

# Ted Cruz and a leaderless USAID

By Terence Wood and Jo Spratt

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In [April this year](#) the Obama administration nominated Gayle Smith to become the head of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Ms Smith was not a controversial appointment-she has worked for USAID and the State Department. She drew favourable comments from Republican senators in the Foreign Relations Committee and her nomination was passed without objection by the committee on [the 29th of July](#).

However, Ms Smith [has yet to take up her role](#). Why? Because one U.S senator has objected, placing a hold on her appointment (under Senate rules it only takes one hold to delay an appointment, potentially indefinitely). The senator in question is Republican presidential aspirant Ted Cruz. Cruz hasn't delayed the appointment because he objects to Ms Smith's credentials. Nor is he holding up the appointment for any reason directly related to aid. He placed the hold because he is blocking all State Department political nominees (including USAID in his list) in protest over the United States' nuclear deal with Iran.

As a result, the aid agency that coordinates the aid efforts of the world's largest aid donor languishes without a leader to coordinate its work.

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