



CIVICS IN REAL LIFE

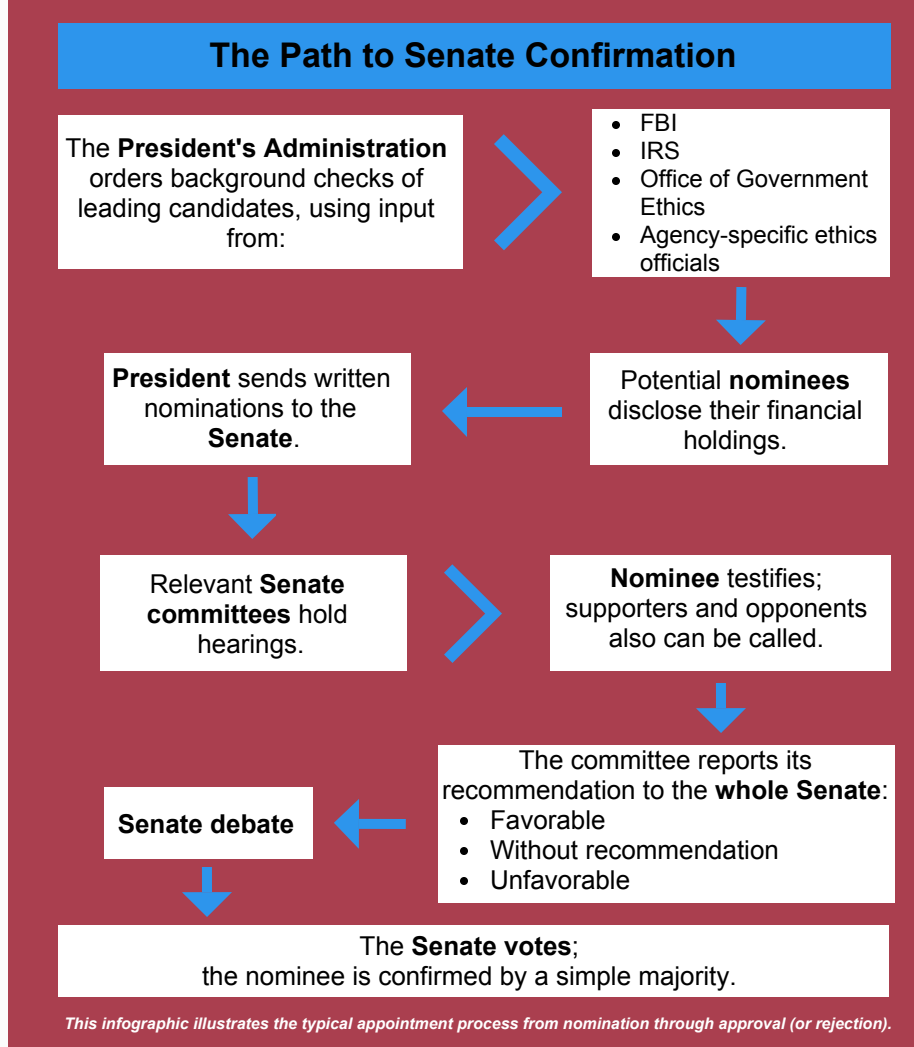
Appointment Process

Civics is all around us. There is a lot to know about the government and how "We the People" interact with the government and each other. Let's help each other expand our civic literacy.

After an election, one of the earliest tasks a president-elect must take on is the assembly of their team. This team, known as the **Cabinet**, is a group of advisors the new president can rely on to help them carry out their domestic and foreign policy agenda. The president-elect will also begin to announce names of individuals they would like to appoint as **ambassadors** to various foreign nations.

According to **Article II**, Section 2 of the United States Constitution, the president has the power to "...nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States..."

There are currently 15 Cabinet-level executive departments, other agencies, and sub-departments under the authority of the president. The leadership of each of these departments is formally nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate. Senate confirmation provides a **check on the power** of the executive branch.



The role of the Senate in evaluating nominations **has grown** throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Beginning in the mid 20th century, the Senate began to use committees to hold public hearings in which the nominee is basically put through a job interview. Questions asked may pertain to their qualifications, previous experience, relevant viewpoints, and any allegations of wrongdoing. Then, the committee makes a recommendation to the full Senate.

Typically, the Senate will not push back and honor the president's selections. Nominations tend to be confirmed quickly and with little debate. However, that has not always been the case. **Throughout history** there have been times where partisan politics and/or strong concerns over qualifications and character have led to either an individual's name being withdrawn from consideration or Senate rejection.

If any of these positions become vacant or a president wants to make a change in who fills the position, the appointment and confirmation process starts over. Presidents may also appoint people to fill positions in a **temporary term** for a period of up to 210 days. These positions are referred to as 'acting' or interim roles. Ultimately, however, the Constitution has been interpreted through law to require that these acting department heads must be confirmed by the Senate if they are going to continue in the position. This maintains the checks and balances of government power built into the Constitution and ensures a level of consensus between the president and the U.S. Senate on who leads executive agencies.

To Do and To Think: Look at the Appointment Process graphic. What stands out to you about the process? Which step do you think might cause the nominee the most difficulty and why? What questions do you have?

Learn MORE about the nomination process.

- [The Cabinet of President Joseph Biden](#), from The White House
- [Articles I, II and III](#), from Civics360.org
- [Trump's Cabinet Picks and Senate Hearing Schedule](#), from AP News



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