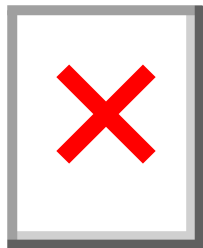


From: POLITICO Playbook PM <politicoplaybook@email.politico.com>
Sent: Jan 13, 2025 18:23:18.000000000 UTC
Subject: Senate gears up for contentious confirmations
To: jperperian@cityofmelrose.org <jperperian@cityofmelrose.org>

Jan 13, 2025

[View in browser](#)



BY **GARRETT ROSS**

Presented by the National Retail Federation

THE CATCH-UP

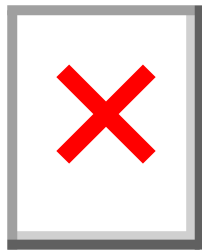
FIRST IN PLAYBOOK — SNOOP DOGG is expected to perform at the inaugural Crypto Ball on Friday night, which is being held at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium, three people familiar with the planning told our Daniel Lippman and Dasha Burns. The rapper [has said positive things](#) about NFTs at crypto conventions and [previously tweeted early on](#) about Dogecoin.

Mark your calendar: The inauguration schedule for President-elect **DONALD TRUMP's** formal return to power next week has been set,

including a MAGA victory rally, three inaugural balls and a fireworks celebration. [See the full rundown](#)

What Trump will be obsessively tracking: “Protest crowd estimates down, ticket demand high for Trump inauguration,” by WaPo’s Emily Davies, Ellie Silverman and Michael Brice-Saddler

BREAKING — U.S. District Judge **AILEEN CANNON** cleared the way for DOJ to release the portion of special counsel **JACK SMITH’s** report on Trump’s efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election, [Josh Gerstein and Kyle Cheney report](#). “Cannon is continuing to prohibit DOJ from showing selected lawmakers another part of Smith’s report that covers his probe into Trump’s handling of classified documents at Mar-a-Lago.” [Read the order](#)



Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer is telling his members to use the confirmation hearings to hold Trump's nominees accountable. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

CONFIRMATION BIAS — This week, the Senate turns its attention to the slate of confirmation hearings on its docket — hearings that are sure to dominate the headlines out of Capitol Hill as Republicans aim to push through Trump’s nominees and fill out his second administration amid expected protests and objections from Democrats.

What you can expect: Absent the numbers to block any of Trump’s nominees from being confirmed (without several Republican defections, of course), Senate Democratic Leader **CHUCK SCHUMER** is privately urging his members to use the hearings to hold the nominees’ “feet to the fire,” [Jordain Carney reports](#).

“Schumer told members during the closed-door lunch that they should hold Trump’s nominees ‘accountable’ for his agenda, particularly as it relates to the working class and families, the official said. That will include using the public hearings to get them to detail how the nominees will enact Trump’s campaign promises, the person added, as well as digging into their backgrounds.”

Schumer’s marching orders come as the Senate kicks off a marathon run of confirmation hearings this week, beginning tomorrow as the marquee action centers on **PETE HEGSETH**, the controversial Pentagon pick.

Speaking of Hegseth: The stream of headlines swirling around Hegseth seems to have eased, but [CNN’s Andrew Kaczynski reports](#) that the former Fox News personality “has voiced strong opposition to removing the names of Confederate generals from US military bases, repeatedly saying the names should be changed back.

“Hegseth, a National Guard veteran and longtime Fox News host, has described the renaming efforts as ‘a sham,’ ‘garbage,’ and ‘crap’ in various media appearances between 2021 and 2024 reviewed by CNN. Hegseth said the moves eroded military tradition and were part of what he characterized as a politically motivated progressive agenda infiltrating American institutions.”

Catching heat: It’s not just Democrats who will be digging into the nominees, though. **JARED ISAACMAN**, the billionaire businessman Trump has tapped to head NASA, is expected to face scrutiny from *conservatives* because in the past he has “donated over \$300,000 to Democrats while his

companies promoted diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives,” [the Washington Examiner’s Gabe Kaminsky reports](#).

Knowing the nominees: [“Trump’s CIA Pick Expected to Push for Bare-Knuckle Spycraft Against China,”](#) by WSJ’s Joel Schectman and Dustin Volz: **JOHN RATCLIFFE** “would push for aggressive spy missions against high-level officials in China and for covert operations intended to counter Beijing’s growing influence around the world, a person close to him said. Ratcliffe would also likely pursue such activity to deter recent Chinese cyberattacks.”

ANSWERING THE BAT SIGNAL — [“MSNBC Ups Rachel Maddow to Five Nights, Sends Alex Wagner Into Field for Trump’s First 100 Days,”](#) by Variety’s Brian Steinberg

JENNIFER KLEIN LOOKS BACK — [“‘This work is not at the fringe’: What it was like to lead the White House Gender Policy Council,”](#) by The 19th’s Jennifer Gerson

JENNIFER RUBIN LOOKS FORWARD — [“Jen Rubin exits Washington Post, joins Norm Eisen to launch new outlet countering ‘authoritarian threat,’”](#) by CNN’s Brian Stelter: “Rather than anti-Trump, the founders describe [The Contrarian] as pro-democracy. They said they have already enlisted about two dozen contributors, including people who played prominent roles in debunking 2020 election denialism and investigating the January 6, 2021, attack at the US Capitol.”

Speaking of WaPo ... Semafor’s @maxwelltani: “WaPo executive editor **MATT MURRAY** sent a lengthy email to staff today with the subject line ‘The Future.’ The note addresses recent staff departures, business challenges, and the paper’s ongoing reorganization.”

MAJOR MESSAGING MOVE — Americans for Prosperity, “the influential and deep-pocketed grassroots network founded by the billionaire Koch Brothers, is announcing that it’s spending \$20 million to launch a wide-ranging campaign to urge the extension of Trump’s signature Tax Cuts and Jobs Act” across all 50 states, [Fox News’ Paul Steinhauser was first to report](#).

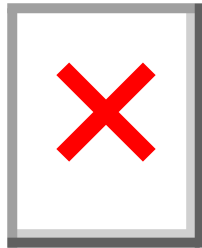
Good Monday afternoon. Thanks for reading Playbook PM. **ICYMI:** This morning, we announced that **Jack Blanchard** is [coming on to helm the](#)

[Playbook franchise](#) as managing editor and lead author. Drop me a line at gross@politico.com.

A message from the National Retail Federation:

Every January, the National Retail Federation convenes the most extraordinary retail industry leaders and partners in New York City for its annual conference and expo. NRF 2025: Retail's Big Show will bring together 40,000 people from 6,200 brands and 100 countries for three days of learning, collaboration and discovery. Retail leaders will connect with 1,300 students at the NRF Foundation Student Program, and the industry will celebrate visionary individuals shaping retail's future at the NRF Foundation Honors. [Learn more](#).

7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW



Trump officials are grilling NSC staff members as they prepare to install the new administration. | Andrew Harnik/Getty Images

1. TRANSITION LENSES: Incoming Trump admin officials recently have “begun questioning career civil servants who work on the White House National Security Council about who they voted for in the 2024 election, their political contributions and whether they have made social media posts that could be considered incriminating by President-elect Donald Trump’s team,” [AP’s Aamer Madhani and Zeke Miller report](#). “At least some of these nonpolitical employees have begun packing up their belongings since being asked about their loyalty to Trump — after they had earlier been given indications that they would be asked to stay on at the NSC in the new administration, the official said. ...

“**The NSC staff members** being questioned about their loyalty are largely subject matter experts who have been loaned to the White House by federal agencies — the State Department, FBI and CIA, for example — for temporary duty that typically lasts one to two years. If removed from the NSC, they would be returned to their home agencies.”

2. MIDDLE EAST LATEST: Officials involved in cease-fire negotiations said that U.S. and Arab representatives “made significant progress overnight toward brokering a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war and the release of scores of hostages held in the Gaza Strip, but a deal hasn’t been reached yet,” [AP’s Victoria Eastwood, Samy Magdy and Josef Federman report](#). “Four officials acknowledged that progress has been made and said the coming days would be critical for ending more than 15 months of fighting that has destabilized the Middle East.”

The usual caveat: “A US official briefed on the negotiations said all sides are ‘closer than we’ve ever been, but it could still fall apart.’”

Related reads: [“In an Upended Mideast, Trump Faces a New Divergence With Old Allies,”](#) by NYT’s Ismaeel Naar ... [“ Hamas Has Another Sinwar. And He’s Rebuilding,”](#) by WSJ’s Summer Said, Anat Peled and Rory Jones

3. STATE OF RESISTANCE: Led by Gov. **GAVIN NEWSOM**, Democrats in California have “reached a \$50 million agreement to shore up state and local legal defenses against the incoming Trump administration just a week ahead of the president-elect’s inauguration. Half the money would go to fending off any mass deportation plan the new president might enact early in his administration,” [Blake Jones and Lindsey Holden scooped](#). “The move —

the first of its kind in the nation that positions California to lead a second term resistance against Trump — comes as Republicans bash state Democratic leaders for focusing on the highly partisan issue even as the southern part of the state suffers from historically devastating fires.”

More out of California: [“Trial by fire: Rep. George Whitesides starts first term with blazes raging back home,”](#) by Emily Schultheis in Los Angeles: “As officials in California and Washington D.C. deploy emergency aid to those whose lives and homes have been devastated, Whitesides already has an eye on how the country can prevent the next big one — and what Congress must do to make it happen.”

TOMORROW: Join POLITICO's Playbook team for The First 100 Days event at Union Station. Get a front row seat to lively conversations on the issues driving the agenda with the stakeholders at the helm of the transition. Hear from Speaker Mike Johnson, Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and more! [Register here](#).

4. THE BRAVE NEW WORLD: [“OpenAI Courts Trump With Vision for ‘A.I. in America,’”](#) by NYT’s Cade Metz and Cecilia Kang: “On Monday, OpenAI released what it calls its economic blueprint for “A.I. in America,” suggesting ways that policymakers can spur development of A.I. in the United States, minimize the risks posed by the technology and maintain a lead over China. ... Most notably, the company has called on policymakers to allow significant investment in American A.I. projects by investors in the Middle East, though the Biden administration has been wary of such investment. OpenAI argues that if countries like the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia do not invest in U.S. infrastructure, their money will flow to China instead.”

5. BEYOND THE BELTWAY: [“The Pitched Battles for Partisan Control in State Legislatures,”](#) by NYT’s David Chen and Campbell Robertson: “As state legislatures convene around the country this month, several knife-edge fights for partisan control have magnified the degree to which political polarization has become ingrained, not just in Congress, but in statehouses across the country. ... The battle to gain the upper hand puts

pressure in particular on Democratic lawmakers, who, unlike the past four years, face even higher stakes.”

A snapshot of the situation: “In Minnesota, Democratic legislators are threatening to stay away from the state capitol this week to prevent Republicans from trying to claim control of the House of Representatives. In Michigan, Republican senators, who are just one seat behind the Democrats, want a special election as soon as possible to fill a seat they believe can be flipped. And in Virginia, Democratic candidates in three special elections last week were pushing hard to retain their majorities in both legislative chambers, as Democrats try to enshrine abortion rights in the state’s constitution.”

Related read: [“A tough-on-crime approach is back in US state capitols,”](#) by AP’s David Lieb

6. THE NEW AMERICAN EXPORT: [“A New Age of American Interference in Europe,”](#) by NYT’s Katrin Bennhold: “For the last decade or more, Europe’s governments have been trying to resist covert influence operations from adversaries like Russia and China. Now they have a very different challenge: Fending off overt efforts by **ELON MUSK** and Donald Trump’s MAGA movement to seize territory, oust elected leaders and empower far-right causes and parties. ... It is not clear if Europe’s political immune system has the antibodies to defend against these new incursions. ... A senior official from the first Trump administration, who is in line for an even more senior role in the second, was blunt in his assessment: Europe, he said, has no idea what is coming its way.”

7. WHAT MITCH McCONNELL WANTS RFK JR. TO READ: [“How Lagging Vaccination Could Lead to a Polio Resurgence,”](#) by NYT’s Apoorva Mandavilli: “Any decision the Trump administration makes regarding the polio vaccine is likely to ripple across the globe.”

POLITICO is helping kick off the U.S. Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting with a Happy Hour on January 16th. Mingle with U.S. mayors, Washington insiders, and business executives over cocktails and light bites at the award-winning Cranes restaurant. [RSVP here to join us!](#)

Steve Bannon called **Elon Musk** a “[truly evil person,](#)” and personally vowed to halt his access to the White House.

Carrie Underwood will [perform “America the Beautiful”](#) at Donald Trump’s inauguration.

Village People will perform at [the Turning Point Inaugural-eve Ball](#).

TRANSITIONS — Ian Haimowitz is joining Rep. Steven Horsford’s (D-Nev.) office as senior

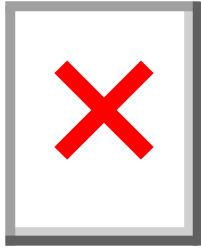
legislative assistant, leading his tax and trade work on Ways and Means. He most recently was a legislative aide for Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.). ... **Kate Käufer** is retiring from the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee after 20 years as a professional staff member and clerk, having spent her entire Senate career serving in the majority, to launch KMK Global Strategies as president and founder. ... **Alex Howard** is now leading public affairs in D.C. for Washington Gas. He previously was assistant press secretary and spokesperson at DHS and is an AT&T, Bloomberg Industry Group, Hillary Clinton and Obama White House comms alum.

Did someone forward this email to you? [Sign up here](#).

*Send Playbookers tips to playbook@politico.com or text us at **202-556-3307**. Playbook couldn’t happen without our deputy editor **Zack Stanton** and Playbook Daily Briefing producer **Callan Tansill-Suddath**.*

Correction: Friday’s Playbook PM misspelled Bob Menendez’s name.

A message from the National Retail Federation:



We are retail's greatest advocates, uniting an industry of leaders and boundary breakers around complex issues and bold opportunities [Learn more.](#)

Follow us on Twitter



Eugene Daniels [@EugeneDaniels2](#)

Eli Okun [@eliokun](#)

Garrett Ross [@garrett_ross](#)

Bethany Irvine [@bethanyirvinee](#)

Subscribe to the POLITICO Playbook family

Playbook | Playbook PM | California Playbook | Florida Playbook |
Illinois Playbook | Massachusetts Playbook | New Jersey Playbook |
New York Playbook | Ottawa Playbook | Brussels Playbook | London
Playbook

View all our politics and policy newsletters

FOLLOW US



To change your alert settings, please log in at [https://login.politico.com/?
redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.politico.com/settings](https://login.politico.com/?redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.politico.com/settings)



This email was sent to jperperian@cityofmelrose.org by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson
Blvd. Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)

****CITY OF MELROSE PUBLIC RECORDS NOTICE: Please be advised that the Massachusetts Attorney General has determined that email is a public record unless the content of the email falls within one of the stated exemptions under the Massachusetts Public Records Laws.****