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Many Trump vows cannot be kept

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A powerful force driving Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in the presidential race is the frustration of grassroots voters, who feel politicians in Washington haven't kept their promises.

Democrats, although still high on President Barack Obama, are upset about an economic recovery that benefited Wall Street more than Main Street, top executives more than workers.

The anger is more palpable among Republican voters, who voted in big congressional majorities for the party, expecting to end Obamacare, reduce the size of government, cut taxes and bolster national security. None of it happened.

With that track record of broken promises and with Trump emerging as the likely Republican nominee, it's good to look at his prominent promises:

» National security: Trump has pledged to be tough, to defeat the Islamic State by bombing oil fields, which he would then turn over to U.S. oil companies. He would force Arabs to do the fighting against the Islamic State. He says he would "get along very well" with Russian strongman Vladimir Putin, whom he has praised. He gets his foreign policy advice from watching television news programs, he says.

This doesn't impress many foreign policy specialists.

"He has said very little of substance," says former Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Indiana, who was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. "It appears he doesn't have a real grasp of the range of complex issues or hasn't done his homework."

Adds Leon Panetta, who served as defense secretary and CIA director in the Obama administration: "It's the sort of stuff you expect to hear at the bar at the country club."

The American Action Forum, a right-of-center research organization run by Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a prominent Republican economist, soon will issue a report on the economic impact of

Trump's plan: The number of personnel devoted to apprehensions would soar from 4,844 to 90,582; the number of attorneys and courts would increase twentyfold; the number of detention beds would have to increase tenfold; and almost 100,000 chartered buses and flights would be required. American Action estimates the cost to the economy at \$1 trillion.

The nonpartisan Pew Research Center calculates that such deportations would cause big job losses in sectors of the economy: 26 percent of farming, fishing and forestry workers; 17 percent of building maintenance and cleaning personnel; 14 percent of construction workers.

Experts ridicule that. "The Mexicans treat this with total disdain," says Alex Nowrasteh of the libertarian Cato Institute. "I don't know any policy people who take this seriously."

Trade specialists note that he couldn't do this unilaterally.

"No president in our lifetime has ever contemplated anything like this, but I believe Congress would have to act," says Susan Schwab, who was U.S. trade representative under President George W. Bush. Moreover, she says, this would be in violation of international trade rules; Mexico and China would win a judgment at the World Trade Organization. Or they could retaliate against U.S. goods, such as agricultural products.

Expert analysis shows that it would indeed take tens of millions off the tax rolls. But little else holds up.

Both the left-of-center Tax Policy Center and the right-of-center Tax Foundation agree that the Trump plan doesn't come close to paying for itself and would cost \$9 trillion in revenue over the first decade. Both concur that it's heavily skewed in favor of the wealthiest taxpayers, not greater equity.

Even Trump's promise to crack down on hedge-fund and private-equity executives who benefit from a lower tax rate on capital gains doesn't hold up. Many of these arrangements are partnerships — and Trump's plan also calls for the top corporate rate to drop to 15 percent, a little lower than the top capital gains rate.

To date, Trump has been immune from substantive criticism, and he may have answers to these complaints. His Republican rivals began to grill him on issues such as health care. That should be just the start.