



Department of Veterans Affairs

Senior Executive Biography

Denis Richard McDonough

Secretary of Veterans Affairs

The Honorable Denis Richard McDonough was nominated by President Biden to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. McDonough's nomination was confirmed by the United States Senate on February 8th, 2021, and he was sworn in the following day as the 11th Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

On January 27, 2021, during his confirmation hearing, Secretary McDonough testified to Congress, "I will work tirelessly to build and restore VA's trust as the premier agency for ensuring the well-being of America's Veterans.

After all, there is no more sacred obligation nor noble undertaking than to uphold our promises to our Veterans, whether they came home decades ago or days ago."



Secretary McDonough served in the Obama Administration as the 26th White House Chief of Staff from February 2013 to January 2017. In that role, Mr. McDonough managed the White House staff and worked across the cabinet to advance the Obama-Biden agenda, confronted management issues facing the federal government, and devised and enforced goals, plans, and performance standards to preserve the Obama-Biden Administration's reputation for effective, ethical operations.

Prior to his role as Chief of Staff, Mr. McDonough was Principal Deputy National Security Advisor from October 2010 to January 2013. He also served as the Chief of Staff of the National Security Staff and as the Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications. He chaired the National Security Council's Deputies Committee, leading the multiagency team to address complex challenges including crisis management and national security policymaking. And throughout his service in the White House, Secretary McDonough helped lead the Obama-Biden administration's work on behalf of military families and Veterans.

Before his eight-year tenure in the White House, Secretary McDonough served in senior leadership and policymaking positions in the U.S. House of Representatives as a Professional Staff Member on the International Relations Committee and in the U.S. Senate for Majority Leader Tom Daschle and Senator Ken Salazar.

Since his White House tenure, Secretary McDonough was Professor of the Practice of Public Policy at the Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame, Senior Advisor and Senior Principal at the Markle Foundation, and on the board of directors of the National Democratic Institute, the Tent Partnership for Refugees, and the SAFE Project, a national nonprofit working to end the nation's catastrophic addiction epidemic.

Secretary McDonough grew up in Minnesota in a family of 11 children, graduated from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, and earned his master's degree from Georgetown University. Secretary McDonough and his wife, Kari, have three children.