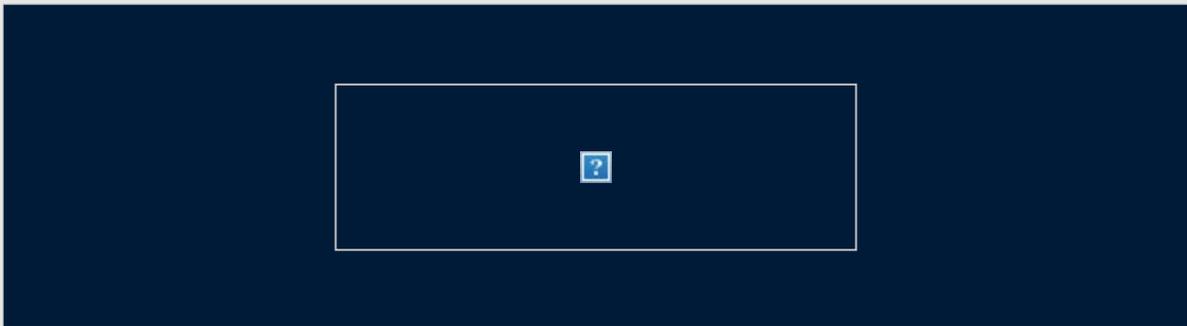


**From:** [Rick Dwyer](#)  
**To:** [Rick Dwyer](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Executive Insight Brief  
**Date:** Friday, January 3, 2025 9:49:14 AM

**Ladies & Gentlemen,**  
Below please find this week's edition of *Executive Insight Brief* from The Roosevelt Group. Happy New Year!

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# Executive Insight Brief

January 3, 2025

## Notable Headlines



- [South Korea's impeached president defies warrant after hourslong standoff](#)
- [House ethics watchdog unfurls campaign finance allegations against two members](#)
- [Why Trump has so much riding on the House speaker vote](#)
- [New Orleans attack latest: FBI, DHS warn of copycat vehicle attack danger](#)
- [Republicans to watch during Mike Johnson's House speaker election](#)

## View From The Hill



Happy New Year, and welcome back to your weekly Executive Insight Brief. The 119<sup>th</sup> Congress officially kicks off today as the House of Representatives convenes to [attempt](#) to elect Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA) as Speaker of the House, and the Senate reconvenes to pass the organizing resolution that will officially usher in a new GOP majority in the upper chamber, handing Republicans control of committees ahead of pivotal confirmation [hearings](#) for the incoming Trump administration's nominees. If you are wondering what the reaction on Capitol Hill is to yesterday's horrific vehicular terror attack in New Orleans or the troubling explosion of a Tesla Cybertruck outside the Trump Hotel in Las Vegas, Republican senators are urging quick confirmation of Trump's nominees for critical national security positions.

This week is all about inside baseball in Congress, and Speaker Mike Johnson is working hard behind the scenes to shore up unified—or near-unified—support across the House Republican Conference. Between vacancies and a razor slim majority, Johnson can only afford to lose two GOP votes, and Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY) has already made clear he has no intention of backing Johnson, despite pressure from President elect Trump. Rep. Chip Roy (R-TX) has also publicly stated he is a “no,” though insists his vote can be won over, as has been the case with several other conservative holdouts. Remember, two years ago at the start of the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, the House took several days to elect former Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) to the speakership, so we will be watching closely just how difficult it will be for Johnson to clear this hurdle. Ahead of this key test, House GOP leadership released its intended rules package governing the chamber for the next two years, including [raising](#) the threshold for triggering a Motion to Vacate (MTV) resolution vote from a single Member to nine. This should give whoever ends up as speaker significantly more breathing room than McCarthy had. The rules package also includes consideration of twelve pieces of legislation ranging from voter ID reform to a crackdown on illegal immigration and transgender student athletes.

Democrats in the Senate [unveiled](#) their full slate of committee assignments for the new congress, while also [achieving](#) 235 judicial nominations during President Biden's term in office, beating out the number of judges confirmed under the first Trump administration.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (NY) also made a key [endorsement](#) of Ben Wikler, currently chair of the Wisconsin Democratic Party, to lead the Democratic National Committee (DNC) in a hotly contested race. Whoever is ultimately tapped to lead the DNC will inherit a party still reckoning with the fallout from a failed presidential race and a total loss of control in congress.

The late President Jimmy Carter will [lie](#) in state at the U.S. Capitol from January 7-9<sup>th</sup> next week, where Members of Congress, the President and First Lady, the Vice President and Second Gentleman, federal officials, diplomats, and the public will be invited to pay their respects in the Capitol Rotunda. The former president will be brought to Washington via Special Air Mission (SAM) 39, so named for his service as the 39<sup>th</sup> President of the United States.

## Pentagon News

The Pentagon is seeking comment on a new pilot program which would increase the customary progress payment rate on approved Defense Department contracts by up to 10%. The Progress Payment Incentive Pilot (PIIP) was authorized in the fiscal year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act and granted the Defense Department authority to permit an increase in the progress payment rate. In a [Federal Register notice](#), DoD indicated they plan on focusing the PIIP to improve the timing of payments to DoD subcontractors in order to “improve the cash flow throughout the supply base.” Ensuring subcontractors receive timely payments was a focus area in the [Defense Contract Finance Study](#) which was published in April 2023. According to that report’s executive summary, defense subcontractors and suppliers don’t typically receive favorable cash-flow benefits to the same degree as prime contractors. The Government Accountability Office also emphasized this finding as “60 to 70% of defense work is being performed by subcontractors.” DoD’s request for comment is open until January 29 and they are “particularly interested in comments and information from companies currently in the Defense Industrial Base.”

The 9/11 attacks claimed nearly 3,000 American lives and prompted the U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq during President Bush’s administration. This week, recent actions by the Biden administration highlight the ongoing difficulties in addressing unresolved 9/11 cases and the complex legacy of Guantanamo Bay. A military appeals court has ruled against Defense [Secretary Lloyd Austin's attempt](#) to annul plea agreements for Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the accused architect of the 9/11 attacks, and two co-defendants, Walid bin Attash and Mustafa al-Hawsawi. After two years of negotiation, plea deals were announced last summer that would have the men plead guilty for war crimes in exchange for avoiding the death penalty. The agreements sparked controversy among 9/11 victims’ families and [senior Republicans](#). Supporters of the plea deals argue that they offer a practical solution to the prolonged legal challenges surrounding the cases of the men detained at Guantanamo Bay.

Pretrial hearings for the actors have been ongoing for over a decade. Much of the pretrial debate has focused on whether the evidence in the case has been compromised and is inadmissible due to the torture the defendants suffered during their initial detention by the CIA.

Austin contended that, given the gravity of the case, he should have the authority to decide whether the accused should be eligible to avoid the death sentence. Defense attorneys argued that Austin's involvement was unlawful, asserting that the plea agreements had already received approval from the Guantanamo court's highest authority. Military Judge Air Force Col. Matthew McCall ruled in favor of the defense, which led the Department of Defense to challenge the decision. However, the appeals court upheld McCall's ruling, leaving the Pentagon Chief with the option to escalate the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

The Pentagon's most recent repatriation, a Tunisian man Ridah bin Saleh al-Yazidi, leaves 26 men at Guantanamo, down from the 700 Muslim men that were detained abroad and brought to the prison after 9/11. The Biden administration released three other men from Guantanamo due to pressure from human rights groups to release detainees held without charges. More than half the remaining men have been cleared as security risks and are awaiting transfer to other countries, while the others face active cases or have been convicted and sentenced by the military commission.

## James “Jimmy” Earl Carter Jr. (1924 - 2024)



[Jimmy Carter](#), 39th President of the United States, passed away at the age of 100 this past Sunday. Aside from serving as President, Carter was a peanut farmer, former Governor of Georgia, and US Naval Academy graduate. His presidency, like many, was marked with highs and lows. Carter was able to mediate the Camp David Accords which saw an end to the war between Israel and Egypt. Carter also spent just over a year working to free 52 Americans being held hostage in the US Embassy in Tehran, Iran. The hostages were freed upon the inauguration of Ronald Reagan. Carter also worked to diversify the federal bench by appointing 41 women, including future Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg to her first post as an appellate judge.

Upon the [announcement of his death](#), President Joe Biden announced the American flag to be displayed at half-staff at federal buildings, military posts, public buildings, and naval vessels for 30 days. Biden also announced January 9th to be a National Day of Mourning, which is also the date at which Carter's State Funeral will occur. Biden, who endorsed Carter for president during his first term as U.S. Senator from Delaware will deliver one of the eulogies.

Jimmy Carter is often best remembered for the 43 years after his presidency when he founded the Carter Center, built homes for Habitat for Humanity, negotiated the release of an American held in North Korea, and was a Sunday school teacher. In addition to serving this nation, Carter was a husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He and his wife Rosalynn were married for 73 years eclipsing George and Barbara Bush for the title of longest-wed presidential couple. President Carter's legacy will be one of faithful service to the United States in which he was guided by his deep Christian faith and commitment to decency.

## Next Week's Hearings

**Armed Services Committee:**

**House:** NONE

**Senate:** NONE

**Appropriations Committee:**

**House:** NONE

**Senate:** NONE

**Homeland Security Committee:**

**House:** NONE

**Senate:** NONE



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