

## **Senate Commerce Committee Nominee Questionnaire, 116<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Instructions for the nominees: The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation asks you to provide typed answers to each of the following questions. It is requested that the nominee type the question in full before each response. Do not leave any questions blank. Type "None" or "Not Applicable" if a question does not apply to the nominee. Return printed answers to Committee. Begin each section (i.e., "A", "B", etc.) on a new sheet of paper.

### **A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION AND QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Name (Include any former names or nicknames used):

**Joel Matthew Szabat**

2. Position to which nominated:

**Under Secretary of Transportation Policy,  
U.S. Department of Transportation**

3. Date of Nomination: **May 4, 2020**

4. Address (List current place of residence and office addresses):

  
**1200 New Jersey Ave, SE, Washington DC. 20590 (Work)**

5. Date and Place of Birth: **25 January 1959, Fort Worth, TX.**

6. Provide the name, position, and place of employment for your spouse (if married) and the names and ages of your children (including stepchildren and children by a previous marriage).

**Spouse: Chiling Tong, Chief Executive Officer and President of the  
National Asian/Pacific Islander Chamber of Commerce and  
Entrepreneurship (National Ace)  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., MW, Suite 700, Washington DC. 20004**

7. List all college and graduate degrees. Provide year and school attended.

**Georgetown University, 1981 BA Economics & Public Administration**

**Harvard University, 1988 MBA**

8. List all post-undergraduate employment, and highlight all management-level jobs held and any non-managerial jobs that relate to the position for which you are nominated.

**Captain, US Army, 1981-86**

Management Consultant, Strategic Planning Associates, 1988-90

**Executive Officer, US EPA, 1990-93**

Principal Consultant (Transportation), California State Assembly, 1993-2001

Principal, White Dragon Group (self-employed) 2001-02

**Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy, USDOT, 2002-03**

**Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management & Budget, USDOT, 2003-05**

**Transportation Counselor, US Embassy, Baghdad, Iraq, 2005**

Senior Counselor to the Secretary, USDOT, 2005-06

**Chief of Staff, Small Business Administration, 2006-08**

**Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy, USDOT, 2008-11**

**Executive Officer, Maritime Administration, USDOT, 2011-18**

**Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aviation & International Affairs, USDOT, 2018-2019**

**Assistant Secretary for Aviation & International Affairs, USDOT, January 2019-present**

**Acting Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy, USDOT (through January 2020); and Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary January 2020-Present**

9. Attach a copy of your resume: **See attached**

10. List any advisory, consultative, honorary, or other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed above, within the last ten years. **None**

11. List all positions held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, company, firm, partnership, or other business, enterprise, educational, or other institution within the last ten years.

**Unpaid advisor to the International Leadership Foundation (ILF), an educational non-profit my wife and I founded in 2000.**

12. Please list each membership you have had during the past ten years or currently hold with any civic, social, charitable, educational, political, professional, fraternal, benevolent or religiously affiliated organization, private club, or other membership organization. (For this question, you do not have to list your religious affiliation or membership in a religious house of worship or institution.). Include dates of membership and any positions you have held with any organization. Please note whether any such club or organization restricts membership on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability.

**Unpaid advisor to the International Leadership Foundation (ILF), an educational non-profit my wife and I founded in 2000.**

13. Have you ever been a candidate for and/or held a public office (elected, non-elected, or appointed)? If so, indicate whether any campaign has any outstanding debt, the amount, and whether you are personally liable for that debt.

**Unsuccessful candidate for the Sacramento, CA Municipal Utility District (SMUD) in 1998. No debts.**

14. List all memberships and offices held with and services rendered to, whether compensated or not, any political party or election committee within the past ten years. If you have held a paid position or served in a formal or official advisory position (whether compensated or not) in a political campaign within the past ten years, identify the particulars of the campaign, including the candidate, year of the campaign, and your title and responsibilities.

**None**

15. Itemize all political contributions to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity of \$500 or more for the past ten years.

**Judy Chu for Congress August 6, 2011 \$1,750**

**McConnell Senate Committee August 22, 2014 \$2,100**

**McConnell Senate Committee October 31, 2014 \$2,100**

16. List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, military medals, and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievements.

**Army Commendation Medal**

**Army Meritorious Service Medal**

**Presidential Rank Award (Meritorious Service)**

**USDOT War on Terror Medal**

**USDOT Inspirational Leader**

**Ellis Island Foundation Medal of Honor**

**Distinguished Visitor, Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy, National Defense University**

17. Please list each book, article, column, Internet blog posting, or other publication you have authored, individually or with others. Include a link to each publication when possible. Also list any speeches that you have given on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated. Do not attach copies of these publications unless otherwise instructed.

**No books, articles, columns, or publications. Since becoming the Assistant Secretary for Aviation & International Affairs, and subsequently the Acting Under Secretary I have spoken to transportation stakeholder organizations and on panels at the Transportation Research Board (TRB).**

18. List digital platforms (including social media and other digital content sites) on which you currently or have formerly operated an account, regardless of whether or not the account was held in your name or an alias. Include the name of an "alias" or "handle" you have used on each of the named platforms. Indicate whether the account is active, deleted, or dormant. Include a link to each account if possible.

**Facebook – Joel Szabat – dormant. I have no other social media accounts**

19. Please identify each instance in which you have testified orally or in writing before Congress in a governmental or non-governmental capacity and specify the date and subject matter of each testimony.

**(House) Committee on Small Business, March 12, 2009, Ensuring Stimulus Contracts for Small and Veteran-Owned Businesses**

**(House) Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure, March 26, 2009, DOT's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program**

**(House) Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Marine Transportation, April 4, 2017, Authorization of Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation Programs**

**(Senate) Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing & Urban Development and Related Agencies, April 5, 2017, Preventing Sexual Assault & Sexual Harassment at the US Merchant Marine Academy**

**(Senate) Committee on Science, Commerce & Transportation, May 9, 2017, Maritime Transportation**

**(Senate) Committee on Science, Commerce & Transportation, August 23, 2018, Nominations Hearing**

**(Senate) Committee on Science, Commerce & Transportation, June 19, 2019, Reauthorization of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015**

**(House) Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Subcommittee on Aviation, September 26, 2019, 2018 FAA Reauthorization**

**(Senate) Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, November 20, 2019, Highly Automated Vehicles: Federal Perspectives on the Deployment of Safety Technology**

**(Senate) Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Transportation & Safety, January 28, 2020, Overview of the Build America Bureau and the U.S. Department of Transportation Rural Transportation Initiatives**

**(Senate) Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Aviation & Space, March 4, 2020, From SARS to Coronavirus: Examining the Role of Global Aviation in Containing the Spread of Infectious Disease**

20. Given the current mission, major programs, and major operational objectives of the department/agency to which you have been nominated, what in your background or employment experience do you believe affirmatively qualifies you for appointment to the position for which you have been nominated, and why do you wish to serve in that position? I have been performing the duties of the position to which I have been nominated since June, 2019. Because of my work history, I had prior experience in most of the functions of my position before I assumed the responsibilities.

**For a year-and-a-half before I became Acting Under Secretary, I ran the Office of Aviation & International Affairs (January 2018 – June 2019), one of the four subordinate offices under the aegis of the Under Secretary.**

**I have had two stints (2002-2003; 2009-2011) as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, a second office that reports to the Under Secretary. In 2009 I was the senior career official and performed the duties of the Under Secretary during the gap between the departure of the political appointees of one administration, and the confirmation of appointees for the incoming administration. In 2009 I was also named the federal official responsible for overseeing DOT's \$48 billion in Recovery Act funds. During this period I oversaw the establishment of staff to oversee the first major intermodal competitive grant program (TIGER) which has grown into a third office (Build America Bureau) that reports to the Under Secretary.**

**The Department of Transportation has a unique 'modal' structure, with decentralized statutory and regulatory authorities given to organizations such as the Federal Aviation Administration and Federal Highway Administration. The Under Secretary has to coordinate their policy efforts with that of the rest of the Secretary's leadership. My time as the Executive Director of the Maritime Administration (2012-2018) gives me better understanding, experience, and credibility in performing that coordination.**

**I have the good fortune to be an American, and I appreciate that public service is a way to give back to the country. This particular**

**job is important. I believe I can do it well, and I have the background to do it better than most.**

21. What do you believe are your responsibilities, if confirmed, to ensure that the department/agency has proper management and accounting controls, and what experience do you have in managing a large organization?

**I am already responsible for ensuring that the Office of the Under Secretary and its component offices have proper management controls. If confirmed, I would continue that responsibility, and continue to work closely with both the Chief Financial Officer of the Office of the Secretary and the management and procurement staff in the Office of the Under Secretary, who provide financial controls expertise for this office.**

**During the transition between Presidents Bush and Obama, I was the senior official managing the entire Office of the Under Secretary. During the transition between Presidents Obama and Trump, I was the senior official managing the Maritime Administration.**

**As Executive Director of the Maritime Administration, all the program and support offices reported to me, totaling over 700 federal employees. As Chief of Staff of the Small Business Administration, I directly supervised numerous staff offices, including the CFO, procurement, human resources, administration, civil rights, and government affairs.**

**In the Army, I was a Tank Platoon leader, and then the Executive Officer and Acting Troop Commander of a Cavalry Troop of 200 officers and soldiers.**

22. What do you believe to be the top three challenges facing the department/agency, and why?

**Transportation in the a Pandemic: Maintaining vital national transportation services, and the well-being of critical infrastructure workers, is essential to fighting COVID-19. Transportation will also lead the national rebound, and must be positioned to do so quickly, as the threat of the virus abates.**

**Safety: Safety is Secretary Chao's top priority. Safety is the primary statutory mission of most of the component administrations within the Department. Reducing accidents, injuries and deaths across transportation is far and away our most important mission.**

**Infrastructure&Innovation: Much of our existing infrastructure is aging-out, or is obsolete for emerging technologies. The administration has recognized the need to reinvest in infrastructure with a ten year, \$1 trillion plan. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with Congress on a new Surface Transportation Reauthorization. Our top innovation challenge is to safely integrate promising new technologies (e.g. drones, autonomous vehicles, hyperloop) into our existing transportation system.**

## **B. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

1. Describe all financial arrangements, deferred compensation agreements, and other continuing dealings with business associates, clients, or customers. Please include information related to retirement accounts.  
**My arrangement are fully described in Part 3 of my Public Financial Disclosure Report.**
2. Do you have any commitments or agreements, formal or informal, to maintain employment, affiliation, or practice with any business, association or other organization during your appointment? If so, please explain. **No**
3. Indicate any investments, obligations, liabilities, or other relationships which could involve potential conflicts of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

**In connection with the nomination process, I have consulted with the Office of Government Ethics and the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Designated Agency Ethic Official to identify potential conflicts of interest. Further any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved in accordance with the terms of the ethics agreement that I have entered into with DOT's Designated Agency Ethics Official and that has been provided to this Committee. I am not aware of any other potential conflicts of interest.**

4. Describe any business relationship, dealing, or financial transaction which you have had during the last ten years, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as an agent, that could in any way constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

**In connection with the nomination process, I have consulted with the Office of Government Ethics and the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Designated Agency Ethic Official to identify potential conflicts of interest. Further any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved in accordance with the terms of the ethics agreement that I have entered into with DOT's Designated Agency**

**Ethics Official and that has been provided to this Committee. I am not aware of any other potential conflicts of interest.**

5. Identify any other potential conflicts of interest, and explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

**In connection with the nomination process, I have consulted with the Office of Government Ethics and the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Designated Agency Ethic Official to identify potential conflicts of interest. Further any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved in accordance with the terms of the ethics agreement that I have entered into with DOT's Designated Agency Ethics Official and that has been provided to this Committee. I am not aware of any other potential conflicts of interest.**

6. Describe any activity during the past ten years, including the names of clients represented, in which you have been engaged for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the passage, defeat, or modification of any legislation or affecting the administration and execution of law or public policy.

**As a federal government employee since 2002, I have only ever been involved in representing the administration's position on legislative matters.**

### C. LEGAL MATTERS

1. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics, professional misconduct, or retaliation by, or been the subject of a complaint to, any court, administrative agency, the Office of Special Counsel, professional association, disciplinary committee, or other professional group? If yes:
  - a. Provide the name of agency, association, committee, or group;
  - b. Provide the date the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action was issued or initiated;
  - c. Describe the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action;
  - d. Provide the results of the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action.

**No**

2. Have you ever been investigated, arrested, charged, or held by any Federal, State, or other law enforcement authority of any Federal, State, county, or municipal entity, other than for a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain. **No**
3. Have you or any business or nonprofit of which you are or were an officer ever been involved as a party in an administrative agency proceeding, criminal proceeding, or civil litigation? If so, please explain. **No**
4. Have you ever been convicted (including pleas of guilty or *nolo contendere*) of any criminal violation other than a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain. **No**
5. Have you ever been accused, formally or informally, of sexual harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or any other basis? If so, please explain. **No**
6. Please advise the Committee of any additional information, favorable or unfavorable, which you feel should be disclosed in connection with your nomination. **None**

#### **D. RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMITTEE**

1. Will you ensure that your department/agency complies with deadlines for information set by congressional committees, and that your department/agency endeavors to timely comply with requests for information from individual Members of Congress, including requests from members in the minority? **Yes, insofar as it is in my power to do so.**
2. Will you ensure that your department/agency does whatever it can to protect congressional witnesses and whistle blowers from reprisal for their testimony and disclosures? **Yes**
3. Will you cooperate in providing the Committee with requested witnesses, including technical experts and career employees, with firsthand knowledge of matters of interest to the Committee? **Yes**
4. Are you willing to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress on such occasions as you may be reasonably requested to do so? **Yes**

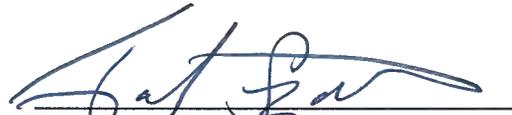
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(Nominee is to include this signed affidavit along with answers to the above questions.)

**F. Affidavit**

Joel M. Szabat being duly sworn, hereby states that he/she has read and signed the foregoing Statement on Biographical and Financial Information and that the information provided therein is, to the best of his/her knowledge, current, accurate, and complete.

  
Signature of Nominee

Subscribed and sworn before me this 8 day of May, 2020.

  
Notary Public

