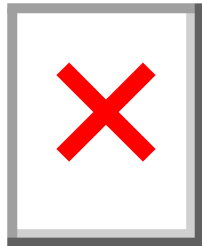


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**Sent:** May 06, 2025 08:50:35.000000000 UTC  
**Subject:** Trump secretaries start hitting the Hill  
**To:** jperperian@cityofmelrose.org <jperperian@cityofmelrose.org>

May 06, 2025

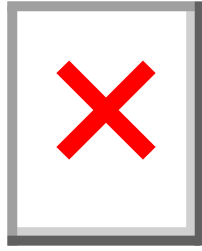
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BY MIA MCCARTHY, LISA KASHINSKY AND BEN LEONARD

**IN TODAY'S EDITION:**

- Dems to grill Trump secretaries over budget
- SALT, D.C. funding fix updates
- Thune eyes crypto bill changes to appease Dems



Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem is among President Donald Trump's agency heads who will face funding scrutiny on the Hill today. | Susan Walsh

**Get ready for fireworks:** Democratic appropriators infuriated by the Trump administration's disregard for Congress' power of the purse are getting their first chance to cross examine the secretaries who have aided the president's slashing.

**Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent**, DHS Secretary **Kristi Noem** and Agriculture Secretary **Brooke Rollins** are hitting the Hill today to testify on their portions of President **Donald Trump**'s fiscal 2026 budget request. VA Secretary **Doug Collins** is also likely to face sharp budget questions when he appears before Senate Veterans' Affairs today.

**Democrats will push hard for answers** on why Trump is unilaterally cutting congressionally approved funding — and why he's proposing another \$163 billion in nondefense cuts going forward.

**“Appropriations laws are not suggestions,”** Rep. **Lauren Underwood**, the top Democrat on the Homeland Security subcommittee, told Lisa of the warning she’ll deliver to Noem. Here’s where things could get testy today:

**The looming X-date:** Expect lawmakers to press Bessent on when the Treasury Department believes Congress will have to act on the debt limit (unless Treasury drops that news before his 10 a.m. hearing). Bessent and House Republicans will need Democrats’ support to raise the debt limit if the X-date comes before the GOP can pass its party-line megabill.

**Noem will have to defend** Trump’s immigration policies: The president’s budget called for a 65 percent increase in funding for border security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

**Noem is almost certain** to face scrutiny over disaster aid, with the Trump administration on track to [run out of cash for FEMA this summer](#), as our Jennifer Scholtes reports. The secretary [plans to tell lawmakers](#) that the agency “needs to be both reformed and reimaged,” while privately telling officials she wants [FEMA to end its role in funding long-term rebuilding efforts](#) and helping communities with disaster preparation.

**But Congress will want to know** whether the Trump administration has plans to fund existing disaster aid needs — and when it plans to make a formal request, kicking off what could be a contentious funding fight.

**On the Senate side,** expect Rollins to get questions on funding freezes and tariffs’ impact on U.S. farmers. Meanwhile, Democrats are expected to slam Collins over plans to cut tens of thousands of jobs at the VA. All in all, expect a preview of what other Cabinet secretaries will face as they parade up to the Hill for their budget hearings in the coming weeks.

**GOOD TUESDAY MORNING.** We heard rumors a mini Starbucks would be replacing the seating area across from Capitol Market. House Administration confirmed to us that’s not true — it’s going to be a 24/7 self-service “micro store” like the one in Longworth.

Follow our live coverage at the Inside Congress blog at [politico.com/congress](https://www.politico.com/congress) and email your Inside Congress scribes at [mmccarthy@politico.com](mailto:mmccarthy@politico.com), [lkashinsky@politico.com](mailto:lkashinsky@politico.com) and [bleonard@politico.com](mailto:bleonard@politico.com).

## THE SKED

The **House** is in session and will take a procedural vote on a bill renaming the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America, and on a bill prohibiting DHS funds from being used for Confucius Institutes at 1:30 p.m.

— **Republicans** and **Democrats** will hold their separate weekly conference meetings at 9 a.m.

— **GOP leaders** will hold their post-meeting news conference at 10 a.m.

— **Appropriations** will hear testimony from Bessent and Noem at 10 a.m.

— **Agriculture** will have a joint hearing with **Financial Services** on the future of digital assets at 10 a.m.

— **Judiciary** will have a hearing examining the Federal Bureau of Prisons at 10 a.m.

— **Education and Workforce** will have a hearing on a federal workers compensation program at 10:15 a.m.

— **Natural Resources** will mark up its portion of the GOP party-line bill at 10:15 a.m.

— **Financial Services Ranking Member Maxine Waters** and committee Democrats will hear testimony on a path forward for cryptocurrency legislation at 10:30 a.m.

— **Democratic leaders** will hold their post-meeting news conference at 10:45 a.m.

— **House Administration** will have a hearing on Library of Congress operations at 2 p.m.

— **Armed Services** will have a hearing on military readiness for FY 2026 at 3 p.m.

The **Senate** is in session and will vote to undo four Biden-era regulations, including on tire manufacturing emissions and bank mergers. The votes will

be at 11:30 a.m., 2 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. The **Senate** will also vote on **Frank Bisignano**'s nomination to be commissioner of Social Security Administration during the 2 p.m. vote.

— **Armed Services** will have a hearing to examine the DOD nominations of **Anthony Tata** to be under secretary for personnel and readiness and **Katherine Sutton** to be an assistant secretary at 9:30 a.m.

— **Banking** will vote on multiple nominations: **Andrew Hughes** to be deputy HUD secretary; **David Woll** to be general counsel at HUD; **Michelle Bowman** to be vice chairman for supervision of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System; **John Hurley** to be under secretary for terrorism and financial crimes at the Treasury Department; **David Fogel** to be assistant secretary and director general of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service and **Landon Heid** to be an assistant secretary at the Commerce Department at 9:45 a.m.

— **Finance** will have a hearing on **James O'Neill**'s nomination to be deputy secretary and **Gary Andres** to be an assistant secretary at HHS at 10 a.m.

— **Commerce** will have a hearing on digital platforms changing the way Americans watch sports including testimony from NBA, MLB and NHL executives at 10 a.m.

— **Appropriations** will have a hearing on FY 2026 budget requests for the Library of Congress at 10 a.m. and USDA with testimony from Rollins at 10:30 a.m.

— **Veterans Affairs** will have a hearing featuring testimony from Collins at 11:30 a.m.

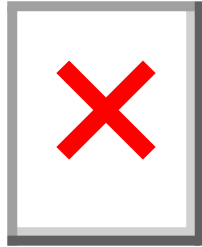
— **Republican** and **Democratic** senators will have separate weekly conference lunches at 12:45 p.m.

— **Intel** will have a closed door briefing at 2:30 p.m.

**The rest of the week:** The House will continue consideration of the Gulf of America and DHS funding bills. The Senate will continue working through

nominations and undoing Biden-era rules. Senate Democrats will have their annual issues conference on Wednesday.

## THE LEADERSHIP SUITE



Republicans are getting closer to lifting the SALT deduction cap, but megabill hangups remain for Speaker Mike Johnson. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

### ***Republicans pour SALT on their megabill wounds***

Blue-state Republicans seem poised to finally win their battle to raise the cap on the state and local tax deduction — they just have to stop fighting over the details to let GOP leaders set a markup, our Benjamin Guggenheim and Meredith Lee Hill [report on POLITICO Pro this morning](#). One of the biggest sticking points is whether there should be an income cap on qualifying for the deduction, which is particularly valuable to homeowners in areas with high property taxes. Rep. **Nicole Malliotakis** has suggested that SALT relief should target people making less than \$400,000 to \$500,000, but other Republicans like Rep. **Nick LaLota** oppose that.

Key Republicans, including some in **Mike Johnson's** leadership circle, support the income cap, though the speaker has not publicly backed it. Johnson said Monday an agreement on SALT is "very close."

### ***Johnson promises DC funding fix***

Johnson said Monday the [House will vote "as quickly as possible"](#) on fixing D.C.'s \$1 billion funding shortfall. But he also suggested it's taking a back seat to resolving Republicans' megabill problems. "Reconciliation has taken all of our energy right now, but we're not delaying this for some political purpose or any intentionality," Johnson told reporters Monday. "It's just a matter of schedule."

House Oversight Chair **James Comer**, whose panel has jurisdiction over Washington affairs, said Monday he's been pressing colleagues to rectify the city's funding issue that could cause dramatic reductions in services.

### ***AOC passes on Oversight ranker***

Rep. **Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** [won't seek the top Democratic slot on House Oversight](#) because the "underlying dynamics in the caucus have not shifted with respect to seniority as much as I think would be necessary" to win, the 35-year-old told reporters Monday. That leaves likely contenders Rep. **Stephen Lynch**, 70, who's filling in for Rep. **Gerry Connolly** on the dais, and Rep. **Jasmine Crockett**, 44, who's talking to colleagues about a bid. Expect others to jump in.

### ***Thune eyes crypto bill changes***

Senate Majority Leader **John Thune** said Monday he is [open to amending landmark cryptocurrency legislation](#) that GOP leaders hope to pass in the coming weeks. This comes as Republicans scramble to negotiate changes that would win over enough Democrats to overcome a filibuster, our Jasper Goodman, Jordain Carney and Katherine Tully-McManus report.

"Changes can be made on the floor for sure," Thune told reporters, adding he's "waiting to see what it is [Democrats] are asking for." Democratic Sen. **Ruben Gallego** said he's hoping to reach a deal ahead of a procedural vote expected Thursday. GOP Sen. **Rand Paul** is undecided.

## ***Thune's Georgia primary pickle***

Thune's also going to have to decide whether to intervene in what could be a crowded GOP primary to take on Democratic Sen. **Jon Ossoff** in Georgia now that Gov. **Brian Kemp** isn't running, [as our Adam Wren scooped](#). "We haven't crossed that bridge yet," Thune told Jordain.

He could have plenty of ambitious House Republicans to choose from: Rep. **Marjorie Taylor Greene** has been actively flirting with a bid. Rep. **Buddy Carter** [didn't rule it out](#) Monday. Reps. **Mike Collins** and **Rich McCormick** both want to talk to Trump about it; the latter told Meredith that people close to the administration have encouraged him to run. Trump is interested in Rep. **Brian Jack** running, a person familiar with the conversations told Jordain.

Democrats are salivating over the possibility of a Greene bid. But Thune and other GOP senators are downplaying any jitters about the MAGA firebrand mounting a campaign — and about Republicans' prospects for retaining their Senate majority after losing another star recruit. "Anytime you go through a cycle, you have recruiting wins, you have recruiting losses," past NRSC Chair Sen. **Steve Daines** told Lisa. "But there's more people to recruit in Georgia."

## ***Schumer shuts down Fetterman concerns***

Senate Minority Leader **Chuck Schumer** [defended Sen. John Fetterman](#) as "an excellent legislator" who "does a great job" in response to a bombshell New York Magazine piece in which staffers raised concerns with the Pennsylvania Democrat's mental and physical health. Fetterman was one of several senators who did not cast a vote Monday.

## **POLICY RUNDOWN**

**DEAR HEALTH INSURERS** — The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is suggesting there could soon be a new system for how Congress funds payments to insurers through the Affordable Care Act. It would reduce out-of-pocket costs for patients while also possibly delivering key savings that Republicans desperately need to offset their megabill.

The agency is out with [a new notice](#) to insurers, telling them to prepare for the possibility that Congress might endorse a policy that would offer subsidies to insurers that would, in turn, help reduce premiums and co-pays for patients. Trump ended this practice in his first administration, saying it constituted a bailout to the insurance industry. But the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated at that time that ending the payments would cost [hundreds of billions of dollars](#) over a decade.

**NEW MEDICAID DATA DROPS —** A new study from the National Bureau of Economic Research could put Republicans further on the defensive as they eye cuts for Medicaid expansion states to help finance their party-line package. The nonprofit used [a dataset of 37 million people](#) to determine that states that expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act increased enrollment by 12 percentage points.

It also found the program's broader availability reduced mortality among low-income adults by 2.5 percent, with "a 21 percent reduction in the mortality hazard of new enrollees." Expect Democrats to seize on this statistic as they try to protect the program from GOP slashing.

**CRUZ TAKES ON SPORTS STREAMING —** Senate Commerce is meeting today to discuss how the rise in digital platforms is changing the way Americans watch sports. "Catching your favorite team on TV shouldn't feel like solving a puzzle," said Chair **Ted Cruz**. "Games that used to be free or easy to find are now scattered across pricey apps and exclusive deals." Executives from the NBA, MLB and NHL are all scheduled to testify. According to Cruz, the NFL declined to send a representative.

#### ***Best of POLITICO Pro and E&E:***

- **E&E:** [Forest Service official to testify on updated wildfire bill](#)
- **Pro Agriculture:** [Senate Agriculture Committee advances two senior USDA nominees](#)
- **Pro Financial Services:** [Senate to take up rollback of OCC bank merger rule](#)

#### **CAMPAIGN STOP**

**DEM DOMINOES IN ILLINOIS —** Rep. **Robin Kelly** is [jumping into the race](#) to replace retiring Sen. **Dick Durbin**. Rep. **Raja Krishnamoorthi** is

also expected to announce a bid, and Rep. **Lauren Underwood** continues to eye the seat, our Shia Kapos reports this morning.

Rep. **Jan Schakowsky** made her [retirement plans official](#) Monday, after our Nicholas Wu and Shia [scooped her intentions](#) last month. Progressive influencer **Kat Abughazaleh** is already running for the seat.

## THE BEST OF THE REST

[Congress's Fight Over Trump's Agenda Runs Through Alaska](#) from Catie Edmondson at The New York Times

[Swing-Seat Democrat Proposes Younger, Riskier Party to Beat GOP](#), from Maeve Sheehy at Bloomberg Government

[‘He Didn’t Save My Life’: Veterans Question Rep. Cory Mills’ Bronze Star](#), from Reese Gorman and John T. Seward at NOTUS

## JOB BOARD

**Chris Esparza** is now senior adviser for Agriculture Secretary **Brooke Rollins**. He previously was a professional staff member on the House Appropriations Commerce-Justice-Science Subcommittee.

**Antoine Givens** is now comms director for Rep. **Angie Craig**’s Minnesota Senate campaign. He previously was deputy comms director on then-Rep. **Elissa Slotkin**’s Michigan Senate campaign.

**Gabby Wiggins** is now press secretary for Sen. **Steve Daines**. She previously was deputy press secretary and is a **Ron DeSantis** alum.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Rep. **Anna Paulina Luna** ... former Sen. **Richard Shelby** (91) ... former Rep. **Eric Fingerhut** ... **Spencer Pederson** ... **McKinley Lewis** of the Senate Committee on Aging ... **Wendy Helgemo** ... **Kate Jaffee** of the Aspen Institute ... **Meghan Conklin** ... **Bill Dolbow** ... **Claire Mullican** ... **David Rogers** ... Granicus’ **Trevor Corning** ... **Sheena Mollineau** ... NBCUniversal’s **Tejasi Thatte** ... **Joe Nocera**

## TRIVIA

**MONDAY'S ANSWER:** Gregory Clark correctly answered that **Romualdo Pacheco** was the first Mexican American to serve in Congress.

**TODAY'S QUESTION, from Mia:** What member of Congress ran for the House on five different party tickets? What were those parties?

The first person to correctly guess gets a mention in the next edition of Inside Congress. Send your answers to [insidecongress@politico.com](mailto:insidecongress@politico.com).

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