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The wife of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Elaine Chao ran the Labor Department under the President George W. Bush administration. | Getty

Elaine Chao tapped to be Trump's transportation secretary

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Former Labor Secretary Elaine Chao was nominated on Tuesday by President-elect Donald Trump to head the Department of Transportation.

Chao ran the Labor Department under the George W. Bush administration. She met with the president-elect at Trump Tower last week to discuss labor and transportation policy, according to Trump's transition team.

Top Senate Democrats signaled that Chao may not face much of a fight to get confirmed, with incoming Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) congratulating her earlier

on Tuesday for her expected nomination and praising her for her "long history of service to our country."

"Senate Democrats have said that if President-elect Trump is serious about a major infrastructure bill, backed by real dollars and not just tax credits and without cutting other programs like health care and education, that we are ready to work with his administration," Schumer said. "I hope Secretary Chao shares that ambitious goal and is willing to work with Democrats to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and create millions of good paying jobs along the way."

The wife of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Chao is the first Asian-American woman to hold a Cabinet-level position. She also served as deputy secretary of transportation under President George H.W. Bush. Chao was also a member of Trump's Asian Pacific American Advisory Council during the campaign.

McConnell declined to comment at length on his wife's impending nomination, noting only that she's an "outstanding choice" and that he would not be recusing himself from voting to confirm Chao.

When she came before the Senate in 2001 as the Labor secretary-designate for George W. Bush, Chao was quickly approved on a voice vote.