

Trump Transition Tracker

Updates as of 1 PM EST Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Transition Updates

The wind is at President-elect Trump's back. President-elect Donald Trump is on a roll. Last week, he was named [Time Magazine's Person of the Year](#). On Saturday, he [was](#) awarded \$15 million in the defamation lawsuit against ABC News and veteran anchor George Stephanopoulos. Yesterday, during his first post-election news conference, he [boasted](#) about the number of CEOs flocking to his Mar-a-Lago Club to cozy up to him before starting his second term in January. "Everybody wants to be my friend," he said. Trump also made clear he is ready to reinsert himself on the world stage. He said he was working to end the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, had talked to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about the situation in Gaza, and credited Turkey for Syrian rebels' victory in ending the regime of Syria's now-ousted President Bashar al-Assad. Trump declined to say whether he has had spoken to Russian President Vladimir Putin since winning the election. Additionally, Trump used the opportunity to double down on his use of tariffs, saying, "they tax us, we tax them." As APCO has previously noted, Trump firmly believes the results of the November 5 election are a mandate for change. He plans to push as hard and as far as he can to change how Washington operates.

Get ready for day one. Trump could issue as many as 25 Executive Orders on Inauguration Day, according to [recent reporting from Reuters](#). Trump has been telegraphing for months that he plans to roll back several Biden-era green energy and DEI initiatives as well as address border security on his first day back in the White House. What's new is the number of directives he is planning to issue. Stephen Miller, one of Trump's most loyal staffers who will be deputy chief of staff for policy in Trump II, is reportedly coordinating the effort and relying heavily on proposals that have been circulating for months by groups such as the [America First Policy Institute](#), the [Heritage Foundation](#) and the [Conservative Partnership Institute](#). Rest assured, Trump won't stop issuing EOs on January 20. They just won't all be ready to be rolled out yet.

All in the family? Trump appears to be lowering expectations about his daughter-in-law being appointed to the Senate. Lara Trump, who is married to Trump's son, Eric, and recently resigned as the co-chair of the Republican National Committee, has expressed interest in filling Florida Sen. Marco Rubio's seat once he is confirmed as Trump's Secretary of State. Florida GOP Governor Ron DeSantis reportedly is vetting several potential candidates for the seat. During Monday's press conference, Trump said it is DeSantis' decision to make. This is the latest chapter in an intense – and often bitter – rivalry between Trump and DeSantis. This also could all be a ploy. It's hard to believe Trump and his allies would ever forget that DeSantis had the chance to put a member of Trump's family in the Senate, ensuring that he would have a direct pipeline for inside information on the most exclusive club in Washington.

If I could turn back time. Trump [said](#) in a Truth Social post that as president, he will push Congress to abandon daylight savings time, calling it "inconvenient" and "costly." The debate between those who [prefer](#) permanent standard time and those who [prefer](#) permanent daylight savings time is heating up on social media. Interestingly, Trump's choice for Secretary of State Marco Rubio has been [leading](#) the charge in the Senate on this issue, with a bill announced in March 2023 to make daylight savings time permanent – the opposite of Trump's position now, though Trump in 2019 [voiced](#) support for permanent daylight savings time. The push for permanent daylight savings time, favored by some in the retail and tourism sectors, comes despite broad agreement in the medical community that standard time is better for human health. The topic will be interesting to watch as typical partisan political alliances are scrambled over the issue.

Leadership Spotlight: Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Stephen Miller. While Miller is technically not a member of the Cabinet, and his position does not require Senate confirmation, he is perhaps Trump's most trusted – and loyal – staffer. He started in Trump I as a speechwriter but quickly moved to the policy shop. Miller was a key architect of Trump's hardline immigration policies during his first term. He was instrumental in implementing the travel ban on

predominantly Muslim countries and the family separation policy at the U.S.-Mexico border. Miller has previously advocated for the mass deportation of undocumented migrants but will also continue to push Trump for stricter controls on legal immigration. Also during Trump I, Miller pushed to establish a novel “denaturalization” process to revoke citizenship from individuals based on suspected fraud during their naturalization processes. Expect Miller’s influence to extend to other areas, including trade and national security, where he has advocated for protectionist measures and a tough stance against globalization.

Cabinet Spotlight: Secretary of Homeland Security nominee Kristi Noem. Noem, the current governor of South Dakota, will oversee Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the agency that is responsible for enforcing U.S. immigration laws. Her support of strict immigration policies has endeared her to the GOP base, Miller and Trump. She was the first governor to send National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexico border in response to an appeal from Texas. She has denounced sanctuary cities and opposed receiving migrants in South Dakota as they apply for asylum. Noem knows how to navigate Washington, having served four terms as South Dakota’s lone representative in the House, and will hit the ground running. She received significant scrutiny for writing in her autobiography that she shot and killed her “untrainable” 14-month-old dog. The incident, which came to light in April, probably cost her any chance of being Trump’s VP pick. She will not have any issues getting confirmed.

Trade, Tariffs & Investments

Trump and SoftBank CEO announcement. During a Monday press conference, Trump and SoftBank Group CEO Masayoshi Son jointly announced that the company plans to invest at least \$100 billion in U.S. projects over the next four years, creating an estimated 100,000 jobs focused on AI and other emerging technologies. It is unclear how Softbank intends to finance the venture, with only \$30 billion of cash on hand. Over the weekend, Trump also hosted Akie Abe, the wife of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, at Mar-a-Lago. The announcement is part of an ongoing trend of world leaders and tech CEOs coming to Mar-a-Lago to curry favor with Trump before the inauguration.

Trump blames foreign companies for port problems. Following a meeting with International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) President Harold Dagget ahead of their potential strike on January 15, 2025, Trump sent out a post criticizing foreign companies and their attempts to implement automation in ports. As part of the post, Trump also asserted that “for the great privilege of accessing our markets, these foreign companies should hire our incredible American Workers, instead of laying them off, and sending those profits back to foreign countries,” implying that any future market access by foreign companies is tied to hiring U.S. workers.

Regulation & Deregulation

Controversy over polio vaccinations. Aaron Siri, an ally of HHS Secretary-nominee Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., submitted a petition to the FDA in 2022 urging the agency to suspend approval for the polio vaccine, variations of which have been in use since 1955. Siri has also urged the pause or suspension of other common vaccines, such as the hepatitis B vaccine, though he has more recently stated that anyone who wants to get a vaccine should be able to do so. Trump has said his administration would explore the links between vaccines and autism, but recently said, “you’re not going to lose the polio vaccine.” Siri’s petitions over the past few years have raised further concerns among many health experts about Kennedy’s agenda as HHS Secretary. Kennedy will begin having meetings on the Hill this week, though opponents of his nomination have notably begun buying ads in the home states of key senators. Former Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), who retains substantial influence in the Senate, also voiced his staunch opposition to the removal of the polio vaccine

Technology

Tick tock, TikTok. TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew met with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago golf club in Palm Beach on Monday as the company fights to overturn an impending U.S. ban that takes effect on January 19. Chew’s trip came on the same day that TikTok filed an appeal with the Supreme Court to challenge a U.S. law that forces its Chinese parent, ByteDance, to divest from TikTok or face a ban. Trump, who opposes the ban, told Chew that he would “take a look at the issue” and later told a press conference that he had a “warm spot in [his] heart” for TikTok” for boosting his

popularity with young voters, whom he erroneously claimed to have won by 34 points in the November elections – Kamala Harris won the youth vote by eight points.

Latest Trump Appointments

Presidential Envoy for Special Missions

Richard Allen Grenell

Ambassador to Ireland

Edward Sharp Walsh

Ambassador to Belgium

Bill White

Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security

Troy Edgar

Click [here](#) for an inventory of senior staff announcements. Ordered reverse chronologically by official [announcement](#).

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