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RESEARCH

Tracking turnover in the Trump administration

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Editor's note: Because Donald Trump's tenure in the White House has ended, this page will no longer be updated. It will remain in its current state as a resource for historical data.

The rate of turnover among senior-level advisers to President Trump has generated a great deal of attention. Below, we offer two sets of resources to help measure and contextualize this turnover. The first set of resources tracks turnover among senior-ranking advisers in the executive office of the president (which does not include Cabinet secretaries); [the second set of resources \(#cabinet\)](#) tracks turnover in the Cabinet.

Turnover on the president's "A Team"

President Trump's "A Team" turnover is 92% as of January 20, 2021

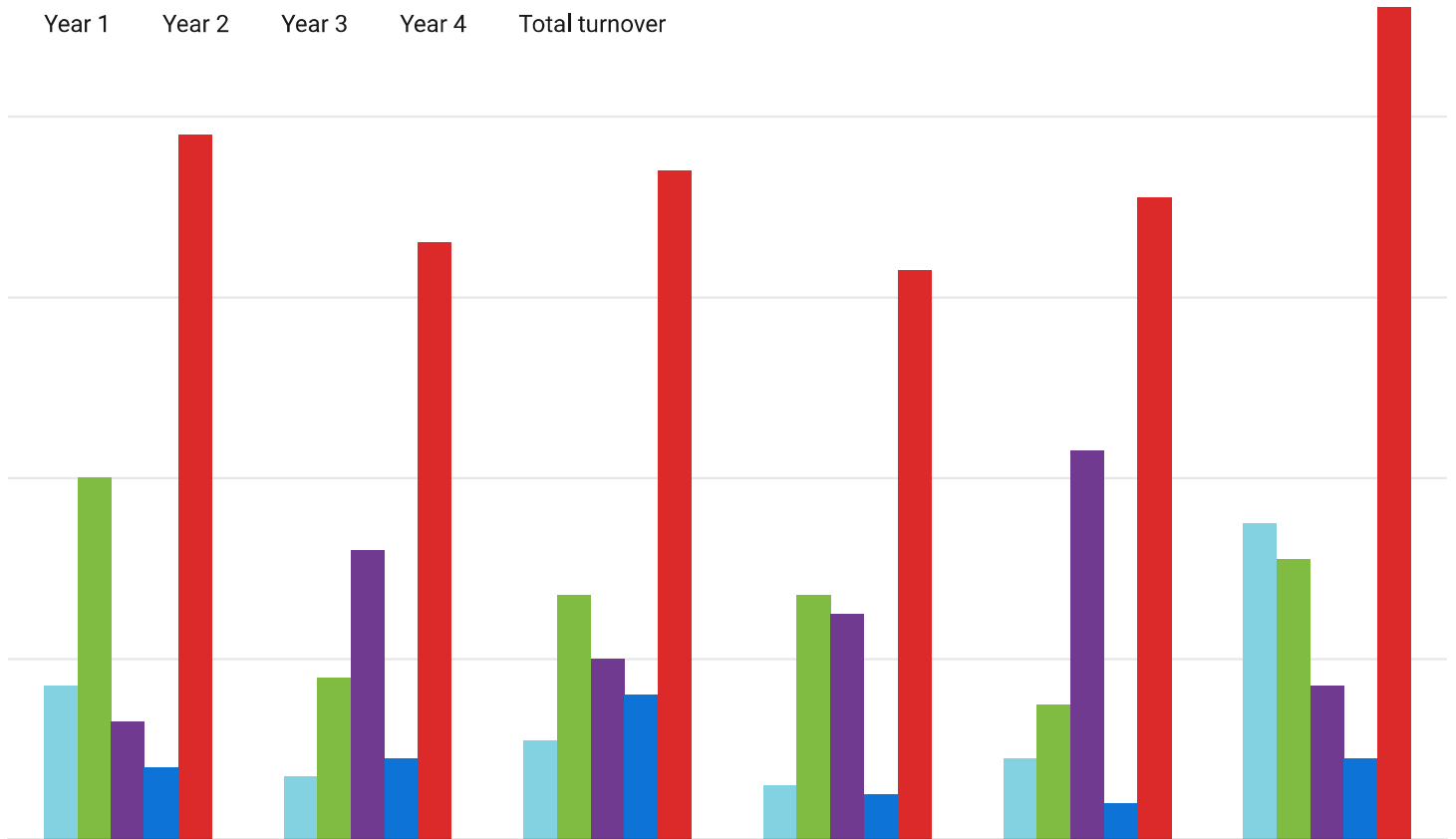
The following chart and table reflect turnover among the most influential positions within the executive office of the president. This data is compiled and tracked by Brookings Nonresident Senior Fellow [Kathryn Dunn Tenpas](#) (<https://www.brookings.edu/experts/kathryn-dunn-tenpas-ph-d/>), who refers to this group of advisers as the president's "A Team." The list of positions that make up the "A

Team” is based on National Journal “Decision Makers” editions, and Dunn Tenpas’s methodology is described in detail in a [report \(https://www.brookings.edu/research/why-is-trumps-staff-turnover-higher-than-the-5-most-recent-presidents/\)](https://www.brookings.edu/research/why-is-trumps-staff-turnover-higher-than-the-5-most-recent-presidents/) she published in January 2018. The chart and table below will be updated as additional members of the “A Team” depart their positions. It is important to note the following:

- Because the “A Team” is made up of members of the executive office of the president, it does not include Cabinet secretaries.
- Each position on the “A Team” is only counted once. If multiple people hold and depart from the same position (e.g., communications director), only the initial departure is tracked/affects the turnover rate. For more information on these instances, see the [“serial turnover” section below \(#serial1\)](#).

President Trump's 'A Team': Turnover from year to year

Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4 Total turnover



Trump (N=57)

Source: National Journal "Decision Makers" editions (April 25, 1981, p.678; June 10, 1989, p.1405; June 19, 1993, p.1457; June 23, 2001, p.1886 and June 20, 2009, p.26). Kathryn Dunn Tenpas "Why is Trump's staff turnover higher than the 5 most recent presidents?" The Brookings Institution, Jan. 19, 2018. • [Get the data](#)

Summary and analysis of "A Team" turnover in the Trump administration

Set out below is a list of the senior level departures from the executive office of the president since the beginning of the Trump administration (each of the 65 "A Team" positions is only counted once toward the turnover rate, thus, this chart only includes the first person to hold/depart a given position). "ST" indicates a position that went through multiple instances of turnover; [see below for more details \(#serial1\)](#).

Year	Position	Name	Prior job	Nature of departure*	Date of departure announcement
1	Senior Director for Africa, NSC (ST)	Robin Townley	Marines	Resigned Under Pressure (RUP)	2/10/2017
1	Chief of Staff and Executive Secretary, NSC (ST)	Keith Kellogg	Cubic Defense	Promoted	2/13/2017
1	National Security Advisor (ST)	Michael Flynn	Trump Campaign	RUP	2/13/2017
1	Assistant to the President (AP) and Senior Counselor for Economic Initiatives	Dina Powell	Goldman Sachs	Promoted	3/15/2017
1	Deputy Chief of Staff (ST)	Katie Walsh	RNC	RUP	3/30/2017
1	Deputy National Security Adviser (ST)	KT McFarland	TV analyst	RUP	5/19/2017
1	AP and Communications Director (ST)	Michael Dubke	Black Rock Group	RUP	5/30/2017
1	Press Secretary (ST)	Sean Spicer	RNC	RUP	7/21/2017

Year	Position	Name	Prior job	Nature of departure*	Date of departure announcement
1	Principal Deputy Press Secretary (ST)	Sarah Huckabee Sanders	Trump Campaign	Promoted	7/21/2017
1	AP and Chief of Staff to the VP (ST)	Josh Pitcock	Capitol Hill	Resigned	7/28/2017
1	Chief of Staff (ST)	Reince Priebus	RNC	RUP	7/31/2017
1	Senior Intelligence Director, NSC (ST)	Ezra Cohen-Watnick	U.S. Government (DIA)	RUP	8/2/2017
1	AP and Chief Strategist and Senior Counselor to the President	Steve Bannon	Media	RUP	8/18/2017
1	AP and Director of Public Liaison (ST)	George Sifakis	Gov't Relations	RUP	8/18/2017
1	Deputy AP and Director of Presidential Advance (ST)	George Gigicos	Consulting	RUP	8/22/2017
1	National Security Adviser for VP	Andrea Thompson	McChrystal Group	Promoted	9/11/2017

Year	Position	Name	Prior job	Nature of departure*	Date of departure announcement
1	AP and Director of Strategic Communications (ST)	Hope Hicks	Trump Organization	Promoted	9/12/2017
1	DAP and Deputy Communications Director and Research Director	Raj Shah	RNC	Promoted	9/12/2017
1	Deputy AP and Director of Oval Office Operations (ST)	Keith Schiller	Trump Organization	RUP	9/20/2017
1	Deputy AP and Deputy White House Counsel (ST)	Greg Katsas	Law Firm	Resigned	11/28/2017
1	AP and Director of Communications, Office of Public Liaison	Omarosa Manigault	Reality Television	RUP	12/13/2017
1	Deputy Director of the Domestic Policy Council and Director of Budget Policy (ST)	Paul Winfree	Heritage Foundation	Resigned	12/15/2017
1	AP and Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy	Rick Dearborn	U.S. Senate staff	Resigned	12/23/2017 resignation announced,

Year	Position	Name	Prior job	Nature of departure*	Date of departure announcement
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departed
3/13/2018

Year	Position	Name	Prior job	Nature of departure*	Date of departure announcement
2	AP and Staff Secretary (ST)	Rob Porter	U.S. Senate Staff	RUP	2/7/2018
2	Senior Director of Legislative Affairs, NSC	Daniel Greenwood	Marines	Promoted	2/9/2018
2	AP and Director of Presidential Personnel (ST)	John DeStefano	U.S. House of Representatives Staff	Promoted	2/9/2018
2	AP for Intergovernmental and Technology Initiatives (ST)	Reed Cordish	Real Estate	Resigned	2/16/2018
2	AP and Director of the National Economic Council	Gary Cohn	Goldman Sachs	Resigned	3/6/2018
2	CIA Director	Mike Pompeo	Member, House of Representatives (R-KS)	Promoted	3/13/2018
2	DAP and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs	Justin Clark	Trump Campaign	Promoted	3/13/2018
2	Deputy CIA Director	Gina Haspel	CIA	Promoted	3/13/2018

Year	Position	Name	Prior job	Nature of departure*	Date of departure announcement
2	AP and Director for Strategic Initiatives	Chris Liddell	WME/IMG	Promoted	3/19/2018
2	AP for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (ST)	Thomas Bossert	Atlantic Council	RUP	4/10/2018
2	DAP and Director of Policy and Interagency Coordination	Carlos Diaz-Rosillo	Harvard University	Promoted	6/19/2018
2	DAP and Senior Adviser to the Chief of Staff	Sean Cairncross	RNC	Promoted	Unknown (nominated MCC 1/5/18)
2	Deputy Director, National Economic Council and International Economic Affairs (ST)	Everett Eissentat	Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT)	Resigned	7/15/2018
2	AP and White House Director of Legislative Affairs (ST)	Marc Short	Trump Campaign	Resigned	7/20/2018
2	DAP and Deputy Chief of Staff to the Vice President	Jen Pavlik	Office of Governor Pence	Resigned	August 2018
2	Counsel to the President	Donald McGahn	Trump Campaign	Resigned	10/17/2018

Year	Position	Name	Prior job	Nature of departure*	Date of departure announcement
2	SAP and Director of Communications for the First Lady	Stephanie Grisham	Trump Campaign	Promoted	November 2018
2	DAP and Director of White House Management, Office of Administration	Marcia Lee Kelly	RNC	Resigned	November 2018
2	DAP and Political Director	Bill Stepien	Trump Campaign	Resigned	12/7/2018
2	OMB Director	Mick Mulvaney	Member, House of Representatives (R-SC)	Promoted	12/14/2018

Year	Position	Name	Prior job	Nature of departure*	Date of departure announcement
3	AP and Director of Domestic Policy Council (ST)	Andrew Bremberg	RNC	Promoted	January 2019
3	Administrator, OIRA	Neomi Rao	George Mason Law School	Resigned	3/13/2019
3	SAP and Director of Organizational Structure and Human Capital	Kirk Ryan Marshall	Trump Campaign	Promoted	March 2019
3	Member, White House Council of Economic Advisers	Richard Burkhauser	Professor	Resigned	May 2019
3	Associate Director for Natural Resources, Energy, and Science; OMB	James P. Herz	Senior Policy Analyst, Budget Committee; House of Representatives	Promoted	6/1/2019
3	Chair, White House Council of Economic Advisers (ST)	Kevin Hassett	American Enterprise Institute	Resigned	6/2/2019
3	DAP and Cabinet Secretary	William McGinley	Jones Day	Resigned	6/28/2019 (July departure)

Year	Position	Name	Prior job	Nature of departure*	Date of departure announcement
3	Senior Director for Europe and Russia, NSC (ST)	Fiona Hill	Brookings Institution	Resigned	6/17/2019 (August departure)
3	Director of National Intelligence	Dan Coats	U.S. Senator	RUP	7/28/2019
3	AP and Special Representative for International Negotiations	Jason Greenblatt	Trump Organization	Resigned	9/5/2019
3	Senior Director for Asia, NSC	Matthew Pottinger	U.S. Marine Corps	Promoted	9/22/2019

Year	Position	Name	Prior job	Nature of departure*	Date of departure announcement
4	Deputy AP and Deputy Communications Director and Research Director	Jessica Ditto	Office of Ky. Gov. Matt Bevin; Trump campaign	Resigned	3/30/2020
4	AP and Chief of Staff to the First Lady (ST)	Lindsay Reynolds	The LBR Group/event planning	Resigned	4/6/2020
4	AP and Director of Social Media	Dan Scavino	Trump campaign	Promoted	4/21/2020
4	Deputy AP for Legislative Affairs and Senate Deputy Director	Amy Swonger	Invariant GR, Principal	Promoted	6/5/2020
4	Counselor to the President	Kellyanne Conway	Trump campaign	Resigned	8/24/2020
4	DAP and Senior Director for South and Central Asia	Lisa Cutris	Heritage Foundation	Resigned	1/8/2021

SUMMARY: 60/65 (92%) "A Team" positions have turned over.

* Author's note: The departure status was difficult to determine in some cases because media reports were often at odds with an individual's claim that they were resigning. In the end, the category "resigned under pressure" was created to capture the general sentiment at the time of their departure. "(ST)" indicates a position that went through multiple instances of turnover; see the "Serial turnover" section below for more details.

** Author's note: Anthony Scaramucci was communications director for 11 days. He was succeeded by Hope Hicks, who resigned Feb. 28, 2018. On July 5, 2018, Bill Shine was appointed to the White House communications director role with a slightly different official title, "Assistant to the President and Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications"; he resigned on March 8, 2019. Stephanie Grisham subsequently took over both the communications director and press secretary roles.

*** Author's note: After Thomas Bossert's departure, incoming National Security Adviser John Bolton folded the position of "AP for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism" into the National Security Council with the new title of "Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Advisor."

Sources: Multiple news websites, LinkedIn, WhiteHouse.gov, and other government websites.

Serial turnover within the Trump "A Team"

[\(\)](#) The turnover data above include only the president's initial team of advisers and when one departs, the position falls out of the sample. One of the limitations of this approach is that it does not consider multiple departures within a single position, a common phenomenon within the Trump team. Set out below are the "A Team" positions that have had more than two occupants.

45% of President Trump's "A Team" departures have undergone serial turnover as of January 20, 2021

Position	Original	Replacement 1	Replacement 2	Replacement 3	Replacement 4
Chief of Staff	Reince Priebus	John Kelly	Mick Mulvaney (acting)	Mark Meadows	
Deputy Chief of Staff**	Katie Walsh	Kirstjen Nielsen	Zachary Fuentes	Emma Doyle	John Fl...
Chief of Staff to the VP	Josh Pitcock	Nick Ayers	Marc Short		
Chief of Staff to the First Lady	Lindsay Reynolds	Stephanie Grisham	Unknown		
Communications Director*	Michael Dubke	Anthony Scaramucci	Hope Hicks	Bill Shine	Stephanie Grisham
Press Secretary	Sean Spicer	Sarah Huckabee Sanders	Stephanie Grisham	Kayleigh McEnany	
Director of Strategic Communications	Hope Hicks	Mercedes Schlapp	Unknown		
Principal Deputy Press Secretary	Sarah Huckabee Sanders	Raj Shah	Hogan Gidley	Brian R. Morgenstern	
Director of Public Liaison	George Sifakis	Justin Clark	Timothy Pataki		
Director of Oval Office Operations	Keith Schiller	Jordan Karem	Madeleine Westerhout	Nicholas F. Luna	
Director of Presidential	John DeStefano	Sean Doocey	John McEntee		

Position	Original	Replacement 1	Replacement 2	Replacement 3	Replacement 4
Personnel					
Staff Secretary	Rob Porter	Derek Lyons	Unknown		
Director of Presidential Advance	George Gigicos	Robert L. Peede	Max Miller	Unknown	
Deputy White House Counsel**	Greg Katsas	Uttam Dhillon	Patrick Philbin		
National Security Adviser	Michael Flynn	HR McMaster	John Bolton	Robert C. O'Brien	
Deputy National Security Adviser	KT McFarland	Dina Powell/Ricky Waddell	Nadia Schadow	Mira Ricardel	Charles Kupperr
AP for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism	Thomas Bossert	Doug Fears	Peter Brown	Julia Nesheiwat	
Chief of Staff and Executive Secretary, NSC	Keith Kellogg	Frederick Fleitz	Joan Virginia O'Hara	Matthias Mitman	
Senior Director of Intelligence, NSC	Ezra Cohen Watnick	Michael Barry	Michael Ellis		
Senior Director for Europe and Russia, NSC	Fiona Hill	Tim Morrison	Andrew Peek	Tom Williams	Ryan Tu
Senior Director for Africa, NSC	Derek Harvey	Cyril Sartor	Elizabeth Erin Walsh		

Position	Original	Replacement 1	Replacement 2	Replacement 3	Replacement 4
Director of Domestic Policy Council	Andrew Bremberg	Joe Grogan	Brooke Rollins (acting)		
Deputy Director, National Economic Council and International Economic Affairs	Everett Eissenstat	Cletus Willems	Kelly Ann Shaw	Thomas Storch	Francis Brooke
Chair, White House Council of Economic Advisers	Kevin Hassett	Tomas Philipson (acting)	Tyler Goodspeed (acting)	Unknown	
Deputy Director of the Domestic Policy Council and Director of Budget Policy	Paul Winfree	Lance Leggitt	Jenniver Bardley Lichter		

SUMMARY: 27/60 (45%) “A Team” departures have turned over twice or more.

* Author's note: For the purposes of this study, we count Michael Dubke as the first communications director, since Sean Spicer was serving in a temporary capacity until the Trump administration filled the job with a permanent candidate.

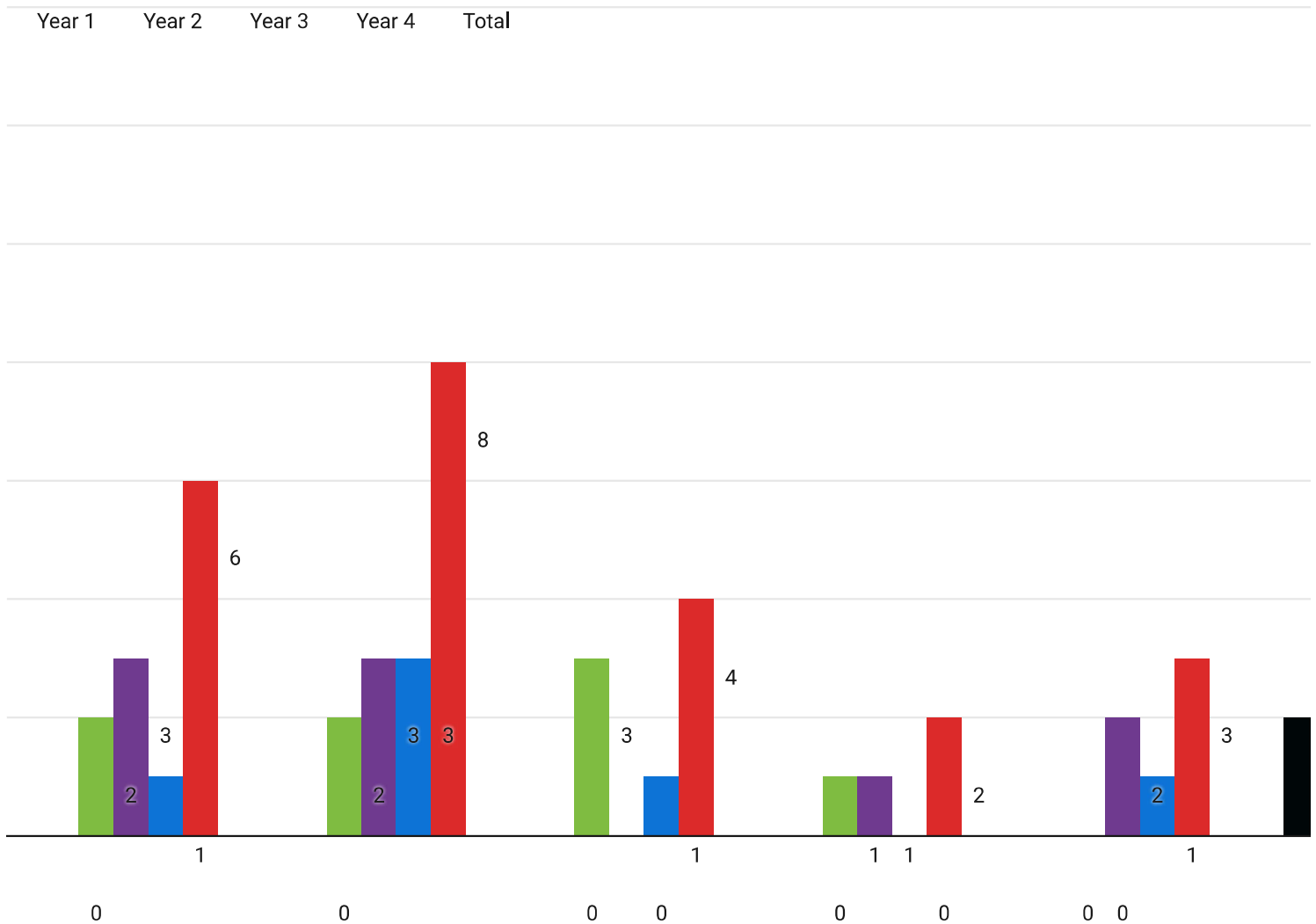
** Author's note: Notice that there are multiple deputies under the chief of staff and White House counsel. The data reflect an attempt to track just a single deputy position and note the successor. However, there is minimal publicly available information on presidential staffing. It is also the case that a new chief of staff may not have a “first among equals” deputy chief of staff, such that the role may have changed since the original occupant. The same is true for White House Counsel. While Greg Katsas may have been the “first among equals” among the Deputy White House Counsel positions in 2017, the role may have changed under the new White House Counsel, Pat Cipollone.

*** Author's note: Upon the departure of former Deputy National Security Adviser Charles Kupperman, National Security Adviser Robert C. O'Brien divided the duties of that position between Matthew Pottinger and Victoria Coates. On Feb. 20, 2020, the National Security Council said that Coates had left the position and been reassigned as a senior adviser to Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette; on Jan. 7, reports indicated that Pottinger had resigned (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/06/politics/national-security-adviser-resigns-trump-protest/index.html>).

Turnover in the president's Cabinet

The chart and table below are dedicated to tracking turnover in the Cabinet. They will also be updated as additional turnover occurs. Unlike the trackers above dedicated to the president's “A Team,” these resources look at every departure from the president's Cabinet, even if multiple people have occupied that position.

President Trump's Cabinet: Turnover from year to year



Disclaimer

Cabinet membership for all administrations includes the heads of federal executive departments that are in the presidential line of succession; excludes Cabinet-level appointments (e.g., Small Business Administration administrator, chief of staff) since those can change across and even administrations. Special thanks to Kobi Hackenburg for research assistance.

Source: Agency websites, White House website and archives, and various news sources. • [Get the data](#)

Notice of updated methodology

The current table of Cabinet-level turnover has been updated from a previous version, [accessible here for reference \(https://www.brookings.edu/research/appendix-archive-version-of-brookings-white-house-turnover-tracker/\)](https://www.brookings.edu/research/appendix-archive-version-of-brookings-white-house-turnover-tracker/), that was based on a different methodology; this change was made on May 21, 2019. This newer table provides data going back to President Reagan (1981) and adheres to a strict definition of Cabinet by only including the heads of the executive departments. While presidents often promote a position like EPA administrator to Cabinet-level status, these appointments

are ad hoc, can be short-lived, and make it difficult to compare over time. Given the variability, we only include Senate-confirmed Cabinet members who are in the presidential line of succession, since this allows for greater consistency and standardization. More information on this update is available in [a piece on Brookings's FixGov blog \(https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2019/05/21/who-is-in-the-presidents-cabinet/\)](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2019/05/21/who-is-in-the-presidents-cabinet/). Additionally, since Reagan's presidency, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Homeland Security have been added to the list (increasing from 13 to 15 positions). Year of departure is determined by the date a Cabinet member announced they were resigning, regardless of their final end date.

Summary and analysis of Cabinet departures in the Trump administration

Set out below is a list of departures from the president's Cabinet since the beginning of the Trump administration.

Year	Position	Name	Prior job	Nature of departure	Date of departure announcement
1	Secretary of Homeland Security	John F. Kelly	U.S. Marine Corps	Promoted	7/28/2017
1	Secretary of Health and Human Services	Tom Price	Member of the House	Resigned under pressure (RUP)	9/29/2017
2	Secretary of State	Rex Tillerson	Exxon	RUP	3/13/2018
2	Secretary of Veterans Affairs	David Shulkin	U.S. Government (VA)	RUP	3/28/2018
2	Attorney General	Jeff Sessions	U.S. Senator	RUP	11/7/2018
2	Secretary of Defense	Jim Mattis	Retired	Protest Resignation (PR)	12/20/2018
2	Secretary of Interior	Ryan Zinke	Member of the House	RUP	12/15/2018
3	Secretary of Homeland Security	Kirstjen Nielsen	Deputy Chief of Staff	RUP	4/7/2019
3	Secretary of Labor	Alex Acosta	FIU College of Law	RUP	7/12/2019


Year	Position	Name	Prior job	Nature of departure	Date of departure announcement
3	Secretary of Energy	Rick Perry	Presidential candidate/Governor of Texas	Resigned	10/17/2019
4	Secretary of Defense	Mark Esper	U.S. Secretary of the Army	RUP	11/9/2020
4	Attorney General	William Barr	Kirkland & Ellis LLP	Resigned	12/14/2020
4	Secretary of Transportation	Elaine Chao	Hudson Institute	Resigned	1/7/2021
4	Secretary of Education	Betsy DeVos	The Windquest Group	Resigned	1/7/2021

*Author's note: An asterisk by the name of a successor denotes that individual is no longer serving in the Cabinet.

Sources: Agency websites, presidential library websites, and various news sources. Thanks to Elaine Kamarck and Nick Zeppos, who contributed to the initial data collection for this section.

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