

# BIDEN'S FIRST 75 DAYS



ACCOUNTABLE<sup>.US</sup>

**HOW SENATE  
REPUBLICANS TRIED**

**— AND FAILED —**

**TO OBSTRUCT HIS  
ADMINISTRATION**

# INTRODUCTION

In November 2020, government watchdog group Accountable.US launched the Accountable Senate War Room with a specific mission: to fight back against Republican senators who were dead-set on sabotaging the incoming Biden administration and its agenda, with a particular focus on calling out the hypocrisy and motivations behind their plans to obstruct President Biden's Cabinet nominees and prevent them from hitting the ground running to help workers and families.

In the months since then, and especially in the 75 days since President Biden was inaugurated, Senate Republicans did everything they could to obstruct, delay, and sabotage Biden's team — but their arguments against these qualified nominees fell flat, and served only to shine a spotlight on the senators' primary motivations: protecting their special interests and corporate donors.

The following report highlights the tactics Republicans used and the motivations behind their obstruction as they attempted to delay President Biden's Cabinet in the months between the election and Inauguration Day and in the first 75 days of the Biden administration. Senate Republicans immediately broke longstanding tradition, deciding to sit on their hands during the lame-duck instead of moving the confirmation process forward while they waited for the Georgia Senate runoff elections to determine how much they'd be able to obstruct the incoming Biden administration. Then, about-to-be Minority Leader McConnell refused to agree to a simple organizing agreement, making outsized demands and obstructing Senate Democrats' ability to take over committees and start doing the work Senate Republicans refused to do while they were in power.

When it came time to obstruct individual nominations, some Senate Republicans weren't coy about the reasoning behind their opposition: their special interest donors demanded it. Senator Cornyn, who has taken \$1 million from Big Pharma, said he wouldn't support Xavier Becerra because he wasn't a pharmaceutical executive like Trump's HHS Secretary Alex Azar, and Senators Daines (R-MT) and Barasso (R-WY), who have each taken \$1.2 million from Big Oil waged a smear campaign against Deb Haaland because they believed she'd be bad for the oil and gas industry. However, these attacks fell flat because the American people understood that the Biden administration was going to upend the status quo that has allowed corporations and special interest groups to have an outsized influence, and that those trying to stop or slow down the administration were doing the bidding on behalf of those special interests.

Senate Republicans spent the first 75 days of this administration prioritizing their special interest allies over the American people, failing to have any meaningful impact on the policymaking process amid unprecedented health and economic crises. Moving forward, they should stand with Democrats in putting workers and families first to deliver real results the American people expect. Read Accountable Senate War Room's 75 Day report to learn more:

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The Accountable Senate War Room launched in the days after President Biden's win, as both the Trump Administration and Senate Republicans began signalling they would obstruct President Biden's administration, particularly his Cabinet nominees.

**RELEASE:** Government Watchdog Launches Senate War Room Demanding Smooth Transition of Power and Swift Confirmation of Biden Cabinet and Staff [[11/10/20](#)]

## POLITICO

**FIRST IN TRANSITION PLAYBOOK:** The government watchdog group Accountable.US, which is funded by progressive donors and foundations, is starting a Senate War Room to pressure lawmakers to quickly approve Biden's nominees to ensure that he has a well-staffed administration. The campaign will include opposition research, digital messaging and rapid response efforts, a spokesperson for the group said. "We agree with Mitch McConnell and will hold him to his word that a new president should have their Cabinet nominees confirmed in a timely fashion," said KYLE HERRIG, president of Accountable.US, in a statement. "Donald Trump may no longer be president come January 20, but the public health and economic crisis he leaves behind will require the complete attention of our new president and a fully staffed cabinet and government." [Politico, [11/09/20](#)]

## THE WRITING ON THE WALL: EARLY DAYS OF OBSTRUCTION

Sensing what was to come early on, Accountable.US President Kyle Herrig issued a warning in an op-ed in USA Today that outlined the harm this obstruction, hyperpartisanship, and hypocrisy could cause, and called for increased accountability of Senate Republicans throughout this process:

## USA TODAY

**USA Today Op-Ed: Republicans Are Ramping Up Hypocrisy And Obstruction. We Can't Let Them Cripple Biden.** Kyle Herrig: "If Senate Republicans get away with this, it would not only be the height of hypocrisy from politicians who did everything possible to jam Trump's inexperienced and often corrupt nominees through the Senate. It would also be a massive setback for the country and would delay, and likely prevent, the incoming administration from doing everything possible to get our country back on track and pull power away from the wealthy and well-connected special interests to help families and communities." [USA Today, [12/16/20](#)]



The obstruction was almost immediate. Days after the election — as President Trump and his allies spread lies about election fraud — officials inside the Administration were refusing to acknowledge President Biden’s win, which “would further delay the official start of Biden’s transition, which cannot communicate with federal agencies or access millions in federal funds until the GSA concludes that Biden is president-elect,” [according to Politico](#).

**RELEASE: Watchdog: Trump Administration’s Obstruction of Transition Resources Is Putting Our National Security, Public Health at Risk** [[11/12/20](#)]

The obstruction didn’t end there. Secretary DeVos was caught urging employees at the Department of Education to “[be the resistance](#)” to the Department of Education. Accountable Senate War Room immediately pushed back:

**RELEASE: Watchdog Group Demands DeVos Stop Obstructing Incoming Administration’s Pro-Student Agenda** [[12/21/20](#)]

## POLITICO

**PROGRESSIVE GROUP ASKS DEVOS TO RETRACT ‘RESIST’ COMMENTS:** Accountable.US, the progressive government watchdog group, is calling on DeVos to retract comments she made last week to career Education Department staff in a meeting to discuss the upcoming transition to the Biden administration. The group asks DeVos [in a letter](#) today “to publicly commit to ceasing any activity between now and Inauguration Day that would obstruct President-elect Biden’s administration from implementing its agenda of prioritizing students, families and public education over corporations and special interests.” [Politico, [12/21/20](#)]

Senate Republicans quickly followed Trump and DeVos’ lead. As control of the Senate remained undetermined ahead of the January 5th runoffs, Senate Republicans began signalling their planned obstruction. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) suggested blocking nominations because Democrats were “[so unfair](#)” to President Trump, while Senator John Barrasso (R-WY) threatened that Biden’s nominees will have to “[run the gauntlet](#)” if Republicans remained in power. Senator Rick Scott (R-FL) also promised an [uphill battle](#) for Biden’s nominees. Other Senators dug right into hypocritical excuses that directly conflicted with their treatment of Trump’s nominees. Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) demanded that “[transparency is non-negotiable](#),” despite having voted for Trump nominees [riddled with conflicts of interests](#), including Education Secretary [Betsy DeVos](#) and Commerce Secretary [Wilbur Ross](#). Some Senate Republicans suddenly took umbrage with tweets by Biden nominees — after four years of ignoring, dismissing, and at times, [refusing to look at](#) Trump’s racist, conspiratorial, and violence-inducing tweets.

**RELEASE:** Rubio, Contradicting His Own 2017 Comments, Signals Intent to Block Biden Cabinet Appointments, Sabotage Incoming Administration's Work. [[11/12/20](#)]

**RELEASE:** Senators' Refusal to Commit to Nominee Hearings "Height of Hypocrisy," Latest Attempt to Sabotage Incoming Administration [[12/02/20](#)]

**RELEASE:** Watchdog Group Jumps on Sen. Senator Rick Scott's "Absurd" Biden Nominee Attack: "He Thinks Budgets Should Prioritize His Wealthy Donors and Special Interest Allies" [[12/3/20](#)]

- **Roll Call HEADLINE:** "In A GOP Senate, Biden's Cabinet Faces A Gantlet" [Roll Call, [12/14/20](#)]
- **CNN HEADLINE:** "Biden Faces Uncertain Outlook For Quick Confirmation Of Cabinet Nominees As Some Republicans Urge Caution" [CNN, [12/22/20](#)]
- **Reuters HEADLINE:** "Biden Cabinet Picks May Face Rough Republican Reception In Senate" [Reuters, [11/24/20](#)]
- **November 2020: Republican Senators Such As Marco Rubio And Tom Cotton Signaled They Would Oppose President-Elect Biden's Cabinet Appointments.** "Republican members of the U.S. Senate fired warning shots to President-elect Joe Biden that they may be prepared to stand in the way of his Cabinet appointments, despite the long-held tradition of a new president having the right to choose who will run government agencies. The threats, from senators including Marco Rubio and Tom Cotton, highlighted the importance of a pair of runoff elections in Georgia in early January that will determine whether Republicans keep majority control of the Senate, or cede it to Democrats after six years in the minority." [Reuters, [11/24/20](#)]
- **Washington Post, November 2020: Senators Rob Portman And Lindsey Graham "Declined To Commit" To Holding Confirmation Hearings For OMB Nominee Neera Tanden.** "The two Senate Republicans poised to lead committees that would hold Tanden's confirmation hearings both declined to commit to doing so. One of them — Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio), who is in line to chair the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee — also said he hopes that Biden will decide not to formally nominate Tanden.' [...] The other potential committee chairman

who would oversee Tanden's hearings, Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.), chuckled when asked about Tanden on Monday, noting that she in the past has had a lot to say about him. He also declined to commit to hearings for her, saying only that he'll 'cross that bridge when we get there.'" [Washington Post, [11/30/20](#)]

- **Senator Kevin Cramer (R-ND) Said Cabinet Confirmations On Environmental Positions Would Be A "Brawl" Where The Republicans Would "Stand Our Ground And Fight The Fight."** "President-elect Joe Biden's nominees to lead the EPA and Interior Department could face tough Senate questioning over their past opposition to fossil-fuel projects. 'We will be in a bit of a brawl,' said Senator Kevin Cramer of oil- and coal-rich North Dakota, during an appearance on Fox Business Network's 'Varney & Co.' 'We're going to have to stand our ground and fight the fight,' Cramer said." [Detroit News, [12/18/20](#)]

## PRECIOUS TIME WASTED: LAME DUCK

Shortly after, threats turned to action – or, rather, inaction. Senate Republicans began to make good on their promises to obstruct President Biden's cabinet. Anticipating victory in the Georgia Senate runoffs, Senate Republicans blew up the longstanding tradition of moving through the 'advise and consent' process on a president's cabinet nominees in the months between the election and Inauguration, known as the "lame duck" period.

At the same time, Senate Republicans tried to jam through one last controversial Trump nominee only to sit on their hands when it came time to move forward with Biden's roster of qualified and crisis-tested nominees.

**RELEASE:** What Health Crisis? McConnell Senate Tees Up Lame Duck Confirmation of Trump's Extremist Fed Board Pick. [[11/13/20](#)]

We don't have to wonder what would happen if the shoe was on the other foot. As it became increasingly clear that a 50-50 Senate was possible, the Accountable Senate War Room dug into how the last tied Senate handled nominees. In 2001, ahead of President George W. Bush's Inauguration, Democrats had control of a tied Senate. Senator Tom Daschle (D-SD), Senate majority leader at the time, promised to "[work in good faith](#)" and was praised by Republicans for working to get the vast majority of Bush's nominees confirmed by or shortly after Inauguration Day. The *Washington Times* [reported](#) "even veteran Republican officials" praised former Senator Daschle as "classy" and "gracious."

**REPORT:** Flashback, 2001: In 50-50 Senate Under Democratic Control, Bush's Nominees "Breezed Through Their Senate Committee Hearings" [[1/21/21](#)]

- Over 85 percent of Bush's Cabinet nominees had a hearing before Inauguration Day, and, on average, the Democratic Senate gave Bush's nominees a hearing within three weeks of their announcement.
- On average, Bush nominees were confirmed less than a month after their announcement
- As Democratic Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle predicted, Bush was able to assemble a full Cabinet a mere 12 days after taking office as half of Bush's nominees were confirmed via voice vote "just hours" after his inauguration
- Then-Republican Senate Leader Trent Lott praised the Democratic Majority Leader Tom Daschle

- **Then-Democratic Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle On Inauguration Day 2000: "Ultimately, I Think, Most Nominees Are Going To Be Confirmed Quite Easily."** "JENNINGS: Can you--can you assure the public now that every one of his nominees will be confirmed both by the respective committees and the Senate? Senator DASCHLE: I don't know that I can assure it. I think it's a--it's a very strong likelihood. I don't know that there will be any difficulties. Obviously the work hasn't been completed yet, but assuming that we have not had any glitches along the way, I don't think there's going to be any difficulty ultimately, and the confirmation of most of the nominees--there will be a vigorous debate on Mr. Ashcroft, maybe Ms. Collins, but ultimately, I think, most nominees are going to be confirmed quite--quite easily." [ABC News, 1/20/01]
- **New York Times: Bush's Nominees "Breezed Through Their Senate Committee Hearings," Which Were Held Over The Two Weeks Before Inauguration.** "Senate approval of Bush's nominees, who had breezed through their Senate committee hearings held over the past two weeks, is the final step before they are formally sworn into office." [New York Times, 1/20/01]
- **Final Bush Cabinet Nominee Hearing Date Was January 24, 2001, For Both Labor Secretary Elaine Chao And Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta.** [United States Senate, "George W. Bush Cabinet Nominations, accessed 1/12/21]

Of course, Senate Republicans couldn't start moving nominees forward while also refusing to accept the results of the election. Senate Republicans blocked a simple resolution acknowledging the transfer of power, cowering to President Trump and his allies and they began to sow the seeds of doubt in the results of the election. Even after Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and others caved, senators like Ron Johnson (R-WI) continued to raise questions about election security and give air to debunked conspiracy

theories. All the while, other Senate Republicans continued to threaten obstruction and delays ahead of the Georgia runoffs.

**RELEASE:** Republican Congressional Leaders Block Resolution Acknowledging Transfer of Power to Appease Trump, Special Interest Allies. [[12/8/20](#)]

**RELEASE:** As Republican Leadership Acknowledges Biden As President-Elect, Senator Johnson Still Attempting to Undermine Confidence In Election [[12/16/20](#)]

**RELEASE:** Grassley Threatens Biden Administration, American People By Suggesting Republicans Are Going to Play Politics with Biden Nominees. [[12/17/20](#)]

**RELEASE:** Watchdog Group Calls Out Senator Barrasso's Hypocrisy and Obstructionism Around Incoming Biden Nominees. [[12/21/20](#)]

- **Politico HEADLINE:** "GOP Leaders Block Measure Affirming Biden As President-Elect" [Politico, [12/8/20](#)]
- **Texas Tribune HEADLINE:** "After Riot At The U.S. Capitol, Ted Cruz Gets Fierce Blowback For His Role In Sowing Doubts About Joe Biden's Victory." [The Texas Tribune, [01/07/21](#)]
- **Downplaying Senators' Comments Or Lack Thereof Acknowledging Biden As The President-Elect, McConnell Said, "What We All Say About It Is Frankly Irrelevant. All Of It Will Happen Right On Time."** "Asked about the General Services Administration's refusal to ascertain Biden's victory, which triggers important components of the transition, McConnell did not push for the Trump administration to begin that process but said 'we're going to have an orderly transfer from this administration to the next one.' 'What we all say about it is frankly irrelevant,' he said, adding, 'All of it will happen right on time, and we will swear in the next administration on January 20th.'" [NBC News, [11/17/20](#)]
- **January 3, 2021: Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) Doubled Down On Call To Investigate Voter Fraud In 2020 Presidential Election, Claiming "Tens Of Millions Of People"**

**Did Not View Election As Legitimate.** U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson doubled down on his calls to investigate allegations of voter fraud in the 2020 presidential election in a heated interview Sunday that, at times, devolved into shouting. The interview, on NBC's 'Meet the Press,' came a day after Johnson announced he would join an effort with 10 Republican senators to object to the certification of the Electoral College count when Congress meets to do so Wednesday. [...] "The fact of the matter is that we have a(n) unsustainable state of affairs in this country where we have tens of millions of people that do not view this election result as legitimate,' Johnson said." [WPR, [1/3/21](#)]

- **Kansas City Star Editorial Board: Besides Trump, No One Is More Responsible For The Insurrection Than Hawley, Who "Was First To Say That He Would Oppose The Certification Of Joe Biden's Electoral College Win" Which "Set Off Much That Followed."** "No one other than President Donald Trump himself is more responsible for Wednesday's coup attempt at the U.S. Capitol than one Joshua David Hawley, the 41-year-old junior senator from Missouri, who put out a fundraising appeal while the siege was underway. [...] Hawley was first to say that he would oppose the certification of Joe Biden's Electoral College win. That action, motivated by ambition, set off much that followed – the rush of his fellow presidential aspirant Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and other members of the Sedition Caucus to put a show of loyalty to the president above all else." [Kansas City Star, [01/06/21](#)]

## SENATE REPUBLICANS DUST OFF AN OLD FAVORITE: HYPOCRISY


As Inauguration Day approached, President Biden was slated to face unprecedented obstruction thanks to Senate Republicans who disregarded the longstanding tradition of preparing the incoming administration to hit the ground running. This was also in stark contrast to their positioning four years ago, when they lamented about a president's right to deference in choosing his Cabinet. The Accountable Senate War Room was there to call out this blatant hypocrisy:



Accountable.US  
@accountable\_us

PSA: @Senatemajldr Mitch McConnell and other Republican leaders have previously insisted that presidents deserve to have their nominees confirmed for Cabinet and other administration posts.

*This time should be no different.*



Senator Marco Rubio  
January 23, 2017 · 🌐

I believe the president is entitled to significant deference when it comes to his choices for the cabinet. I also believe given the uncertainty surrounding the future direction of our foreign policy that a higher degree of scrutiny is justified in evaluating whoever is nominated to serve as secretary of state.

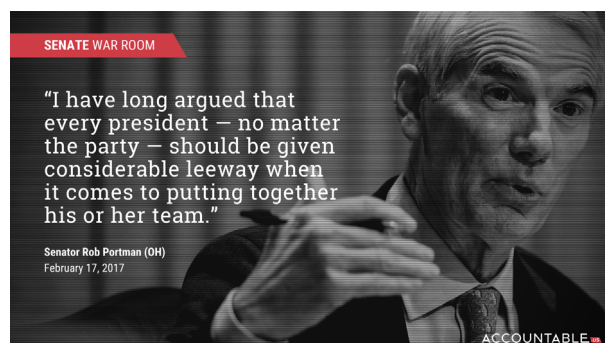
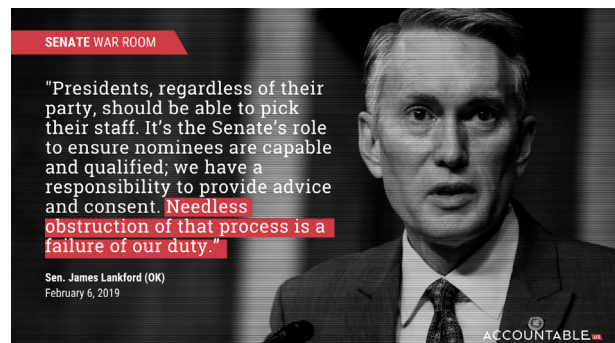
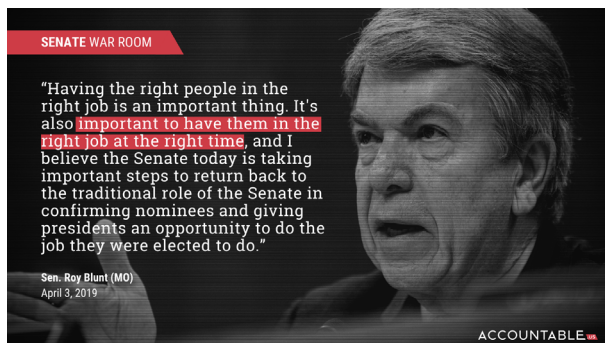
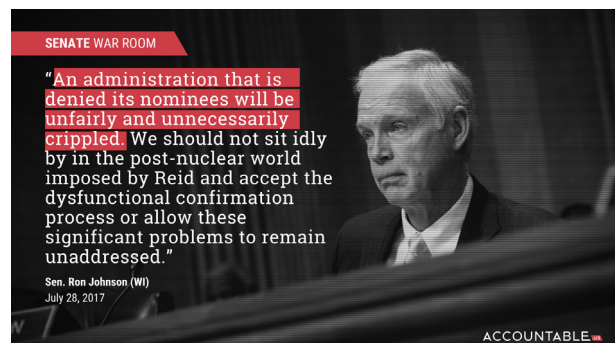
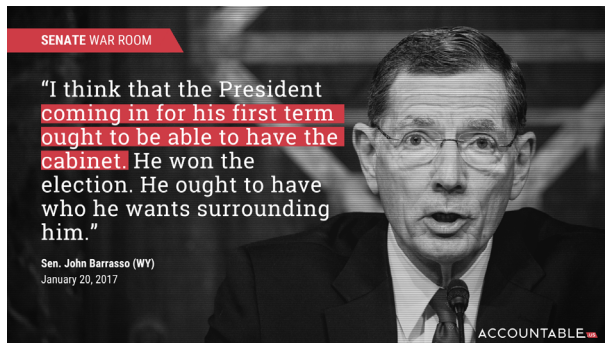
Our foreign policy is at its best and most effective when it is grounded in the moral principles and values that have defined us since our founding. President Reagan made democracy and liberty central to his foreign policy. He challenged the 'evil empire,' and he demanded they 'tear down this wall.'

But today there are calls to move our foreign policy in a direction that views geopolitics as a series of deals to be made, even if they come at the expense of our values or require us to abandon our traditional allies. Therefore, my consideration of Mr. Tillerson's nomination focused not just on his qualifications, but also on his views about the role of democracy and human rights in shaping our foreign policy.

I have no doubts about Mr. Tillerson's qualifications and patriotism. He has an impressive record of leadership and the proven ability to manage a large and complex organization. What I focused on from the beginning is whether as secretary of state he will make the defense of liberty, democracy and human rights a priority.



## Accountable Senate War Room Quote Graphics:

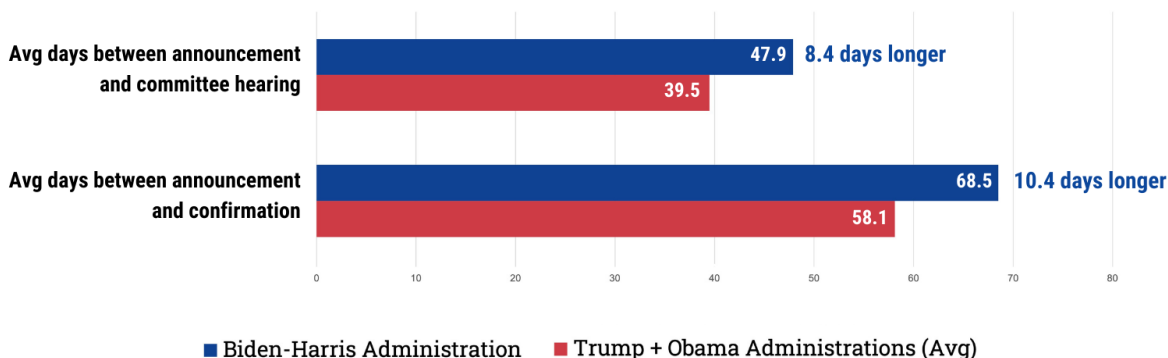


Senate Republicans were successful in delaying a timely confirmation of President Biden's Cabinet, especially in the first few days of his presidency – which Accountable Senate War Room [reviewed](#) ahead of President Biden's Inauguration. Biden entered office with only one Cabinet post confirmed on his first day, the least of any President in recent history. And though President Trump only had two confirmed Cabinet posts on day one, the Senate had held hearings for 12 of his Cabinet positions ahead of Inauguration Day, whereas President Biden only had 4. Many of President Trump's nominees were delayed ultimate confirmation as a result of [legitimate concerns](#) from ethics watchdogs about conflicts of interest and complicated financial entanglements from the "[richest Cabinet](#)."

**RELEASE: Watchdog Group Releases Review of Senate GOP Failure to Keep Nominations On Track. [\[1/19/21\]](#)**

- **For 15 Traditional Cabinet Offices, Biden Cabinet Nominees Received Just 4 Pre-Inauguration Senate Hearings Compared To 12 For Trump, 11 For Obama, 12 For George W. Bush, And 14 For Bill Clinton.** George H. W. Bush nominees received 2 hearings, while Ronald Reagan nominees received 13. [Washington Post, [1/18/21](#)]
- **Reuters: Biden Cabinet Nominees Faced Delays During Transition Period Despite Senate Typically Holding Such Hearings To Ensure Smooth Transition.** "The U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee said on Wednesday it had scheduled a confirmation hearing for President-elect Joe Biden's nominee to be director of national intelligence, after delays in the transition process for some nominees. [...] It is typical for the Senate to hold such hearings before inauguration to help assure a smooth transition." [Reuters, [1/13/21](#)]
- **Bloomberg: Confirmation Delays Were Seriously Impacted By McConnell's "Decision To Hold Almost No Confirmation Hearings During The Period From Jan. 3 To Jan. 20, When He Was Still Majority Leader."** "That does not appear to be Biden's fault. He was probably slowed a bit by Trump's refusal to allow the transition to proceed normally, but the more serious issue was Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell's decision to hold almost no confirmation hearings during the period from Jan. 3 to Jan. 20, when he was still majority leader, and then for a while after that when he stalled the organizing resolution needed for Democrats to become committee chairs in the current Senate session. Since then, the new (slim) Democratic majority has been playing catch-up." [Bloomberg, [03/16/21](#)]

## Biden Cabinet Obstruction, Compared.



## IN THE MIDST OF A REPUBLICAN-ABETTED INSURRECTION, DELAYS CONTINUED

The delay of President Biden's Cabinet was particularly egregious given the national security concerns stemming from the deadly insurrection that President Trump and some Republicans in the Senate helped incite on January 6th. As some of Trump's allies in Congress were preparing to object to the certification of the election, Accountable Senate War Room released a memo outlining how this futile protest subverted the will of the American people, but unfortunately fit a pattern for Senate Republicans. But even after a violent mob overtook the U.S. Capitol, as well as the largest cybersecurity hack in U.S. history, Senate Republicans continued to obstruct President Biden's nominees charged with protecting the U.S. from enemies, foreign and domestic.

**MEMO:** Electoral College Certification Protest Is The Latest Step By Republicans To Ignore American People For Their Own Personal Gain. [\[1/6/21\]](#)

**MEMO:** Continued Delays to Confirmation Process of Biden Nominees Are A Threat to National Security and Public Safety. [[1/11/21](#)]

**RELEASE:** Delays on Biden's Secretary of State Nominee Put National Security At Risk. [[1/11/21](#)]

**REPORT:** Hypocrisy of Republican Senators Who Once Urged the Speedy Confirmation of Cabinet Members for National Security. [[1/13/21](#)]

## ROLL CALL

**Roll Call Op-Ed by Jim Manley: Continued Delays In Confirming Biden's Cabinet Risk National Security And Public Health.** "For the good of the country, as well as the viability of their own party in the wake of assault on the Capitol by Trump supporters, Senate Republicans must commit to respecting the will of the American people and protecting the security of our country by quickly confirming Biden's nominees. Every day delayed is a threat to national security, public health and American lives and livelihood – and raises more questions about whether Republicans have learned any lessons from the tragic events of last week. [Roll Call, [1/14/21](#)]

## THE AMERICAN INDEPENDENT

**GOP Senators Suddenly Don't Care If Anyone's In Charge Of National Security.** "The contrast is stark, given the previous push by Republicans, who currently control the Senate, to ensure Donald Trump's national security team was ready to go on day one."

"According to a report from the anti-corruption watchdog group Accountable.US, numerous Republicans who are current members of the Senate pressed hard for Trump's nominees to be confirmed quickly back in 2017, yet have been relatively silent as Biden prepares to take office with a pending Cabinet and national security team." [The American Independent, [1/19/21](#)]

- **2017: Sen. John Cornyn Argued That Leaving The CIA Director Position Vacant Was "Jeopardizing Our National Security."** "Unfortunately Senate Democrats continue to obstruct other well-qualified, non-controversial nominees in a spiteful attempt to deny the President his team. It's particularly alarming that Democrats are holding up a vote on the President's nominee to be CIA Director, leaving this crucial post vacant and jeopardizing our national security." [Senator John Cornyn, - Press Release, [1/23/17](#)]
- **2017: Sen. Marco Rubio Argued "It Would Be Against Our National Interests" To Have Rex Tillerson's Confirmation As Secretary Of State "Unnecessarily Delayed Or Embroiled In Controversy."** "Therefore, my consideration of Mr. Tillerson's nomination focused not just on his qualifications, but also on his views about the role of democracy and human rights in shaping our foreign policy. [...] But in making my decision on his nomination, I must balance these concerns with his extensive experience and success in international commerce, and my belief that the president is entitled to significant deference when it comes to his choices for the cabinet. Given the uncertainty that exists both at home and abroad about the direction of our foreign policy, it would be against our national interests to have this confirmation unnecessarily delayed or embroiled in controversy." [Facebook - Senator Marco Rubio, [1/23/17](#)]
- **Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC) Said Of Trump CIA Director Nominee Mike Pompeo's Confirmation, "We Ought To Provide This President A CIA Director Who's In Charge" And "They Need To Know Tomorrow Who's Heading That Agency."** "A early tiff emerged Friday over the nomination of Rep. Mike Pompeo, R-Kansas, selected to serve as CIA director. Several Democratic senators raised objections to proceeding with Pompeo's confirmation without an extended floor debate, even though they could not block an up-or-down vote. [...] Sen. Richard Burr, R-North Carolina, the Intelligence Committee's chairman, said Friday that there was no reason for delay. 'We owe it to the country to have a vote today,' he said. 'We ought to provide this president a CIA director who's in charge. An acting director ... it's just not sufficient, whether it's for a day or whether it's for a week. Right now, they need the leadership that's permanent. They need to know tomorrow who's heading that agency.'" [Bangor Daily News, [01/21/17](#)]
- **Majority Whip John Cornyn Said It Was Important That AG Nominee Jeff Sessions "Be Put In Place On A Timely Basis For The Safety Of Our Communities."** "Today on the Senate floor U.S. Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) pressed Senate Democrats not to slow-walk the President-elect's nominations for purely political reasons. Excerpts of Sen. Cornyn's remarks are below, and video of his remarks can be found here. [...] 'I mentioned the national security nominations that the President-Elect has indicated, and one of those first ones was Senator Sessions. It's really important that people like Senator Sessions, the Attorney General nominee, be put in place on a timely basis for the safety of our communities.'" [Senator John Cornyn – Press Release, [1/5/17](#)]



- **Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI): “An Administration That Is Denied Its Nominees Will Be Unfairly And Unnecessarily Crippled.”** “Our country is facing enormous challenges. An administration that is denied its nominees will be unfairly and unnecessarily crippled. We should not sit idly by in the post-nuclear world imposed by Reid and accept the dysfunctional confirmation process or allow these significant problems to remain unaddressed.” [Washington Post, [7/28/17](#)]

## MCCONNELL’S LAST STAND: ORGANIZING RESOLUTION DELAYS

Even after President Biden had his national security team in place, Senate Republicans still found ways to obstruct the rest of the Biden’s Cabinet. In his new role as minority leader, Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) tried to hold on to his last vestiges of power by refusing to agree to a simple organizing resolution that would give Democrats the committee gavels to begin the process of confirming President Biden’s nominees — a task he and his party refused to do while they remained in power.

**RELEASE:** McConnell Obstruction Continues As He Refuses to Agree to Organizing Resolution, Further Slowing Down Biden’s Cabinet Nominees. [[1/21/21](#)]

**RELEASE:** McConnell Backed Down on Initial Obstruction, Now He Must Allow Committees to Quickly Confirm Nominees. [[1/26/21](#)]

After losing control of the Senate, Republican Senators channeled their energy into blocking or delaying specific nominees.

**Below is an in-depth look at the nominees who faced the biggest hurdles from Senate Republicans:**

## ALEJANDRO MAYORKAS, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

As the U.S. was grappling with multiple crises earlier this year, including the growing threats from those emboldened by the deadly insurrection at the Capitol, the aftermath of the massive Russian cybersecurity attack, a chaotic initial vaccine rollout, and the daunting task of reuniting families that were separated by the previous Administration, it



had never been more critical for an incoming administration to have a strong and swiftly-confirmed DHS Secretary ready to tackle our nation's most crucial emergency response challenges. Instead, some Senate Republicans set their sights on President Biden's DHS nominee, Alejandro Mayorkas – doing everything they could to delay his inevitable confirmation as long as possible.

**RELEASE:** As Hawley Once Again Puts National Security At Risk, Senate Must Reject His Antics and Quickly Confirm Mayorkas. [1/21/21]

**RELEASE: ROUNDUP:** A Week of Obstruction Leaves Biden Administration Without Confirmed Cabinet, Including Key National Security Roles. [1/22/21]

**PRESS CALL:** Experts Discuss National Security Threats Caused by Continued Obstruction Of Homeland Security Official from Senate Republicans. [1/29/21]

**Accountable.US** @accountable\_us · Feb 2

HAPPENING NOW: The Senate will vote on Alejandro Mayorkas' nomination to serve as Secretary of @DHSgov.

Here's why this confirmation and a fully-staffed DHS are so critical to the American people right now:

**THE COST OF OBSTRUCTION**



**THE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY IS TASKED WITH...**

- Reuniting the families separated under former President Trump's cruel immigration policies
- Countering terrorism and cybersecurity threats, enhancing national security
- Building resilience and aiding response to national disasters including the COVID-19 pandemic

Nominee: Alejandro Mayorkas

ACCOUNTABLE.US

**Accountable.US** @accountable\_us · Feb 18

Flying to a resort in Mexico is not the first time @SenTedCruz has abdicated his responsibilities to Texans in the middle of a crisis.

He also opposed confirming Sec. Mayorkas, the current head of @DHSgov and a leader in supporting vaccine rollout efforts across TX and the U.S.

**REUTERS**

2020 CANDIDATE SLIDESHOWS JANUARY 19, 2021 / 3:10 PM / UPDATED 2 MONTHS AGO

**Senator Hawley blocks quick consideration of Biden homeland security nominee**

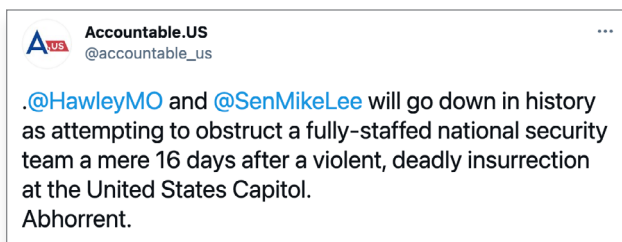
- **Mayorkas Had Been Confirmed Three Times By The Senate Prior To 2021.** "The confirmation process is not unfamiliar to Mayorkas. He has been confirmed three times by the Senate, though no Republican voted for him in 2013 for his most recent role at the department." [CNN, 12/15/20]

## THE UNIQUE DANGERS POSED BY SENATOR HAWLEY

The Accountable Senate War Room paid particular attention to Senator Josh Hawley's (R-MO) obstruction around Mayorkas and President Biden's nominees as a whole. The Senator was a key player in helping incite the deadly January 6th insurrection and instead of reflecting on the damage he instigated, Senator Hawley decided to do everything he could to hamstring DHS, the very department responsible for stopping violent insurrection attempts and other national security threats.

**RELEASE:** Watchdog Group: The American People Shouldn't Have to Pay the Price Because Hawley Feels the Need to Pander to Extreme Base. [1/19/21]

**RELEASE:** As Hawley Once Again Puts National Security At Risk, Senate Must Reject His Antics and Quickly Confirm Mayorkas. [1/21/21]



**RELEASE:** "Hawley Dozen" — The Missouri Senator Has Voted Against Every Single Biden Cabinet Nominee So Far. [3/2/21]

## MERRICK GARLAND, ATTORNEY GENERAL

President Biden's Attorney General nominee, Merrick Garland, ultimately received broad, bipartisan support on his nomination. But that didn't stop Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and others from delaying his confirmation hearing and floor vote as long as they could.

## COMMON DREAMS

### **Lindsey Graham Under Fire for Latest Blockade of Merrick Garland's Senate Confirmation.**

"Graham's fresh blockade also drew criticism from Mairead Lynn, spokesperson for the government watchdog group Accountable.US's Senate War Room campaign. 'Since apparently it wasn't enough for Senate Republicans to refuse Merrick Garland a hearing when he was nominated to the Supreme Court—now they are delaying his hearing to head up the Justice Department,' Lynn said in a statement." [Common Dreams, [2/2/21](#)]

- **Salon: Lindsey Graham Under Fire For Blocking Merrick Garland: Does This Sound Familiar?** "It's well past time for this obstruction to end,' Lynn said, 'and if Sen. Graham refuses to work in good faith to quickly confirm President Biden's highly qualified nominees, then it's time for him to step aside and let more serious legislators get to work.'" [Salon, [2/3/21](#)]
- **Senate Judiciary Republicans are expressing faux outrage over Merrick Garland's potential to politicize the Dept. of Justice. As in, exactly what Jeff Sessions and Bill Barr did—where was this concern when the same senators confirmed them?** [[2/22/21](#)]

**RELEASE: Attorney General Nominee Continues to Face GOP Roadblocks to Confirmation.** [[3/4/21](#)]

## DEBRA HAALAND, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

However, when it came to the staunchest Republican opposition, Deb Haaland, Xavier Becerra, and Neera Tanden faced the brunt of it. Congresswoman Deb Haaland made history when President Biden nominated her as the nation's first Native American to serve in a Cabinet. However, her confirmation was still an uphill battle.

The attacks on Haaland were almost immediate and the loudest voices of opposition were those backed by Big Oil. These same senators who wholeheartedly supported President Trump's conflict-of-interest riddled former oil lobbyist turned-Interior Secretary David Bernhardt launched smear campaigns hoping to sink Haaland's confirmation, ultimately voting against her because they knew she could take on their oil and gas special interest donors.

**RELEASE: Daines Favors Special Interests Over Montanans By Opposing Haaland for Interior Secretary.** [[2/8/21](#)]

**RELEASE:** As Millions in Texas Go Without Heat, Senator Daines Spreads Misinformation to Attack Interior Nominee Haaland. [2/16/21]

## E&E NEWS

**Interior: Haaland's Allies Gird For Tense Confirmation Hearing.** "At the same time, Accountable.US is rolling out a [10-page report](#) detailing the oil and gas industry's hold on the 10 Republicans who sit on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. It is a catalogue of past statements, bills introduced, votes cast and, most important of all, checks cashed, all designed to show how the lawmakers are biased in their opposition to Haaland. According to the group's analysis, the Republican committee members cumulatively took over \$1.4 million from oil and gas interests between 2019 and 2020. Their combined haul from these interests, over the course of their congressional careers, accounts for nearly \$8.8 million." [E&E News, 2/22/21]

**REPORT:** GOP Senators Took Nearly \$8.8M From Oil And Gas, Then Obstructed Biden's Interior Secretary Nominee And Environmental Agenda. [2/22/21]

**Accountable.US**  
@accountable\_us

.@EnergyGOP vs. Deb Haaland in oil and gas donations...

Who would you rather make decisions concerning the future health of our planet?  
#ConfirmHaaland

**CAREER CONTRIBUTIONS FROM BIG OIL & GAS**

SENATOR	2020 CYCLE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OIL & GAS	CAREER CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OIL & GAS
Bill Cassidy	\$306,127	\$1,681,447
Lisa Murkowski	\$46,250	\$1,530,644
James Lankford	\$19,400	\$1,266,270
Steve Daines	\$549,567	\$1,179,260
John Barrasso	\$68,137	\$1,169,103
John Hoeven	\$20,367	\$690,170
Mike Lee	\$8,755	\$366,400
Cindy Hyde-Smith	\$155,988	\$357,439
Jim Risch	\$100,097	\$326,547
Roger Marshall	\$162,151	\$209,233
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,436,839</b>	<b>\$8,776,513</b>

**\$0**

**Jennifer Bendery** ✓  
@jbendery

Replying to @jbendery

As Deb Haaland's confirmation hearing gets underway, here's a handy guide to how much money every Republican senator on this committee takes from the oil and gas industry.

Via Accountable Senate War Room.

SENATOR	2020 CYCLE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OIL & GAS	CAREER CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OIL & GAS
<a href="#">Bill Cassidy</a>	\$306,127	\$1,681,447
<a href="#">Lisa Murkowski</a>	\$46,250	\$1,530,644
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,436,839</b>	<b>\$8,776,513</b>

**Jennifer Bendery** @jbendery

Replying to @jbendery

BTW here's how much money Risch and all the other GOP senators on this committee have taken from the oil and gas industry. Something to keep in mind as they try to cast Haaland as "radical" for wanting to protect public lands as Interior sec.

Via Accountable Senate War Room.

SENATOR	2020 CYCLE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OIL & GAS	CAREER CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OIL & GAS
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,436,839</b>	<b>\$8,776,513</b>

**RELEASE:** As Energy Committee Votes on Haaland Nomination, Opposition is Coming from Members Who Have Taken More Than \$8 Million From Big Oil. [3/4/21]

**RELEASE:** Daines' Hold on Haaland Nomination is a Big Show for Oil and Gas Donors. [3/9/21]

**Accountable.US** @accountable\_us · Mar 15

Deb Haaland just made history as the first Native American person to be confirmed to the U.S. Cabinet no thanks to #BigOil-tied Republican senators who fought her confirmation every step of the way.

Today, people – not polluters – are victorious. #ConfirmHaaland



**DEB HAALAND**  
UNITED STATES  
SECRETARY OF  
THE INTERIOR

✓ **CONFIRMED**

ACCOUNTABLE.US

**RELEASE: Haaland Confirmed: How She Overcame Attacks from Oil-Backed Senators to Make History. [3/15/21]**

## NATIVE NEWS ONLINE

**Praise for Deb Haaland Becoming Interior Secretary from Around the Country.** "With her confirmation to become the 54th secretary of the Department of the Interior, Rep. Deb Haaland (Pueblo of Laguna) will be the first American Indian in history as a presidential cabinet secretary." [3/16/21]

- **HEADLINE: Daines Vows To Block Confirmation Of First Native American Interior Secretary.** [Missoula Current, [02/09/21](#)]
- **HEADLINE: "'She Became An Easy Target': GOP Opposition To Haaland Rankles Native Americans"** [Politico, [2/22/21](#)]
- **HEADLINE: "Republicans put procedural delay on Haaland's nomination"** [The Hill, [3/9/21](#)]
- **HEADLINE: "Republicans Call Deb Haaland A 'Radical.' Polls Show Their Views On Climate Are Out Of The Mainstream."** [The Washington Post, [02/27/21](#)]
- **HEADLINE: "How Deb Haaland's Confirmation Bid Became A 'Proxy Fight' Over Fossil Fuels."** [The Guardian, [02/28/21](#)]
- **February 2020: Daines Said He Would Block Haaland's Confirmation Unless His Demands For Oil And Gas Industry Were Met.** DAINES: "'After our conversation, I'm deeply concerned with the Congresswoman's support on several radical issues that will hurt Montana, our way of life, our jobs and rural America, including her support for the Green New Deal and President Biden's oil and gas moratorium, as well as her opposition to the Keystone XL pipeline. [...] Unless my concerns are addressed, I will block her confirmation.'" [Office of Senator Steve Daines, [2/5/21](#)]
- **Barrasso: "If You Want Accountability And Not Just A Rubber Stamp For A Joe Biden Cabinet, You Need To Have People Like Me As Chairman Of The Energy Committee."** BARRASSO: "We have a role to advise and consent on these nominees, which is why the election coming up in Georgia is so critical in the control of the Senate, why I wanna make sure that David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler get elected there. If you want accountability and not just a rubber stamp for a Joe Biden Cabinet, you need to have people like me as chairman of the energy committee." [FOX News, [12/20/20](#)] (VIDEO)



## XAVIER BECERRA, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Xavier Becerra, President Biden's pick for Health and Human Services (HHS), was another nominee that faced partisan, hypocritical, and damaging obstruction from Senate Republicans. While they knew they could no longer stop most of President Biden's nominees from being confirmed, one Republican official close to Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) stated that Becerra "[ought to be the one who goes down](#)," turning sinking his confirmation into a concerted effort amongst many members of the Republican caucus. Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) said the quiet part out loud when he [suggested](#) Becerra wasn't qualified because he wasn't a pharmaceutical executive like President Trump's HHS Secretary, Alex Azar.

The attacks kept coming. Heritage Action for America, a right-wing [group known for doing the bidding for Big Pharma](#), released its own ads attacking Becerra in a desperate move to protect the pharmaceutical industry's bottom line. Senator Cotton felt so strongly in his opposition to Becerra that he even used his own campaign funds to launch false and misleading attack ads against the nominee in the hopes of tanking his confirmation. This led to Accountable Senate War Room launching its own [ad](#) to set the record straight on who Senator Cotton was really advocating for in his fight against Becerra: Big Pharma.

Despite the deadly ongoing pandemic that has taken the lives of over 500,000 Americans, created one of the worst unemployment crises in our country's history, and violently forced millions into poverty, Senate Republicans stopped at nothing to obstruct, delay, and smear the confirmation of Xavier Becerra – delaying leadership in the department that oversees the pandemic response and vaccine distribution – by pulling out one flimsy objection after another to distract from their fear that Becerra will take on the special interests funding their campaigns.

**RELEASE:** Senator Cornyn Admits He Believes Health Secretary Should Be In The Pocket of Big Pharma. [[12/8/20](#)]

**RELEASE:** After Overseeing Biggest Medicare Fraud In History, Sen Senator Rick Scott Doesn't Want to Vote on Health Nominee That Would Crack Down on Medicare Fraud. [[12/9/20](#)]

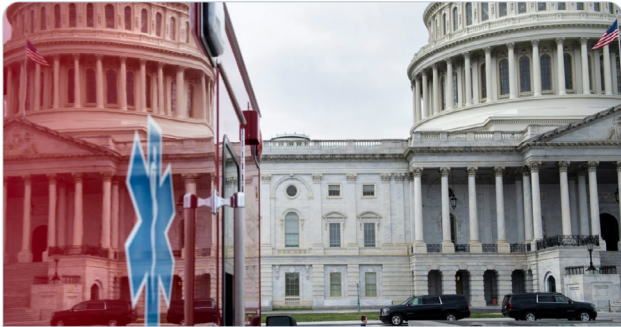
**REPORT:** Senator Cornyn's Hypocrisy and Planned Obstructionism On Behalf of Special Interest Allies. [[12/14/20](#)]

**REPORT: Delaying Confirmation Of Biden's HHS Nominee Could Impede Administration's Ability To Fight Covid-19 Pandemic. [1/28/21]**

**Accountable.US** @accountable\_us

We won't mince words: Obstructing the confirmation of Becerra to serve as Secretary of @HHSgov in the middle of a deadly pandemic is the \*definition\* of malpractice by Senate Republicans.

Read more in Accountable Senate War Room's new report:



New Report Highlights How Delays of Health Secretary Could Impede Admini...  
Senate Republicans' obstruction of Biden's HHS Secretary nominee Xavier Becerra could leave HHS without top leadership — possibly for weeks New ...  
accountable.us

**Accountable.US** @accountable\_us · Feb 3

59 days \*and counting\* since President Biden tapped Becerra to lead Health and Human Services in the middle of a once-in-a-generation pandemic.

Still no hearings.

#DelayEndangersLives



**Accountable.US** @accountable\_us · Feb 3

In 2017, Trump's pick to lead @HHSgov had a Senate hearing on Jan 18.

Today is Feb 3, a pandemic that has taken 446K lives rages on, and President Biden's pick for Sec of @HHSgov has yet to receive a hearing.

Worse: His hearings haven't been scheduled.

#DelayEndangersLives



**RELEASE: 60 Days of Delay and Counting: As Pandemic Rages On, Senate Republicans Obstruct Biden's Health Secretary Nominee. [2/4/21]**

**RELEASE: Senate Republicans Choose Special Interests Over American People with Plans to Obstruct Becerra's Confirmation Amid Global Pandemic. [2/10/21]**

**RELEASE:** Heritage Action to GOP Senators: Put PhRMA Interests Ahead of Constituents and Effective COVID-19 Response. [2/19/21]

ACCOUNTABLE<sup>US</sup>

PRESS RELEASE // MARCH 1, 2021

## New Ad: Accountable.US Responds to Sen. Cotton's Anti-Becerra Campaign, Exposes His Loyalty to Big Pharma

**Cotton:**



**Accountable.US:**



**RELEASE:** As Finance Committee Votes on Becerra Nomination, Opposition is Coming From Members Who Have Taken \$9.6 Million from Big Pharma. [3/3/21]

## SALON

**Republican Senators Opposed To Biden's HHS Nominee Have Taken Nearly \$10 Million From Big Pharma.** "While Xavier Becerra has spent his career taking on the pharmaceutical industry for their corrupt price gouging, Senate Republicans have spent their political careers lining their pockets with millions of dollars from Big Pharma and furthering the industry's bottom line in Congress," Mairead Lynn, spokesperson for the Accountable Senate War Room, a project of the watchdog group Accountable.US, said in a statement. [Salon, 3/4/21]

## COMMON DREAMS

**Despite Pandemic, Confirmation of Xavier Becerra for HHS Secretary Squeaks by With Just One GOP Vote.** "On Thursday, Accountable.US called Republicans the 'antagonists in the Senate' who, 'backed by Big Pharma,' made Becerra a target due to his history of holding the for-profit health industry to account. 'It's no secret why Senate Republicans took aim at Becerra's confirmation: from deep inside the pockets of Big Pharma and with wealthy donors to please, they felt threatened by Becerra's track record and promise to work for the American people,' Mairead Lynn, spokesperson for Accountable Senate War Room, said in a statement." [\[3/18/21\]](#)

**RELEASE: Republican Attacks Fall Flat as Becerra Confirmed as Health Secretary.** [\[3/18/21\]](#)

- **Los Angeles Times HEADLINE: "How Republicans Plan To Sink Xavier Becerra's Nomination."** [Los Angeles Times, [2/10/21](#)]
- **LA Times: "Republicans Are Confident They Have A Ripe Target In Xavier Becerra," And "Confident That Amid Enduring Voter Anxieties Over Healthcare, Biden Overplayed His Hand."** "Republicans are confident they have a ripe target in Xavier Becerra. The GOP is fixated on rejecting President Biden's pick to helm the Department of Health and Human Services. [...] Republicans – who would need to pick up at least one Democratic vote to block the nomination – are confident that amid enduring voter anxieties over healthcare, Biden overplayed his hand." [Los Angeles Times, [2/10/21](#)]
- **Politico: Even If Republicans "Can't Muster The Votes To Block [Becerra]," They "Plan To Make His Confirmation Process A Slog' And "Force Democrats To Eat Up Senate Floor Time To Advance His Nomination."** "Republicans have already begun mobilizing for a longshot bid to block Becerra's confirmation [...] Even if they can't muster the votes to block him, Republicans plan to make his confirmation process a slog. They're expected to grill him during his two Senate hearings and force Democrats to eat up Senate floor time to advance his nomination." [Politico, [02/16/21](#)]
- **Los Angeles Magazine: Republicans Have Channeled Their "Energy Toward Scuttling Xavier Becerra's Bid To Become Health And Human Services Secretary" And Played "Fast And Loose With The Actual Facts Of His Tenure" As CA AG.** "With Neera Tanden withdrawing her nomination to head the Office of Management and Budget, the GOP is channeling its energy toward scuttling Xavier Becerra's bid to become Health and Human Services secretary, focusing on his four years as California's attorney general—and playing fast and loose with the actual facts of his tenure." [Los Angeles Magazine, [02/04/21](#)]

- **CBS Sacramento HEADLINE: "GOP Working To Block Nomination Of Xavier Becerra As Health Secretary."** [CBS 13 Sacramento, [2/23/21](#)]
- **HEADLINE: "Republicans See Becerra As Next Target In Confirmation Wars."** [The Hill, [02/26/21](#)]

## NEERA TANDEN, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

Nowhere was Republicans' rank hypocrisy on display more than their sudden interest and faux outrage over Neera Tanden's tweets, after four years of ignoring, downplaying, and refusing to acknowledge President Trump's.

- **Bloomberg Opinion: The OMB Director Shouldn't Be 'Partisan'? That's a New One.** "Portman was a Republican member of the House before he led the OMB, and he was therefore himself 'overtly partisan.' So were Democrat Leon Panetta and Republicans David Stockman, Jim Nussle and Mick Mulvaney... How much more partisan can you get? There hasn't been a nonpartisan budget director since the Bureau of the Budget became OMB 50 years ago." [Bloomberg Opinion, [12/1/20](#)]
- **The Columbus Dispatch: Rob Portman Knocks Tweets From Biden's Pick For Budget Post, Won't Address Donald Trump's.** "I think it's very important to have someone who can work with both sides of the aisle," said Portman, who held the budget post under President George W. Bush. "She has a very liberal public record and a very partisan series of comments she's made" Asked by a reporter Tuesday why he was concerned with Tanden's Tweets but not those from President Donald Trump, Portman deflected back to his comments about Tanden being 'very partisan.'" [The Columbus Dispatch, [12/1/20](#)]
- **Salon: Suddenly Republicans Want Norms, Ethics And "Civility": Are They Actually Psychopaths?** "Moreover, they are complaining about 'partisanship' when they all voted to confirm Mick Mulvaney, the one time Tea Party congressman and founder of the House Freedom Caucus, which was so "partisan" it chased both John Boehner and Paul Ryan out of the speaker's chair and forced regular government shutdowns." [Salon, [12/2/20](#)]
- **The Washington Post: Are A Biden Nominee's Twitter Attacks Fair Game For Senate Republicans After Years Of Tolerating Trump's?** "But there's irony, or even hypocrisy, on the other side... Some of the Republican senators who have expressed resistance to Tanden said they weren't happy with her attacks on them, many of which came in tweets... Singling out such attacks as disqualifying seems rich for members of a party who have spent the past four years defending or ducking President Trump's tweets." [The Washington Post, [12/1/2020](#)]



# THE SMEARS OF PRESIDENT BIDEN'S NOMINEES OF COLOR

Unfortunately, the nomination processes of Haaland, Becerra, Mayorkas and Tanden exposed a troubling pattern around the treatment of Biden's nominees of color more generally.

While most of Biden's nominees have experienced some form of opposition, an analysis from Accountable.US showed that Senate Republicans tend to use harsher language for President Biden's Cabinet nominees of color – especially women Cabinet nominees of color – than the language used to discuss white nominees.

**RELEASE:** After Four Years of Pretending Not to See Trump's Tweets, GOP Senators Are Suddenly Concerned About Partisanship on Twitter. [\[2/9/21\]](#)

**RELEASE:** Watchdog Group Calls Out Concerning Trend of Senators Opposing Biden's Nominees of Color. [\[2/22/21\]](#)

**REPORT:** Republican Senators & Their Allies Cast Nonwhite Biden Nominees As "Radical" While Taking Softer Tone On White Nominees. [\[2/26/21\]](#)

**RELEASE:** Biden's Women Cabinet Nominees of Color Face Unprecedented Obstruction. [\[3/1/21\]](#)





- **HEADLINE: “Many Of Biden’s Nominees Of Color Run Into Turbulence In The Senate.”** [The Washington Post, [02/24/21](#)]
- **HEADLINE: “Biden’s Nominees Of Color Facing More Intense Republican Scrutiny Than His White Picks. If Only We Knew Why.”** [The Root, [02/24/21](#)]
- **Billings Gazette Editorial: Stridency Of Daines’ Opposition To Haaland Was “Dog-Whistle Reserved For A Candidate Of Haaland’s Tribal Status – And Gender.”** “We understand Daines’ concerns, and realize they are shared by many who support continued oil and gas extraction on federal lands. But the stridency of his opposition, even before the hearing, gives us pause. We wonder, for instance, if Daines’ former Senate colleague, Tom Udall of New Mexico, had been nominated instead, if we would have heard the same level of sharp opposition. Udall favors the Green New Deal. He opposes the Keystone XL Pipeline. Would Daines have denounced him as a ‘radical?’ We doubt it. We believe the vituperative nature of much of the GOP criticism is a dog-whistle reserved for a candidate of Haaland’s tribal status – and gender.” [Billings Gazette – Editorial, [2/21/21](#)]

## TRICKLE DOWN OBSTRUCTION: ASSISTANTS AND DEPUTIES

The opposition did not stop at the Cabinet level. After failing to sink any of the top level nominees, Senate Republicans set their sights on sub-Cabinet roles, including Vanita Gupta for assistant attorney general at the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Colin Kahl as the under secretary of Defense. Both are unquestionably qualified nominees for these roles, but that hasn’t stopped Senate Republicans from launching false and misleading attacks against them while working to obstruct their confirmations.

Senate Republicans’ opposition to Gupta has been anything but subtle. Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) went as far as calling Gupta “[the most dangerous](#)” nominee to the Department of Justice, an attack laced with racist undertones. Senate Republicans even went after the nominee for her stance on policing, a nonsensical argument that simply doesn’t hold up, especially considering Gupta’s wide support from police unions across the country. For Colin Kahl, Senate Republicans have used his confirmation as a proxy battle to hash out political differences and personal grievances, throwing anything and everything at the wall, hoping something sticks. The attacks against sub-Cabinet nominees will fail, just as they did at the Cabinet level, and Republicans will once again only be successful in delaying rather than blocking the inevitable confirmations of nominees like Vanita Gupta and Colin Kahl.

## TALKING POINTS MEMO

**Talking Points Memo Op-Ed - Jim Manley: GOP Objection To Biden Nominee Just More Bad Faith From Sens Who Looked The Other Way For Far-Right Extremists.** Jim Manley: "After four years of turning a blind eye to Trump skirting their own oversight, Senate Republicans have suddenly had a change of heart in the role they play in the confirmation process, and have set their sights on torpedoing the confirmation of Colin Kahl for under secretary of Defense. During his nomination hearing Thursday, Republican senators attacked Kahl, resorting to hypocritical attacks regarding his tweets and claiming Kahl is "too partisan," after four years of standing behind Trump's right-wing extremist nominees and claiming to not see the President's often offensive tweets." [Talking Points Memo, [3/10/21](#)]

**RELEASE: Watchdog Condemns Cornyn's Vitriolic and Baseless Attack Against Justice Nominee Gupta.** [[3/19/21](#)]

## BIDEN'S NOMINATIONS BACK ON TRACK

Despite their best efforts and months of pointless obstruction, Senate Republicans were only able to delay the inevitable confirmation of Biden's many qualified nominees. After working tirelessly to pick up the slack on nominations, the Senate was able to successfully get President Biden's Cabinet confirmations back on track, having confirmed the last of his Cabinet secretaries two weeks ago. Senate Republicans failed to sink any of President Biden's Cabinet secretaries because the American people saw their charade for what it was: a ploy to protect their special interest donors. After four years of rubber stamping President Trump's Cabinet – a group of billionaires and industry insiders who looked out for themselves and those like them – the opposition to President Biden's Cabinet was nothing more than a hypocritical attempt to appease the special interests who benefited under the Trump Administration.

- **Washington Post HEADLINE: "Biden's Slow And Steady Approach On Cabinet Choices Seems To Be Working."** [Washington Post, [3/6/21](#)]
- **Washington Post: Biden Was First President Since Reagan In 1981 To Confirm Every Initial Choice For 15 Traditional Cabinet Departments.** "And while he had to withdraw his initial choice for budget director, Biden remains on track to confirm every initial choice for the 15 traditional Cabinet departments – a feat that, according to Senate records, was last achieved in 1981 by Ronald Reagan." [Washington Post, [3/6/21](#)]

- **Washington Post: Despite Slow Pace Of Nominee Consideration, Biden Administration Earned Bipartisan Confirmation Votes At Larger Margin Than President Trump.** “The Biden administration has learned that slow and steady might just win the race to confirming the new Cabinet. Despite the historically sluggish pace of Senate consideration, President Biden’s Cabinet choices have, so far, racked up bipartisan confirmation votes at a significantly larger margin than those of his predecessor.” [Washington Post, [3/6/21](#)]
- **Roll Call HEADLINE: “Biden Nominees Are Cruising To Confirmation With GOP Votes.”** [Roll Call, [3/29/21](#)]
- **As Of March 29, 2021, Biden Has Had 13 Other High-Level Administration Officials Confirmed Beyond 15 Traditional Cabinet Departments.** “In addition to the 15 Cabinet secretaries, the Senate has confirmed 13 other high-level Biden administration officials. Three won approval by voice vote, while a majority of Republicans backed six of the other 10 in roll calls.” [Roll Call, [3/29/21](#)]
- **Politico HEADLINE: “Senate Revs Its Confirmation Engine To Fill Biden’s Cabinet.”** [Politico, [03/10/21](#)]
- **Politico: After A Slow Start, “The Senate Is Finally On Track To Catch Up To Its Pace Of Confirmations At The Beginning Of The Trump And Obama Administrations.”** “After slow early progress on approving President Joe Biden’s Cabinet nominees, the Senate is finally on track to catch up to its pace of confirmations at the beginning of the Trump and Obama administrations.” [Politico, [03/10/21](#)]
- **New York Daily News HEADLINE: “Marty Walsh Confirmed As Labor Secretary, Completing Biden’s Cabinet.”** [New York Daily News, [3/22/21](#)]
- **Confirmation Of Marty Walsh As Labor Secretary Completed Biden’s 15-Member Executive Cabinet.** “The Senate confirmed Boston Mayor Marty Walsh to serve as secretary of the Labor Department on Monday, meaning President Biden’s entire executive cabinet is finally in place. Walsh, who served as the president of the influential Laborers’ International Union before being elected mayor of Beantown in 2014, won confirmation in a 68-29 vote. [...] With Walsh’s confirmation in the books, Biden’s 15-member presidential cabinet is now complete, 61 days into his term.” [New York Daily News, [3/22/21](#)]

# CONCLUSION

President Biden's historically diverse Cabinet is incredibly qualified and shares the President's vision of building an economy that prioritizes working families over corporations and special interests. Though they delayed swift confirmation for many of Biden's nominees, Senate Republicans ultimately failed in their efforts to sink or smear any Cabinet secretaries because the American people saw through their efforts and wanted President Biden's crisis-tested Cabinet to get to work addressing the ongoing economic and health crises.

The Accountable Senate War Room launched in November to call out this planned obstruction and shine a light on their true motivations: from deep inside the pockets of their special interest donors, Senate Republicans are only willing to protect those that write the biggest checks.