



POLITICS

Senate confirms Project 2025 architect Russell Vought to lead powerful White House budget office



1 of 3 | Russell Vought, President Donald Trump's choice for Director of the Office of Management and Budget, attends a Senate Budget Committee hearing on his nomination, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)



BY [STEPHEN GROVES](#)

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WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate confirmed [Russell Vought](#) as White House budget director on Thursday night, putting an official who has planned the zealous expansion of President Donald Trump's power into one of the most influential positions in the federal government.

Vought was confirmed on a party-line vote of 53-47. With the Senate chamber full, Democrats

repeatedly tried to speak as they cast their "no" votes to give their reasons for voting against Vought, but they were gavelled down by Sen. Ashley Moody, a Florida Republican who was presiding over the chamber. She cited Senate rules that ban debate during votes.

The Thursday night vote came after Democrats had exhausted their only remaining tool to stonewall a nomination — holding the Senate floor throughout the previous night and day with a series of speeches where they warned Vought was Trump's "most dangerous nominee."

"Confirming the most radical nominee, who has the most extreme agenda, to the most important agency in Washington," said Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer in a floor speech. "Triple-header of disaster for hardworking Americans."

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Vought's return to the White House Office of Management and Budget, which he also helmed during Trump's first term, puts him in a role that often goes under the public radar yet holds key power in implementing the president's goals. The OMB acts as a nerve center for the White House, developing its budget, policy priorities and agency rule-making. Vought has already played an influential role in Trump's effort to remake the federal government as one of the architects of [Project 2025](#), a conservative blueprint for Trump's second term.

The budget office is also already shaking up federal spending. It had issued [a memo to freeze federal spending](#), sending schools, states and nonprofits into a panic before it was rescinded amid legal challenges.

In the Senate, Republicans have stayed in line to advance Vought's nomination and argued that his mindset will be crucial to slashing federal spending and regulations.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune pushed for his confirmation this week, saying he "will have the chance to address two key economic issues — cutting burdensome government regulations and addressing excessive spending."

Vought has often advanced a maximalist approach to conservative policy goals. After leaving the first Trump administration, he founded the Center for Renewing America, part of a constellation of Washington think tanks that have popped up to advance and develop Trump's "Make America Great Again" agenda. From that position, Vought often counseled congressional Republicans to wage win-at-all-costs fights to cut federal programs and spending.

Writing in the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025, Vought described the White House budget director's job "as the best, most comprehensive approximation of the President's mind."

The OMB, he declared, "is a President's air-traffic control system" and should be "involved in all aspects of the White House policy process," becoming "powerful enough to override implementing agencies' bureaucracies."

During Trump's first term, Vought pushed to [reclassify tens of thousands of federal workers](#) as political appointees, which could then enable mass dismissals.

Vought has also been a proponent of the president using "impoundment" to expand the executive branch's control over federal spending.

When Congress passes appropriations to fulfill its Constitutional duties, it determines funding for government programs. But the impoundment legal theory holds that the president can decide not to spend that money on anything he deems unnecessary because Article II of the Constitution gives the president the role of executing the laws that Congress passes.

During [confirmation hearings](#), Vought stressed that he would follow the law but avoided answering Democrats' questions on whether he would withhold congressionally allotted aid for Ukraine.

Democrats charged that Vought's responses amounted to an acknowledgment that he believes the president is above the law.

In response to questions from Republican lawmakers, Vought did preview potential budget proposals that would target cuts to discretionary social programs.

"The president ran on the issue of fiscal accountability, dealing with our inflation situation," he said.

Vought has also unabashedly advanced " [Christian nationalism](#)," an idea rising in the GOP that the United States was founded as a Christian nation and the government should now be infused with Christianity.

In a 2021 opinion article, Vought wrote that Christian nationalism is "a commitment to an institutional separation between church and state, but not the separation of Christianity from its influence on government and society."



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