

## An expert explains Biden's decision to pardon his son

Kimberly Wehle says the pardon might seem hypocritical, but it's not out of bounds.

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## Hegseth on Capitol Hill

Trump's pick starts to branch out to shore up Pentagon bid.

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## The economic clashes looming in Trump 2.0

Investors have been heartened by signs the incoming Cabinet might soften the parts of Trump's agenda that could shake markets.

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## Matt Wuerker

The cartoonist's daily take on the world of politics.

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FRANCIS CHUNG/POLITICO

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (fifth from left) is flanked Monday by Whip Dick Durbin and Steering and Policy Chair Amy Klobuchar after Democratic Caucus leadership elections at the Capitol.

# Schumer reelected as Senate Democratic leader

The New Yorker's reelection as leader signals trust from rank-and-file Democrats in their current leadership ranks

BY URSULA PERANO AND ANTHONY ADRAGNA

Democrats nationally are wrestling over who will lead their party post-election. But in the Senate, they're largely staying the course.

In a closed-door party meeting on Tuesday, Senate Democrats elected leadership for their return to the minority, including tapping Sen. Chuck Schumer for another term as caucus leader, according to a Senate Democratic leadership

aide. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) was also elected to another term as whip, the No. 2 spot.

Two other Democrats rose in the ranks: Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) was elected to the No. 3 spot as chair of the Steering and Policy Committee. It's a step up for Klobuchar, who is currently No. 4 in the Democratic leadership rankings and serves as chair of the Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee.

Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) was

elected as chair of the Strategic Communications Committee. The one-time presidential candidate has been in the Senate in 2013 after previously serving as a mayor of Newark, New Jersey.

All of the elections were unanimous, per the aide. The chair for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee has not yet been publicly selected, but is expected to be Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.).

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# Thune outlines ambitious agenda for upcoming term

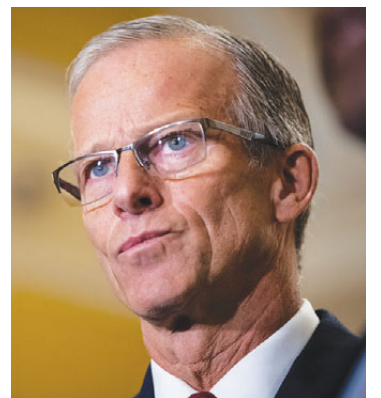
It'd be a significant first swing at legislation for the incoming Senate majority leader

BY URSULA PERANO

Incoming Senate Majority Leader John Thune is pushing for two major partisan bills next term, including one within the first 30 days of the Trump administration, he told Republican senators at a private GOP conference meeting on Tuesday, according to a person familiar with his remarks.

Thune was broadly outlining priorities for the next Congress during the closed-door meeting. He said the first of the two pieces of legislation, which would pass under a process known as budget reconciliation that can bypass the Senate filibuster, would focus on

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FRANCIS CHUNG/POLITICO

Sen. John Thune said the legislation would pass under a process known as budget reconciliation that can bypass the Senate filibuster.

# Biden's pardon gives Trump powerful new political cover

BY KYLE CHENEY AND BETSY WOODRUFF SWAN

In his sweeping pardon of Hunter Biden, President Joe Biden did not just protect his son. He also handed President-elect Donald Trump a template to shield his own allies and stretch the pardon power even further.

Legal experts say Trump now has fresh precedent — and political cover — to issue expansive pardons absolving his allies not only of specific offenses, but even any undetermined crimes they may have committed.

With the singular exception of Gerald Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon, no modern American president had ever issued such a broad grant of clemency until Joe Biden's "full and unconditional" pardon of his son on Sunday night. The younger Biden is now effectively cleared of legal consequences for any federal law he might have broken over a nearly 11-year period.

Those terms are so unusual — and the process leading to it was so secretive — that the Justice Department's Office of the Pardon At-

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