

Senate Commerce Committee Nominee Questionnaire, 117th Congress

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

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

Elizabeth Mauer Sembler, Elizabeth M. Sembler, Liz Mauer Sembler, Liz Sembler, Elizabeth Mauer, Liz Mauer

2. Position to which nominated:

Member, Board of Directors, Corporation for Public Broadcasting

3. Date of Nomination: **October 7, 2021**

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

Residence: [REDACTED]

Office: N/A

5. Date and Place of Birth:

April 27, 1962; West Hempstead, NY

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).

**Gregory Scott Sembler
CEO, The Sembler Company, St. Petersburg, FL 33707**

**Jacob Mauer Sembler, age 31
Ezra Eugene Sembler, age 31
Eve Beth Sembler, age 28
Benjamin Henry Sembler, age 27**

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

**Syracuse University, BA, 1984
University of South Florida, MA, 1989
Gratz College, Graduate Certificate, 2007**

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.

**My career began as a newspaper reporter; then I became an educator.
The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is the steward of the American public media system, the mission of which is to provide programs and services that inform, educate, enlighten, and enrich the public.**

| | |
|------------------|---|
| 2011-2019 | Director of Congregational Engagement Congregation B'nai Israel St. Petersburg, Florida |
| 2012-2013 | Program Director Keshet Afterschool Program Clearwater, Florida |
| 2001-2010 | Director of Jewish Studies Pinellas County Jewish Day School Clearwater, Florida |
| 2000-2001 | Sixth Grade Jewish Studies Teacher Pinellas County Jewish Day School Clearwater, Florida |
| 1984-1986 | Staff Writer, <i>St. Petersburg Times</i> Times Publishing Company St. Petersburg, Florida |

9. Attach a copy of your resume. **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.

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 2021 | Member, Board of Trustees Congregation B'nai Israel St. Petersburg, FL |
| 2021 | Member, Board of Trustees TOP Jewish Foundation Tampa, FL |

2021 **Member, Board of Directors**
Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions, St. Petersburg College
St. Petersburg, FL

2019-present **Chair, Endowment Campaign**
Jewish Burial Society/Chapel Hill Cemetery
St. Petersburg, FL

2015-2021 **Member, Foundation Board**
The Poynter Institute for Media Studies
St. Petersburg, FL

2011-present **Member, Board of Trustees**
Academy Prep Center
St. Petersburg, Florida
Served as Chairman of the Board 2017-19

2008*-2020 **Member, Board of Directors**
The Corporation for Public Broadcasting
Washington, DC
Served as Chairman of the Board 2014-16
*The first six-year term was a partial term

2008-present **Member, Board of Directors**
The Florida Orchestra
St. Petersburg, Florida

2004-present **Member, Board of Advisors**
William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education
Jewish Theological Seminary
New York, New York

1993-present **Member, Board of Directors**
Florida West Coast Public Broadcasting, Inc. - WEDU
Tampa, Florida
Served as Chairman of the Board 2001-2003
One year off for term limits (twice) during this tenure

1987-2012 **Jewish Communal Leader**
Served on boards of the Jewish Federation of Pinellas County; the Pinellas
County Jewish Day School; and Congregation B'nai Israel of St. Petersburg,
Florida

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.

1993-present **WEDU public television station, Board Member, Chairman of the board 2001-2003**
2016-present **WUSF public radio station, Member**
2012-present **Metropolitan Museum of Art, Member**

None of these organizations and clubs restricts membership on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or handicap.

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. **No.**

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.

| | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| 2012: | Romney Victory, Inc. | \$2,500 |
| | Romney Victory, Inc. | \$2,500 |
| | Romney for President, Inc. | \$2,500 |
| | Romney for President, Inc. | \$2,500 |
| 2015: | JEB 2016, Inc. | \$2,700 |
| | Friends of David Jolly | \$2,700 |
| | Friends of David Jolly | \$2,700 |
| 2016: | Ryan for Congress, Inc. | \$2,700 |
| | Team Ryan | \$2,700 |
| | Liz Cheney for Wyoming | \$2,700 |
| | Liz Cheney for Wyoming | \$2,700 |
| | Team Josh | \$1,350 |
| | Team Josh | \$1,350 |
| | Citizens for Josh Mandel, Inc. | \$1,350 |

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| 2018: | Team Ryan | \$5,000 |
| | Ryan for Congress, Inc. | \$2,300 |
| | Ryan for Congress, Inc. | \$2,700 |
| | Adam Putnam for Governor | \$1,000 |
| | Rick Scott for Florida | \$2,700 |
| 2019: | Rubio Victory Committee | \$2,700 |
| | Marco Rubio for Senate | \$2,700 |
| | Friends of Darden Rice | \$500 |
| | Chris Spowles for State House | \$500 |
| 2021: | Darden Rice for Mayor | \$1,000 |

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

Syracuse University Class Marshal, University Scholar, 1984 [graduation honors in lieu of valedictorian/salutatorian]

Pinellas Jewish Federation: Young Leadership Award, 2003; Educator of the Year, 2009

Jewish Theological Seminary, New York: Shin Award, 2005
Service to Community, Synagogue, and the Jewish Theological Seminary

Academy Prep Center, St. Petersburg, FL: Jeffrey L. Fortune Dream Maker Award, 2017

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.

As staff writer and correspondent for the *St. Petersburg Times* from 1984-1986, I wrote articles nearly every day for the newspaper.

In *Chaucer's Pilgrims: An Historical Guide to the Pilgrims in The Canterbury Tales*, edited by Laura C. Lambdin and Robert T. Lambdin, I contributed Chapter 12: "A Frankeleyn Was In His Compaignye" [1996:Greenwood Press, Westport, CT].

In *Shibboleth Schechter*, Volume 25, Issue 2, Winter 2004, I contributed "MaToK Feedback."

Speeches, Presentations on behalf of public media, CPB:

- 1. Presentations, introductions at CCSSO/CPB meetings: March 2009 and March 2010**
- 2. Presentation of CPB Board Resolution of Appreciation to retiring WEDU CEO Dick Lobo, Sept. 29, 2010**
- 3. Presentation of Ralph Lowell Award for outstanding contribution to public television to Rep. Earl Blumenauer: Nov. 17, 2011**

18. List all 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 (active): Liz Sembler

Instagram (active): #auntlizzy427

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.

On September 17, 2008, I appeared before the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and testified about my nomination to the board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

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?

As a classroom and informal educator and trained journalist, my professional career has given me insight into both of these areas that are vital parts of the CPB mission.

I have served on the board of my local public television station in Tampa, WEDU, since 1993 (with one year off for term limits twice), and I am a former board chair of WEDU.

I served on the board of the national organization Association of Public Television Stations (now America’s Public Television Stations) from 2006-2008, and I have served on the CPB board from 2008-2020. I have chaired the CPB Board, I have served as vice chair, and I have chaired the Audit and Finance Committee during most of my board service (except when I was board chair).

I would like to be re-appointed to the CPB board because I am a firm believer in the Corporation’s service-oriented mission. I have decades of experience as a local and national lay leader in the public media world, including 11 years of board experience at

CPB. I would like to continue to offer the Corporation and the American people my thoughtful approach to the issues. I enjoy contributing to the CPB board's wide-ranging discussions and direction-setting decisions that impact the Corporation's investment in early education, high school graduation rates and career readiness, and enhanced quality, balance, and transparency in public media's editorial areas. I take seriously my role as an advocate for the public, and I work hard to ensure that CPB fulfills its mission to serve all Americans. As a board member on a local board for 27 years, I bring a unique perspective to the Corporation – one that I believe is helpful as it stewards the federal appropriation on behalf of the 1,500+ local stations in the public media system.

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?

As mentioned, I have served as the chair of the CPB Audit and Finance Committee. I began serving in that position in 2008. (I relinquished the position when I served as board chair.) As a result, I have learned the intricacies relating to the statutorily-mandated distribution of the federal appropriation (among television stations, radio stations, internal staff, and system support) and the CPB Board's and Audit and Finance Committee's role in ensuring its proper stewardship.

I have participated in the selection process for hiring the Corporation's current auditing firm, and I was the firm's point person on the Board for the annual audit of financial statements. I conferred regularly with the Inspector General and twice chaired the search committee of the Board to hire the new Inspector General when the position was vacant.

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

Public media occasionally faces challenges from those who believe it should be privately financed, or that it should sell airtime for commercials, or that its mission has been eclipsed by other networks in a 500+ channel universe, or that it demonstrates political bias and leans too far to the left or too far to the right. These criticisms, or suggestions, periodically generate a lot of attention. While this is frustrating and disappointing on many levels, and perhaps is the most public of our challenges, there are other challenges as well.

The media landscape and consumption habits of television in America are rapidly changing. More than 50 percent of video consumption takes place on screens other than TV. Most is on mobile. The PBS station system is inconsistent when it comes to meeting the needs of mobile video consumers around the country, with smaller stations in particular facing more impediments than others. Many stations have adapted well to a digital universe; some have not. CPB has funded a digital accelerator to help lagging stations embrace the new technological opportunities and will continue to monitor the system as it experiences growing pains and other challenges. It is critical for the entire

public media system to not only be adept in the mobile space, but to pioneer in this space as well. This is a particular necessity for stations on the local level. As PBS and NPR feed national content designed for mobile devices, local stations must produce compelling content in this space as well, or they will be bypassed by the mobile user who watches/listens to the national feed only.

Lastly, new technology continues to emerge. As the nation looks to adopt the new ATSC 3.0 (Nextgen) broadcasting standard, it will create disruption at local PBS stations. Will stations have the equipment necessary to move to the standard? Can they afford it? Will they be able to collaborate with other local stations as needed to simultaneously maintain the new and old standards during transition? Will consumers willingly move to the new standard? Will broadcast be granted an extended lease on life as a result of ATSC 3.0, or is this simply postponing the inevitable?

As I have learned over the years, all of these challenges are opportunities in disguise. I have witnessed a stunning transformation of public media since I first joined the board of WEDU in 1993. I have watched stations rise to the challenge of the digital conversion in the early 2000s and the recent spectrum auction. I have watched them embrace the social media explosion that characterizes this century. American public media has been strengthened all the more after being reshaped and reconfigured by all of these opportunities, and continues to serve the country just as powerfully as it was designed to do in 1967. I find that inspirational. It compels me to seek another term on this board to help steward the federal appropriation to ensure that this transformation continues and that our country continues to benefit from the investment in a strong public media 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.

I am the owner of a 403(b) retirement account held by TIAA. I am also the owner of a rollover IRA account held by Goldman Sachs.

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 nominations process, I have consulted with the Office of Government Ethics and the Corporation of Public Broadcasting's designated agency ethics official to identify any potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved in accordance with the terms of an ethics agreement that I have entered into with CPB'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. **None.**
5. Identify any other potential conflicts of interest, and explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

In connection with the nominations process, I have consulted with the Office of Government Ethics and the Corporation of Public Broadcasting's designated agency ethics official to identify any potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved in accordance with the terms of an ethics agreement that I have entered into with CPB'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.

Since becoming a member of the WEDU board in 1993, I have had the opportunity to speak with elected officials, on both the state and national level, about the vital contribution of public media, both nationally and locally. Since joining the CPB Board in 2008, when meeting with elected officials and their staffs, I make sure that my conversations are strictly educational and informational. I understand that I cannot seek support for appropriations and/or other legislation affecting public media.

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? **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.

I believe I have served our country with honor and diligence in my years of service and leadership on the board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. I worked cooperatively with the other members of the board and the staff and have developed strong relationships with leaders in our country's public media system.

I believe I carefully safeguarded the taxpayers' investment in our public media system, and I believe I served as a responsible steward of the federal appropriation.

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.**

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? **If applicable, 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.**

F. AFFIDAVIT

Elizabeth Sembler 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.

Elizabeth Sembler
Signature of Nominee

Subscribed and sworn before me this 13 day of October, 2021.

Heleen M Camp
Notary Public



Elizabeth M. Sembler

Employment History:

- 2011-2019 **Director of Congregational Engagement**
Congregation B'nai Israel
St. Petersburg, Florida
- Educational leader for Conservative synagogue, responsibilities of which included recruiting and training volunteer service participants, teaching classes, and organizing and chairing the congregation's first Engagement Committee. Retired June 2019.
- 2012-2013 **Program Director**
Keshet Afterschool Program
Clearwater, Florida
- Created, ran and taught at a Jewish Community Center afterschool program for elementary school children who attended a Hebrew language public charter school that was open for one year.
- 2001-2010 **Director of Jewish Studies**
Pinellas County Jewish Day School
Clearwater, Florida
- Coordinator of Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth Grade religious education program, responsibilities of which included supervising Hebrew and Jewish Studies teachers; teaching Middle School Bible, Hebrew, and Jewish Studies; conducting daily prayer services and supervising Torah reading; setting curriculum; conducting holiday programming; and working with other Jewish communal professionals and rabbis
School closed in May 2010
- 2000-2001 **Sixth Grade Jewish Studies Teacher**
Pinellas County Jewish Day School
Clearwater, Florida

1984-1986 **Staff Writer, *St. Petersburg Times***
Times Publishing Company
St. Petersburg, Florida

Community Service:

2021 **Member, Board of Trustees**
Congregation B'nai Israel
St. Petersburg, FL

2021 **Member, Board of Trustees**
TOP Jewish Foundation
Tampa, FL

2021 **Member, Board of Directors**
Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions, St. Petersburg College
St. Petersburg, FL

2019-present **Chair, Endowment Campaign**
Jewish Burial Society/Chapel Hill Cemetery
St. Petersburg, FL

2015-2021 **Member, Foundation Board**
The Poynter Institute for Media Studies
St. Petersburg, FL

2011-present **Member, Board of Trustees**
Academy Prep Center
St. Petersburg, Florida
Served as Chairman of the Board 2017-19

2008-2020 **Member, Board of Directors**
The Corporation for Public Broadcasting
Washington, DC
Served as Chairman of the Board 2014-16

2008-present **Member, Board of Directors**
The Florida Orchestra
St. Petersburg, Florida
Currently serving as Vice Chair

- 2006-2008 **Member, Board of Directors**
America's Public Television Stations
Washington, DC
- 2004-present **Member, Board of Advisors**
William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education
Jewish Theological Seminary
New York, New York
Currently serving as Co-Chairman of the Board
- 1993-present **Member, Board of Directors**
Florida West Coast Public Broadcasting, Inc. - WEDU
Tampa, Florida
Served as Chairman of the Board 2001-2003
One year off for term limits (twice) during this tenure
- 1987-2012 **Jewish Communal Leader**
- Served on boards of the Jewish Federation of Pinellas County and the Pinellas County Jewish Day School

Education:

- 2007 **Gratz College**, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Graduate Certificate in Jewish Education
- 1989 **University of South Florida**, Tampa, Florida
Master of Arts in English
- 1984 **Syracuse University**, Syracuse, New York
Bachelor of Arts in Newspaper and Political Science

Honors and Recognitions:

- 2017 ***Jeffrey L. Fortune Dream Maker Award*** from Academy Prep Center, St. Petersburg, FL
- 2009 ***Educator of Excellence Award*** from the Pinellas County Jewish Federation

- 2005 ***Shin Award*** from the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
for Service to Community, Synagogue and the Jewish Theological
Seminary
- 2003 ***Edward N. Ludin Award for Young Leadership*** from the Pinellas
County Jewish Federation
- 1984 ***University Scholar***, Syracuse University