



MEMORANDUM

February 4, 2019

To: Interested Parties

From: Navin Nayak, Executive Director, Center for American Progress Action Fund

Re: Trump's False Campaign Promises Are a Devastating Vulnerability

Tomorrow, President Trump will use the State of the Union to make the case for his re-election. All the American people will see is a braggadocious president trying to compensate for significant shortcomings. The president won a narrow victory two years ago by making sweeping promises—many unprecedented for a Republican nominee in the modern era. Now, as the president faces re-election, all those false campaign promises are coming home to roost.

Overwhelmingly, Trump's most popular campaign promises tapped into the American people's understandable desire for systemic change. Trump's promises as a candidate were legendary, including:

- Ensuring every American will have health coverage funded by the government
- Lowering drug prices
- Ending the offshoring of American jobs
- Taxing Wall Street and holding them accountable
- Protecting Medicare and Medicaid from any cuts
- Self-funding his campaign

In fact, as president, Trump has done the exact opposite of what he promised as a candidate, despite complete Republican control of Congress for his first two years. Trump has aggressively worked to gut health care protections for millions, providing billions in tax cuts to corporations and Wall Street, while sitting idly by as GM and many others continue offshoring American jobs. Far from helping the working men and women of this country, Trump has pursued a savage agenda that has further weakened them.

For the next two years, the Center for American Progress Action Fund will be lifting up in great detail the harm that Donald Trump has caused working people—black, brown and white—in this country. We begin [today with an overview of more than 20 false promises](#) Trump made as a candidate and how he has broken them. In time, we will document on a state-by-state basis how Trump has betrayed the very people he promised to help. Moreover, beyond providing the analysis of how Trump's policies have harmed working people, we will profile the stories of the people Trump has harmed—from GM workers in Michigan and Ohio who were laid off to the families who have suffered tragic effects as a result of Trump's sabotage on the Affordable Care Act, and much more.

Pre-Existing Perceptions

The core problem for the president is that these false promises reinforce three core negative perceptions the public already has about him:

- He's a liar;
- He's just another Republican focused on helping the wealthy and well-connected, despite his pledge to look out for the “forgotten men and women”;
- He has taken political corruption to a new level, willing to sell out the public for personal benefit.

President Donald Trump's habitual lying has become comical—even mundane—with [more than 8,000](#) false statements in his first two years in office. But perhaps the most important lies were the ones Trump told to be elected, when he promised hardworking people that he would work for them rather than the wealthy donors and big corporate interests who have rigged the system to benefit themselves. In each of these areas, there is ample polling showing the public's negative views of the president and the significant vulnerabilities they present to him.

Honesty and Integrity

Do you think Trump is honest and trustworthy, or not?

Yes: 36%. No: 61% [[Washington Post/ ABC, 1/24/19](#)]

Do you trust what Trump says more or less than previous presidents?

Less: 58% More: 26% [[Pew, 1/14/19](#)]

Focused on the Wealthy and Big Corporations Over the Middle Class

What kind of job do you think Trump has done so far in helping the middle class?

Positive (41%): Excellent (18%) or Good (23%)

Negative (56%) Not so good (17%) or **Poor (39%)**

This data point is particularly damning for Trump since [50% of Americans expected Trump](#) to help the middle class, when he was initially elected

Who does the Republican tax law benefit more?

Large corporations and rich Americans: 61%

Middle class families: 30% [[Public Opinion Strategies \(internal GOP poll\), 9/2/18](#)]

Corruption

Ratings for ethical standards of top administration officials:

Excellent (7%) or good (32%): 39%

Not good (20%) or poor (39%): 59% [[Pew, 1/14/19](#)]

President Trump and his campaign will do their best to distract the media and the country from examining his record against the promises he made as a candidate. But on issue after issue, no candidate has made more sweeping promises than Donald Trump, and no president has so blatantly and intentionally betrayed them.