

‘Nobel prize for fiction’: Trump’s State of the Union provokes polarized reactions

Democrats accuse president’s address of litany of lies as Republicans hail his bullish claims about year back in office

[*Joseph Gedeon*](#) in Washington

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Congressional [Democrats](#) lined up on Tuesday night to call [Donald Trump](#) a liar and [Republicans](#) said America had never been greater. The country’s longest-ever [State of the Union](#) address had ended, and the two parties had, again, watched entirely different speeches.

Trump’s address ran for nearly two hours, with the president touching on tariffs, border security, military recruitment and energy production, among other topics. He told the country the economy was booming, inflation was under control and a golden age was at hand, but [Democrats](#) were not persuaded.

“Donald Trump told us that the economy is ‘wonderful’ and that everything is ‘affordable’,” said Representative Brad Sherman, a Democrat from California. “And if you believe that, then you probably believe he was faithful to all three of his wives.”

Sherman also said the address was “the longest and worst State of the Union in our country’s history”.

Representative Jim McGovern of Massachusetts suggested the sheer volume of falsehoods was itself the strategy. “If any other president had spun out of thin air such a grandiose, absurd lie about their economic record, it would have been a huge scandal,” he said. “Trump’s strategy is to flood the zone with so much BS that it’s impossible to keep up. Don’t give up on the truth.”

Senator Chris Coons of Delaware said the president had missed his moment. “President Trump had the chance to bring the country together tonight. Instead, we got a campaign rally where he lied, ducked responsibility and had zero answers for Americans worried about the challenges they’re facing.”

Trump’s tariff agenda featured prominently in the address, in which he framed it as the foundation of an industrial revival. But Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona doubted that his constituents had heard anything of use. “One year into his presidency, families are paying more at the grocery store. Seniors are struggling to afford their prescription drugs. Small business owners are having trouble keeping their doors open, and President Trump’s illegal tariffs are making it worse.”

Representative Raul Ruiz of California went through the speech's claims one by one. "He lied to us about inflation, while his tariffs have increased costs for all of us. He lied to us about healthcare, while his policies took away health coverage from millions of Americans. He lied to us about protecting retirees, while he is doing everything he can to dismantle social security and Medicare."

Ruiz added: "Trump wants desperately a Nobel prize – with all his lies, he should try to get one for fiction."

Senator Raphael Warnock of Georgia said: "Their proudest accomplishment is taking food away from working families to give their donors another tax cut."

The mood in the chamber was similarly testy during the speech. Representative Al Green of Texas was escorted out after holding up a sign reading "Black people aren't apes!" Representative Ilhan Omar of Minnesota shouted "You have killed Americans" at the president, and Representative Rashida Tlaib of Michigan was heard calling out: "Release the Epstein files."

Later on Wednesday, Trump commented on both Omar and Tlaib's appearance and intelligence, posting an unhinged social media message featuring the racist dog whistle that "we should send them back from where they came", and saying they had "the bulging, bloodshot eyes of crazy people, LUNATICS" and adding they "look like they should be institutionalized".

"When people can behave like that, and knowing that they are Crooked and Corrupt Politicians, so bad for our Country, we should send them back from where they came – as fast as possible," he wrote. "They can only damage the United States of America, they can do nothing to help it."

On the Republican side, the mood was different. Trump had claimed gains on the border, falling crime, record military recruitment and a reviving economy, and his party took him at his word, and backed him up.

Representative Byron Donalds of Florida posted on X immediately after the address: "In just ONE YEAR, we have achieved a transformation like NO OTHER. Economy BOOMING. Inflation UNDER CONTROL. Border SECURED. Military recruitment at RECORD LEVELS. Crime DOWN. PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH. The Golden Age of America is upon us."

Senator Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma singled out the moment Trump challenged members of Congress to stand if they believed the government's first duty was to protect American citizens rather than undocumented migrants. "The contrast was clear," Mullin wrote. "President Trump is an America First fighter, and a fearless patriot."

Representative Tony Wied of Wisconsin pointed to the manufacturing theme running through the address. "It's time that we re-industrialize our great country and really ignite our manufacturing base," he said in an interview on C-Span. "That's what the president is focused on, that's what House [Republicans](#) are focused on. I think we're moving in the right direction."

Representative Jason Smith called it “the strongest State of the Union Address I’ve attended”, saying Trump’s vision “fosters patriotism, defends American citizens, and will deliver another year of historic results”.

Many Democrats highlighted the distance between that version of events and the daily lives for their constituents. Representative Luz Rivas of California, in a post in Spanish, said families in her district were “feeling the impact of high prices and the presence of ICE in our communities” and that she and her colleagues would “continue fighting to hold the Trump administration accountable for all the chaos they have caused in our country”.

Representative Adelita Grijalva of Arizona summed up the evening up for her party: “That was two hours of rambling completely detached from reality. Just over a year into his presidency, America is less safe, more divided and more expensive than ever before.”