



Elaine Chao



Elaine Chao is a highly experienced leader of large public, private, and non-profit organizations, as well as a veteran expert in strategic management and oversight, crisis management and communications, innovative transformations, public/private partnerships and coalition building.

She has a distinguished career leading domestic and international organizations, and special expertise in East Asia. She has been confirmed to two cabinet positions by the U. S. Senate on a strong bipartisan basis. Elaine is well known as the first Asian-Pacific American woman to serve in the President's cabinet in American history. She is also the longest serving Cabinet Secretary since World War II.

At the U. S. Department of Transportation, an organization of 77,000 people and a budget of approximately \$124 billion including the Federal Aviation Administration, Secretary Chao has focused on keeping our nation's transportation system safe and efficient; investing over \$300 billion in infrastructure over three and a half years; and, promoting American innovation in autonomous vehicles, unmanned aerial systems, commercial space and supersonic jets. During the COVID-19 health crisis, Secretary Chao's decisive actions kept America's transportation networks open, safe and operational.

As U.S. Secretary of Labor, a department of over 17,500 employees and a budget of over \$70 billion, Secretary Chao focused on increasing the competitiveness of America's workforce in a global economy. She set new records at the time for workplace safety and health, while reducing the annual budget by 9% through more effective cost control and better management practices.

Prior to becoming U. S. Secretary of Labor, Elaine Chao was President and Chief Executive Officer of United Way of America, where she restored public trust by reforming the governance structure and instilling a new culture of accountability and transparency after the organization had been tarnished by previous financial mismanagement and abuse. 64% of Americans had heard of the scandal, which caused contributions to plummet. Because of the governance reforms she instituted, overall contributions rebounded to \$3.2 billion within four years.

Elaine Chao also served as head of the Peace Corps, where she launched programs supporting women and entrepreneurs in the newly liberated Baltic nations and former Soviet Union. She began her public service working on transportation and trade issues at the White House. She was promoted in rapid succession to Deputy Maritime Administrator, U. S. Department of Transportation; Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission; and, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation. Early in her career, Elaine worked in the private sector as a banker with Citicorp in New York and BankAmerica Capital Markets Group in San Francisco, where she helped establish the West Coast Syndications unit.

Elaine has been a director on numerous public boards while out of government including News Corp, Ingersoll Rand, HCA Healthcare, Northwest Airlines, Wells Fargo, Clorox and Dole Food Company. She currently serves on the boards of Kroger and Hylion. As a Board member, she has advocated for innovation and business transformations. She has also been a director on many nonprofit boards, including Harvard Business School Board of Dean's Advisors and Global Advisory Board and a trustee of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

An immigrant who arrived at the age of 8 not speaking English, she received her citizenship at age 19. Elaine earned her undergraduate degree in economics from Mount Holyoke College, and her MBA from Harvard Business School.