

The Washington Post

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington.

SU V1 V2 V3 V4



Rain 54/46 • Tomorrow: Mostly cloudy, windy 59/46 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2024 • \$3

Thune to lead GOP's Senate majority

McConnell ally pledges to back Trump as incoming president demands fealty

BY LIZ GOODWIN, DYLAN WELLS AND MARIANNE LEVINE

Senate Republicans on Wednesday chose Sen. John Thune of South Dakota to be their new leader, rejecting an outside pressure campaign from Donald Trump's allies to break with the establishment in the secret-ballot election.

Thune, a close ally of retiring leader Mitch McConnell (Kentucky), has been critical of Trump in the past but has worked to repair that relationship in recent months. He reassured senators in a closed-door meeting Tuesday that he would work hand in glove with the new administration and would not butt heads with Trump even on issues such as continuing U.S. aid for Ukraine, which Trump opposes, senators said.

The incoming leader said Wednesday that he was "extremely honored" to have the support of his colleagues and planned to push Trump's priorities after the "mandate election" he won.

"We are excited to reclaim the majority and to get work with our colleagues in the House to enact President Trump's agenda," Thune said after the election.

With Republicans on the brink of a governing trifecta in Washington, Trump looms larger than ever on Capitol Hill. The president-elect has made it clear he expects deference from the Senate but did not endorse in the race even as many of his allies backed Sen. Rick Scott (Florida). The incoming vice president, SEE SENATE ON A8

Trump tests clout with surprise picks



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST

President Joe Biden meets with President-elect Donald Trump on Wednesday at the White House, where they spoke for about two hours.

Contentious words aside, Biden welcomes Trump to White House

BY MATT VISER, ISAAC ARNSDORF AND MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR

President Joe Biden and President-elect Donald Trump met face to face on Wednesday morning in the Oval Office, an extraordinary moment for two men who have repeatedly expressed public disdain for each other as they go through one of the most unusual transfers of power in American history.

The two met just after 11 a.m., their first extended meeting since

the fumbling debate performance that drove Biden out of the race.

For Trump, it marked a triumphant return to an office where he sat for four years, a week after decisively winning an election by relentlessly attacking Biden's mental capacity and then by casting the Biden administration as a disaster.

"Congratulations," Biden said at the start of the meeting, during the brief time reporters were in the room. He added that he

SEE TRUMP ON A8

UPHILL FIGHTS LOOM FOR CONFIRMATIONS

Dares GOP to defy him on Gaetz, Gabbard nods

BY ISAAC ARNSDORF AND JOSH DAWSEY

Donald Trump named Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Florida), a fierce ally and a divisive figure who was investigated for sex trafficking but not criminally charged, as his pick for attorney general, the nation's top law enforcement job, on Wednesday.

Minutes earlier, the president-elect had announced that he would tap former congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii, who has no direct experience in intelligence, as his director of national intelligence.

Gabbard and Gaetz join Trump's pick to lead the Pentagon, Pete Hegseth, a Fox News weekend co-host who lobbied Trump to pardon military service members accused of war crimes, as choices who would be certain to face near universal opposition from Democrats and have some Republicans expressing concern.

The president-elect's first handful of picks went to people broadly acceptable to his Republican coalition, including his co-campaign manager Susie Wiles as White House chief of staff, Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Florida) as secretary of state and Rep. Mike Waltz (R-Florida) as national security adviser.

But Trump's decision to choose Gabbard, Gaetz and Hegseth stunned senators and some of his own advisers, setting up multiple uphill confirmation battles that will test the incoming president's political clout in the Senate, where his party is expected to hold 53 seats.

Gaetz, who has alienated many members of his own party, had been facing a House ethics probe over allegations of sexual misconduct.

SEE NOMINATIONS ON A9

Familiar feeling: Trump's return raises old anxieties in D.C. C1

Trump's incoming Cabinet picks so far



Sen. Marco Rubio
State



Pete Hegseth
Defense



Rep. Matt Gaetz
Justice



Gov. Kristi Noem
Homeland Security



John Ratcliffe
Central Intelligence Agency



Tulsi Gabbard
National Intelligence



Lee Zeldin
Environmental Protection Agency



Rep. Elise Stefanik
United Nations ambassador

Pentagon: The nation's top general is thrust into a brewing storm. A4

Tech turnabout: A newly practical Silicon Valley praises Trump. A16

Trump could try to bypass Congress on spending cuts

BY JEFF STEIN, ELIZABETH DWOSKIN, CAT ZAKRZEWSKI AND JACOB BOGAGE

President-elect Donald Trump's aides are readying unconventional strategies to implement at least some recommendations from a new government spending commission with or without congressional approval, according to two people with knowledge of the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to reflect private deliberations.

On Tuesday, Trump announced that tech billionaire Elon Musk and former GOP presidential hopeful Vivek Ramaswamy would jointly lead a "Department of Government Efficiency" that would produce recommendations on overhauling U.S. agencies — an effort that people in Musk's orbit say would aim to apply slash-and-burn business ideologies to the U.S. government. The commission will officially operate outside of the administration but work with the White House budget office, Trump said.

Although changes to government spending typically require

SEE SPENDING ON A9

'First buddy': Billionaire emerges as ubiquitous figure in transition. A2



CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

Theodore B. Olson, 1940-2024

Mr. Olson, a leading conservative lawyer who helped George W. Bush win the presidency, shocked many when he worked to overturn a ban on same-sex marriage. Obituary, A12

GOP takes House, completing sweep

BY MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR

Republicans won control of the House of Representatives on Wednesday, according to a projection by the Associated Press, handing the party a sweep and ushering in a new era in Washington.

With the presidency, the Senate and the House in hand, the Republican Party has a powerful governing trifecta. President-elect Donald Trump and his close ally, Speaker Mike Johnson (R-Louisiana), have promised an overhaul of the federal government and profound changes to domestic and foreign policy.

"We're going to raise an American First banner above this place,"

Johnson said, gesturing to the Capitol dome during a news conference earlier this week.

While the House GOP agenda has yet to be released, Republican leaders said they would prioritize passing a robust border security bill before working with the Senate to quickly reauthorize Trump's 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Johnson said House Republicans have a mandate to quickly

implement Trump's policies, such as significantly scaling back environmental regulations and ending what he called "wokeness and radical gender ideology."

The biggest challenge to that vision may come from within the party itself. House Republicans will probably enter the 119th Congress with a slim majority. Johnson will have to navigate pressure from Trump to find votes among moderate Republicans who may not support his more unorthodox policies, as well as hard-liners who revolt when policies are not conservative enough.

Trump has in recent days narrowed the Republican majority,

SEE HOUSE ON A2

Netanyahu's 'gift': A cease-fire plan

BY SHIRA RUBIN, SUZAN HAIDAMOUS AND JOHN HUDSON

TEL AVIV — A close aide to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told Donald Trump and Jared Kushner this week that Israel is rushing to advance a cease-fire deal in Lebanon, according to three current and former Israeli officials briefed on the meeting, with the aim of delivering an early foreign policy win to the president-elect.

Ron Dermer, Netanyahu's minister of strategic affairs, made Mar-a-Lago the first stop on his U.S. tour Sunday before traveling

to the White House to update Biden administration officials on the state of Lebanon talks, a sign of how swiftly America's political center of gravity has shifted after Trump's electoral victory.

"There is an understanding that Israel would gift something to Trump ... that in January there will be an understanding about Lebanon," an Israeli official said.

With Lebanon proposal, Israel hopes Trump can claim foreign policy win

Like others in this article, the official spoke to The Washington Post on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive conversations.

Dermer's spokesman told The Post that he discussed a wide range of issues during his trip but did not elaborate. Netanyahu's office and a spokesperson for Trump declined to comment. Kushner's spokesperson did not reply to a request for comment.

Trump has said he wants to bring an end to the wars in the Middle East, but he also told Netanyahu in a call last month to "do what you have to do" against

SEE ISRAEL ON A14

IN THE NEWS

Climate analysis European weather monitors say they are "virtually certain" that 2024 will become the hottest year on record. A10

Community of criers Fans of the TikTok account Crying in D.C. finally meet in person at the Southwest Library, judged to be one of the city's best spots to shed a tear. B1

THE NATION Democrats are racing to confirm Biden's judicial nominees before the Senate flips. A3
A CIA official was charged in the leak of classified documents about Israel. A6

THE WORLD Ukraine's European allies increasingly consider a once-taboo "land-for-peace" deal. A13
Vigilantes and police in Haiti killed two patients in an ambulance, an aid group said. A14

THE ECONOMY Inflation rose modestly, by 2.6 percent, in October compared with a year earlier. A17
The White House endorsed a land-swap deal that could pave the way for a controversial road, debated for decades, through a wildlife refuge in southwest Alaska. A18

THE REGION Truancy and chronic absenteeism in D.C. public schools dropped to their lowest levels since the pandemic. B1
A Virginia House committee will consider constitutional amendments on reproductive, voting and marriage rights. B1

OBITUARIES Janelle Goetcheus, a physician who became a healer to homeless residents in the District, was 84. B1

LOCAL LIVING Finicky houseplants can put your green thumb to the test, but don't let a little extra work scare you away.

BUSINESS NEWS.....A16
COMICS.....C7
OBITUARIES.....B4
OPINION PAGES.....A19
TELEVISION.....C6
WORLD NEWS.....A13

CONTENT © 2024
The Washington Post
Year 147, No. 54035

