



Life In Brief

Born: November 12, 1966

Birthplace: Washington, DC

Hometown: Kensington, MD

Education Summary:

- BS, Political Science, Duke University, 1988

Work History:

- White House COVID-19 Coordinator, 2021-Present
- Co-Chair, Joe Biden Presidential Transition Team, 2020-2021
- CEO, Cranemere, 2017-2021
- Director, National Economic Council, 2014-2017
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB), 2009-2013
 - Acting Director, 2012-2013 and 2010-2010
 - Chief Performance Officer, 2009-2013
 - Deputy Director of Management, 2009-2013
- Founder, Portfolio Logic, 2004-2009
- Chairman, Corporate Executive Board, 2000-2001
- Advisory Board Company, 1996-2001
 - CEO, 1998-2001
 - COO, 1996-1998

Quick Summary

A former Obama administration official and private equity professional known for his efficacy and managerial skills, Zients has earned the trust of both industry and government officials, successfully transcending the private and public sectors

- A Maryland native and Duke University alumnus, Zients worked in management consulting and advisory services at the start of his career; appointed to multiple leadership roles at Corporate Executive Board and the Advisory Board, two Washington, DC based business advisory firms, and upon their public sale, Zients became a multimillionaire and rose to prominence for his management expertise
- After early success, Zients started his own firm Portfolio Logic before transitioning into the public sector; during the Obama administration, Zients was appointed deputy director of management at OMB, where he led the Accountable Government Initiative to improve efficiency and effectiveness in government and institute “management best practices” throughout the federal government
- Appointed by President Obama to lead the National Economic Council, working on initiatives such as TechHire which pushed to fill jobs in the IT field across the country; implemented the Fiduciary Rule, which looked to ensure financial managers are serving the best interests of their clients by increasing disclosure requirements for fees and commissions and potential conflicts of interest
- Served as the President of Cranemere Group, a holding company looking to position itself as a nontraditional private equity firm by focusing on long term holdings and investment opportunities that match Cranemere’s expertise with the needs of their partners
- As the White House COVID-19 coordinator, Zients holds a leading role in the administration’s COVID-19 response, overseeing the rollout of the vaccine, testing and economic aid; picked because of his managerial and operational expertise, as seen throughout the Obama administration
- Zients’ appointment has received criticism from progressives for his close ties to finance and perception as a business-friendly advocate; Jeff



Jeff Zients

White House COVID-19 Coordinator and Counselor to the President

Vignette
by National Journal

Hauser at the Revolving Door Project has said “Zients’ mindset is at odds with Biden’s stated goal of an FDR-style administration,” arguing that Zients will not be able to understand the concerns of middle America. Biden transition spokesman Cameron French defended Zients, arguing that he “joined the administration...to ensure a future Biden administration has the tools needed to address the crises facing the American people”

- Created the Urban Alliance foundation to provide children in underserved communities access to professional development training, mentoring and paid internship opportunities to provide them with “pathways to self-sufficiency”

Approach and Motivations

A high profile technocrat often viewed as a bridge between the private sector and government, Zients approaches policy through a goal-oriented lens focused on long term impact; began a nonprofit organization to provide workforce development opportunities

- Zients was known as the “businessman’s businessman” in the Obama administration because he was able to connect with industry and advocate for more business-friendly policies in what was largely viewed by the business community as a regulatory-heavy administration
- Zients has approached policy much in the same way that he has approached business, with an eye for the long term impact of his decisions; President Obama has described Zients as someone “not swayed by short-term trends...day-to-day gyrations in stocks prices or...day-to-day press clippings”
- Describes himself as an “operator” willing to do whatever is necessary to “get stuff done”; became the first Chief Performance Officer of the US, a role focused on implementing new processes to enhance efficiency in government, and led the restructuring of the healthcare.gov website for the Obama administration, after initial issues with the rollout

Professional Affiliations

- Co-founder, Urban Alliance Foundation
- Former Board, Facebook
- Former Board, Sirius XM Radio
- Former Board, Children’s National Medical Center
- Former Board, Revolution Health Group
- Former Board, Timbuk2 Designs

Contact Information

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