



In this picture taken through a window, from left, President-elect Donald Trump, Elon Musk and Vice President-elect JD Vance attend the NCAA college football game between Army and Navy at Northwest Stadium in Landover, Md., Dec. 14, 2024. (AP/Stephanie Scarbrough)



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Where's JD? Our vice president-elect, JD Vance, hasn't been making headlines since the election, at least not when compared to some others President-elect Donald Trump has selected to help him run the executive branch.

Matt Gaetz made headlines when Trump nominated him to be the attorney general. Republican senators immediately voiced concerns about the choice. They did not want to support Gaetz knowing that the Ethics Committee on the other side of the Capitol [had completed a report](#). They were right to be concerned. When the report [was released](#), it found Gaetz paid a lot of women for sex, and he wasn't too particular about the women's age.

Tom Homan, whom Trump has tapped to become his "border czar," has [made lots of headlines](#) warning immigrants he is coming for them. He is also warning U.S.-born children in mixed-status families that they are not going to be exempt from his sweeping deportation plans. "You knew you were in the country illegally and chose to have a child," Homan said. "So you put your family in that position."

Homan should be making headlines for his failure to answer the most basic questions about his plans. He never seems to know how many undocumented migrants there are, nor how much mass deportations will cost, nor how U.S. immigration law works. I'm not sure I would ask this guy to set the table for dinner, he seems so clueless.

Stephen Miller, tapped to be deputy chief of staff for policy, has also made headlines on immigration. He has [threatened](#) "sanctuary cities" and their mayors with prison if they pursue policies they have legally adopted.

No one in Trump's orbit has made more headlines than billionaire Elon Musk, whom Trump tapped to lead a not-yet-created [Department of Government Efficiency](#). Musk [blew up a budget deal](#) in Congress, threatening a government shutdown in the days before Christmas, and then he [celebrated Christmas](#) with the Trump family at Mar-a-Lago.

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Most significantly, Musk forced Trump to [diss his MAGA base](#) when the billionaire said anti-immigrant animus stops at the doors of the tech industry. Musk tweeted support for keeping H-1B visas for highly trained workers, the Steve Bannon wing went crazy, and Trump sided with Musk.

Where is JD?

We know he has been at Mar-a-Lago. Women's Wear Daily [reported](#) on the "snake dress" his wife, Usha, wore at the New Year's gala at the Trump estate. Why the low profile?

When Trump selected Vance back in July, he said he reminded him of "[a young Abraham Lincoln](#)." In his [acceptance speech](#) at the GOP convention, Trump said of Vance, "He's going to be a great vice president, he's going to be great. He'll be with this country and with this movement. Greatest movement in the history of our country. Make America Great Again." He also noted Vance had been "a great student at Yale" and that he met his wife there.

Since the election? Crickets.

Maybe Vance is keeping a low profile because he knows that the vice presidency is not a position of strength. He knows that few people other than historians and trivia specialists could name all three of Franklin Roosevelt's vice presidents.

Maybe Vance simply is figuring out where to place himself in Trump's orbit. Trump likes rich people, and while Vance made a lot of money as an author of the bestselling book *Hillbilly Elegy*, it was a lot of money by author standards, not by Trump standards. Vance is from a slice of American society in which ideas matter more than money, and that isn't Trump's slice.

Perhaps Vance has noticed that being captured in the same photo frame as Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Tulsi Gabbard isn't a great look for him. Maybe he doesn't want to be too closely associated with the clown car.

Still, you would think that in dealing with prickly congressional negotiations, Trump might have turned to Vance, who is still a member of Congress, rather than to Musk.

You would think that the articulate vice president-elect would take the lead on a complicated issue like immigration, instead of a blowhard like Homan.

Whatever the reason, you can bet there will soon be a new parlor game in Washington, D.C.: Where's JD?

This story appears in the **Trump's Second Term** feature series. [View the full series.](#)