

# U.S. Senate Confirms Jeh Johnson as Secretary of Homeland Security

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On December 16, 2013, the U.S. Senate [confirmed](#) Jeh C. Johnson, the former general counsel of the Pentagon, to lead the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** in a resounding 78-16 vote. (As reported [earlier](#), the confirmation of Alejandro Mayorkas to become DHS Deputy Secretary is also expected to move forward after a Senate committee vote held last week.) The late-night confirmation followed procedural changes implemented in response to the frequent filibustering of presidential nominees, crucially removing the 60-vote threshold that previously delayed votes on many nominations. A key proponent of the Obama administration's increased use of unmanned drones, Mr. Johnson will be the fourth person to lead the DHS, which includes 22 agencies that oversee diverse national priorities such as counter-terrorism, immigration enforcement, and national disaster relief.

Mr. Johnson, who is expected to be sworn in later this week, has pledged to promote unity within the Department and fill numerous senior-level vacancies, declaring his "hope to be a visible leader [and] remind people of the importance of the overriding, unifying mission of homeland security." Responding to Mr. Johnson's confirmation, President Obama also reiterated the challenges Mr. Johnson will face in his new role, stating, "As secretary of homeland security, Jeh will play a leading role in our efforts to protect the homeland against terrorist attacks, adapt to changing threats, stay prepared for natural disasters, strengthen our border security, and make our immigration system fairer."

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