

Trump has a bunch of new false claims. Here's a guide.



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The Fact Checker

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When a politician gives rally speeches lasting nearly two hours, it's hard to decide what factually challenged statements should be examined. In the case of [Donald Trump](#), it's especially difficult because he frequently says so many things that are false or misleading.

Last Saturday, in Georgia, when Trump spoke for 1 hour and 55 minutes, he devoted huge chunks of time to inaccurate accounts of the legal cases against him. He made nearly five dozen references to [President Biden](#), but they consisted mostly of epithets — such as “incompetent,” “crooked,” “out of control,” and “weak, angry, flailing.” Trump also repeatedly labeled Biden as “corrupt” — but he applied the same charge to MSNBC, the 2020 elections, the judge in a libel case Trump lost, the judge in a business fraud case Trump lost, the prosecutor in a pending Georgia case, New York state and finally the entire United States.

“We have a very corrupt country,” he declared during a 30-second rant that touched on allegations that Russia intervened in the 2016 election to help him win, his first impeachment over blocking aid to Ukraine, Hunter Biden's laptop, his firing of FBI director James B. Comey and [unproven allegations](#) that Pfizer forged informed consent signatures for clinical trials of the [coronavirus vaccine](#).

On top of that, Trump frequently recycles false claims of achievement from when he was president that [we have repeatedly fact-checked](#), including:

- He created the greatest U.S. economy in U.S. history ([not by any metric](#)).
- He passed the biggest tax cut in history ([it ranks 8th](#)).
- He did more for Black people than any president but Abraham Lincoln ([not by any metric](#)).
- He defeated ISIS in four weeks ([it took the United States and coalition partners more than two years after he took office](#)).
- He was the first president to impose tariffs on China ([China has faced U.S. tariffs since George Washington first enacted them in 1789](#)).
- He increased government revenue even though he cut taxes ([False](#)).

Rather than repeat ourselves, we are going to focus on new false claims that Trump has introduced to his repertory in recent months. Many appeared in his Georgia speech, but others came up in other recent speeches, a town hall and an interview. Any of these would be worthy of at least Three or Four Pinocchios, but we don't award Pinocchios when we do quick roundups.

Biden was declared 'incompetent' to stand trial in documents case

"He's [Biden] at great jeopardy, really, but they said: 'Look, he's incompetent to go to court but he can be president.' Figure that one. In other words, he can't represent himself at court because he's incompetent." ([Fox News town hall, Feb. 20](#))

"Well, Joe Biden had more boxes than any human being ever, and they let him off. Of course, I wouldn't want to be let off that way. They say: 'He's incompetent, we'll let him off.'" (rally in Richmond, March 2)

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"He has no clue, like with the documents hoax. How about that? He's not competent to stand trial, but he's allowed to be the president." ([rally in Rome, Ga., March 9](#))

Trump faces a criminal trial for hoarding classified documents after he left office and refusing to return them. But Biden also discovered that he had retained classified documents at his home and office. He returned them, but a special counsel was appointed to see if he, too, should face criminal charges. The special counsel, Robert K. Hur, concluded that it would be tough to win a case — because Biden had reasonable defenses, the facts were occasionally murky and Biden (unlike Trump) had cooperated fully with the investigation. In a controversial passage, he wrote that jurors probably would view Biden as “a sympathetic, well-meaning, elderly man with a poor memory.”

Trump has now absurdly twisted this sentence to falsely claim that Biden was not competent to stand trial — which under the law means a person is incapable of understanding or assisting in their defense. In reality, Hur was making the point that, if a case were brought to trial, Biden could make a credible case he did not willfully retain the documents, especially because he cooperated. In many cases, the special counsel decided that the documents were mishandled by mistake — or were not especially important anymore, despite the classification level.

During a congressional hearing on his report Tuesday, Hur was asked if he found that the president was senile and exhibited a decline of cognitive ability. “I did not,” Hur said. “That conclusion does not appear in my report.”

In his report, Hur addressed the difference between the Trump and Biden document cases. “Several material distinctions between Mr. Trump’s case and Mr. Biden’s are clear,” Hur wrote. “After being given multiple chances to return classified documents and avoid prosecution, Mr. Trump allegedly did the opposite. According to the indictment, he not only refused to return the documents for many months, but he also obstructed justice by enlisting others to destroy evidence and then to lie about it. In contrast, Mr. Biden turned in classified documents to the National Archives and the Department of Justice, consented to the search of multiple locations including his homes, sat for a voluntary interview and in other ways cooperated with the investigation.”

The United States is a Third World country

“We have a country that a political person uses weaponization against his political opponent never happened here. It happens in other countries, but they’re Third World countries. And in some ways, we’re a Third World country. We’re a Third World country at our borders, and we’re a Third World country at our elections, and we have to stop that.” (remarks after Super Tuesday, March 5)

The United States is an economic powerhouse, and its currency, the U.S. dollar, is dominant. But Trump frequently reaches for a dated Cold War-era term used to refer to poor or developing countries. Sometimes, he also calls the United States a “banana republic.”

“Third World” is an all-purpose phrase used to falsely claim that the 2020 election was rigged by Democrats — and to claim that Biden is personally directing federal, state and local prosecutions of Trump, not to mention a civil defamation lawsuit that he lost. There is no evidence that Biden is involved in any of these cases. And it’s simply silly to claim the United States is a Third World country.

Prisons are being emptied around the world to flood U.S. borders

“The prison population all over the world is at the lowest point it’s been in many decades because they’re dumping their prisoners into our country.” (Richmond)

“When you look at the people that are being allowed to come all over the world, they’re emptying their prisons. They’re emptying their mental institutions into the United States of America.” (Rome, Ga.)

This claim is an echo of Trump’s notorious comment in his 2015 speech announcing he would run for president — that Mexico was “sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists.” Illegal immigration by Mexicans has fallen sharply, so now Trump claims the entire world is sending criminals to the southern border. Sometimes he even riffs that it’s a cost-saving maneuver by world leaders — “nothing more expensive than storing a prisoner in a jail for 60 years.”

This is poppycock. Immigration experts know of no effort by other countries. As someone who came to prominence in the late '70s and early '80s, Trump appears to be channeling Cuban leader Fidel Castro's 1980 Mariel boatlift. About 125,000 Cubans were allowed to flee to the United States in 1,700 boats — but there was a backlash when it was discovered hundreds of refugees had been released from jails and mental health facilities.

Helen Fair, research associate at the Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research in Britain, which tracks the world prison population (except for a handful of countries), says the numbers keep growing. In 2013, 10.2 million people were in prison — and that had grown to 10.77 million in 2021. A preliminary estimate for February 2024, not ready to be published, indicates the population has grown even more. “In short, I would disagree with Donald Trump’s assertion,” she said.

Congo has released murderers into the United States

“Last night they had four from the Congo. Where in the Congo do you live? I wonder what beautiful place do you live in the Congo? ‘We are from prison.’ What did you do? ‘Murder.’ They’re in the United States right now, right? This is what they’re allowing.” (Richmond)

“The Congo — very big population coming in from the jails of the Congo.” (speech at Eagle Pass, Tex., Feb. 29)

“The other day from Africa, the Congo, they had numerous prisoners caught from the Congo.” (Rome, Ga.)

As part of his falsehood on prisons being emptied, Trump often conjures up another bit of fiction — that a conflict-riven country in Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, is shipping murderers to the United States. Fair says no such decline in Congo’s prison population is shown in the data. Instead, the DRC’s prison population keeps growing.

When Trump was president, he greatly restricted refugee admissions, stranding Congolese who had been waiting in camps seeking to reunite with relatives already in the United States. Still, Customs and Border Protection data show that during his presidency there was a surge in undocumented arrivals from the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2017 and 2018, no one from Congo sought to cross either the southern or northern border, but in 2019 and 2020, that changed, with 614 and 267 encounters, respectively.

15 million migrants have entered the United States under Biden

“They’ve let in 15 million people ... and I think it’s going to be 18 million by the time we get the worst president in our history out of office.” (Richmond)

“I think the number is 15 million people already, I think it’ll be 18 to 20 million people by the time we get rid of this guy. Think of it, that’s bigger than New York state. I think it’s going to be close to 20 million people.” (Rome, Ga.)

“This is the worst invasion probably. We’ve never had anything like it. No country has ever had anything like it. The number today could be 15 million people, and they’re coming from rough places and dangerous places.” (Super Tuesday remarks.)

Trump never met a number that he could not double, triple or quadruple. Here, he manages to take a real number — 4 million to 5 million migrants arriving during Biden’s presidency — and increase it threefold. Then he offers a prediction to make it sound even larger.

Here’s the reality: Customs and Border Protection recorded about 8.5 million “encounters” between February 2021, after Biden took office, through December of last year. But that does not mean all those people entered the country illegally. Some people were “encountered” numerous times as they tried to enter the country — and others (about 4 million of the total) were expelled, mostly because of covid-related rules that have since ended.

CBP has released more than 2.3 million migrants into the United States at the southern border under the Biden administration through September, the Department of Homeland Security said. These numbers, however, do not include “gotaways” — which occur when cameras or sensors detect migrants crossing the border but no one is found or no agents are available to respond. That figure could add an additional 2 million, bringing the total number of migrants arriving during Biden’s presidency to between 4 and 5 million.

That’s a big number, but apparently not big enough for Trump.

The inflation rate under Biden is 50 percent

“But the fact is, under Biden, we have a three-year inflation rate of almost 50 percent. Under me, you had no inflation. You had no inflation.” (Rome, Ga.)

“We have cumulative inflation of over 50 percent. That means people are, you know, they have to make more than 50 percent more over a fairly short period of time to stay up.” (interview on CNBC, March 11)

The monthly inflation headlines are often about the year-over-year inflation rate, as measured by changes in the consumer price index. It reached a high of 9 percent during Biden’s presidency, largely because of supply chain issues after the pandemic. Annualized inflation has dropped since then. The year-over-year figure in February was 3.2 percent.

Cumulative inflation measures the total increase in the price of goods and services over a specific period of time. But of course Trump nearly triples the real number. Since Biden took office, cumulative inflation is 18.5 percent. Moreover, Trump is wrong when he says there was “no inflation” when he was president. Cumulative inflation during Trump’s presidency was nearly 8 percent.

Wages have also gone up under Biden, helping to mitigate the impact, though many workers have not seen their paychecks keep up with inflation. Average hourly earnings are up 15.5 percent during Biden’s presidency and the Employment Cost Index is up 14 percent. Since early 2023, wage growth began to outpace inflation, with the gap expected to fully close sometime this year.

Native-born Americans have lost 1 million jobs to immigrants

“In February alone, nearly 1 million jobs held by native-born Americans disappeared. Think of that. You lost a million jobs. Black people, that’s who lost the jobs. Hispanic people, that’s who lost the jobs.” (Rome, Ga.)

Here, Trump seizes on a confusing (and exaggerated) number to make a misleading claim. The latest Bureau of Labor Statistics employment report shows that the number of native-born workers with jobs fell from 129.8 million in January to 129.3 million in February 2024, for a decline of about 500,000. So Trump doubled the actual figure. Meanwhile, the number of foreign-born workers, meaning people who were not citizens at birth, grew from nearly 30 million to 31 million — an increase of more than 1 million.

But that does not mean that U.S. citizens have “lost” those jobs to immigrants. Monthly changes in employment don’t tell you much — and this report is not seasonally adjusted, meaning temporary holiday hiring and a winter slowdown in construction can affect the numbers at the start of the year. The BLS report shows the unemployment rate is lower for native-born Americans — 4.0 vs. 4.7 percent. That’s the more important figure. Moreover, according to the Economic Policy Institute, the share of prime-age (ages 25-54) employment-to-population ratio (EPOP) for U.S.-born individuals was 81.4 percent in 2023, up from 80.7 percent in 2019 — for its highest rate since 2001. Indeed, native-born workers have gained more than 6 million jobs during Biden’s presidency — as have foreign-born workers.

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