

# Trump Touts Rapid Action on Border, Budget and Economy

*The State-of-the-Union-style address gave the president a chance to sell his agenda to the American public six weeks into his second term*

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WASHINGTON—President Trump put his disruptive return to power on full display during a prime-time address to Congress, offering a [no-apologies assessment](#) of his decisions to crack down on illegal immigration, slash the federal workforce and impose stiff tariffs on imports.

“I return to this chamber tonight to report that America’s momentum is back, our spirit is back, our pride is back, our confidence is back,” Trump said, standing in the House chamber five years after his last address to Congress, describing what he called a “swift and unrelenting” campaign to transform the country.

The one-hour, 40-minute address—the longest of its kind in history—gave Trump an opportunity to [sell his combative brand of governing](#) to tens of millions of Americans in what was expected to be his largest audience since his inaugural address.

Trump presented a swaggering view of his administration, boasting of the dozens of executive orders he has signed and casting his first month in office as the most successful in history. He made few entreaties for unity, instead attacking Democrats as “radical left lunatics” and blaming his predecessor, [Joe Biden](#), for the country’s problems.

“I look at the Democrats in front of me and I realize there is absolutely nothing I can say to make them happy,” he said. Democratic lawmakers held signs that read “false” and “Musk steals,” a reference to Trump’s ally Elon Musk and the efforts he has led to slash government spending.

Seven minutes into the speech, Rep. Al Green (D., Texas) was escorted out after rising from his seat and shouting at the president. The disruption prompted Trump to momentarily pause his remarks. Green later told reporters that the outburst was “worth it to let people know that there are some people who are going to stand up” to Trump.

Throughout the address, Trump [defended his policies](#), which have sent shock waves across the globe, by invoking his election victory over Vice President [Kamala Harris](#) in

November. Democrats broke out in boos, as Republicans sought to drown those out with chants of “U.S.A.”

The public remains polarized and Trump has made some supporters second guess their choice, but Trump said he had a mandate to enact far-reaching change.

“The people elected me to do the job, and I am doing it,” Trump said.

He accused Biden of allowing the government to prosecute him, cases that withered as the president marched back to power. “How did that work out?” Trump asked. “Not too good.”

Trump showed off a theatrical side through the night. At one point he displayed an executive order that renamed a wildlife refuge in honor of Jocelyn Nungaray, a 12-year-old from Texas who was killed by two migrants. Trump pointed to a boy in the crowd with brain cancer and directed the head of the U.S. Secret Service to make him an honorary agent, fulfilling the boy’s dream of becoming a police officer and leading to roaring cheers in the chamber. And he announced a young man had been admitted to West Point.

The president also revealed during the speech that the U.S. had taken custody of an Afghan involved in planning the [deadly 2021 suicide attack](#) at the Kabul airport.

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Six weeks into office, Trump has moved with lightning speed to put in place his policy proposals, leaving some Democrats struggling to mount a defense.

The president has removed thousands of federal workers from their posts, wound down the work of key federal agencies and put in place an adversarial foreign policy. On Tuesday, [he imposed 25% tariffs](#) on goods from Mexico and Canada, rattling investors.

The tariffs, paid for by U.S. importers, have triggered widespread concern about higher prices for consumers. Trump blamed Biden for high prices, including a rise in the cost of eggs. Trump said he is working to bring down costs by cutting federal spending and opening the door to more domestic energy production.

He touted the [Musk](#)-led Department of Government Efficiency, which has rocked Washington with job cuts. “He didn’t need this,” Trump said of the world’s richest man. Musk, who swapped his trademark T-shirt and MAGA hat for a suit, was in the audience for the speech—offering a salute at one point—as Trump ticked off what he said were some of the most absurd examples of federal spending.

Trump and his advisers have [at times exaggerated](#) the scale of the cuts they have made to government spending. In his speech, the president suggested that fraudulent Social Security payments were being made to dead people, rattling off people in the government's database who are well over 100 years old. A 2023 inspector general report found that 18.9 million people born in 1920 or before were in the system but very few were actually receiving benefits.

The president asked Congress to move quickly to enact his legislative agenda, which includes steep tax cuts, and to pour vast new resources into securing the border. Trump pointed to a drop in border crossings, even as he privately hasn't been happy with [the pace of deportations](#).

He also talked about his plans to negotiate a peace deal between Ukraine and Russia, just days after a tense Oval Office meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Trump is still aiming to land an agreement to develop rare-earth minerals in Ukraine. Trump's handling of the war has been criticized by Democrats and a handful of Republican lawmakers, and it [has frustrated European allies](#), who worry he is cozying up to Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#).

Trump portrayed himself as a peacemaker. Hours before the speech, Zelensky said last week's White House meeting [was regrettable](#). "It is time to make things right. We would like future cooperation and communication to be constructive," Zelensky wrote on social media. Trump said during his speech to Congress that he appreciated Zelensky's comments.

Trump offered to welcome the people of Greenland into the U.S., pushing further on his talk of acquiring the land from Denmark. "We need Greenland for national security and even international security, and we're working with everybody involved to try and get it," Trump said. "And I think we're going to get it one way or the other." Officials in Greenland have said the self-governing island isn't for sale.

Trump also said his administration "will be reclaiming the Panama Canal." He has previously threatened to take control of the canal, potentially by military force.

Recent polls are mixed over whether voters hold a net positive or negative view of Trump's actions so far, but the overall trend suggests that approval of his job performance has slipped.

Shortly after Trump took office, approval outweighed disapproval by more than 8 percentage points in an average of public polls compiled by FiveThirtyEight, which is run by ABC News. Since then, public opinion has turned more negative, and Americans are

evenly divided over how Trump is handling his job, with about 48% approving and 48% disapproving.

Trump's speech came amid unfolding trade tensions prompted by his decision this week to move forward with tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico and to increase tariffs on Chinese imports. All three nations have said they plan [retaliatory tariffs](#).

Trump has argued tariffs are necessary to boost American manufacturing, and he contends that the U.S. has been taken advantage of for decades. "It's a beautiful word, isn't it?" he said of tariffs, defending his duties on Mexico and Canada.

"There may be a little disturbance, but we're OK with that," Trump said.

Throughout the speech, Trump took jabs at Democrats. At one point, he referred to Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D., Mass.) by the slur "Pocahontas." During her 2012 Senate race, Warren faced accusations she had portrayed herself as [part Native American](#) to advance her academic career.

The Democratic response to the speech was delivered by Michigan Sen. Elissa Slotkin, a freshman who ran on a more moderate message focused on the economy.

Speaking from her home state, she criticized Trump's economic policies and raised concerns about Musk's work. "America wants change, but there's a responsible way to make change and a reckless way—and we can make that change without forgetting who we are as a country and as a democracy."

Democrats had brought as guests to the speech federal workers who lost their jobs following cuts made by Musk's team, as well as small-business owners affected by tariffs. Some members boycotted the speech.