

Accountable.US Case Study: The Nomination Of Arun Venkataraman

SUMMARY: Arun Venkataraman, an Indian American nominated for Assistant Secretary and Director General of the US and Foreign Commercial Service, waited 315 days from his nomination to confirmation. This is 226.25 days longer than the average timeline for Biden’s Department of Commerce Nominees.

Though Arun Venkataraman was eventually confirmed, the elongated delay between his nomination and confirmation dates are indicative of a larger trend of Biden Administration white male nominees being confirmed by the Senate much faster than any other demographic group. In confirmation hearings for Venkataraman, multiple Senators mispronounced or asked the nominee himself how to pronounce his name, another pattern from Senate confirmation hearings, which the [Washington Post has reported on](#).

Table of Contents

Accountable.US Case Study: The Nomination Of Arun Venkataraman	1
NOMINATION TIMELINE	1
Arun Venkataraman’s Nomination Was Greatly Delayed Because Of Senate Rules Requiring Nominations To Be Resent To The Senate In A New Session. Venkataraman Was Close To Being Confirmed In 2021, But Was Sent Back To Committee In Early 2022 And Confirmed In April 2022.	2
MEDIA RECEPTION TO NOMINATION AND SENATE RESPONSE	2
Venkataraman Received Relatively Little Coverage Both When He Was Nominated And When He Was Confirmed ..	2
Coverage Of Venkataraman’s Nomination Focused On His Indian Heritage.....	2
A.US Commerce Department Nominee Timeline Analysis (As of Feb 2022)	3
Commerce Department Nominees Overall Leaned White, Male.....	3
White Nominees At Commerce Had A Faster Track Through Confirmation Process Than Nonwhite Nominees, In Terms Of Both Hearings And Confirmations	3
White Male Nominees From The Commerce Department Fared Better Through The Confirmation Process In Receiving Timely Hearings And Confirmations	3
Senators Had Trouble Pronouncing Arun Venkataraman’s Name, A Pattern Repeated In Multiple Confirmation Hearings For Nominees Of Color	4
EVENTUAL CONFIRMATION	4
Venkataraman Was Confirmed Via A Voice Vote In The Senate In April 2022	4
Senator Scott Objected To Confirming Venkataraman In December 2021.....	4
Venkataraman Was Confirmed Via A Voice Vote Later In April 2022, A Full 315 Days After His Initial Nomination	5

Field Code Changed

NOMINATION TIMELINE

In May 2021, Arun Venkataraman was announced as the nominee for Comptroller of the Currency at the Department of Treasury by President Biden. Venkataraman was officially nominated on May 27th, 2021 and confirmed on April 7th, 2022—a whole 315 days after his official nomination.

Status	Date Of Nomination	Hearing Date	Floor Vote/Confirmation Date	Days From Nomination To Hearing	Days From Hearing To Confirmation	Days From Nomination To Confirmation
Confirmed	5/27/21	7/12/21	4/7/22	47	268	315
DOC Average (As Of 1/14/22)				58	49.5	88.75
DIFFERENCE				Received a hearing 11 days sooner than average for DOC nominees	Confirmation took 218 days longer than average for DOC nominees	Confirmation took 226.25 days longer than average for DOC nominees

Arun Venkataraman’s Nomination Was Greatly Delayed Because Of Senate Rules Requiring Nominations To Be Resent To The Senate In A New Session. Venkataraman Was Close To Being Confirmed In 2021, But Was Sent Back To Committee In Early 2022 And Confirmed In April 2022.

President Biden Announced Venkataraman’s Nomination On May 26th, 2021. “Arun Venkataraman, Nominee for Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service and Assistant Secretary for Global Markets, Department of Commerce.” [White House Press Release, [5/26/21](#)]

- Venkataraman Was Officially Nominated The Next Day, On May 27th, 2021. “Received in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.” [Congress.gov, Accessed [6/30/22](#)]
- Both The Commerce, Science, And Transportation Committee And The Banking, Housing, And Urban Affairs Committee Reported Venkataraman Favorably After Hearings. “Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Ordered to be reported favorably. [...] Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. Ordered to be reported favorably.” [Congress.gov, Accessed [6/30/22](#)]
- Venkataraman’s Nomination Timeline Was Reset When The New Senate Session Began In 2022. “01/03/2022, Returned to the President under the provisions of Senate Rule XXXI, paragraph 6 of the Standing Rules of the Senate.” [Congress.gov, Accessed [6/30/22](#)]
- Venkataraman Was Confirmed On April 7th, 2022. “04/07/2022, Confirmed by the Senate by Voice Vote.” [Congress.gov, Accessed [6/30/22](#)]

MEDIA RECEPTION TO NOMINATION AND SENATE RESPONSE

Venkataraman Received Relatively Little Coverage Both When He Was Nominated And When He Was Confirmed

Coverage Of Venkataraman’s Nomination Focused On His Indian Heritage

Announcement Coverage

Mint Headline: “Who Is Indian American Arun Venkataraman - Biden's Nominee To A Key Position?”

“US President Joe Biden has nominated another Indian American, Arun Venkataraman, to a key position in his administration. Informing about the decision, the White House said Venkataraman was the nominee for Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service and Assistant Secretary for Global Markets, Department of Commerce.” [Mint, [5/27/21](#)]

The Print Headline: “Joe Biden Nominates Indian American Arun Venkataraman To A Key Administration Post.” “Venkataraman is the nominee for Director-General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service and Assistant Secretary for Global Markets, Department of Commerce, the White House said. With over 20 years of experience in advising companies, international organisations and the US government on international trade issues, Venkataraman is currently the Counselor to the Secretary of Commerce, advising the department on trade and other international economic matters.” [The Print, [5/27/21](#)]

Confirmation/Hearing Coverage

Economic Times Headline: Indian-American Arun Venkataraman sworn in as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Global Markets. “Arun Venkataraman, a leading Indian-American international trade policy expert, has been sworn in as the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Global Markets and Director General of the US and Foreign Commercial Service for the International Trade Administration.” [Economic Times, [4/26/22](#)]

A.US Commerce Department Nominee Timeline Analysis (As of Feb 2022)

Commerce Department Nominees Overall Leaned White, Male

Of The 18 Total Nominees At The Commerce Department, 11 (62%) Were White And 7 (38%) Were Nonwhite. [Accountable.US Analysis – Biden Cabinet Nominees, 1/10/22]

Of The 18 Total Nominees At The Commerce Department, 11 (62%) Were Male And 7 (38%) Were Female. [Accountable.US Analysis – Biden Cabinet Nominees, 1/10/22]

White Nominees At Commerce Had A Faster Track Through Confirmation Process Than Nonwhite Nominees, In Terms Of Both Hearings And Confirmations

Commerce Department’s White Nominees Had Faster Track To Receiving Congressional Hearings Once Nominated, 37% Faster Than Nonwhite Nominees. White Commerce nominees received a congressional hearing an average of 53.3 days following official nomination, compared to 73.3 days for nonwhite nominees (20 day difference). [Accountable.US Analysis – Biden Cabinet Nominees, 1/10/22]

Commerce Department’s White Nominees Had Faster Track To Receiving Congressional Confirmation, With Votes Taking Place 55% Faster Than Nonwhite Nominees. White Commerce nominees received congressional confirmation an average of 88.2 days following official nomination, compared to 137.5 days for nonwhite nominees (49.3 day difference). [Accountable.US Analysis – Biden Cabinet Nominees, 1/10/22]

White Male Nominees From The Commerce Department Fared Better Through The Confirmation Process In Receiving Timely Hearings And Confirmations

Commerce Department’s White Male Nominees Had The Fastest Track To Receiving A Congressional Hearing After Being Nominated, At 41% Faster Than Nonwhite Females, 39% Faster Than Nonwhite Males, And 4% Faster Than White Females. White male Commerce nominees received a congressional hearing an average of 52.2 days following official nomination, compared to 74 days for nonwhite females, 73

days for nonwhite males, and 54.6 days for white females. [Accountable.US Analysis – Biden Cabinet Nominees, 1/10/22]

Commerce Department’s White Male Nominees Had Faster Track To Receiving Congressional Confirmation After Being Nominated, At 117% Faster Than Nonwhite Males, 61% Faster Than Nonwhite Females, And 42% Faster Than White Females. White male Commerce nominees received a congressional hearing an average of 72.7 days following official nomination, compared to 158 days for nonwhite males, 117 days for nonwhite females, and 103.7 days for white females. [Accountable.US Analysis – Biden Cabinet Nominees, 1/10/22]

Senators Had Trouble Pronouncing Arun Venkataraman’s Name, A Pattern Repeated In Multiple Confirmation Hearings For Nominees Of Color

Washington Post **Headline: “It’s Not Just Sundar Pichai. Senators Keep Mispronouncing The Names Of Nominees Of Color.”** “On Wednesday, the Senate Commerce Committee considered another slate of prominent federal nominees, many from underrepresented backgrounds, including Alvaro Bedoya for the Federal Trade Commission, and Jainey Kumar Bavishi and Arun Venkataraman for the Commerce Department. Lawmakers weren’t quite ready, though. “Say your name for me please,” Chair Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) said to Venkataraman after attempting to pronounce it. After hearing his response, she laughed, seemingly startled, “Okay.”” [Washington Post, [11/18/21](#)]

Three Senators Had Trouble Pronouncing Venkataraman’s Name In Two Separate Nomination Hearings

Senator Toomey: “Mr. Venkataraman, And I Hope I Am Pronouncing That Approximately Correctly.” There. [Senate Banking Committee Hearing, [7/13/22](#)]

Senator Menendez: “Thank You, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Venkataraman, Is That The Correct Pronunciation?” [Senate Banking Committee Hearing, [7/13/22](#)]

Senator Cantwell: “Finally, We Will Hear From Arun Venkataraman, Say Your Name For Me, Please. OK. Venkataraman.” [Senate Commerce Committee Hearing, [11/17/21](#)]

EVENTUAL CONFIRMATION

Venkataraman Was Confirmed Via A Voice Vote In The Senate In April 2022

Senator Scott Objected To Confirming Venkataraman In December 2021

Rick Scott Objected To Unanimous Consent To Confirm Arun Venkataraman In December 2021.



[Dem Senate Majority Floor Updates, via Twitter, [12/16/21](#)]

Venkataraman Was Confirmed Via A Voice Vote Later In April 2022, A Full 315 Days After His Initial Nomination

Arun Venkataraman Was Confirmed Via A Voice Vote On April 7, 2022. [Congress.gov, Accessed [6/30/22](#)]

Commerce Department's White Male Nominees Had Faster Track To Receiving Congressional Confirmation After Being Nominated, At 117% Faster Than Nonwhite Males, 61% Faster Than Nonwhite Females, And 42% Faster Than White Females. White male Commerce nominees received a congressional hearing an average of 72.7 days following official nomination, compared to 158 days for nonwhite males, 117 days for nonwhite females, and 103.7 days for white females. [Accountable.US Analysis – Biden Cabinet Nominees, 1/10/22]

###