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Executive Insight Brief

April 4, 2025

Notable Headlines



- [Judge ponders contempt of court over US immigration actions](#)
- [Trump tariffs provoke world condemnation and fears of a \\$2,300 iPhone](#)
- [Senate Republicans vote to advance a massive budget blueprint for Trump's agenda](#)
- [Trump's tariffs threaten US weapons production](#)
- [South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol removed from office over declaration of martial law](#)

View From The Hill



Congress lurched through the week, with [House](#) and [Senate](#) republicans struggling to coalesce around a budget blueprint and overall reconciliation strategy that is essential for legislating on President Trump's agenda. The sticking points continue to be the House's desire to enact deep spending cuts versus the Senate's desire to avoid cuts to essential programs like Medicare and Medicaid, as well as raising the debt ceiling and whether to make certain tax cuts from Trump's first term permanent. Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) [began](#) the process of passing his chamber's budget resolution on Thursday, hoping to muscle it through by the weekend, but prospects for that resolution in the House are murky, at best.

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) was [dealt](#) a blow Tuesday afternoon, when several of his republican Members voted with all democrats against an internal procedural motion that would effectively kill an effort by Rep. Anna Paulina Luna (R-FL) and Rep. Brittany Petterson (D-CO) to allow Members with newborns to vote via proxy. The surprise takedown of the motion led Speaker Johnson to adjourn the chamber for the remainder of the week, sending lawmakers home early and scuttling planned votes for the rest of the week.

Over in the Senate, history was [made](#) as Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) stood and spoke on the Senate Floor for 25 hours and 5 minutes, breaking the record for longest filibuster. In so doing, Booker ended the previously held record of Sen. Strom Thurmond (D-SC), a segregationist whose filibuster over the passage of the *Civil Rights Act* had stood for 68 years. The remarkable feat by Sen. Booker came as Democrats, who face limited options in a GOP-controlled Washington, are facing heavy pressure from their base to show resistance to the Trump agenda.

Two special elections in Florida to fill House seats left vacant by President Trump's recent appointments [occurred](#) this week, with republicans handily defeating their democratic opponents in deeply conservative districts. And while the two new GOP Members will help alleviate some of the pressure on Speaker Mike Johnson's razor thin majority, democrats took a victory lap over the republican candidates' underperformance, as well as a democratic win to fill a Wisconsin state supreme court seat in which Elon Musk invested millions in the republican-backed candidate.

Pentagon News



President Donald Trump's proposed tariffs pose a significant threat to U.S. weapons production by disrupting global supply chains that the Pentagon has relied on for decades. The [tariffs](#), which include 20% on imports from the EU and 10% on goods from the U.K. and Australia, could make American weapons more expensive, delay production, and weaken international defense collaborations.

The ripple effects are already being felt. Projects like the F-35 fighter jet—built through an international partnership—or the nuclear submarine pact with Australia and the U.K. could see significant delays, or worse, become unworkable. Allies who've long relied on U.S. defense manufacturing are starting to rethink that relationship, with European officials openly discussing shifting production closer to home.

The defense industry already faces labor shortages, and additional costs from tariffs could further strain production. Business groups and lawmakers from both parties are pushing

for a defense-specific exemption to avoid cost hikes and supply disruptions. Without such carve-outs, America's defense capabilities and its ability to support allies could suffer long-term consequences.

One thing is certain: if the tariffs move forward as planned, America's military supply chains are in for a rough ride—and U.S. allies might start looking elsewhere.

Retired Lt. Gen. Dan 'Razin' Caine was in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday for his [confirmation hearing](#) to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His nomination comes after President Trump fired the previous Chairman, Gen. CQ Brown in late February. Caine is a former F-16 pilot who served for 34 years with the Air Force, National Guard, special operations community, and the CIA.

During his confirmation hearing he touted his private sector experience which he said he "will draw on as the DoD looks to modernize its business systems and revitalize America's Defense Industrial Base." He said the American entrepreneurial spirit is a force multiplier" and that he'll "bring more of that spirit into the joint force." His hearing comes as the Pentagon looks to buy more technologies from nontraditional companies in the private sector and bring them into their acquisition fold. Caine said DoD "must work to exploit these solutions via rapid prototyping programs, defense innovation organizations, and congressionally granted authorities." If confirmed, Caine also stressed he will work with Pete Hegseth, Secretary of Defense, to increase investments in advanced manufacturing technology. He called on DoD leaders to have an "entrepreneurial mindset" as they pursue reforms.

While his confirmation hearing was not as contentious as Secretary Hegseth's, he did need to [contradict a story](#) President Trump has told on several occasions since Caine was floated as a potential replacement for CQ Brown. According to the President, when he first met Caine in Iraq during his first term, said "I would kill for you sir" and donned a MAGA hat. This story brought concerns from Senate Democrats who emphasized service-members are bound to deliver nonpolitical and nonpartisan guidance to civilian superiors. Caine told Senators, "I went back and listened to those tapes, and I think the President was actually talking about somebody else...I've never worn any political merchandise or said anything to that effect."

Caine also sidestepped questions regarding the Signal group chat controversy saying it "was a partisan political chat, and so the joint force should not have been represented there." His strongest comment that came close to a rebuke of the situation was when he said, "we should always preserve the element of surprise, and that should translate across every information domain and format, and never put our war fighters in any harm's way."

Caine has pledged independent military advice saying, "candor has gotten me here today, and candor will continue to allow me to do my job." If confirmed, only time will tell how much President Trump enjoys his new Chairman's candor. Through comments two Armed Services Democrats seemed open to voting for his confirmation. Sen. Tammy Duckworth (IL) praised his National Guard experience and Sen. Tim Kaine (VA) said Caine has seen the "breadth of the military mission." While Caine is expected to pass a committee vote and the full floor vote, having bipartisan support will be helpful considering Senate Democrats were furious with the ouster of Brown. If confirmed, Lt. Gen. Caine will be the 22nd Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Next Week's Hearings



Armed Services Committee:

House:

- NONE

Senate:

- 4/8, 9:30 AM - To consider the nominations of: Mr. Bradley D. Hansell to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security; Mr. Earl G. Matthews to be General Counsel of the Department of Defense; Mr. Dale R. Marks to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment; and Honorable Brandon M. Williams to be Under Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Security
- 4/8, 2:30 PM - To receive testimony on the state of nuclear shipbuilding
- 4/8, 2:30 PM - Open/Closed: To receive testimony on United States Special Operations Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program
- 4/9, 2:30 PM - To receive testimony on Department of Defense personnel policies and programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program
- 4/9, 3:30 PM - Open/Closed: To receive testimony on United States Cyber Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program
- 4/10 9:30 AM - Open/Closed: To receive testimony on the posture of United States Indo-Pacific Command and United States Forces Korea in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program

Appropriations Committee:

- 4/8, 8:00 AM - Assessing the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)
- 4/8, 9:00 AM - Budget Hearing – Architect of the Capitol and Library of Congress
- 4/8, 10:00 AM - Energy and Water Development - Member Day
- 4/8 10:30 AM - Oversight Hearing - Quality of Life in the Military
- 4/9, 11:00 AM - Budget Hearing – United States Capitol Police
- 4/9, 9:00 AM - Homeland Security - Member Day
- 4/9, 9:00 AM - Budget Hearing – Government Accountability Office, Congressional Budget Office, United States Government Publishing Office
- 4/9 10:00 AM - Oversight Hearing – State of the Department of Veterans Affairs
- 4/9, 10:00 AM - Transportation, Housing and Urban Development - Member Day
- 4/9, 10:00 AM - Oversight Hearing – Review of U.S. Department of Agriculture Programs
- 4/10, 10:30 AM - Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education - Public Witness Day
- 4/9, 10:30 AM - Hearing - GAO's Assessment of the Costs of Deferred Maintenance Across the Federal Government
- 4/9, 11:00 AM - Legislative Branch - Member and Public Witness Day
- 4/9, 3:00 PM - Commerce, Justice, and Science - Member Day

Senate: NONE

Homeland Security Committee:

House:

- 4/8, 10:00 AM - America on the Global Stage: Examining Efforts to Secure and Improve the U.S. Travel System and Prepare for Significant International Events

Senate:

- 4/9, 10:00 AM - Business Meeting



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