

# Research Report

**BIDEN CABINET NOMINEES OF COLOR  
HAVE FACED UNEQUAL TREATMENT, SCRUTINY  
THROUGHOUT CONFIRMATION PROCESS**

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President Biden, who has appointed the most diverse Cabinet in U.S. history, has also been met with the slowest confirmation process in recent memory. A review of confirmation data, such as nomination date, confirmation hearing and floor vote schedules, shows that the Senate has confirmed Biden's white nominees at a faster pace than nominees of color.

The analysis comes as Senators ramp up attacks Office of Management and Budget nominee Neera Tanden, Department of Interior nominee Deb Haaland and Health and Human Services Secretary nominee Xavier Becerra.

## A Slow Start: Republican Obstruction

Typically, after a presidential election and the new Senate is sworn in, the upper chamber of Congress spends the weeks leading up to inauguration holding confirmation hearings. This process allows for Cabinet nominees to be confirmed quickly after a President takes office.

However, this year, Republicans fought to overturn the results of the presidential election, and the Senate, under the control of then-Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, held just one hearing before Biden's inauguration. Republicans also used a parliamentary procedure to delay an organizing resolution for the Senate, allowing them to further delay hearings for more than 2 weeks.

According to [VOX's Ian Millhiser](#):

*Twelve of President Ronald Reagan's nominees were confirmed in his first two days in office, as were 13 of President Bill Clinton's nominees, seven of President George W. Bush's, and nine of President Barack Obama's. President Donald Trump's cabinet was confirmed more slowly, but the Senate still respected the tradition of holding confirmation hearings prior to Trump's inauguration.*

## White Nominees Get Heard

As of February 24, 2021, 36 days into the Biden presidency, just 9 of his 22 of Cabinet nominees have been confirmed. While all nominees have been confirmed too slowly, Biden's nominees of color have been treated differently than white nominees:

- White nominees for Biden's Cabinet took an average of **44 days** to go from their announcement as nominees to receiving a Senate hearing; non-white nominees took an average of **57 days**, a differential of **13 days**.

- As of February 24, 2021, white Biden nominees have waited an average of **58 days** to go from being announced as a nominee to receiving their Senate floor vote; non-white Biden nominees have waited an average of **72 days** for their Senate floor vote, a differential of **14 days**.
- As of February 24, 2021, white Biden nominees have waited an average of **14 days** to go from receiving a Senate hearing to receiving a Senate floor vote; it took non-white Biden nominees **19 days** to go from Senate hearing to Senate floor vote, a differential of **5 days**.
- Xavier Becerra waited the longest between announcement and hearing - 79 days - and Linda Thomas-Greenfield waited the longest between announcement and floor vote - 92 days.

## Senators Will Be Judged for Race-Based Double Standard

While we know that nominees of color are being treated differently than their white counterparts, we don't know the extent to which this disparity exists. In the coming days, Senators from both parties will be judged on their conduct. If they continue to hold up, block and oppose Biden's qualified nominees of color, they will be called out for this troubling conduct.

Nominee	Race	Announcement	Hearing	Vote	Days between announcement and hearing	Days between announcement and floor vote	Days between hearing and floor vote
Cecilia Rouse	Nonwhite	30-Nov-20	28-Jan-21	N/A	59	86	27
Marcia Fudge	Nonwhite	10-Dec-20	28-Jan-21	N/A	49	76	27
Linda Thomas-Greenfield	Nonwhite	23-Nov-20	27-Jan-21	23-Feb-21	65	92	27
Katherine Tai	Nonwhite	10-Dec-20	25-Feb-21	N/A	77	76	N/A - Hearing 2/25
Xavier Becerra	Nonwhite	6-Dec-20	23-Feb-21	N/A	79	80	N/A - Hearing 2/24
Debra Haaland	Nonwhite	17-Dec-20	23-Feb-21	N/A	68	69	N/A - Hearing 2/24
Neera Tanden	Nonwhite	30-Nov-20	10-Feb-21	N/A	72	86	14
Michael Regan	Nonwhite	17-Dec-20	3-Feb-21	N/A	48	69	21
Isabel Guzman	Nonwhite	7-Jan-21	3-Feb-21	N/A	27	48	21
Miguel Cardona	Nonwhite	22-Dec-20	3-Feb-21	N/A	43	64	21
Lloyd Austin	Nonwhite	8-Dec-20	19-Jan-21	22-Jan-21	42	45	3
Alejandro Mayorkas	Nonwhite	23-Nov-20	19-Jan-21	2-Feb-21	57	71	14
Jennifer Granholm	White	17-Dec-20	27-Jan-21	N/A	41	69	28
Gina Raimondo	White	7-Jan-21	26-Jan-21	N/A	19	48	29
Merrick Garland	White	7-Jan-21	23-Feb-21	N/A	47	48	1
Marty Walsh	White	7-Jan-21	4-Feb-21	N/A	28	48	20
Tom Vilsack	White	10-Dec-20	2-Feb-21	23-Feb-21	54	75	21
Denis McDonough	White	10-Dec-20	27-Jan-21	8-Feb-21	48	60	12
Pete Buttigieg	White	15-Dec-20	21-Jan-21	2-Feb-21	37	49	12
Janet Yellen	White	30-Nov-20	19-Jan-21	25-Jan-21	50	56	6
Avril Haines	White	23-Nov-20	19-Jan-21	20-Jan-21	57	58	1
Tony Blinken	White	23-Nov-20	19-Jan-21	26-Jan-21	57	64	7
WHITE NOMINEE AVERAGE WAIT TIME (All Nominees, as of 2/24/21)					44	58	14
NONWHITE NOMINEE AVERAGE WAIT TIME (All Nominees, as of 2/24/21)					57	72	19
DIFFERENCE IN AVERAGE WAIT TIME (All Nominees, as of 2/24/21)					13	14	5

Highlighted sections indicate the nominee has no currently scheduled floor vote; 2/24/21 has been used as a stand-in, to indicate the current waiting period.