

Former Navy SEAL Will Join President-Elect Trump's Cabinet

U.S. Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.), a fifth-generation Montanan, grew up in a logging community near Glacier National Park, where he often hiked in his youth.

Now, he will be in charge of the federal government department that oversees all of the nation's federally owned lands. President-elect Donald Trump announced Thursday morning, just minutes before the daily transition team press briefing, that he was nominating the former Navy SEAL to lead the Department of the Interior.

"I am pleased to nominate Congressman Ryan Zinke as our secretary of the interior," Trump said. "He has built one of the strongest track records on championing regulatory relief, forest management, responsible energy development and public land issues. As a former Navy SEAL, he has incredible leadership skills and an attitude of doing whatever it takes to win."

Although his time in Congress has been brief—he was first elected in 2014—he quickly established a record as a Teddy Roosevelt Conservationist in the House of Representatives. He has consistently led the efforts to renew the Land and Water Conservation Fund in Congress and has also been a firm advocate for our nation's sportsmen to gain access to our public lands with the SCORE and SHARE Acts. Rep. Zinke also introduced the Resilient Federal Forest Act in Congress, which initiated new reforms for revitalizing America's timber areas and preventing wildfires.

"America is the most beautiful country in the world, and he is going to help keep it that way with smart management of our

federal lands,” Trump said. “At the same time, my administration’s goal is to repeal bad regulations and use our natural resources to create jobs and wealth for the American people, and Ryan will explore every possibility for how we can safely and responsibly do that.”

Zinke holds a geology degree from the University of Oregon—where he was an All-PAC 10 football player—a master’s degree in business finance from National University, and a master’s degree in global leadership from the University of San Diego. He also served in the U.S. Navy for 23 years as a SEAL, retiring with the rank of commander in 2008.

In Congress, he has served on the House Armed Services and Natural Resources committees. He is also an adopted member of the Assiniboine Sioux Tribe at the Fort Peck Reservation in Northeast Montana.

Zinke issued the following statement regarding Trump’s nomination:

As someone who grew up in a logging and rail town and hiking in Glacier National Park, I am honored and humbled to be asked to serve Montana and America as secretary of interior. As inscribed in the stone archway of Yellowstone National Park in Gardiner, Montana, I shall faithfully uphold Teddy Roosevelt’s belief that our treasured public lands are “for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.”

I will work tirelessly to ensure our public lands are managed and preserved in a way that benefits everyone for generations to come. Most important, our sovereign Indian Nations and territories must have the respect and freedom they deserve. I look forward to making the Department of Interior and America great again. May God bless Montana, God bless America and God bless the troops who defend her.

Zinke brings the number of Cabinet-level evangelicals in the Trump administration to nine, which is more than a third of

the total appointments to be made. It also signals the nomination process for the Trump Cabinet is drawing to a close; the president-elect has only these Cabinet-level positions left to name in the remaining 36 days before Inauguration Day:

- Secretary of Agriculture
- Secretary of Veterans Affairs
- Director of the Office of Management and Budget
- U.S. Trade Representative
- Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers

The topic of Cabinet appointments was popular with the press on Thursday. Transition team spokesmen Sean Spicer and Jason Miller addressed the following points:

- The Military Times noted there are concerns among veterans groups that Trump has not yet nominated a VA secretary, particularly in light of his making veterans issues a key part of his presidential campaign. Miller said he recently discussed the matter with the president-elect and that there's a desire to "get it right" not just because of the bureaucracy involved, but also because of the lives at stake. Spicer added that although Trump has filled his Cabinet at the fastest pace in modern history, he cares deeply about veterans and the military, and he wants to make sure he finds the right person for the job.
- The Financial Times also asked if additional confirmation dates for other key Cabinet members had been set. Attorney General-designate Jeff Sessions will appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Jan. 10. Miller said no dates had been set by the respective Senate committee chairs, but they would alert the media when those dates are set.

Earlier in the briefing, Spicer noted Trump had held a "technology summit" at Trump Tower on Wednesday afternoon. He

provided the following “readout” of that gathering:

President-elect Donald J. Trump today met with more than a dozen of the greatest tech leaders in the country to begin a conversation and partnership in order to spark innovation and create more jobs in the U.S., particularly for working Americans.

In addition to the private sector leaders in attendance, the President-elect was joined by Vice President-elect Mike Pence, Jared Kushner, Ivanka Trump, Donald Trump Jr., Eric Trump, Peter Thiel, Reince Priebus, Steve Bannon, Wilbur Ross, Gary Cohn and Stephen Miller. During the meeting, the President-elect discussed a wide range of issues impacting both American workers and American companies, including specific innovative solutions that have been blocked by narrow thinking in Washington.

The President-elect expressed an open mind and willingness to listen, which was greatly received by the industry leaders in attendance.

During the Tech Summit, the following topics were discussed:

- Creating more jobs for American workers
- Eliminating barriers preventing American companies from doing business in other countries
- America’s competitive trade dynamic and market access with China
- Cutting taxes
- Repatriation of American profits kept overseas by prohibitive tax rates
- Improving our physical and digital infrastructures
- Protecting our intellectual property rights
- Improving America’s cybersecurity
- Updating our government software systems
- Technology in schools,
- The need for greater vocational education

opportunities

- Reducing bureaucracy
- Introducing greater accountability in the government procurement process.

The leaders in attendance also praised the ingenuity and energy of the American workforce, and President-elect Trump suggested reconvening the tech leaders again in the future, perhaps as frequently as every quarter.

Tech leaders in attendance included:

- Jeff Bezos, Amazon
- Safra Catz, Oracle
- Tim Cook, Apple
- Alex Karp, Palantir
- Brian Krzanich, Intel
- Elon Musk, Tesla
- Satya Nadella, Microsoft
- Larry Page, Google
- Chuck Robbins, Cisco
- Ginni Rometty, IBM
- Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook
- Eric Schmidt, Google

Later, during the Q&A with the press, Fox Business Network asked for the reasons Trump has delayed the press conference—which had been scheduled for Thursday—at which he would announce his plans to transfer control of the Trump Organization to his adult children. Miller noted Trump owns a number of businesses, and that due to internal considerations, it takes time to develop a strategy.

He said the American people understand they elected a successful businessman, and that the priority was to get the transfer accomplished correctly. Trump is expected to announce his full divestment from the company he built from the ground up next month, prior to the inauguration.

The Daily Signal also asked about reports that President Barack Obama has implemented an 11th-hour rule change within the Department of Health and Human Services that would prevent states from defunding Planned Parenthood. Miller said the policy team led by Stephen Miller was already reviewing first-day executive actions and that those would be announced in the run-up to the inauguration.

The Daily Signal also asked about reports a Supreme Court nominee could be announced around the time of the inauguration. Miller said there have been discussions, and the list has been narrowed to about five or six top contenders, but there was no official timetable for making an announcement.

Miller also update the president-elect's upcoming schedule for Thursday:

- meeting with Facebook Vice President of Public Policy Joel Kaplan, who served as deputy chief of staff for policy under President George W. Bush;
- meeting with Concerned Veterans for America President and CEO Pete Hegseth, a potential VA secretary candidate;
- meeting with Nucor Steel CEO Dan Dimicco, who served as Trump's senior trade adviser and who is a potential trade representative candidate;
- meeting with representatives of the U.S. Conference of Mayors;
- meeting with Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, a potential Customs and Border Patrol director candidate and
- traveling with Vice President-Elect Mike Pence to Hershey, Pa. for another USA Thank You Tour event.

Additional rallies are planned for 7 p.m. EST Friday in Orlando, Fla., and 3 p.m. EST Saturday in Mobile, Ala. {eoa}