



CRS Report for Congress

The Senate's *Executive Calendar*¹

Betsy Palmer
Analyst in American National Government
Government and Finance Division

Treaties and nominations constitute the executive business of the Senate and are the subjects of the Senate's *Executive Calendar*. When a Senate committee reports a treaty or nomination, it is said to be placed "on the calendar" and is eligible for floor consideration. It is not in order for the majority leader or any other Senator to move that the Senate proceed to the consideration of a treaty or nomination that is not on the calendar, though the leader could ask unanimous consent to do so. If a treaty or nomination is not on the calendar, either it remains in the possession of the committee to which it was referred, or it is being "held at the desk" by unanimous consent and awaiting a decision to refer it to committee or to bring it directly to the floor for consideration by unanimous consent. See [<http://www.crs.gov/products/guides/guidehome.shtml>] for more information on legislative process.

The Senate's other calendar, the *Calendar of Business*, identifies the bills, resolutions, and other items of legislative business eligible for consideration (see CRS Report 98-429, *The Senate's Calendar of Business*). Both the *Calendar of Business* and the *Executive Calendar* are published each day the Senate is in session and distributed to Senators' personal offices and all committee and subcommittee offices. There are no cumulative issues of the *Executive Calendar*, each issue documents the Senate's legislative business as of its publication. The *Executive Calendar* is available on the Legislative Information System website, [<http://www.congress.gov/schedules/slegis.html>].

Each issue of the *Executive Calendar* contains five sections.

First, the calendar presents the texts of any **unanimous consent agreements** concerning executive business that have not yet been fully implemented. Such agreements may control when the Senate will begin consideration of a treaty or nomination, for example, or how long Senators can debate it.

Second, the calendar lists any Senate **executive resolutions** that concern executive business. A measure to discharge a committee from further consideration of a treaty or nomination, for example, would be an executive resolution, which are used very rarely.

¹ This report was written by Stanley Bach, formerly a Senior Specialist in the Legislative Process at CRS. Dr. Bach has retired, but the listed author updated the report and is available to answer questions concerning its contents.

Third, the calendar lists all **treaties** that have been reported from committee. A treaty becomes eligible for floor consideration on the day after it is placed on the calendar. For each treaty, this list provides:

- the treaty’s calendar number, reflecting the chronological order in which it was placed on the calendar.
- the treaty document number, which is the number assigned to the Senate document containing the text of the treaty and any accompanying documents that were submitted to the Senate. Each treaty document is assigned a number that identifies the Congress during which the President submitted the treaty and the order in which treaties were submitted during that Congress. Treaty Doc. 105-2 would refer to the second treaty submitted to the Senate during the 105th Congress (unlike nominations and bills, treaties remain before the Senate from one Congress to the next).
- the subject of the treaty.
- information on how the treaty was reported, such as when and by whom it was reported; whether the Foreign Relations Committee reported it favorably, unfavorably, or without recommendation; whether the committee recommended that the Senate adopt any amendments or any reservations, conditions, declarations, understandings, or other statements; and the number of the printed committee report, if any.

Fourth, the calendar lists **nominations** that have been reported from committee. Except by unanimous consent, the Senate may not begin floor consideration of a nomination until it has been on the calendar for at least one day. Any nominations appearing in the calendar for the first time are listed under the heading of “new reports.” For each nomination, this section of the calendar identifies:

- the calendar number that is assigned to each nomination in the order in which it is placed on the calendar.
- the number of the presidential message by which the nomination was transmitted to the Senate.
- the name of the nominee, the office to which he or she has been nominated, and the name of the predecessor in that office.
- information on how the nomination was reported, such as when and by whom it was reported, which committee reported it, whether the committee reported it favorably, unfavorably, or without recommendation, and the number of the printed committee report, if any.

Fifth, the calendar identifies lists of **nominations placed on the secretary’s desk**. These are routine nominations — in the armed services, the Coast Guard, the Public Health Service, and the Foreign Service, for example — that the Senate normally considers and approves by unanimous consent without committee action. When the Senate receives such nominations, they are printed in the *Congressional Record* for the information of all Senators. After being printed in the *Record*, these nominations are identified in the *Executive Calendar* by entries such as “Foreign Service nominations beginning John C. Kornblum, and ending William L. Young, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 19, 1996.”