

TRUMP'S SECOND QUARTER: A FACT SHEET

with research from Sonja Colford, Jack Laub, and Reston Kaufman

6 months into the Trump administration, it feels nearly impossible to have a grasp on what's happened. Trump has launched a full-fledged assault on our democracy in virtually every arena, whether it be his violent deportation policies or his attacks on higher education. After Trump's first quarter, we released a f(act) sheet and a corresponding report that distilled some of the key issues with the aim of fighting information overwhelm. This report builds on that earlier work, providing updates about his major actions in the second quarter of his presidency.

MANIPULATING GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Q1: In his first days in office, Trump created the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and appointed mega-donor Elon Musk its head. He made drastic staff cuts from government agencies, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Education, Social Security, and the Environmental Protection Agency—in the name of government efficiency.

Savings from these cuts were often inconsequential—and far below what Musk promised.

Q2: DOGE's actions have already proven disastrous. The dissolution of USAID has closed aid checkpoints all around the world. And Social Security and Medicaid recipients are concerned about the status of their aid. In Trump's second quarter, Musk left his role as head of DOGE—exchanging public insults with Trump in the process—and was replaced by Russ Vought, an architect of Project 2025 and a longtime conservative policymaker. DOGE's efforts are ongoing, with Vought aiming to institutionalize DOGE staff across agencies. The administration faces legal fallout concerning the level of access given to these employees.

Simultaneously, Trump's second quarter has also brought the spotlight to another lever in government: the budget. Trump's Big Beautiful Bill passed Congress with a simple majority. The bill proposes \$4.5 trillion(!) tax cuts that overwhelmingly benefit the wealthy, while increasing the military budget by \$150 billion and ICE by \$100 billion. These changes will be paid for by cuts to SNAP food benefits and Medicaid, as well as by increasing the federal debt.

Why it matters: These cuts—whether they're from DOGE or the Big Beautiful Bill—primarily hurt working-class Americans. Through the mask of efficiency, Trump and Musk have reduced, cut, or eliminated programs that millions rely on. USAID provides healthcare and resources to impoverished people around the world. The Department of Education ensures access to and the quality of education. And the 74 million Americans who rely on Social Security will have to face real disruption. DOGE has failed to reach its initial goal of \$2 trillion in federal cuts, and instead of eliminating "waste," they have reduced or ended necessary support systems for millions of Americans.

FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT

UKRAINE AND RUSSIA

Q1: On the campaign trail, Trump declared himself a peacemaker. He claimed that “before I even arrive at the Oval Office... I will have the horrible war between Russia and Ukraine settled.” A great-sounding promise, right? But after humiliating President Zelenskyy in a February meeting, we are now over 1,200 days since fighting began, and the war rages on.

Q2: After four months of escalating conflict, on **July 9th**, Russia launched the largest drone strike of the war. During that time, the Trump administration’s foreign policy regarding the war has been anything but coherent. Without a ceasefire agreement **in March**, Marco Rubio, the Secretary of State, said the U.S. was days away from backing out of the war. When asked about Rubio’s comments, Trump said that was not entirely true. **In May**, Vice President Vance publicly announced that the idea of a 30-day ceasefire was not in the best interest of the United States. A day later, Trump demanding a 30-day ceasefire on social media. Then **in June**, Trump had “a good conversation” with Putin. A month later, relations between the U.S. and the Russian president seemed to have dissolved. And although Congress approved funding to Ukraine, which increased U.S. aid to over \$175 billion, the Pentagon then cut some of its funding, a decision of which Trump was not informed. The chaotic attempts by the Trump administration to intervene in the war in Ukraine have been anything but successful. There are now about 1.5 million casualties since the war began, with no end in sight. He still has his work cut out for him if Trump truly believes that he can broker peace in Ukraine.

PALESTINE, IRAN, AND ISRAEL

Q1: Trump’s campaign promise to “bring peace back to the Middle East” has also shown itself to be hollow. On January 15th, a ceasefire deal was brokered, and fighting temporarily stopped. Still, the U.S. State Department agreed to sell billions of dollars’ worth of weapons to Israel, and Trump floated the idea of turning the Gaza Strip into a personally branded resort. Trump then announced new demands for Hamas that extended beyond the original ceasefire agreement, with an added threat that he announced on his personal social media site, Truth Social: “I am sending Israel everything it needs to finish the job.” If anything, these actions only escalated the conflict.

Q2: On March 18th, Israel began “preemptive” attacks in Gaza, breaking the ceasefire and ending the promise of peace. In May, after Israel blocked U.N. humanitarian aid to Gaza, the Israeli and U.S. governments created the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. Instead of the 400 aid zones in the U.N. plan, the GHF only had 4. Further, the U.N. denounced the plan for not meeting Gaza’s needs and creating new dangerous zones, in which nearly 800 Gazans have been killed for seeking food. Sadly, the Gaza humanitarian crisis is worsening in large part due to the U.S.’s role.

This June, Israel launched an attack on Iran, fearing the threat of potential nuclear weapons, despite little concrete evidence that Iran’s program was on the brink of a finalized bomb or attack. After Iran retaliated, the United States got involved. On June 22nd, Trump ordered an attack on Iran without congressional approval or international notice. Trump explained, “Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon” and so we bombed Iranian threat sites with a stated goal of restoring peace. Setting aside the legality of Trump’s decision, it is unclear whether the U.S. attacks accomplished their goal of eliminating the nuclear sites. Nevertheless, a fragile ceasefire, promoted by Trump on Truth Social, is in effect. While there has been no fighting, Israel still says it is willing to breach the agreement if it feels threatened. It remains unclear whether long-term peace between Israel and Iran is possible, but either way, Trump’s promise of peace in the Middle East remains empty as the war between Israel and Palestine rages on with more deaths every day.

Why it matters: Not only has peace failed to be secured, but the scope of violence has widened in terms of deaths, destruction, and the number of actors involved. Trump’s actions have inflamed tensions, creating more instability and violence rather than appeasement. His promises have become more than failures; they have become disasters.

IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN, ICE RAIDS, AND LA PROTESTS

Q1: Since taking office, Trump has gone full tilt to “launch the greatest deportation program in American history.” Despite his alleged focus on reducing crime, Trump has deported thousands of innocent people, including Green Card and Visa holders, without due process. Notable moments from his first months in office were his invocation of the obscure 1798 Alien Enemies Act, his detainment of student visa holders, and a slew of executive orders, including an attempt to roll back birthright citizenship.

Q2: On June 27, 2025, a Supreme Court ruling expanded the Trump administration’s ability to enforce a birthright citizenship ban. The Birthright Act was a clear breach of the Constitution—the 14th Amendment ensures birthright citizenship for those born on American soil. However, the conservative court ruled on procedural grounds—referencing universal injunctions—as to why they could not intervene, not on the legality of the law itself. By avoiding the constitutional question, SCOTUS handed the Trump administration a major victory, allowing the administration to continue to reshape the meaning of citizenship with minimal resistance from the courts.

Adding to Trump’s docket of anti-immigrant legislation was a judicial memo, issued in late June 2025, changing requirements for the denaturalization of naturalized citizens by making it easier to revoke citizenship for certain crimes. The repealing of citizenship on the basis of criminal status is unconstitutional. Trump has made it explicit that he would be willing to revoke citizenship from anyone, whether or not they were born here.

On June 20, 2025, Columbia University pro-Palestine activist **Mahmoud Khalil** was released from the Louisiana ICE detention center after being detained for 104 days. (See our Q1 fact sheet for more background on his case). U.S. District Judge Michael Farbiarz granted his release, declaring that he is not a danger to society. The government plans to appeal Khalil’s release based on the groundless claim that he “lied on his green card application.” However, for the time being, he is freely able to travel between various states for his court appearances and to see his family. During his detainment, Khalil was denied temporary release to witness the birth of his son and was granted only a brief visit in May. Government attorneys have failed to provide compelling reasons or evidence for Khalil’s deportation, yet they continue the rhetoric that he represents a national security threat. Khalil has now sued for damages.

In March, **Kilmar Abrego Garcia**, a Salvadoran man, was deported by ICE despite a 2019 court order granting him protection from returning to El Salvador due to fear of gang violence. He was put in a maximum El Salvadorian prison notorious for its horrific conditions. After his wife filed a court appeal, it was admitted that he was deported because of an “administrative error.” Still, even after the Supreme Court called to “facilitate his return” in April, the Trump administration refused to do so for months. During the delay, the defense department charged him with a new crime of transporting illegal migrants through the country. Garcia was sent back to the U.S. on June 6, 2025, to be brought to trial. A judge ruled on June 30, 2025, that Garcia had to remain in custody for fear that he would be deported if released pretrial, as the case’s prosecutors said that if he were released on bail, they would turn the case over to ICE.

LA protests: Another big story from Trump’s second quarter in office was his reaction to anti-deportation protests in Los Angeles County, California. Responding to the arrest of over 100 immigrants in California, protests began. Generally, the State’s division of the National Guard is under the direction of the State’s Governor. However, against Federal Law, Trump overruled the Governor, sending in the National Guard and Marines to combat protestors and “deescalate” the situation. In a 36-page opinion, U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer determined Trump’s military deployment to be dangerous and in direct violation of the law. At its peak, 4,800 U.S. troops were deployed in Los Angeles—more than in Iraq and Syria combined. In its response to the protests, law enforcement was shown to attack peaceful protestors without provocation. Video footage shows an Australian journalist being shot by a rubber bullet fired by an LAPD officer. The large-scale military deployment was also logistically absurd, as troops arrived with no plans for lodging, no federal funding for food and water, and even no portable bathrooms. California Governor Gavin Newsom is taking Trump to court to protest the National Guard deployment. As ICE raids in California continue, the resistance to them is growing.

IMMIGRATION CONTINUED

Why it matters: The fact that a man—not yet convicted of any crime—could lose not only his citizenship but his family and his home, highlights how weak citizens' rights and freedoms are under the Trump administration. Data has shown that many of those deported in February 2025, Trump's first full month in office, had no criminal convictions or pending charges. As mass deportations become the subject of much national and international attention, with videos circulating of children being stripped from mothers, families being torn apart, and neighbors rallying together in protection, it is evident that Trump's immigration crackdown is far from an attempt to eliminate violent crime; it is a direct attack on the diverse and dynamic social fabric of the nation. It is an attack on the very freedoms this country has claimed to protect for its people.

UNIVERSITY LEGAL AND FUNDING BATTLES

Q1: Trump has consistently fought to weaken higher education. In March, he took away \$440 million in federal grants from Columbia University, issuing a list of demands to be met. Since then, Trump has targeted Cornell University, Northwestern University, Brown University, Princeton University, and the University of Pennsylvania, withholding anywhere from \$175 million to \$1 billion dollars in funding, in some cases for reasons as minor as having a transgender athlete.

Q2: His attacks reached a new peak in May 2025, when the Trump administration froze over \$2 billion in research grants and contracts from Harvard. His action came alongside claims by the administration that the school has not done enough to combat antisemitism on its campus. Similarly, the administration moved to "eliminate what it calls 'racist diversity, equity, and inclusion practices' at the school. Unlike Columbia, Harvard fought back, filing a lawsuit against the administration. Meanwhile, Trump barred the University from enrolling international students and reminded them that he could still cut billions more in funding and even take away its tax-exempt status.

As of late June 2025, Harvard and the Trump administration are locked in two lawsuits—one responding to the funding cuts and the other regarding the limits on admitting foreign students. Negotiations between the Trump administration and Harvard University are ongoing. Donald Trump has even called them "mindbogglingly historic, and very good for our Country". However, after a court ruled that Harvard can admit international students, the Trump administration issued a subpoena for international students' data and threatened the accreditation of the school—the ultimate attack on a higher education institution. The University responded by calling the moves "unwarranted." This consequential battle is far from resolved.

Why it matters: Cuts to university funding have wide-reaching impacts. The loss of grants and contracts means that high-quality research across almost every discipline—from cancer to farming solutions—will see devastating slashes. As Harvard President Alan Garber said, defunding research "hurts the country because after all, the research funding is not a gift," emphasizing that it is money given in exchange for what the federal government deems "high-priority work." Moreover, this loss in research grants, combined with the administration's immigration policy, is driving away global talent en masse. The actions against Harvard ultimately threaten academic freedom nationwide, eroding the very independence that is the meaning of academic freedom.

SIGNALGATE

The Trump administration has failed to keep some highly sensitive private communication secure. In what has been dubbed Signalgate, texts on the communication platform Signal by the Trump administration were leaked. The messages included remarks from Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Vice President JD Vance, and former adviser Mike Waltz on plans to strike the rebel Houthis in Yemen in late March. The texts included when, how, and where the attacks were going to happen. The only problem was that Waltz mistakenly added the editor-in-chief of *The Atlantic*, Jeffrey Goldberg, to the chat. Goldberg never had strong relations with President Trump, once referring to him as “the most ostentatiously unqualified major-party candidate [in American history].” Nonetheless, this lack of attention to detail at the highest level of the Trump administration raised alarm bells for multiple reasons. Signal is not a platform regularly approved by the Government for confidential communications. By sidestepping protocol around government information, these leaders created a potential breach of American security. The self-created security breach is an example of the carelessness of the leaders of our trillion-dollar defense department, and an embarrassment to our allies and to the American public.

Why it matters: It should be a given that our government officials communicate highly sensitive information using secure government channels. The Signalgate security breach was incredibly inappropriate and entirely preventable. This level of carelessness and unprofessionalism threatens all of our safety.

END TO GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE

Q1: The Trump administration has attacked the recognition of gender identity, making threats to the health and freedoms of the LGBTQ+ community. In his first months in office, he issued numerous Executive Orders that threaten LGBTQ+ rights, including prohibiting gender affirming care for minors and recognizing only “two sexes.” Since taking office, Trump has deliberately silenced the voices and rescinded the rights of the LGBTQ+ community.

Q2: Unlike many of Trump’s executive orders, his order banning gender-affirming care for minors has passed successfully through the Court system as of June 18, 2025. The Supreme Court, in a 6-3 decision, ruled that blocking trans youth from having access to gender-affirming care, such as puberty blockers and hormones, was not discrimination. Rather, Chief Justice John Roberts, in his majority opinion, argued that the “ongoing debate among medical experts regarding the risks and benefits” of such care was reason enough to ban it entirely. The transgender teenagers, their parents, and the doctor who brought the case argued that the law was discriminatory on the basis of sex under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment because the treatment could still be used by minors with other medical needs, such as endometriosis or early-onset puberty. In her dissenting opinion, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote, “by retreating from meaningful judicial review exactly where it matters most, the Court abandons transgender children and their families to political whims.” The decision is expected to have reverberating impacts throughout the U.S., as 25 states already have restrictive laws.

Why it matters: This landmark Supreme Court decision will remove federal protections for transgender youth. Without the legal protections they once had, transgender minors will be unable to access the medical care they deserve. The denial of gender-affirming care to the transgender community is a devastating outcome that undermines years of progress for members of the LGBTQ+ population.