

CABINET APPOINTEE: SPECIAL CLIMATE ENVOY

President-elect Biden is expected to nominate John Kerry to a newly created international climate envoy position. A former naval officer, Massachusetts Senator, and U.S. Secretary of State, Sen. Kerry also served as chief negotiator on the Paris climate change accord.

Ballard Spahr Special Counsel [Edward G. Rendell](#), the former mayor of Philadelphia and Governor of Pennsylvania, and Partner [Kenneth M. Jarin](#), who leads the firm's Government Relations and Public Policy Group, shared their insights about Sen. Kerry and what the near future may hold for his latest role.

How did you come to know John Kerry?

Mr. Jarin: "I've been involved in national Democratic fundraising dating back to 1998, and I met John at a number of national Democratic meetings. We vacation near one another, so I have gotten to know him personally as well as professionally."

Governor Rendell: "I first met John when I was Mayor sometime in the 1990s. I really didn't get to know him until I was elected Governor and took office in 2003. The way I really got to know him was when he became a candidate for president and started to call governors of various states. He was very impressive. He spoke beautifully. He spoke with compassion, and he spoke very convincingly. That made an impression on me."

Why do you think he was picked? What makes him uniquely qualified for this position?

Mr. Jarin: "Climate is just not a national issue. It's an international issue. John's background equips him to be a spokesperson for the United States throughout the world in what is one of our two or three most critical issues. His experience in the Senate, and his experience dealing with both sides of the aisle, will be very useful with any legislation that pertains to the environment and climate change."

Gov. Rendell: "John is passionate about the environment, but so are a lot of people. The reason I think he was picked, what I think makes him unique, is his past service as Secretary of State. He knows the leaders of the various countries of the world, and

climate change will only be solved through international cooperation. You couldn't pick a better spokesman than John Kerry to get the message out there."

Climate is just not a national issue. It's an international issue. John's background equips him to be a spokesperson for the United States throughout the world in what is one of our two or three most critical issues.

What do you anticipate the biggest challenges being in his first year?

Mr. Jarin: "Dealing with a climate crisis is an immediate problem that has to be dealt with today, and every day thereafter. President-elect Biden has said he'd like to rejoin the Paris climate accord, and there is a big range of other pressing climate issues that require immediate attention. There's going to be a lot on his plate from Day One."

Gov. Rendell: “How we reintegrate ourselves into the international community will take some doing, as well as how to get China and India to meet their obligations under the Paris accord. Those are going to be his first big challenges, and they’re going to be with him for a while.”

The previous presidential administration did not have a comparable position. Why do you think this was created?

Mr. Jarin: “The appointment speaks to climate change being a world issue, and one we can’t solve without the cooperation of every single other country. To have someone with John’s diplomacy and skill is critical.”

Gov. Rendell: “This can’t be done strictly by the EPA. It’s going to involve outreach to the various countries of the world, working with the Commerce Department, and figuring out how to take advantage of the jobs that come from a green economy, and at the same time, mitigate the effect environmental protection will have on traditional manufacturing. John Kerry is the right person to strike that balance.”