



Federal policy on jobs, 2017-2018

DONALD TRUMP ▾ CABINET ▾ EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS ▾ FEDERAL POLICIES ▾

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In his first year, President Donald Trump released a variety of proposals related to jobs and employment: In April 2017, the administration released a tax plan called the 2017 Tax Reform for Economic Growth and American Jobs. The proposal includes the reduction of seven tax brackets to three, the elimination of income taxes for singles with income under \$25,000 and couples under \$50,000, a reduction of the corporate tax rate to 15 percent maximum, the elimination of the estate tax, and the elimination of tax loopholes the administration argued are used by the wealthy and corporations. In May 2017, the administration released its infrastructure proposal of approximately \$1 trillion in infrastructure spending financed "through a combination of new federal funding, incentivized non-federal funding, and newly prioritized and expedited projects."^{[1][2][3]}

This page tracked major events and policy positions of the Trump administration on jobs from 2017 and 2018. This page was updated through 2018. Think something is missing? Please email us at editor@ballotpedia.org.

Major events and policy announcements:

- **July 26, 2017:** Labor Department begins accepting comments on rewrite of Obama overtime rule
- **July 17, 2017:** Homeland Security announces temporary increase in visas for foreign, non-farm workers
- **May 30, 2017:** White House releases infrastructure jobs proposal

Trump Administration



President Donald Trump

Vice President Mike

Pence

Cabinet • Transition team

Jobs in Trump's first year

Proposed revision of Obama overtime rule (July 2017)

On July 26, 2017, the U.S. Department of Labor began to formally undo the Obama administration's 2016 rule expanding the number of individuals covered by federal overtime requirements. Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, employees must be paid time and a half (known as overtime pay) once they work more than 40 hours per week, though businesses may exempt individuals from the overtime requirement if they have managerial duties and meet a specific salary threshold. In May 2016, the Labor Department adjusted the salary threshold from \$23,000 annually to more than \$47,000 annually. In its statement requesting public comments to rescind the rule, the department said, "The department is aware of stakeholder concerns that the standard salary level set in the 2016 final rule was too high. In particular, stakeholders have expressed the concern that the new salary level inappropriately excludes from exemption too many workers." The department said it would accept public comments on whether "the standard salary level set in that rule effectively identifies employees who may be exempt, whether a different salary level would more appropriately identify such employees, the basis for setting a different salary level, and why a different salary level would be more appropriate or effective."^[4]^[5]^[6]

In November 2016, U.S. District Court Judge Amos Mazzant issued a preliminary injunction prohibiting the Labor Department from implementing and enforcing the overtime rule beginning on December 1, 2016. On August 31, 2017, Judge Mazzant ruled that the rule exceeded the department's statutory authority and was thus invalid. Mazzant wrote, "The department creates a final rule that makes overtime status depend predominately on a minimum salary level, thereby supplanting an analysis of an employee's job duties. Because the final rule would exclude so many employees who perform exempt duties, the department fails to carry out Congress's unambiguous intent." Mazzant concluded, "The department has exceeded its authority and gone too far with the final rule."^[7]

DHS decision on visas for temporary workers (July 2017)

On July 17, 2017, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced it would institute a one-time increase in new H2-B visas for seasonal, non-agricultural workers for fiscal year 2017. The decision would allow for up to 15,000 additional visas. The visas apply to seasonal, foreign workers in temporary summer employment.

According to then-DHS Secretary John Kelly, "Congress gave me the discretionary authority to provide temporary relief to American businesses at risk of significant harm due to a lack of available seasonal workers. As a demonstration of the Administration's commitment to supporting American businesses, DHS is providing this one-time increase to the congressionally set annual cap." In May 2017, Congress delegated authority to the DHS

Policy positions

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secretary to increase the number of H-2B visas available through September 30. The H-2B Temporary Nonagricultural Worker visa program assists U.S. businesses unable to find a sufficient number of qualified American workers to perform non-agricultural, temporary work. Congress set the annual H-2B cap at 66,000 visas. A maximum of 33,000 visas are available from October 1 to March 31 in each fiscal year. The remainder, including any unused H-2B visas, is available from April 1 to September 30 of a fiscal year.^[8]

Infrastructure proposal (May 2017)

On May 30, 2017, the White House released its infrastructure proposal. The proposal stated that "the Nation's infrastructure needs to be rebuilt and modernized to create jobs, maintain America's economic competitiveness, and connect communities and people to more opportunities." The proposal included approximately \$1 trillion in infrastructure spending financed "through a combination of new federal funding, incentivized non-federal funding, and newly prioritized and expedited projects." Trump's proposed 2018 budget included \$200 billion in direct spending related to infrastructure.^{[1][2][9]}

Contract with American voters (November 2016)

In his contract with American voters—the "100-day action plan to Make America Great Again" —Trump said that he would work with Congress to pass the Middle Class Tax Relief and Simplification Act, which aims to "grow the economy by 4% per year and create at least 25 million new jobs through massive tax reduction and simplification, in combination with trade reform, regulatory relief and lifting the restrictions on American energy."^[10]

Donald Trump on jobs



- In a speech to Congress on February 28, 2017, Trump said, "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. Currently, when we ship products out of America, many other countries make us pay very high tariffs and taxes — but when foreign companies ship their products into America, we charge them almost nothing." Trump said regarding immigration and jobs, "By finally enforcing our immigration laws, we will raise wages, help the unemployed, save billions of dollars, and make our communities safer for everyone." Trump further stated, "To launch our national rebuilding, I will be asking the Congress to approve legislation that produces a \$1 trillion investment in the infrastructure of the United States – financed through both public and private capital – creating millions of new jobs."^[11]



- During an interview with *Reuters* on February 23, 2017, Trump discussed the proposed border adjustment tax, saying, "It could lead to a lot more jobs in the United States. ... I certainly support a form of tax on the border because everybody else does. We're the only country, we're one of the very few countries, possibly the only country, that has no border tax. And that's not a tax to the consumer, because that's going to be a tax to companies and it's going to be a tax to other countries much more so than it is to the consumer. That's a tax to other countries. And what will happen is, don't forget there is no tax if we make our product in the United States. So I don't consider it a tax. That's a tax if companies are buying their product outside of the United States. But ... if they make their product in the United States, there is no tax.

So what is going to happen is companies are going to come back here, they're going to build their factories and they're going to create a lot of jobs and there's no tax."^[12]

Are people who have stopped looking for work counted in the unemployment rate?

December 23, 2016

Donald Trump criticized the relatively low unemployment rate as deceptive, saying, "the millions of people that gave up looking for work...they're not considered in that number that's less than 5 percent." Is Trump correct about the unemployment rate?

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Alexander Acosta on jobs

- Secretary R. Alexander Acosta said the following about Trump's budget request on May 23, 2017: "This budget reflects the Department of Labor's core mission and commitment to ensuring all Americans have access to good, safe jobs – and does so in a fiscally responsible way. Most importantly, this budget focuses on narrowing the skills gap, and includes a proposal to provide new mothers, fathers, and adoptive parents with paid family leave, the cost of which is completely offset by

reforms to the Unemployment Insurance system."^[13]

Recent news

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| Footnotes

1. *CNN*, "Trump: Infrastructure plan 'largely completed,' coming in 2-3 weeks," May 1, 2017
2. *The White House*, "2018 Budget Fact Sheet: Infrastructure Initiative," accessed June 1, 2017
- 3.
4. *Washington Examiner*, "Labor Department moves to formally roll back Obama overtime rule," July 25, 2017

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