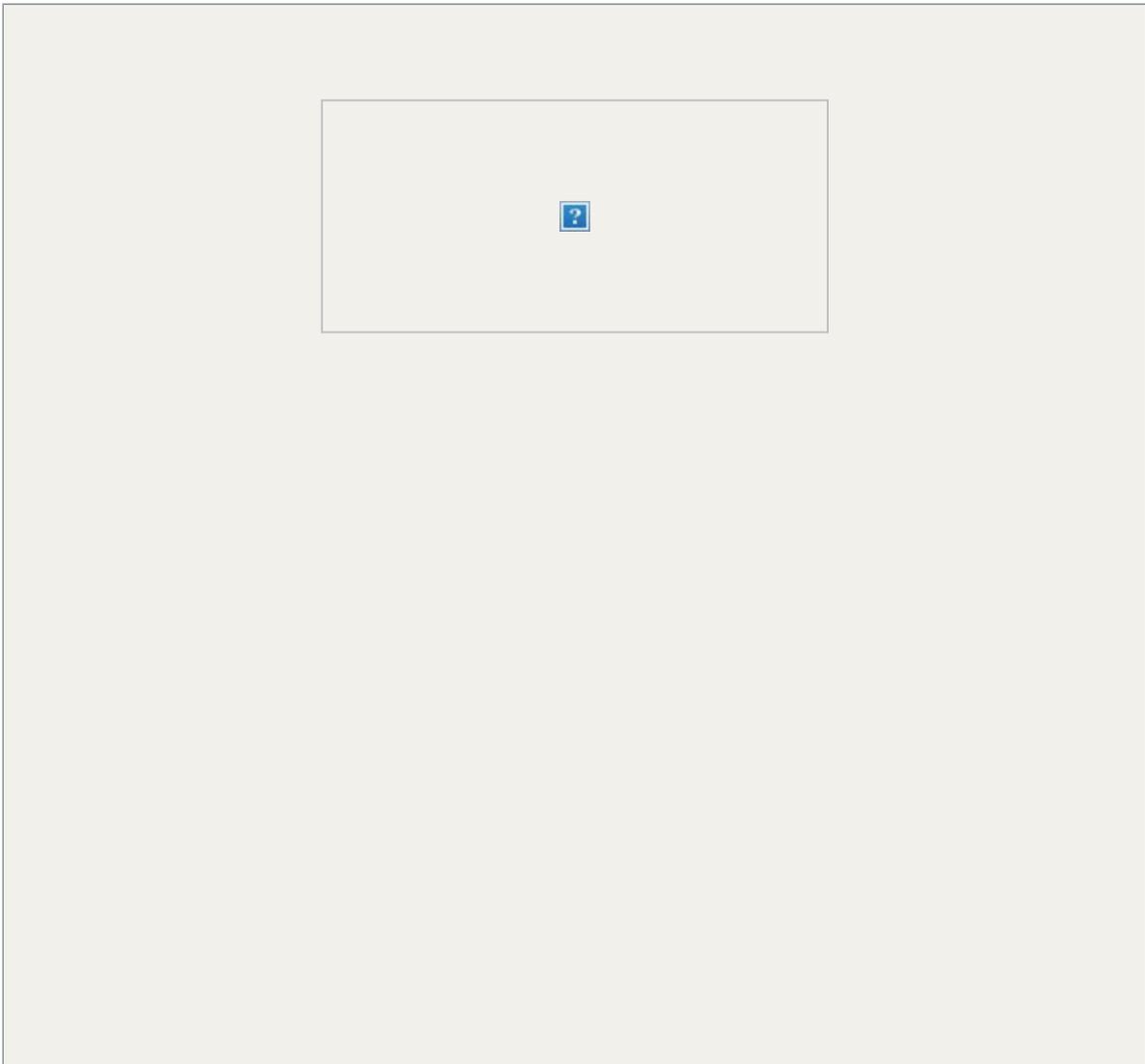


From: [Rick Dwyer](#)
To: [Rick Dwyer](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Executive Insight Brief
Date: Friday, May 16, 2025 8:18:50 AM

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

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May 16, 2025

Executive Insight Brief

Stay informed with The Roosevelt Group's Executive Insight Brief—your weekly roundup of key developments shaping federal policy, defense, and homeland security. Curated by our expert team, each issue delivers timely analysis and strategic context to help you stay ahead.

Notable Headlines

[Senate panel leaders back Trump's lifting of sanctions on Syria](#)

[Megabill teeters after hard-liners make their stand](#)

[Supreme Court justices appear divided in birthright citizenship arguments](#)

[Trump says the US and Iran have 'sort of' agreed on the terms for a nuclear deal](#)

[DHS asks for 20,000 National Guard troops to assist in deportations](#)

View From The Hill

It was an incredibly busy week on Capitol Hill, with massive budget reconciliation markups dominating the legislative landscape. The House Committee on Ways and Means pulled a marathon consideration on federal tax [policy](#), opting against new taxes on the highest income earners, making the 2017 Trump tax cuts permanent, eliminating taxes on tips and overtime income until 2028, and temporarily expanding the child tax credit. However, several key House Republicans representing districts in blue states with high property taxes were incensed at the lack of agreement over state and local income tax (SALT) deductions, setting up a high-stakes [negotiation](#) between the bloc and Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) before the bill comes to the floor. However, the most immediate headache for the Speaker is overcoming multiple declared conservative “no” votes in the Budget Committee, where the full package must pass before it can advance.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee [moved](#) to try and help pay for the massive tax, energy, border, and defense reconciliation effort by repealing massive portions of President Biden’s signature climate law, streamlining federal permitting requirements for energy projects, and passing changes to the politically sensitive Medicaid federal health program. Democrats on the panel bemoaned what they argue amounts to a significant rollback in the federal government’s fight against climate change, as well as policies expected to lead to the loss of health coverage for millions of Americans currently on Medicaid. For its part, the House Agriculture Committee [tightened](#) requirements on the popular Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) while also pushing more costs onto states—a move even some Republicans are expressing concern about. Throughout the brutal, overnight markup schedule, more than one lawmaker succumbed to the late-night hours, with Rep. Blake Moore (R-UT) nearly missing an amendment vote after [falling](#) asleep on the dais, and Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI) caught [snoozing](#) during committee proceedings.

With the House markup marathon drawing to its conclusion, Speaker Johnson now faces the daunting task of combining everything into President Trump’s “one big, beautiful bill” and getting it through the Rules Committee and passed by the full House. In order to accomplish this before his ambitious pre-Memorial Day timeline, he will need to overcome entrenched opposition from blue-state Republicans balking at the lack of SALT deductions, as well as the conservatives in the House Freedom Caucus upset that the existing package does not seek deeper spending cuts they’ve long sought. We’ll see next week whether these factions can be cobbled together sufficiently to garner enough votes to send the legislation to the Senate, which will almost certainly have changes to the

House version.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., [testified](#) on Capitol Hill this week, telling lawmakers that the American People “shouldn’t take medical advice from me.” Kennedy was on the Hill defending deep spending cuts, primarily to the National Institutes of Health, outlined in the President’s proposed budget for fiscal year 2026. The hearing was interrupted by protestors, including the co-founder of Ben and Jerry’s ice cream.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) [announced](#) a blanket “hold” on all Trump administration nominees to lead the Department of Justice this week, in protest of the White House’s announcement that the Qatari royal family was donating a Boeing 747 to the Department of Defense for President Trump to use as Air Force One while in office, with plans to subsequently donate the plane to his presidential library after his second term. Members on both sides of the aisle have expressed near-universal opposition to the plan, with reactions ranging from security and espionage concerns among Republicans to malign foreign influence and corruption accusations by Democrats.

Pentagon News

Senate Democrats are gearing up for a political fight to [block](#) more than \$3.5 billion in foreign arms sales to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar in protest of President Donald Trump’s foreign ties. The controversy centers around Qatar’s offer to gift Trump a luxury Boeing jet for use as Air Force One, as well as the UAE’s \$2 billion investment in Trump’s cryptocurrency venture. Thursday, Senators Chris Murphy (CT), Chris Van Hollen (MD), Brian Schatz (HI), Tim Kaine (VA), and Bernie Sanders (VT) filed joint resolutions of disapproval to block the deals for both [Qatar](#) and the [UAE](#), which currently include drones, helicopters, munitions, and radar systems.

The proposed jet from Qatar has drawn criticism from some Republicans, including Senate Majority Leader John Thune (SD) and Armed Services Chair Roger Wicker (MS), who warned that accepting such a gift could pose serious security and political risks. “It would be like the United States moving into the Qatari embassy,” [Wicker](#) said. Meanwhile, scrutiny around the UAE centers on concerns of quid pro quo after a [U.S.-UAE AI data center](#) partnership was announced shortly after the [UAE’s \\$2 billion investment](#) in a Trump-linked digital currency.

The effort gives Democrats a new line of attack and puts Republicans in a bind by pitting party loyalty against Trump’s agenda. Whether the resolutions pass is uncertain, but they’ve already

drawn rare bipartisan pushback against Trump, highlighting ongoing tensions between foreign policy and Trump's growing private interests.

While the debate over foreign influence and defense contracting continues, the Senate this week confirmed Emil Michael as Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering in a [54-43 vote](#). A former Uber executive and [CEO of DPCM Capital](#), Michael joins the Trump administration for a second time after serving as special assistant to the defense secretary during the President's first term. Michael is an advocate for partnerships with the private sector following his vocal support during the March confirmation hearings, where he [underscored](#) the industry's competency in streamlining operations and resources. His time in the industry has most recently been spent with DPCM Capital, an approved DoD vendor as a special acquisition and quantum computing company after merging with D-Wave Systems in 2022.

On strengthening the defense industrial base, Michael has emphasized greater opportunities for venture capital and private equity investment to leverage revitalization efforts. These investments could be pivotal for supporting small businesses throughout the procurement process, potentially icing out R&D programs that are failing. As the Pentagon's new chief technology officer, Michael is poised to shape the department's technology agenda amid rising global threats.

Those threats were underscored this week by a new strategic assessment from the [Defense Intelligence Agency](#) (DIA), which forecasts a significant escalation of the global missile threat. Projected to surge through 2035, the identified threats reinforce the need for the Golden Dome, a national missile defense initiative prioritized by the Trump administration. The [report](#) indicates that China could triple its intercontinental ballistic missile inventory, expand its hypersonic weapon stockpile seven-fold, and develop sixty nuclear-armed orbital weapons that have been designed to evade American early-detection systems. Russia, North Korea, and Iran are also expected to expand their missile capabilities.

The Golden Dome, though still in early planning stages, is designed to protect the U.S. from multidirectional missile threats. A recent Congressional Budget Office [estimate](#) suggests the space-based interceptor layer alone, critical for missile interception, could cost between \$161 billion and \$542 billion over 20 years. Head of the Guam Defense System (GDS), LTG Robert Rasch, [testified](#) to the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Golden Dome prototype currently being built in Guam costs \$8 billion. Sen. Angus King (ME) has also [voiced concerns](#) about cost scalability, recently noting that replicating a GDS-level infrastructure across 779 U.S. cities would be over a \$6 trillion investment. This project is touted as a great addition to defending the homeland, however, critics note the hefty price tag contradicts the current administration's ambition to reduce defense spending.

Next Week's Hearings

Armed Services Committee

U.S. House of Representatives

- NONE

U.S. Senate

- 5/20, 9:30 AM - To examine the posture of the Department of the Air Force in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by a closed session in SVC-217.
- 5/20, 4:45 PM - To examine the Department of Energy's atomic energy defense activities and Department of Defense nuclear weapons program in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program.

Appropriations Committee

U.S. House of Representatives

- 5/20, 10:00 AM - Budget Hearing - Department of the Interior
- 5/20, 10:00 AM - Oversight Hearing - National Guard and Reserves Forces
- 5/20, 10:00 AM - Member Day - Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
- 5/20, 10:00 AM - Oversight Hearing - U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
- 5/20, 1:00 PM - Oversight Hearing - The Transportation Security Administration
- 5/21, 10:00 AM - Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Requests for the Army Corps of Engineers (Civil Works) and the Bureau of Reclamation
- 5/21, 10:00 AM - Budget Hearing - U.S. Department of Education
- 5/21, 10:00 AM - Oversight Hearing - The Federal Communications Commission
- 5/21, 2:00 PM - Budget Hearing - Department of State and Related Programs

U.S. Senate

-

- 5/20, 10:00 AM - To examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2026 for the Department of Health and Human Services
- 5/20, 2:00 PM - To examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2026 for the Department of State
- 5/21, 2:30 PM - To examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2026 for the Small Business Administration
- 5/21, 2:30 PM - To examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2026 for the Department of Energy

Homeland Security Committee

U.S. House of Representatives

- NONE

U.S. Senate

- 5/20, 9:30 AM - To examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2026 for the Department of Homeland Security



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