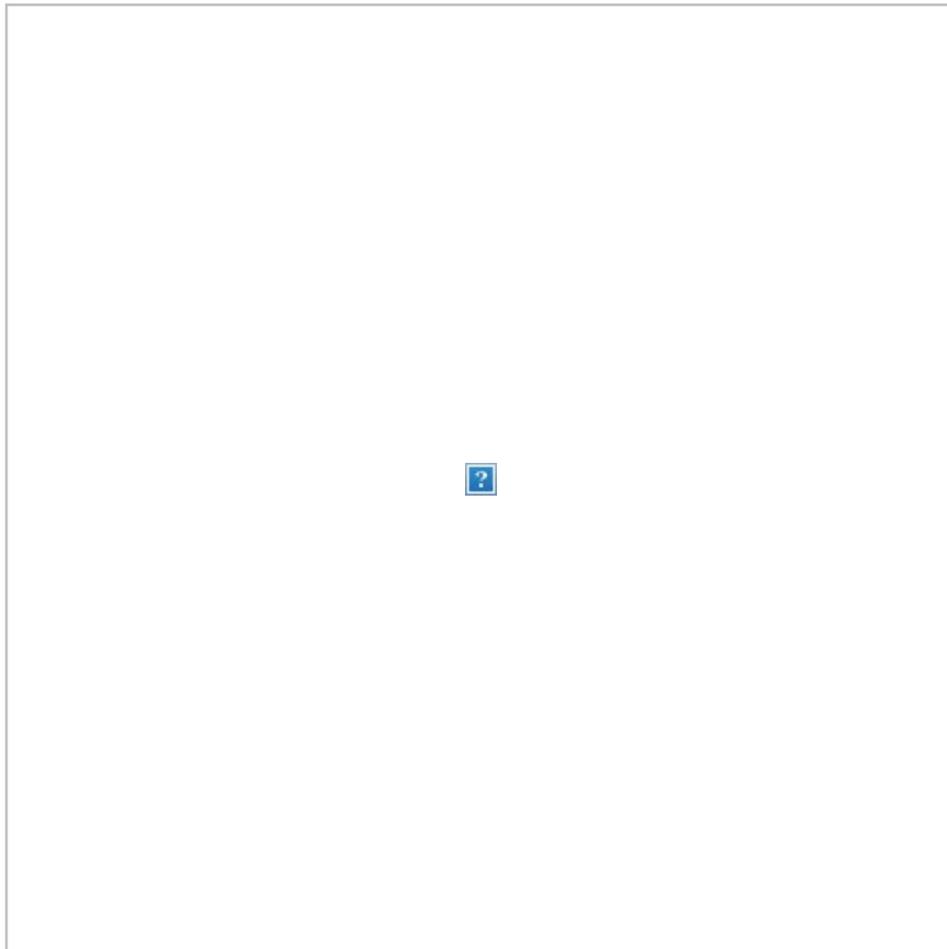
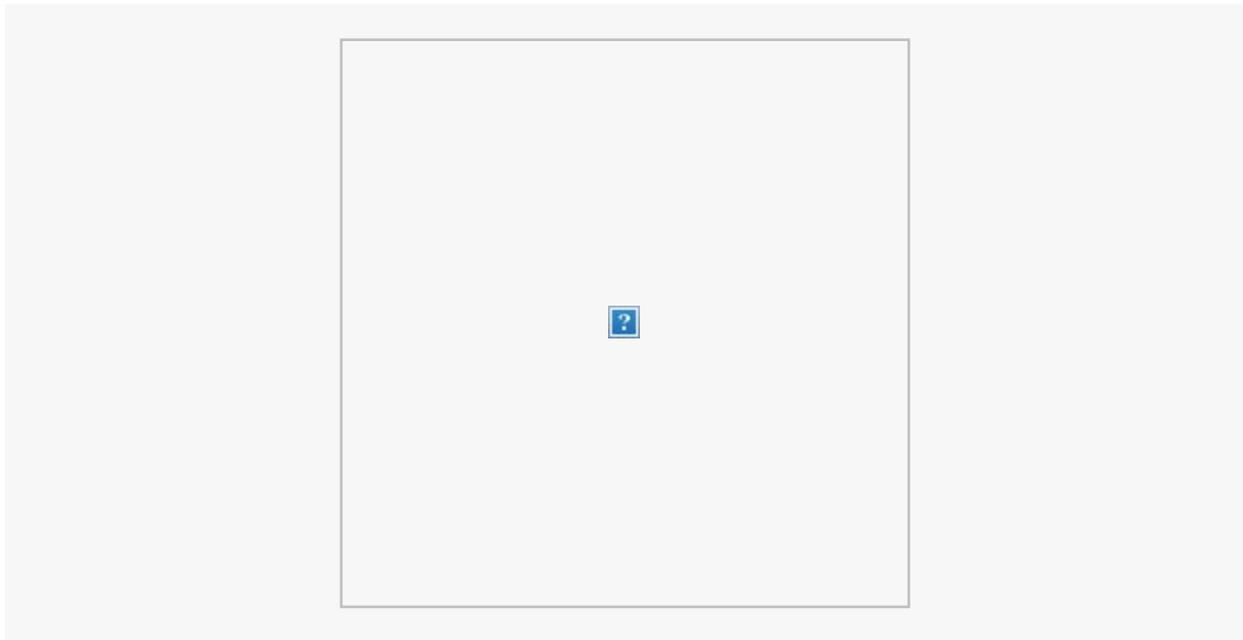


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Subject: [EXTERNAL] Executive Insight Brief
Date: Friday, May 3, 2024 8:02:54 AM



May 3, 2024

Headlines - Aerospace & Defense - Budget & Economy - Advanced Tech - Military Installations & Communities - Homeland Security - Transportation & Infrastructure - Biotech & Healthcare - Climate & Development

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Notable Headlines

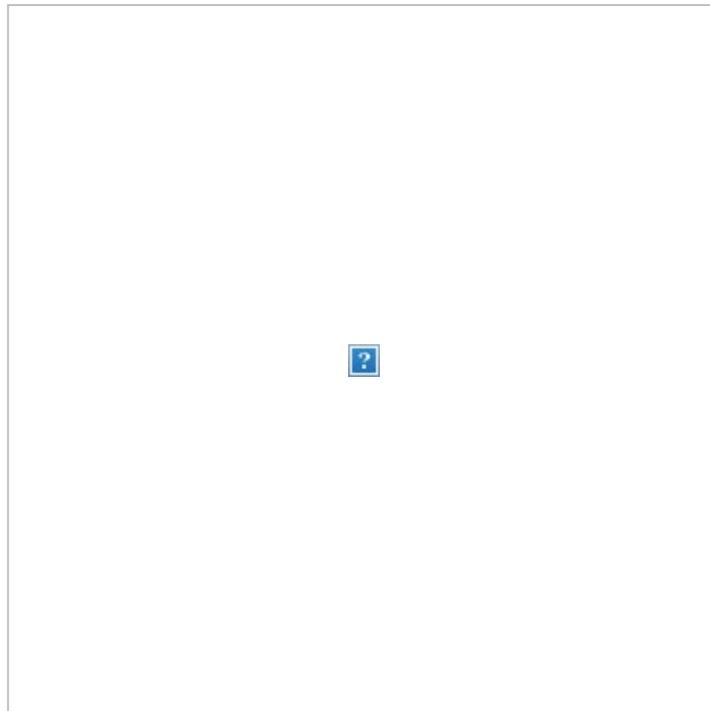
- [Why the Senate GOP is downplaying the chances of a red wave](#)
- [Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs signs repeal of 1864 abortion ban](#)
- [Whistleblower Joshua Dean, who raised concerns about Boeing jets, dies at 45](#)
- [Alarm in Israel at reports of possible ICC legal action over Gaza](#)
- [US military acknowledges errant drone strike last year killed a civilian, not an al-Qaeda leader](#)

Worth reading:

[General Brown Opening Statement HASC Budget Request Hearing](#)

[Sec. Austin Opening Statement HASC Budget Request Hearing](#)

View From The Hill



With widespread unrest on college campuses across the United States, the House overwhelmingly [passed](#) the *Antisemitism Awareness Act* this week, 320-91. The bill requires the Department of Education to use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism. While the bill passed by a considerable margin, some Members on both sides of the aisle opposed the measure out of first amendment

concerns. A group of Republican Members also [visited](#) George Washington University's campus this week, where DC's Metropolitan Police Department have rebuffed requests from university leadership to remove a student protest encampment. The House Committee on Oversight and Reform, which has jurisdiction over the District of Columbia, announced a hearing next week on the issue, while the Committee on Education and the Workforce is slated to hear from other universities' officials at its own hearing on antisemitism on college campuses.

Must-pass legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration was [agreed](#) to by House and Senate negotiators this week, though a short term extension of the current authorization may be needed to give lawmakers enough time to pass the full package. The bill would prohibit airlines from charging families for sitting together on flights and triples the maximum penalties for air carrier passenger rights violations, though it does not go so far as to enact all of the Biden Administration's requested passenger protections.

Firebrand Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) [announced](#) her plan to trigger a previously-filed Motion to Vacate (MTV) effort to oust embattled House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA). She is now supported by Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Y) and Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ) on the resolution, which is expected to come up for a vote next week. While many of her fellow conservatives share similar ire against the speaker for recent bipartisan dealmaking, the vast majority do not support ousting Johnson this close to the election. Meanwhile, House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) announced that House Democrats would vote against the MTV, throwing Johnson a lifeline.

Sen. Lindsay Graham (R-SC) [shared](#) that his cell phone was in the hands of the FBI after a possible hack of his device. Graham reported that he received a text impersonating Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), who notably does not text and uses a flip phone, before the device began acting strangely. This focus on cybersecurity was shared by the Senate Finance Committee, who [held](#) a hearing with UnitedHealth Group CEO Andrew Witty on the company's response to a hack of its Change Healthcare unit back in February.

With budget season well underway, multiple House and Senate hearings occurred this week on the Biden Administration's fiscal year 2025 budget requests. The House Armed Services Committee [heard](#) from Pentagon brass on the full Department of Defense budget, while also having hearings on military readiness, nuclear forces, space programs, and the Navy. On the Senate Side, hearings were held on readiness, Air Force modernization, the Navy and Marine Corps, as well as military and civilian personnel programs.

Aerospace & Defense

[Boeing supplier Spirit Aerosystems sues to block Texas Safety probe \(Reuters\)](#)

The company who supplies fuselages for Boeing, Spirit Aerosystems, is asking a US judge to block a probe by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, calling the state's demand for internal documents and other information "unreasonable and unlawful." The lawsuit said Spirit Aero had "significant legal concerns with the investigation." Although Spirit Aero supplies Boeing, Boeing itself is not named in Paxton's suit. AG Paxton requests internal communications and documents pertinent to "manufacturing defects in their products." Spirit Aero said that Paxton's investigation "bears no connection to events occurring in the State of Texas and as such has, at best, a questionable law enforcement purpose." While the company does have one repair-and-maintenance facility in Texas that hosts 98

employees, they say, “it does not manufacture any part, in Kansas, Texas, or elsewhere, that allegedly failed in incidents involving Boeing 737 aircraft.”

[Pentagon technology hub sees lower transition rate, higher value deals](#)

[Boxer deployment delay highlights aging fleet, lack of repair capacity \(DefenseNews\)](#)

USS Boxer left San Diego for deployment on April 1 and was already behind schedule as fellow ship Somerset left the city in January. Somerset was the lone member of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group prepared to leave as Boxer and Harpers Ferry stayed back for maintenance. However, only 10 days into her deployment, Boxer had to return to port “due to what was ultimately determined to be an issue with the ship’s starboard rudder and roller bearing system.” According to a statement from the commander of Naval Surface Forces, Arlo Abrahamson, “the waterborne repairs will be conducted at the pier and Boxer may resume its deployment as soon as this summer.” The Navy is determining if they can address the issue with an underwater repair team rather than having to wait for a dry dock. When asked about the age of the fleet, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro said, “I’m hopeful about the future and we’ll continue to do the very best that we can to replace those old amphibious warships. Del Toro noted the deployment roadblocks like Boxer’s would be less common with a younger amphibious fleet.

Budget & Economy

[Lawmakers chafe at nonprofit earmark ban, tight request deadline \(Roll Call\)](#)

House members are scrambling to sort through programmatic and earmark requests that are due today, which comes one week after House Appropriations Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) rolled out new guidelines for “community project funding that cut off a lucrative avenue for delivering social services benefits back home.” Cole announced that nonprofits would be barred from earmarks in the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Economic Development Initiative grant. The FY24 appropriations package included around \$800 million worth of earmarks as part of this fund. Members of both parties are frustrated by the change, “which would prohibit grants for organizations ranging from Young Men’s Christian Association facilities to Boys & Girls Clubs to shelters for victims of domestic violence.” Rep. Mike Garcia (R-CA), a member of the Appropriations Committee made his displeasure known saying, “those charities and those nonprofits actually put the power to the ground for us...so I’m not happy about this change at all.” However, Rep. Steve Womack (R-AR) who took over the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee Chairmanship looked at the banning of non-profit eligibility as “Tom is trying to leverage the ability for us to get bills passed.”

[What to expect in Friday’s jobs report](#)

[Biden blames China, Japan and India’s economic woes on ‘xenophobia’ \(Reuters\)](#)

At a fundraising event kicking off Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Biden said “xenophobia” from China, Japan, and India is hobbling their growth. He continued by indicating the reason why the American economy is growing is “because we welcome immigrants...and that China, Japan, and India don’t want immigrants.” Many economists “attribute better-than-expected performance partly to migrants expanding the country’s labor force. However, as Biden embraces migration there is growing concern about the amount of migration occurring in the US. Biden has been condemning Trump’s rhetoric as anti-immigrant, but immigration has polled as the top US problem for the third straight month. But as Biden looks to expand economic and political relations with India and Japan, criticizing their immigration stances may not be the best way to do that. The US has been a melting pot for generations, but as a general stance Japan and India are more homogeneous in nature.

Advanced Technologies

[V-22 Osprey could see second life, with new drive system, wings in 2050s \(DefenseNews\)](#)

The V-22 program office is studying the future of the tiltrotor, weighing both a “technology refresh as well as whether it could rip off the wings and nacelles to add decades of additional life to the airframes.” The program office is eyeing a Cockpit Technology Replacement upgrade effort that will begin “research and development in 2026 and would be fielded from 2032 to 2042.” The effort looks to bring in more off-the-shelf technology to the screens, keyboards, computers and radars. The program office is also in the early stages of studying a Renewed V-22 Aircraft Modernization Program (ReVAMP) that would “consider how to keep the fuselage for decades beyond what would otherwise be the end of the plane’s effective life in the early 2060s.” Col. Brian Taylor, the joint program manager for the V-22 said a new input quill assembly prototype “that incorporates 15 design changes will be delivered in the next month or so to begin testing.”

[House lawmakers denounce Pentagon’s planned drop in submarine orders](#)

[Google and Apple now threatened by the US antitrust laws that helped build their technology empires \(AP\)](#)

In 1998, the Justice Department had a landmark antitrust case against Microsoft when both Google and Apple were just specks in the tech industry. Now, federal lawyers have gone as far as to assert “Google and Apple may never have created so many popular products or become as powerful as they are now if Microsoft hadn’t been reined in a quarter century ago.” Closing arguments have started in Google’s antitrust trial that began last September alleging Google “turned its search engine into an illegal monopoly that stifles competition and innovation.” The Apple case filed last month is years away from resolution. When the Justice Department went after Google in 2020, “regulators compared the lucrative deals that the company cut with Apple to lock its search engine into the iPhone and Safari web browser to the same tactics Microsoft deployed in its personal computer software to block competition.” In the lawsuit filed against Apple the Justice Department pointed to complaints Steve Jobs raised in 1998 against “Microsoft’s ‘dirty tactics’ while urging regulators to take steps to force the PC software maker to ‘play fair.’” This is truly a full circle for both tech giants and could pave the way for small tech

companies to grow into booming businesses.

Military Installations & Communities

[Army suspends temporary promotions, overhauls required schooling for noncommissioned officer promotions \(Military.com\)](#)

On Thursday, the Army said it would suspend its controversial program that promotes noncommissioned officers before they attend an academy. The service will suspend the temporary promotions in June which marks one of the most significant changes to its promotion system in recent years. They will also “realign required noncommissioned officer schools, moving each requirement up a rank.” In 2016, the Army set a standard for completion of those academies before promotion, “but soldiers have long struggled to attend the schools, either due to deployments or shortages in open seats.” In a memo, Sergeant Major of the Army, Michael Weimer stated, “this effort requires active engagement across all echelons, and leaders will need to do their best to ensure soldiers are given the time and opportunity to attend all phases of schooling.”

[Military jet crashes near Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico](#)

[Marine General issues a ‘call to action’ against China hackers lurking in US computer systems \(Military.com\)](#)

According to military leaders earlier this week “a Chinese, state-sponsored hacking group has embedded itself in critical US infrastructure and is waiting to ‘foment terror’ and ‘societal panic’ through cyberattacks.” Volt Typhoon is a Chinese-backed campaign designed to infiltrate software systems, staying undetected and can conduct attacks at a time and place of its choosing. The threat they pose has been recognized by multiple government officials in the past years. An urgency to thwart the campaign came this week via Maj. Gen. Lorna Mahlock who heads the US Cyber Command unit tracking Chinese incursions. While the Chinese Communist Party has denied allegations that Volt Typhoon is tied to the government, US experts find that possibility highly unlikely. One of the biggest challenges that lies ahead is determining the time frame when Volt Typhoon will become active.

Homeland Security

[DHS docs reveal where paroled migrants under controversial Biden flight program are landing \(Fox\)](#)

Data obtained via a subpoena by the House Homeland Security Committee “is revealing the more than 45 cities in the US that hundreds of thousands of migrants have flown into via a parole program for four nationalities – with the vast majority entering the US via airports in Florida.” The program announced for Venezuelans in October 2022 allowed a limited number to fly or travel directly into the US “as long as they had not entered illegally, had a sponsor in the US already, and passed certain biometric and biographical vetting.”

According to DHS data, from January through August 2023 roughly 200,000 migrants flew into the US via the program. Almost 80% of those arrived in the state of Florida. DHS Secretary Mayorkas recently said the program “is a safe and orderly way to reach the US and has led to a reduction in numbers of those nationalities.” Mayorkas also said the program is “a key element of efforts to address the unprecedented level of migration throughout our hemisphere.” The top cities migrants flew into include Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, New York City, Houston, and Orlando.

[House GOP, 13 Dems rebuke Biden on immigration](#)

['Seize all cannabis': Inside the surprising federal crackdown on New Mexico weed farmers \(Politico\)](#)

While drug cartels and human traffickers are usually the individuals dodging border patrol, folks in the cannabis business have now entered the fold. Although weed is legal and their businesses are legal under New Mexico state law US Customs and Border Protection officers “have seized more than \$300,000 of cannabis in the last two months.” The seizures occurred at border patrol checkpoints. The crackdown by federal law enforcement is creating some tension between the Biden administration and Democratic Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham who championed the legalization efforts. The seizures also come as the Justice Department is preparing to loosen federal restrictions on marijuana, “which would mark the biggest liberalization of drug policy in more than half of a century.” Many are shocked because federal officials have largely taken a hands-off approach to enforcement where states have legalized medical or recreational marijuana.

Transportation & Infrastructure

[Biden replaces Obama-era infrastructure protections to defend against Chinese cyberthreats \(CNBC\)](#)

President Biden is updating a decade-old policy to “protect US critical infrastructure sectors” like energy and financial services from foreign attacks as officials continue to sound the alarm on Chinese cyberthreats. The policy is a rewrite of the Presidential Policy Directive (PPD-21) which was published in 2013. The effort to rewrite began over a year ago and the goal was to “modernize the PPD and to keep up with hackers who have benefited from over a decade of technological advancement.” A senior administration official said the “threat environment has significantly changed since PPD-21 was issued, shifting from counterterrorism to strategic competition.” The updated policy lays out which federal agencies are responsible for which duties in the “complex network of government agencies with the responsibility to protect US infrastructure.” The threat posed by Chinese hackers cannot be overstated as FBI Director Wray has repeatedly warned.

[Carvana shares spike 30% as used car retailer posts record first quarter](#)

[Investors trying to take control of Norfolk Southern railroad pick up key support \(AP\)](#)

Investors attempting to take control of Norfolk Southern's board are picking up support, but the railroad's CEO promised "to fight the takeover attempt until a May 9 shareholder vote." CEO, Alan Shaw believes his strategy is the best in the long run for investors, customers, and workers. Ancora Holdings' bid to elect seven new directors and replacement management at the Atlanta-based railroad "has gained the backing of one of the major proxy advisory firms, one of the railroad's biggest customers and two of its largest labor unions in recent days. The main issue is "whether Shaw's strategy of keeping additional resources on hand during a downturn and his investments in safety are the best course for the railroad that has been in the spotlight ever since the derailment in Ohio in February 2023." Ancora and former UPS and CSX railroad executives being nominated argue a dramatic overhaul of operations is needed to streamline logistics and to increase profits.

Biotechnology & Healthcare

[Walmart to shutter health centers, virtual care service in latest failed push into healthcare \(CNBC\)](#)

Walmart set out on an adventure to bring its low-priced reputation to the dentist and doctor's office. However, that adventure has come to a close as they announced they will close "all of its health-care clinics across the country." It will also shut the door on its telehealth provider which it acquired in 2021. All 51 clinics will close across Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, and Texas over the next 45 to 90 days. In a release, Walmart said the closures will not affect the pharmacies or vision centers at their stores. They said the move was a difficult decision but said it couldn't operate a profitable business "because of the challenging reimbursement environment and escalating operating costs."

[After downsizing health care for years, Pentagon says medical readiness was a casualty](#)

[WuXi Biologics withdraws from 2024 BIO convention amid worsening geopolitical tensions \(Fierce Pharma\)](#)

At the 2024 Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) International Convention this June two Chinese based biotech companies will not be present. The BIO International Convention is one of the industry's biggest events each year, but a US biosecurity "crackdown targeting certain Chinese manufacturers and contract research organizations" has these companies making quiet exits. WuXi bio will "not have a presence" as confirmed by a spokesperson for BIO. This is a rather quick change as they were listed as an exhibitor as late as April 11. WuXi Bio's sister company, WuXI AppTec was not listed as an exhibitor on April 11. Both companies were both exhibitors during the 2023 BIO convention and "the two firms consistently had a presence at the event as attendees going as far back as at least 2020." It is not a surprise that due to geopolitical tensions between China and the US that these companies are not attending the conference. WuXI AppTec was even called out in a piece of draft legislation from the House Select Committee on the Chinese Community Party as part of the BIOSECURE Act which "aims to prevent foreign adversary biotechs from receiving federal funding."

Climate & Development

[Oregon Medicaid patients get air conditioning, mini fridges as climate change drives health concerns \(CBS\)](#)

In a first-in-the nation experiment Oregon will be utilizing Medicaid money to ship air conditioners, air purifiers, and power banks to prevent the health effects due to climate-related disasters. This new project started in March and “expands a Biden administration strategy to move Medicaid beyond traditional medical care and into the realm of social services.” 20 states already use Medicaid dollars to help the homeless and to provide healthy meals to those with diabetes. Oregon will be the first state to direct Medicaid dollars for climate-related costs. According to the Oregon Health Authority most of the 102 Oregonians who died due to deadly heat in 2021 were “elderly, isolated and living with low incomes.” However, not everyone is on board with utilizing Medicaid dollars for climate-related costs or to tackle homelessness. Gary Alexander, Director of the Medicaid and Health Safety New Reform Initiative at the Paragon Health Institute is concerned that “Medicaid’s expansion into social services may duplicate existing housing and nutrition programs offered by other federal agencies.” Alexander continued saying, “There are 600,000 or 700,000 intellectually disabled people in the US waiting for Medicaid services... Seems to me that we should serve the intellectually disabled first before we get into all of these new areas.”

[Methane emissions from gas flaring being hidden from satellite monitors](#)

[Senate, House Dems: Oil companies pivoted from climate denial to ‘deception, disinformation, and doublespeak’ \(The Hill\)](#)

According to a three-year report issued by Democratic members on the Senate Budget Committee and the House Oversight Committee, “major oil companies have internally conceded their public vows to reduce planet-warming emissions are incompatible with their business plans.” The report includes documents in which oil industry figures concede the industry’s history of knowingly suppressing the link between fossil fuels and climate change. Along with the oil companies the report also alleges the US Chamber of Commerce and the trade group the American Petroleum Institute engaged in “deception, disinformation, and doublespeak.” The committees also claim “the industry publicly expresses support for climate legislation and regulations, while either privately lobbying against them or relying on trade groups to do that work.” Several of the oil companies or entities named in the report including Shell and ExxonMobil pushed back on the report calling them “tired allegations that have already been publicly addressed.”

Next Week's Hearings

Armed Service Committee:

House: None

Senate:

- 5/08, 3:00 PM - Military and Civilian Personnel Programs FY2025 Defense Authorization Request
- 5/08, 4:00 PM - Air Force Modernization FY2025 Defense Authorization Request

Appropriations Committee:

House:

- 5/07, 9:00 AM - Public Witness Hearing, American Indian & Alaska Native
- 5/07, 10:00 AM - Drug Enforcement Administration FY2025 Request
- 5/07, 10:00 AM - US International Development Finance Corporations FY2025 Request
- 5/07, 10:00 AM - Internal Revenue Service FY2025 Request
- 5/07, 1:00 PM - Public Witness Hearing, American Indian & Alaska Native
- 5/08, 9:00 AM - Public Witness Hearing, American Indian & Alaska Native
- 5/08, 10:00 AM - Department of Commerce FY2025 Request
- 5/08, 10:00 AM - Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (Member Day)
- 5/08, 10:00 AM - Federal Communications Commission FY2025 Request
- 5/08, 1:00 PM - Public Witness Hearing, American Indian & Alaska Native
- 5/08, 3:00 PM - Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (Member Day)
- 5/09, 9:30 AM - Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies (Member Day)
- 5/09, 10:30 AM - Financial Services and General Government (Member Day)

Senate:

- 5/08, 10:00 AM - Department of Defense FY2025 Request
- 5/08, 10:00 AM - Food and Drug Administration FY2025 Request
- 5/08, 10:30 AM - Department of the Interior FY2025 Request
- 5/08, 2:30 PM - Congressional Budget Office, the Government Accountability Office, and the Government Publishing Office
- 5/09, 10:00 AM - Department of Labor FY2025 Request

Homeland Security Committee:

House:

- 5/07, 10:00 AM - Building the Fleet: Assessing the Department of Homeland Security's Role in the US Coast Guard's Acquisitions Process
- 5/08, 2:00 PM - Silent Weapons: Examining foreign anomalous health incidents targeting Americans in the Homeland

Senate: None



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