

Secretary of Agriculture - Tom Vilsack



Thomas J. Vilsack was confirmed as the 32nd United States Secretary of Agriculture on Feb. 23, 2021 by the U.S. Senate.

He was nominated by President Joe Biden to return to a role where he served for eight years under President Barack Obama.

As leader of the U.S. Department of Agriculture as the 30th Secretary of Agriculture between 2009-2017, Vilsack worked hard to strengthen the American agricultural economy, build vibrant rural communities and create new markets for innovation in rural America. He fought to put Americans back to work by investing in rural infrastructure, renewable energy and large-scale conservation partnerships. Under his leadership, USDA supported America's farmers, ranchers and growers who drove the rural economy forward, set records for U.S. agricultural exports, provided food assistance to millions of Americans, and helped provide a safe, sufficient and nutritious food supply for the American people. USDA introduced healthier food choices in school meals to benefit 50 million children during Vilsack's tenure and expanded free and reduced-price lunches for millions of kids.

Vilsack was the longest-serving member of President Obama's original Cabinet. Prior to his appointment, he served two terms as the Governor of Iowa, served in the Iowa State Senate and as the mayor of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. He received his bachelor's degree from Hamilton College and his law degree from Albany Law School in New York.

Prior to returning to USDA, he served as president and CEO of the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) from 2017 until February 2021. There, he provided strategic leadership and oversight of USDEC's global promotional and research activities, regulatory affairs and trade policy initiatives. In addition to his post at USDEC, he also served as a Strategic Advisor to Colorado State University's food and water initiatives.

A native of Pittsburgh, Penn., Vilsack was born into an orphanage and adopted in 1951. After graduating from law school, Vilsack moved to Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, his wife Christie's hometown, where he practiced law. The Vilsacks have two adult sons and two daughters-in-law—Doug, married to Janet; and Jess, married to Kate. They have five grandchildren.