

# Trump looking at several candidates for chief of staff

## Top pick dropped out of the mix

By **ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and CATHERINE LUCEY**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is considering at least four people to serve as his next chief of staff, after plans for an orderly succession for departing John Kelly fell through.

The high-profile hiring search comes at a pivotal time as the Republican president looks to prepare his White House for the twin challenges of securing his re-election and fending off expected congressional investigations once Democrats gain control of the House next year.

Trump's top pick for the job, Nick Ayers, announced Sunday that he would instead be leaving the White House, surprising even senior staffers who believed the move was a done deal. Trump is now soliciting input on at least four people, including Office of Management and Budget director Mick Mulvaney and Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., the chair of the conservative House Freedom Caucus.

Ayers, who is chief of staff to Vice President Mike Pence, was seen as the favorite for the job when Trump announced Saturday that Kelly would leave around year's end. But a White House official said Sunday that Trump and Ayers could not reach agreement on Ayers' length of service and that he would instead assist the president from outside the administration. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive personnel matters.

Ayers confirmed the decision in a tweet Sunday, thanking Trump and Pence for giving him the opportunity to work in the White House.

"I will be departing at the end of the year but will work with the #MAGA team to advance the cause," he said.

Trump offered his own take on the development: "I am in the process of interviewing some really great people for the position of White House Chief of Staff. Fake News has been saying with certainty it was Nick Ayers, a spectacular person who will always be with our #MAGA agenda. I will be making a decision soon!"

Even senior White House officials were caught off guard Sunday by the news of Ayers' departure. No obvious successor to Kelly was in sight, and there was some fretting that Trump may not be able to fill the job by the time Kelly leaves.

Ayers and Trump had discussed the job

for months, making the breakdown Sunday all the more surprising. Trump said Saturday that he expected to announce a replacement for Kelly in a day or two. But with Ayers no longer waiting in the wings, Trump may now take until the end of the year, according to a person familiar with the president's thinking.

And it remains unclear who wants the job.

Mulvaney, the budget director, was not interested in becoming chief of staff, according to a person close to him who spoke on the condition of anonymity. Mulvaney has been saying for almost two months now that he would be more interested in becoming commerce or treasury secretary if that would be helpful to the president, the person said.

Also among those thought to be in the mix were Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who said in a CBS interview that he hadn't spoken to anyone at the White House about the job and was "entirely focused" on his position.

The White House official said that, while the president likes Lighthizer, he is reluctant to move him from his current post because of the ongoing high-stakes trade negotiations with China and others.

And a person familiar with Mnuchin's thinking said he, too, was happy with his



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

**White House chief of staff John Kelly will leave his job at the end of the year.**

work at Treasury and had not sought the job of chief of staff.

Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker and Trump's former deputy campaign manager David Bossie were also among the names being floated by some close to the White House Sunday.

Trump's administration has set records for staff turnover, and he has often struggled to attract experienced political professionals, a challenge that has grown more difficult by the upcoming threat of costly Democratic oversight investigations and an uncertain political environment.

# Workers: 'It's not just that it's a lot of money for us. We worked for it'

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Former Klean employees are skeptical after struggling through months of escalating chaos.

In Long Beach, employees say there were signs of major trouble, including bouncing and missing paychecks, severe understaffing and declining levels of patient care.

Brett and Melissa Sholin, of Ilwaco, were among the staffers who lost their jobs last week. The Sholins say Klean owes them about \$5,000 in unpaid wages that were repeatedly promised, but never delivered.

Brett Sholin feels the constant broken promises were so stressful they amounted to "mental abuse."

"We really need our money," Sholin said. "It's not just that it's a lot of money for us. We worked for it. It's a mess."

John Thelen, a former chemical dependency specialist with Klean, has filed a wage complaint with the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. Thelen claims the company owes him nearly \$4,000.

Thelen said he started working for Klean in early September. After receiving his first couple of checks from the company, they started coming in late and later started bouncing, he said.

Thelen has since found a similar job at a nearby treat-

ment center, but said the loss in pay from Klean nearly put him and his wife out of a home.

Spanswick did not respond to a question about when he planned to pay his employees.

### Legal trouble

The 30-bed rehab center on Pioneer Road opened in 2013. It was one of several Klean-brand treatment facilities owned by White Rabbit Partners Inc., a West Hollywood-based holding corporation.

In October, Presidential Healthcare Credit Corp., an Alpharetta, Georgia, lender, filed a federal lawsuit, asking White Rabbit for nearly \$8 million in overdue loans.

In 2013, White Rabbit used its holdings as collateral for a \$1.1 million variable interest loan and a \$2.9 million revolving loan from Presidential. Revolving loans allow borrowers to borrow and repay up to their limit any number of times. They are often used to help businesses stay liquid in day-to-day operations.

White Rabbit allegedly asked Presidential to extend payment deadlines several times. Presidential agreed, in order to give White Rabbit "time to reorganize their affairs and to pay the indebtedness," according to the lawsuit.

In mid-September, White Rabbit signed over even more collateral in order to borrow another \$250,000.

About a week later, the company allegedly requested another \$250,000 so they could make payroll. By then, White Rabbit was over its borrowing limit, but Presidential agreed, once again. They also lent White Rabbit \$99,000 to "preserve and protect its collateral."

Spanswick and his partners had agreed to provide Presidential with weekly financial statements and pay at least \$200,000 in August, but allegedly failed to do so. By the end of October, the company reportedly owed more than \$7.9 million.

Presidential terminated the loan, demanded full payment and filed the lawsuit, which asked the court for permission to take control of White Rabbit's assets.

White Rabbit denies the allegations, and says Presidential acted unethically. The judge postponed any decision about the takeover, but ordered White Rabbit to round up its reportedly scanty financial records and cooperate in a financial audit.

Klean is also facing two lawsuits from Astoria property owners Sean Fitzpatrick and Anne Carpenter, who, through their company, Wecoma Partners, rented Klean an apartment complex on Alameda Avenue for

a 40-bed sober living facility and offices at 12th and Exchange streets for outpatient treatment.

One lawsuit, filed in Circuit Court against the Well in Mind nonprofit associated with Klean, claims the company has fallen behind on rent at the apartment complex by more than \$44,000.

The other, filed against White Rabbit Partners, claims Klean has fallen behind by more than \$16,000 in rent at the offices. Fitzpatrick also has locked Klean out of the offices, with equipment still inside.

The total Klean owes Wecoma Partners now exceeds \$100,000, Fitzpatrick said, and he expects a default judgment against the company, which has not responded to either lawsuit.

### Patient care

In better times, Klean served up to 30 patients and employed 50 to 80 people in Long Beach. But the patient census fluctuated. White Rabbit's leaders laid off or fired a dozen or more workers on two or three occasions, employees said, claiming patient numbers had fallen too low.

In late October, paychecks were late. And they were handwritten — a sign that payroll had not been

processed in the usual way, Sholin said. Eight paychecks bounced. When the staff got paid again in early November, a group of leery employees rushed to a bank in Astoria to cash their checks.

"No one wanted them to bounce," Sholin explained. They didn't receive their late November or early December paychecks.

A worker who asked not to be publicly identified said patient care steadily declined as employees got laid off and quit. A few stalwarts struggled to provide counseling, groups and classes.

"The clients that were left were not getting good care. Not even close to what they were supposed to be getting," she said, noting there was so little structure or accountability for patients that staffers started urging them to find other treatment centers.

"The clients knew what

was going on," she said. "It was hard for them not to know."

On Tuesday, some workers learned they'd lost their jobs via text message. Most patients made plans to move to other treatment options. A couple of patients told workers they had nowhere to go and would likely end up living in their cars.

The Sholins and others stayed because they liked their jobs despite the turmoil, and because they felt a sense of duty to the remaining patients. Many patients want to get out and get high again, Brett Sholin said, but the ones who were still there on the last day were people who wanted to get clean.

"For these clients to stick with it and stay in that building for their treatment — I couldn't leave," Sholin said.

Edward Stratton of The Daily Astorian contributed to this report.



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MONDAY EVENING												DECEMBER 10			
A	L	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30		
2	KATU	(2) KATU News at 6 (N)		Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel Fortune (N)	CMA Country Christmas	Join in a celebration of the holiday season. (N)	C'mas Light Fight "All Stars" (N)		KOMS (N)		(35) Jimmy Kimmel			
3	KOMO	(4) KOMO 4 News (N)		Jeopardy! (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	CMA Country Christmas	Join in a celebration of the holiday season. (N)	C'mas Light Fight "All Stars" (N)		KOMO 4 News (N)		(35) Jimmy Kimmel			
4	KING	(5) NBC News (N)	KING 5 News	KING 5 News	Evening	The Voice "Live Semi-Final, Top Eight Performances" (N)		Pentatonix: Not So Silent Night (N)		KING 5 News (N)		(35) Tonight Show			
6	KOIN	(7) KOIN Local 6 (N)	Evening News (N)	Extra	Ent. Tonight (N)	Neighborhood (N)	H.Together (N)	Magnum P.I. "Bad Day to Be a Hero" (N)		Bull "A Higher Law" (N)		News (N)	(35) Colbert (N)		
7	KIRO	(5:00) NFL Football Minnesota Vikings at Seattle Seahawks Site: CenturyLink Field -- Seattle, Wash. (L)		Ent. Tonight (N)	Neighborhood (N)	H.Together (N)	Magnum P.I. "Bad Day to Be a Hero" (N)			Bull "A Higher Law" (N)		KIRO 7 News (N)	(35) Colbert (N)		
8	KGW	(3) KGW News at 6:00 p.m. (N)		Tonight Cassidy	Inside Edition	The Voice "Live Semi-Final, Top Eight Performances" (N)		Pentatonix: Not So Silent Night (N)		News (N)		(35) Tonight Show			
9	KRCW	(3) Modern Family	Modern Family	The Goldbergs	The Goldbergs	Arrow		DC's Legends of Tomorrow		News (N)		Two and a Half	Two and a Half		
10	KOPB	(10) This Old House	Business (N)	PBS NewsHour		Antiques Rd. "Junk in the Trunk 4" 1/2		Ore. Exper. "Oregon State University"		Band "Classic Band Masterpieces"		Richard M. Sherman			
12	KPTV	(12) 6 O'Clock News (N)		Family Feud	Family Feud	The Resident "Three Words"		9-1-1 "Awful People"		10 O'Clock News (N)		News (N)	Page Six TV		
13	KPDx	(2) Mike & Molly	Mike & Molly	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Prime News (N)		Prime News (N)		Big Bang Theory		Family Guy	American Dad!		
13	KCPQ	(13) Modern Family	Modern Family	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	The Resident "Three Words"		9-1-1 "Awful People"		Q13 NEWS AT 10 (N)		News (N)	The Simpsons		
20	TBS	(20) Bob's Burgers	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy		Family Guy		Family Guy		Family Guy	Final Space		
20	KZJO	(20) Black-ish	Black-ish	Mom	Modern Family	Mom		Modern Family		Q13 News at 9 (N)		Big Bang Theory	Two and a Half		
29	ESPN	(29) (5:15) NFL Football Minnesota Vikings at Seattle Seahawks (L)		(15) SportsCenter With Scott Van Pelt (N)		(15) SportsCenter With Scott Van Pelt (N)		NFL PrimeTime		SportsCenter With Scott Van Pelt (N)		Scott Van Pelt (N)	NFL PrimeTime		
29	ESPN2	(30) Poker Global Championship		Poker World Series		Baseball Tonight		Baseball Tonight		SportsCenter With Scott Van Pelt (N)		Poker World Series	SportsCenter		
31	NICK	(31) The Loud House	The Loud House	The Loud House	The Loud House	Double Dare		Double Dare		To Be Announced		Friends	(35) Friends		
32	DISN	(32) Bunk'd	Bunk'd	Raven's Home	Raven's Home	Bizaardvark		Coop & Cami		Andi Mack		Stuck in Middle	Bunk'd		
34	FAM	(34) (20) *** Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000, Fantasy) Taylor Momsen, Molly Shannon, Jim Carrey.		No Sleep "Til Christmas" (18) Charles Michael Davis, Odette Annable.		The 700 Club									
35	FMC	(35) (5:10) What Happens in Vegas		(05) ** What Happens in Vegas ('08) Ashton Kutcher, Cameron Diaz.		*** Gone Girl (2014, Mystery) Rosamund Pike, Missi Pyle, Ben Affleck.							(50) FXM Presents		
36	LIFE	(36) A Christmas Arrangement ('18, Rom) Miles Fisher, Daphne Zuniga, Nicky Whelan.		Santa's Boots (2018, Family) Noah Mills, June Squibb, Megan Hilty.		(05) A Very Nutty Christmas ('18) Barry Watson, Melissa Joan Hart.									
38	ROOT	(38) Charlie Moore	DFL Soccer VfB Stuttgart at Borussia Mönchengladbach		In the Spotlight	Mark Few (N)		Undeniable Joe Buck "Ray Leonard"		F-E Preview (N)		UFC UFC Fight Night 90			
39	FS1	(39) UFC "Bantamweight Brawlers" (N)		PBC Countdown	PBC Countdown	Speak for Yourself		TMZ Sports (N)		UFC Road Octagon "Lee vs. Inaquina 2"		PBC Countdown	PBC Countdown		
43	SPIKE	(43) Mom	Mom	Friends	Friends	** Spider-Man 3 (2007, Action) Kirsten Dunst, James Franco, Tobey Maguire.							Green Lantern		
44	COM	(44) The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office		The Office		The Office		The Office	The Daily Show (N)		
45	HIST	(45) Forged in Fire "Kora Sword"		Forged in Fire "Knights Templar"		Forged in Fire: Cutting Deeper The surviving smiths craft a Knightly Poleaxe. (N)							(05) Forged in Fire "Pioneer Sword"		
45	A&E	(46) The First 48 "In a Lonely Place"		The First 48 "Mother of Two"		The First 48 Detectives investigate real-life murders.							(05) The First 48 "Murder on the Bluff"		
47	TLC	(47) Four Weddings "...and a Chork"		Mama Medium "Faded Memories"		Medium "Surprising a Psychic" (N)		Long Island "Five Star Readings" (N)		Think You Are "Josh Duhamel" (N)		Think You Are "John Stamos"			
48	DISC	(48) OutlawsMemphis "Hustler's Paradise"		OutlawsMemphis "Desert Do-Over"		MemphisFullThrottle (N)		Memphis "Bet On Memphis" (N)		Street Outlaws "Top Home"		To Be Announced			
49	NGEO	(49) Mars "Contagion"		Mystery Mummies of New Guinea		One Strange Rock "Genesis"		Mars "Power Play" (N)		Space Race (N)		StarTalk "Weird Al Yankovic" (N)			
50	TNT	(50) (5:00) *** The Island ('05) Scarlett Johansson, Djimon Hounsou, Ewan McGregor.		Doctor Strange (2016, Action) Chiwetel Ejiofor, Rachel McAdams, Benedict Cumberbatch.		*** RoboCop (2014, Action) Marc Abraham, Joel Kinnaman.									
51	AMC	(51) (4:00) Miracle ('04, True) Kurt Russell.		*** National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation ('89) Chevy Chase.		(15) *** National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation ('89) Beverly D'Angelo, Randy Quaid, Chevy Chase.							Last Holiday '06		
52	USA	(52) Modern Family	Modern Family	Modern Family	Modern Family	WWWE Monday Night Raw							Modern Family		
53	FOOD	(53) Chopped "Celebrity Holiday Bash"		Chopped "Holiday Cooking"		Holiday Baking "Light and Inspiring"		Holiday Bake "New Family Classics" (N)		Cmas Cookie "Mr. and Mrs. Claus" (N)		Holiday Gingerbread Showdown			
54	HGTV	(54) Love It or List It "One Last Renovation"		Love/It "Urban vs. Suburban Living"		Love It/List It "A Sentimental Situation"		Love It or List It (N)		House Hunters (N)		House Hunters (N)	House Hunters		
56	FX	(56) (5:00) *** Star Trek Into Darkness ('13) Zachary Quinto, Chris Pine.		*** Independence Day: Resurgence (2016, Action) Maika Monroe, Jeff Goldblum, Liam Neeson.		*** Interstellar ('14) Matthew McConaughey.									
57	CNN	(57) Cuomo Prime Time		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon		Anderson Cooper 360		Cuomo Prime Time		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon			
58	FNC	(58) Hannity		The Ingraham Angle		Fox News @ Night Hard news and analysis of the most compelling stories.		Hannity		Fox News @ Night		Fox News @ Night			
61	CNBC	(61) Amer. Greed "Florida Rehab Gone Wild"		American Greed: Scam		American Greed: Scam "Conn's Job"		Amer. Greed "Artistic License to Steal"		Greed "Scams on Film/ God and Gold"		Paid Program	Paid Program		
63	BRAV	(63) Vanderpump Rules "Last Call"		Vanderpump Rules "Reunion"		Vanderpump Rules		Vanderpump Rules (N)		Unanchored "Sink or Swim" (N)		Watch What (N)	Vanderpump Rules		
64	TCM	(64) (15) Helpmates	(45) Towed	(15) **** Paths of Glory ('57) Adolphe Menjou, Ralph Meeker, Kirk Douglas.		**** It's a Gift (1934, Comedy) Baby LeRoy, W.C. Fields.		**** Mrs. Lambert Remembers Love ('91) Ellen Burstyn.							
65	SYFY	(65) (5:15) ** The Addams Family ('91) Anjelica Huston.		(35) ** National Treasure: Book of Secrets (2007, Adventure) Jon Voight, Ed Harris, Nicolas Cage.		Nightflyers (N)		(55) Futurama "My Three Suns"				(25) Futurama			
162	RFD	(162) American Rancher	Red Steagall (N)	Horse Master		Horse of the West		Craig Cameron		Rural Eve. News		Rural America "Live" "Total Feeds"			