



**U.S. Department of Transportation**

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# **Secretary Elaine Chao**

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Secretary Elaine Chao is currently the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. This is her second cabinet position. She served as U.S. Secretary of Labor from 2001 to January 2009, and is the first Asian American woman to be appointed to the President's cabinet in American history.

Secretary Chao comes to the U.S. Department of Transportation with extensive experience in the transportation sector. Early in her career, she specialized in transportation financing in the private sector. She began her executive career in public service working on transportation issues at the White House. She began her executive career in public service working on transportation and trade issues at the White House. She then served as Deputy Maritime Administrator, U.S. Department of Transportation; Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission; and, Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation. As U.S. Secretary of Transportation, she is a strong advocate for safety, and the importance of infrastructure and innovation in our nation's economic competitiveness and growth.

Secretary Chao has a distinguished career in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. An immigrant who arrived in America at the age of eight speaking no English, she received her citizenship at the age of 19. Her experience transitioning to a new country has motivated her to devote most of her professional life to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to build better lives for themselves and their families. As U.S. Secretary of Labor, she focused on increasing the competitiveness of America's workforce in a global economy, promoted job creation, and set new records in workplace safety and health at that time.

Prior to the Department of Labor, Secretary Chao was President and Chief Executive Officer of United Way of America, where she restored public trust and confidence in one of America's premier institutions of private charitable giving, after it had been tarnished by financial mismanagement and abuse. Secretary Chao also served as Director of the Peace Corps, where she established the first programs in the Baltic nations and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union.

Secretary Chao earned her MBA from the Harvard Business School and an economics degree from Mount Holyoke College. Honored for her extensive record of accomplishments and public service, she is the recipient of 37 honorary doctorate degrees.

Secretary Chao is a resident of Jefferson County, Kentucky. Prior to her appointment as Secretary of Transportation, she was a Distinguished Fellow at Hudson Institute. She is the eldest of six daughters born to Dr. James S.C. Chao and the late Mrs. Ruth Mulan Chu Chao.