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## Federal Eye

Keeping Tabs on the Government  
by Ed O'Keefe

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President Obama nominated Jack Lew as his pick to lead the Office of Management and Budget in July. (Bloomberg)

President Obama's pick to lead the [Office of Management and Budget](#) faces two Senate confirmation hearings on Thursday.

**Jacob "Jack" Lew** will discuss the "B" of OMB with the Senate Budget Committee starting at 10 a.m., and the "M" with the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee at 3 p.m. Both panels must refer his nomination to the full Senate, where Democrats hope to quickly for a vote. But Republicans are likely to stall, despite Lew's three previous confirmations as deputy and top boss at OMB during the Clinton years and for his current job as deputy secretary of state for management.

"You're confirming a member of the president's economic team with just weeks to go in the midterm elections," said one senior administration official. "Someone is bound to try scoring political points."

One potential line of GOP questioning: The seven-figure compensation he earned as a Citibank executive from 2006 to 2009.

Beyond that, federal management and budget experts are hoping to hear several things from Lew:  
**Who is Jack Lew and what should he do?**

**MAX STIER | President, Partnership for Public Service:**

"I hope that he makes sure that the M in OMB receive as much attention as the B. Because they should be interrelated. He understands that, he's coming with the prior experience of having run OMB and the management side of the State Department.

"What we fundamentally need from OMB is a true integration of those. The way we're going to make government meet its financial numbers is

**Eye Opener**



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as if interest rates rise substantially. More large spending cuts!"

[GARY BASS](#) | Executive Director, OMB Watch:

"I hope he can balance the electioneering of the Obama team with the policy/economic side of the White House. There's a bit of a conflict between what's the right policy and what does it take to get reelected. I think his stature of having been an OMB director will help navigate those waters. From our perspective, I hope he comes to the conclusion that we need to spend to get out of the hole. Not to continue with the mindset of cutting taxes. His stature will help him negotiate better with the Obama team."

BLOGROLL

[J.D. FOSTER](#) | Fiscal policy analyst, Heritage Foundation and former OMB official:

"I think the most important questions to ask are whether or not he's going to be willing to challenge assumptions. That doesn't mean getting into verbal fisticuffs with his White House colleagues, but it's very easy within any White House for people to nod their heads. They do that sometimes even when they don't agree. It does the president no service or your White House colleagues no service to just agree with what's being said."

"Every one says they say and usually means that they're going to focus on the 'M' side of OMB. I hope he does that, as most do, because it really is extremely important work and doesn't get a lot of support."

Bass and Foster also mentioned staff and morale issues -- two potential lines of questioning when Lew meets with HSGAC (especially considering OMB's [poor rankings in the recent Best Places to Work rankings](#)).

"The staff at OMB are uniformly professional, intelligent, dedicated," Foster said. "They are, in my experience, everything you ask and hope government employees to be. They work incredibly long hours, they take

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By Ed O'Keefe | September 16, 2010; 6:00 AM ET | Category: [Budget](#), [Eye Opener](#)

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