

A look at Trump's false and misleading claims in his State of the Union speech

In a marathon State of the Union address, President Donald Trump ticked through claimed victories, insisting the U.S. is “winning so much” even as his approval slips, and blasting Democrats as “crazy” for remaining seated rather than standing to applaud.

By [MELISSA GOLDIN](#) and [CALVIN WOODWARD](#)

Updated 10:53 PM CST, February 24, 2026

WASHINGTON (AP) — On inflation, immigration, tariffs and matters of war and peace, President Donald Trump presented a frequently distorted account of the [state of the nation](#) Tuesday as he claimed a “turnaround for the ages” and myriad achievements that don’t pass scrutiny.

Trump has spent the last year boasting of his accomplishments while mocking the record of his predecessor, Joe Biden. But much of this bluster has been based on misinformation, which he again fell back on during his State of the Union address.



President Donald Trump delivers the State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress in the House chamber at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2026. (Jessica Koscielniak/Pool Photo via AP)

Here's a closer look at the facts:

THE ECONOMY

CLAIM: “When I last spoke in this chamber 12 months ago, I had just inherited a nation in crisis, with a stagnant economy.”

THE FACTS: Not quite. Voters were unhappy with high inflation in the 2024 election, but the U.S. economy was far from stagnant. The U.S. gross domestic product rose 2.8% in 2024 after adjusting for inflation. That's a stronger pace of growth than the 2.2% achieved last year during the start of Trump's second term. ____

TRUMP: “Incomes are rising fast, the roaring economy is roaring like never before.”

THE FACTS: Not so. After-tax incomes, adjusted for inflation, rose just 0.9% in 2025, down from 2.2% in 2024, Biden's last year in office. The annual gain in Trump's first year is the smallest since 2022, when inflation soared and caused Americans' inflation-adjusted income to drop.

Wages and salaries are the largest component of incomes, and their growth has slowed as companies have sharply slowed hiring. Workers typically command smaller wage gains in such an environment.



[Minneapolis turmoil has Democrats scrambling to figure out political strategy on immigration](#)

INVESTMENT

CLAIM: “I secured commitments for more than \$18 trillion pouring in from all over the globe.”

THE FACTS: Trump has [presented no evidence](#) that he’s secured this much domestic or foreign investment in the U.S. Based on statements from various companies, foreign countries and the White House’s own website, that figure appears to be exaggerated, highly speculative and far higher than the actual sum. The [White House website](#) offers a far lower number, \$9.6 trillion, and that figure appears to include some investment commitments made during the Biden administration.

A study [published in January](#) raised doubts about whether more than \$5 trillion in investment commitments made last year by many of America’s biggest trading partners will actually materialize and questions how it would be spent if it did.

JOBS

CLAIM: “More Americans are working today than at any time in the history of our country.”

THE FACTS: Yes, but the number of Americans with jobs always rises as the population grows. The relevant figure is the proportion of Americans with jobs, which has fallen significantly in the last quarter-century, partly because the workforce is aging and more people are retired. The proportion of Americans with jobs peaked at 64.7% in April 2000, and was 59.8% in January.

The unemployment rate is a low 4.3%, but was lower when Biden left office in January 2025, at 4%. During Biden’s presidency, the rate fell to a 50-year low of 3.4%.

FOREIGN WARS

CLAIM: “My first 10 months I ended eight wars.”

THE FACTS: This statistic, which Trump frequently cites, is highly exaggerated.

Although he has helped mediate relations among many nations, his impact [isn’t as clear-cut](#) as he makes it seem. In at least two instances of peace he claims credit for achieving, there were no wars to end: no fighting between Serbia and Kosovo, and friction rather than fighting between Egypt and Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

The other wars Trump counts as those that he has solved were between Israel and Hamas, Israel and Iran, India and Pakistan, Rwanda and Congo, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Cambodia and Thailand. His influence varied in those conflicts.

TARIFFS

CLAIM: Tariff revenues are “saving our country, the kind of money we’re taking in.”

THE FACTS: Though Trump has imposed massive tax hikes on imports, they’re not sizable enough to make a dent in the government’s annual budget deficits. Nor have the tariffs corresponded with manufacturing job gains.



President Donald Trump speaks during an event to announce new tariffs in the Rose Garden at the White House, April 2, 2025, in Washington. (AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein, File)

Before the Supreme Court struck down Trump’s tariffs based on an emergency declaration, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that his new taxes would raise \$3 trillion over 10 years, or \$300 billion annually.

That’s not enough to cover the cost of his \$4.7 trillion in tax cuts, including additional interest cuts, that favored companies and the wealthy. Nor is it enough to pay down an annual budget deficit that last year was \$1.78 trillion.

CLAIM: “Tariffs paid for by foreign countries will, like in the past, substantially replace the modern day system of income tax.”

THE FACTS: Not likely. Under Trump, tariff revenues have swelled — to \$195 billion in the budget year that ended Sept. 30 from \$77 billion the year before. But the import taxes accounted for less than 4% of federal revenue. Income taxes and payroll taxes that finance Social Security and Medicare account for 84%.

MEDICINE

CLAIM: “I took prescription drugs, a very big part of health care, from the highest price in the entire world to the lowest. That’s a big achievement. The result is price differences of 300, 400, 500, 600% and more.”

THE FACTS: [This is impossible](#). Although the Trump administration has taken steps to lower drug prices, cutting them by more than 100% would theoretically mean that people are being paid to take medications.

Geoffrey Joyce, director of health policy at the University of Southern California’s Schaeffer Center, said in August that this claim is “total fiction” by the president. He agreed that it would amount to drug companies paying customers, rather than the other way around.

CRIME

CLAIM: “Last year, the murder rate saw its single largest decline in recorded history. This is the biggest decline. Think of it in recorded history, the lowest number in over 125 years.”

THE FACTS: Trump takes credit for a significant decrease in violent crime during 2025, claiming the murder rate in the U.S. dropped to its lowest in 125 years. But this is misleading. Crime had already been trending down in recent years.

[A study](#) released in January by the independent Council on Criminal Justice, which collected data from 35 U.S. cities on homicides, showed a 21% decrease in the homicide rate from 2024 to 2025.

The report noted that when nationwide data for jurisdictions of all sizes is reported by the FBI later this year, there is a strong possibility that homicides in 2025 will drop to about 4 per 100,000 residents. That would be the lowest rate ever recorded in law enforcement or public health data going back to 1900.

FBI reports for [2023](#) and [2024](#) show significant reductions in violent crimes.

Crime surged during the coronavirus pandemic, with homicides increasing [nearly 30% in 2020](#) over the previous year, the largest one-year jump since the FBI began keeping records. But violent crime dropped to [near pre-pandemic levels around 2022](#) when Biden was president.

IMMIGRATION

CLAIM: “We will always allow people to come in legally, people that will love our country and will work hard to maintain our country.”

THE FACTS: Trump has actually taken steps to restrict who can emigrate to the U.S., often in the name of protecting national security.

He suspended the refugee program on his first day in office and in October resumed the program but only in limited numbers for white South Africans.

Trump has also [placed restrictions](#) on who can travel or emigrate to the U.S. from nearly 40 countries around the world. Many of those countries are in Africa.

TAXES

CLAIM: “With the great big beautiful bill, we gave you no tax on tips, no tax on overtime and no tax on Social Security.”

THE FACTS: Though the president frequently says his big tax cut bill means no tax on Social Security, that’s not true for everyone. Not all Social Security beneficiaries will be able to claim the deduction, which lasts until 2029.

Those who won’t be able to do so include the lowest-income seniors who already don’t pay taxes on Social Security, those who choose to claim their benefits before they reach age 65 and those above a defined income threshold. The deductions also phase out as income increases.

ELECTIONS

CLAIM: “I’m asking you to approve the Save America Act to stop illegal aliens and other who are unpermitted persons from voting in our sacred American elections. The cheating is rampant in our elections.”

THE FACTS: He and his allies have never produced evidence of rampant election cheating. Experts say voter fraud is [extremely rare](#), and very few noncitizens ever slip through the cracks.

For example, a recent review in Michigan identified 15 people who appear to be noncitizens who voted in the 2024 general election, out of more than 5.7 million ballots cast in the state. Of those, 13 were referred to the attorney general for potential criminal charges. One involved a voter who has since died, and the final case remains under investigation.

CLAIM: “The revolution that began in 1776 has not ended. It still continues because the flame of liberty and independence still burns in the heart of every American patriot.”

THE FACTS: To be clear, the American Revolution started the previous year, on April 19, 1775. The colonies declared independence in 1776. It ended Sept. 3, 1783.

Associated Press writers Rebecca Santana, Fatima Hussein, Josh Boak, Paul Wiseman, Christopher Rugaber, Elliot Spagat and Matthew Daly contributed to this report.

Find AP Fact Checks here: <https://apnews.com/APFactCheck>.