

QB saves Georgia football, dings Tennessee prospects

Carson Beck fuels Bulldogs' rally as college playoff hopes for Volunteers in flux. **In Sports**

Deportation of immigrants may worsen housing crisis

Experts weigh in on effect of losing workers when U.S. is short millions of homes. **In Money**

Stefani shares faith, hope, love on 'Bouquet'

No Doubt alum, dropping her first album since 2016, chats about inspiration, husband Blake Shelton and energy of "The Voice." **In Life**

USA TODAY

THE NATION'S NEWS | \$3 | MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024

MICHAEL TRAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

E2



Jennifer Love, the chief science officer of the Washington, D.C., crime lab, with Francisco Diaz, the interim director, says a lot of effort has gone into restoring the reputation of the lab, but more work remains to be done. JOSH MORGAN/USA TODAY



Susan Page
Washington Bureau Chief
USA TODAY

Trump signals combat ahead

Picks make clear pursuit of controversial promises

Welcome to Week Two. Donald Trump, finishing his first full week as president-elect, has wasted no time with a takeover of the capital that signals four turbulent years ahead.

From nominating the much-investigated Matt Gaetz as attorney general to embracing gazillionaire Elon Musk as sidekick-in-chief, Trump has signaled what to expect: combat.

Trump has flashed his determination to pursue even the most controversial promises he made during the campaign, and he's demonstrating the lessons he learned during his first term about just how to do that. With Cabinet appointments that shocked even some allies and a not-very-veiled threat to the Senate about speedy confirmations, Trump is moving with a dispatch and an assurance he didn't have the last time around.



Trump

"Promises made, promises kept," Trump declared at his victory celebration, claiming a mandate with his victory in both the Electoral College and the popular vote.

One question is what lessons both his political allies and his Democratic opponents have learned as Trump 2.0 moves back to town.

Here are four takeaways for the future from what Trump has already done in the early days since the election.

Dismantling the government

Musk is the richest man in the world and, apparently, the new best friend of the president-elect. A constant companion at Mar-a-Lago, he and former GOP presidential hopeful Vivek Ramaswamy have been named to head the Department of Government Efficiency, which despite its name has no official standing or staff or funding.

That doesn't mean it won't have power – the power of having the new president's ear.

Musk last week estimated that he could cut "at least \$2 trillion" from the \$6.75 trillion federal budget. The simple math of slashing 30% from government spending would likely demand not only eliminating some agencies – the Department of Education has been a prime target – but also curtailing such big budget items as Social Security, Medicare and defense spending.

That said, Trump has promised not to cut those two popular entitlement programs for the elderly – which consume 34% of the federal budget – and he has vowed to strengthen the Pentagon, which takes up about 13%.

The Constitution gives the power of the purse to Congress, but Trump's campaign website said he would try to repeal parts of the Budget Act of 1974 that restrict his ability to impound funds – that is, to refuse to spend money Congress has appropriated. He has suggested he could move unilaterally to cut off funds and let the lawsuits that would surely follow determine whether he had had the authority to do that.

Not exactly a team of rivals

Job requirement No. 1: loyalty. Some of the decisions on top Cabinet and White House officials that took

Forensic science failures are undermining justice

Despite stakes, many crime labs haven't raised standards

N'dea Yancey-Bragg
USA TODAY

Kathy Eppler had waited seven years to see the man who murdered her two brothers and sister-in-law be punished for his crimes.

Garrett Coughlin was sentenced to life without parole in the triple murder, but failures in a forensic lab contributed to the derailment of her long-sought justice.

A forensic scientist with the Colorado Bureau of Investigation manipulated hundreds of DNA test results – including those in the 2017 killings of Eppler's



Coughlin

family. So prosecutors offered Coughlin a deal allowing him parole after 24 years.

"All of us feel betrayed," Eppler told USA TODAY.

Colorado's crime lab is one of many across the country that have come under fire in recent years as the ripple effects of misconduct and lab errors came to light. Colorado authorities have pledged to review DNA testing practices, but Eppler believes fixing the system will require a complete overhaul of the lab, greater transparency and

more outside oversight.

"Where the heck's the checks and balances for this? There's nobody regulating," she said.

It has been 15 years since a scathing report blasted scattershot practices at forensic labs across the country, including shoddy analysis of bite marks and blood splatter, and five years since federal researchers began issuing exacting new standards designed to make forensic science more reliable. But only half of the more than 400 largest crime labs across the country

See LABS, Page 6A

'Fabulous flunky' now helps Ohio police

Licorice the therapy dog raises officers' spirits

Bebe Hodges
Cincinnati Enquirer
USA TODAY NETWORK

Licorice is somewhat of a failure. Anyone who meets the gentle, obedient boy would never call him that. He just so happened to fail his test to become a service dog. But this "failure" allowed him to improve officers' lives at the Blue Ash Police Department near Cincinnati.

The 7-year-old phantom golden doodle is one of a handful of therapy dogs in regional police departments. Licorice became one of the firsts in the county about 3½ years ago, said his owner, Capt. Roger Pohlman, assistant chief for Blue Ash Police. The increase in police therapy dogs is part of an increased focus on officer mental health.

"I've been doing this for 26 years," Pohlman said. "If you would've said that we had a therapy dog back then, people



"I've been doing this for 26 years. If you would've said that we had a therapy dog back then, people would've laughed at you."

Capt. Roger Pohlman

Blue Ash police Capt. Roger Pohlman says officers in the Ohio department are always eager to see Licorice, the agency's therapy dog.

LIZ DUFOUR/
USA TODAY
NETWORK

See THERAPY DOG, Page 4A



47
RECYCLED PAPER
©COPYRIGHT 2024
USA TODAY,
A division of
Gannett Co., Inc.

HOME DELIVERY
1-800-872-0001, USATODAYSERVICE.COM