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Welcome aboard, Mr. Powell

Last week, the Senate finally confirmed Jerome Powell to a second term as chair of the Federal Reserve. In typical lawmaker fashion, his nomination had been held up for many months. In that period, he had been saddled with an unwanted longer title, chair pro tempore. Much of the delay is attributable to the Democrats' attempt to push through all five of President Biden's nominees together in order to facilitate the confirmation of the controversial Sarah Bloom Raskin. She's a proponent of having the Fed consider non-financial issues, the most significant being climate change. Republicans pushed back and she withdrew her candidacy in March.

The Senate also confirmed two other Fed governor nominees last week: Lisa Cook and Philip Jefferson. That leaves just the vice chairman of bank supervision left. Biden has nominated law professor Michael Barr for that position.

One wonders why Powell would want to stay at the helm of the central bank in these stormy seas. It's a prestigious job—counted as one of the most powerful in the world. But he likely feels he has unfinished business with inflation before leaving office. In any case, inflation is more than ready to keep tangling with him. Although April's core Consumer Price Index (CPI) declined slightly from March—slipping from 6.5% to 6.2%—it still is red hot. If Powell can lead the Fed to a victory, he might earn a sterling legacy.