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Executive Insight Brief

March 28, 2025

Notable Headlines



- [Trump allies are starting to notice Hegseth's growing pile of mistakes](#)
- [Marco Rubio says 300 student visas have been revoked, including detentions at Tufts, Columbia and more](#)
- [HHS cuts 10,000 employees in major overhaul of health agencies](#)
- [Judge orders Trump administration to keep Signal records amid Yemen attack chat controversy](#)
- [Trump pulls Rep. Elise Stefanik's nomination to be U.N. ambassador](#)

View From The Hill

Lawmakers returned from recess this week with a long list of priorities, including negotiations between the House and Senate on competing visions of upcoming budget reconciliation moves. After a [meeting](#) at the White House with Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) and Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-ND), there appears to be consensus to add a debt-ceiling hike to whatever final agreement comes together. Make no mistake: getting the budget reconciliation over the finish line is critical to congressional republicans' efforts to enact President Trump's legislative agenda on issues related to border security, energy policy, defense, and taxes. Using this procedural vehicle allows the final legislation to pass the Senate with only a simple majority, meaning democrats would be unable to block it with a filibuster. There exists some daylight, however, between the House and Senate over whether the *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act* from Trump's first term should be made permanent and whether steep spending cuts can be made in other areas without adversely impacting Medicare and Medicaid.

The dominating story of the week involving a journalist inadvertently being added to a group message thread of several of the nation's top national security officials broke just in time to play out heavily on Capitol Hill, where the House and Senate Intelligence Committees were slated to hold annual hearings on worldwide threats to U.S. national security. At the hearings, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and Director of the Central Intelligence Agency John Ratcliffe [faced](#) intense grilling from democrats over the security and legal implications of the incident, in which top officials discussed U.S. plans to attack Houthi rebels in Yemen on the messaging application known as Signal. Gabbard and Ratcliffe largely deflected responsibility for the incident and were vague on providing answers to lawmakers' questions.

The Senate moved to [confirm](#) Martin Makary to lead the Food and Drug Administration, marking one of the Trump administration's less controversial nominees. The Senate also [confirmed](#) Jay Bhattacharya to lead the National Institutes of Health. Moving forward towards confirmation is Dr. Mehmet Oz, who [advanced](#) out of the Senate Finance Committee along party lines to lead the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

While being largely dismissive of the idea to impeach federal judges ruling against the Trump administration, Speaker Johnson did [express](#) a willingness for Congress to assert its powers over the federal courts, outlining authorities around funding and court structure.

Former Rep. Mia Love (R-UT), who became the first black republican elected to Congress [passed](#) away from cancer this week. Love was just forty-nine years old and penned a final [op-ed](#) calling on a divided country to come together to overcome bitter political differences.

Pentagon News

As the Pentagon gets underway in reducing their civilian workforce, Army Materiel Command (AMC) has started to play their part. According to Liz Miranda, executive deputy to the commanding general for Army Materiel Command, 2,500 civilians at the command have opted to participate in the service's deferred resignation program. This aligns with the Trump administration's goal of cutting 5% to 8% of the Pentagon's civilian workforce. It is expected that 2,500 positions will be eliminated within AMC as a result of the participation in the deferred resignation program. However, just because 2,500 positions are being eliminated they don't necessarily have to correlate to the positions the individuals held during their time at AMC. Miranda said due to the voluntary separation AMC "has the flexibility to identify which position they're going to eliminate."

As of March 18, about [21,000](#) Department of Defense (DoD) civilians have opted for voluntary buyouts and most have been accepted. Most, if not all, of those jobs will be eliminated before the end of the year. Although there has been litigation against the Trump administration's plan to "terminate probationary civilian employees" officials are not expecting their goal to be derailed. On the reductions at AMC, Lieutenant General Christopher Mohan, who is the deputy commanding general, said the civilian workforce reductions "will force us to rethink and reimagine the way that we do business." AMC is conducting an assessment to determine where cuts would need to be made to be in line with an Army request to "take additional cuts in the near future." The key question moving forward on these workforce reductions is one asked by Miranda, "Where can we absorb that 8% but still support the Army mission?" Striking the right balance between the Army and the Office of the Secretary of Defense will be key to resolving this issue.

While DoD trims its ranks, the FAA is gearing up to hire 2,000 air traffic controllers this year, underscoring the agency's urgent push to shore up staffing at the nation's airports. The hiring spree comes as aviation safety remains in the spotlight following the dramatic midair collision on January 29 between an American Airlines flight and a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter near Washington, D.C. [Testifying](#) before the aviation panel of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, Acting FAA Administrator Chris Rocheleau discussed the National Transportation and Safety Board's (NTSB) preliminary report on the investigation into the crash.

Rocheleau was joined by Jennifer Homendy, Chairman of the NTSB, and Brigadier General Matthew Braman, Director of Army Aviation for the U.S. Army. Braman testified that Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B)-Out transponders are required by the FAA, except in cases of sensitive operations; the Army is investigating whether this policy was appropriately applied in the crash. Braman also testified that the NTSB's preliminary report recommendations would not negatively affect Army helicopter operations, and stated that the Army and other military services with helicopter operations in the region will participate in a working group led by the FAA to develop a new helicopter route to replace the legacy route 4 that was involved in the crash. With a larger controller workforce and smarter route planning, officials hope to see real improvements in aviation safety and efficiency.

Next Week's Hearings

Armed Services Committee:

House:

- 4/1, 10:00 AM - U.S. Military Posture and National Security Challenges in North and South America
- 4/2, 3:30 PM - Small UAS and Counter-Small UAS: Gaps, Requirements, and Projected Capabilities.

Senate:

- 4/1, 9:30 AM - Hearings to examine the nomination of Lieutenant General John D. Caine (Retired), to be general and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defense.
- 4/3, 9:30 PM - Hearings to examine the posture of the United States European Command and United States Africa Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program

Appropriations Committee:

House:

- 4/1, 8:30 AM - National Security and Department of State (Member Day)
- 4/2, 10:00 AM - Budget Hearing - U.S. House of Representatives
- 4/2, 10:00 AM - National Security and Department of State (Outside Witness Day)

Senate: NONE

Homeland Security Committee:

House:

- 4/1, 10:00 AM - Cybersecurity is Local, Too: Assessing the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program
- 4/1 2:00 PM - Exploring the Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems Across the DHS Enterprise

Senate:

- 4/3, 9:30 AM - Nominations



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