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AHMAD GHARABLI AFP/Getty Images

PEOPLE walk in the compound at the Dome of the Rock mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem on Thursday.

Trump digs in, appoints Miller as chief of staff

The choice reinforces the mass deportation agenda, a big factor in GOP's midterm rout.

BY KEVIN RECTOR, MICHAEL WILNER AND JUSTINE MCDANIEL

WASHINGTON — President Trump on Friday named Stephen Miller to replace Susie Wiles as White House chief of staff, elevating one of his most controversial advisors just days after Republicans suffered historic losses in the midterm elections.

The appointment signaled Trump would double down on an agenda that has alienated broad swaths of voters, including Latinos, who shifted away from the GOP in record numbers Tuesday following a campaign of aggressive immigration enforcement spearheaded by Miller.

Wiles had been seen as a relatively moderate voice within Trump's orbit. But Miller, the deputy chief of staff and a native of Los Angeles, has been the architect of Trump's most hard-line policies since the outset of the president's political career, advocating a push for mass deportations that sent fear throughout immigrant communities nationwide.

"President Trump is the most transformative political leader in American History — and he has singlehandedly saved America from those who would destroy it," Miller said Friday on social media after the announcement.

"The mission now is more clear than ever: Fight with all of our soul to support our President and defend this magnificent Republic."

Trump told reporters that he chose Miller for the role because he's a "great manager."

"Stephen's been with me from the beginning," Trump said. "He gets it. Very good politically."

But across party lines in Washington, elected officials and pundits wondered aloud what the president's political strategy might be in picking Miller, whose policy prescriptions helped lead to the worst election rout for Republicans since the Watergate era.

Democrats had hoped their historic victories would be sufficient to sour the

[See **Miller,** A7]



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN Associated Press

POLICIES Stephen Miller has pushed helped lead to massive Republican losses in the midterm elections.

Arabs appear to be key in Israeli coalition

Palestinian parties are in the unlikely role of kingmakers after record election gains.

BY NABIH BULOS

BEIRUT — When Israeli President Isaac Herzog announces his choice for who can try to form a governing coalition on Sunday, he'll be making a pivotal decision in a contested election that many see as Israel's most fateful.

Before Herzog are two bitter rivals: longtime incumbent Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his right-wing Likud party versus Gadi Eisenkot, who leads the center-right Yashar party and once served as Netanyahu's military chief of staff.

As of Thursday, after days of consultations between Herzog and the parties that won a place in the 120-seat Knesset, Eisenkot appears to have the advantage. When no party prevails in the parliament, the president — an otherwise largely ceremonial figure — selects which party can lead in forming a government.

In last month's election, Eisenkot's opposition bloc, which includes several parties, gained 48 seats, and picked up 19 more after Arab-led parties said they will support him, for a total of 67. The Arab-led parties, which gained a record number of seats after unprecedented voter turnout by Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, are now in the unlikely position of kingmakers.

Netanyahu and his right-wing allies garnered 46 seats, Herzog said. United Torah Judaism, a party focusing on ultra-Orthodox Jews that wants to maintain a military service exemption for religious students, has traditionally supported Netanyahu, but has so far refused to support either candidate.

Until a coalition is formed, Netanyahu, who has served 19 years over three tenures as prime minister, remains the head of a caretaker government. If neither candidate succeeds in forming a government, another election must be held.

Eisenkot's numbers make clear that he should take the first stab at forming a government, Herzog said, but it was "not entirely clear" that Eisenkot will succeed given what Herzog called "the mutual vetoes between the blocs and within the blocs themselves."

Eisenkot must rely in large part on a fragile and

[See **Israel,** A4]

What path will L.A.'s DSA mayor take?

BY JENNY JARVIE

Six months after Zohran Mamdani took office as mayor of New York, he said that New Yorkers no longer had to imagine what life looks like if a socialist wins.

"What we've delivered for working people are the very things we were told were impossible," he declared, noting that his administration had offered free child care to 2-year-olds, given millions of dollars back to tenants with negligent landlords, fixed 165,000 potholes and brought low crime.

"That's what it looks like to have democratic socialism," he said.

Many Angelenos are wondering what to expect now that Nithya Raman has been elected the first democratic socialist mayor of Los Angeles. She will join a tiny but growing band of socialist city executives from New York to Seattle who are leading experiments to raise taxes on businesses and the richest residents to redistribute wealth and expand public housing, transit and child care.

It will take time to see how this current crop of socialist leaders fare. Most are decidedly pragmatic: One of their top priorities is to demonstrate everyday competence in the essential but mundane tasks of submitting balanced budgets and repaving streets.

"Mamdani doesn't go around saying, 'I want to nationalize the investment banks of New York City,' " said John Mollenkopf, professor emeritus of political science and sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center. "He says, 'I'm going to fill my 1,000th pothole of the day.' "

But socialist mayors have also experienced setbacks in enacting some of their more ambitious policies because they have limited power and face budget constraints, legal challenges and opposition from wealthy residents, businesses and even moderate Democrats.

As Raman

[See **DSA,** A9]

Mass transit a top priority

Raman pledged to focus on transportation issues

BY COLLEEN SHALBY

Public transit is expected to be a top priority for Los Angeles Mayor-elect Nithya Raman, an advocate for expanding bus lanes and making the city friendlier for bicycles — and who campaigned on getting the Los Angeles International Airport people mover back on track after years of squabbles, delays and cost overruns.

As mayor, Raman will oversee the city's transportation department and will have the power to appoint new members to the city's Airport Commission. What's more, she will have regional clout through L.A. Metro, the transportation agency that runs the county's light-rail and subway lines.

Raman will take over as chair of Metro's board of 13 voting members, a job now held by Mayor Karen Bass, whom Raman defeated for reelection this week. She will also get three appointees on the board, and can replace the current mayoral appointees — Councilmembers Katy Yaraslovsky and Imelda Padilla and community advocate Jaqueline Dupont-Walker — who all backed Bass in the election.

Metro needs millions of dollars to fund a massive bus network for the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. Raman said that she would push Los Angeles' congressional delegation to make this a key priority. In a statement to The Times ahead of the election, she said she will also prioritize Metro projects that "give the most benefits to the most riders and help make our network more useful" and plans to reinstate a project team in the mayor's office to eliminate city delays on major capital projects.

Transportation analysts believe Raman, who has a graduate degree in urban planning from MIT, will be more aggressive in addressing transit issues than Bass, whose background was in healthcare and community organizing.

"I do think we'll see a considerable amount of action on transit and multimodal transportation in the short run on a timeline that puts this work in the context of

[See **Transit,** A9]

Feds move to end disputed ballots case

DOJ had sought to sequester 20,000 votes of alleged 'likely noncitizens' in state.

BY KEVIN RECTOR AND BRITTNY MEJIA

The U.S. Justice Department moved Friday to voluntarily dismiss its lawsuit challenging the counting of 20,000 ballots in California, arguing the relief it sought is now impossible given Tuesday's midterm election has concluded.

The Justice Department had sought a court order requiring state and Los Angeles County election officials to set aside the ballots, which it alleged could be from noncitizen voters. U.S. District Judge David O. Carter and a three-judge panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals had both rejected that request, and the U.S. Supreme Court denied a Trump administration appeal to those lower court rulings — with no noted dissents.

Carter had ruled that the government's request was probably unconstitutional, since the Constitution gives states and Congress power over elections, not the executive, and probably ran afoul of federal law barring

[See **Ballots,** A14]

Moving LAX fliers ... with his poetry

L.A.'s poet laureate turns terminal anxiety into a moment to connect

By Maddie Connors

On a Wednesday morning in Terminal 1 at LAX, traveler Nikki Hexum found herself in tears. Crying, on its face, is not an unusual occurrence at LAX. The notorious airport is a tender spot for Angelenos and tourists. Nearby, a displeased lawyer squabbles about a case into his phone. Flight attendants whisk by in pressed uniforms. A delay is announced over a speaker.

Today, an unexpected brush with poetry brought Hexum to tears. She was about to board a flight to Nashville, where she would discuss AI regulation at a film festival for her job, when she stumbled upon Brian Sonia-Wallace, the poet laureate of Los Angeles, sitting at a 1940s-model Underwood typewriter writing custom poems for passing travelers. As Hexum told him about her trip, he began to type, the clacking of the keys echoing through the terminal. When he finished, he read the poem aloud. Hexum's eyes began to well.



CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

BRIAN Sonia-Wallace used his 1940s-model Underwood typewriter to write custom poems for travelers.

"I sat in something where there was discomfort, but at the end of it, it became something amazing," Hexum says. The encounter affirmed something for Hexum: the importance of spontaneous human interactions in a world where communication is increasingly relegated to AI. "I think we lost that ability to do that a lot," she says as she wipes her eyes.

Hexum was one of dozens of travelers who received a custom poem from Sonia-Wallace as they waited to board their flights. Some were traveling to funerals, weddings and family reunions that the poet laureate commemorated in a poem written in minutes. Even flight attendants confided in Sonia-Wallace about their love of travel, which he honored in a poem. Soon, a line of eager travelers began to form.

"We had a couple of criers

[See **Poet,** A14]

Becerra focuses on cost of living
The governor-elect says that he is already working with legislators to lower costs. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Jay Rockefeller is dead at 89
Last member of the political dynasty was a West Virginia governor and a U.S. senator. **NATION, A6**

Rams' Garrett will play Sunday
The two-time NFL defensive player of the year has sat out seven games with a knee injury. **SPORTS, B12**

Weather
Sunny and very warm. L.A. Basin: 85/62. **B8**

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