

# SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE

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## KENT CONRAD, CHAIRMAN

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### SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN ANNOUNCES STAFF CHANGES

**Washington, DC** - Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND) today announced the appointment of new staff members, along with the reassignment of duties for several existing committee employees. The changes were prompted, in part, by the departure since January of four staff members who have been hired for senior positions in the Obama administration, and a fifth staff member whose nomination is pending in the Senate.

“I am pleased that the new staff members joining the committee have a wide array of experience in the public sector, including on the Hill, in the executive branch and in the military, along with outstanding education credentials,” said Senator Conrad. “I look forward to working with them as they bring their budget, health and economic background to our budget team. While it is never easy losing valued employees, I am delighted that my former staffers will continue their work in public service by helping the new administration.”

Russell Rumbaugh is the committee’s new defense and international affairs analyst. He replaces Jamie Morin, who is now serving as Assistant Secretary for Financial Management and Comptroller at the Air Force, after having been nominated by President Obama and confirmed by the Senate on June 19. Rumbaugh most recently worked for Representative Jim Cooper (D-TN), handling issues that came before the House Armed Services Committee. Prior to his working on the Hill, Rumbaugh was an analyst in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He also served in the U.S. Army, attaining the rank of Captain. He holds a graduate degree from MIT, and an undergraduate degree from the University of Chicago.

Purva Rawal, a health analyst who joined the committee in 2008, will take over Medicaid, CHIP and veterans issues. She previously worked for Senator Joe Lieberman (I-CT), and holds a PhD in clinical psychology from Northwestern University, where she also received her undergraduate degree. Rawal will assume some of the tasks performed by Jim Esquea, a 10-year committee staff member, who was nominated by President Obama to serve as Assistant Secretary for Legislation at the Department of Health and Human Services. His nomination is pending before the Senate Finance Committee.

The balance of Esquea’s portfolio – income security and discretionary health – will be handled by Jennifer Hanson-Kilbride, who is joining the committee as a senior budget analyst. She will also assist on Social Security reform. Hanson-Kilbride has most recently been a budget analyst for the House Budget Committee, and previously worked at the Office of Management and Budget. Hanson-Kilbride holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from Indiana University.

Craig Kalkut will serve as a budget analyst with a portfolio handling banking, financial affairs and general government issues. Kalkut advised Senator Conrad on similar issues while serving on his personal office staff as counsel. Prior to his Hill service, Kalkut was an associate at the New York City law firm, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP. He is a Harvard Law School graduate, with an undergraduate degree from Tufts University.

Matthew Mohning, a budget analyst on the committee since 2008, adds transportation issues to his portfolio. He holds a graduate degree from the University of Minnesota and an undergraduate degree from the University of Northern Iowa. He previously worked at the Minnesota Department of Finance. Mohning assumes some of the duties previously performed by Brodi Fontenot, who left the committee this summer after being tapped to serve as the administration's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget at the Department of Transportation.

Michael Obeiter is the committee's new analyst for energy and environment issues. He most recently was employed at World Energy Solutions as a research manager analyzing international and domestic energy markets. He is a graduate of Williams College in Massachusetts, and holds a graduate degree from Johns Hopkins University. Obeiter's duties were previously handled by Cliff Isenberg who recently joined the staff of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies.

Jean Biniek joins the committee as associate economist. She will be assisting the committee's chief economist, Matt Salomon, as well as other senior staff on economic, budget and tax matters. Biniek previously worked at NERA Economic Consulting as an analyst. She holds an undergraduate degree from UCLA, and is nearing completion of a graduate degree from Johns Hopkins University.

Amy Edwards will serve as the committee's analyst for government performance, management and budgeting. She was most recently with the Pew Charitable Trusts, managing a government performance project. She previously worked at the Council for Excellence in Government. She holds a graduate degree from Troy State University in Alabama and an undergraduate degree from Radford University in Virginia.

Ron Storhaug is the committee's new staff assistant helping the committee in a variety of tasks. He previously served as an intern in Senator Conrad's personal offices in Washington and in Fargo. He is a 2009 graduate of North Dakota State University.

Joining the committee as a fellow is Benjamin Licht, a detailee from the Government Accountability Office. With his expertise in performance-based budgeting and management, Licht will help the committee on government performance management issues.

In addition to the departures of Morin and Fontenot to the Obama administration (as well as the pending nomination of Esquea), two other Budget Committee staff members have left the committee for the administration since the beginning of the year. They are Lisa Konwinski, who is Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs at the White House, and David Vandivier, who is Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Office of Legislative Affairs at the Department of Treasury.

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