Social policy of Donald Trump

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Summary

• Trump supports legalizing recreational marijuana & supports states that have legalized medical marijuana.

• President Donald Trump describes himself as pro-life and generally opposes abortion with some exceptions: rape, incest, and circumstances endangering the life of the mother.

• Whereas candidate Donald Trump largely avoided commenting on LGBT issues, the Trump administration rolled back a number of LGBT protections during the president's first six months in office.

President Donald Trump describes himself as pro-life and generally opposes abortion with some exceptions: rape, incest, and circumstances endangering the life of the mother. He has said that he is committed to appointing justices who may overturn the ruling in Roe v. Wade. Trump personally supports "traditional marriage" but said after the election that he considers the nationwide legality of same-sex marriage a "settled" issue with the Obergefell v. Hodges ruling. This appeared to contradict some of his campaign statements, where he said he would "strongly consider" appointing justices who may overturn this decision. Whereas candidate Donald Trump largely avoided commenting on LGBT issues, the Trump administration rolled back a number of LGBT protections during the president's first six months in office.

Trump supports a broad interpretation of the Second Amendment and says he is opposed to gun control in general, although his views have shifted over time. Trump supports legalizing recreational marijuana & supports states that have legalized medical marijuana.

He favors capital punishment, as well as the use of waterboarding.

Abortion

Before 2016

• In October 1999, Trump said, "I am very pro-choice" and "I believe in choice."

• Later that year, Trump gave interviews stating "I'm totally pro-choice" and "I want to see the abortion issue removed from politics.

Trump's views on abortion have changed significantly between 1999 when he was "very" pro-choice and would neither ban abortion nor "partial-birth abortion", and his 2016 presidential campaign where he repeatedly described himself as pro-life (more specifically "pro-life with exceptions"), suggested that women who have abortions should face some sort of punishment (a view he quickly retracted), and pledged to appoint pro-life justices to the Supreme Court.

In October 1999, Trump said, "I am very pro-choice" and "I believe in choice." He said that he hated the "concept of abortion," but would not ban abortion or the procedure sometimes called "partial-birth abortion." Later that year, Trump gave interviews stating "I'm totally pro-choice" and "I want to see the abortion issue removed from politics. I believe it is a personal decision that should be left to the women and their doctors."

2016 presidential campaign

• Planned Parenthood said in a statement that "Trump presidency would be a disaster for women" and criticized Trump's claim that "he'd be great for women while in the same breath pledging to block them from accessing care at Planned Parenthood."

• While campaigning for the presidency in 2016, Trump stated "I'm pro-life and I've been pro-life a long time" and acknowledged that he had "evolved" on the issue.

While campaigning for the presidency in 2016, Trump stated "I'm pro-life and I've been pro-life a long time" and acknowledged that he had "evolved" on the issue. CNN reported that Trump "dodged questions testing the specificity of those views." In August 2015, Trump said that he supported a government shutdown over federal funding for Planned Parenthood (which receives federal funding for the health services it provides to 2.7 million people annually, but is barred by federal law from using federal funds for abortion-related procedures). In March 2016, Trump said that Planned Parenthood should not be funded "as long as you have the abortion going on," but acknowledged that "Planned Parenthood has done very good work for many, many -- for millions of women." Planned Parenthood said in a statement that "Trump presidency would be a disaster for women" and criticized Trump's claim that "he'd be great for women while in the same breath pledging to block them from accessing care at Planned Parenthood."

In an interview later that month, Trump acknowledged that there must be "some form" of punishment for women if abortion were made illegal in the U.S. Trump issued a statement later that day reversing his position from earlier by saying, "the doctor or any other person performing this illegal act upon a woman would be held legally responsible, not the woman." Trump has said that abortion should be legal in cases involving "rape, incest or the life of the mother being at risk."

In May 2016, when asked if he would appoint Supreme Court justices who would overturn Roe v. Wade, Trump stated: "Well, they'll be pro-life. And we'll see about overturning, but I will appoint judges that will be pro-life." In the same interview, Trump stated of the pro-life cause: "I will protect it, and the biggest way you can protect is through the Supreme Court." The Susan B. Anthony List, a pro-life feminist group, praised Trump's list of potential Supreme Court nominees as "exceptionally strong," while the pro-choice group NARAL Pro-Choice America called the candidates on the list "a woman's worst nightmare." Trump has also pledged to sign legislation from Congress banning abortion at the 20-week mark.

Presidency

• In January 2018, Trump spoke at the March for Life in Washington D.C., becoming the first president to directly address the annual anti-abortion rally, albeit through satellite.

• In his first interview following his designation as president-elect, Trump affirmed his pledge to appoint pro-life Supreme Court justices.

In his first interview following his designation as president-elect, Trump affirmed his pledge to appoint pro-life Supreme Court justices. He said that if Roe v. Wade were overturned, the issue would be returned to the states, and that if some states outlawed abortion, a woman would "have to go to another state" to obtain an abortion.

In January 24, days after being sworn in, Trump issued an executive order reinstating the Mexico City policy (also called the "global gag rule"). Under the policy, international non-governmental organizations that "offer or promote abortions as part of their family planning services" are barred from receiving funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

On March 27, Trump revoked the 2014 Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces order then-President Barack Obama put in place to ensure that companies with federal contracts comply with 14 labor and civil rights laws.

In January 2018, Trump spoke at the March for Life in Washington D.C., becoming the first president to directly address the annual anti-abortion rally, albeit through satellite.

On May 3, 2018 he signed an executive order entitled, "Establishment of a White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative" that aims to prevent funding for abortion.

Christianity

• Trump has suggested that he is being audited by the IRS "maybe because of the fact that I'm a strong Christian."

• He and Melania Trump married at Bethesda-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church.

• In his February 2017 address at the National Prayer Breakfast, Trump stated: "I will get rid of and totally destroy the Johnson Amendment."

Trump, a self-described Presbyterian who was described by CNN as "unique among modern American presidents for his seeming lack of deep religious orientation", has largely considered the support of Evangelical voters to be instrumental in him becoming President of the United States, 81% of whom voted for him. Trump attended Marble Collegiate Church, a congregation of the Reformed Church in America, for more than 50 years but is not an "active member." He and Melania Trump married at Bethesda-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church.

Trump has on several occasions suggested that Christians are being discriminated against, for instance, stating that "Christianity is under tremendous siege."

Trump has suggested that he is being audited by the IRS "maybe because of the fact that I'm a strong Christian." He has suggested that he would have an easier time getting a ban on Christian immigrants passed than one on Muslims.

He has vowed to end the Johnson Amendment, an IRS rule that prohibits section 501(c) tax-exempt organizations from endorsing candidates or participating in partisan campaigns. He stated the rule undermines Christian influence in U.S. politics, adding "we have more Christians than we have men or women in our country and we don't have a lobby because they're afraid to have a lobby because they don't want to lose their tax status... So I am going to work like hell to get rid of that prohibition and we're going to have the strongest Christian lobby and it's going to happen." In his February 2017 address at the National Prayer Breakfast, Trump stated: "I will get rid of and totally destroy the Johnson Amendment."

Trump has been critical of department stores that do not greet their customers with "merry Christmas", stating that things will change if he gets elected president: "I'll tell you one thing: I get elected president, we're going to be saying 'merry Christmas' again. Just remember that."

Capital punishment

• By October 2016, Trump still maintained that "Central Park Five" were guilty.

• Trump has long advocated for capital punishment in the United States.

Trump has long advocated for capital punishment in the United States. In May 1989, shortly after the Central Park jogger case received widespread media attention, Trump purchased a full-page ad in four New York City newspapers with the title "BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY!" Five defendants (the "Central Park Five") were wrongfully convicted in the case and were subsequently exonerated. By October 2016, Trump still maintained that "Central Park Five" were guilty.

In December 2015, in a speech accepting the endorsement of the New England Police Benevolent Association, Trump said that "One of the first things I do [if elected President] in terms of executive order if I win will be to sign a strong, strong statement that will go out to the country, out to the world, that ... anybody killing a police officer—death penalty. It's going to happen, O.K.?" However, under the current U.S. legal system, these prosecutions usually take place in state court under state law, and the president has no authority over such cases. Furthermore, 19 states have abolished the death penalty, and mandatory death sentences are unconstitutional, as held by the Supreme Court in Woodson v. North Carolina (1976).

Drug policy

• Trump told Sean Hannity in June 2015 that he opposes marijuana legalization and that "I feel strongly about that."

• Trump has voiced support for medical marijuana, saying that he is "a hundred percent in favor" because "I know people that have serious problems... and... it really, really does help them."

• Trump also claims to have personally never used controlled substances of any kind.

• Trump's views on drug policy have shifted dramatically over time.

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At a luncheon hosted by the Miami Herald in April 1990, Trump told a crowd of 700 people that U.S. drug enforcement policy was "a joke," and that: "We're losing badly the war on drugs. You have to legalize drugs to win that war. You have to take the profit away from these drug czars."

In his campaign for the presidency in 2015 and 2016, however, Trump adopted "drug warrior" positions and has sought advice on the issue from William J. Bennett, who served as the U.S. first "drug czar" in the 1980s "and has remained a proponent of harsh 1980s-style drug war tactics." Trump told Sean Hannity in June 2015 that he opposes marijuana legalization and that "I feel strongly about that." Trump also claims to have personally never used controlled substances of any kind.

Trump has voiced support for medical marijuana, saying that he is "a hundred percent in favor" because "I know people that have serious problems... and... it really, really does help them." When asked about Colorado (where recreational use of marijuana is legal), Trump softened his previously expressed views and essentially said that states should be able to decide on whether marijuana for recreational purposes should be legal.

Family leave

• Trump's proposals were criticized by opponents as hypocritical in light of Trump's previous comments on women, and for being sexist in assuming that women were their children's sole caregivers.

• In October 2015, Trump was cautious regarding paid family leave, as he thought it may adversely impact the country's competitiveness.

In October 2015, Trump was cautious regarding paid family leave, as he thought it may adversely impact the country's competitiveness. In September 2016, he announced a policy proposal created in part by his daughter Ivanka, to guarantee six weeks of paid maternity leave to mothers who do not already receive similar benefits from their employers. This policy was the first paid maternity leave plan from a Republican presidential nominee. Trump's proposals were criticized by opponents as hypocritical in light of Trump's previous comments on women, and for being sexist in assuming that women were their children's sole caregivers. Josh Levs in Time magazine wrote that "Policies that only allow women time off end up hurting women by pushing women to stay home and men to stay at work, reinforcing our anachronistic Mad Men-era work cultures."

First Amendment and defamation law

• In October 2016, NBC News reportedly held off on airing a video of Trump making lewd and disparaging remarks about women due to concerns that Trump would sue the network.

• On the campaign trail in 2015 and 2016, Trump has frequently "railed against" the press, referring to the media as "the most dishonest people" and "absolute scum."

Trump has called for police to arrest those who protest at his rallies, saying that fear of an "arrest mark" that would "ruin the rest of their lives" would be a deterrent and that then "we're not going to have any more protesters, folks." Geoffrey R. Stone, a professor at the University of Chicago Law School, notes that opponents and disruptive individuals may be removed from Trump rallies consistent with the First Amendment, but opponents have a First Amendment right to protest Trump outside the venue. Stone writes that it is unclear whether it would be consistent with the First Amendment for Trump to "order the removal of those who oppose his candidacy from his political rallies if he does not announce in advance that they are open only to his supporters," noting that the answer to this question depends not on the First Amendment, but on the nature of open invitations in the law of trespass.

Trump has said that if elected, he would loosen defamation laws so that when journalists write "purposely negative and horrible and false articles, we can sue them and win lots of money." The Associated Press reported that this proposal to weaken the First Amendment protections for the press is at odds with "widely held conceptions of constitutional law." The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press and other First Amendment advocates condemned Trump's proposal, which would make it easier to win lawsuits accusing newspapers of libel.

Trump has expressed support for adopting English-style defamation laws in the U.S.; under UK law, it is easier for plaintiffs to sue newspapers and other media outlets. In 2016, the American Bar Association (ABA)'s committee on media law created a report that was critical of Trump's support for expansive defamation laws and his use of libel suits in the past. The committee concluded that Trump was "a 'libel bully' who had filed many meritless suits attacking his opponents and had never won in court." The ABA's leadership blocked the report from being issued; the organization did not contest the committee's conclusions, but expressed concern about the possibility of being sued by Trump.

On the campaign trail in 2015 and 2016, Trump has frequently "railed against" the press, referring to the media as "the most dishonest people" and "absolute scum." The Trump campaign has barred reporters (from Politico, The New York Times, The Des Moines Register, The Huffington Post, and Univision, among others) from its campaign events, "often in the wake of critical coverage." In October 2016, NBC News reportedly held off on airing a video of Trump making lewd and disparaging remarks about women due to concerns that Trump would sue the network.

Gender pay gap

• According to the Chicago Tribune, Trump has not addressed the gender pay gap in his 2016 presidential bid (as of July 2016).

According to the Chicago Tribune, Trump has not addressed the gender pay gap in his 2016 presidential bid (as of July 2016). According to the Tribune, "Trump's past statements on women in the workplace have included calling pregnancy 'an inconvenience' and telling a voter in New Hampshire last year that women will receive the same pay as men 'if they do as good a job.'"

LGBT issues

• During his campaign for the presidency, Trump did not emphasize LGBT issues and at times gave ambiguous answers.

• Immediately after Trump's election, Rea Carey, the executive director of the National LGBTQ Task Force, described his public statements on LGBT issues as "confusing and conflicting."

During his campaign for the presidency, Trump did not emphasize LGBT issues and at times gave ambiguous answers. Immediately after Trump's election, Rea Carey, the executive director of the National LGBTQ Task Force, described his public statements on LGBT issues as "confusing and conflicting." However, he was the first Republican presidential nominee to mention LGBT rights in his acceptance speech.

Before and during presidential candidacy

• Compared to other Republican candidates, Trump was viewed as having a relatively tolerant view of LGBT people.

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Public comments on LGBT issues

• In an October 1999 appearance on Meet the Press, Trump said gays openly serving in the military was "not something that would disturb me."

• In a February 2000 interview with The Advocate, in response to the murders of Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Trump said that he wanted a more "tolerant society".

• Trump then asserted that religious freedom and nondiscrimination aren't "mutually exclusive."

In an October 1999 appearance on Meet the Press, Trump said gays openly serving in the military was "not something that would disturb me."

In a February 2000 interview with The Advocate, in response to the murders of Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Trump said that he wanted a more "tolerant society". He agreed with amending the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and would "absolutely" support hate crime legislation covering race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, notably the Matthew Shepard Act.

Trump has offered qualified support for the First Amendment Defense Act, which aims to protect those who oppose same-sex marriage based on their religious beliefs from action by the federal government, such as revocation of tax-exempt status, grants, loans, benefits, or employment. Trump said, "If Congress considers the First Amendment Defense Act a priority, then I will do all I can to make sure it comes to my desk for signatures and enactment."

In April 2015, when asked about the Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act, Trump responded that Indiana Governor (and future running mate) Mike Pence "didn't do a good job. He wasn't clear in what he said." Trump then asserted that religious freedom and nondiscrimination aren't "mutually exclusive."

Same-sex marriage

• In 2000, Trump stated his belief that "marriage is between a man and a woman."

• Later, in the run up to the Iowa caucuses on February 1, 2016, Trump stated that if elected he would strongly consider appointing Supreme Court justices that would overturn Obergefell.

• When asked if gay couples should be able access the same benefits as married couples, Trump said that his "attitude on it has not been fully formed."

In 2000, Trump stated his belief that "marriage is between a man and a woman."

In June 2015, when asked about the Obergefell v. Hodges ruling in which the Supreme Court guaranteed the right to same-sex marriage nationwide, he said he personally supported "traditional marriage." He added: "I would have preferred states, you know, making the decision and I let that be known. But they made the decision...So, at a certain point you have to be realistic about it." Later, in the run up to the Iowa caucuses on February 1, 2016, Trump stated that if elected he would strongly consider appointing Supreme Court justices that would overturn Obergefell. When asked if gay couples should be able access the same benefits as married couples, Trump said that his "attitude on it has not been fully formed." The Advocate, an American LGBT-interest magazine, characterized Trump's proposed Supreme Court nominees as "LGBT-unfriendly," noting that "not all have ruled in LGBT rights cases, but those who have are largely unsympathetic, and some have the backing of anti-LGBT activists."

In 2016 he maintained his opposition to same-sex marriage and his preference for the right of each state to decide whether to allow same-sex couples to marry. Furthermore, in a letter to the president of CatholicVote.org, Trump expressed support for legislation that would protect the religious liberty of Christians who oppose marriage equality.

In November 2016, shortly after the presidential election, Trump told Lesley Stahl on 60 Minutes that his personal view on same-sex marriage was "irrelevant" and that he was "fine with" same-sex marriage, stating that the issue was "settled" in the Obergefell decision.

Transgender issues

• At a rally in October 2016, Candidate Trump called the open military service of transgender Americans a result of a "political correct military" and said that he would "very strongly" defer to the recommendations of top military officers on the issue of transgender military personnel.

• Prior to running for the presidency, Trump called for the exclusion of trans women from beauty pageants.

Prior to running for the presidency, Trump called for the exclusion of trans women from beauty pageants. He did not want Jenna Talackova to compete in the Miss USA pageants.

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In April 2016, Trump criticized North Carolina's North Carolina House Bill 2, which eliminates all private employment and public accommodation anti-discrimination laws not covered by statewide law, and legislates that in government buildings, individuals may only use restrooms and changing facilities that correspond to the sex on their birth certificates, saying: "North Carolina did something that was very strong and they're paying a big price. ... You leave it the way it is. There have been very few complaints the way it is. People go, they use the bathroom they feel is appropriate, there has been so little trouble, and the problem with what happened in North Carolina is the strife, and the economic punishment that they're taking." Trump stated: "I fully understand if they [North Carolina] want to go through, but they are losing business and they are having a lot of people come out against." The bill is controversial because it prevents transgender people who do not or cannot alter their birth certificates from using the restroom consistent with their gender identity. Later that April, Trump took the position that states have the right to enact such legislation and that the federal government should not become involved. He did not express an opinion on whether the law was right or wrong. In July 2016, Trump again emphasized a states' rights approach regarding HB2, saying, "The state, they know what's going on, they see what's happening and generally speaking I'm with the state on things like this. I've spoken with your governor, I've spoken with a lot of people and I'm going with the state."

Other statements

• At the July 2016 Republican National Convention where he accepted the party's nomination, Trump acknowledged the mass shooting at the Pulse gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida that had occurred weeks earlier.

• Nine days before the election, at a campaign rally in Greeley, Colorado, an audience member presented Trump with a rainbow flag with the handwritten message "LGBT for Trump."

• Trump held it onstage for a photo opportunity and then handed the flag back to the audience member.

At the July 2016 Republican National Convention where he accepted the party's nomination, Trump acknowledged the mass shooting at the Pulse gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida that had occurred weeks earlier. He blamed "an Islamic terrorist" who "targeted our LGBT community. As your President, I will do everything in my power to protect our LGBT citizens from the violence and oppression of a hateful foreign ideology." While Trump's promise arguably focused more on combatting terrorism perpetrated by fundamentalist Muslims than it did on anything specific about LGBT rights, his words made history as the first time the acronym "LGBT" was mentioned in a presidential nomination address at the RNC.

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Presidency

• GLAAD identified over 100 anti-LGBT attacks in the first two years of the Trump administration.

• During his presidential campaign, Trump largely avoided LGBT rights issues.

• After taking office, Trump rolled back a number of protections for LGBT individuals, such as those for transgender schoolchildren and transgender members of the military.

During his presidential campaign, Trump largely avoided LGBT rights issues. After taking office, Trump rolled back a number of protections for LGBT individuals, such as those for transgender schoolchildren and transgender members of the military. GLAAD identified over 100 anti-LGBT attacks in the first two years of the Trump administration.

LGBT anti-discrimination laws

• In March 2017, the Trump administration rolled back efforts to collect data on LGBT Americans.

• LGBT advocates have argued that this is a signal that the Trump administration would not enforce workplace violations against LGBT people.

• However, in March 2017, the Trump administration rolled back key components of the Obama administration's workplace protections for LGBT people.

On January 30, 2017, Donald Trump and the White House stated that they would keep in place a 2014 executive order from the Obama administration which created federal workplace protections for LGBT people, with the White House released a statement saying that the President was "respectful and supportive of LGBTQ rights" and noted that he was the first Republican nominee to raise the issue in his acceptance speech at the 2016 Republican National Convention.

However, in March 2017, the Trump administration rolled back key components of the Obama administration's workplace protections for LGBT people. The Trump administration rescinded requirements that federal contractors prove that they are complying with the LGBT workplace protections, which makes it difficult to tell if a contractor had refrained from discriminatory practices against LGBT individuals. LGBT advocates have argued that this is a signal that the Trump administration would not enforce workplace violations against LGBT people.

On July 26, 2017, the Department of Justice argued in court that federal civil rights law does not ban employers from discriminating against employees based on sexual orientation. The Obama administration had decided that it did.

In March 2017, the Trump administration rolled back efforts to collect data on LGBT Americans. The Health and Human Services removed a question about sexual orientation in a survey of the elderly. The U.S. Census Bureau, which had planned to ask about sexual orientation and gender identity in the 2020 Census and the American Community Survey, scrapped those plans in March 2017.

Judicial appointments

• On July 9, 2018, the Trump Administration formally nominated Brett Kavanaugh to be a Supreme Court Justice.

• On August 27, 2018, the Trump administration formally nominated Allison Jones Rushing to be a U.S.

• On January 31, 2017, the Trump Administration formally nominated Neil Gorsuch to be a Supreme Court Justice.

On January 31, 2017, the Trump Administration formally nominated Neil Gorsuch to be a Supreme Court Justice. The LGBT rights organization Lambda Legal called Gorsuch "hostile" to LGBT rights after he voted with the majority on the 10th Circuit Court on the Hobby Lobby case in June 2013 and underscored it by penning an opinion. Gorsuch was confirmed and sworn in on April 7, 2017.

On July 9, 2018, the Trump Administration formally nominated Brett Kavanaugh to be a Supreme Court Justice. Kavanaugh's position on LGBT rights was unclear. Less than a year earlier, Kavanaugh had praised former Chief Justice William Rehnquist for "stemming the general tide of freewheeling judicial creation of unenumerated rights that were not rooted in the nation’s history and tradition." Kavanaugh was confirmed and sworn in on October 6, 2018.

On August 27, 2018, the Trump administration formally nominated Allison Jones Rushing to be a U.S. Circuit Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. On March 5, 2019, her appointment was confirmed with the support of all 53 Republican senators. Rushing has associated with the conservative organization Alliance Defending Freedom. Sharon McGowan, Legal Director and Chief Strategy Officer of Lambda Legal, noted Rushing's "denunciation of the Supreme Court’s marriage equality decision in United States v. Windsor, and her commitment to ADF’s mission to recriminalize homosexuality and sterilize the transgender community."

HIV prevention and treatment

• Trump issued a proclamation for World AIDS Day 2017 without mentioning LGBT people; Vice President Mike Pence gave a speech for World AIDS Day 2018 without mentioning LGBT people.

• On January 20, 2017, the day Trump was inaugurated, it was reported that the White House Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP), formed in 1993, no longer had a webpage.

Trump issued a proclamation for World AIDS Day 2017 without mentioning LGBT people; Vice President Mike Pence gave a speech for World AIDS Day 2018 without mentioning LGBT people. On January 20, 2017, the day Trump was inaugurated, it was reported that the White House Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP), formed in 1993, no longer had a webpage. ONAP's director, anticipating that the office might be disbanded, had tweeted farewell two weeks earlier. She asked people to continue following @aidsgov on Twitter, but that Twitter handle no longer exists either. In June 2017, six members of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA) resigned, saying that the President made their job difficult or pointless. The remaining members of the council were fired in a letter that arrived two days after Christmas. PACHA had no members and no activity throughout 2018. On February 12, 2018, Trump released a proposed 2019 budget that "completely eliminates funding for the AIDS Education and Training Centers (AETCs) and Special Projects of National Significance (SPNS), which are both programs run under the auspices of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program."

In Trump's State of the Union address on February 5, 2019, he devoted a few words to announcing a new program by scientists in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that hopes to reduce new HIV infections by 90% in ten years. On May 9, 2019, HHS announced that pharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences would donate pre-exposure prophylaxis medication to prevent HIV infection for up to 200,000 Americans until at least 2025 and possibly 2030.

Transgender military personnel

• In March 2018, Trump announced a new policy on transgender service members, namely a ban on those with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, which would effectively be a ban on most transgender service members.

• On July 26, 2017, Trump announced on Twitter that transgender people would not be allowed to serve in the military "in any capacity", saying that American forces could not afford the "tremendous medical costs and disruption" of transgender service members.

On July 26, 2017, Trump announced on Twitter that transgender people would not be allowed to serve in the military "in any capacity", saying that American forces could not afford the "tremendous medical costs and disruption" of transgender service members. However, a RAND study of 18 countries that allow transgender individuals to serve in the military found "little or no impact on unit cohesion, operational effectiveness, or readiness." Also, according to the Scientific American, studies have shown that the medical costs for transgender service members would be "minimal". Pentagon officials expressed dismay that Trump's tweets could open them up to lawsuits and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said that the policy on who is allowed to serve would not change until the White House sends the Defense Department new rules and the secretary of defense issues new guidelines. On August 25 Trump signed a memo prohibiting transgender individuals from joining the armed services unless the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security recommend otherwise. The departments of Defense and Homeland Security are directed to determine what to do about currently serving transgender individuals.

The policy change faced legal challenges. Following a challenge in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, on October 30, 2017 Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly blocked enforcement of the ban, writing that as far as could be seen, "all of the reasons proffered by the president for excluding transgender individuals from the military in this case were not merely unsupported, but were actually contradicted by the studies, conclusions and judgment of the military itself". In March 2018, Trump announced a new policy on transgender service members, namely a ban on those with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, which would effectively be a ban on most transgender service members. The new policy was challenged in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington. On April 13, 2018 Judge Marsha J. Pechman blocked enforcement of the policy, ruling that the administration's updated policy essentially repeated the same issues as its predecessor order from 2017, and that transgender service members (and transgender individuals as a class) were a protected class entitled to strict scrutiny of adverse laws (or at worst, a quasi-suspect class), and ordered that matter continue to a full trial hearing on the legality of the proposed policy. On January 21, 2019, the Supreme Court — with Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Samuel Alito, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Clarence Thomas forming the majority for the 5-4 opinion — allowed Trump's policy to go into effect while challenges in lower courts are adjudicated. On March 12, 2019, acting Deputy Defense Secretary David Norquist signed a directive to allow Trump's policy to take effect in 30 days.

Other transgender issues

• On May 24th 2019, the Trump administration proposed a regulation to remove gender identity protections by the Department of Health.

• Responding to protests against the move, Trump said that gender issues are in flux and he aims to "protect the country."

• Lady Gaga has called Trump administration's definition of gender as an "immutable condition" transphobic.

In February 2017, Trump's Justice Department withdrew a motion that had previously been filed by the Justice Department, "seeking to allow transgender students in public schools to use the restroom with which they identify." The move, which occurred within two days of Jeff Sessions becoming U.S. Attorney General, was condemned by the Human Rights Campaign, an LGBT rights advocacy group.

In October 2018 it was reported that the Trump administration is considering a definition of a person's gender as based on their genitalia at birth and not changeable later in life, in effect defining transgender out of existence. Responding to protests against the move, Trump said that gender issues are in flux and he aims to "protect the country."

On November 23, 2018, the administration officials removed the Office of Personnel Management guidance intended to protect transitioning employees against adverse actions.

Lady Gaga has called Trump administration's definition of gender as an "immutable condition" transphobic.

On May 24th 2019, the Trump administration proposed a regulation to remove gender identity protections by the Department of Health.

Other actions

• They fundraise for the Trump campaign, not for LGBT causes.

• In 2019, nonetheless, the Trump Make America Great Again Committee is selling "LGBTQ for Trump" T-shirts.

• Although Presidents Clinton and Obama officially recognized June as LGBT Pride Month, Trump did not do so in 2017, 2018, or 2019.

After Trump's inauguration, the State Department initially kept U.S. diplomat Randy W. Berry in his position as the State Department's Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons, a post created in 2015 under the Obama administration. This decision surprised pro-LGBT rights groups such as GLAAD and initially seemed to be a defeat for Christian right groups such as the Family Research Council, which "implored Trump to launch a major purge of pro-LGBT diplomats inside Foggy Bottom." However, in November 2017, Berry was reassigned to serve as a "deputy assistant secretary” for the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, while supposedly the "role and responsibilities" of the Special Envoy were being covered by the same bureau's Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Scott Busby. The position of Special Envoy remained vacant as of March 2019.

Although Presidents Clinton and Obama officially recognized June as LGBT Pride Month, Trump did not do so in 2017, 2018, or 2019. In 2019, nonetheless, the Trump Make America Great Again Committee is selling "LGBTQ for Trump" T-shirts. They fundraise for the Trump campaign, not for LGBT causes.

Pornography

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Trump signed a pledge in July 2016 that he would work to combat both legal pornography and illegal pornography, such as child pornography. In the pledge, put forth by the anti-pornography group Enough Is Enough, Trump promised to "give serious consideration to appointing a Presidential Commission to examine the harmful public health impact of Internet pornography on youth, families and the American culture and the prevention of the sexual exploitation of children in the digital age."

Privacy, encryption, and electronic surveillance

• Trump supports bringing back now-expired provisions of the Patriot Act to allow for the NSA to collect and store bulk telephone metadata.

• Trump himself still uses his iPhone to send out tweets.

• On National Security Agency (NSA) surveillance, Trump says that he "tends to err on the side of security" over privacy.

• Trump said: "I assume that when I pick up my telephone, people are listening to my conversations anyway."

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In February 2016, Trump urged his supporters to boycott Apple Inc. unless the company agrees to build a custom backdoor for the FBI to unlock the password-protected iPhone connected to one of the perpetrators of the 2015 San Bernardino shooting, a move that Apple argues would threaten the security and privacy of its users. Trump himself still uses his iPhone to send out tweets.

Race relations

• When asked if he believes police treat African Americans differently than whites, Trump answered, "It could be."

• Donald Trump is consistent in finding no fault on the part of law enforcement when it clashes with racial minorities and in dismissing contrary evidence.

• Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop called Trump's claim "absurd" and said that Trump "has memory issues or willfully distorts the truth."

Donald Trump is consistent in finding no fault on the part of law enforcement when it clashes with racial minorities and in dismissing contrary evidence. In April 2017, Trump was accused of being Islamophobic while presenting Executive Order 13769, which blocked people from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States.

Trump has criticized the Black Lives Matter movement and accused former President Obama of "dividing America." Speaking to Bill O'Reilly during his presidential campaign, Trump said that he may direct his Attorney General to look into the Black Lives Matter movement for criminal charges. When asked if he believes there to be a racial divide in America, Trump answered, "Sadly, there would seem to be...and it's probably not been much worse at any time." When asked if he believes police treat African Americans differently than whites, Trump answered, "It could be." Trump describes the police killings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile as "tough to watch" and criticized the "terrible, disgusting performance" by police. Trump said that he could relate to the systemic bias African Americans faced against whites, saying, "even against me the system is rigged when I ran ... for president." When asked if he could understand the experience of being African American, Trump replied, "I would like to say yes, but you really can't unless you are African American. You can't truly understand what's going on unless you are African American. I would like to say yes, however."

On November 19, 2015, a week after the November 2015 Paris attacks, when asked if he would implement a database system to track Muslims in the United States, Trump said: "I would certainly implement that. Absolutely. There should be a lot of systems, beyond databases. We should have a lot of systems." On November 21, Trump clarified that he doesn't support any registry of Muslims in the US and said that his earlier supportive remarks for surveilling Muslims were due to efforts by news media to entrap him. He however said that he would order "surveillance of certain mosques" to combat "Islamic extremism", alluding to the New York Police Department's use of informants in mosques after the September 11 attacks. Trump also spoke in favor of a database on Syrian refugees without clarifying how it would be different from the records already kept by federal agencies. Trump's support for a database of American Muslims "drew sharp rebukes from his Republican presidential rivals and disbelief from legal experts." Trump justified his proposals by repeatedly saying that he recalled "thousands and thousands of people ... cheering" in Jersey City, New Jersey, when the World Trade Center towers fell. PolitiFact noted that this statement was false and gave it a "Pants on Fire" rating. It reported that the rating was based on some debunked rumors and also that there were only eight people (suggested by unproven media reports) purported to be seen cheering, as opposed to Trump's claim of "thousands and thousands". Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop called Trump's claim "absurd" and said that Trump "has memory issues or willfully distorts the truth."

Car that rammed protesters and killed a woman in Charlottesville, Virginia, August 2017

White supremacy

• Trump did not expressly mention Neo-Nazis, white supremacists, the alt-right movement, or counter protesters in his remarks.

• In August 2017, Trump condemned violence "on many sides" after a car plowed into counter-protesters during a gathering of hundreds of white nationalists in Charlottesville, Virginia the previous day, on August 12.

• Two days later, Trump condemned "the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and other hate groups".

In June 2017, the Department of Homeland Security dropped a planned 400,000 dollar grant to "Life After Hate", a program which was intended to de-radicalize Neo-Nazis and stop white extremism. The change came following a review of priorities, begun during the Obama administration, with regards to a 10 million dollar DHS umbrella grant program for "Countering Violent Extremism".

In August 2017, Trump condemned violence "on many sides" after a car plowed into counter-protesters during a gathering of hundreds of white nationalists in Charlottesville, Virginia the previous day, on August 12. Trump did not expressly mention Neo-Nazis, white supremacists, the alt-right movement, or counter protesters in his remarks. Whereas Republican and Democratic elected officials condemned the violence and hatred of white nationalists, neo-Nazis and alt-right activists, The New York Times noted that Trump "was the only national political figure to spread blame for the "hatred, bigotry and violence" that resulted in the death of one person to 'many sides'". Two days later, Trump condemned "the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and other hate groups". Then the next day, he returned to his initial comments, blaming "both sides". Trump came under criticism from world leaders and politicians, as well as a variety of religious groups and anti-hate organizations for his remarks, which were seen as muted and equivocal.

Rights of the accused

• Later that October, Trump spoke fondly of the "Lock her up" chants at his rally, saying "Lock her up is right."

• Trump campaign manager Kellyanne Conway said that the "jail" comment was merely "a quip."

• At the second presidential debate, which took place in October 2016, Trump said that if he was "in charge of the law of our country," rival presidential contender Hillary Clinton would "be in jail."

In a 1989 interview with Larry King, Trump stated: "The problem with our society is the victim has absolutely no rights and the criminal has unbelievable rights" and that "maybe hate is what we need if we're gonna get something done."

In 2016, Trump decried the fact that Ahmad Khan Rahami, a U.S. citizen charged in connection with the bombings in New York and New Jersey, would be provided with medical treatment and the right to counsel, calling this "sad."

At the second presidential debate, which took place in October 2016, Trump said that if he was "in charge of the law of our country," rival presidential contender Hillary Clinton would "be in jail."

In the same debate, Trump also pledged that if elected, he would direct his attorney general to appoint a special prosecutor to "look into" Clinton. Clinton campaign manager Robby Mook called the remark "chilling" and said: "Trump thinks that the presidency is like some banana republic dictatorship where you can lock up your political opponents." The remark was viewed as part of "a litany of statements [Trump] has made during the campaign that many legal specialists have portrayed as a threat to the rule of law." The remark was condemned by a number of prominent Republican lawyers, such as Paul K. Charlton, Marc Jimenez, and Peter Zeidenberg, as well as David B. Rivkin and Michael Chertoff. Trump campaign manager Kellyanne Conway said that the "jail" comment was merely "a quip."

Later that October, Trump spoke fondly of the "Lock her up" chants at his rally, saying "Lock her up is right." He also said that Clinton's legal representatives "have to go to jail". However, in November, after winning the election, Trump told reporters from the New York Times that he would not recommend prosecution of Clinton, saying that it was "just not something (he) feel(s) very strongly about" and suggesting that Clinton had "suffered greatly". He repeated this stance in public at a rally in Michigan the following month, responding to "Lock her up" chants from the crowd by saying: "That plays great before the election - now we don't care, right?".

Trying U.S. citizens in military tribunals

• In August 2016, Trump said that he "would be fine" with trying U.S. citizens accused of terrorism in military tribunals at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

In August 2016, Trump said that he "would be fine" with trying U.S. citizens accused of terrorism in military tribunals at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Under current federal law (specifically, the Military Commissions Act of 2006), trying U.S. citizens at military commissions is illegal; only "alien unlawful enemy combatants" may be tried in such commissions.

Use of torture to procure information

• Speaking with Sean Hannity on Fox News on January 26, 2017, Trump termed

waterboarding "just short of torture," and said, "I will tell you, though, it works.

• In February 2016, Trump said that he approved of the use of waterboarding and "a hell of a lot worse."

In February 2016, Trump said that he approved of the use of waterboarding and "a hell of a lot worse." He said that "torture works" and called waterboarding a "minor form" of torture. Speaking with Sean Hannity on Fox News on January 26, 2017, Trump termed

waterboarding "just short of torture," and said, "I will tell you, though, it works. And I just spoke to people who told me it worked, and that's what they do." However, he said that he would rely on the advice of his defense secretary, James Mattis and others and, "If they don't wanna do, that's fine. If they do wanna do, then I will work for that end."

Voter fraud, voter ID laws, and false claims about "rigged elections"

• In the September 2016 presidential debate, when asked if he would honor the outcome of the election, Trump said that he "absolutely" would.

• While he has repeatedly charged during his candidacy that the election system is rigged against him, Trump's statements became bolder and more specific in August 2016.

Trump opposes same-day voter registration, supports voter identification laws, asserted that Obama won in 2012 due to voter fraud, has charged that the election system would be rigged against him in the 2016 race, and has equivocated on whether he would accept the outcome of the 2016 election.

Trump has asserted that America's "voting system is out of control," alleging that "you have people, in my opinion, that are voting many, many times," even though the number of cases of voter fraud in the U.S. is minuscule. Trump opposes same-day voter registration, alleging that this allows non-citizens to vote in U.S. elections and that voting laws should prevent people from "[sneaking] in through the cracks." PolitiFact ruled Trump's claim about voter fraud false, noting that according to experts, "there is no additional risk of noncitizens casting ballots in states with same-day voter registration, nor is there any evidence that this occurs."

While he has repeatedly charged during his candidacy that the election system is rigged against him, Trump's statements became bolder and more specific in August 2016. He alleged that the only way he would only lose Pennsylvania if "cheating goes on", and that voters will cast their ballots "15 times" for Clinton without voter ID laws. The Wall Street Journal notes that several voter ID laws have been struck down in several states recently, with courts ruling that they unfairly discriminate against minority voters, and that "there is no evidence of widespread voter fraud occurring in recent U.S. elections." According to Dartmouth political scientist Brendan Nyhan, Trump's rhetoric "threatens the norms of American elections and could provoke a damaging reaction among his supporters."

In the September 2016 presidential debate, when asked if he would honor the outcome of the election, Trump said that he "absolutely" would. Four days later, Trump appeared to have reconsidered his statement from the debate, saying "We're going to have to see. We're going to see what happens. We're going to have to see." In early- and mid-October 2016, Trump repeatedly claimed that the election was "rigged" and alleged that the media coordinated with the Clinton campaign, citing Alec Baldwin's portrayal of him on Saturday Night Live. In October 2016, after early voting and voting by mail had begun in many states, Trump claimed, without evidence, that ""The election is absolutely being rigged" at "many polling places." That same month, Trump asserted, also without evidence, that the federal government was allowing illegal immigrants to come into the U.S. so they can vote. PolitiFact found Trump's claim of "large scale voter fraud" false, giving it a "Pants-on-fire" rating.

Trump has claimed that "dead people voted for President Obama" and that "dead voters... helped get President Obama elected." and alleged that voting machines were "switching" votes for the Republican nominee, Mitt Romney, to votes for Obama. On election night 2012, Trump expressed skepticism about Obama's victory, saying, among other things, "This election is a total sham and a travesty. We are not a democracy!" Additionally, when it seemed like Mitt Romney may have gained the popular vote but lost the electoral college vote, Trump called the electoral college system "a disaster for democracy", calling for "a revolution in this country".

Since his election in November 2016—in which he won the electoral college but received 2.8 million fewer votes nationally than Clinton—Trump has repeatedly insisted, without evidence, that he actually won the popular vote if one excludes "3 to 5 million illegal votes" cast for his opponent. This claim is false. After taking office, Trump said he would launch a major investigation into these unsubstantiated allegations, and appointing his Vice President, Mike Pence, to head a White House commission to do so. Trump eventually followed through with that promise, announcing the creation of a commission to investigate voter fraud via an executive order on May 11, 2017. On June 29, 2017, the vice-chairman of Trump's voter fraud commission, former Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, instructed the secretaries of state for all 50 states to provide the commission with voter roll data, though most refused to provide some voter information, citing concerns of privacy. This prompted President Trump to remark on Twitter, "Numerous states are refusing to give information to the very distinguished VOTER FRAUD PANEL. What are they trying to hide?".

Women in the military

• In 2013, Trump questioned the wisdom of allowing women to serve, linking gender-integrated forces with higher rates of sexual assault "26,000 unreported sexual assaults in the military-only 238 convictions.

• In 2014, Trump stated that it was "bedlam" to bring women into the army.

• In August 2015, Trump said he would support women in combat roles "because they're really into it and some of them are really, really good."

In 2013, Trump questioned the wisdom of allowing women to serve, linking gender-integrated forces with higher rates of sexual assault "26,000 unreported sexual assaults in the military-only 238 convictions. What did these geniuses expect when they put men & women together?" In 2014, Trump stated that it was "bedlam" to bring women into the army. In August 2015, Trump said he would support women in combat roles "because they're really into it and some of them are really, really good."

References