69 of President Barack Obama's appointees. At the same point, the Senate confirmed 28 of President Trump's nominees, 35 of President George W. Bush's and 47 of President Bill Clinton's.
- By the end of Bush's first year, more than 520 nominees were confirmed, compared with 321 for Trump, 463 for Obama and 499 for Clinton.

Presidential Appointment without Senate Confirmation (PA)

- Approximately 450 positions.
- About two-thirds of all PA positions exist within commissions, councils, committees, boards or foundations. (Requirements for PAs in these agencies are stricter).
- Slightly less than one-third are in the Executive Office of the President (EOP).
- The remaining PA are located within other federal departments or agencies.

Non-Career Members of the Senior Executive Service (Non-career SES)

- About 750 positions.
- Non-career appointments are approved by OPM and cannot exceed 25% of the agency's Senior Executive Service position allocation. Governmentwide, only 10% of SES positions may be filled by non-career appointees. Senior Executive Service positions include most managerial, supervisory, and policy positions.
- In the first 100 days of their administrations, Obama placed 112 non-career SES appointees in 19 key agencies while Trump appointed 76 non-career SES officials in 19 key agencies.
- By the end of Obama's first year in office, 359 appointees were in place. At the same point, Trump appointed 321 non-Career SES officials.

Schedule C

- About 1,550 positions are excepted from the competitive service because of their confidential or policy-determining character.
- In the first 100 days of their administrations, Obama placed 516 Schedule C appointees in 19 key agencies. Trump appointed 545 Schedule C officials for 19 key agencies.
- By the end of Obama's first year in office, 1258 Schedule C appointees were in place. At the same point, Trump appointed 1075 Schedule C officials.

TOTAL NON-COMPETITIVE FEDERAL POSITIONS BY AGENCY BASED ON THE 2016 PLUM BOOK

Agency	PAS	PA	NA-SES	Sched. C	Agency total
Executive Office of the President	22	129	30	44	225
Department of Agriculture	14	2	48	165	229
Department of Commerce	21	1	39	106	167
Department of Defense	52	0	77	109	238
Department of Education	15	2	20	123	160
Department of Energy	21	0	33	83	137
Department of Health and Human Serv.	18	2	80	80	180
Department of Homeland Security	17	7	50	82	156
Department of Housing and Urban Dev.	13	0	28	41	82
Department of Justice	209 ¹	14	55	55	333
Department of Labor	16	2	26	88	132
Department of State	265 ²	4	38	123	430
Department of the Interior	17	0	37	52	106
Department of the Treasury	31	3	36	56	126
Department of Transportation	22	2	28	39	91
Department of Veterans Affairs	11	4	10	11	36
Environmental Protection Agency	13	0	26	25	64
Central Intelligence Agency	3	1	0	0	4
Commodity Futures Trading Commission	5	0	0	7	12
Federal Communications Commission	5	0	4	3	12
Federal Reserve System	7	0	0	0	7
General Services Administration	1	1	19	28	49
Office of Personnel Management	2	0	14	19	35
Securities and Exchange Commission	1	4	0	15	20
Small Business Administration	4	0	14	39	57
Social Security Administration	3	2	10	2	17
U.S. Agency for International Dev.	11	1	2	0	14
Remaining agencies	423	291	37	143	894
Total across all agencies	1242	472	761	1538	4013

¹The Department of Justice PAS total includes 84 U.S. Marshals and 93 U.S. Attorneys.

²The Department of State PAS total includes 221 ambassadors.

Source: Data compiled by the Center for Presidential Transition from Policy and Supporting Positions, 2016 (commonly known as the Plum Book).

Notes: The Plum Book is published once every 4 years. The positions described in the most recent Plum Book reflect the personnel and organizational structure of the end of the second term of the Obama administration. This is a snapshot to give a general idea of the number of appointments that needs to be made, and not an accurate count for 2020.

SENATE CONFIRMED APPOINTMENTS IN THE FIRST YEAR

PAS NOMINATIONS AND CONFIRMATIONS BY PRESIDENT

Confirmed Nominations				
President	Jan. 20	Jan. 31	Apr. 29	Dec. 31 ¹
H. W. Bush	0	5	45	401
Clinton	3	21	47	499
W. Bush	7	15	35	521
Obama	7	22	69	463
Trump	2	5	28	321

¹ Includes all nominations and confirmations sent from the president to the Senate. This includes multiple nominations for concurrent positions (e.g. ambassador to the United Nations and ambassador to the United Nations Security Council; appointment to and chair of a board or commission, etc.) and nominations withdrawn and resubmitted regardless of reason. This also includes more than 150 nominations resubmitted by President George W. Bush following the adjournment of the Senate in Aug. 2001.

Source: Data compiled by the Center for Presidential Transition from Congress.gov.

Notes: The date received in Senate is used to determine when a nomination was submitted, and the date of the latest action combined with the latest action are used to determine when the nomination is confirmed.

Data compiled by the Center for Presidential Transition from Congress.gov. Only includes civilian nominations.

Submitted Nominations				
President	Jan. 20	Jan. 31	Apr. 29	Dec. 31 ¹
H.W. Bush	15	17	95	491
Clinton	25	27	170	678
W. Bush	13	17	84	856
Obama	33	39	191	690
Trump	27	1	72	571

¹ Includes all nominations and confirmations sent from the president to the Senate. This includes multiple nominations for concurrent positions (e.g. ambassador to the United Nations and ambassador to the United Nations Security Council; appointment to and chair of a board or commission, etc.) and nominations withdrawn and resubmitted regardless of reason. This also includes more than 150 nominations resubmitted by President George W. Bush following the adjournment of the Senate in Aug. 2001.

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