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PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2024

WHAT IS AT STAKE - THE COLLECTIVE CONCERNS

- Democracy and Governance ■ Civil and Human Rights ■ Health and Social Services
- Economic Policies ■ Environmental Protection & Climate Control ■ Foreign Relations
- Labor and Employment ■ Economic Inequality ■ Judiciary and Legal Systems

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Inheritance from the Obama Administration to the Trump Administration in Regards to the Collective Concerns

Democracy and Governance-Democratic Stability

- Transparency and Ethics: Emphasized transparency and implemented ethics reforms aimed at reducing lobbying influence and conflicts of interest.
- Voting Rights: Supported efforts to protect and expand voting rights, although faced significant opposition and legal challenges.

Civil and Human Rights

- LGBTQ+ Rights: Advanced protections for LGBTQ+ individuals, including the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” and support for marriage equality.
- Criminal Justice Reform: Implemented measures aimed at reducing mandatory minimum sentences and addressing systemic racial disparities.

Health and Social Services

- Affordable Care Act (ACA): Signed into law the ACA, which expanded Medicaid and created health insurance marketplaces, significantly reducing the uninsured rate.
- Public Health: Strengthened public health infrastructure, including efforts to combat the opioid crisis.

Economic Policies

- Economic Growth: Oversaw steady economic growth post-Great Recession, with GDP growth averaging around 2% annually.
- Tax Policies: Maintained a progressive tax system and implemented tax credits aimed at low and middle-income families.

Environmental Protection and Climate Control

- Climate Action: The Obama administration took significant steps to address climate change, including the Clean Power Plan and the Paris Agreement.

- Environmental Regulations: Implemented numerous regulations to protect air and water quality, and increased fuel efficiency standards for vehicles.

Foreign Relations

- Restored Alliances: The Obama administration focused on rebuilding alliances and multilateralism, such as the Paris Agreement and the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA).
- Trade Policies: Promoted trade agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), though it was not finalized before Trump took office.

Labor and Employment

- Economic Recovery: Inherited an economy in recession and led a recovery, reducing the unemployment rate from around 10% in 2009 to 4.7% by January 2017.
- Labor Rights: Supported policies that strengthened labor rights and increased the minimum wage for federal contractors.

Economic Inequality

- Affordable Care Act: Expanded healthcare coverage, reducing the number of uninsured Americans and aiming to reduce healthcare costs for low-income families.
- Dodd-Frank Act: Introduced financial regulations aimed at preventing another financial crisis and protecting consumers.

Judiciary and Legal Systems

- Judicial Appointments: Appointed judges to the federal judiciary who were largely moderate, maintaining a balance in the courts.
- Legal Reforms: Focused on criminal justice reforms and upholding civil liberties.

Trump Administration Stance in Relationship to the Collective Concerns

Democracy and Governance-Democratic Stability

- Populist Rhetoric: Emphasized populist themes and frequently challenged traditional democratic norms and institutions.
- Electoral Integrity: Controversially questioned the integrity of the electoral process, particularly during the 2020 election.

Civil and Human Rights

- Criminal Justice Reform: Signed the First Step Act, aimed at reforming the federal prison system and reducing recidivism.
- LGBTQ+ Rights: Rolled back protections for LGBTQ+ individuals, including military service bans and changes to healthcare protections.

Health and Social Services

- Affordable Care Act: Attempted to repeal the Affordable Care Act, though ultimately unsuccessful. Reduced the individual mandate penalty to zero.
- Pandemic Response: Oversaw the initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including Operation Warp Speed to accelerate vaccine development.

Economic Policies

- Tax Cuts: Implemented the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, reducing taxes for individuals and corporations, claiming to stimulate economic growth.
- Deregulation: Significantly reduced federal regulations on businesses, arguing for increased economic freedom and efficiency.

Environmental Protection and Climate Control

- Deregulation: Rolled back numerous environmental regulations, arguing for reduced burdens on businesses.
- Climate Change: Withdrew the United States from the Paris Agreement, emphasizing energy independence and fossil fuel production.

Foreign Relations

- Trade Agreements: Negotiated the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) to replace NAFTA.
- Diplomatic Relations: Engaged in direct diplomacy with North Korea and took a hard stance on China, leading to a trade war aimed at reducing trade deficits.

Labor and Employment

- Unemployment Rates: Pre-pandemic, unemployment rates reached historic lows, particularly for Black and Hispanic workers.
- Deregulation: Reduced regulations on businesses, aiming to stimulate job growth and economic activity.

Economic Inequality

- Opportunity Zones: Created Opportunity Zones to encourage investment in economically distressed communities, aiming to spur job creation and economic development.

Judiciary and Legal Systems

- Judicial Appointments: Appointed three Supreme Court justices and numerous federal judges, significantly shaping the judiciary's ideological balance.
- Legal Reforms: Advocated for strict law and order policies, increasing penalties for certain crimes and supporting police departments.

Current Administration Progress and Accomplishments Based on Collective Concerns

Democracy and Governance-Democratic Stability

- Restoring Norms: Emphasized transparency, accountability, and ethical governance, aiming to restore public trust in democratic institutions.
- Electoral Integrity: Took measures to protect the integrity of elections and ensure the security of voting processes.

Civil and Human Rights

- Civil Rights Protections: Issued executive orders to combat discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, and reinstated protections for LGBTQ+ individuals.
- Voting Rights: Supported legislation aimed at protecting and expanding voting rights, although facing significant challenges in Congress.

Health and Social Services

- Affordable Care Act: Strengthened and expanded the Affordable Care Act, increasing healthcare coverage and affordability.
- Pandemic Response: Implemented a robust COVID-19 vaccination campaign, leading to widespread vaccine availability and distribution.

Economic Policies

- Infrastructure Investment: Passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, focusing on rebuilding roads, bridges, and public transportation, creating jobs and stimulating the economy.
- Tax Policies: Proposed tax reforms to increase rates on the wealthiest individuals and corporations to fund social programs and reduce the deficit.

Environmental Protection and Climate Control

- Climate Action: Signed executive orders to address climate change, including rejoining the Paris Agreement, aiming for net-zero emissions by 2050.

- Regulation: Reinstated numerous environmental regulations rolled back by the previous administration, focusing on clean air and water protections.

Foreign Relations

- Restoring Alliances: Rejoined the Paris Agreement on climate change and renewed commitments to NATO, strengthening alliances.
- International Cooperation: Worked to repair relationships with traditional allies and re-engaged in multilateral institutions like the World Health Organization (WHO).

Labor and Employment

- Job Growth: Oversaw significant job creation, with efforts to boost employment through infrastructure projects.
- Worker Protections: Strengthened labor rights, supporting union activities and increasing the minimum wage for federal contractors.

Economic Inequality

- Economic Equity: Launched initiatives aimed at reducing economic disparities, including support for minority-owned businesses and increased funding for historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).
- American Rescue Plan: Provided direct financial assistance to families and individuals, aiming to reduce poverty and support economic recovery.

Judiciary and Legal Systems

- Judicial Appointments: Nominated a diverse array of judges to the federal judiciary, emphasizing representation and qualifications.
- Legal Reforms: Supported criminal justice reforms aimed at reducing mass incarceration and addressing systemic racial biases.

The Highs and Lows of the Current Administration in The Collective Concerns

1. Democracy and Governance

Highs:

- COVID-19 Relief Legislation: Passage of significant relief legislation through a challenging political environment.
- Infrastructure Legislation: Bipartisan support for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- Focus on Voting Rights: Advocacy for voting rights protections and electoral reforms.

Lows:

- Partisan Polarization: Continued high levels of partisan division and legislative gridlock.
- Challenges with Filibuster Reform: Efforts to reform the filibuster have faced significant resistance.
- Disinformation and Trust Issues: Ongoing challenges with disinformation and declining public trust in institutions.

2. Civil and Human Rights

Highs:

- LGBTQ+ Protections: Expanded protections for LGBTQ+ individuals through executive orders and policies.
- Racial Equity Initiatives: Efforts to address systemic racism and promote equity through various initiatives.
- Voting Rights Advocacy: Strong advocacy for voting rights protection and reform.

Lows:

- Border and Immigration Policies: Continued criticism of immigration policies and conditions at the border.
- Police Reform Challenges: Struggles to pass significant federal police reform legislation.
- Transgender Rights Controversies: Ongoing debates and legal challenges over transgender rights in sports and healthcare.

3. Health and Social Services

Highs:

- COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign: Rapid distribution of vaccines and efforts to increase vaccination rates.
- American Rescue Plan: Expanded healthcare access and support for pandemic-related health services.
- Focus on Mental Health: Increased funding and attention to mental health services.

Lows:

- Pandemic Response Criticism: Ongoing criticism regarding changing guidelines and mandates during the pandemic.
- Healthcare Reform Stalemate: Challenges in making significant reforms to the healthcare system.
- Opioid Crisis: Continued struggles to effectively address the opioid epidemic.

4. Economic Policies

Highs:

- American Rescue Plan: Provided significant economic stimulus to help recover from the pandemic.
- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: Major investment in infrastructure aimed at long-term economic growth.
- Support for Innovation and Manufacturing: Initiatives to boost American manufacturing and technology sectors.

Lows:

- Inflation: Rising inflation rates have led to economic concerns and affected purchasing power.
- National Debt: Increased government spending has contributed to rising national debt levels.
- Supply Chain Issues: Ongoing supply chain disruptions impacting economic recovery.

5. Environmental Protection and Climate Change

Highs:

- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (2021): Included significant funding for clean energy and climate resilience projects.
- Rejoining Paris Agreement: Reinforced U.S. commitment to global climate action.
- Regulatory Rollbacks Reversed: Reversed several Trump-era environmental deregulations.

Lows:

- Pipeline Controversies: Mixed messages with approvals of some pipelines while halting others, like the Keystone XL.
- Climate Legislation Challenges: Struggles to pass comprehensive climate legislation through a divided Congress.
- Continued Fossil Fuel Production: Criticized for allowing continued fossil fuel projects despite climate pledges.

The Highs and Lows of the Current Administration in The Collective Concerns

6. Foreign Relations

Highs:

- Rejoining International Agreements: Rejoined the Paris Agreement on climate change and the World Health Organization (WHO), signaling a return to multilateralism.
- Withdrawal from Afghanistan (2021): Although controversial, Biden ended the 20-year U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan.
- Support for Ukraine (2022): Strong international coalition against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, providing military and humanitarian aid.

Lows:

- Afghanistan Withdrawal Execution: The chaotic and tragic nature of the withdrawal drew significant criticism.
- Diplomatic Tensions with China: Increased tensions with China over issues like Taiwan, human rights, and trade.
- AUKUS Controversy (2021): The new security pact with Australia and the UK led to a diplomatic spat with France, which felt blindsided by the agreement.

7. Labor and Employment

Highs:

- American Rescue Plan (2021): Provided economic relief, including extended unemployment benefits and direct payments to Americans.
- Job Growth: Significant job creation as the economy recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Labor Support: Pro-union stance, including support for the PRO Act and promoting higher minimum wages.

Lows:

- Inflation: Rising inflation rates have impacted real wage growth and cost of living.
- Labor Shortages: Ongoing issues with labor shortages in various industries post-pandemic.
- Gig Worker Policies: Struggles to effectively address the classification and rights of gig economy workers.

8. Economic Inequality

Highs:

- Child Tax Credit Expansion (2021): Temporarily expanded the child tax credit, significantly reducing child poverty rates.
- American Rescue Plan: Included measures to support low-income families and small businesses.
- Minimum Wage Advocacy: Continued push for a \$15 federal minimum wage.

Lows:

- Persistent Wealth Gap: Despite efforts, economic inequality remains a significant issue.
- Healthcare Costs: Continued high healthcare costs affecting low and middle-income families.
- Temporary Nature of Reforms: Many relief measures were temporary and faced challenges in becoming permanent.

9. Judiciary and Legal Systems

Highs:

- Diverse Judicial Appointments: Appointed a historically diverse group of judges to the federal judiciary.
- Support for Criminal Justice Reform: Advocacy for reforms aimed at reducing mass incarceration and addressing systemic issues.
- Restoring DOJ Independence: Efforts to restore the Department of Justice's independence and integrity.

Lows:

- Supreme Court Challenges: Struggles to address the conservative tilt of the Supreme Court.
- Continued Judicial Vacancies: Ongoing challenges in filling all judicial vacancies due to political gridlock.
- Limited Success in Major Legal Reforms: Challenges in passing significant legal and judicial reform legislation.

The Highs and Lows of President Donald Trump Administration in The Collective Concerns

1. Democracy and Governance

Highs:

- Judicial Appointments: Appointed a significant number of federal judges, including three Supreme Court Justices.
- Regulatory Reform: Implemented policies aimed at reducing government regulations.
- Criminal Justice Reform: Bipartisan support for the First Step Act.

Lows:

- Impeachments: Impeached twice, first over Ukraine dealings and second over the January 6 Capitol riot.
- Election Integrity: Repeated claims of election fraud and attempts to overturn the 2020 election results undermined trust in democratic processes.
- Transparency and Accountability: Criticized for lack of transparency and accountability, including conflicts of interest and resistance to oversight.

2. Civil and Human Rights

Highs:

- Criminal Justice Reform: Signed the First Step Act (2018), aimed at reducing recidivism and reforming sentencing laws.
- LGBTQ+ Initiatives: Promoted some initiatives like decriminalizing homosexuality globally, although domestic policies were mixed.
- Anti-Human Trafficking Efforts: Increased efforts and funding to combat human trafficking.

Lows:

- Immigration Policies: Policies such as family separations at the border and travel bans were widely condemned.
- Racial Tensions: Accused of exacerbating racial tensions through rhetoric and policies perceived as discriminatory.

- LGBTQ+ Rights Rollbacks: Rolled back protections for transgender individuals in the military and other areas.

3. Health and Social Services

Highs:

- Right to Try Act (2018): Allowed terminally ill patients to try experimental treatments not yet approved by the FDA.
- VA Mission Act (2018): Improved access to healthcare for veterans.
- Telehealth Expansion: Expanded telehealth services, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lows:

- Affordable Care Act Repeal Attempts: Repeated efforts to repeal the ACA without a clear replacement, causing uncertainty.
- Pandemic Response: Widely criticized for the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, including testing, PPE shortages, and inconsistent messaging.
- Public Health Funding Cuts: Proposed cuts to public health programs and agencies, including the CDC.

4. Economic Policies

Highs:

- Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (2017): Major tax overhaul aimed at reducing corporate and individual tax rates.
- Pre-pandemic Economic Growth: Strong GDP growth and low unemployment before the pandemic.
- Deregulation: Significant rollbacks of federal regulations, which supporters argue boosted economic growth.

The Highs and Lows of President Donald Trump Administration in The Collective Concerns

Lows:

- Trade Wars: Trade conflicts, particularly with China, led to market uncertainty and hurt some sectors like agriculture.
- Pandemic Response: Criticized for the economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including delays in stimulus packages.
- Rising Deficits and Debt: Tax cuts and increased spending contributed to growing federal deficits and national debt.

5. Environmental Protection and Climate Change

Highs:

- Economic Deregulation: Rolled back numerous environmental regulations, arguing it would boost economic growth and job creation.
- National Parks Funding: Signed the Great American Outdoors Act (2020), providing permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Lows:

- Paris Agreement Withdrawal: Withdrew the U.S. from the global climate accord.
- Regulatory Rollbacks: Reversed numerous environmental protections, leading to increased emissions and environmental degradation.
- Climate Change Denial: Downplayed the significance of climate change, impacting global leadership on the issue.

6. Foreign Relations

Highs:

- Abraham Accords (2020): Brokered normalization agreements between Israel and several Arab countries, including the UAE and Bahrain.
- North Korea Diplomacy: Historic meetings with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, though results were mixed.

- China Trade Deal: Phase One trade deal with China aimed at reducing trade imbalances.

Lows:

- Withdrawal from International Agreements: Pulled out of the Paris Agreement, Iran nuclear deal, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).
- Diplomatic Strains with Allies: Strained relationships with traditional allies, particularly in NATO and the European Union.
- Russia Investigations: Ongoing controversies and investigations into Russian interference in the 2016 election and possible collusion.

7. Labor and Employment

Highs:

- Pre-pandemic Job Growth: Strong job growth and low unemployment rates before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (2017): Argued that tax cuts would stimulate job growth and investment.
- Deregulation: Claimed that reducing regulations would spur economic growth and create jobs.

Lows:

- Pandemic Job Losses: Massive job losses during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a slow recovery.
- Wage Stagnation: Continued issues with stagnant wages for many workers despite low unemployment.
- Gig Worker Classification: Policies seen as unfavorable to gig workers seeking employee status and benefits.

The Highs and Lows of President Donald Trump Administration in The Collective Concerns

8. Economic Inequality

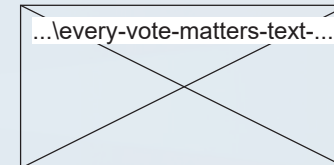
Highs:

- Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (2017): Significant tax cuts, which proponents argued would benefit the economy broadly.
- Opportunity Zones: Created Opportunity Zones to spur investment in economically distressed areas.
- Regulatory Rollback: Claimed that reducing regulations would help small businesses and spur economic growth.

Lows:

- Widening Wealth Gap: Critics argue that the tax cuts disproportionately benefited the wealthy and increased economic inequality.
- Limited Poverty Reduction: Modest reductions in poverty rates, with significant disparities remaining.
- Healthcare and Social Services Cuts: Proposed cuts to social safety net programs, which critics argued would harm low-income Americans.

- Pardons and Commutations: Issued controversial pardons and commutations, often to political allies.



9. Judiciary and Legal Systems

Highs:

- Supreme Court Appointments: Appointed Justices Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett, shifting the Court to the right.
- Judicial Confirmations: Record number of federal judicial appointments, shaping the judiciary for years to come.
- First Step Act: Significant bipartisan criminal justice reform.

Lows:

- Controversial Nominations: Some judicial nominations were highly controversial and faced significant opposition.
- Justice Department Independence: Accused of undermining the independence of the DOJ through interference and politicization.

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