

Trump nominates far-right Senator Markwayne Mullin to lead DHS, drawing support from Democrats and Teamsters bureaucracy

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President Donald Trump's nomination of Republican Senator Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma to head the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has quickly won the backing of leading Democratic politicians and sections of the trade union bureaucracy, underscoring the bipartisan character of the assault on immigrants and democratic rights.

Mullin, 48, has been a far-right supporter of Trump, consistently backing the administration's anti-immigrant policies and the expansion of the domestic police apparatus. Mullin has served in Congress since 2012, first as a member of the House of Representatives and since 2023 as a US senator from Oklahoma. Prior to entering politics he owned a small plumbing and home services company and briefly attempted a career as a mixed martial arts fighter, participating in three amateur bouts roughly two decades ago that lasted less than five minutes combined.

Mullin's response to the killing of Minneapolis resident Alex Pretti earlier this year underscores the reactionary outlook that he will bring to the Department of Homeland Security. Appearing on Fox News the day of the murder, Mullin immediately repeated the administration's justification for the killing and slandered the victim as a threat. "A deranged individual who came in to cause max damage with a loaded pistol, with an extra mag that was completely loaded was shot and killed," Mullin declared, before blaming Democratic politicians for the political fallout from the incident. The remarks echoed the rhetoric of Noem and other administration officials, who lied in defense of the immigration police while at the same time smearing those murdered by them.

Speaking on CNBC in February, Mullin mounted an open defense of "show me your papers" policing.

"As far as people having to show ID ... there is nothing to hide if you are here legally, there's nothing to hide," Mullin said. "There is no reason to hide. Most people already are

walking around with a government-issued ID, meaning your Real ID or your driver's license."

Mullin has also been a vocal supporter of US military aggression abroad. In a recent interview on CNN, he defended the ongoing US-Israeli assault on Iran while falsely claiming the United States was not at war.

"What he declared on us was war, meaning us as Ayatollah," Mullin said. "We are not at war with the Iranian people. The Ayatollah who declared war on us, we have already taken him out. Now we are eliminating the threat."

Mullin's record of defending police violence, promoting anti-immigrant repression and supporting imperialist war leaves no doubt about the political character of Trump's nominee. It is precisely for this reason that sections of the trade union bureaucracy have rushed to embrace him.

Teamsters President Sean O'Brien offered praise for Mullin on Thursday, telling *The Hill*, "If anyone is willing to stand their butt up to protect America, it's Markwayne Mullin." The statement marks a remarkable turn in relations between the two men, who nearly came to blows during a Senate hearing in November 2023 after Mullin challenged O'Brien to a physical fight.

The confrontation, which drew national attention, has since given way to what both men now describe as a friendly relationship. Speaking at the Republican National Convention last year, Mullin said O'Brien apologized to him at the request of Trump and that the two have remained in regular contact.

"He said, 'Out of all of the people that I should have read their bio on, I should read yours, and I didn't,'" Mullin recalled. "Since then, him and I have talked very often."

O'Brien's praise for Trump's nominee is significant. Mullin is poised to become the head of the largest domestic policing apparatus in the United States, overseeing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and

Border Protection (CBP) and other agencies that have carried out mass deportations, raids and lethal operations across the country, including at work sites.

The Teamsters president's embrace of Mullin comes less than three years after the sellout contract pushed through by O'Brien in 2023 at UPS. Since its passage, tens of thousands of UPS workers have been laid off, tied to the company's so-called "network of the future," takes shape.

That such a figure is being openly praised by Teamsters President Sean O'Brien exposes the role of the trade union bureaucracy as an arm of the capitalist state. Mullin has made clear through his statements defending the killings carried out by federal immigration police and his calls for expanded enforcement that he intends to intensify the repressive operations of DHS. Yet rather than opposing the elevation of a far-right Trump loyalist to head the country's largest domestic policing apparatus, O'Brien has publicly embraced him. The spectacle of the Teamsters president cozying up to the future head of the agency that oversees ICE and other federal police bodies demonstrates that the union bureaucracy functions not as a defender of workers but as a partner of the state and corporations.

Support for Mullin is not limited to the trade union bureaucracy.

Democratic Senator John Fetterman of Pennsylvania has already declared he will vote to confirm Trump's nominee, calling Mullin a "nice upgrade" from outgoing DHS Secretary Kristi Noem.

Fellow Democratic Senator Peter Welch of Vermont likewise praised Mullin as "competent" and "honest," predicting that the Senate will confirm him.

Mullin himself has signaled his intention to meet with Senate Democratic leaders, including Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, to discuss "improvements" to immigration enforcement operations.

"If they have real concerns, I'm going to listen to them. I'm going to see if it's practical," Mullin told reporters.

These discussions are taking place under conditions in which broad hostility exists toward the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the immigration police. Recent polling has shown that large sections of the population, 50 percent, support abolishing ICE altogether. Yet the discussions between Mullin and Democratic leaders are not about dismantling the widely hated department but about restoring its credibility.

Despite claims from capitalist politicians in both parties, DHS does not exist to protect the population. Its function is to police and suppress the population in the interests of the financial oligarchy.

All those sowing illusions in Mullin and the DHS are lying to workers.

In addition to the Democrats and Teamsters bureaucracy, Mullin's nomination has been welcomed by some of the most reactionary forces in American politics.

The anti-immigrant Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), a group long associated with far-right and xenophobic politics, issued a statement congratulating Mullin and declaring it looked forward to working with him as he "carries out President Trump's mass deportation mandate."

That endorsement underscores the political character of Mullin's nomination. His elevation to lead the DHS signals the continued expansion of the federal immigration police and the intensification of Trump's "mass deportation operation."

Nothing about Mullin's appointment signals any change in the role of DHS.

The department's purpose has never been the defense of workers, who have no country under capitalism, but the repression of workers and immigrants alike. Its agencies have repeatedly targeted not only undocumented immigrants but US citizens and political opponents of the Trump administration's policies.

Democratic and trade union support for Mullin and the DHS exposes these organizations as enemies of the working class. Seven Democratic senators voted to confirm Kristi Noem as DHS secretary, and leading Democrats are now preparing to support her replacement. The unions, integrated into the corporate and state apparatus, function as labor police, suppressing opposition while maintaining close relations with the very officials overseeing mass repression.

The defense of immigrants and democratic rights requires a break with both big business parties and the pro-corporate union apparatus. Workers must organize independently, building rank-and-file committees across industries and national boundaries to unite immigrant and native-born workers in a common struggle against the capitalist system that produces dictatorship, war and social inequality.



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