



New attorney general moves to align Justice Department with Trump's priorities

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Ryan Lucas



President Trump and Pam Bondi pose with the official commission signed by Trump that appoints Bondi to the position of U.S. Attorney General after she was sworn in in the Oval Office on Wednesday.

Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP via Getty Images

On her first day in charge at the Justice Department, Attorney General [Pam Bondi](#) on Wednesday issued a series of directives aimed at aligning the department with President Trump and his agenda, including establishing a task force to examine the alleged weaponization of the justice system and reviving the federal death penalty.

The Senate confirmed Bondi on Tuesday evening and she was sworn in Wednesday in a ceremony at the White House. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas administered the oath of office for Bondi, whose husband and mother were by her side.

She takes over at a time of tumult at the Justice Department, where the Trump administration has pushed out several senior career officials over the past few weeks as the new leadership looks to assert control over the department and implement the president's agenda.



POLITICS

Justice Department changes rattle current and former agency veterans

On her first day on the job, Bondi signed 14 memos addressed to all Justice Department employees. Some of the directives roll back guidelines put in place under the Biden administration, while others strike new ground. Many appear to offer details to implement executive orders President Trump signed, including on the [weaponization](#) of the federal government and on [combatting](#) antisemitism.

One of the memos, for example, establishes the "Weaponization Working Group," which is tasked with reviewing "the activities of all department and agencies exercising civil or criminal enforcement authority of the United States over the last four years."

Trump and Bondi have both argued that the department under the Biden administration unfairly targeted conservatives, most notably Trump himself. Trump was charged in two federal cases: for election interference in 2020 and for hoarding classified documents. Both cases were dropped after he won election to a second term.



POLITICS

Special counsel Jack Smith taking steps to wind down federal cases against Trump

The department's previous leadership rejected the allegation of political motivations, and pointed to multiple criminal cases against prominent Democrats during the Biden administration.

Focus on "improper aims"

According to the Bondi memo, the new working group will "identify instances where a department's or agency's conduct appears to have been designed to achieve political objectives or other improper aims rather than pursuing justice of legitimate governmental objectives."

It mentions several specific things that it will examine, including "weaponization" by former special counsel Jack Smith, the prosecutors and the investigators who took

part in the "unprecedented raid on President Trump's home." FBI agents [searched](#) Trump's Mar-a-Lago club and his residence as part of its classified documents case.

It also will examine "federal cooperation with the weaponization" by the Manhattan district attorney and the New York state attorney general "to target President Trump, his family and his businesses." The Manhattan district attorney brought state criminal charges against Trump for falsifying business records to conceal a payment to an adult film star.

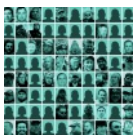


LAW

Trump is sentenced in hush money case — but gets no penalty or fine

The Jan. 6 Capitol riot will also come under review, it says. The working group will look at "the pursuit of improper investigative tactics and unethical prosecutions" related to the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol attack. Trump [granted clemency](#) to every defendant accused of committing crimes that day in one of his first acts after returning to the White House.

The memo says the Justice Department will provide quarterly reports to the White House on the review's progress.



POLITICS

Trump gave pardons to hundreds of violent Jan. 6 rioters. Here's what they did

Another memo sets up a Joint Task Force for Oct. 7 to "prioritize seeking justice for victims" of the Hamas-led attacks on Israel. The task force also aims to address the "ongoing threat posed by Hamas and its affiliates" and to combat "antisemitic acts of terrorism and civil rights violations in the homeland."

Two other memos relate to the federal [death penalty](#).

One lifts the moratorium on federal executions, and instructs federal prosecutors to seek the death penalty in cases involving the murder of a law enforcement official and capital crimes "committed by aliens who are illegally present in the United States."

The other relates to President Biden's decision in his waning days in office to [commute the death sentences](#) of 37 people on federal death row to life in prison. The Bondi memo directs the Justice Department to, among other things assist local prosecutors in pursuing death sentences under state law against the 37 individuals who received commutations.



NATIONAL

Trump's executive order resumes executions, after Biden dialed them back

Bondi also signed a memo that puts department attorneys on notice that they are expected to "zealously" defend, advance and protect the interests of the United States —interests that are set by the president.

It says that when DOJ attorneys "refuse to advance good-faith arguments by declining to appear in court or sign briefs, if undermines the constitutional order and deprives the President of the benefit of his lawyers."

It goes on to say that any department attorney who "because of their personal views or judgments declines to sign a brief or appear in court, refuses to advance good-faith arguments on behalf of the Administration, or otherwise delays or impedes the Department's mission will be subject to discipline and potentially termination."

pam bondi

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