

# WAPO: LABOR, TRANSPORTATION NOT “MAJOR” ISSUES

In its story this morning on Obama's appointment of Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education, the WaPo said this (in its lede paragraph, no less!):

President-elect Barack Obama will nominate Chicago schools executive Arne Duncan as his education secretary at an event in the city today, transition aides said, and is expected to tap Sen. Ken Salazar (D-Colo.) later this week to serve as secretary of the interior, all but finalizing his selections for major Cabinet posts. [my emphasis]

I'm triple checking, but according to this list from the AP last night, Obama has not yet named his Secretaries of Labor or Transportation. (Rumors have Sanford Bishop's appointment as Secretary of Agriculture to be close, but I wonder whether his "pee in a cup" mini-scandal will give Obama pause; also Interior and Education are not technically official.)

Now, I realize that it has been eight long years since anyone in the White House gave a damn about our nation's workers. But here's a hint for Kornblut and Rucker. Obama is a Democrat. Democrats, you see, actually care about the issues of the men and women who make stuff in this country. Democrats care about whether Americans make a fair wage. Democrats care about whether people get injured or poisoned while at their workplace. Democrats realize that you can't sustain the vitality of our nation's economy without making sure that the workers share in prosperity. In a Democratic administration—particularly one that relied on organized labor to win the election—the Secretary of Labor is not a minor post.

And how about Transportation? I'm not sure if Kornblut and Rucker have heard about this, but Obama has plans to put through a massive stimulus package as one of his first acts. And a big chunk of that stimulus package—maybe \$150 billion—is going to go to infrastructure. You know, roads, bridges, public transportation. See that word there—"transportation"? That's a hint that maybe Obama's Secretary of Transportation is going to be doling that money out. I would suggest that if one of Obama's immediate goals is to dole out a bunch of money to support our nation's transportation infrastructure, then maybe the Secretary of Transportation shouldn't be regarded as a minor flunkie.

Like I said, I'm going to assume that the WaPo believes that Ag and Interior, along with this Ed pick, are done deals. So I'll assume the WaPo is not lumping them into the "not major" category that Labor and Transportation apparently appear to be in.

Still, these reporters might want to brush up their notions of what is major and what not to Democratic Presidents, because I hear one is coming to town shortly.

(One more note: I'm not really sure whether Obama will include an intelligence position—DNI?—in his cabinet or not. Which is why I didn't hit that issue.)