



# ERIC UELAND

DIRECTOR OF WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

NationalJournal

## Life in Brief

**Born:** July 12, 1965

**Hometown:** Portland, OR

**Current Residence:** Arlington, VA

### Education:

- BA, University of San Francisco, 1988

### Family:

- Married, Cathleen
- Three children

### Work History:

- Assistant to the President/Director of the Office of Legislative Affairs, White House, 2019-Present
- Deputy Assistant to the President/Deputy Director of the Domestic Policy Council, White House, 2019
- Director, U.S. Office of Foreign Assistance, 2018-2019
- Senior Strategy Officer, Millennium Challenge Corporation, 2018
- U.S. Senate Budget Committee, 2013-2018
  - Senior Advisor, 2017-2018
  - Republican Staff Director, 2013-2017
- Transition Team Member, Donald J. Trump for President, 2016-2017
- Vice President, Duberstein Group, 2007-2013
- Staffer, U.S. Senate, 1989-2007
  - Deputy Chief of Staff/Policy Advisor/Chief of Staff, Office of Majority Leader William Frist, 2003-2007
  - Staff Director, Committee on Rules and Administration, 2002-2003
  - Deputy Chief of Staff/Chief of Staff, Office of Republican Whip Don Nickles, 1996-2002

## Quick Summary

**Seasoned Senate operative and former lobbyist who brings expertise on congressional procedure to role as top liaison between the White House and Capitol Hill**

- History buff from Portland, OR
- Held senior positions in the Senate, including as Chief of Staff for Republican Majority Leader Bill Frist and Assistant Majority Leader Don Nickles, where he became renowned for his encyclopedic knowledge of Senate rules
- In his capacity as a staffer, worked on initiatives that benefit business, such as tax cuts, and has spoken out in defense of Senate precedent
- Gained experience lobbying for global corporate clients, advocating for free trade agreements
- Joined the Trump Administration during the presidential transition to help prep Trump's cabinet picks and rose to legislative director after a failed nomination for Under Secretary of State for Management
- Advisory role in the Clinton and Trump impeachments; staunch defender of President Trump during his impeachment trial
- Described by White House colleagues as bringing a stable and strategic presence

## Approach and Motivations

**Draws on institutional knowledge from decades on the Hill; committed to advancing the policy views of the elected officials he works for**

- First job was in the Senate Republican Policy Committee where he was assigned to watch Senate floor action and type updates for lawmakers; from that experience, learned that parliamentary procedures can tie the hands of opponents or cut through obstacles
- From time as a staffer, gained deep understanding of how the Senate functions; passionate about the complex rules, arcane precedents, and early history of the Senate
- Describes himself as someone whose mission is to help elected officials carry out their duties

**Policy Positions and Areas of Focus**

**Involvement in Clinton and Trump impeachment trials; work as staffer focused on congressional procedure and pro-business initiatives**

**Impeachment: *Advised Republicans on impeachment procedures for Clinton and Trump***

- Helped Republican leadership develop a plan for the Clinton impeachment trial, dissuading them from a truncated trial; said a shortened trial would undermine Senate's credibility and duty
- As legislative affairs director, helped the Trump Administration navigate the impeachment process; assisted President Trump in drafting a six-page letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi condemning the trial

**Congressional Procedure: *Stickler for rules and their application to conservative interests***

- Expert on and defender of Senate filibuster, calling Democrats' 2012 attempt to limit the practice as a desire to stifle debate and avoid difficult votes
- Supports expedited voting at the end of a budget resolution consideration; cited its impact on ensuring that the then-Republican minority can offer amendments; has suggested more debate time be allowed
- Spoke out in support of former boss Senator Bill Frist's ownership of HCA stock, clarifying Senate ethics rules on trusts and stock holdings

**Business: *Has promoted business interests as staffer and lobbyist through work on de-regulation, tax breaks, and trade***

- Staff author of the Congressional Review Act, a part of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act, which empowers Congress to review and overrule burdensome regulations issued by government agencies
- Worked with Senator Frist and Republicans on the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act, which included benefits for small business; involved in 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Bill
- As a lobbyist, sought the approval of pending free trade agreements, including deals with Colombia and South Korea

**Core Communities**

**Capitol Hill insider with friends in the Senate, lobbying, and the Trump Administration**

**Senate Republicans: *Well-connected to past and present Senators and members of their staff***

- Former Chief of Staff for Whip Don Nickles (OK); worked with staffers including Stewart Verdery, who is now Founder and CEO of Monument Advocacy
- Worked as Chief of Staff for Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (TN) alongside staffers Lee Rawls and Rohit Kumar, who now serve as Senior Counsel at the FBI and US Tax Policy Services Leader at PwC, respectively
- Named by former Sen. Jeff Sessions to Staff Director of the Committee on the Budget, where he worked closely under Sen. Mike Enzi (WY) and with Deputy Director Dan Kowalski, who is now at the Treasury

**Government Affairs Professionals: *Fostered relationships with lobbyists and legislative affairs offices***

- Served as Vice President of Duberstein Group for five years under CEO Ken Duberstein and President Michael Berman
- Worked with fellow lobbyists including Hogan & Hartson partner Candida Wolff and Dutko Worldwide Chairman Gary Andrew on the John McCain Campaign
- Represented diverse corporate clients during his tenure, including AHIP, Amgen, BP America, CSX Corp., Comcast, and Goldman Sachs

**Trump Administration: *Connections in diverse White House divisions since Trump's election***

- Served as an adviser to Donald Trump's presidential transition led by former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie
- Partnered with Special Assistant to the President Jeffrey Freeland to prepare for the impeachment trial
- Previously held role in Domestic Policy Council under Director Joe Grogan, with whom he worked with on drug pricing and gun control initiatives

**Relevant Financial Information**

**Top donor to GOP congressional campaigns**

**Political Donations**

- Has donated \$150,000 to Republican campaigns between 1999 and 2013, including Jeff Flake, Mitch McConnell, and Mitt Romney

**Publications, Media, and Speaking**

**Generally keeps out of the spotlight but has written for the Wall Street Journal and testified before Congress on congressional procedure; speaks in national media on behalf of the President**

**Publications: *Has published an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal on Senate procedure***

- Favorite Subjects: Senate filibuster
- Preferred Outlets: The Wall Street Journal

**Media: *Has appeared in national media to speak on behalf of the White House***

- Favorite Subjects: Impeachment
- Preferred Outlets: National cable news including CBS
- Social Media Habits: No social media

**Congressional Testimony: *Statement before congress on Senate procedure***

- Testified before the Senate Budget Committee on expedited voting, 2011

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**Family and Personal Background**

**Originally from Portland, Oregon; outside of politics, enjoys keeping up with pop culture**

**Oregon native with Catholic faith**

- Oldest of four children; raised Catholic and attended parochial school in Northeast Portland
- Attended Jesuit University of San Francisco, where he met his wife

**Pop culture fanatic**

- Described as delighting in a secret and encyclopedic knowledge of popular culture; reportedly kept copies of People magazine, and the entertainment gossip columns were strewn in the back seat of his car
- Former boss Bill Frist said “How do you pay tribute to a man who is the first to know of Britney Spears’ pregnancy and Don Rumsfeld’s resignation?”

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**Criticisms and Controversies**

**Unsuccessful nomination for Under Secretary of State for Management**

- Trump’s first nominee to serve as Under Secretary of State; nomination was withdrawn after a failure to be confirmed by the year’s end
- A spokeswoman for Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR), who sits on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said Ueland had not been confirmed because members appeared to have doubts about his experience and ability to achieve the tasks required

**COVID-19 Response**

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**Reiterates the Administration's priorities and updates the public on legislation related to the COVID-19 outbreak, keeping a relatively low profile**

**Relevant Positions**

- Legislative Director for the White House, acting as the bridge between the Trump Administration and Congress on the COVID-19 response

**Actions: *Present at legislative meetings focusing on Republicans' economic recovery plan***

- Involved in negotiations with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, and Secretary of the Treasury Steve Mnuchin on the stimulus package; reportedly supported immediate payroll-tax cut to boost demand and encourage growth

**Statements: *Speaks on the progress of COVID-19 legislation***

- On February 28, predicted reaching an agreement on a supplemental spending package to address COVID-19 within the week
- On March 25, announced the agreement reached on the economic relief package
- Told reporters that President Trump was supportive of the prohibition against aiding businesses connected to him or his family as long as it also applied to members of Congress
- Defended Trump Administration's focus on implementing the Phase Three stimulus bill rather than moving on to the next one