



## **Fact-checking President Donald Trump's address to a joint session of Congress**

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During his address to a joint session of Congress Tuesday night, President Donald Trump made a number of claims about a range of issues, including unemployment and immigration.

Throughout the speech, a team of journalists from ABC News identified questionable statements and provided context, detail and additional information and statistics.

Here is ABC News' fact-check of the address:

### **Fact check No. 1: Impact of immigrants on employment, wages and crime**

**What Trump said:** "By finally enforcing our immigration laws, we will raise wages, help the unemployed, save billions of dollars, and make our communities safer for everyone."

**What we know:** According to a major report last fall from the National Academies of Sciences, immigrants have "little to no negative effects" on the wages or employment of native-born workers in the United States.

Instead, the biggest impact to wages was among previously arrived immigrants. That is to say, new immigrants can impact the jobs/employment of immigrants who have been in the U.S. longer.

To the extent that negative wage effects were found, native-born teens and specifically high-school dropouts, who saw fewer hours of work, were some of the most affected.

On crime, a number of scientific studies conducted over the past several years contradict the idea that immigrants are responsible for a disproportionate share of crime. While the government doesn't track the number of undocumented (or documented) immigrants that have committed crimes, studies have found that immigrants in the U.S. are less likely to commit violent crime than U.S. citizens.

A 2015 study by the pro-immigrant, nonprofit American Immigration Council, found that “immigrants are less likely to commit serious crimes or be behind bars than the native-born, and high rates of immigration are associated with lower rates of violent crime and property crime.” This holds true for both legal immigrants and the unauthorized, regardless of their country of origin or level of education, according to the study.

A 2016 study published in the Journal of Quantitative Criminology actually suggests that communities that recorded significant increases in immigration had a sharper reduction in crime compared to areas that had less immigration.

### **Fact check No. 2: Number of Americans out of the labor force**

**What Trump said:** "Ninety-four million Americans are out of the labor force."

**What we know:** This number, offered by Bureau of Labor Statistics data, is misleading. It includes every person over 16 years old who isn't working, such as high school and college students, retirees, disabled people and stay-at-home parents. These groups account for more than half of the number Trump cites. The Bureau of Labor Statistics puts another number — “number of unemployed persons” — at 7.6 million people.

### **Fact check No. 3: The national debt, manufacturing jobs and trade deficit**

**What Trump said:** "In the last eight years, the past administration has put on more new debt than nearly all other presidents combined. We've lost more than one-fourth of our manufacturing jobs since NAFTA was approved, and we've lost 60,000 factories since China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001. Our trade deficit in goods with the world last year was nearly \$800 billion dollars."

**What we know:** The national debt ballooned from \$10.6 trillion to \$19.9 trillion under President Obama, according to the Treasury Department, which is nearly more than all other presidents combined. But the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget notes that all of the blame should not be placed on the Obama administration, since some of the debt increases were already projected to occur before Obama took office, and spending and tax decisions are also influenced by action or inaction by Congress.

On manufacturing, the U.S. has lost roughly one-third of its manufacturing jobs since NAFTA was approved, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data. According the U.S. Census Bureau, the trade deficit with the world last year was \$734 billion.

### **Fact check No. 4: Military spending increase**

**What Trump said:** "I am sending Congress a budget that rebuilds the military, eliminates the defense sequester, and calls for one of the largest increases in national defense spending in American history."

**What we know:** Trump has proposed a 10 percent increase equal to \$54 billion that would increase the Defense Department's budget next year to \$603 billion. The proposal has been met positively by Congressional Republicans, but Sen. John McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed

Services Committee, has said the increase is only \$18.5 billion above the level Obama proposed for fiscal year 2018. McCain has proposed a defense budget of \$640 billion for 2018 as a first step to restore military readiness.

### **Fact check No. 5: Trump's impact on job creation and investment**

**What Trump said:** "Since my election, Ford, Fiat-Chrysler, General Motors, Sprint, Softbank, Lockheed, Intel, Walmart, and many others, have announced that they will invest billions of dollars in the United States and will create tens of thousands of new American jobs."

**What we know:** The companies Trump named have made announcements about new jobs since his election. It's unclear in some instances if Trump can take credit for these jobs.

Ford, for instance, told ABC News that the company "didn't have any direct negotiations" with then President-elect Trump around the move to create 700 jobs here and cancel plans to build a new plant in Mexico. But that Trump's policy reforms — tax and also regulatory — "played a factor in our decision-making. So in essence, yes he did play a factor as we made some of the decisions."

Similarly while both GM and Intel announced the jobs will be added, they credited their long-term plans and general business growth for the investments.

Companies though are quick to point to future optimism on pro-growth policies and tax reform.

### **Fact check No. 6: Cost of F-35 fighter jet**

**What Trump said:** "We've saved taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars by bringing down the price of the fantastic new F-35 jet fighter and will be saving billions more dollars on contracts all across our government."

**What we know:** Lockheed Martin, a government contractor, has been direct in crediting Trump's personal involvement in reducing costs of the F-35 project. They said on February 3 that their agreement with the Defense Department for the next 90 F-35 aircraft represents \$728 million in savings from their last contract and creates 1,800 new jobs. "President Trump's personal involvement in the F-35 program accelerated the negotiations and sharpened our focus on driving down the price," the statement said.

The Pentagon and Lockheed Martin also announced that for the first time the cost of new F-35 fighter aircraft had been reduced to less than \$100 million per plane. But the announcement was in line with already existing Pentagon cost projections for the next lot of aircraft to be purchased. Lockheed Martin has told the Pentagon that by 2019 it expects to have unit costs down to \$85 million.

### **Fact check No. 7: 2015 murder rate and Chicago shootings**

**What Trump said:** "The murder rate in 2015 experienced its largest single-year increase in nearly half a century. In Chicago, more than 4,000 people were shot last year alone — and the murder rate so far this year has been even higher."

**What we know:** The number of murders in the U.S. did have its largest year-to-year increase in nearly five decades from 2014 to 2015 — but it's important to note that violent crime in the United States has declined dramatically over the last two decades. Chicago accounts for nearly half of the increase in murders over the last year, according to data from the Major Cities Chiefs Police Association. In 2016, there were 4,331 shooting victims in Chicago. And there were 51 murders in Chicago in January 2017 — one more than the 50 murders in January 2016, according to the Chicago Police Department.

### **Fact check No. 8: Terrorism-related convictions since September 11**

**What Trump said:** "According to data provided by the Department of Justice, the vast majority of individuals convicted for terrorism-related offenses since 9/11 came here from outside of our country."

**What we know:** Last year, the Department of Justice provided a Senate panel with a list of 580 individuals who were convicted of terrorism or terrorism-related offenses between Sept. 11, 2001, and Dec. 31, 2014. While the Justice Department did not provide immigration-related information on those individuals, the Senate panel — led by then-Sen. Jeff Sessions, who's now the U.S. attorney general — conducted open-source research and determined that at least 380 of those 580 people were born outside the United States.

However, a review by a Cato Institute analyst concluded that Sessions' findings were "flawed," with "two major problems ... First, you might get the impression that all of those convictions were for terrorist attacks planned on U.S.-soil but only 40, or 6.8 percent, were. Second, 241 of the 580 convictions, or 42 percent, were not even for terrorism offenses. Many of the investigations started based on a terrorism tip like, for instance, the suspect wanting to buy a rocket-propelled grenade launcher. However, the tip turned out to be groundless, and the legal saga ended with only a mundane conviction of receiving stolen cereal. According to Sessions' list, that cereal thief is a terrorist." In addition, of the 380 foreign-born individuals identified by Sessions' office, about 24 were admitted to the United States as refugees.

### **Fact check No. 9: Increasing Obamacare premiums**

**What Trump said:** "Obamacare premiums nationwide have increased by double and triple digits. In Arizona, premiums increased 116 percent."

**What we know:** It is true that premiums are on the rise. Insurers are set to raise the premiums for plans sold through HealthCare.gov by an average of 22 percent in 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said in a report. This is approximately triple the percentage increase from 2015 to 2016, when premiums increased by 7.5 percent.

As for the Arizona example, a recent [HHS report](#) supports the claim — but there are some important caveats. Indeed, the report shows the 116 percent increase in the monthly cost of a Silver plan in Arizona between 2016 and 2017. However, Arizona is an outlier in that the increase seen there is not typical. True, nearly every state showed an increase, but none were as dramatic as the Arizona example.

Additionally, these costs represent what a 27-year-old would pay before tax credits. Tax credits allow a large part of the population to pay some fraction of the actual price when it is all figured out. In 2016, a 40-year-old adult making \$30,000 per year would pay about \$208 per month for the second-lowest-silver plan. If this person is willing to switch to whatever the new second lowest-cost silver plan is in 2017, they will pay a similar amount (the after-tax credit payment for a similar person in 2017 is \$207 per month or a change of 0 percent).

Finally, we know that premiums had been increasing before the Affordable Care Act took effect — suggesting that it may not be appropriate to assign all blame for this increase on the ACA

### **Fact check No. 10: Border security and drugs entering the U.S.**

**What Trump said:** "We've defended the borders of other nations, while leaving our own borders wide open, for anyone to cross — and for drugs to pour in at a now unprecedented rate."

**What we know:** On border security, the U.S.-Mexico border is currently secured by fencing, billions of dollars in resources, thousands of Border Patrol agents and new technologies.

Some 700 miles of border fencing have already been completed along the country's nearly 2,000-mile border with Mexico, much of it during Barack Obama's presidency, as part of the Secure Fence Act of 2006, which was signed by President George W. Bush. Border Patrol employs a "digital wall" composed of about 8,000 cameras, which monitor the southern fence and ports of entry. Its resources also include more than 11,000 underground sensors, 107 aircraft, eight drones, 175 mobile surveillance units and 84 boats.

Despite the security at the border, illegal drugs continue to make their way into the U.S. It's unclear if drugs are pouring in at "unprecedented rates," but drug deaths are currently at their highest ever recorded level. Every year since 2009, drug deaths have outnumbered deaths by firearms, motor vehicle crashes, suicide, and homicide, according to the DEA's 2016 National Drug Threat Assessment. In 2014, approximately 129 people died every day as a result of drug poisoning.

Mexican criminal organizations remain the "greatest criminal drug threat to the United States," according to the same report. No other groups are currently positioned to challenge them, the DEA found. By controlling smuggling corridors, these criminals are able to introduce multi-ton quantities of illicit drugs into the U.S. on a yearly basis, according to the DEA.

### **Fact check No. 11: Health care options in Kentucky and nationwide**

**What Trump said:** "Gov. Matt Bevin of Kentucky just said Obamacare is failing in his state — the state of Kentucky — and it's and unsustainable and collapsing. One-third of counties have

only one insurer on the exchanges. They're losing them fast. They're losing them so fast. They're leaving and many Americans with no choice at all."

**What we know:** Kentucky will have 59 counties with only one health insurance option on the exchange for 2017. Off the exchange, most Kentucky counties will have only two options.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, in states that use HealthCare.gov, the average number of insurers participating in the marketplace will be 3.9 in 2017 — down from 5.4 companies per state in 2016. The reason behind the exodus of major insurers (Aetna, Humana) has been one of numbers; they have reportedly been struggling to make money given the relative dearth of young, healthy people paying into the system to balance out the costs incurred by sicker and older people. This, combined with general uncertainty about the upcoming plans for the health care system, have companies backing away from potentially costly commitments.

### **Fact check No. 12: Jobs created by the Keystone pipeline**

**What Trump said:** "We have cleared the way for the construction of the Keystone and Dakota Access pipelines — thereby creating tens of thousands of jobs — and I've issued a new directive that new American pipelines be made with American steel."

**What we know:** A report from the State Department in 2014 estimated the Keystone pipeline project, through direct and indirect spending, could result in over 40,000 jobs. But most of those jobs are not permanent — instead the State Department estimated that the Keystone jobs would mostly be four or eight months long, and many would not be construction-related. The report says the pipeline's construction will likely lead to about 35 permanent full-time jobs.