

Senate Commerce Committee Nominee Questionnaire, 117th 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):

- **Mohsin Raza Syed**

2. Position to which nominated:

- **Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs, U.S. Department of Transportation**

3. Date of Nomination:

- **April 12, 2021**

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

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- **Office – 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590**

5. Date and Place of Birth:

- **July 9, 1980, Morganton, NC**

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).

- **Wife – Sehar Siddiqi**
 - **Director, Fair Housing Policy and Valuation, National Association of Realtors**

[REDACTED]

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

- **B.A., University of Virginia, 2002**
- **J.D., University of Virginia School of Law, 2008**

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.

Management-Level Jobs Related to Nominated Position

- **January 2021 – Present**
 - Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs (Acting Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs), U.S. Department of Transportation
- **January 2019 – January 2021**
 - Chief Counsel, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Chair Peter DeFazio
- **July 2016 – January 2019**
 - Staff Director/Senior Counsel, for the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security, Ranking Member Bill Nelson

Non-Management-Level Jobs

- **October 2014 – July 2016; February 2018 – March 2018**
 - Legislative Counsel, U.S. Senator Bill Nelson
 - From February 2018 to March 2018, I briefly served as Legislative Counsel in addition to my duties on the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation as the previous Legislative Counsel had left and Senator Nelson's personal office needed assistance.
- **February 2014 – August 2014**
 - Legislative Fellow, U.S. Senator Brian Schatz

- During this time, I was employed and paid by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). However, I was assigned as a Legislative Fellow to Senator Schatz's office for six months as part of a congressional detail assignment. Once that assignment ended in August 2014, I returned to DOT.
- **October 2011 – October 2014**
 - Attorney Advisor, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of the General Counsel, Office of Operations
- **January 2011 – October 2011**
 - Associate, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
- **September 2008 – December 2010**
 - Associate, Arnold & Porter LLP
- **May 2007 – August 2007**
 - Summer Associate, Arnold & Porter LLP
- **May 2006 – August 2006**
 - Legal Intern, U.S. Department of Justice, Counterterrorism Section
- **July 2003 – July 2005**
 - Intelligence Officer, Defense Intelligence Agency
- **July 2002 – July 2003**
 - Honors Paralegal, Federal Trade Commission, Bureau of Competition

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.

- **None**

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.

- **Member of Virginia Bar and District of Columbia Bar**
- **April 2013-April 2016 - served on the board of the Asian and Asian Pacific American Alumni Network (AAPAAN) at the University of Virginia**

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.

- **Biden-Harris Campaign Infrastructure Policy Committee, (battleground states subcommittee), 2020, Member/Volunteer**
- **Biden-Harris Campaign, GOTV volunteer, 2020**

- **Nelson for Senate Campaign, Voter Protection volunteer, 2018**
- **Clinton-Kaine Campaign, Voter Protection volunteer, 2016**
- **McAuliffe Virginia Gubernatorial Campaign, GOTV volunteer, 2013**

15. Itemize all political contributions to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity of \$200 or more for the past ten years.

- **No individual or aggregate political contributions of \$200 or more**

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

- **None**

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.

- ***Articles* - I have a memory of submitting a *letter to the editor* in the fall of 2007 while attending the University of Virginia School of Law to the school's newspaper, *The Cavalier Daily*. However, no such *letter to the editor* is available in the online archives. I reached out to a UVA librarian for assistance, and the librarian could not find it either. I am unclear if it was published but mentioning here out of an abundance of caution.**
- ***Speeches* – As a Senate and House staffer, I had on occasion participated in panel discussions involving question-and-answer sessions. Because I lack access to my former Senate and House calendars, I do not recall the exact times and panel hosts but am happy to discuss further with the Committee.**

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:** <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1523142>
- **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mohsin-syed-162299175/>
- **Pinterest:** @mrsyed6865 (not active – 0 followers and 0 following)
- **Yelp:** Mohsin S. (not active – 0 friends and 0 reviews)

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.

- **None**

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?

My father immigrated to the United States in the 1970s. As a veterinarian trained in Pakistan, his professional background led to a 42-year career in public service with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and an inspirational life for his kids in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. Like my father, my neighbors worked for agencies across the federal government. This was my community – a community in which public service was a meaningful way to serve our country and provide for our families.

This commitment to public service has been a constant theme throughout my professional career – whether as an intelligence officer with the Defense Intelligence Agency, a career attorney at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and over six years of service in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. This is the experience I will bring to the position of Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs at DOT.

Specifically, I served for over three years as an Attorney-Advisor within DOT, where I learned about the many different aspects of the work done within the Department and its Operating Administrations. I also

served with dedicated public servants, many of whom are thankfully still with the Department and a source of help to me when I navigate my current position as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs.

I also had the good fortune of working for two of the Department's congressional authorizing committees – the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation as well as the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. In both positions, I worked on key legislative and oversight priorities for then-Ranking Member Bill Nelson and Chair Peter DeFazio respectively specific to DOT. I cherish the bipartisan relationships that I developed during my tenure on both committees, our collective accomplishments, and the opportunity to work on every aspect of DOT's mission – from aviation to surface to maritime and everything in between. If confirmed, I am confident my Capitol Hill experience will help me serve the needs of Congress here at the Department.

While I have not matched my father's 42 years of public service nor that of my neighbors growing up in Dale City, VA, I believe I am playing a small part on giving back to the country that has given so much to my family. If confirmed, I hope to continue this tradition of public service as Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs at DOT.

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?

Having worked on legislative and oversight matters in the Senate and House on matters affecting DOT, I am mindful of the statutory deadlines and mandates Congress expects departments and agencies to meet in authorizing legislation. And especially with regards to congressional oversight, ensuring timely and complete responses from the Department is essential to developing and maintaining a trustful relationship. My team and I will clearly communicate Department-wide that meeting statutory deadlines, responding robustly to congressional oversight requests, and implementing laws passed by Congress is essential to meeting the Department's mission of ensuring the safety and efficiency of the country's transportation system. Having clarity with regards to goals and mission is how I previously managed teams on

Capitol Hill – especially when working on legislation that have and continue to impact DOT.

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

The Department's primary challenge and responsibility is ensuring the safety of the country's transportation system. No matter the strides made on safety in any mode of transportation, the challenge always remains. Remaining vigilant and one step ahead of the next safety crisis will maintain the Department's credibility, continue motivating its dedicated team, and more importantly keep Americans safe while preventing transportation-related tragedies.

Along with safety, integrating new entrants into the country's transportation system remains a challenge. Be it unmanned aircraft systems helping to survey damage caused by natural disasters or delivering needed medical supplies or autonomous vehicles navigating our roads and streets safely, it is essential for the Department to ensure a thorough and robust regulatory framework is in place. This will require effective cooperation and clear communication with congressional committees of jurisdiction and interested Members, consumer, safety, and labor groups, and industry stakeholders.

An overall challenge for the Department is managing over 55,000 employees working on a diverse array of issues cutting across different modes of transportation. While a welcome challenge given DOT's mission, ensuring seamless execution requires clear and precise direction from managers, feedback from DOT's employees, and clear lines of communication within and among the Office of the Secretary and Operating Administrations. I am grateful to already be working with a wonderful group of public servants on this and other challenges and look forward to continuing to do so if confirmed for this role.

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.

- None**

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 the Government Ethics and the Department of Transportation's Designated Agency Ethics Official to identify potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved in accordance with the terms of the ethics agreement 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 the Government Ethics and the Department of Transportation's Designated Agency Ethics Official to identify potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved in accordance with the terms of the ethics agreement 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 the Government Ethics and the Department of Transportation's Designated Agency Ethics Official to identify potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved in accordance with the terms of the ethics agreement 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.

- **None**

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:

- **No, I have not**

- 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.

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, I have not**

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

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

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

F. AFFIDAVIT

Mohsin Syed 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.

Mohsin Syed
Signature of Nominee

Subscribed and sworn before me this 5th day of 2021.

Graylon A. Smith
Notary Public



Mohsin R. Syed

EXPERIENCE

U.S. Department of Transportation, Washington, DC

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs, January 2021 – Present

Acting Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs, January 2021 – April 2021

- Serve as the Secretary of Transportation's principal advisor on all matters pertaining to congressional, state, local, and Tribal affairs.

U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC

Chief Counsel, January 2019 – January 2021

- Assisted in managing a committee staff of attorneys and policy experts to implement the legislative priorities of Chair Peter DeFazio on all issues pertaining to transportation, infrastructure, federal emergency management, and public buildings.
- Strategized with and provide policy counsel to committee staff in developing and moving legislation through the committee, House Floor, and negotiations between the House and Senate.
- Provided counsel to the committee's oversight team, including a lead investigator and two attorneys, in conducting oversight of government agencies and industries within the committee's jurisdiction.
- Advised the Chair and committee staff on all rules and parliamentary procedures pertaining to legislation considered in committee and on the House Floor.
- Directed committee staff during House Floor consideration of committee-related legislation in coordination with House Leadership.

U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Washington, DC

Staff Director (with TS clearance), Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security, July 2016 – January 2019

- Advised Ranking Member Bill Nelson, Democratic committee members, and Democratic caucus on all issues pertaining to aviation consumer protection, operations, safety, and security.
- Managed subcommittee staff in providing policy counsel, developing legislative strategy, and drafting and negotiating bipartisan legislation on aviation-related matters, including the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-254) – a five-year reauthorization of the FAA and three-year reauthorization of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).
- Directed committee oversight of the aviation industry through committee hearings and engagement with the FAA, TSA, and relevant stakeholders.

Office of U.S. Senator Bill Nelson, Washington, DC

Legislative Counsel, October 2014 – July 2016; February 2018 – March 2018

- Advised the Senator on all issues pertaining to judiciary, immigration, and child welfare.
- Managed the Senator's bipartisan process for recommending individuals to the White House for federal district court and U.S. Attorney vacancies in Florida.
- Led the Senator's legislative efforts in response to two mass shootings in Florida – Pulse nightclub in Orlando and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland.
- Assisted Senate Commerce Committee in drafting and negotiating the Senate-passed FAA Reauthorization Act of 2016 and FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-190).

U.S. Department of Transportation, Washington, DC

Attorney-Advisor (with Secret Clearance), October 2011 – October 2014

Legislative Fellow to U.S. Senator Brian Schatz, February 2014 – August 2014

- Detailed from the Department to provide legislative and policy counsel for the Senator's priorities in the areas of aviation, surface transportation, and homeland security.

Mohsin R. Syed

Office of the General Counsel, Operations

- Provided legal counsel to the Essential Air Service (EAS) program, including reviewing program orders, drafting responses to congressional requests, and facilitating a working group on enforcing statutory requirements and improving the program's administration.
- Provided legal counsel to a working group seeking to establish a medical countermeasures program to distribute antibiotics to personnel during a biological attack.
- Coordinated on privacy and security-related legal issues pertaining to the domestic use of unmanned aircraft systems.
- Served as the Department's legal contact for a White House-led interagency working group to improve chemical facility safety and security.
- Ensured regulatory compliance of documents containing Sensitive Security Information (SSI).

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, Washington, DC

Associate, January 2011 – October 2011

- Represented aerospace, defense, financial, industrial, and technology clients on internal investigations and compliance matters related to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, export control and antiboycott laws and regulations, and U.S.-administered sanctions programs.

Arnold & Porter LLP, Washington, DC

Associate, September 2008 – December 2010; Summer Associate, 2007

- Represented corporate clients on commercial and white collar litigation matters involving the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, antitrust, and patent legal issues.

Defense Intelligence Agency, Washington, DC

Intelligence Officer (with TS/SCI clearance), July 2003 – July 2005

- Monitored, analyzed, and presented intelligence collected on transnational terrorist organization activities in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia to senior officials, deployed personnel, and the greater intelligence community as part of the Joint Intelligence Task Force – Combating Terrorism (JITF-CT).
- Served for one year as a CENTCOM Desk Watch Officer responsible for monitoring and sending all-source terrorism reporting while providing initial assessments and warnings of imminent threats to deployed personnel as part of 24-hour Warning and Fusion Center.
- Awarded JITF-CT Challenge Coin for distinguished service as an all-source analyst assessing terrorist trends in Iraq and twice recognized for outstanding contributions to defense intelligence.

Federal Trade Commission, Washington, DC

Honors Paralegal for Bureau of Competition, July 2002 – July 2003

- Assisted attorneys on antitrust cases, including conducting telephone interviews of potential witnesses, drafting interview reports, and reviewing documents requested through discovery.

EDUCATION

University of Virginia School of Law

J.D., May 2008

Member of Virginia State Bar (2008) and District of Columbia Bar (2009)

Interned at U.S. Department of Justice, Counterterrorism Section with TS/SCI clearance (summer of 2006)

University of Virginia

B.A., Foreign Affairs and History, May 2002

Interned at the White House Office of Public Liaison (summer of 2000)