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# Window On Washington - January 11, 2021, Vol. 5, Issue 2

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## Outlook for This Week in the Nation's Capital

**Congress.** Democrats Jon Ossoff and Reverend Raphael Warnock were declared the winners of the Senate runoffs in Georgia, giving Democrats the Senate majority, House majority, and the White House. The pair will be sworn in once Georgia certifies the results, likely around January 19 or 20. Congress is not in session this week, though House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) indicated last night that the House will attempt to pass a measure today that calls on Vice President Mike Pence to invoke the 25th Amendment and remove President Trump from office. The [letter](#) notes that if Pence does not act, Democrats will then proceed with impeaching Trump; however, it remains unclear how this all may play out. The House would likely not vote on impeachment articles until later this week, and the Senate not until after Inauguration Day, meaning it is almost impossible for President Trump to be removed from office before then through impeachment. An impeachment trial would also stall President-elect Joe Biden's first weeks in office, as it would delay the confirmation of his Cabinet and the passage of another round of COVID-19 relief legislation.

**Capitol Hill Riots.** Two members of President Donald Trump's Cabinet - Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos - submitted their resignation letters, citing Trump's handling of the riots. A handful of White House aides have also exited, and more resignations are expected over the coming days. Two GOP senators- Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Pat Toomey (R-PA) - have also joined the calls for Trump to resign.

**Biden Transition.** After the siege ended, both chambers returned for a joint session late last Wednesday night and certified President-elect Joe Biden and Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris's victory, as many of the lawmakers who initially planned to object withdrew their opposition due to the riots. Trump also formally announced last week that he will not attend Biden's inauguration on January 20, though Vice President Mike Pence plans to attend. Separately, after this morning's announcement that former Deputy Secretary of State William Burns is Biden's pick for director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Biden has finalized his Cabinet [slate](#) and picks for other key non-Cabinet officials.

## Last Week in the Nation's Capital

### CONGRESS

#### *Budget & Appropriations*

**House Adopts Rules Package for 117th Congress:** While the rules package does not directly provide any pay-as-you-go, or PAYGO, exemptions, it would provide the Budget Committee chairperson the authority to declare legislation providing economic and health responses to the pandemic, as well as measures designed to combat climate change, as having no cost. That means those measures would not be found in violation of PAYGO, mitigating the need to waive the rule. ([Roll Call](#))

#### *Defense*

**Senate Armed Services Sets Confirmation Hearing for Austin:** The Senate Armed Services Committee will hold a confirmation hearing for Lloyd Austin to be Defense secretary on January 19, just a day before President-elect Joe Biden is sworn in. The hearing - and an even later hearing before the House Armed Services Committee - means the retired Army general likely won't be confirmed in time for the start of the new Biden administration. ([Politico](#))

#### *Homeland Security & Immigration*

**Two Senate Committees Vow Probe of Security Failure During Capitol Riots:** Sens. Gary Peters (D-MI) and Rob Portman (R-OH), the top members of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Roy Blunt (R-MO), the top members of the Rules Committee, said they would hold hearings and conduct joint oversight after a mob was able to storm the Capitol, temporarily suspending the counting of the Electoral College vote. ([The Hill](#))

### EXECUTIVE BRANCH

#### *Budget & Appropriations*

**Biden to Unveil Coronavirus Relief Plan This Week:** At an event last Friday, President-elect Joe Biden said he'll offer details of his first COVID-19 aid proposal this Thursday with a price tag likely "in the trillions of the dollars." He ticked off a list of standbys from previous aid proposals, including upping the recently enacted \$600 rebate checks to \$2,000 per person; expanded unemployment benefits; rental assistance; aid to states, localities and tribal governments, including for school systems, police and fire departments; and money for vaccine distribution. ([Roll Call](#))

#### *Health/HHS/NIH*

**HHS Finalizes Regulatory Review Rule, Though More Lenient Than Proposed:** The Trump administration last Friday finalized a rule requiring HHS to

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review existing regulations, with some exceptions, every 10 years based on their real-world impact. ([Healthcare Dive](#))

**Mental Health Chief Resigns After Capitol Hill Assault:** Elinore McCance-Katz, HHS Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, resigned last Thursday. ([Bloomberg Government](#))

**Biden to Release Nearly All Available COVID-19 Vaccine Doses to the Public:** President-elect Joe Biden plans to release nearly all available coronavirus vaccine doses when he takes office. Releasing nearly all doses would allow more people to get vaccinated with at least one dose. ([Axios](#))

*Labor & Workforce*

**Biden Chooses Boston Mayor Walsh as Labor Secretary:** President-elect Joe Biden has picked Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, a former top union leader, to serve as his Labor secretary. ([Politico](#))

*Department of Education*

**DeVos Resigned After Believing 25th Amendment was off the Table:** Education Secretary Betsy DeVos submitted her resignation last Thursday after she believed that it would not be possible to remove President Donald Trump from office under the 25th Amendment, according to an adviser. ([Politico](#))

*Banking & Housing/HUD*

**Small Business Paycheck Protection Program to Restart This Week:** The loan application window will open today primarily for first-draw borrowers working with a group of smaller lenders defined as community financial institutions. On Wednesday it will be expanded to second-draw applications from those same lenders, which comprise around 10% of PPP's approved lender universe. ([Axios](#))

**Biden Picks California Official Isabel Guzman to Head SBA:** President-elect Joe Biden announced last Thursday that he picked California official Isabel Guzman to lead the Small Business Administration. ([Bloomberg](#))

**FHFA Announces 2021 Plans to Serve Underserved Areas:** While these plans normally encompass three years – and would need to lay out the plan for years 2021 to 2023 – due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the FHFA announced the government-sponsored enterprises would be releasing just one year – an extension of their 2018 to 2020 plans. ([HousingWire](#))

*Transportation/DOT*

**DOJ Charges Boeing with Criminal Conspiracy, Fines it \$2.5 Billion:** The Department of Justice (DOJ) announced last Thursday that it filed a criminal charge against Boeing over allegations that it hid information from FAA investigators probing the high-profile crashes of the company's 737 Max aircraft. The DOJ said the charge was being filed as part of a deferred prosecution agreement that will also see Boeing pay more than \$2.5 billion in fines. ([The Hill](#))

**Biden's Options for Reviving Travel Economy Ravaged by COVID-19:** The U.S. travel economy has lost about \$500 billion since last March, and Biden has promised to restore the nation's confidence that traveling is safe via better health procedures until the vaccine is widely distributed. ([Roll Call](#))

**Chao Resigns from Transportation Department:** Elaine Chao resigned as Transportation secretary, citing the troubling nature of President Donald Trump's rally last Wednesday and the chaos that it later spurred as rioters tore through the halls of the Capitol building. ([Politico](#))

*Space/NASA & NOAA*

**Busy Year for Space in Ahead in 2021:** Between three different nation's missions arriving at the red planet, the prospect of more exciting SpaceX Starship tests, potential first launch of ULA's Vulcan rocket, new NASA leadership and even (hopefully) the launch of the James Webb Space Telescope, 2021 is shaping up to be an exciting year for space science and exploration. ([Ars Technica](#))

**What to Expect from NOAA Under the Biden Administration:** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) focus on weather forecasting and climate science is likely to be a high priority under President-elect Joe Biden, who has already nominated several climate-focused politicians to his cabinet. ([MPR News](#))

**Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo Is Biden's Commerce Secretary Pick:** If confirmed by the Senate, Raimondo, a Democrat who is serving her second term as Rhode Island governor and was previously the state's treasurer, would oversee the U.S. Commerce Department's eclectic portfolio of federal agencies, including NOAA. ([NPR](#))

*Defense/DOD*

**How the Department of Defense Could Help Win the War on Climate Change:** The Defense Department offers an opportunity on climate change for the new president: a huge appetite for clean energy sources and a massive budget to help accelerate the development of new technologies needed to curb greenhouse gases and harden infrastructure to protect against worsening climate impacts. ([Politico](#))

**Defense Research Director Has a Vision to Connect With New, Innovative Companies:** Victoria Coleman, who was named DARPA director last

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August, says that the advanced research agency wants to create an Apple store-like storefront where companies can gather information about accessing the DoD market, better understand DARPA's work and learn about opportunities with the agency. ([C4ISR Net](#))

*Judiciary/DOJ*

**Garland Vows to Fight 'Violent Extremism' as Attorney General:** Merrick Garland, a D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge whom former President Obama had tried to install on the Supreme Court, made his first address since Biden announced his selection to serve as Attorney General last Wednesday shortly before the riot on Capitol Hill. ([The Hill](#))

**Barr Says Trump Committed 'Betrayal of His Office':** Former Attorney General William Barr accused President Donald Trump last Thursday of a "betrayal of his office" — the latest rebuke of the president by a former high-ranking administration official after pro-Trump rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol. ([Politico](#))

*Cyber*

**Biden Taps Intelligence Veteran for New White House Cybersecurity Role:** Anne Neuberger, who joined the National Security Agency (NSA) more than a decade ago and has been serving as the agency's director of cybersecurity since 2019, will be named deputy national security adviser for cybersecurity in the incoming National Security Council (NSC). ([Politico](#))

**A Cyber Opportunity - Priorities for the First National Cyber Director:** The national cyber director will fill several important leadership roles in the White House that have been either missing entirely or lacking in practical effectiveness over the past four years, and in some respects over the past four administrations, and it will require the priority attention of the Biden Administration in the wake of the SolarWinds attack. ([War on the Rocks](#))

*Agriculture/USDA*

**Food Box Program Continuing with \$1.5B from Relief Bill:** USDA will buy another \$1.5 billion of food to continue the Farmers to Families Food Box program. USDA will be able to issue solicitations to 240 organizations that have already received Basic Ordering Agreements (BOAs). ([Agri-Pulse](#))

*Department of Energy*

**Baltimore Lawsuit Against Energy Companies Heads to Supreme Court:** Later this month, the nation's highest bench will weigh in on a highly technical issue on state or federal jurisdiction stemming from Baltimore's lawsuit demanding financial damages for climate change related costs that could affect the outcome of this case and many others like it that have been filed in state courts across the country. ([E&E News](#))