

- Mark your confusion.
- Purposefully annotate the article (1-2 mature, thoughtful responses per page to what the author is saying)
- Write a 250+ word response to the article.

(If you are a teacher or student who would like to modify this Google Doc, go to File > Make a Copy. I cannot and do not respond to Share requests -- my apologies!)

What Would President Trump Do with a Second Term?

By *The Week* Staff, October 4, 2020

What the president says he will do if he's re-elected. Next week: The Biden agenda. Here's everything you need to know:

Donald Trump has broken the mold as president, and that extends to his second-term agenda. In August, the Republican Party dispensed with long-standing tradition and did not formulate a policy platform, instead issuing a statement declaring that the party will "enthusiastically support the president's America First agenda." The Trump campaign later issued a list of "core priorities" for a second term, offered in bullet points that included "Build the World's Greatest Infrastructure System" and "Stop Endless Wars," but did not offer any detail about how it would achieve them. Still, Trump's stated priorities and his first-term record offer a sense of what policies he might pursue in a second term.

COVID-19

Trump has suggested repeatedly that we are "rounding the corner of the pandemic" and that the coronavirus may just "go away" on its own. He has declined to have the federal government take an active role in building a testing system or putting in place other public health measures, telling states that the response is their responsibility. He has been a vocal opponent of state lockdown efforts, remote schooling, and other social-distancing measures aimed at stemming viral spread, and has questioned the value of wearing face masks. Recently, he has focused on developing a vaccine and initiated the public-private partnership Operation Warp Speed to fast-track vaccine development, manufacture, and distribution. He has pledged that a vaccine will be available within months, "maybe even before a special date." Experts involved in the vaccine efforts say that's unlikely.

Taxes

Trump campaigned in 2016 on a platform of lowering taxes, and he delivered with the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which lowered the corporate tax rate and cut income tax rates across the board, with most of the benefits going to corporations and upper-income earners. Extending those cuts, which are slated to expire in 2025, would almost certainly be a second-term priority. Trump has said he may pursue a reduction in capital-gains taxes and additional tax cuts for middle-income families. By executive order, Trump deferred the collection of payroll taxes for many workers through the end of the year, and he has vowed to eliminate the payroll tax, which funds Social Security and Medicare, if he is re-elected. But Congress has shown no interest in eliminating the tax.

Health care

Trump's health-care plan could best be described as a plan to make a plan. He vowed in his first term to "repeal and replace" the Affordable Care Act — an effort that failed in Congress — and has continually promised that he will unveil a health-care plan that will cost less than ObamaCare while offering better coverage. But he has never released such a plan, even as his administration has joined a lawsuit by 20 Republican-led states seeking to repeal the ACA as unconstitutional, which will reach the Supreme Court in November. If the lawsuit succeeds, at least 21 million Americans will lose their coverage. Last week, Trump issued an executive order stating that the estimated 133 million Americans with pre-existing conditions should be protected from losing their health insurance. He offered no specifics on how that might be achieved if ObamaCare is revoked.

Climate change and the environment

Trump moved early in his first term to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate agreement, and maintains that the science on climate change is unsettled. His administration has aggressively pursued rollbacks of environmental protections — rollbacks that have benefited the fossil-fuel industry by

weakening fuel-efficiency standards for cars, loosening limits on power-plant emissions, and opening up public lands for gas and oil extraction. In his second term, Trump has promised, he will continue his "deregulatory agenda for energy independence."

Education

Trump has said that education will "be a big factor for me" in a second term, and he's a strong proponent of school choice. His administration has pushed policies favoring charter schools and vouchers, which allow families to use tax dollars for private-school tuition, and he has promised to "rescue kids from failing schools by helping their parents send them to a safe school of their choice." He has proposed a \$5 billion tax credit that would reimburse private donations to state-based scholarship funds.

The economy

Trump embarked on a trade war with China in his first term, imposing tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars in imports. Aiding the American economy by reducing our dependence on China is a key focus of his second-term agenda. He has promised to pass tax credits for companies that shift operations from China to the U.S., deny federal contracts to companies that move jobs there, and increase deductions "for essential industries like pharmaceuticals and robotics who bring back their manufacturing to the United States."

Trump's foreign policy

Trump has pursued an "America First" doctrine that has led to a cooling of relations with long-standing allies, curtailment of international cooperation, and calls to reduce overseas troop deployments. He has questioned the worth of international alliances such as NATO — which he says relies too heavily on U.S. defense spending — and the World Trade Organization, and has announced his intent to withdraw the U.S. from the World Health Organization. He also pulled out of the nuclear deal President Obama struck with Iran, pursuing economic sanctions that he predicts will force Tehran back to the negotiating table. He has made the Middle East a priority, and successfully brokered deals to establish diplomatic ties between Israel and two Arab nations, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. And he has taken a much friendlier approach to Russia than previous administrations, communicating regularly with Russian President Vladimir Putin and pushing last summer to readmit Russia to the G-7 group of Western nations. Trump has declined to confront Putin over Moscow's interference in the 2016 and 2020 elections or its offering of bounties to Taliban militants for killing U.S. troops in Afghanistan. "I like Putin, he likes me," Trump said last week. "We get along."

Response option(s):

- The article mentions President Trump's "America First" agenda. Based on your reading of the article, what does this agenda mean?
- Of all the issues listed in this article, which is most important to you? Do you agree with the President's stance on the issue? Explain.
- Summarize any point made in the article and respond.