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## Trump's Executive Orders

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February 8, 2017

A main focus of recent news has been the executive orders enacted by recently-elected President Donald Trump. Many are in uproar about the constitutionality, or lack thereof, of some of these executive orders. Some are confused as to how these orders work and how they will impact the citizens of this country.

The power to implement executive orders is an implied power given to the president in the Constitution. Contrary to popular belief, executive orders are not laws passed without the permission of Congress; while they do have the “force” of law, they can be rejected by the Supreme Court or overruled by Congress, as part of the checks and balances system of the American government. It is important to note that executive orders are typically mundane; for instance, President Obama enacted 276 executive orders, ranging from topics such as flood management and closing the federal government for a half-day for Christmas Eve, and Franklin Roosevelt implemented a whopping 3,522. Some, though, have been used to enact large changes in the United States. Famous examples of executive orders include the Emancipation Proclamation by Abraham Lincoln, which laid the groundwork for the freeing of slaves, and the desegregation of the Armed Forces by President Truman.

David McDonald, a legal associate at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think-tank based in Washington, D.C., said via email, “Most executive orders are uncontroversial and just another tool in the day-to-day management of a large bureaucracy. The controversy erupts when the President uses executive orders to refuse to enforce federal law or to subvert Congress by implementing policies Congress explicitly rejected.”

In the 19 days that he has been in office, President Trump has enacted seven executive orders. Some have been complaining about the frequency of these orders in such a short timeframe, but it should be noted that President Obama signed nine executive orders in the same time period. The subjects of Trump's executive orders have varied, covering a wide range of issues. These issues include everything from repealing the Affordable Care Act to the building of a border wall between Mexico and the United States to a temporary ban on immigration to the United States from seven Muslim-majority countries.

Robert Spitzer, Department Chair of Political Science at State University of New York (SUNY) at Cortland, said, “[The executive orders] reflect exactly what he said he would do if elected. Aside from whether one agrees or disagrees with what he is trying to do, the problem is that he

has laid no groundwork with party or congressional leaders, or with the affected federal agencies.”

The ban on immigration is by far the most controversial, with widespread protests and demonstrations organizing in anger from the executive order. The order, formally titled “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States,” outlines a temporary ban on immigration from seven different countries. Trump starts by referencing the Sept. 11 attacks as well as other “attacks by foreign nationals;” however, there has not been a single person from any of the countries banned by the order that has committed an act of terrorism on U.S. soil since the 9/11 attacks.

“The fact is that what Trump has done is unprecedented,” said McDonald. “No president has ever banned all immigrants from a certain country without any exceptions, and we’re likely to see litigation over this executive order for years.”

Trump’s plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act has also sparked controversy. This would potentially leave tens of millions of Americans without health insurance, forced to pay exorbitant prices for medications and visits to the doctor; however, it seems this executive order is only temporary, as Congress will spend months deciding how to replace the act with a new system.

While there has been much said about the new President’s executive orders, one thing is certain: President Trump will remain a very polarizing figure in American culture for quite some time.