
The 45th Presidency is Underway: An Inauguration Update

Jan 20, 2017

In a celebration of our democracy, the 45th President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, took the oath of office at noon today with his hand on two Bibles: Lincoln's and his own. President Trump's inaugural address largely revolved around a theme of handing power back to the people and improving life for the everyday Americans. "We assembled here today are issuing a new decree to be heard in every city, in every foreign capital and in every hall of power. From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this day forward, it's going to be only America first. America first," Trump said during his speech. He closed his inaugural address with a variation of his campaign slogan: "We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again. And, yes, together, we will make America great again."

As President Trump first official acts, he signed executive orders to formally nominate his Cabinet picks, the Mattis waiver bill to become Secretary of Defense into law, and a proclamation for a national day of patriotism.

Transition Update

The last vacant Cabinet spot was filled on Wednesday night with the selection of former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue (R) for the Secretary of Agriculture. Confirmation hearings for nominees have been taking place over the past two weeks. Senate Democrats are allowing two of the nominees to move forward to confirmation today much to the displeasure of Senate Republicans as they are ready to proceed on multiple nominations. Democrats stated they would likely decide which two it would be during debate on Friday afternoon.

However, with over a thousand positions requiring Senate confirmation and only 30 nominees being announced so far, the Trump Administration is still at least months away from completing this process. Additionally, there are more than 4,000 appointees that served under President Obama meaning that Trump and his team will need to fill these positions as well. Although with pledges to cut the bureaucracy, some of these positions could remain vacant. *The Washington Post* has been tracking the key Senate confirmation positions, which is available [here](#), and additionally, did a helpful primer in December regarding all the categories of personnel that will need to be filled. That information is available [here](#).

For the most recent news on the transition, Politico has been doing a daily update and the post for Inauguration Day is available [here](#).

FY18 Budget Process

Trump's transition team has begun work on what's being called the "skinny budget," an approximately 200-page document that will lay out the main priorities for the Trump Administration and will also include summary tables. The skinny budget is expected to be released around the end of February with the full budget request expected to come out by mid or late April.

News reports out this week stated that the Trump transition team was considering a series of budget reductions outlined by the Heritage Foundation in a report released last year. The report included ways to decrease federal spending by \$10.5 trillion over ten years. The recommendations made by the Heritage Foundation, which are laid out by government function, are available [here](#).

The Hill outlined additional information about the possible budget earlier this week and that article is available [here](#).

115th Congress is Underway

The 115th Congress convened on January 3rd and organizing in both the House and Senate is well underway. The House of Representatives got off to a rocky start as Republican Leadership looked to hinder some of the powers of the independent Office of Congressional Ethics but ended up shelving the proposal after President-elect Trump spoke out against the idea. During their second week in session, the House and Senate both voted to begin the process of dismantling the Affordable Care Act through a process called "budget reconciliation." This process allows the Senate to only need a simple majority to pass the measure but can only pertain to the fiscal portions of the health care law such as the tax credits to make buying coverage more affordable. Republicans are working on the replacement for the health care law and Trump stated previously that this plan would not be released until his Secretary of Health and Human Services is confirmed.

With the new President, Congress will look to pull back some of the final policies put in place by the Obama Administration through the rarely used Congressional Review Act. The Congressional Review Act gives Congress the opportunity to overturn regulations put in place by the Administration as far back as June. The Obama Administration has finalized over 150 regulations since this time including some more controversial ones related to methane emissions, pollution from coal-mining companies in streams and drinking water, and overtime pay. If a regulation is overturned by this Act, a future administration cannot issue the same regulation again. The only time the Congressional Review Act was successfully used previously was in overturning a Clinton Administration regulation related to ergonomics in the workplace.

For more information on this matter, please contact a member of Clark Hill's Government & Public Affairs Practice Group.