

Wait for Trump's science adviser breaks modern-era record

Top White House science job stays empty more than nine months after president took office.

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Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

US President Donald Trump still hasn't chosen a White House science adviser.

Donald Trump has now gone longer without a science adviser in place than any recent first-term US president — by any measure.

On 23 October, Trump broke the record set by former President George W. Bush. Bush's science adviser, physicist John Marburger, was confirmed by the Senate on 23 October 2001. That was 276 days after Bush took office, and 120 days after he announced that Marburger was his pick for the job.

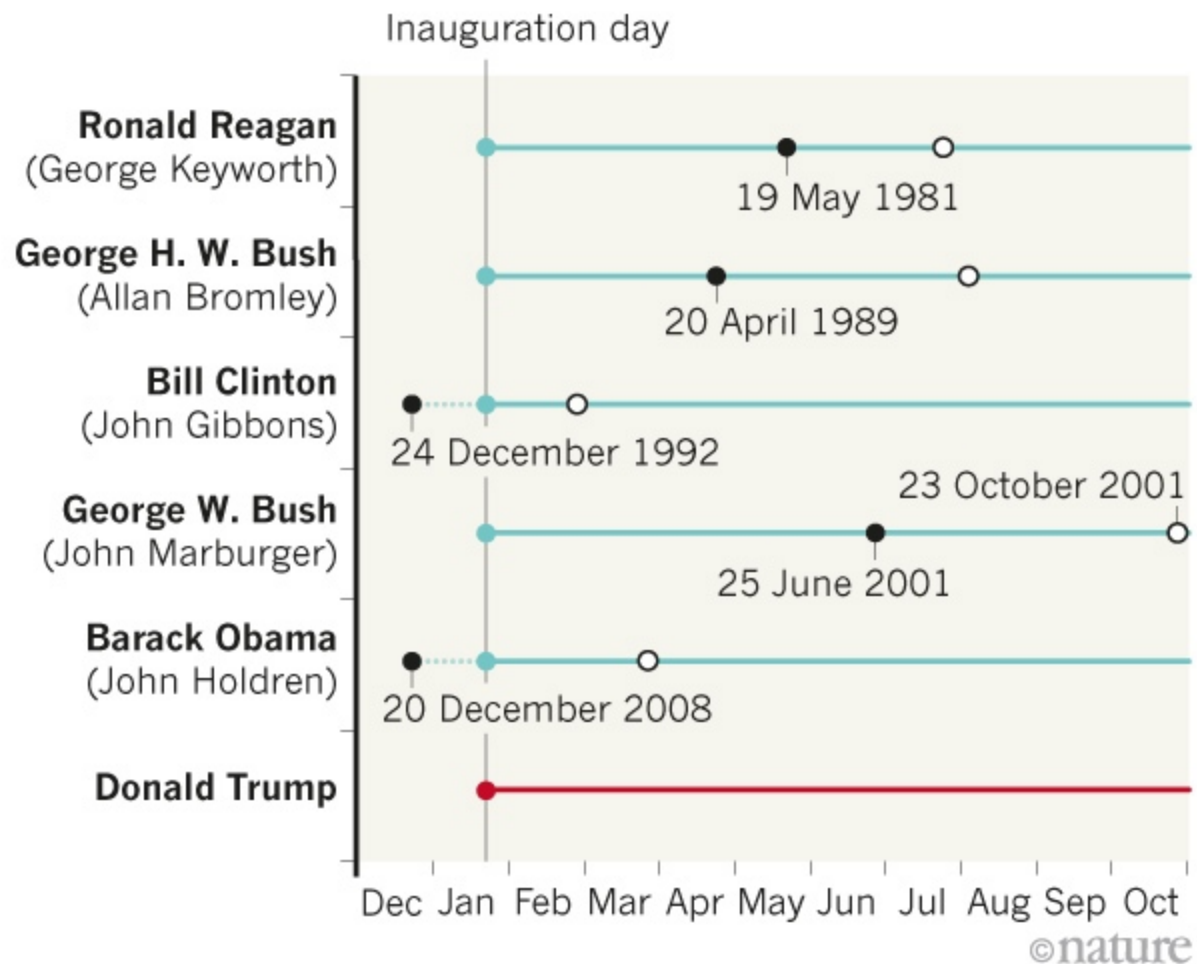
Trump has also waited longer than any president since at least 1976, when the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy was created, to name his choice for the science-adviser job (see ‘Help wanted’). Although rumours have surfaced periodically about scientists who may be in the president’s sights, the White House has not made any official announcement.

By contrast, Trump’s predecessor Barack Obama took the least time of any first-term president since 1976 in naming his science adviser. Obama revealed his choice of physicist John Holdren on 20 December 2008 — just 47 days after he won the presidency, and exactly one month before he was sworn in. (Holdren was confirmed by the US Senate three months later, on 19 March 2009.)

HELP WANTED

Donald Trump has now gone longer without a science adviser than any first-term US president since at least 1976. By contrast, his predecessor Barack Obama took the least amount of time in announcing his science adviser pick (in brackets), naming John Holdren one month before Inauguration Day.

- Science adviser announced
- Confirmed by Senate



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Corrections

Corrected: An earlier version of the graphic gave the wrong year for the date that John Marburger was confirmed by the Senate as the science adviser.