

# BUSINESS INSIDER

## Democrats want some of them gone, but these 9 Trump-era officials are still holding high-level positions in the Biden administration

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Postmaster General Louis DeJoy gets a lot of attention as the legally challenged Trump donor who Democrats would love to see go away. But there are other officials appointed by President Donald Trump who are sticking around in their high-level posts in the Biden administration.

That's not unusual, said Eleanor Eagan, of The Revolving Door Project. Term limits and other circumstances keep a small portion of about 4,000 political appointees in their jobs when an administration changes hands.

"But the Trump administration was not usual in any sense, and the ways in which these people use their power, and then some of the abuses of power, certainly really point, in our opinion, to the need to remove them where it's possible," said Eagan, who has written about Trump holdovers.

Some political appointees, such as the commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service and the director of the FBI, are expected to stay, and others remain in their positions because the president wants to keep them, said Max Stier, president and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service. "Continuity is of high value," he said.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Here are nine Trump-era officials continuing in top government positions months after he left office.

### **Postmaster General Louis 'Get used to me' DeJoy**

DeJoy, a Trump megadonor, takes exception to being called a "political appointee." He says he isn't one and once told Rep. Jim Cooper to "get that straight."

So before we get in trouble, we'll explain that DeJoy was appointed to his post by the US Postal Service's Board of Governors, who had all been nominated by Trump and were mostly Republicans. He began his tenure in June 2020.

Some Democrats have been calling for DeJoy's ouster, but his fate is up to a majority of the Board of Governors, which typically consists of nine members appointed by the president. The Senate confirmed three of Biden's nominees in May, but the board's six other term-limited members — as of April — continued to support DeJoy, according to a letter sent to Sen. Tammy Duckworth, an Illinois Democrat.

The postmaster general has no fixed term. "Get used to me," DeJoy told Cooper during a February hearing.

The former trucking and logistics executive became controversial quickly with aggressive cost-cutting measures that led to slower mail service and raised concerns about mailed ballots during the November election.

Now the Federal Bureau of Investigation is probing DeJoy as part of an investigation into potential campaign finance violations involving his former company, North Carolina-based New Breed Logistics, according to the Washington Post. The newspaper had reported employees alleged they were pressured by DeJoy to contribute to Republicans and then received bonuses as reimbursements.

Mark Corallo, a spokesman for DeJoy, said in a June 3 statement, "Mr. DeJoy has learned that the Department of Justice is investigating campaign contributions made by employees who worked for him when he was in the private sector. He has always been scrupulous in his adherence to the campaign contribution laws and has never knowingly violated them."

### **Andrew Saul, Social Security Administration commissioner**

A former retail apparel chain owner and Republican donor, Saul is another official on Democrats' wish list for removal along with his deputy, David Black.

The Senate confirmed both men in 2019 for six-year terms that expire in January 2025. Three key Democrats calling for their ouster say the duo has pushed "substantial" cuts to Social Security and engaged in "aggressive anti-union activities."

"The policies advanced by Mr. Saul and Mr. Black fit right in with former President Trump and congressional Republicans' agenda for Social Security – dismantling and cutting it," House Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee Chairman John Larson of Connecticut, Worker and Family Support Subcommittee Chairman Danny Davis of Illinois, and Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Bill Pascrell, Jr. of New Jersey wrote in a joint statement in March.

The lawmakers also said in March that Saul and Black were responsible for delaying stimulus disbursements to nearly 30 million people by not sending their payment files to the IRS. The files were delivered the day after the lawmakers complained.

Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio, in his first act as chairman of a Senate subcommittee on Social Security, also called for Saul and Black's replacement.

A commissioner "may be removed from office only pursuant to a finding by the president of neglect of duty or malfeasance in office," according to the Social Security Act.

A Social Security Administration spokesman said Saul took action to keep employees safe during the pandemic, adding that he and Black have invested in outreach to vulnerable populations and worked to enhance the customer experience with technology improvements.

"The facts demonstrate their commitment to the public and employees," Mark Hinkle said in a statement to Insider. "Both the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner appreciate the opportunity to continue to serve people throughout our country and this Administration during their full terms."

Saul also served under former Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama from 2002 to 2011 as the chairman of a federal board that manages a savings plan for federal employees and service members.

### **David Black, Social Security Administration deputy commissioner**

Like Saul, Black is the subject of Democrats' ire for helping implement Trump's agenda.

Before becoming deputy commissioner, Black spent two years as a senior White House advisor at the Social Security Administration. He was Social Security Administration's general counsel from November 2007 to July 2015, according to his LinkedIn profile.

He worked in the Department of Education from 2004 to 2007 as deputy assistant secretary, Office of Civil Rights.

Black has a long military career. He has served as a US Army Reserve Command judge advocate for the past 21 years. He also spent 10 years in the Army as a Russian linguist and judge advocate.

### **Charles Rettig, IRS commissioner**

Rettig may seem a curious match for a president like Joe Biden who wants to increase taxes on corporations and wealthy individuals.

A former Beverly Hills tax attorney, Rettig spent more than three decades representing rich clients and helping corporations fight taxing authorities before Trump nominated him to lead the agency in 2018.

Two years earlier, Rettig in 2016 penned an op-ed in Forbes defending Trump's decision not to release his taxes. He explained Trump's tax team was already busy dealing with "inquiries by the IRS 'Wealth Squad' audit team assigned to his case."

He came under fire during his 2018 Senate confirmation hearing for failing to disclose a stake in two Hawaii rental units at a Trump-branded hotel. Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington a year later reported that he earns as much as \$1 million in rental income.

More recently, Republicans are questioning the leak of private IRS data to the news organization ProPublica, which revealed how billionaires avoid paying federal income taxes. Rettig recently assured lawmakers that any illegal activity would be prosecuted.

Rettig has earned praise for implementing the stimulus package. He is in charge of distributing the American Rescue Plan's expanded child tax credit payments, and he would have a major hand in carrying out tax credits in Biden's proposed infrastructure plan along with any tax increases. His term ends in November 2022. A spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment.

### **Mark Calabria, Federal Housing Finance Agency director**

Calabria served as former Vice President Mike Pence's chief economist before joining the Federal Housing Finance Agency, which regulates Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the 11 Federal Home Loan Banks.

If Biden wanted to oust Calabria, he could potentially get a hand from a case pending before the Supreme Court, *Collins v. Yellen*. One argument in that case is that the structure of FHFA is unconstitutional because the president's authority to fire the director is limited.

The Senate confirmed Calabria's appointment in 2019 and his term expires in 2024. He told Fox Business in 2019 that he intends to serve all of his term.

Calabria is known as a libertarian economist and a frequent media commentator who previously directed financial regulation studies at the Cato Institute and served as a senior aide on the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs to then-Chairmen Phil Gramm and Richard Shelby, both Republicans

### **John Sullivan, US ambassador to Russia**

Biden asked Sullivan to remain in the post he has held since December 2019 amid tensions with Russia over cyber attacks, election interference and Ukraine.

Sullivan previously served as deputy secretary of State from 2017 to 2019 and spent about a month as the acting Secretary of State in 2018 after Trump fired Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

Before State, Sullivan was a partner in Mayer Brown LLP and co-chair of the firm's national security practice. He chaired the US-Iraq Business Dialogue, a governmental advisory committee, from 2010 to 2016 and previously served in senior positions at the Justice, Defense and Commerce departments during the two Bush administrations.

In a February statement, Sullivan said Biden asked him to remain in his post "for an indefinite period through this year."

### **Christopher Wray, FBI director**

Trump nominated Wray to lead the bureau after firing James Comey in 2017, but he wasn't happy with Wray, either.

Wray's statements about voter fraud, Russia's election interference efforts, and Antifa — the loosely organized left-wing anti-fascist movement — often put him at odds with Trump, Insider reported.

Last spring, then-Attorney General Bill Barr threatened to resign in protest when Trump was considering firing Wray.

Biden administration officials have said he intends to keep Wray in his post. FBI directors typically serve their full 10-year-terms.

### **David Ryder, US Mint director**

Making change is hard at the US Mint.

The official director post had been open since 2011 when Ryder was approved for a five-year term in April 2018.

The Senate didn't confirm two of Obama's nominees after Republican Edmund Moy left in 2011.

Ryder also served as Mint director from September 1992 to November 1993 as well as deputy treasurer of the United States, deputy chief of staff to former Vice President Dan Quayle, and special assistant to then-Vice President George H.W. Bush.

### **David Pekoske, TSA administrator**

Pekoske is a former vice commandant of the US Coast Guard. He spent 33 years in the service in various roles and was twice awarded the Homeland Security Distinguished Service Medal.

He was also an executive in the government services industry, leading teams that provided counterterrorism, security and intelligence support services to government agencies, according to his biography.

He was confirmed in 2017 for a five-year term ending in August 2022.