

Ohio Senator J.D. Vance Picked as Trump's Vice President

5 Key Takeaways

- Vance is the embodiment of the MAGA movement, having established himself as one of the fiercest defenders of the Trump agenda, especially when it comes to foreign policy, trade and immigration. His selection could be viewed as the Trump campaign believing it is going to cruise to victory in November.
- Vance is an extremely effective communicator – something Trump values – and gained national attention in 2016 with his “Hillbilly Elegy” memoir of growing up in poverty in Appalachia. The book effectively showcases the plight of poor, rural white Americans.
- In addition to being able to connect with working class voters because of his Rust Belt roots, Vance is a former Marine, has a law degree from Yale and is a former venture capitalist connected to the high-tech community, giving him the ability to move in a variety of political circles.
- Vance has been an outspoken critic of American engagement in foreign conflicts, especially the war in Ukraine. He deployed to Iraq and has said while he served honorably, he felt like he was lied to about U.S. objectives.
- Vance will reach across the political aisle, particularly when it comes to issues important to his home state of Ohio. He has worked closely with the Buckeye state’s senior Senator, Sherrod Brown, a Democrat, on rail safety issues following the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, in 2023. He also has a progressive streak, recently teaming up with Senator Elizabeth Warren, a Democrat from Massachusetts and Senator Dick Durbin, a Democrat from Illinois, to introduce legislation aimed at cracking down on big banks and reining in credit card fees.

Implications For Business

- Having just served less than two years in the Senate, Vance does not have an extensive voting record when it comes to issues important to the business community. However, he does receive high ratings from pro-business organizations like the National Federation of Independent Business and the National Retail Federation.
- Vance often is described as “economic populist” who wants to see government do more to rebuild the nation’s industrial base. He is the co-author of bipartisan legislation to end tax-free mergers and taxpayer subsidies for acquisitions that consolidate corporate power. The Stop Subsidizing Giant Mergers Act (S. 4011) was introduced in March with Vance as the only co-sponsor. It not expected to move in the 118th Congress. Vance also has been vocal in opposing the sale of U.S. Steel to Japan’s Nippon Steel.

- It is worth noting that Vance has publicly praised Federal Trade Commission Chair Lina Khan, a Democrat, for blocking a number of proposed business mergers over the last two years. This kind of public support for someone in the opposing party is rare these days in Washington.
- Vance has close ties to major donors in Silicon Valley and has steadily built a national profile among GOP donor circles across the country. Vance's fundraising ability will be an important factor for the rest of the campaign.
- Vance's position on immigration largely mirrors Trump's and he has been extremely vocal in his criticism of President Biden's handling of the border crisis.

Next Steps

- **Keep Building Relationships:** Regardless of who wins the White House, November's elections will usher in new Members of Congress in both the House and the Senate. It is imperative that organizations continue relationship building efforts across parties, prioritizing members where you have an economic footprint. This engagement should include D.C. office visits as well as state/district engagement with Members and/or staff. Companies also should be preparing materials that can be used in introductory meetings with new Members of Congress. These materials should focus on the positive impact of commercial operations and include brief overviews of priority public policies and company values.
- **Expand Your Ecosystem:** Beyond developing relationships with individual Members of Congress and Administration officials, companies can prepare for the next election by identifying opportunities to engage with other organizations on shared business and value priorities, including business and trade organizations, advocacy groups and nonprofits, think tanks and academic institutions and congressional caucuses. Businesses and organizations can leverage the power of their brand to act as a convener to bring together diverse audiences to foster conversations and build alignment on key issues. These relationships can help amplify advocacy impact and insulate when there are disagreements with policymakers.

With so much on the line, and the potential scenarios in flux, a comprehensive grasp of electoral processes and timelines, coupled with a strategic engagement plan, is essential for navigating these upcoming political shifts. Now is the time to meet with APCO's government relations, issues management and crisis communications colleagues to prepare your strategy and begin executing against it.

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