

ARE WE BETTER OFF NOW THAN WE WERE ONE YEAR AGO

By Paul Arieti

After one year of Donald Trump's second term, it's time to ask, borrowing from former president Ronald Regan, are we better off than we were one year ago.

From January 2025 until now, unemployment has increased from 4.0% to 4.3% and adding to that is the significant reduction in job growth. Annual Job growth has slowed considerably from 1.46 million in 2024 to a recently revised 181,000 in 2025.

During 2025 core inflation has increased from 2.8 to 3.0. So far Trump has failed to "end inflation" as promised during his campaign. Basic commodities such as beef, poultry, eggs and vegetables have increased significantly in 2025. While a gallon of gas has fallen from the national average of \$3.11 at the beginning of 2025 to \$2.97 at the end, the administration has little control over gas prices since they are determined by global crude oil and refining costs.

In July 2025 Trump approved an extension to his 2017 tax cuts which mostly benefit the wealthy and corporations. These tax cuts have significantly contributed to the increase in the nation's record levels of inequality. By the end of 2025, the top 1% now hold about 32% of the nation's household net wealth while the bottom 50% hold only 2.5%. Further, the top 10% now own 87% of all stock market wealth while the bottom 50% own only 1% and the number of billionaires has increased from 565 in 2017 to 902 in 2025.

During 2025 one of the most disturbing actions by the Trump administration is the treatment of immigrants. While the number of formal deportations (removals of people arrested inside the U.S. rather than at the border) during 2024 and 2025 were comparable at about 230,000, the methods used by the Trump compared to the Biden administration are unnecessarily severe, cruel and have resulted in unjustified loss of life. The irony is that we need immigrants. Because of recent significantly reduced birthrates, without immigration our population is projected to shrink in the near future and together with our aging population this will put an unsustainable burden on the working age population.

Trump promised to end the Ukrainian war on "day one". It is now the end of year one and Russia continues their brutal assault on Ukrainian infrastructure and its civilians with little change on the battlefield and continued attempts by the Trump administration to pressure Ukraine to concede territory which would only reward Russian aggression. Also, after two years of brutal Israeli attacks and near total devastation of the country, a ceasefire was negotiated in Gaza. Yet Israeli strikes and violent clashes continue. Finally, Trump's backers in the MAGA movement must be wondering what happened to his "America First" pledge considering the several surprise foreign military actions he has authorized in the past year. While our military successfully removed the Venezuelan dictator last year, the anti-democratic regime remains in place. And now the attacks on Iran, what could go wrong?

Trump claims everything has improved during this past year, but the facts are quite the opposite. All in all, we are clearly no better off and, in many ways, much worse off than we were one year ago!