

Trump Cabinet Nominees – Bios

This document includes bios for Trump’s cabinet nominees in alphabetical order by the nominee's last name.



Secretary or Treasury nominee Scott Bessent

The palace intrigue over who would emerge as Trump’s Treasury Secretary consumed “Trump World” and Washington unlike any of his other nominations. Ultimately, Bessent, the founder of the Connecticut-based hedge fund Key Square Group, got the nod, signaling that Elon Musk may not have as much sway as he believes. Trump long wanted Bessent, but Musk favored Howard Lutnick, who has been nominated as Secretary of Commerce. Wall Street and business leaders have reacted positively to Bessent’s selection, recognizing his pedigree as a global investor and his history of supporting both Republicans and Democrats. The centerpiece of Bessent's economic agenda is what he calls a "3/3/3" approach to policy: cutting the budget deficit to 3% of GDP, achieving 3% annual growth, and increasing domestic oil production by 3 million barrels per day. When it comes to tariffs, there is a great deal of speculation that Bessent could moderate Trump’s position. Expect Bessent to be easily confirmed.



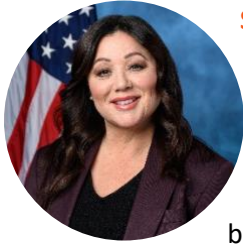
Attorney General Nominee Pam Bondi

A longtime ally and vocal supporter of Trump, Bondi made history in 2010 when she was elected as Florida’s first female attorney general. Before being elected, she served as a state prosecutor for 18 years. Bondi is well regarded in legal circles and beloved by GOP activists for challenging the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and fighting to keep Florida’s ban on same-sex marriage. Proving her loyalty, she served on Trump’s legal team during his first impeachment trial in 2019-2020. Expect Bondi to carry out Trump’s mission to turn the Department of Justice upside down but without all the baggage carried by Gaetz. Unlike Gaetz, the Senate is unlikely to hold up her confirmation.



Secretary of Interior nominee Doug Burgum

Burgum, the governor of North Dakota who ran a short-lived presidential campaign in 2023, will be both Interior Secretary and “energy czar,” a newly created role that will orchestrate the new administration’s sweeping plans to repeal climate rules, scrap clean-energy subsidies, and boost oil and gas production on millions of acres of federal lands nationwide. Burgum should be easily confirmed and will lean heavily on his lessons learned from serving as governor of an oil-rich state, where he focused on deregulation and economic development, particularly in the energy sector. Anticipate Burgum prioritizing increasing drilling access on federal lands and promoting energy independence. Also look for him to emphasize a balanced approach to conservation and development, reflecting a business-oriented mindset. As head of Interior, Burgum also will preside over the National Park System, work with Native American tribes and oversee mining operations on federal lands across the U.S.



Secretary of Labor nominee Lori Chavez-DeRemer

Chavez-DeRemer’s selection validates Trump’s understanding that working-class voters played a huge role in his election. Chavez-DeRemer is one of only a handful of Republican elected officials who regularly side with labor over business. She was a vocal and enthusiastic supporter of the PRO Act, which would have made it easier for workers to unionize, and co-sponsored a measure that would lower barriers for public safety workers to collectively bargain. Both Trump and JD Vance actively courted union and blue-collar workers during the campaign, including in July, when the president of the Teamsters spoke at the Republican National Convention. Her nomination clearly bucks conventional wisdom when it comes to who runs the Department of Labor under a GOP president. This pick is a “thank you” to the general public. However, getting any pro-union legislation through a Republican-controlled Congress will be a longshot, at best. Republicans are more likely to try to roll back Biden-era labor initiatives in the upcoming 119th Congress.



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 eventually won by [Democrat Raphael Warnock](#). Collins never served on the Veterans Affairs Committee in Congress, but he 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 Trump ally and is the fourth member of his impeachment defense team to be rewarded with a Cabinet appointment. He has continued advising Trump on legal issues since leaving Congress, including his 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.



Secretary of Transportation nominee Sean Duffy

Duffy, a former member of Congress from Wisconsin, should have no problem being confirmed. Expect Duffy to play an integral role in the next surface transportation reauthorization bill in 2026. He also will have discretion over the remaining infrastructure funds from President Biden’s 2021 infrastructure. Some transportation watchers suspect Duffy will provide substantially fewer competitive grant funds to projects that support low-carbon transportation. Duffy is expected to play a key role in the Trump administration’s efforts to scale back incentives for electric vehicles and limit funding for low-carbon initiatives. The League of Conservation Voters has noted that his 2% score from the group is the lowest of any nominee so far.



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](#). Critics also claim [he is inexperienced](#) and don’t like his [opposition to women serving in combat roles](#) and his [desire to roll back several DEI policies](#) at the Pentagon. In addition to wanting to

reshape the Department of Defense to align with conservative principles, look for Hegseth to push to strengthen the U.S. military's capabilities to counter global threats, particularly from China and Russia, and call 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 transitions to civilian life. Hegseth's confirmation is very much up in the air, and much will depend on how he does at his [January 14 confirmation hearing](#) before the Senate Armed Services Committee. 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.



Secretary of Health & Human Services nominee Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

RFK Jr., a known skeptic of science, medicine, and vaccines, supports the "Make America Healthy Again" agenda, which is also endorsed by Trump. RFK Jr. attributes many of the nation's health problems to pharmaceutical and food companies, alleging collusion with HHS and the Agriculture departments. Kennedy and other nominees set to lead agencies within HHS have proposed overhauling the health system, including firing employees, eliminating certain FDA centers and shifting NIH research focus from infectious diseases to chronic diseases. RFK Jr.'s selection is unconventional and could cause disruption and confusion across the health sector. This week, a group of 77 Nobel Prize laureates wrote a letter to the Senate urging them to block Kennedy's nomination based on his lack of medical or scientific credentials. Given HHS's status as the largest federal agency by spending and its strong constituencies in Congress and nationwide, the extent of change Kennedy can implement is uncertain, and his confirmation is not a sure bet. It is unclear how much support RFK Jr. has within the Republican Caucus due to previous positions on abortion and most, if not all, Democrats are expected to oppose him. While the anti-vaccine groups will support him, many public health groups and organizations will vocally oppose his nomination. Read APCO's additional analysis on his nomination and others within HHS [here](#).



Secretary of Commerce nominee Howard Lutnick

A prominent Wall Street figure and co-chair of Trump's transition team, Lutnick is a staunch supporter of Trump's plan to enact aggressive trade restrictions on China covering a broad range of goods, such as electronics and steel. Like Duffy, he shouldn't have any issue getting confirmed. Remember that the Commerce Department oversees an array of federal policies, including on climate, semiconductors, cybersecurity and patents. It's unclear where Lutnick stands on many of these issues.



Secretary of Education nominee Linda McMahon

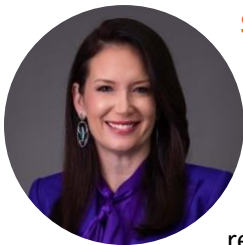
The former CEO of World Wrestling Entertainment and a major Republican donor, McMahon ran the Small Business Administration (SBA) in Trump's first term. She is presently the board chair of the [America First Policy Institute](#), a pro-Trump think tank that was formed in 2021 and has played a key role in developing policy proposals for Trump's second term. McMahon is considered a relative unknown in education circles, though she has expressed support for [charter schools](#) and school choice. She is a [strong proponent of expanding Pell Grants](#) to include short-term workforce education programs. At the same time, [McMahon has been critical](#) of Biden Administration DEI efforts, saying they could gut apprenticeship programs. McMahon's biggest task will perhaps be eliminating the agency she has been nominated to oversee. Trump [has promised to close the Education Department](#) and return much of its powers to states but has not explained how he would shutter the agency, which was created

by Congress in 1979 and [would likely require action from Congress to dismantle](#). She is not expected to have any issues getting through the Senate, especially after a [federal judge recently paused](#) a child sexual abuse case involving her, her husband, Vince McMahon, and the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE). She was confirmed in an overwhelmingly bipartisan 81-19 vote to run the SBA.



Secretary of Homeland Security nominee Kristi Noem

Noem, the current governor of South Dakota, will oversee Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the agency 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.



Secretary of Agriculture nominee Brooke Rollins

Rollins served as White House domestic policy chief during the first Trump administration. She is the president and CEO of the America First Policy Institute, which has played an outsized role in Trump's re-election campaign and planning for a second term. She will not have an issue being confirmed. As Secretary, Rollins will oversee a sprawling agency that controls policies, regulations and aid programs related to farming, forestry, ranching, food quality and nutrition. She will be a key player in pushing Congress to reauthorize the Farm Bill, which supports everything from crop insurance to sustainable farming to providing low-income families with nutritious meals. Farming subsidies in the bill also affect the global food chain and influence world markets. It was last reauthorized in 2018 during Trump's first presidential term. The agricultural community, a major constituency in many of the red states Trump carried in November, is desperate for the bill to be updated. Rollins will also need to navigate Trump's looming tariff war, which will directly impact farmers. During his first administration, Trump paid farmers for losses incurred from the U.S.-China trade war. While some have questioned Rollins's credentials, she does have ties to agriculture: she was raised on a farm, is a former member of Future Farmers of America and graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in agricultural development.



Secretary of State nominee Sen. Marco Rubio

Rubio will likely be the first member of Trump's cabinet confirmed by the Senate. As the top Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, a senior member of the Foreign Relations Committee, and former presidential candidate, Rubio is a seasoned U.S. foreign policy player. He is well respected by his colleagues and would be the first Latino Secretary of State. Expect Rubio to continue to be an outspoken critic of authoritarian regimes such as China, Iran, Venezuela, and Cuba. Also watch for him to prioritize Indo-Pacific alliances and work to enhance cooperation with regional allies like Japan, South Korea and Australia. Rubio, an avowed institutionalist, has shown flexibility in his stance towards Ukraine, softening his position in the past few years to be more in line with the Trump wing of the GOP and voting against aid packages while in the Senate. Human rights in U.S. adversary countries will be a

priority for Rubio and will be part of conversations with foreign leaders, particularly regarding China. That has not always been the case for past Secretaries of State.



Secretary of Housing & Urban Development nominee Scott Turner. A former NFL star who served in Trump’s first term, Turner is currently the chair of the [Center for Education Opportunity](#) at [America First Policy Institute](#), a pro-Trump think tank that was formed in 2021 and has played a key role in developing policy proposals for Trump’s second term. In the first Trump administration, Turner led the [White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council](#) which was tasked with turning around distressed communities and included steering billions in private investment to so-called Opportunity Zones, economically depressed areas eligible to be used for the federal tax incentives. The effort won bipartisan praise, though critics suggested the wealthy investors getting tax breaks saw more benefit than local residents. Turner was twice elected to the Texas House of Representatives, serving from 2013 to 2017, and [opponents are pointing](#) to several votes he cast as potential red flags to lead the federal agency that oversees housing for the poorest Americans, sheltering more than 4.3 million low-income families through public housing, rental subsidy and voucher programs. Despite the criticism, Turner should have an issue being confirmed.



Secretary of Energy nominee Chris Wright. Wright is a strong supporter of oil and gas development. Like many of Trump’s picks, he has regularly appeared on Fox News. Wright, who founded one of North America’s largest fracking companies, Liberty Energy, said “climate change is a global challenge but is far from the world’s greatest threat to human life.” Oil industry executives have praised his selection; climate activists have been openly critical. Wright will be central to any GOP efforts to repeal parts of the Inflation Reduction Act. Expect him to lead the charge to end the year-long pause on liquefied natural gas export approvals by the Biden administration last January. Also look for Wright to prioritize the rollback of environmental regulations that hinder energy production and economic growth and support technological innovations in the energy sector, including advancements in fracking and nuclear energy. It’s worth noting that Wright sits on the boards of modular nuclear reactor company Oklo Inc. and global mining company EMX Royalty Corp. Wright’s confirmation hearings will be testy, but he will get through, most likely on a party-line vote.