

U.S. cost cuts are tall task for Musk

Trump asks two entrepreneurs to slim down government. It's not clear how they might achieve that.

BY JAMES RAINEY

President-elect Donald Trump has given two wealthy entrepreneurs a mission that has eluded many other occupants of the White House: Make the U.S. government smaller and more efficient.

No one knows much about how Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy plan to accomplish that task, only that they and the president they will serve want big reforms not beholden to precedent.

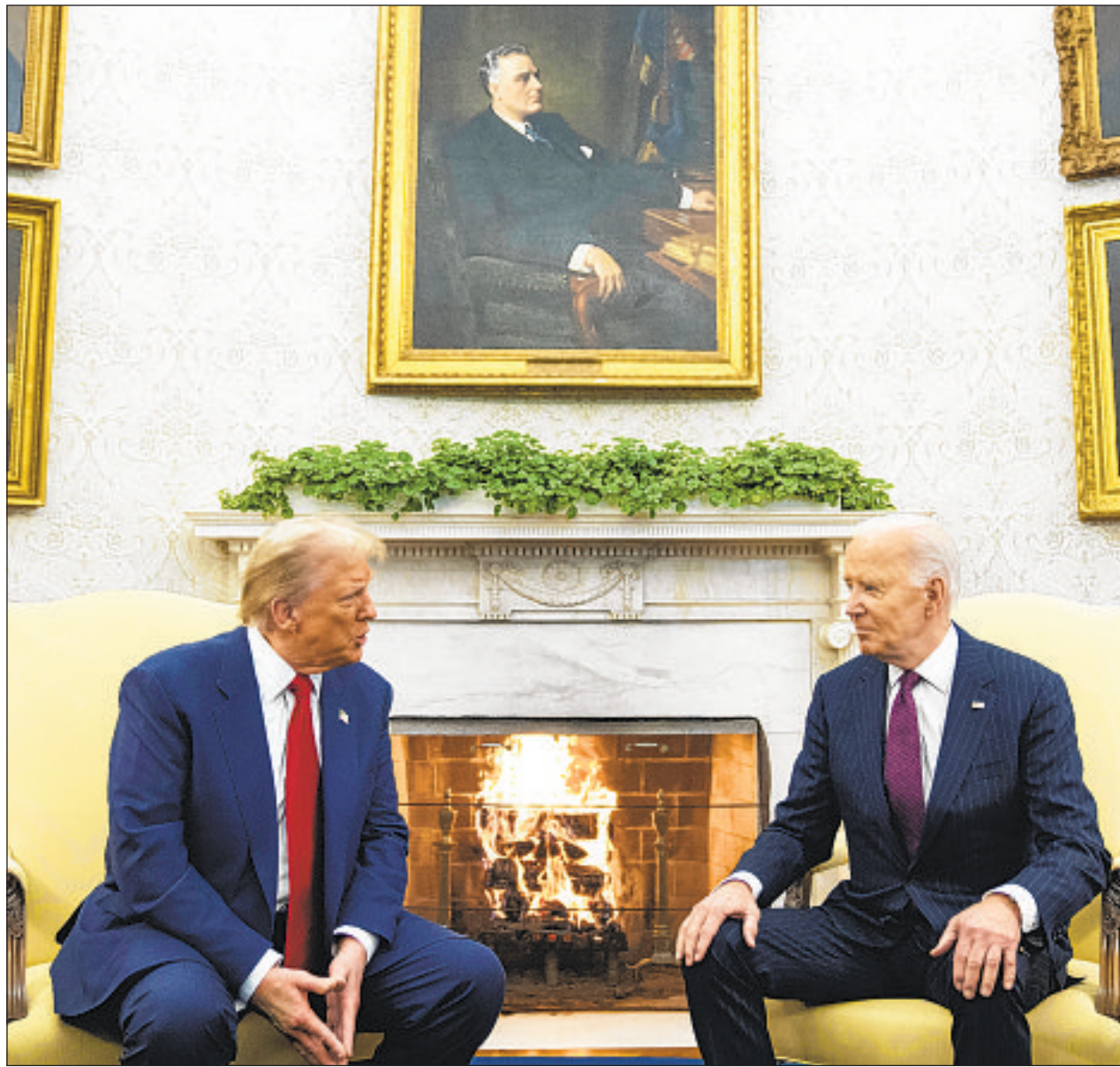
In naming the space and electric car tycoon and the healthcare entrepreneur to head a new Department of Government Efficiency, Trump said he expected them to drive "radical change," something like the Manhattan Project, the government initiative that created the atomic bomb during World War II.

"This will send shockwaves through the system, and anyone involved in Government waste, which is a lot of people!" Musk, the chief executive of Tesla and SpaceX, said in a statement. Ramaswamy said during his run for the Republican presidential nomination that he planned to advance a "radical dream" that would cut three-quarters of a U.S. government workforce that numbers about 2.2 million.

In his announcement Tuesday, Trump said he expected the "major cuts and new efficiencies in bloated agencies" to be put in place by July 4, 2026 — a deadline coinciding with the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The incoming president, who takes office Jan. 20, said the two businessmen — among his most vocal surrogates during the presidential campaign — will operate outside the federal bureaucracy.

But much about how Musk and Ramaswamy will proceed remains a mystery. They will be heading a department (whose DOGE acronym matches Musk's favored cryptocurrency) with no employees and no budget. It's unclear if their effort will be privately [See Musk, A5]



EVAN VUCCI Associated Press

PRESIDENT BIDEN welcomed President-elect Donald Trump to the White House on Wednesday in a revival of democratic norms after then-President Trump failed to meet with him after Biden's victory in 2020.

Trump returns to D.C., offers a preview

President-elect meets with Biden and names several Cabinet picks, laying the groundwork for his second term.

BY NOAH BIERMAN

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald Trump returned to the nation's capital Wednesday for the first time since winning election, meeting with congressional leaders, sitting in the Oval Office with President Biden and announcing a flurry of high-profile nominations for his Cabinet.

The visit to the White House and Capitol Hill offered a visual preview of Trump's emboldened second term, in which Trump-friendly Republicans are expected to have full control of Congress to carry out his wishes.

Republicans in the Senate selected a new leader Wednesday, John Thune of South Dakota, who has vowed to align the chamber more closely with Trump than his predecessor, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who occasionally bristled at Trump's attempts to bypass rules. Among Thune's promises: agreeing to Trump's demand to recess appointments to the Cabinet that would skirt the Senate confirmation process.

Trump's newest nominations include Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida for secretary of State; Rep. Matt Gaetz, also of Florida, for attorney general; and former Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii for director of national intelligence.

Gaetz has long been regarded as a fringe member of the Republican Party, who helped oust former House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Bakersfield) and has himself been under investigation by the Department of Justice, which he is now being asked to lead.

Though the department did not charge him, Gaetz was until Wednesday under a House Ethics Committee [See Transition, A5]

Education system braces for GOP plans

California's schools, colleges and universities are girding for potentially sweeping changes under a new Trump administration, based on his starkly different vision for education gleaned from campaign pledges, the GOP platform and his past actions.

President-elect Donald Trump and conservative allies could reduce federal financial aid, privatize student loans and end student loan forgiveness.

They could revise, again, enforcement of the Title IX civil rights law to eliminate protections for LGBTQ+ students and strengthen rights for those accused of sexual misconduct. Teacher job protections in K-12 schools could come under scrutiny, and Head Start preschools could be threatened.

In what would be a blow to the research prowess of the University of California, a Trump White House could reduce federal funding in areas of ideological disdain — climate change, for instance — or tie funding to political goals such as reining in teaching about race. International and undocumented students could be targets.

"Under Trump, higher education in the US will face a difficult future, featuring an aggressive [See Education, A10]

Trump's win could affect financial aid, research funding and protections for LGBTQ+, undocumented students

BY JAWEED KALEEM, TERESA WATANABE AND JENNY GOLD



GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

THE UC SYSTEM is the largest recipient of federally sponsored research among U.S. higher education institutions. Above, UCLA.



A TRUCK carrying lithium-ion batteries that crashed and caught fire on Interstate 15 near Baker, Calif., in July left drivers trapped for hours in 109-degree heat.

Lithium-ion batteries causing fires, dangers on freeways in state

Recent blazes have focused attention and fears on the power sources. Just how dangerous are they?

BY CLARA HARTER

For more than two days, a vital shipping passageway in the Port of Los Angeles was shut down, and the cause was surprising to some. A big rig overturned, sparking a fierce lithium-ion battery blaze that spewed toxic gases, snarled port traffic and resulted in what one official said was massive economic losses from delayed shipments.

The incident focused new attention, and concern, on the technology helping drive the state's clean energy transition.

But how dangerous are these batteries? Should you be scared of your e-bike, vape pen or electric car? Here is what you need to know.

These batteries are generally safe with proper care and storage, said Robert Rezende, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department battalion chief and the region's first lithium-ion battery safety coordinator.

But there is serious re- [See Batteries, A7]

Mexico faces wave of violence

Newly inaugurated President Sheinbaum is pressed on what she plans to do about the problem. **WORLD, A3**

Gay marriage advocate dies

Conservative attorney Theodore B. Olson, who also served under George W. Bush, was 84. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Chargers, Rams assess the future

L.A.'s NFL teams are in playoff conversation, but season will come into focus in about a month. **SPORTS, B10**

Weather

Mostly sunny. L.A. Basin: 72/51. **B6**

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