

Trump taps Markwayne Mullin for Cabinet, sets up uncertain Senate race

Andrea Hancock
NonDoc.com



Sen. Markwayne Mullin, a longtime ally of President-elect Donald Trump, drinks a milkshake with Trump and Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyoming) on Trump's plane, Trump Force One, on the way to Arizona on Thursday, Oct. 31, 2024.

President Donald Trump has named U.S. Sen. Markwayne Mullin as his new Cabinet secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. If confirmed by his colleagues in the U.S. Senate, Mullin will fill the post held by Kristi Noem for the past 14 months.

Mullin (R-OK) has long been linked to Cabinet openings, but politicians had previously questioned whether the close Trump ally would be willing to give up a seat in the Senate and sow succession chaos in his home state. Elected in 2022 to fill the unexpired term of former U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe, Mullin was already facing reelection this year, and the normal 2026 election cycle will ultimately decide who claims the seat's next six-year term.

When a U.S. Senate vacancy occurs, Title 51, Section 10 of state statute requires the governor to appoint someone to fill the remainder of the unexpired term within 30 days. The appointee must sign "an oath affirming that the person will not file as a candidate for the office when it next appears on the ballot," although the constitutionality of that statute — passed by the Legislature in anticipation of Inhofe's resignation — has long been questioned.

The same Title 51 statute also instructs the governor to call a special U.S. Senate election within 30 days, but that provision is subject to Title 26, Section 12-101, which states that "if the vacant office is already scheduled to be filled for a full term at the next available regularly scheduled election, then no special election shall be called."

When Mullin was last rumored as a Cabinet appointee in November 2024, Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond, Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell, U.S. Rep Kevin Hern (R-OK1),

U.S. Rep. Stephanie Bice (R-OK5), and Stitt himself were rumored appointees — and potential long-term candidates — among Oklahoma politicians.

Drummond is now leading GOP primary polls for the state's 2026 gubernatorial election, although he previously worked in the U.S. Senate and has long expressed interest in returning to the body in elected office. Stitt, whose Gateway Mortgage Group became Gateway First Bank and was placed under temporary management when he was elected governor, has previously said he intends to leave politics at the conclusion of his current term.

In response to Mullin's seat vacancy, Stitt said we will be looking to appoint a "small government conservative" for the interim post.

"Markwayne Mullin has been a fighter for Oklahoma and will fight to keep our nation secure. There isn't a better choice to lead the Department of Homeland Security," Stitt said in a press release. "Oklahoma has been an example to the nation for smart immigration enforcement, and Markwayne will bring that common sense to DHS. I will be looking to appoint a strong, small government conservative voice to support President Trump and protect Oklahomans' way of life."

In a 2023 interview with Gaylord News, Mullin described President Donald Trump as "first and foremost" a "friend." Trump praised Mullin and his wrestling chops in a post today on Truth Social announcing the appointment.

"A MAGA Warrior, and former undefeated professional MMA fighter, Markwayne truly gets along well with people, and knows the Wisdom and Courage required to Advance our America First Agenda," Trump wrote. "As the only Native American in the Senate, Markwayne is a fantastic advocate for our incredible Tribal Communities. Markwayne will work tirelessly to Keep our Border Secure, Stop Migrant Crime, Murderers, and other Criminals from illegally entering our Country, End the Scourge of Illegal Drugs and, MAKE AMERICA AGAIN!"

DHS is the main engine of Trump's mass deportation effort, which the agency said resulted in 2.2 million self-deportations and 675,000 deportations last year. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, which is under DHS' purview, has gained national notoriety for shooting and killing several people, including American citizens Renee Good, Alex Pretti, and Ruben Ray Martinez. ICE has drawn criticism for other tactics, including wearing masks during operations, detaining children, and arresting American citizens.

Noem was previously the governor of South Dakota before she accepted her post as DHS secretary in January 2025. A report from National Review characterized Trump as

"privately furious" with Noem after she testified to a Senate committee that Trump had pre-approved a \$220 million contract with an ad firm tied to Noem and her staff.

"I never knew anything about it," Trump told Reuters. However, in a statement to Truth Social, Trump was effusive about the former secretary.

"The current Secretary, Kristi Noem, who has served us well, and has had numerous and spectacular results (especially on the Border!), will be moving to be Special Envoy for The Shield of the Americas, our new Security Initiative in the Western Hemisphere we are announcing on Saturday in Doral, Florida," Trump wrote. "I thank Kristi for her service at 'Homeland.'"

Noem's new role was previously nonexistent, according to reporting from The New York Times.

Mullin, a Cherokee citizen who would become the first tribal member to serve as secretary of homeland security, received congratulations from Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr.

"Senator Mullin's dedicated service in the U.S. Senate has demonstrated his unwavering commitment to progress and the well-being of all communities, including Indian Country. It is deeply encouraging to have someone with a keen understanding of federal Indian policy, law and justice elevated to such a critical leadership role within a powerful federal agency," Hoskin said in a statement. "Having a Cherokee Nation citizen serve within the United States Cabinet is a mark of high esteem for our tribe. It stands as a testament to the resilience, capability and enduring impact of our people."

Drummond also commended the selection — a rare moment of public agreement between him and the governor.

"Sen. Mullin is an inspired and excellent pick by President Trump to serve as his Cabinet Secretary of Homeland Security. The president knows what Oklahomans know, that Markwayne is exactly the sort of straight-talking, stalwart, and commonsense patriot needed to lead the Department of Homeland Security at this juncture," Drummond said in a statement. "As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and of three critical subcommittees, including the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, Markwayne is extremely well-versed on matters of national security and will always act in the best interests of Americans. I have the utmost confidence in Sen. Mullin and wish him the best upon this extraordinary next chapter. Oklahoma's loss is the nation's gain."

Democrat Jim Priest, a lawyer who ran unsuccessfully for attorney general in 2010, announced his 2026 campaign for Mullin's U.S. Senate seat in January.

OKLAHOMA CLASSIFIED AD NETWORK
FOR MORE INFO CALL **1-888-815-2672**
WANT TO BUY

ONLINE AUCTION
NO RESERVE ONLINE AUCTION- 3/27 @ 2PM: 2 Commercial Properties on 1.11± ac. in Healthcare Corridor near Clinton Hospital & Health Depart. * Previously Utilized for Transitional Housing & Behavioral Health Services * Rare Opportunity to Acquire Versatile Commercial Property in a Great Location * WigginsAuctioneers.com 580-233-3066

ADVERTISE STATEWIDE
Put your message where it matters most - IN OKLAHOMA NEWSPAPERS. We can place your ad in 134 newspapers. For more information or to place an ad, contact Landon Cobb at (405) 499-0022 or toll-free in OK at 1-888-815-2672.

REID Newspapers
2026 POLITICAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENTNER DRUMMOND
for Governor (R)
Election in 2026
(Paid for by Friends of Gentner Drummond 2026)

CYNDI MUNSON
for Governor (D)
Election in 2026
(Paid for by Cyndi Munson for Oklahoma 2026)

JON ECHOLS
for Attorney General (R)
Election in 2026
(Paid for by friends for Jon Echols)

LEISA MITCHELL HAYNES
for Governor (R)
Election in 2026
(Paid for by friends for Leisa Mitchell Haynes)

CHARLES MCCALL
for Governor (R)
Election in 2026
(Paid for by friends for Charles McCall)

CHIP KEATING
for Governor (R)
Election in 2026
(Paid for by Chip Keating for Governor 2026)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO INCLUDE YOUR CANDIDACY IN THIS COLUMN CALL 580-772-3301

Delaware County Court Report

Divorces
Comelia Buzzard vs. Toby Buzzard
Tonya Michelle Friend vs. Frederick Bernell Friend Jr.
Emily Jenkins vs. Michael Thomas Jenkins
Jeremi Nicole Zellow

vs. Christopher Zellow
Protective Orders
Breanna Dawn Lashbrook vs. Robin Daniel Joe Bearpaw
Justina Lynn Mouse vs. Shylah Marie Caughman

Teresa Ann Thompson vs. Charles Dwayne Thompson
Misdemeanors
State of Oklahoma vs. Justin Cody David Atkins for protective order violation

State of Oklahoma vs. Timothy Brian Brinegar for public intoxication
State of Oklahoma vs. Jacob Dee Jones for driving while suspended/cancelled/revoked
State of Oklahoma vs. Leo Palitti for driving while under the influence of drugs
State of Oklahoma vs. David Lee Perry for threatening to perform act of violence

Felonies
State of Oklahoma vs. Matthew Wayne Barnard for battery upon police officer
State of Oklahoma vs. James Harris for assault, battery or assault, and battery with dangerous weapon
State of Oklahoma vs. Robert W. Levis for felony value - false pretenses/bogus check/con game after former conviction

Jay OKLAHOMA
CROSSROAD OF NATIONS
City of Jay / Jay Utility Authority

Robyn Kirby City Clerk Becki Mullin Farley Mayor Sarah Scott Treasurer

March 4, 2026

The City of Jay is currently taking applications for a part-time Code Officer. This position will be approximately 20 hrs a week with a pay of \$15.00 an hour. Computer skills are recommended. Applications can be picked up at City Hall and will be due March 20, 2026.

PO Box 348 Jay, OK 74346 1(918)253-8542 102 N 5th St Jay, OK 74346

LEGALS

DISTRICT COURT OF DELAWARE COUNTY STATE OF OKLAHOMA

IN RE: The name of: Teresa Sue Birge

CV-2026-38 NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME

TO: All interested parties.

Take notice that Teresa Sue Birge has petitioned to change his/her name to Teresa Sue Williams.

Should you know of some reason why this change of name should not be allowed you must file a written protest in the above styled and numbered cause prior to the above date with the Clerk of this Court. Should you fail to do so, the petition for change of name will be granted as prayed.

COURT CLERK /s/ Natasha Isaacs By: DEPUTY

APPROVED: /s/ Teresa Birge

A Hearing on said petition is set for 2:30 o'clock P.M. on the 23rd day of March, 2026, before Judge Lelecas in his courtroom in the Delaware County Courthouse.

(Published in the Delaware County Journal March 11, 2026) LPXLP