# Donald Trump’s rapid policy overhaul in first 100 days of second term sparks widespread debate



In the first 100 days following his inauguration as the 47th president of the United States, Donald Trump has undertaken an unprecedented rapid transformation of the country’s governance and policy landscape. His administration's fast-paced use of executive power has reached across all sectors of American life, provoking strong reactions from supporters and critics alike.

A defining moment early in Trump's second term came when Vice-President JD Vance posted on social media, "Judges aren't allowed to control the executive's legitimate power." This statement sparked widespread constitutional debate, as legal experts emphasised the judiciary’s long-standing role as a co-equal branch capable of checking government actions that violate the US Constitution. The White House’s ongoing efforts to expand executive authority into areas traditionally overseen by Congress and the courts have led to many legal challenges. According to reports, over 100 court rulings have blocked presidential actions deemed unconstitutional—for example, mass deportations under wartime powers and unilateral budget control.

One prominent figure within the administration’s drive for sweeping change is Elon Musk. At the Conservative Political Action Conference, Musk dramatically drew attention to his role overseeing government budget cuts by brandishing a symbolic gold chainsaw, representing his so-called "Department of Government Efficiency" (Doge). Since then, Musk's team has sought access to federal databases to identify programmes for elimination, resulting in significant reductions to agencies including the near shutdown of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and efforts to dismantle the Department of Education. While the administration claims to be targeting wasteful spending, some Americans—including Trump supporters—have voiced concern that cuts could affect popular social programmes like Social Security, veterans benefits, and health insurance for disadvantaged groups.

Trump’s economic policy has also attracted considerable attention, particularly his implementation of new tariffs announced in a high-profile White House event dubbed "Liberation Day." The immediate market reaction was severe, with the S&P 500 index and other stock markets plunging globally. Traders such as Richard McDonald described the turmoil: "I jumped to my feet because I wasn't expecting a board [of charts]—I was expecting an announcement... There are billions being wiped off share prices every second, so it's really 'fastest finger first'." The tariffs aimed to protect American industry and curb inflation, which had been a primary voter concern. However, the short-term effects include rising interest rates, declining consumer confidence, and increasing unemployment partly due to cuts in federal employment. Despite this, there remains strong support among certain constituencies, especially former industrial workers hopeful that restrictive trade measures will support domestic job growth.

In the realm of immigration, the administration’s focus has been stark. A photograph circulated showing 238 men, identified by US authorities as members of the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, deported to a maximum-security prison in El Salvador. Among them was Myrelis Casique Lopez’s son, whom she insists is innocent. The administration’s blunt enforcement strategy has led to decreased illegal border crossings, yet civil rights advocates warn that due process has sometimes been overlooked, affecting non-criminal migrants including foreign students involved in pro-Palestinian campus demonstrations. Immigration enforcement actions have extended into various community settings, including homes, businesses, churches, and universities.

Higher education has emerged as a contested front. Harvard University’s president, Alan Garber, publicly announced a lawsuit challenging the Trump administration’s freezing of billions in federal grants, describing the move as an improper attempt to control university operations. The White House accused Harvard of inadequate action against antisemitism. Similar pressures have been applied to other institutions such as Columbia University, leading to changes in protest policies and academic departments. On the corporate and media side, firms face withholding of federal contracts and pressure to increase conservative representation in their ranks. Some have responded with legal challenges; others with concessions or legal support for the administration. Notably, ABC News contributed $15 million to Trump’s foundation to settle a defamation suit, and negotiations are underway with other media corporations regarding lawsuits.

Additionally, the Trump administration has made a marked shift in federal diversity and inclusion policies. In a highly publicised moment, Trump attributed a fatal aircraft collision partly to diversity initiatives that he claimed led to hiring individuals with severe intellectual disabilities as air traffic controllers, an assertion unsupported by evidence. The White House has since ordered an end to government diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programmes, urging investigations into private organisations purportedly engaged in "illegal DEI." This reversal has influenced numerous major companies to curtail such programmes. Critics highlight unexpected effects such as the removal of historical information about black and female service members from Arlington National Cemetery’s website and the initial proposal to remove references to the Enola Gay aircraft from Pentagon documents.

Overall, the first 100 days of Donald Trump’s second presidency have showcased a forceful and expansive use of executive authority, with efforts to restructure federal agencies, reshape domestic policies, and assert control over legislative and judicial counters. The durability of these changes is uncertain, given that many rely on executive orders rather than legislation and face ongoing legal challenges. Republican majorities in Congress later in the year may seek to codify some reforms, but narrow margins and upcoming mid-term elections could alter legislative dynamics. Similarly, the US Supreme Court, although conservative-leaning, may issue rulings that constrain parts of the administration's agenda. The months ahead will test whether this initial whirlwind of political actions can establish a lasting legacy.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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