

Trump Transition Tracker

Updates as of 5 PM EST Thursday, December 5, 2024

Transition Updates

New DOJ antitrust lead is a committed tech trustbuster. President-Elect Donald Trump has [tapped](#) former National Economic Council member Gail Slater to head the Department of Justice's antitrust division. Slater, who most recently served as a policy aide to Vice President-elect JD Vance, has been an outspoken critic of overconcentration in the tech sector, which she argues hinders competition and stifles innovation. But questions hang over whether Slater will pursue antitrust issues with equal zeal in other sectors, or whether her enforcement efforts will focus mostly on the tech giants that Trump has accused of swinging the election against him in 2020. In either case, antitrust may be a rare area where the Trump administration will not make a clean break from Biden's approach.

Trump's transition team greenlights FBI background checks. On Tuesday, the Trump transition team [finalized](#) a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Justice to submit Cabinet nominees for background checks and security clearances. The transition team had delayed signing the agreement for several weeks, preventing the FBI from vetting Trump's picks. Last week, the team signed a separate agreement granting the incoming administration access to federal agencies. However, Trump's team has yet to sign a third standard transition memo with the General Services Administration, which would provide federal funding, office space, and cybersecurity support in exchange for an ethics and transparency commitment. The cumulative delays could leave some officials unable to start their roles immediately after Inauguration Day.

California kicks off opposition to Trump agenda. In America's largest and most influential state, Governor Gavin Newsom (D) and state legislators opened a special session of the California legislature this week to "safeguard" the state from the new Trump administration. The session has produced multiple placeholder bills that will be debated and voted on in early January, including bills affirming [access to abortion](#), [protecting California's environmental regulations](#), and [setting aside \\$25 million](#) for the California Department of Justice to respond to legal motions from the Trump administration. Companies should prepare to navigate a polarized regulatory and reputational dynamic between the federal government and California as well as politically aligned states, some of which have adopted elements of California's regulatory structure (such as [emissions standards](#)). While Newsom has positioned the session as a necessary step to safeguard the "[rights and freedoms](#)" of Californians in a Trump administration, some policy experts note that the session is also geared towards burnishing Newsom's future presidential ambitions. California is not the only state opposing Trump's agenda. Democratic Attorneys General in several blue states across the country are preparing to counter Trump's workplace law policies. They will be a key line of defense, just as they were in Trump's first term when they were involved in 160 lawsuits contesting policies.

Pay attention to what's happening on Capitol Hill. While the palace intrigue surrounding who is up and who is down among Trump's nominees as they make the rounds in the Senate is grabbing all the headlines, monitoring what Republicans and Democrats are doing to prepare for the 119th Congress is critically important. In a somewhat surprising move, incoming Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) on Tuesday rolled out a plan to take up a budget reconciliation package focused on border security, energy, and defense and wait until later in the year to act on extending the 2017 Trump tax cuts that expire at the end of 2025. But the idea was panned by House Ways & Means Chairman Rep. Jason Smith (R-MO), who is a key player in the House when it comes to taxes and reconciliation – the special legislative process that allows for expedited consideration of certain tax and spending legislation and isn't subject to filibuster in the Senate. Smith warned that there has never been a time when two reconciliation packages have passed in the same year. Thune says he cleared his plan with Trump and House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA). The fact that Smith wasn't involved in the conversation is puzzling, especially considering that any legislation to raise or lower taxes is constitutionally required to originate in the House and that Smith's committee would be responsible. Republicans know they need to get on the same page on the issue quickly because they don't want a repeat of Trump's first term when they struggled to deliver on the president's policy promises and wasted valuable political capital.

The changing of the guard. Democrats in the House, meanwhile, are taking steps to replace the aging, long-serving chairmen of at least three key committees – Judiciary, Natural Resources and Agriculture – and replace them with younger, more dynamic members who are seen as better foils to Trump and the GOP. House Democrats do not limit the terms of their committee chairs and/or ranking members; House Republicans do. The most high-profile change is Judiciary, where Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY) has agreed to step aside and allow Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD) to assume the mantle as the top Democrat on the committee. Raskin, a constitutional lawyer, will have no problem going toe-to-toe with Chairman Jim Jordan (R-OH) in providing oversight of the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, the FBI and federal courts. Raskin is also well known to Trump and his allies: he was the lead impeachment manager of Trump following the attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. Raskin’s move to Judiciary will leave open the top spot on Government Oversight, another key committee that will look to do battle with the GOP and Trump. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), perhaps more well known as AOC, is expected to run for the top spot, leapfrogging several other senior Members. Notably, AOC is as controversial among Republicans as Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) is among Democrats.

Trade, Tariffs & Investments

Wall Street darling to head SEC. Trump [announced](#) that free marketeer and crypto-enthusiast Paul Atkins will be the next chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission. This will be Atkins’s second stint at the SEC after serving as a commissioner under the George W. Bush administration, where he earned a reputation for fighting against regulations that he found overly burdensome to the financial sector. Expect Atkins to dial back the use of fines on public companies, which he argues unfairly harms shareholders. His nomination also [sent](#) Bitcoin prices past \$100,000 for the first time ever, with the market expecting that he will create a friendly regulatory environment for digital assets. Atkins has previously testified before Congress in defense of cryptocurrencies and represented major industry players like FTX as a private-sector consultant.

The tail that wags the DOGE. Trump [announced](#) that Bill McGinley, who was originally selected as Trump’s White House counsel, would instead serve as counsel to the Department of Government Efficiency non-governmental advisory commission. The swap – with David Warrington, counsel to Trump’s 2024 campaign, selected as White House counsel instead – may indicate the rising significance of DOGE as an instrument of Trump’s agenda, but also the waning influence of advisor Boris Epshteyn, who had pushed for McGinley and has since been accused of selling access to Trump. Click [here](#) for coverage of today’s Capitol Hill visit by Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, the two co-chairs of DOGE.

Regulation & Deregulation

FCC Chair Nominee Vows to “Smash the Censorship Cartel”: Trump’s pick to chair the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Brendan Carr, has promised that he would change the way that the commission enforces Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act to promote a higher degree of viewpoint diversity on social media platforms. Carr has said that while he favors the protection from liability that Section 230 offers to platforms hosting speech, he disagrees with past judicial interpretations of Section 230 that have protected platforms from liability with respect to content moderation decisions.

Technology

Despite weakened economy, China ready to tangle on tech and trade. Last week, President Biden [announced](#) new export controls on semiconductors meant to curb China’s access to advanced western technology. China responded rapidly by banning the export of gallium, germanium, and antimony – rare minerals with military and technology applications – to the U.S. Beijing’s response was highly calibrated, demonstrating its ability to cut the U.S. off from critical minerals but in a way that did not cause major economic disruptions. This may be a foretaste of what to expect if Trump enacts sweeping tariffs or other measures that harm China’s economy: swift, pointed, and potentially asymmetrical retaliation.

Latest Trump Appointments

Commissioner of the Social Security Administration

Frank Bisignano

Administrator of the Small Business Administration

Kelly Loeffler

Commissioner of the IRS

Billy Long

White House Counsel President

David Warrington

Chief of Protocol

Dr. Monica Crowley

Security and Exchange Commission Chair

Paul Atkins

Assistant Attorney General for Antitrust

Gail Slater

Deputy Treasury Secretary

Dr. Michael Faulkender

NASA Administrator

Jared Isaacman

Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs

Adam Boehler

Secretary of the Army

Dan Driscoll

White House Senior Counselor for Trade and Manufacturing

Peter Navarro

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