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Letters to the Editor • Opinion

# America's drug-policy office deserves real expertise at the top

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It is sad for the country that an inexperienced 24-year-old political appointee would be named to lead the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy [[“24-year-old helps lead Trump drug policy office,”](#) front page, Jan. 14].

Under President Bill Clinton, Patricia M. McMahon was deputy chief of staff and White House liaison. She came from helping run a major treatment program in New Hampshire, was a true expert in the field and directed Mr. Clinton's state presidential campaign in New Hampshire. You can do the jobs of deputy chief of staff and White House liaison — yes, there is precedent — but Ms. McMahon had enormous experience in the drug field and in political leadership. This kid has neither.

When 175 people a day are dying from opioid overdoses and more than 60,000 a year die from drug overdoses, there is a national crisis that demands leadership and funding. The acting director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Richard Baum, is a career civil service drug-policy expert who received cheers for his advocacy when he spoke at the National Press Club. The administration needs to serve him and the nation better by not jamming political hacks down his throat. He needs actual help to lead the anti-drug effort as the drug-abuse numbers surge.

**Robert S. Weiner, Accokeek**

*The writer was director of public affairs and spokesman for the Office of National Drug Control Policy from 1995 to 2001.*

 **2 Comments**