

GEC Model United Nations Trump's Cabinet



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Letters from the Chairs

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Trump's Cabinet!

Our names are Rebecca Kim, Jiyu Shin, and Jay Baik, and we will be serving as your chairs for this conference. We are so excited for this crisis committee and we hope that you all are just as overjoyed to become members of President Donald Trump's Cabinet.

The Cabinet has remained an integral part of the executive branch since President George Washington first set the precedent of organizing his principal officers in this manner. As delegates in this committee, we hope that you will carefully consider views that may contrast with your own. It is crucial that you remain steadfast in the beliefs of your specific Cabinet member – and remember that your role in the Cabinet is first and foremost to serve as an advisory body to the President, as written in the Opinion Clause (Article II, Section 2, Clause 1) of the US Constitution.

Our committee will focus specifically on the issues of healthcare and immigration, as these have proved to play a major role in shaping the impact of the Trump administration. While you should take into consideration the president's policy goals and the promises he made during his campaign, you may also seize chances to push for your individual political agenda. Cabinet members will need to strike a balance between acting in their best interests and preserving the president's trust in their abilities.

While this is a historical crisis committee, we encourage you to avoid trying to follow the exact path that the Trump administration has taken and instead use your powers as a member of the Cabinet to rewrite history. Your actions in this committee will decide the domestic and international policies of the United States, sway the public opinion of the administration, and influence the actions of President Trump.

Given the rather volatile nature of President Trump's Cabinet over the past two years, several Cabinet members included in this committee may have been dismissed or resigned from their posts. However, please keep in mind that for this conference, the committee will begin in March of 2017. The holders of the positions of the Cabinet have been determined according to this time frame. The chair report has also been written in a manner that only considers information that adheres to the events leading up to March of 2017.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at any time between now and the conference. We look forward to seeing you engage in fruitful debate, develop creative solutions, and most importantly, enjoy the conference!

Sincerely,
Rebecca, Jiyu, and Jay

Introduction

Definition of Key Terms

BIPARTISANSHIP

A political situation where two opposing parties are able to compromise on an issue.

MEDICARE

A federal program for adults 65 and older and some people with disabilities.

MEDICAID

A conglomeration of federal–state programs for certain low-income populations (The Commonwealth Fund).

THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (ACA)

More commonly known as “Obamacare,” the ASA was a health care reform law enacted in 2010 which expanded federal health coverage with the objective of providing all Americans with access to quality medical care.

DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)

An immigration policy established by President Barack Obama that allows some individuals who were brought to the US illegally as children to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and to be eligible for a work permit (“What Is the DREAM Act and Who Are DREAMers?”). Individuals who qualify for this policy are referred to as “DREAMers.”

DREAM ACT

Acronym for the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, a bill first introduced to the Senate on Aug 1, 2001 that would establish a process for qualifying alien minors in the US that would grant conditional residency and later permanent residency.

INDIVIDUAL MANDATE

A law that requires people to purchase certain goods or services. In the context of health care, the individual mandate refers to the compulsory purchase of health insurance.

EXECUTIVE ORDER

A directive issued by the president that has the force of law, and has historically been used to promote the president’s political agenda. Executive orders tend to have more dramatic and longer lasting effects than either proclamations or memoranda (Ray).

Agenda

Health Care

The US has a health care system distinct from most developed nations, as a hybrid of public and private means are used for coverage. Most Americans – about 67.2% as of 2015 – have bought into private voluntary health insurance (VHI), either through employment or direct acquisition. As for federal support, the two central systems are Medicare and Medicaid.

Many critics have argued that this convoluted amalgamation of public and private sectors has decreased the efficiency of the US healthcare system. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), despite the fact that health spending constitutes 17.7% of the GDP, the average US resident visits the doctor's office less often than citizens of other developed nations (Sawyer and Cox).

The passing of the the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010 was the beginning for increasingly progressive health care reform in the United States. The ACA promised to ensure that all Americans had access to quality medical care. The ACA has exhibited success in lowering the percentage of uninsured Americans: in 2015, this demographic constituted 9.1 percent of the population. In the first quarter of 2016, this number was down to 8.6 percent.

However, the ACA has not been without its downfalls. The late Obama administration's institution of the individual mandate, federal subsidization of state-regulated Medicaid expansion, and other tenets of the ACA have been heavily criticized for their inefficiency and infringement on property rights. Some critics have also noted that the benefits of the ACA have not been equalized. Between 2014 and 2015, the overall rate of health insurance among Hispanics increased by 6.6 percentage points. On the other hand, non-Hispanic whites experienced a relatively modest increase in overall coverage of 2.4 points (The Commonwealth Fund).

Thus, many US residents have begun to call for alternate forms of health care reform. In his 2016 presidential campaign, President Trump ran on the promise of repealing the ACA all together. In spite of this promise, President Trump and other GOP representatives have experienced difficulty reaching a consensus on how to carry out such a landmark action. Given the infeasibility of a sudden and complete reversal of the ACA, Republicans have begun to consider repealing only certain components of the ACA.

Immigration

When it comes to immigration, President Trump has been fighting two different demographic groups: Muslims and Hispanics who are attempting to gain access into the United States under the pro-immigration policies passed by the previous Obama Administration.

Travel Ban

As a presidential candidate, President Trump called for a “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States,” and even within his pledge to his voters, he sought to “suspend immigration from terror-prone regions where vetting cannot safely occur” (Greenwood). This call for a “Muslim travel ban” was exacerbated by events such as the Orlando nightclub shooting – a terrorist

attack committed by an ISIS radical that killed 49 people, which at the time was the largest mass shooting by a single shooter in the US.

There is a possibility that heightened apprehension regarding terrorist attacks played a crucial role in mobilizing voters to lift Trump to the presidency. Soon after his inauguration in January, he quickly issued Executive Order 13769, which “banned foreign nationals from seven predominantly Muslim countries from visiting the country for 90 days, suspended entry to the country of all Syrian refugees indefinitely, and prohibited any other refugees from coming into the country for 120 days” (“Timeline of the Muslim Ban”). Many Cabinet members initially criticized as this temporary ban as unconstitutional. However, some members have shifted their stances, stating that Executive Order 13769 does not discriminate against Muslims, but simply prioritizes US national security.

Illegal Immigration

In June 2015, Donald Trump infamously stated that Mexico is “sending people that have a lot of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us [sic]. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists” (Mark). The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program established under the Obama Administration granted the ability for “certain individuals without lawful status, who were brought to the United States before their 16th birthday and were under age 31 on June 15, 2012” to “request discretionary relief in the form of deferred action and employment authorization” (“A Summary of Deferred Action”). Critics have stated that such programs have allowed for illegal immigration into the US to persist.

President Trump has been active in taking measures to keep his campaign promise to limit illegal immigration, one of which was to “build [a] wall and make Mexico pay for it” (Trump). Additionally, President Trump looks to attack the DACA and DAPA program, which may become a point of contention within the committee.

Delegate Positions

VICE PRESIDENT: MIKE PENCE

Mike Pence has been a faithful supporter of the president since he was announced as President Trump’s running mate in July 2016. Following the election, Pence was appointed chairman of the President-elect’s transition team and reportedly held much influence in the administration while acting as a mediator between Trump and congressional Republicans and advising the president in nominating the members of the cabinet. Pence has already made history as the first vice president to cast a tie-breaking vote to confirm a Cabinet member: Betsy DeVos.

SECRETARY OF STATE: REX TILLERSON

Rex Tillerson, before becoming the Secretary of State, was the CEO of ExxonMobil. Strangely enough, Tillerson’s political views differ quite significantly from that of President Trump. He urges “the United States to stay in the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Paris climate accord and [takes] a hard line on Russia,” to name a few of those discrepancies (Miller and Sokolsky). Global peace and international diplomacy are a priority for Tillerson, which may come in conflict with immigration policies against Mexico and some Muslim nations. Due to his conflicting political views with the president, Rex Tillerson may be in danger of being dismissed from his position. Tillerson should thus take great care to balance his personal goals with concession to the President.

SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY: STEVEN MNUCHIN

As a former investment banker, Steven Mnuchin was the perfect option for President Trump to nominate as the Secretary of the Treasury. He had personal connections with President Trump and supported him ever since the beginning of the campaign. His vision for economic revival centers heavily on securing jobs for unemployed Americans. Taking this into consideration, the influx of undocumented workers may prove to be an important point of discussion. In addition, as the Secretary of the Treasury has the ability to control the national budget, Mnuchin can have major impact in discussions over the subsidizing of health care reforms.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: JAMES MATTIS

James Mattis was a former United States Marine Corps general, even serving as a commander during the 2003 Iraq War. Though agreeing with President Trump on numerous issues, Mattis will not shy away from dissenting with the President. He has openly acknowledged the threat that Russia poses to global peace and opposed pulling out of the Iran nuclear deal. With the potential threat of terrorist attacks that immigrants from the Middle East may pose, Mattis will have to work strategically to avoid compromising the safety of his nation.

ATTORNEY GENERAL: JEFF SESSIONS

After serving as Senator for Alabama from 1997, Sessions retired in 2017 in order to serve the Trump administration as Attorney General. While a member of Congress, Sessions was considered one of the most conservative members of the Senate, and his conservative beliefs have been carried on to his newest position. As Attorney General, Sessions has already become known for being a staunch opponent of illegal immigration and sanctuary cities. His moves so far have gained him a reputation for having a “nationalist ideology” and “hard-line views” (Zapotosky and Horwitz).

SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT: BEN CARSON

First rising to fame as a groundbreaking neurosurgeon, Ben Carson first entered the political sphere as a Republican candidate for the US presidential election of 2016. After experiencing struggles in the primaries, however, Carson dropped out and became an outspoken supporter of his former rival, Trump. Carson was then nominated as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) soon after Trump's inauguration. Carson's nomination was met with opposition by Democrats, who voiced concerns regarding Carson's lack of education and experience regarding urban housing matters. In spite of such criticism, Carson was unanimously approved by the HUD Committee. Since coming into office, however, Carson has been the subject of a number of scandals, including using government funds to order the purchase of a \$31,000 dining set for his office (Rosenberg).

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION: BETSY DeVOS

Betsy DeVos's confirmation was swarmed with controversy and required the first ever tie breaking vote for a Cabinet nominee by Vice President Mike Pence, which may have been influenced by the fact that DeVos is a billionaire and conservative activist with no professional experience in schools. Leading up to the 2016 presidential election, DeVos described Trump as an “interloper” and said he “does not represent the Republican party,” which made many call DeVos an unconventional pick by Trump (Brown). Republicans hoped that DeVos, who is known for supporting school choice, school voucher programs, and charter schools, would give more power to states and decrease the Education Department's role in public schools.

SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY: JOHN F. KELLY

A retired four-star marine general, Kelly boasts extensive involvement in the armed forces, both in the field and in bureaucracy. As the former head of the United States Southern Command – a position

known to be less combat-focused than other commands – Kelly gained experience in coordinating humanitarian relief programs. Allegedly, one of the main contributing factors to Kelly’s nomination was the loss of his son, who was killed while on duty in Afghanistan. Despite the fact that Kelly never endorsed Trump during his campaign, Trump is thought to have chosen Kelly as he wanted to nominate a military official who understood the personal costs suffered by every American family who sent their loved ones to war (“John F. Kelly”).

Kelly has previously criticized the Obama Administration’s military policy. For instance, Kelly condemned the opening of combat positions to women, as he believed this would lead to the deterioration of overall physical standards for soldiers. Kelly has also expressed concerns regarding illegal immigration – and as the Secretary of Homeland Security, it is Kelly who will be tasked with carrying out important tenets of Trump’s immigration policies.

DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE: DAN COATS

Dan Coats has had an extensive career in politics, having served in both the House of Representatives and the Senate for the state of Indiana. While in the Senate, he served on the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and later served as US Ambassador to Germany. As Director of National Intelligence, Coats is responsible for directing and overseeing the National Intelligence Program, heading the US Intelligence Community, and advising the National Security Council and Homeland Security Council. Coats also has the ability to influence President Trump through his responsibility of producing the President’s Daily Brief, which is a top-secret document that includes information from various intelligence agencies and is received each morning by the president.

AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS: NIKKI HALEY

Nikki Haley served as Governor of South Carolina and represented the state in the House of Representatives before her nomination as US Ambassador to the United Nations. Her time so far as Ambassador has been marked by her close alignment with President Trump’s views and her high visibility in the public. She has made strong moves at the United Nations, speaking clearly in the Security Council against nations such as North Korea and Iran. A daughter of immigrants, Haley believes in enforcing immigration laws. However, she stated that she would “never support a Muslim ban,” calling it “un-American” (Kim).

DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY: MIKE POMPEO

Mike Pompeo represented Kansas at the House of Representatives where he served from 2011 to 2017 until his nomination as the Director of the CIA. Terrorism and security is a major concern for Pompeo, and as director, his main priority will be to keep ISIS and Syria in check. When it comes to healthcare, Pompeo has voiced negative opinions about the Affordable Care Act (ACA) during his tenure representing Kansas in the House of Representatives.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY: SCOTT PRUITT

A vocal supporter of Trump, Pruitt’s views on environmental policy align almost flawlessly with that of the president. Pruitt believes that human-caused greenhouse gas emissions are not a key factor contributing to climate change. During his campaign to become Oklahoma’s Attorney General, Pruitt received major contributions from petroleum corporations. Pruitt even went so far as to declare himself a “leading advocate against the EPA’s activist agenda” (*About the Attorney General*). Thus when Pruitt was nominated as the head of the EPA, both Trump and Pruitt were met with intense backlash. Even though Pruitt’s nomination was eventually confirmed by the Senate, countless scandals have continued to follow him. Pruitt is thought to have received benefits from energy industry lobbyists, ordered an aide scout to find a Trump hotel mattress, and misused public funds for various extraneous amenities – including \$43,000 for a soundproof phone booth.

Solutions

While each member of President Trump's Cabinet will have their own view on the issues that are debated during the conference, it may be useful to consider some of these suggestions while trying to find answers to the questions posed to the cabinet.

Bipartisanship has always been rare in Washington DC, but some of the cabinet members may want to try an approach that brings together both Democrats and Republicans. In a political climate that is becoming more and more divided with each day, it may be in the interest of the GOP to strike certain compromises with the opposing party.

That being said, the Trump administration's conflicts among the GOP itself must also be examined. Though there are many variables, one of the main contributing factors to Republicans' failure to successfully repeal and replace Obamacare is a lack of consensus among the GOP party itself. If the Trump Administration is able to rally universal Republican support, more consequential changes could be made regarding both health care and immigration policy. Given that Republicans held a majority in both federal legislatures at the time of Trump's election, even exclusively mobilizing the GOP in an efficient manner will have huge implications.

In addition, Cabinet members should consider how they want to implement President Trump's immigration goals. Previous policies like the DACA program, the attempted DREAM Act, and President Barack Obama's plan to introduce the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) should be considered while delegates think of new solutions to control immigration. However, if Cabinet members decide to push for a phase out of current immigration policies, they will also need to take into consideration the people that will be affected by such choices. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that the courts, acting as a check on the other two branches of the government, are always able to declare laws unconstitutional or block executive orders.

Questions to Consider

- Should the Trump Administration take steps to promote bipartisanship? If so, what measures could be used to achieve this?
- Should the Trump Administration move to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ie. Obamacare), and if so, what should replace it?
- What should the Trump Administration's policies on illegal immigration be?
- What should President Trump's stance on Medicaid/Medicare be?
- How might a cabinet member's personal agenda clash with the interests of the President?

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