

Executive Actions:

President Trump Signs Presidential Memorandum Regarding Withdrawal of the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Negotiations and Agreement

On Jan. 23, President Trump signed a [presidential memorandum](#) that notified the parties of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) that the United States withdrew as a signatory of the negotiating process. Following the withdrawal, the Trump administration stated that it is the policy of the administration to “begin pursuing, wherever possible, bilateral trade negotiations to promote American industry, protect American workers and raise American wages.”

President Trump Signs Executive Order to Secure and Defend the U.S. Border

On Jan. 25, President Trump signed an executive order titled “[Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements](#),” which authorized the construction of a border wall on the United States border with Mexico. The executive order “deploy[s] all lawful means to secure the nation’s southern border, prevent further illegal immigration into the United States and repatriate illegal aliens swiftly, consistently and humanely.” It orders the completion of the border security measures promised, but never met, in the [Secure Fence Act of 2006](#). President Trump’s order also calls for hiring 5,000 additional Border Patrol agents and the construction of more immigration detention centers and assigns additional asylum officers.

Betsy DeVos is Confirmed as Education Secretary

On Feb. 7, Betsy DeVos was confirmed as the U.S. secretary of Education by a vote of 51-50, with Vice President Mike Pence breaking the tie. On Jan. 9, ABC sent a [letter](#) to Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) to encourage the swift confirmation of DeVos. For more information about ABC’s support of DeVos, please read the [Newsline story](#) published on Jan. 10.

President Trump Cuts Through Red Tape with a Regulation-killing Executive Order

On Feb. 24, President Trump signed an [executive order](#) requiring every agency to eliminate costly and unnecessary regulations. The executive order establishes mechanisms intended to reduce regulations, including implementing the president’s Jan. 30 [Executive Order 13771](#), which calls for agencies to eliminate two regulations for each new regulation they create. As described in a White House [news release](#), the executive order directs each agency’s Regulatory Reform Task Force to: “evaluate existing regulations and identify candidates for repeal or modification” and “focus on eliminating costly and unnecessary regulations.”

President Trump Issues Executive Order to Rein in Overreaching Waters of the U.S. Rule

On Feb. 28, President Trump [issued an executive order](#) requiring the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to review the controversial Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule and accordingly revise or rescind it through public comment. [ABC praised](#) the action to reign in the rule, which had been previously been blocked under a nationwide stay issued by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, and has been a vocal opponent of the rule since it was first proposed in April 2014. ABC [filed comments](#) with more than 50 ABC chapters, with a group of [375 trade associations](#) and as a member of the [Waters Advocacy Coalition](#) expressing concern over the rule.

Trump Administration Approves Keystone XL Pipeline Permit

On March 24, the U.S. Department of State signed a permit approving the [TransCanada Keystone XL pipeline](#). The decision came after President Trump issued a [presidential memorandum](#) on Jan. 24 designed to expedite the completion of the pipeline. The memorandum invited TransCanada to re-submit its application for a presidential permit for the construction of the 1,600-mile pipeline, which would ship crude oil from Canada's western oil-sands region to refineries on the Gulf Coast, and requested that the State Department reach a final permitting decision within 60 days of TransCanada's submission. For more information, read the [Newsline story](#) on the approval of the Keystone XL pipeline.

On Jan. 24, President Trump also issued related memoranda [regarding the Dakota Access pipeline](#) and the environmental permitting process for infrastructure projects related to the pipelines, [directing the Department of Commerce to streamline the manufacturing permitting process](#) and giving it [180 days to develop a plan to maximize the use of U.S. steel in the pipeline](#).

President Trump Eliminates Illegal Obama Blacklisting Rule

On March 27, President Trump signed into law H.J.Res. 37, which blocks the Obama administration's controversial Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces Executive Order 13673, commonly referred to as the blacklisting rule, from taking effect and prevents future administrations from promulgating a similar rule—essentially permanently eliminating the rule. ABC led the fight against the unfair policy since it was first proposed in July 2014 and filed a successful legal challenge against the final rule last fall. The U.S. House of Representatives approved the resolution on Feb. 2 with a bipartisan vote of 236-187, and was later joined by the U.S. Senate, which passed the resolution on March 6 by a vote of 49-48. To read more about the blacklisting rule, please visit abc.org/blacklisting.

President Trump Signs Resolution to Eliminate Burdensome OSHA Recordkeeping Rule

On April 4, President Trump signed H.J.Res. 83 into law, blocking the Obama administration’s controversial “Volks rule” (formally known as Clarification of an Employer’s Continuing Obligation to Make and Maintain an Accurate Record of Each Recordable Injury and Illness final rule) from taking effect and preventing future administrations from promulgating a similar rule—essentially permanently eliminating the rule. ABC sent letters to [members of the U.S. House of Representatives](#) and [U.S. Senate](#) ahead of the Congressional Review Act resolution votes on the Volks rule urging them to support the resolution. For more information on the elimination of the Volks rule, read the [Newsline story](#) published on April 4.

OSHA Delays Enforcement of Silica Rule by Three Months

On April 6, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) delayed enforcement of the silica standard as it applies to the construction industry from June 23, 2017 to Sept. 23, 2017. On March 10, the ABC-led Construction Industry Safety Coalition sent a letter to the acting secretary of Labor requesting that the department delay enforcement of OSHA’s final silica rule by one year. ABC, along with several national construction organizations, is challenging the rule in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. For more information on the silica rule, read the [Newsline story](#) published on April 12. ABC will continue to update members on any developments regarding the legal challenge through Newsline.

Neil Gorsuch is Confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court

On April 10, Neil Gorsuch was sworn in as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court after being confirmed by a vote of 54-45 in the U.S. Senate. With a strong record of judicial integrity and respect for the Constitution, ABC saw Judge Gorsuch as an exceptional choice to serve on the Supreme Court, and [applauded the Trump administration](#) for his nomination on Feb. 1. ABC sent a [letter](#) to members of the Senate Judiciary Committee on April 3 urging them to swiftly approve the nomination of Judge Gorsuch, and the committee voted 11-9 to send the nomination to the full Senate. Following the committee vote, ABC sent a [letter](#) to members of the full Senate on April 5 urging them to vote yes on cloture to prevent a Democratic filibuster and ensure that the Senate had the opportunity to vote on Judge Gorsuch’s nomination. Although the vote on cloture failed, Judge Gorsuch was confirmed by a simple majority after U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell successfully changed Senate rules and invoked the “nuclear option.” Please read the [Newsline story](#) for more information on Neil Gorsuch’s confirmation to the Supreme Court.

President Trump Signs “Buy American, Hire American” Executive Order

On April 18, President Trump signed an [executive order](#) directing federal agencies to review and propose changes to the H-1B visa program, which is meant to attract skilled foreign labor. President Trump’s order also asks federal agencies to maximize the use of products produced in the United States.

White House Releases Tax Proposal

On April 26, the White House rolled out its tax proposal, which it billed as “the biggest individual and business tax cut in American history.” The proposal cuts the business tax rate to 15 percent for C corporations and pass-throughs alike and repeals the estate tax and the alternative minimum tax. It also reduces the current seven individual brackets to three with a top rate of 35 percent. Additional details of the plan can be found in the [Newsline story](#).

According to a [White House news release](#), the Trump administration will start holding listening sessions with stakeholders next month, giving ABC and its members an opportunity to weigh in. On April 26, House Speaker Paul Ryan, Senate Leader Mitch McConnell, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady and Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch released a [joint statement](#) praising the outline.

Senate Confirms President Trump’s Secretary of Labor Nominee, R. Alexander Acosta

On April 27, the U.S. Senate confirmed R. Alexander Acosta to be the secretary of Labor by a 60-38 vote. Joining the Republicans to vote to confirm Acosta were Democratic Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto (Nev.) Heidi Heitkamp (N.D.), Joe Manchin of (W. Va.), Claire McCaskill (Mo.), Bob Menendez (N.J.), Bill Nelson (Fla.), Jon Tester (Mont.) and Mark Warner (Va.). Independent Sen. Angus King of Maine also voted to confirm Acosta.

President Trump nominated Mr. Acosta on Feb. 16. He previously served as the dean of Florida International University’s College of Law. Under former President George W. Bush, Acosta was confirmed by the U.S. Senate three times, as a member of the National Labor Relations Board, the head of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division and as a U.S. Attorney in Miami. Acosta is a graduate of Harvard Law School and clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito when he was a judge on the Third Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals.

ABC congratulated Acosta on his confirmation in a [news release](#).

President Trump Signs Executive Order to Expand Offshore Drilling

On April 28, President Trump signed an executive order instructing the U.S. Department of the Interior to revise the Obama administration’s five-year plan for developing federal waters. The order was issued one day after President Trump signed an executive order directing Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke to review and roll back ineffective conservation efforts on public lands.

Nominations and Appointments

James Mattis, secretary of defense, confirmed by Senate Jan. 20, 2017

John F. Kelly, secretary of homeland security, confirmed by Senate Jan. 20, 2017

Mike Pompeo, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, confirmed by Senate Jan. 23, 2017

Nikki Haley, ambassador to the United Nations, confirmed by Senate Jan. 24, 2017

Elaine Chao, secretary of transportation, confirmed by Senate Jan. 31, 2017

Rex Tillerson, secretary of state, confirmed by Senate Feb. 1, 2017

Betsy DeVos, secretary of education, confirmed by Senate Feb. 7, 2017

Jeff Sessions, attorney general, confirmed by Senate Feb. 8, 2017

Tom Price, secretary of health and human services, confirmed by Senate Feb. 10, 2017

Steven Mnuchin, secretary of the treasury, confirmed by Senate Feb. 13, 2017

David Shulkin, secretary of veterans affairs, confirmed by Senate Feb. 13, 2017

Linda McMahon, administrator of the Small Business Administration, confirmed by Senate Feb. 14, 2017

Mick Mulvaney, director of the Office of Management and Budget, confirmed by Senate Feb. 16, 2017

Scott Pruitt, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, confirmed by Senate Feb. 17, 2017

Wilbur Ross, secretary of commerce, confirmed by Senate Feb. 27, 2017

Ryan Zinke, secretary of the interior, confirmed by Senate March 1, 2017

Rick Perry, secretary of energy, confirmed by Senate March 2, 2017

Ben Carson, secretary of housing and urban development, confirmed by Senate March 2, 2017

Dan Coats, director of national intelligence, confirmed by Senate March 15, 2017

Neil Gorsuch, sworn in as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court April 10, 2017

Sonny Perdue, secretary of agriculture, confirmed by Senate April 24, 2017

R. Alexander Acosta, secretary of labor, confirmed by Senate April 28, 2017

Robert Lighthizer, U.S. Trade Representative, to be confirmed