

CABINET APPOINTEE: DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

President-elect Biden has nominated Pete Buttigieg to lead the Department of Transportation. Mr. Buttigieg previously served two terms as Mayor of South Bend, Indiana, from 2012 to 2020.

Former Pennsylvania Governor [Edward G. Rendell](#), now a member of Ballard Spahr's [Government Relations and Public Policy Group](#), shared his insights about Mayor Buttigieg and what the future may hold for him in this role.

How did you meet Mayor Pete?

Gov. Rendell: I was sitting in my office one day and I got a call from a man named Pete Buttigieg. He introduced himself and told me he was the mayor of South Bend, Indiana. He told me he had followed my career as Mayor and Governor and that he was running for the position of Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. He asked for my support. We chatted and I asked him what

he thought needed to be done in that position. Pete had a bundle of fresh ideas and enthusiasm. At the time of his call, everyone was feeling pretty down about Hillary Clinton's defeat in the presidential election. I was immediately drawn to him as a potential new, young, and enthusiastic voice that could represent the Democrats as Chairman. I told him I would be happy to endorse him, and that I would take the additional step of speaking to other former Chairs and

They started out as rivals and went at it pretty hard in some of the debates, but as Joe got to know Pete more, he said that Pete reminded him of his late son, Beau. That says a lot. Not only did Joe love his son, he thought Beau could be President someday. For Joe to say that Pete reminded him of Beau was about the highest praise he could give.

asking for their endorsement. He didn't get the nomination, but Pete and I formed a great friendship.

A year and a half later, he came to Philadelphia to talk about running for president. I was curious how a person of his age could articulate why he wanted to be president and why he thought he was qualified. Pete gave a smashing presentation that blew us away. He knew what he wanted to do and had solutions I thought were practical. Although I was committed to endorsing Joe, I was impressed with Pete, and he and I maintained our friendship.

I actually just got off the phone with him, and he told me he will never forget that I gave him his first endorsement outside of Indiana.

Why do you think President-elect Biden chose him to lead this department?

Gov. Rendell: Pete endorsed Joe right after the South Carolina primary, and they became good friends. They started out as rivals and went at it pretty hard in some of the debates, but as Joe got to know Pete more, he said that Pete reminded him of his late son, Beau. That says a lot. Not only did Joe love his son,

he thought Beau could be President someday. For Joe to say that Pete reminded him of Beau was about the highest praise he could give.

What challenges will he face in this role?

Gov. Rendell: The biggest challenge Pete will face is funding. Talk to any member of Congress, and they'll tell you that we need to do something immediately to revitalize and repair our infrastructure. Everyone supports an infrastructure program, but nobody wants to say how to pay for it. Joe Biden will. President-elect Biden has said he wants a 10-year, \$2 trillion infrastructure revitalization program. That's exactly what the

American Society of Civil Engineers said we should do. When it comes to finding the money to pay for that, Pete is very resourceful and extremely intelligent. He is dedicated to finding the right solution. He will work with the President and the President's team to come up with a workable solution that, hopefully, will include a jobs program that will offer good-paying jobs to Americans without a college education.

What can we expect from Mayor Pete's leadership?

Gov. Rendell: Pete is a great young leader. He's the youngest Cabinet member ever nominated. He's also the first openly LGBTQ-

identifying person to be nominated to the Cabinet. I think he will bring enthusiasm, innovative-thinking, and energy to the job.



Presidential Transition Center

Our national Government Relations and Public Policy team helps clients navigate legal, regulatory, and legislative challenges at the state and federal level.

The attorneys of our team have held public office and worked with officials across all branches of government. The result: a deep, nuanced understanding of politics and policy.

We frequently update our [Presidential Transition Center](#) with timely insights on the formation of President-elect Biden's administration. We look forward to working with clients of all sizes as they prepare for a new era.