

November 15, 2024

Trump Appointees: Our Take

If taken individually, we would expect Tulsi Gabbard, Matt Gaetz and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. all to lose their confirmation battles and either have their names withdrawn for consideration or lose a Senate floor vote. But looking more holistically, presidents rarely lose confirmation votes, especially for Cabinet level positions and especially when their party controls the Senate. Maybe two of the three aren't confirmed, with Gaetz leading our list but we don't see all three being denied their position.

In our healthcare team's opinion, RFK Jr. has the highest chances of being confirmed of the three, but even then, they are skeptical he survives the Senate process due to opposition from the healthcare industry and the pro-life movement.

Having said that, we do not believe any of *these* three will be cleared through a recess appointment, despite incoming Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) putting that option on the table. We doubt the Senate will simply give up their Constitutional responsibilities for the most controversial of Trump's nominees. Even if Thune tried to take the recess appointment route, some moderate Republicans might join Democrats in opposing motions to adjourn to prohibit the most controversial recess appointments.

A quick look at history shows how few candidates are denied confirmation. The last *Cabinet* nominee to lose on the Senate floor was on Senator John Tower (R-TX) on March 9, 1989, during the President George H.W. Bush's (R) administration. He was nominated to be Secretary of Defense and later found work at the White House in a position that didn't require confirmation.

Since President Bill Clinton's (D) term, which started on January 20, 1993, only 11 *Cabinet* candidates have been nominated and then had their name withdrawn. No other Cabinet candidates since Tower have been rejected by a Senate vote. Since the filibuster was eliminated in 2017 with regard to presidential nominees, only two Cabinet officials who were nominated were not confirmed.

Could 2025 be different? Sure, but we doubt it. Most of Trump's nominees are likely to be confirmed.

Joe Lieber

202-964-7473

joe.lieber@capitolpolicypartners.com

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