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PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION®

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An Open Letter from the Partnership for Public Service's Center for Presidential Transition® Advisory Board

March 2024

The next president will be inaugurated less than a year from now amid the country's deep political divisions, concerns about the future of our democracy, overseas wars, declining trust in government and vivid memories of the violence on Jan. 6, 2020, at the Capitol.

It is against this backdrop that the Partnership for Public Service's Center for Presidential Transition has launched its 2024 transition and second-term planning activities to help ensure the continuity of knowledge and lay the groundwork for a well-functioning federal government.

For nearly 250 years, the United States has upheld a tradition of the peaceful transfer of power that has been the cornerstone of a stable, secure democracy. Even at moments of division around the Civil War and the Depression, the public and their elected representatives ultimately recognized election results and, to varying degrees, worked together across administrations. The United States' ability to address modern challenges and our continued leadership on the world stage rely on this tradition to continue.

Since 2008, the Center has been the nation's leading nonpartisan organization that works with federal agency leaders, presidential candidate transition teams, outgoing presidents and those seeking a second term to ensure that our next president is fully prepared to govern.

While candidates at one time avoided the perception that they were "measuring the drapes" by preparing too soon, today they recognize that early personnel and policy planning is necessary to assume the mammoth task of overseeing our federal government. In this election cycle, planning is underway for various Republican presidential candidates earlier and in more detail than ever before.

The conversation around second-term planning must also change. As an incumbent running for re-election, President Joe Biden can set a new standard by planning for a second term and setting a blueprint to learn from and improve upon his first term. His administration can also work to retain appointed leaders and decrease turnover between terms. Given the long nomination and Senate confirmation process, both incumbents seeking re-election and challengers must plan in advance to keep talented people in key roles.

In addition, the law obligates a sitting president to prepare to hand over the reins of power in the event of an election loss. In an era of polarization and division, this responsibility may feel particularly difficult, but it is more important than ever.

presidentialtransition.org | (202) 775-9111

600 14th Street NW, Suite 600 | Washington, D.C. | 20005

As Democrats and Republicans with experience in the White House, the Cabinet and presidential transitions, we strongly support the Center for Presidential Transition’s ambitious mission. The stakes of the next transition are extremely high, with the stability and continuity of our government requiring those seeking the presidency to be committed to the smooth and peaceful transfer of power, and to be prepared and ready to govern.

Center for Presidential Transition Advisory Board

Joshua Bolten

Former Chief of Staff to President George W. Bush

Edward “Ted” Kaufman

Former United States Senator; Former Chair of the Biden-Harris Transition

Michael Leavitt

Former Governor of Utah Former Chairman of the Romney Readiness Project

Thomas “Mack” McLarty

Former Chief of Staff to President Bill Clinton