

# Inter-Office Memo

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December 22, 2025

TO: International Executive Board  
FROM: Legislative Department  
SUBJECT: Weekly Legislative Update on the Trump Administration

## 1) TRADE & MANUFACTURING

Jamieson Greer, U.S. Trade Representative, delivered an update on USMCA to Congress—arguing that this satisfies the statutorily required report on the administration’s strategy for the USMCA joint review—saying that the deal’s “shortcomings are such that a rubberstamp of the Agreement is not in the national interest.” While his report was delivered in-person in a closed-door meeting, the agency subsequently publicly released Greer’s [opening statement](#), which provides an overview of key issues the U.S. plans to address in the review, including “improvements to labor law enforcement [in Mexico], including by providing sanction authority to the Federal Center for Conciliation and Labor Registration,” “strengthening the rules of origin for non-automotive industrial goods,” and penalizing offshoring. Later in the week, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney [announced](#) that the U.S. and Canada will begin formal negotiations around the USMCA review in mid-January 2026.

In a [letter](#) to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the U.S. called for several reforms to the international body and declared that the era of equal treatment among trade partners under the *most favored nation* (MFN) principle is over. For decades, the MFN principle justified very low tariffs on auto imports (2.5%) and served as an obstacle to efforts to raise tariffs in past presidential administrations.

The Ford Motor Company has sent a [letter](#) to Senate Commerce Committee Chair Ted Cruz (R-TX) objecting to CEO Jim Farley's attendance at the Committee's planned [hearing](#) in January, due to both scheduling conflicts and as a result of the Committee's decision to invite the CEOs of Ford, General Motors, and Stellantis, but not Elon Musk of Tesla – electing instead to invite Tesla’s head of engineering.

Investments negotiated a part of the reciprocal tariff agreements with South Korea and Japan are slowly kicking off. South Korea will form a joint venture with the U.S. and investors to build a [\\$7.4 billion zinc processing plant](#) in Clarksville, Tennessee, on the same site as the only other domestic zinc smelter, to produce critical minerals for chipmaking, defense, and aerospace products. This week, Japan and the U.S. will begin a [review of energy projects](#) to select for Japanese investment under the \$550 billion fund as part of its deal with the Trump administration.

[Reporting](#) indicates the President Trump is considering issuing an executive order to restrict defense contractors from spending large sums on stock buybacks, dividends, and executive compensation. Analysts estimate that stock buybacks will reach [\\$1.2 trillion this year](#) (a new record), with Apple alone announcing a \$100 billion buyback program earlier this year.

In response to Ford’s announcement that it will lay off over 1,500 UAW members at BlueOval SK (BOSK) and convert the plant to produce stationary batteries, Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear [blamed](#) the move on President Trump and Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY-2) for repealing EV tax incentives, saying “any temporary job loss is directly on this President and that Congressman, because there was a big, bright future in front

of us." In response, Guthrie said "rather than own up to the fact that the Electric Vehicle mandate was not what the American people wanted, [Beshear] tries to pass the blame for decisions that came as a result of lack of market demand." Notably, neither side blamed the company. As part of the split of the joint venture, the Department of Energy [said](#) it plans to reduce the company's \$9.6 billion loan that it received to develop three BOSK EV battery plants.

## 2) IMMIGRATION

The Trump administration started the week by [expanding](#) their travel ban to include 20 more countries, effective January 1st, which brings the total number of countries with travel restrictions to 39. Following the killing of two students at Brown University and the murder of professor at MIT, DHS Secretary Kristi Noem [ordered](#) US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to pause the green card lottery program known as the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program, which the suspect in those shootings used to enter the United States.

## 3) CONGRESS

As Congress adjourns until 2026, they were unable to pass legislation to avert the rising health care premiums from the expanded Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies, which expire at the end of this year. Instead, House Republican leadership passed a different health care bill that [does not address](#) the soaring monthly premiums that millions of Americans will soon endure. House Speaker Mike Johnson previously [signaled to](#) moderate Republicans that they would get a vote on their ACA proposal but stated this week that it was "not to be." Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick, Rob Bresnahan, Ryan Mackenzie, and Mike Lawler then signed the Democrats' discharge petition, which would bring to the House floor a bill that would enact a 3-year extension of the subsidies. A vote on this bill will be held sometime early in January, despite passing the expiration date of the subsidies and the Senate rejecting a similar provision this month.

Among a slew of confirmations this week, the Senate [approved](#) a tranche of 97 of President Trump's nominees including James Murphy and Scott Mayer to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and Crystal Carey as NLRB General Counsel. The NLRB finally regains its quorum (2 Republicans, 1 Democrat) and will be able to issue decisions again, which they have not been able to do since Trump fired Democratic member Gwynne Wilcox in January 2025. It will be important to watch whether the Republican-led NLRB will dispatch with the longstanding tradition of not overturning major precedent without a 3-vote majority.

President Trump [signed](#) the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2026 after it passed the Senate this week by a vote of 77 to 20. Among other items, the NDAA includes provisions to assert guardrails for the Department of Defense to inform Congress about major operations, such as withdrawing troops and restructuring military commands.

The past year was [historically unproductive for the House](#) as members took 336 roll call votes, a 30-year low outside of the 2020 COVID-19 year. Meanwhile, Trump has [signed](#) more executive orders in 2025 than he did in his entire first term.

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