

Like the duties of other deputy officials and officers in the Defense Department, those of the Vice Chairman would not be specified by title 10. Subject to the approval of the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman would enjoy substantial flexibility in determining the duties of the Vice Chairman.

Despite this broad grant of authority, the conferees strongly believe that the Vice Chairman, like the Chairman, should not be required to participate too deeply in the defense acquisition process. Instead, the Vice Chairman should assist the Chairman in carrying out the significant responsibilities he already bears as well as the many new ones assigned by this conference substitute amendment. In particular, the Chairman performs unique planning and advisory duties (including representing the interests of the unified and specified combatant commanders) that would greatly benefit from the assistance of the Vice Chairman.

Qualifications for Appointment as Vice Chairman

The Senate amendment contained a provision (section 111) that would require, subject to a waiver by the President, that JCS members (including the Vice Chairman) have served in at least one joint duty position for a substantial period of time before their assignment to the JCS.

The House amendment contained no similar provision for the Vice Chairman.

The House recedes with an amendment to require, subject to a waiver by the President, that the Vice Chairman have the joint specialty (established in title IV of the conference substitute amendment) and have served in at least one joint duty assignment as a general or flag officer before his appointment. In addition, the conferees provided, in section 204 of the conference substitute amendment, a transition provision for use by the President before full application of these new requirements.

Vice Chairman as the Acting Chairman

The Senate amendment contained a provision (section 111) that would provide that the Vice Chairman, unless otherwise directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, would act for the Chairman when there was a vacancy in the office of Chairman or in the absence or disability of the Chairman.

The House amendment contained an identical provision (section 606), except that it did not include authority for the President or Secretary of Defense to direct that the Vice Chairman would not act for the Chairman in his absence.

The Senate recedes with an amendment to direct the President to designate a JCS member to act for the Chairman if both the Chairman and Vice Chairman should be absent or disabled.

Sec. 155. Joint Staff

Assistance to the Chairman and Other JCS Members

The Senate amendment contained a provision (section 111) that would specify that, subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Chairman, the Joint Staff would assist the Chairman and the other JCS members in carrying out their responsibilities.