

Trump Transition Tracker

Updates as of 12 PM EST on Tuesday, January 7, 2025.

Transition Updates

The confirmation process is coming into focus. Several of President-elect Donald Trump's cabinet nominees will have confirmation hearings next week. First up are Pete Hegseth for Secretary of Defense, Pam Bondi for Attorney General, Doug Burgum for Secretary of the Interior and Doug Collins for Secretary of Veterans Affairs on January 14. Additionally, expect Chris Wright for Secretary of Energy, Lee Zeldin for EPA Administrator, Brooke Rollins for Secretary of Agriculture and Sean Duffy for Secretary of Transportation to have their hearings next week. There have been calls to expedite the process for South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem, Trump's pick to run the Department of Homeland Security, following the deadly attack in New Orleans on New Year's Day. A hearing date for Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) to serve as Secretary of State should be announced soon. Secretary of State and Defense are traditionally the first two positions to be confirmed. Hegseth's hearing is expected to be the most contentious as he continues to deny a claim that he sexually assaulted a woman in 2017. Several Senators have asked to see the FBI background check on Hegseth ahead of the hearing. However, Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) believes Hegseth has the votes to be confirmed. Bondi, Burgum, Collins, Wright, Zeldin, Rollins, Duffy, Noem and Rubio should all easily be confirmed. For context, click [here](#) to see when Trump's nominees in 2016 had their hearings and were ultimately confirmed; click [here](#) for Biden's nominees in 2021.

Potential cracks in the tariff regime. Trump administration aides are preparing universal tariffs on imports from all countries but only on classes of goods deemed critical to national security, possibly including metals, medical supplies, and green energy, according to [The Washington Post](#). This represents a departure from the across-the-board tariffs of 10%-20% that Trump promised during his campaign but would still prove disruptive to global markets. Yet, Trump himself [disputed](#) the *Post's* report on Truth Social, insisting that the story "incorrectly states that my tariff policy would be pared back. That is wrong." Expect stark internal divisions within the Trump administration over what form the tariffs ultimately take, with figures like White House Trade Czar Peter Navarro pushing for protectionism and full-scale decoupling with China and figures like Elon Musk angling for freer global trade. Any decision will entail serious political trade-offs for the administration as stiff tariffs will prove painfully inflationary for average consumers, while light tariffs risk Trump appearing weak on trade (and China) to his populist base.

Trump turns up the heat in the far north. Trump continues to turn the screws on Canada as he seeks to expand the U.S.'s presence in the Arctic, which is emerging as a key future battleground for global preeminence as the warming climate opens previously frozen shipping lanes and natural resource deposits. Following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's resignation [announcement](#) on January 6, Trump again proposed on Truth Social that Canada should become the nation's "51st state" and warned that the U.S. "can no longer suffer the deficits and subsidies that Canada needs to stay afloat." The looming threat of U.S. tariffs will be a core challenge for the next Canadian leader, which will likely be Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre, following an interim leadership period by Trudeau's successor until elections are held in October. As part of Trump's Arctic push, Trump also has repeatedly floated the idea of buying Greenland, where his son Donald Trump Jr. is currently [visiting](#) to build grassroots support for a U.S. takeover.

One step forward, two steps back. The GOP continues to struggle with its strategy for passing a comprehensive border, tax and energy package that will be the heart of its legislative agenda in the 119th Congress. The plan is to use reconciliation, a special congressional procedure that allows for easier passage of tax and spending changes, to get around the 60-vote threshold needed to overcome a filibuster. However, Republicans are divided on whether to tackle everything at once or split the package into two. Soon after the election, Sen. Thune said Trump and House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) were on board with a two-bill approach, focusing first on border security, energy and defense. House Ways and Means Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO) opposed this, noting that getting two

reconciliation bills in the same year is a heavy lift – it was last done in 2006. Smith has warned that dropping the tax provisions could lead to Republicans failing to extend the 2017 Trump tax cuts that expire at the end of this year. Over the weekend, Johnson said he and Trump now favor addressing everything in one package. Then, on January 6, Trump opened the door to doing two bills during a radio interview. The GOP will ultimately get on the same page, so don't get lost in the process. It is important to stay focused on the fact that Republicans are determined to make significant changes to the nation's border, energy and tax policies.

Cabinet Spotlight: Secretary of Defense nominee Pete Hegseth. A veteran and former Fox News host, Hegseth is perhaps Trump's most embattled pick because of [allegations of sexual assault](#) and [excessive drinking](#), both of which he has denied. At least a dozen senators, including moderate Susan Collins (R-ME), traditional Republican Thom Tillis (R-NC), and pro-Trump stalwart Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) [are pushing to see the FBI's background check on Hegseth](#). Some critics also claim [he is inexperienced](#) and dislike his [opposition to women serving in combat roles](#) and his [desire to roll back a number of DEI policies](#) at the Pentagon. In addition to wanting to reshape the Department of Defense to align with conservative principles, expect Hegseth to push to strengthen the U.S. military's capabilities to counter global threats, particularly from China and Russia, and call for defense spending to be reallocated to modernize the armed forces and enhance cyber defense measures. Also, expect him to advocate for policies that support veterans and improve their transition to civilian life. Hegseth's confirmation is very much up in the air. It is worth noting that defense secretary was a tumultuous post during Trump's first term. Five men held the job during Trump's four years.

Cabinet Spotlight: Secretary of Veterans Affairs nominee Doug Collins. A colonel in the Air Force Reserve, Collins served in the House of Representatives from Georgia from 2013 – 2021. He left to run for the U.S. Senate in November of 2020 and finished third in an all-party special election that was ultimately won by [Democrat Raphael Warnock](#). Collins never served on the Veterans Affairs Committee in Congress but supported several pro-veterans bills, including the [2014 Choice Act](#), the [2017 VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act](#), and the [2018 Mission Act](#). Collins is a staunch ally Trump and is the fourth member of his impeachment defense team to be rewarded with a Cabinet appointment. He continued to advise Trump on legal issues after leaving Congress, including on Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election results. Expect Collins to focus on improving the efficiency of veteran services and addressing financial challenges stemming from expanded benefits for veterans exposed to toxins. Collins's approach will likely emphasize accountability and transparency, aiming to enhance the quality of care and support for veterans. Collins should be easily confirmed.

Trade, Tariffs & Investments

New Chinese companies blacklisted by DoD. President Joe Biden's Department of Defense (DoD) [released](#) its revised 1260H List designating Chinese military companies, with some notable additions including tech giant Tencent Holdings and EV battery maker CATL. The list imposes no sanctions, but the reputational damage from inclusion on the list [caused](#) Tencent's stock to drop more than 7% on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. Notably, Trump's DoD originally created the list and may seek to attach additional penalties to the companies listed other than just reputational. Also worth watching is Trump's Secretary of State pick Rubio, a China hawk who has previously [raised](#) national security concerns about CATL equipment being used in U.S. military facilities.

Regulation & Deregulation

Fed leadership opening gives Trump a chance to ease financial regulations. The Federal Reserve's vice chair of supervision, Michael Barr, announced on January 6 that he would step down as the leader of the Fed's Board of Governors but still see out his term as a governor until 2032. Barr was known to be hawkish on issues of financial regulation, which often incurred the wrath of Wall Street. The move creates a significant opportunity for Trump to reshape the Fed's regulatory trajectory by nominating another Fed governor to lead the central bank's oversight function. Michelle Bowman, who has often been critical of Barr's tough regulatory approach, is currently the favorite to replace him.

Biden protects vast swaths of oceans from drilling ahead of Trump's inauguration. President Biden issued an executive order on January 6 to ban oil and gas drilling across some 625 million acres of oceans along the east and west coasts, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Bering Sea. The move was made under authorities granted by the 1953 Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, which grants the president the authority to permanently ban resource extraction on federal lands and requires successive presidents to seek congressional approval to open them back up for development. Trump, who ran on the promise to “drill, baby, drill,” has vowed to immediately undo the action once in office. It is unclear if Congress will oblige Trump’s request, but the issue may see action during budget reconciliation when it can be passed by a simple majority in the Senate.

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Confirmation Hearings

Week of January 13, 2025

- Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth
- Attorney General Pam Bondi
- Secretary of Veterans Affairs Doug Collins
- Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins
- EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin
- Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy
- Secretary of Energy Chris Wright
- Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum

Click [here](#) for a Senate calendar of confirmed hearings.

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For more information on Trump Inauguration packages, please email Dan Meyers at dmeyers@apcoworldwide.com.

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