

**Schott, Heather**

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**From:** Rick Dwyer <rdwyer@hrmffa.org>  
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Ladies & Gentlemen,  
Below please find this week's edition of *Executive Insight Brief* from The Roosevelt Group.

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**Executive Insight Brief**

April 18, 2025

**Notable Headlines**



- [Supreme Court to review Trump birthright citizenship order](#)
- [Trump promises a trade deal with Europe](#)
- [Deputy sheriff's son kills two at Florida State University, police say](#)
- [Nearly 90% of Consumer Financial Protection Bureau cut as as Trump's government downsizing continues](#)
- [Trump administration takes aim at Harvard's international students and tax-exempt status](#)

## View From The Hill



This was the first of a two-week recess for both the House and Senate, as lawmakers returned to their districts in observance of the Passover and Easter holidays. Despite the halls of the Capitol being quiet, however, Members still had plenty to say about the news of the day and the major legislative developments taking shape for when they return to Washington.

Now that both chambers have passed identical budget resolutions, the hard part of coordinating a litany of committee markups that will eventually coalesce into the massive tax, energy, border, and defense package comprising President Trump and Republicans' primary legislative agenda. The first committees [expected](#) to mark up their respective parts of the package are the House Judiciary, Homeland Security, and Armed Services Committees the week of April 28<sup>th</sup>. But as the reconciliation strategy comes into view, a dozen House Republicans representing swing districts [sent](#) Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) a letter drawing a line in the sand over cuts to Medicaid. These vulnerable lawmakers are concerned that if the House's right flank wins its fight to find deep cuts to social safety net programs, the electoral ramifications for the narrow GOP majority will be dire come the 2026 midterm elections. And it isn't just moderate House Republicans sounding off on their concerns. Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO), a staunch conservative, has also consistently [defended](#) Medicaid as budget reconciliation takes shape.

As the showdown between the Executive and Judicial Branches of the U.S. Government continues to play out over the Trump administration's deportation of Kilmar Abrego Garcia to El Salvador, Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) [traveled](#) to El Salvador to attempt to visit with Garcia and demand his release. Van Hollen was denied access to Garcia by El Salvador's vice president. Democrats on Capitol Hill have expressed outrage and concern around the rapid deportation of Garcia, and others, without due process, while the Trump administration and GOP Members of Congress continue to stand firm in their belief that they are carrying out their electoral mandate.

Under significant pressure to ramp up opposition to President Trump, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), is [blocking](#) two of Trump's nominations to be federal prosecutors. Schumer's refusal to return the so-called "blue slip" on the nominations of Jay Clayton to lead the Southern District of New York and Joseph Niccola, Jr. to lead the Eastern District of New York. It remains to be seen whether Senate GOP leadership will continue to honor precedent on this mechanism and allow the appointments to effectively be blocked by Schumer.

Senate Armed Services Chairman Roger Wicker (R-MS) is [proving](#) an interesting template for traditional GOP defense hawks navigating a more isolationist Trump administration. Wicker has been a strong and pivotal support of some of the administration's key nominees, including Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, while also batting down perceived missteps like Hegseth's comments on Ukraine and plans to draw down U.S. troop presence in Europe. It is a delicate balance for Wicker, but one that is positioning him as a real influencer on defense issues.

## Pentagon News



Three Pentagon officials have been placed on administrative leave this week after a [wide-ranging investigation](#) into whether sensitive information was leaked. Some leaks subject to the investigation included military operational plans for the Panama Canal, a second carrier headed to the Red Sea, Elon Musk's controversial visit to the Pentagon to discuss China, and a pause in the collection of intelligence for Ukraine. [In a memo](#), DoD Chief of Staff Joe Kasper said polygraphs could be used in the investigation and that "information identifying a party responsible for an unauthorized disclosure" would be referred for criminal prosecution. The three individuals escorted from the building were Colin Carroll, chief of staff to Deputy Secretary of Defense Stephen Feiberg; Dan Caldwell, senior advisor to Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth; and Darin Selnick, the Department of Defense's deputy chief of staff.

This string of leaks does not bode well for Pete Hegseth who was under fire last month for discussing sensitive information in a Signal group chat that included a reporter. The leaks investigation has renewed some Democrats' calls for Hegseth to resign. Rep. Dan Goldman (D-NY) posted on X "This is now the second major breach of classified information by senior political appointees in Hegseth's two months of leadership at DoD...he should have never been appointed

based on merit alone, but now he is a national security threat.” As the investigation into the leaks continues, only time will tell if more officials will be placed on leave.

In more technical news, DoD officials will soon brief President Donald Trump on [different options](#) for his “Golden Dome,” an anti-missile defense for the United States modeled on Israel’s Iron Dome. President Trump’s endeavor is similar to former President Ronald Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative which was “proposed to protect the United States from Soviet nuclear missiles.” While the Strategic Defense Initiative also mockingly known as “Star Wars” was never implemented, Trump’s push for the Golden Dome seems more plausible due to advancements in technology since the 1980s. If realized, the Golden Dome would bring together multiple air defense systems with the idea of “keeping the country and perhaps eventually American assets around the world safe.”

The intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) Reagan wanted to protect the United States from can now be stopped, at least in theory. The Iron Dome of Israel has been largely successful in its work of stopping small rocket and artillery attacks. However, its task is easier with a significantly smaller land mass and with threats coming from next door instead of thousands of miles away. The Golden Dome effort would need to stop a variety of threats from cruise missiles, to ICBMs, to drones, and hypersonic missiles. Existing technologies like surface-to-air defenses could be repurposed, but depending on the option Trump goes with, the United States could find itself investing “hundreds of billions of dollars to develop new technologies” which would become part of the defense system years down the line.

According to officials familiar with the plans there are three different options at the \$10 billion, \$100 billion, and several hundred billion dollar price points, respectively. It is not yet clear which, or how many options will be briefed, but whichever option is selected will likely take several years to develop and implement. The administration will need to work closely with Congress, the services, and the private sector to make Golden Dome a reality.

## 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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