

The White House: President Biden announces key nominees

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WASHINGTON – Today, President Joe Biden announced his intent to nominate the following leaders to serve as key leaders in his administration:

- Doug McKalip, Nominee for Chief Agricultural Negotiator at the United States Trade Representative
- Kenneth Merten, Nominee for Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Bulgaria
- Jessica Davis Ba, Nominee for Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
- Robert J. Faucher, Nominee for Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Suriname
- Catherine J.K. Sandoval, Nominee for Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board
- Daniel B. Maffei, Nominee for Commissioner of the Federal Maritime Commission

Doug McKalip, Nominee for Chief Agricultural Negotiator at the United States Trade Representative

Doug McKalip is in his 29th year of federal service as an agriculture policy leader and trade expert. Since March 2021, he has served as Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack on all agricultural matters relating to trade, national security, animal and plant health regulations, and a wide portfolio of domestic and international issues. McKalip formerly served in a leadership capacity in the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Biotechnology Regulatory Services. He served as a Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Agriculture from 2015 to September 2016, and also as Acting Chief of Staff. McKalip was Senior Advisor for

Agriculture and Rural Affairs at the White House Domestic Policy Council, where he counseled President Barack Obama on issues involving farm, ranch, and rural policy. He served as the Director of the White House Rural Council and coordinated the Executive Branch-wide response to the 2012-2013 drought. McKalip has served in a variety of other roles at USDA, including as Confidential Assistant to the Secretary, and Director of Legislative and Public Affairs for the National Resources Conservation Service at USDA.

McKalip has a Master's in Public Policy from the American University in Washington D.C. and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Pittsburgh. He is a graduate of the Executive Fellows Program at Harvard Kennedy School of Government (2020), a Fellow in the California Agricultural Leadership DC Exchange (2018), and a graduate of the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville, VA (2005). He was also a participant in the Student Council for U.S. Affairs at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Kenneth Merten, Nominee for Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Bulgaria

Kenneth Merten is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister. He recently served as Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim of the U.S. Embassy in Haiti. Previously, he was the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Global Talent Management and prior to that he was a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Merten has also served as Ambassador to Croatia, Ambassador to Haiti, and as Deputy Executive Secretary of the Department of State. Among his other assignments, Merten was the Economic Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France, the Executive Assistant in the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs and a Senior Watch Officer in the State Department Operations Center. Merten earned his B.A. degree from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and his M.A. degree from American University in Washington, D.C. He is the recipient of multiple awards including the Grande Croix of Honor from the government of Haiti for Earthquake support, the Ryan Crocker Award for Outstanding Leadership in Expeditionary Diplomacy, and the CORE Shandling Humanitarian Award. He speaks Haitian Creole, French, German and Spanish.

Jessica Davis Ba, Nominee for Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

Jessica Davis Ba is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor. She most recently served as Senior Coordinator and Special Advisor for Africa in the Office of the Vice President. Previously, Davis Ba served as the Chargé d’Affaires, ad interim of the U.S. Embassy N’Djamena, Chad and prior to that she was the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission to the African Union and U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Among her other assignments, Davis Ba served as Deputy Program Director at the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as Special Assistant in the State Department Operations Center, and as Deputy Director, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. Her earlier assignments include serving as Deputy Counselor for Economic Affairs and Regional Labor Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya and as Political/Economic Officer for the Somalia Affairs Unit in the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi. Davis Ba earned her B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and her M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania’s Annenberg School for Communication. She speaks French and Spanish.

Robert J. Faucher, Nominee for Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Suriname

Robert J. Faucher is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Minister-Counselor. Faucher has served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) since 2019, including being the Acting Assistant Secretary for CSO throughout 2021. He was previously Director for the Office of Western European Affairs in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. Previously, Faucher held positions as Director in the offices of United Nations (UN) Political Affairs and UN Specialized and Technical Agencies in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs. Faucher joined the Foreign Service in 1985 and served as the Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassies in Belgium, Ireland, Suriname and Luxembourg. His other overseas postings include the Netherlands, the U.S. Mission to the European Union, and the United Kingdom. His prior Washington service includes Deputy Office Director in the Office of European Union Affairs, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs; Special Assistant in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research; and Attorney Advisor for the Middle East and South Asia in the Legal Adviser’s Office. Born in Landstuhl, Germany, Faucher grew up in Arizona, and holds B.A. and J.D./M.B.A. degrees from Arizona State University, an L.L.M. degree in European Union Law from Edinburgh University, and an M.S. degree in National Security Studies from the National Defense University’s National

War College. He speaks Dutch and French.

Catherine J.K. Sandoval, Nominee for Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

Catherine J.K. Sandoval is a tenured Law Professor at Santa Clara University (SCU) who teaches and conducts research on energy, communications, antitrust, and contract law. A regulatory and legal expert for more than thirty years and a safety leader for more than two decades, her interdisciplinary work advances infrastructure safety, reliability, access, and equity. She directs three institutes at SCU Law. Sandoval served a six-year term as a Commissioner of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), appointed by Governor Brown and unanimously confirmed by the California State Senate. During her prior federal service, she served as Director of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC), Office of Communications Business Opportunities. Former California Governor Davis appointed her to serve as Undersecretary and Senior Policy Advisor for Housing, and previously as Staff Director of California's Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency. In that capacity she worked with law enforcement including the California Highway Patrol to respond to infrastructure vulnerabilities and hazardous incidents.

Sandoval hails from a trailer park, the barrio of East Los Angeles, and then Montebello, California, and became the first in her family to earn a B.A. degree. She was the first Latina selected as a Rhodes Scholar, the first tenured Latina Law Professor at SCU Law, and the first Latinx CPUC Commissioner. She served as a law clerk to Judge Dorothy W. Nelson of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. She earned a B.A. from Yale University, a Master of Letters from Oxford University, and a J.D. from Stanford Law School.

Daniel B. Maffei, Nominee for Commissioner of the Federal Maritime Commission

Daniel Benjamin Maffei, of New York, is an experienced public servant who serves as Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission since being appointed to the position by President Biden in 2021. Under his Chairmanship, the Commission has reinvigorated its enforcement efforts, prioritized helping U.S. export shippers, and established several new initiatives to address supply chain congestion and efficiency challenges.

Maffei's career in government spans more than 20 years. He was twice elected to

the U.S. House of Representatives for the 24th Congressional District of New York with assignments to the House Armed Services Committee, House Financial Services Committee, and the House Judiciary Committee. His earlier public service includes working for the Democratic staff of the House Ways and Means Committee and as the Press Secretary for U.S. Senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Bill Bradley. Maffei has substantial experience teaching and researching at universities and think tanks. In addition to his career as a public servant, Maffei has worked in the private sector as an independent consultant and as a broadcast journalist. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Brown University and his Master's degrees from Columbia University and Harvard University.