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Delusional or Reasonable? The Issue of the 45th President's Daunting Aura

#### **Introduction:**

If someone were to tell me a year ago from today that Donald J. Trump was going to win the Presidential election of 2016 based on what the public portrayed him as throughout his campaign, I would have laughed at that person and would have called him or her delusional for thinking that a shortsighted and self-centered bigot would even have the chance to cause an upset against Hillary Clinton and the Democratic Party. Fast forward to the night of November 8 2016, and those who support Trump are having the last laugh, while millions of Americans weep in agony after realizing that the candidate they resented the most just became the 45th president of the United States of America. There is, without a doubt, an ongoing issue between many supporters and opposers of Trump as to whether or not he is fit to be the president of the US and if his impending policies will lead America in the right direction. However, behind this issue lies another issue more compelling in its own rights: Is the fear against Trump and his presidency really justified?

From the increase in supporters since the beginning of his campaign leading up to his victory in November 2016, Trump has since been a massive influence as to why the country is heavily divided, with many liberals constantly living in fear and the Republican Party seemingly split into two factions. Though I am a liberal myself and I acknowledge that Trump's presidency still continues to cause anxiety to the nation directly and indirectly, I still don't fear the possible implications his policies will bring to the country, and neither should anybody else since it is unlikely that his term in office will be able to really tarnish the country's reputation in a substantial way. In this paper, I will discuss my opinions as to why Trump should not be feared, especially against anxious liberals who view his presidency as a threat to American society and its principles and values. While it may also pertain to other political parties who are not necessarily liberals, the message that Trump should not be feared still remains intact as Americans should realize that his time in office will not mean the end of the world.

### **Literature Review:**

Before delving into the argument over which side is more justified, it's important to review the background of Trump's reign leading up to his presidency. Why did Donald J. Trump win the United States presidential election of 2016, and how was he able to garner so much support despite the media's vile portrayal of his campaign? Reuben Steff, a professor at the University of Waikato who has spent more than two years in New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, contends that Trump's victory was largely due to the fact that Democrats and the media alike were complacent about seeing him only as an irrational and incapable candidate. They were not able to see the strategic motives behind his actions and instead always denounced

his confusing and contradictory remarks towards current issues, not knowing that these radical statements are precisely what would allow him to garner so much support in the first place (Steff). Steff writes how one such motive was through the manipulation of media, as Trump's abnormal speeches reached millions of Americans who did not normally follow politics, and because of the profit-driven broadcasting networks, Trump's campaign was able to receive more airtime and exposure than any other candidate during the race. Most important among his motives was his ability to campaign effectively and persuade those who have been disillusioned for the past decade. Trump chose to campaign around states that once had thriving manufacturing industries, but because those industries were devastated by the nation's changing economy, his message of bringing jobs back to the American working class resonated even more heavily among his supporters. Alexander Zaitchik, a freelance journalist who has written for many publications such as Rolling Stone, Mother Jones, and Wired, interviewed 59-year old retired mineworker Ed Wiley on his book *The Gilded Rage: A Wild Ride through Donald* Trump's America. Within it, Wiley is quoted as saying: "Trump will get elected. We're tired of being broke. People's tired of bull crap. Jobs never should have never left here. They should have stayed in America" (44-45). Preceding this, Wiley also stated the hardships of his former job as a mineworker, questioning why other workers did not look for other jobs and if their pride as a mineworker kept them from abandoning one of the worst and riskiest jobs throughout the world (42).

Many people are afraid of Trump's presidency because his victory has revived an old movement towards conservatism and nationalism. Although there are many political and social issues that can be discussed on his presidency, I will only be able to provide some prevailing and

notable issues for the sake of time for this paper. University professors Ben Anderson-Nathe and Kiaras Gharabaghi, both experienced in the field of child and youth care work, are deeply concerned on several issues that Trump's administration could unfold. Some of their concerns include, but are not limited to, the possibility of mass deportation of up to 11 million people due to a potential Muslim registry that could deny immigration to Muslim people, women's sexual safety because of the President's sexist and insensitive remarks towards women and young females, and the safety of the LGBTQ community due to the Vice President-elect's support for a conversion therapy for queer people (Anderson-Nathe and Kiaras). Most importantly, they are terribly worried about the social implications that this far-right drift can bring, stating that universal human and children's rights can be chipped away based on the racist, xenophobic, and misogynistic attitudes that have only been "justified" recently because of the President's actions. Furthermore, if the President is allowed to state such offensive remarks towards the people of the country, what is going to stop the future generations from also stating offensive remarks towards other generations since the President is supposed to be the role model for America's tomorrow? Besides the social implications it can bring, people are also worried about the technological implications, especially from Trump's immigration ban. According to Hossein Ardehali, a medicine-cardiology and pharmacology professor at Northwestern University, Trump's ban will mainly weaken the United States' educational system because it will prevent bright students and scholars from those banned countries into entering the US, despite the fact that those scholars "have a proven record of benefitting the US scientific system" since the arrival of immigrants into the nation (Ardehali). He is also worried that, because of this ban, physicians and scientists from those countries will not be able to obtain the most recent scientific advances, which could

be detrimental since the loss of medicine could potentially endanger the lives of millions of people seeking treatment. Not only will the scientific community be damaged because of this endeavor, but future generations could be harmed as well.

Many people fear the future of America under Trump, but these fears are not necessarily new to the United States. In an article recently published by Politico Magazine, historical events since the era of the founding fathers have already prepared the nation with Trump's presidency (Politico Magazine). Joanne B. Freeman, a history and American professor at Yale University, brings up to light that, since the 1790s, several aspects such as populist surges, anti-intellectualism, and xenophobia have always stayed in place within the US. Freeman also reminds the country how the shift from an intellectual to a non-intellectual president from John Quincy Adams to Andrew Jackson in 1828 resonates similarities to the election of 2016, although Trump is much more politically inexperienced as he states. Trump's xenophobic comments and inflammatory remarks also resemble similarities to events that transpired a century ago. In an article written by University of Pennsylvania graduate Tina Irvine, Trump's statement to "make America great again" echo the "rhetorical arguments of the diffuse and disjointed Americanization movement of the 1910s and 1920s." The fear tactics that came about as a result of the cultural integration and assimilation of the foreign immigrants that came here during the 1910s and 1920s bear a striking resemblance to Trump's derogatory comments towards immigrants today, showing that nothing has changed within a span of a hundred years (Irvine). As Irvine points out, Donald Trump's success is due in large part to his ability of upholding white supremacist ideology and nativism, and it is because of this reason that the

issues America faces today parallel the issues that America had also dealt with many decades ago.

## **Arguments and Counter-Arguments:**

Though I have said this earlier, I will reiterate my statement again: I do not fear Trump and his policies, and neither should everybody else. There are a number of different reasons each unique in their own premise as to why this argument holds true. One of the main reasons why is linked to the research that scholars have already assembled, and that is with the fact the history is repeating itself. The issues that began years ago still remain to be relevant today because history is a dynamic and fluid process that is messy and filled with anxiety. Because these are issues that America has already fought for and has succeeded on all throughout history, there shouldn't be any reason why the issues Trump will bring throughout his presidency would not be reparable either. Let's touch more upon the topic of xenophobia, and take the 1920s as an example, a time era in which many immigrants started running into obstacles in the US. Many Americans started to fear immigrants because they were afraid that immigrants would not assimilate their own culture with American culture, which would further divide the country and its democratic values. As Jeremi Suri, a history professor at the University of Texas, points out, Americans started "blaming newcomers for joblessness, crime, and corruption in American society" (Suri, 2017). Because of the heavy Anti-Immigrant sentiment, Congress eventually passed the Johnson-Reed Act or the National Origins Quota Act in 1924, severely limiting immigration from European countries and banning immigration from Asian countries. However, this act eventually failed when the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 was passed, effectively overturning what was passed in 1924. Fast forward to the March 2017 and Trump signs a law that bans immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries. Though only true for a period of 90 days, the ban is essentially a restoration of the law that occurred a century prior, and that was a law that eventually failed because it deemed to be more problematic for the nation's reputation overall. To sum up my point, past historical policies eventually failed because of the public's outcry, so there should be no reason why Trump's policies, which are essentially a rehashing of previous policies, should not ultimately fail.

The public also has no reason to fear Donald Trump because some of his visions of a "greater America" are simply just too unrealistic. Things are easier said than done, and his idea of building a wall all across the Mexican border is no exception, as it is much easier to proclaim than it is to act upon. Although in this case, building a wall to block the entry of illegal immigrants is a much more impossible feat to accomplish for various reasons. Geographically, Mexico's border includes a vast amount of terrain not only limited to flat plains but also to mountains and rivers. Building an extensive wall over this terrain would require huge amounts of resources, which would only be a waste for the US since they can utilize and fund these resources towards much more valuable projects favored more by the public such as improvement in jobs or education. Furthermore, there already exists a "wall" within the outside of the border that was built two decades ago in 1994, originally built in order to prevent illegal drugs from entering the country. However, this project was unfinished, and the US did not continue to proceed because the border's terrain made it impossible for the wall to be built completely, plus add in the fact that it was too expensive to finish the project. Even if the US did have the money to fund the building of the wall, there are greater issues internationally that far exceed the issue

of illegal immigrants coming into the US, most notably foreign relations with Russia and the controversies regarding the Middle East. Trump's vision is impossible for this example because too much resources would be funded into something that would really have no practical purpose, and even if this wall was built, a lot more complications would arise compared to the prevention of illegal immigrants that it would supposedly fix.

As much as I stand firm with my argument, it would be too irrational even for me to say that President Trump is harmless. There will always be people throughout the nation that will forever be scared of the changes that Trump can bring to the country, whether that's in the political, social, or economical side. According to a recent article published by NBC News, New York and Washington D.C both reported an increase in hate crimes by 24 and 62 percent respectively since 2015 (Reuters). In addition, cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, Montgomery County, Columbus, Seattle, Long Beach, and Cincinnati also experienced an increase in hate crimes by 23.3 percent, 1037 incidents to be exact since the previous year. This is undoubtedly a big issue since America was supposed to be a safe haven for everybody that lived in this country. According to Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid's speech in 2016 at Washington D.C., he recalls receiving a letter from a 7th grader in Rhode Island, stating that she now felt scared after the election since the president, who was deemed as the person that is supposed to make people feel safe, is now making her feel powerless as woman of color even though she was born in the States (Reid). The increase in hate crimes play a big factor in this situation because they are making people of certain ethnicities or gender feel vulnerable due to the fact that they are now being targeted by many groups who support Trump. This is significant because these people happen to be citizens of America, and if these people are the ones that are feeling unsafe because Trump's influence, how much worst are immigrants or refugees going to be treated in the country?

Despite my counterclaim in the aforementioned paragraph, people should still not feel so afraid just because Trump was elected. The general demographic of America as a whole needs to realize that the country is not run by a single entity, but rather, by a body of profound and decisive intellectuals that all seek to make our nation a better place. To put it simply, America is run by different branches of government that all possess different kinds of jurisdiction kept intact by the system of checks and balances. Ergo, it is quite impossible for Trump to solidify policies and laws he devised on his own just because Congress and the Supreme Court also play a role in making the law come into full effect. Furthermore, Trump also states that he wants to make America great again for many people. If Trump is seriously considering in improving the lives of all of America and not just for those who support him or those that he generally supports, Democrats also have to take a pragmatic approach in supporting both Trump and the lives of many Americans. According to Harry Reid and his speech, President Trump now has to be held accountable for the millions of lives that live in the country, regardless of whether those people voted for him or not. If he really wants to pursue policies that will aid all of America, both the Republican and Democratic Party have to come in agreements and ensure that Trump will not lead America into a country filled with racism, bullying, and bigotry (Reid). This is very important because the majority of people that opposed Trump since the beginning were liberals, especially those within the Democratic Party overall. Despite their animosity against Trump, they still want to cooperate with him since their main priority is improving the lives for America

as whole, even if that means having to deal with Trump's intolerance of certain groups or precedents.

# **Significance:**

To reiterate, my paper is targeted heavily towards anxious liberals and Trump opposers who keep viewing his presidency as threat to American society. However, you might also be a Trump supporter who sees that his policies can actually be favorable for the country, or maybe you might just be a reader that has no interest in politics whatsoever and has no stance within the issue of whether or not Trump should be feared. Regardless of your stance, the important question that remains to be answered is, "Why should all of this matter? Why should I express interest on whether or not I should be afraid of Donald Trump?" People should really care about this issue because whether America likes it or not, Trump will be in office and he will be our president during these next 4 years. There are people within this country that are genuinely afraid of Donald Trump and are genuinely afraid of the harm that will potentially be able to bring for many families currently living in the US. After his victory during the election of 2016, my high school U.S. History teacher wrote out a very insightful letter to current students as well as alumni of my previous High School, and within it, he recounted his experience of the school on that following morning, stating how the atmosphere of the school, which had always been bright and cheery, had been so ominous, almost as if the entire school was in mourning (Mansdorf). Many students, from freshmen year all the way to senior year, were crying and were in complete disbelief, and there was without a doubt real fear that emitted across the hallways of the school especially because of the fact that the school was so diverse and many students were afraid about

what would happen to their families and their loved ones. This situation should matter even for those that are apathetic towards politics because it highlights the impact that Trump has really set for people in the country.

People should really acknowledged the fear that the 45th President has bestowed upon the country. Yet, it's also important to know that just because people should acknowledge the fear does not mean that they should also replicate that fear. This subject is significant because however chaotic America may or may not become in these next few years, the country will always find a way to fix itself towards the end. History has always been a series of ups and downs, and during this period, it's safe to assume that the US is currently facing a downward trend. Although this is an issue, people shouldn't be too worried about how he will damage the country, but rather, how people will be able to get a head start on fixing these problems. Even if some people don't care or pay very little attention to politics, these people should still pay attention to what is happening with their own country and know when and when not to act. For some people who are still skeptical, this may still beg the question: "What if problems continue to persist and the country, or worse, the entire world, ends up being worse despite the fact that I believed in not fearing Trump?" My argument is not saying that the downfall of America is not inevitable or that the prosperity of America will always be intact. A fully accurate prediction of the future of America is impossible, and no one can really be certain what will happen to the nation in these next few years. People believing in not fearing Trump simply means having an optimistic view of the future and fully believing that America will prosper soon, whether it be in a few years or many decades from now. If you believed in not fearing Trump, yet end up changing your own perspective because of the potential of ensuing calamity, then you never

really ended up believing and holding true to the sentiment in the first place. If America does end up getting weakened in the future, people should still be optimistic and never lose sight of what America has the potential to become compared to today.

### **Conclusion:**

There will always be people within this country or the entire world that oppose Trump and will be afraid of him because of the impending policies he has yet to enact in the coming years. However, people should not really be scared of what implications his policies can bring since it is improbable that his presidency will be able to completely destroy the United States and its reputation amongst the world. Research has shown both sides of the spectrum, stating legitimate fear from xenophobia, racism, misogyny, and scientific implications, yet arguing that current events are just a representation of history repeating itself and that the terror of his campaign is nothing new to an America that has faced worse dilemmas. Trump's proposed policies are also a repeat of policies that have failed many decades ago, some of which are actually too unrealistic. And despite the fact that some groups do feel powerless because he was elected, Trump is not the only individual that holds power within the whole country, but rather the entire US government. Yes, real fear does exist among the people living in this country against Trump, however, people should still remain to be optimistic since his policies, if, god forbid, they do end up becoming severely damaging, will never outweigh the positives that the US has accomplished since it was founded. People should not fear Trump not because he will do nothing to this nation, but because his presidency is not going to ruin the US and its reputation.

### Works Cited

Anderson-Nathe, Ben, and Kiaras Gharabaghi. "Trending Rightward: Nationalism, Xenophobia, and the 2016 Politics of Fear." *Child & Youth Services*, vol. 38, no. 1, 20 Jan. 2017, pp. 1–3., doi:10.1080/0145935X.2017.1277125. Accessed 29 Mar. 2017.

This article mainly discusses the issues that have arisen or have become more serious and threatening to the country over the course of 2016. Such issues include, but are not limited to, the Brexit decision to leave the European Union as a result of growing fears, the increasing amount of violence throughout the global sphere, and, domestically, the United States' dilemma of letting in a racist, misogynistic billionaire into the White House as the 45th president. Behind these growing issues also lead to greater concerns, such as the policy implications and social implications that the far-right drift, led by President Trump, will bring to the U.S. Ben Anderson-Nathe and Kiaras Gharabaghi are both professors at Portland State University and Dalhousie University respectively, and both teach and are heavily experienced in the field of child and youth care work. They are reliable sources for their work due to the fact that they know exactly what complications these issues can bring to younger generations growing up in the 21st century.

Ardehali, Hossein. "Potential Consequences of the Immigration Ban on the Scientific Community." *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, vol. 127, no. 3, Mar. 2017, pp. 735–736., doi:10.1172/JCI93276.

This article, as the title suggests, primarily focuses on the recent immigration ban that

Trump has enacted and mainly discusses the issues that this ban would bring to the
education system of the nation. Halfway through the article after the author's recollection

of his personal experience as an immigrant, the author states that this ban would harm the education system of the United States as it would only prevent future bright students and scholars from coming into the country. In addition, this travel ban would also prevent scientists and physicians from those banned countries from obtaining the recent technological advances in the field of science, potentially harming and endangering future generations to come due to the fact the science and medicine are crucial to everyday society. Hossein Ardehali is a professor at Northwestern University and is an expert in the field of medicine-cardiology and pharmacology. He is a very reliable source since he mainly works on the scientific field and is aware of what scientific implications the ban would cause to the nation.

"Can History Prepare Us for the Trump Presidency?" *POLITICO Magazine*, POLITICO Magazine, 22 Jan. 2017,

politico.com/magazine/story/2017/01/can-history-prepare-us-for-the-trump-presidency-2 14676. Accessed 3 Apr. 2017.

This article is composed of many opinions from many historians explaining how history is repeating itself for Trump's presidency. The historical comparisons range all the way back from the Founding Era of the 1790s up to today's current events. The article also discusses how the nation can use these past events and occurrences to prepare for Trump's presidency in the upcoming years. Though composed of many authors, most of the authors are history and political science professors at established universities such as Yale and Harvard University, with some being authors of political science books.

Because of this, the authors can be considered reliable enough due to their credibility and profound knowledge at their respective fields.

Irvine, Tina. "The Striking Parallels Between Trump's Xenophobia and the Americanization Movement of the 1910s." *Omnia: All Things Penn Arts & Sciences*, History News Network, 8 Sept. 2016,

omnia.sas.upenn.edu/story/striking-parallels-between-trump's-xenophobia-and-americani zation-movement-1910s. Accessed 3 Apr. 2017.

This article mainly compares the xenophobia at today's current age to the xenophobia that was occurring more than 100 years ago and how people reacted to the situation. It discusses immigration concerns that the country experienced after the end of the first World War and how that rising xenophobia was starting to reappear in today's current events. The article also explains how Trump managed to garner support, and this was through the use of scare tactics by stating that immigrants were taking away the American values that the Founding Fathers had set for the nation. Tina Irvine is a graduate at the University of Pennsylvania and works on the fields of United States History, Cultural History, and Comparative Race, Gender, and Sexuality. The author is a reliable source as she is a Ph.D candidate and is very knowledgeable on American history and politics.

- Mansdorf, Arnold. 10 Nov. 2016, High School of American Studies at Lehman College, Bronx, NY. Personal Email. Retrieved 10 Nov. 2016.
- Reid, Harry. "To Donald Trump: Take Responsibility." Senate Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Capitol Building, Washington, D.C., 15 November 2016. Accessed 27 Mar. 2017.

This speech came out after Trump's victory in the election. Just as the title entails, the speech discusses what Trump's responsibility has to be for the millions of the voters that did not want him as president, and saying that he is a responsible for fixing the removing the fears that have built up towards him due to his radical ideas and policies. The speech also discusses how America as a nation will not stand up to Trump's bigotry and offensive remarks. Harry Reid is a retired politician who served as the senator for Nevada from 1987 to 2017. He is a very reliable source since he has been a politician for nearly 50 years now, having served multiple positions in government since his career began.

Reuters. "U.S. Hate Crimes Up 20 percent in 2016, Fueled by Election Campaign: Report." *NBC News*, 14 Mar. 2017,

nbcnews.com/news/us-news/u-s-hate-crimes-20-percent-2016-fueled-election-campaign-n733306. Accessed 3 Apr. 2017.

This article mainly reviews the statistics of hate crimes that have occurred as a result of Donald Trump's victory in the Presidential Election of 2016. Specifically,, it lists statistics within 9 major cities of America that have experienced a great increase in the percentage of hate crimes since 2015, some of which include New York, Chicago, and Seattle. The article also discusses Anti-Semitic crimes and incidents that have increased due to the previous bomb threats that have risen in since the first few weeks of March. Trump's campaign of highlighting race, religion, and national origin, as well as expanding his campaign coverage across the rest of the country, has definitely contributed to the increase in hate crimes over the past months. Reuters is business and financial news agency from London, United Kingdom that covers breaking news from

around the world. This source is not entirely credible since some of their articles can be biased towards one side.

Suri, Jeremi. "Trump's Policies and Executive Orders Were Tried 100 Years Ago. They Failed."

\*\*UT News | The University of Texas at Austin, Texas Perspectives, 24 Mar. 2017,

\*\*news.utexas.edu/2017/03/24/trump-s-policies-were-tried-100-years-ago-they-failed.\*

\*\*Accessed 3 Apr. 2017.\*\*

The article mainly compares Trump's current policies to policies that occurred around a century ago and how those policies eventually led to failure. Specifically, the article compares how the old policies led to the events of the Great Depression and World War II, and how these new policies will lead to similar events unless the country does something to prevent history repeating itself. Isolationism and intolerance played a big role during the 1920s and why the country suffered a big collapse, and it seems like the same themes are recurring again 100 years later. Although it took more than a decade since the Great Depression for the US to bounce back again, the country eventually went through a booming and flourishing era a few years later. Jeremi Suri is a history professor at the University of Texas and holds the Mack Brown Distinguished Chair for Leadership in Global Affairs. He is also the author and editor of nine books on contemporary politics and foreign policy, and has received numerous awards since 2007 for his work. He is reliable because of the recognition of his profound knowledge in history and politics.

Steff, Reuben. "The Audacity of Trump: How He Won and What We Missed." *New Zealand International Review*, vol. 42, no. 2, Mar. 2017, pp. 2–5. Retrieved fromebscohost.com/academic/academic-search-complete. Accessed 27 Mar. 2017.

Throughout this article, multiple reasons are discussed as to why President Donald Trump won the election back in November 2016. Many of these reasons include, but are not limited to, the inability of the Democrats to convince voters who have been deeply disillusioned during Obama's presidency, the rise of white supremacy wanting their voices to be heard around the country, and the media's portrayal of Trump which allowed him to gain more attention despite it being positive or negative. The article also touches upon Trump's personnel choices for his office and how these changes significantly impacted the direction his campaign was heading towards during the election. Most importantly, the article discusses the media's role in his campaign, and how the widespread attention he received during his campaign led him to effectively utilize what he wanted to spread and what he wanted the nation to know. Reuben Steff is a professor at the University of Waikato, and has spent more than two years in New Zealand' Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Trade, as well as teaching courses on New Zealand Foreign Policy, International Relations and International Security.

Zaitchik, Alexander. *The Gilded Rage: A Wild Ride through Donald Trump's America*. Skyhorse Publishing, 2016.

Chapter 4 Review: This chapter mainly highlights the story of a 59-year old retired mineworker named Ed Wiley, a Trump supporter that dislikes his vision for America, yet is still willing to vote for him. As a young child, Wiley never liked the idea of working in cold, dark mines, and after working several years of constantly living and working near danger, Wiley eventually became an activist to help improve the lives of many people who were struggling or struggled like him. He wanted better jobs for people who had less

of an opportunity like he did since he knows how difficult it was to work 17 hours a day with little to no reward. Because he hated the current economy and how millions of dollars were just being stored instead of being put back into towns and cities, he was drawn to Trump's campaign and eventually became a supporter since he realized Trump was unlike any candidate he had ever witnessed before due to the fact that he was extremely adamant on giving jobs to those who struggled in order to improve their lives. However, he was very opposing on his idea of building a wall since it would bring nothing to the lives of the American people and would just be a waste of millions of dollars that could instead be used to improve the economical sphere of America. Alexander Zaitchik is a freelance journalist who has written for publications such as Rolling Stone, Mother Jones, and Wired. This source is very credible since it is mostly composed of interviews on Trump supporters and why they support him.