

White House Delays Trump's Pick for U.S. Crypto Regulator as CFTC Faces Leadership Vacuum

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Brian Quintenz, former CFTC commissioner and President Donald Trump's nominee to lead the agency expected to oversee much of the U.S. crypto market, has had his confirmation stalled again this time at the request of the White House.

Quintenz had been scheduled to receive a vote in the Senate Agriculture Committee on Monday, a critical step before a full Senate confirmation. However, according to committee staff, *“The White House asked the committee to delay the vote.”* This marks the second such delay in as many weeks, with no explanation provided by the administration. The White House did not respond to media requests for comment.

This latest delay now pushes any progress on Quintenz’s nomination into September at the earliest, as the Senate is due to break for its summer recess. The timing leaves the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) in a state of uncertainty, as leadership transitions hang in the balance amid broader shifts in U.S. crypto policy.

Should Quintenz eventually be confirmed, he could find himself as the sole active member of the five-seat commission. Democrat Commissioner Kristin Johnson, the only remaining member, has announced her intention to step down, further complicating the agency’s capacity to operate, let alone regulate.

While U.S. regulatory bodies are typically required to maintain a bipartisan composition, the CFTC is rapidly approaching a situation where its sole leadership may fall to one individual. Though not by design, the shift appears to be aligning with President Trump’s broader goal of rebalancing agency control in favour of his appointments. Critics may call it politicised, but the reality is that the agency’s functionality has suffered under slow-moving bureaucracy and misaligned priorities for years.

Despite the leadership gridlock, Congress is beginning to move on crypto legislation. The House recently passed the Digital Asset Market Clarity Act with strong bipartisan support, aiming to designate the CFTC as the lead regulator for non-security digital assets. The Senate Banking Committee, led by Senator Tim Scott, has set a 30 September deadline to finalise its version of the bill. However, with the Senate Agriculture Committee also needing to sign off, that timeline remains uncertain, especially given the delays in confirming CFTC leadership.

In a recent interview, a senior policy adviser involved in the Senate discussions told CoinDesk: “Without a confirmed CFTC chair in place, the agency is going to struggle to implement anything meaningful from new legislation.”

Meanwhile, concerns continue to mount over the legal authority of a one-person commission to issue new guidance or enforce major policy changes, should Quintenz find

himself alone at the helm. Still, many in the crypto and financial sectors view Quintenz's confirmation as an essential step toward restoring operational credibility at the CFTC, something the industry has long called for.