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Examining Joe Biden's Cabinet Selections

For a president to be successful, it is critical they surround themselves with capable administrators with shared goals, who work to support the newly elected leader's agenda. Building a successful cabinet is among the first priorities of a new president. A president's cabinet selections can send signals to their various constituencies and can provide a glimpse at how they plan to govern over the next four years. It would appear that Joe Biden's cabinet nominees largely satisfy his promises to promote diversity and a "return to normalcy" with his presidency.

Question 1: [Who has Biden picked so far?](#)

President-elect Joe Biden promised diversity in his administration and appears to have delivered on this promise with many of his cabinet selections. Some of Biden's selections include: Janet Yellen, Secretary of Treasury; Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary of Homeland Security; Xavier Becerra, Secretary of Health and Human Services; Lloyd Austin, Secretary of Defence; Marcia Fudge, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Pete Buttigieg, Secretary of Transportation; Jennifer Granholm, Energy Secretary; Deb Haaland, Interior Secretary; Miguel Cardona, Education Secretary; Governor Gina Raimondo as Secretary of Commerce, and Isabel Guzman as Small Business Administrator.

Many cabinet members have had experience regarding their prospective positions. For example, this will mark Tom Vilsack's second stint as the Secretary of Agriculture having served in this position for Barack Obama. Cardona is a promise fulfilled as he was not only a teacher, but served as the Education Commissioner for Connecticut. Other prospective cabinet members do not have as much direct experience, but many worked closely with Biden or served in Obama's administration. Although Biden campaigned on a promise of restoring normalcy to the White House, he has generated some criticism for relying on too many familiar faces from the Democratic establishment. This, however, is a common criticism presidents face when looking to staff their new administration.

Question 2: **How do Biden's selections differ from President Trump's?**

Biden has emphasized experience and diversity with his cabinet selections. Consistent with previous administrations, this focus should serve him well with his electoral constituency. In the campaign, he made many contrasts with Donald Trump and chief among them was a "return to normalcy." As a businessman "outsider," Trump chose many appointees with little-to-no government experience. Ben Carson (Secretary of Housing and Urban Development), Betsy DeVos (Secretary of Education), and Rex Tillerson (Secretary of State) would fit this mold. In contrast, Biden has filled his cabinet and cabinet level positions with seasoned government officials such as, Susan Rice, former UN ambassador and National Security advisor to President Obama. Biden Nominated Rice to be the Director of the Domestic Policy Council.

While campaigning, Biden capitalized on frustration from Democrats and Republicans by promising to nominate an Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency who supports the scientific consensus on climate change and additionally, as well as nominate a secretary of

education who has been an educator. Biden delivered on these promises by nominating Michael Regan to be the next Administrator of the EPA and Miguel Cardona to be the next Secretary of Education. President Trump and President Elect Biden's cabinets look very different. Trump was criticized for having a cabinet predominantly composed of white males. In contrast Biden promised to choose a cabinet reflecting America's diversity. Biden's proposed cabinet would have more females and more minority members than any previous cabinet.

Parting Thoughts:

The selection of one's cabinet is among the most important events for any incoming president. For Biden, he has placed a premium on choosing a diverse cabinet and one that possesses a great deal of governmental experience. Its connection to the Obama administration is noteworthy and is consistent with Biden's promise to restore normalcy in American politics.