



## **Cabinets, Women in Presidential**

Frances Perkins, appointed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933, was the first woman to hold a Cabinet position. Democratic presidents have appointed 23 women to their Cabinets, including Perkins, and Republican presidents have appointed 17 women. Since the Roosevelt administration, Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama have appointed women to their Cabinets. Presidents Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon Johnson, did not appoint women to their Cabinets. Five women, Madeleine K. Albright, Elizabeth Hanford Dole, Patricia Roberts Harris, Carla Anderson Hills, and Laura D'Andrea Tyson, have each held two Cabinet positions. Patricia Roberts Harris was the first African American woman to hold a Cabinet post; Aida Alvarez was the first Latina; and Elaine Chao was the first Asian American woman.

Presidential Cabinets have their roots in tradition and have neither statutory nor constitutional foundations. For this reason, presidents define Cabinet-level positions in their administrations and can make any government official a member of the Cabinet. For example, the position of United Nations ambassador was a Cabinet-level position in Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton's administrations. During the Bush administration, the post of special trade representative was Cabinet-level, as was the position of U.S. trade representative in the Clinton administration. Chair of the National Economic Council and administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency were Cabinet-level positions in the Clinton administration.

Presidents have a variety of reasons for expanding their Cabinets beyond the department secretaries. They may want to solicit the advice of specialists, call attention to an issue or an agency, or reward an agency or its head for its achievements. For Cabinet members, the benefits include status, visibility, and access to the president.

The position, the women who have held it, their party affiliation, and the time they held the positions are listed below.

- Secretary of State: Madeleine Albright (D) served from 1997 to 2001; Condoleezza Rice (R) 2005 to 2009; Hillary Rodham Clinton (D) appointed in 2009
- Attorney General: Janet Reno (D) served from 1993 to 2001

- Secretary of Agriculture: Ann Veneman (R) served from 2001 to 2005
- Secretary of Commerce: Juanita Kreps (D) served from 1977 to 1979; Barbara H. Franklin (R) from 1992 to 1993
- Secretary of Education: Shirley Mount Hufstedler (D) served from 1979 to 1981; Margaret Spellings (R) 2005 to 2009
- Secretary of Energy: Hazel O'Leary served from 1993 to 1997
- Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare: Oveta Culp Hobby (R) served from 1953 to 1955
- Secretary of Health and Human Services: Patricia Roberts Harris (D) served from 1979 to 1981; Margaret Heckler (R) served from 1983 to 1985; Donna E. Shalala (D) served from 1993 to 2001; Kathleen Sebelius (D) appointed in 2009
- Secretary of Housing and Urban Development: Carla Anderson Hills (R) served from 1975 to 1977; Patricia Roberts Harris (D) served from 1977 to 1979
- Secretary of the Interior: Gale Norton (R) served from 2001 to 2006
- Secretary of Labor: Frances M. Perkins (D) served from 1933 to 1945; Ann Dore McLaughlin (R) served from 1987 to 1989; Elizabeth Hanford Dole (R) served from 1989 to 1991; Lynn Morley Martin (R) served from 1991 to 1993; Alexis Herman (D) served from 1997 to 2001; Elaine Chao (R) 2001-2009; Hilda Solis (D) appointed in 2009
- Secretary of Homeland Security: Janet Napolitano (D), appointed 2009
- Secretary of Transportation: Elizabeth Hanford Dole served from 1983 to 1987; Mary E. Peters (R) served from 2006 to 2009
- Special Trade Representative: Carla Anderson Hills (R) served from 1989 to 1993
- United States Trade Representative: Charlene Barshefsky (D) served from 1997 to 2001; Susan Schwab (R) served from 2006 to 2009
- United Nations Ambassador: Jeane J. Kirkpatrick served from 1981 to 1985; Madeleine K. Albright (D) served from 1993 to 1997; Susan E. Rice appointed 2009
- Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency: Carol M. Browner served from 1993 to 2001; Christine Todd Whitman (R) served from 1997 to 2003; Lisa Jackson (D) appointed in 2009
- Chair of the National Economic Council: Laura D'Andrea Tyson served from 1995 to 1996
- Director of the Office of Management and Budget: Alice Rivlin served from 1994 to 1996
- Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers: Laura D'Andrea Tyson (D) served from 1993 to 1995; Janet Yellen (D) served from 1997 to 1999; Christina D. Romer (D) served from 2009 to 2010
- Small Business Administration: Aida Alvarez served from 1997 to 2001
- Director of the Office of Personnel Management: Janice R. Lachance served from 1997 to 2001

**See also** Albright, Madeleine Jana Korbel; Alvarez, Aida; Barshefsky, Charlene; Browner, Carol; Dole, (Mary) Elizabeth Hanford; Franklin, Barbara Hackman; Harris, Patricia Roberts; Heckler, Margaret Mary O'Shaughnessy; Herman, Alexis Margaret; Hills, Carla Helen Anderson; Hobby, Oveta Culp; Hufstedler,

Shirley Ann Mount; Kirkpatrick, Jeane Duane Jordan; Kreps, Juanita Morris; Martin, Judith Lynn Morley; McLaughlin, Ann Dore Lauenstein; O’Leary, Hazel Rollins; Perkins, Frances (Fanny) Corlie; Reno, Janet; Rivlin, Alice Mitchell; Shalala, Donna Edna; Tyson, Laura D’Andrea; Yellen, Janet

**References** *Congressional Quarterly, Cabinets and Counselors: The President and the Executive Branch* (1997); “Women Appointed to Presidential Cabinets,” Center for American Women in Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 2011; Warshaw, *Powersharing: White House-Cabinet Relations in the Modern Presidency* (1996).

## Cable Acts

The Cable Act of 1922 gave married women citizenship independent of their husband’s citizenship. Until 1907, American women (other than Native American women), whether married or not, had independent citizenship, but a law passed that year withdrew the citizenship of women married to aliens, and the U.S. government assigned those women their husbands’ nationality. In 1913, the Association of Women Lawyers began working to change the policy and was the only organization involved until 1920, when the League of Women Voters and the Women’s Joint Congressional Committee (WJCC) joined the effort.

Passed in 1922, the Cable Act did not apply to all women or all women married to aliens. For example, a female American citizen who married an alien classified as ineligible for citizenship, that is, a Chinese, Japanese, or East Indian immigrant, ceased to be an American citizen. If a woman married a man who could not become a naturalized citizen for any reason, she lost her citizenship and she could not seek repatriation until the termination of the marriage. Native American women did not gain citizenship under the Cable Act; they gained it under the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act. As these and other barriers to women’s citizenship became apparent, WJCC persuaded Congress to amend the Cable Act, which it did in 1930, 1931, and 1934. Even after 1934, however, individual women found themselves in circumstances not addressed by the act or subject to interpretation and discovered that their citizenship was threatened.

**See also** League of Women Voters; Owen Rohde, Ruth Bryan; Women’s Joint Congressional Committee  
**References** Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own: Women, Marriage, and the Law of Citizenship* (1998); Lemons, *The Woman Citizen* (1973).

## Cahill, Mary Beth (b. 1954)

Called “the miracle worker” by *Time* magazine, Mary Beth Cahill revived Massachusetts Senator John Kerry’s 2004 campaign for the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination. When Cahill became Kerry’s campaign manager in November 2003, Kerry trailed in the polls, but under Cahill’s direction, he won the nomination. Cahill placed increased emphasis on Kerry’s status as a war hero, eliminated conflicts within the



campaign, and clarified the decision-making process. She explained: “We discuss a strategy,