

Commentary

Trump's Second Term

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Iowa caucus 2024 results have just started pouring in. Donald Trump is up with 52.8% votes. His nearest Republican rival, Ron DeSantis has 20% votes. Trump's popularity among the Republican voters is enormous in spite of all the court cases and indictments against him. According to the present trend, he will beat Biden in 2024 by 2 percentage points (50% to 48%).

Biden has repeatedly condemned Trump as an "existential threat" to the United States. During a fund-raising meeting in Boston, Biden said, "If Trump wasn't running, I'm not sure I'd be running."

Whatever the case, it seems that Trump will return to power in 2025. Trump is dominating the race for the Republican nomination and has already laid out a sweeping set of policy goals should he win a second term. Trump would try to strip tens of thousands of career employees of their civil service protections. That way, they could be fired as he seeks to "totally obliterate the deep state." Given his anger at the FBI and federal prosecutors pursuing criminal cases against him, Trump probably would target people linked to those prosecutions for retribution.

Trump has pledged to "immediately stop the invasion of our southern border" and end illegal immigration. As part of that plan, he says he would immediately direct U.S.



Immigration and Customs Enforcement to undertake the largest domestic deportation operation in American history. Trump wants to reimpose his travel ban that originally targeted seven

Muslim-majority countries and expand it to "keep radical Islamic terrorists out of the country." In the

wake of the Hamas attack on Israel, he has pledged to put in place "ideological screening" for immigrants. His aim: bar "dangerous lunatics, haters, bigots, and maniacs," as well as those who "empathize with radical Islamic terrorists and extremists."

To deter migrants, he has said he would end birthright citizenship, using an executive order that would introduce a legally untested interpretation of the 14th Amendment. The order would prevent federal agencies from granting automatic citizenship to the children of people who are in the U.S. illegally. It would require that at least one parent be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident for their children to be eligible for passports, Social Security numbers, and other benefits.

Trump says he will institute a system of tariffs of perhaps 10% on most foreign goods. Penalties would increase if trade partners manipulate their currencies or engage in other unfair trading practices.

He will urge that Congress pass a “Trump Reciprocal Trade Act,” giving the president authority to impose a reciprocal tariff on any country that imposes one on the U.S.

Much of the agenda focuses on China. Trump has proposed a four-year plan to phase out Chinese imports of essential goods, including electronics, steel, and pharmaceuticals. He wants to ban Chinese companies from owning vital U.S. infrastructure in sectors such as energy, technology, and agriculture, and says he will force Chinese owners to sell any holdings “that jeopardize America’s national security.”

Trump claims that even before he is inaugurated, he will have settled the war between Russia and Ukraine. That includes, he says, ending the “endless flow of American treasure to Ukraine” and asking European allies to reimburse the U.S. for the cost of rebuilding stockpiles. Trump has said he will stand with Israel in its war with Hamas and support Israel’s efforts to “destroy” the militant group. He says he will continue to “fundamentally reevaluate” NATO’s purpose and mission.

Trump’s goal, he says, is for the U.S. to have the lowest-cost energy and electricity of any nation in the world, including China.

Under the mantra “Drill, Baby, Drill,” he says he would ramp up oil drilling on public lands and offer tax breaks to oil, gas, and coal producers. He would roll back Biden administration efforts to encourage the adoption of electric cars and reverse proposed new pollution limits that would require at least 54% of new vehicles sold in the U.S. to be electric by 2030.

And again, he says, he will exit the Paris Climate Accords, end wind subsidies, and eliminate regulations imposed and proposed by the Biden administration targeting incandescent lightbulbs, gas stoves, dishwashers, and shower heads.

Trump would again push to send the National Guard to cities such as Chicago that are

struggling with violence. He would use the federal government’s funding and prosecution authorities to strong-arm local governments.

He says he will require local law enforcement agencies that receive Justice Department grants to use controversial policing measures such as stop-and-frisk. As a deterrent, he says local police should be empowered to shoot suspected shoplifters in the act. “Very simply, if you rob a store, you can fully expect to be shot as you are leaving that store,” he said in one recent speech.

Trump has called for the death penalty for drug smugglers and those who traffic women and children. He has also pledged a federal takeover of the nation’s capital, calling Washington a “dirty, crime-ridden death trap” unbecoming of the country.

Those are some of the obvious and immediate actions Trump will take, should he win the presidency again. The only caveat is he should not become too powerful to become an autocrat. Fortunately, we have legislature and judiciary to check the executive branch.