

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2020

The President's News Conference in Bedminster, New Jersey
August 15, 2020

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. Appreciate it. And thank you for being here. Let me provide a brief update on the China virus, as well as our economic recovery, which is going really very well, as you probably have been hearing.

Nearly 85 percent of jurisdictions all across our country are reporting a very steep decline in cases, and that's despite the fact that we have the number one testing program anywhere in the world. We're up to almost 70 million tests, far beyond any other country. This week, cases nationwide have declined by 6 percent; the test positivity rate has fallen to just 6.5 percent, a 71 percent reduction from April and a 15 percent reduction from mid-July. That's a big reduction. The hospitalization rate for the virus has been reduced by half since April.

And I urge everyone to apply commonsense mitigation. We know that. And we are all doing that, and I want to thank the American people for really doing such a great job.

The United States has now administered over 70 million tests, more than all of the European Union combined. If you combine all of Europe, it's less than what we do. Millions of point-of-care tests are processed in less than 24 hours and many in under 15 minutes. Nearly 80 percent of all commercial lab test results are now returned within 3 days. So we've gotten that number down from about 8 days to 3 days, and that's only in the longer-term lab cases. But we have many 15-minute tests; we have some 5-minute tests. The turnaround time for Federal surge testing sites is just 2 days. So when you send them out, despite the fact that you have a delivery time, which you can't do anything about, it's all the way down to 2 days. That's a very substantial reduction. Great job by the people that do it.

We are focused on aggressively shielding the highest-risk individuals. Those living in nursing homes and long-term care facilities are less than 1 percent of the U.S. population, but account for nearly half of all fatalities. That's an incredible thing. So it's 1 percent of the U.S. population, but they account for nearly half of the fatalities from the China virus. That's why we have rushed nursing home funding, protective gear, and rapid testing equipment. And we will announce additional measures to protect nursing home residents.

In the coming days, we've worked very hard with nursing home companies and also with the Governors—50 Governors all around the United States—and we have developed a very good relationship with most of the Governors. And I think, for the most part, they're doing a really good job. They're focused very heavily on nursing homes. And when they need equipment that they can't get—remember, they're supposed to get it, but when they can't get, we have tremendous amounts of equipment in stock.

Thanks to my administration's decisive action to save American jobs, we're currently witnessing the fastest economic recovery in American history. And that's because the foundation that we set previously, before the virus came and hit our shore—the foundation was so strong; we had such a strong foundation that we're recovering much faster than anybody anticipated. It turns out that it will be a very, very strong "V," and you'll see that in just a second.

So retail spending has fully recovered and is now at an alltime high. That's not alltime for this month or last month; that's at an alltime high, and you see that with the chart. This was previous to the plague, I call it—the plague coming into our land, and really affected 188—dealing with 188 countries.

And if you see, we've not only recovered, but we're at a much higher level than we were even then. That's an incredible number that nobody thought would even be possible. So we're currently witnessing the fastest economic recovery in American history. That's an amazing statement.

So retail spending is great, and now, if they would put up—auto production has surged 28 percent, and that's your auto production, which is right there.

[At this point, the President displayed a chart.]

So you'll see that that's now about even to where it was, and that was at an alltime record high, and we're already even.

And if you had a chart for used cars, you'd see that used car sales are setting a record, and that's great for production because when the used cars are practically not available—they're very, very tight—that means you're going to make a lot of new cars. So that number is going to go up even beyond what it is right now, but that's a fantastic number. That's a number that's the equivalent of where it was, and that was a record.

So you see what's happening with respect to the economy and the recovery. And the stock market is almost at an alltime high. In fact, NASDAQ is at an alltime high. It's had 14 days where we broke the record already over the last 2 months. So a lot of great things are happening.

Through the historic relief package that I signed into law, we saved over 50 million American jobs—50 million American jobs—and the unemployment rate is rapidly going down. You see that. You've seen that. And I think you'll see it over the next 2 months, and you'll have a good report even prior to the election. You're going to have a very good report. I think you're going to have an incredible GDP. You're going to have a tremendous report on business, and a lot of it's going to be released, which is very fortunate, prior to the election.

I think the Democrats are going out of their way to try and do whatever they can to stop these kind of numbers. They don't like these kind of numbers, because they think it'll hurt them in the election. I think we all have to pull together and we have to do the right job, and we have to do what's good for the American people.

We were unfairly treated by China, because they could have stopped it. With that being said, China has purchased the most amount of corn in history. They—last week, they purchased the 2 largest days in the history of corn purchase and a massive amount of soybeans. Also cattle.

So China has been buying a lot of things, and they are doing that to keep me happy, but they're dreaming about Joe Biden. They would love to have that happen, but I don't think that's going to happen. They are dreaming about him and so is Iran—dreaming about Joe—and so are numerous other countries. They dream about it because if that happens, they'll own the United States. And China, I can tell you, specifically, will own the United States. Can't let that happen.

If you remember, China had the worst year they've had in 67 years prior to the plague coming to our shores. And we are now starting to do really well. We're going to have a very good third quarter, maybe a great third quarter. And we're going to have an incredible next year, unless somebody comes up and quadruples taxes, which is what they're talking about doing.

And also, regulations we've set—we've done more in terms of cutting regulations than any administration in history by far, whether it was 4 years or 8 years or, in one case, more than 8 years. We have, in less than 4 years, done more regulation cutting by far. And we're doing more as we go. Some of it is statutory; you can only do it at a certain pace. You have to wait 90 days, you have to wait 120 days before you can take the next step. We have tremendous regulation cutting coming. With that being said, we're going to have certain regulations to protect the environment and also safety.

Small business optimism has come surging back. In June, it was higher than any month under the previous administration. Think of that. So small business optimism was higher than any month under the previous administration. And that is while we're going through a pandemic, a worldwide pandemic, you have a number like that. And when you see the numbers that we quoted just now as to what's happening with cases and all of the other hospitalization rates, a lot of tremendous things are happening.

Industrial production is increasing at the fastest rate ever recorded. I mean, think of these numbers. I mean, how does that happen? Industrial production is increasing at the fastest rate on record, which is "ever recorded."

Consumer spending is expected to grow at an astronomical rate this quarter. So we don't have the number yet, but it looks like it's going to be at an astronomical rate.

I want to say that I want college football to come back. These are strong, healthy, incredible people. These are people that want to play football very badly. A great, great talent at quarterback, Trevor Lawrence, called me on—2 days ago. I spoke to him a couple of times. And he said, "Sir, I want to just tell you we want it back, we want to play." And he's an incredible quarterback, as you know, from an incredible school, Clemson. And he's going to have a very good future in the NFL. He's got everything. He's got height, accuracy, a strong arm, and he's fast. Other than that, I guess he's got some problems. *[Laughter]* But he's got the whole package. I watched him last year running. He was faster than the backs that were guarding. I think he's going to be great.

But he's just a great young man. I talked to him actually for a long time. They want to play football. And he made the statement that he feels he's safer on the field. He's safer on the field than he is out—you know, outside of the field. He feels very safe.

And if you look, the SEC, the Big 12, and the ACC are back. They want to come back, and I think they're coming back. The Big 10, the Pac 12, are not, and I wish they would come back.

And, you know, I just want to say it's sort of sad, because I've been fighting for football to come back. We're trying to help the NFL, as long as they stand for our National Anthem, as long as they honor our flag and our country. If they start kneeling, I'm not going to be helping them much. They might come back, but I won't be watching. Neither will a lot of other people.

I think what the NBA did was atrocious. I thought it was disgraceful the way they kneeled. And their ratings are reflective of that. But I think football has to get smart. That's the NFL; let's see what happens. But if they do it—they learned their lesson, I thought, 2 years ago, when people started not watching and when people really weren't going to the game so much. A lot of empty seats all of a sudden. So they're going to learn that lesson again if they don't wise up.

But I just want to say—so, Trevor Lawrence, great. And some of the great people—SEC, Big 12, ACC—I want to thank them, and I want to congratulate them for coming back.

I want to also mention that CNN had a story that, "Will they blame Trump for football in the swing States?" What a dishonest story that is. Will they blame me? I'm the one that's pushing them to come back. So they want to try and blame me. So them and, I guess, the New York Times reported one person—it was one person in the story—one person said maybe it's Trump's fault. And I'm the one pushing them back.

So I'd like to see college football come back. I'd like to see them come back proud and strong. I was very impressed by Trevor. I was very impressed by other people that called me. Players called me, coaches called me—Coach O. If you want a coach who's central casting for a movie—if you're doing a movie, you have to put Coach O as the head, because this guy is central casting.

But when you have guys like Nick Saban and others calling for it to come back—they want it to come back. And these are great athletes. These are not people that seem to be at all susceptible to this horrible disease. And they want to play football. And we have great testing, so you'll be able to test.

And when CNN and the New York Times—the New York Times quoted one person—one person. And I'm the one pushing. So we'll get it straight: I'm the one pushing for football to come back. I think if I wasn't pushing, you wouldn't have anything happening.

So, with that, we'll take—we'll take a few questions. Steve [Steve A. Holland, Reuters], please.

Iran/U.S. Seizure of Iranian Oil Tankers/Economic Stimulus Legislation

Q. Mr. President, thank you. The U.S. effort to extend the Iran arms embargo at the U.N. Security Council——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——fell apart yesterday. When will you trigger a snapback of sanctions on Iran?

The President. Well, we knew what the vote was going to be, but we'll be doing a snapback. You'll be watching it next week.

Q. Will it be soon?

The President. Yes, you'll be watching it next week.

Q. And if I could follow up: President Putin wants to hold a video summit——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——on this subject.

The President. He has asked.

Q. Are you wanting to do that? Will you participate?

The President. Probably not. No, I think we want to wait until after the election. Look, Iran wants me to lose so badly, because if they do—you know, Iran is a whole different ballgame right now. They haven't been sponsoring terror because they don't have very much money to sponsor terror, and they know we just captured four Iranian ships, as you know, and we brought them into Houston. They were going to Venezuela; they're not supposed to be doing that. Iran would love to have me defeated.

If I win, which I hope to win—how can you not when you see numbers like this, both on the virus and on the economy? I mean, we should win. We should all be—keep this incredible thing going. And I built it once and I'll build it again. I've already—I think the hardest part is done in terms of the economy. And that's with or without additional funds from Nancy Pelosi. They should have put the things in—whether you call it the CARE Act or phase one, phase two, phase three—but they didn't do that. You know, they put it at the end, things that they're asking for that have nothing to do with corona, that have everything to do with radical-left politics.

U.S. Postal Service/Vote-by-Mail Policies/Economic Stimulus Legislation

Q. Mr. President, more than 40 States have received letters from your Postal Service saying that the ballots for November 3 might not make it in time.

The President. Well, we'll see.

Q. As President, isn't it your responsibility, since this is your Postal Service, to meet this critical need?

The President. Well, we have a man in there for 2 months. He's a very talented man. He's a brilliant business person. He's done great. He's a very nice man also. And he—Louis—he is working very hard.

But as you know, the Democrats aren't approving the proper funding for Postal, and they're not approving the proper funding for this ridiculous thing that they want to do, which is all mail-in voting. Universal, you could call it, mail-in voting.

Again, absentee voting is great. You request—I'm an absentee voter because I requested, I got, and then I sent in my vote. So that works out very well. That's what we've had. But now they want to send in millions and millions of ballots. And you see what's happening. They're being lost, they're being discarded. They're finding them in piles. It's going to be a catastrophe. So—and this is beyond the Post Office.

But Louis DeJoy is working very hard. The Post Office has, for decades, lost billions and billions of dollars. I read numbers today that are unthinkable. And what they want to do now is hit the Post Office with millions of ballots from certain States. And if you look at what happened in New York and Virginia and various other places, it's a catastrophe. They're losing 20 percent of the votes. Nobody knows what's happened.

So we're going to see what happens. But I do say this: Universal mail-in voting is going to be catastrophic. It's going to make our country a laughingstock all over the world. You can't send out millions of ballots.

And look at all of the tests. Look, you've seen them, and there are many. Far more—just look at New York. Look at New Jersey. Look at the catastrophe in New Jersey. And New Jersey had more than just Paterson. Look at what's going on in Virginia. Look at what's happening with this mail-in voting. It's a disgrace. Absentee is good; mail-in, universal, is very, very bad. There's no way they're going to get it accurately. They're off by 20 and 30 percent. And this is beyond Post Office.

Now, with that being said, they want money for the universal mail-in ballots, and they're not getting it. You know why? Because of them. We want money to go to people. They want money in order to bail out States that have done very poorly. The States that have done poorly, you know them as well as I do, these are run by Democrats, usually radical-left Democrats.

You take a look at what's happening in Portland. And we'll go into Portland—we have to be asked—we'll go into Portland, straighten it out in 1 hour, like happened in Minneapolis. We'll go straighten it out in 1 hour. We will straighten that out so fast, but they have to ask us.

So they need money, but they're not willing to approve the money that they need. If they can't get the money that they need for universal mail-in voting, I don't see how they can have it. And that's not only Post Office, it's also for the voting itself.

U.S. Postal Service/Vote-by-Mail Policies

Q. A follow on that, Mr. President. Does Postmaster DeJoy have your backing for the actions that he's taken in the last several days?

The President. Yes. He's a fantastic man.

Q. Does that include removing——

The President. He wants to make the Post Office great again. Do you ever hear the expression? He wants to make the Post Office great again.

Q. So you support removing 10 percent of——

The President. The Post Office is a catastrophe.

Q. ——mail-sorting machines nationwide? That's one of the things that he's [*inaudible*].

The President. I don't know what he's doing. I can only tell you he's a very smart man. He'll be a great Postmaster General. And he needs—obviously, if you're going to do these millions of ballots out of nowhere, he's going to obviously need funding. But the Democrats aren't willing to provide other things and therefore they're not going to get the funding for that.

But you are going to have a catastrophic situation with universal mail-in votes. And, on top of it, the Democrats aren't willing to give the people the money and the Post Office the money.

Vote-by-Mail Policies/2020 Presidential Election/U.S. Postal Service

Q. Mr. President, you said a catastrophic situation is going to happen, but what are you doing to ensure that that doesn't happen, because wouldn't these problems raise questions about the election results if you win?

The President. Well, the problem with the mail-in voting, number one, you're never going to know when the election is over. Okay? I mean, they called the election in New York for Carolyn Maloney. They shouldn't have done that. I think you should redo that election. And, you know, the opponent is screaming. They can't believe it. Ballots are lost. Ballots are defrauded. It's a total mess. And they called it for her. The reason is because I've been using it as a case. I've been using it as a case. So, look——

Q. But Mr. President——

The President. We are going to have an election that takes place on a beautiful day, November 3. And usually, at the end of the evening, they say, "Donald Trump has won the election." "Donald Trump is your new President." Whatever they say.

You know what? You're not going to know this—possibly, if you really did it right—for months or for years, because these ballots are all going to be lost. They're going to be gone. And just take a look on a smaller basis—but it's great tests. We're doing tests. I mean, these are—you could call them polls, you could call them tests. Look at what's happening all over the country, where you have universal mail-in——

Q. But what are you doing——

The President. Wait a minute. The ballots are lost. There's fraud. There's theft. It's happening all over the place.

Now, we're going to do it with this whole, vast, big section of the country. It's crazy.

Q. Have you, because you have made it so plain that you are opposed and do not trust mail-in voting, is your Postmaster General using the agency of the Postal Service to create delays because——

The President. No, not at all. He would love to see it happen. I didn't speak to him about it, but I will tell you this: I would imagine he would say number one, they didn't give me the funding for it, because it's sitting in Congress, because they want a trillion dollars to bail out States, just so you——

Q. But this isn't what is causing delays, sir.

The President. ——understand what they want.

Q. Yes, sir.

The President. They want a trillion dollars to bail out badly run Democrat-run States, okay? That's what they want. They're not giving the money to the Post Office. They have to give the money to the Post Office.

Q. But the steps the Postmaster General is taking are creating some delays now.

The President. No, the steps he's creating——

Q. Is he trying to——

The President. Yes. Yes.

Q. ——discourage mail-in voting? Are you trying to discourage?

The President. No, not at all. The steps that he is taking are trying to stop the tremendous losses that have taken place for many, many years. He's trying to streamline the Post Office and make it great again. Okay?

Q. Eighty days before an election, sir? Is this the right time?

The President. Well, wait a minute. You just threw—look, I just read last night that now New Jersey is going to try the universal mail-in voting. Well, they didn't know this. So now, all of a sudden, New Jersey is going to be hit with millions of ballots to be sent out. They didn't know anything about this.

So how does a Post Office—how does a Postal Service that doesn't know about it, now all of a sudden, New Jersey is supposed to take out, and millions of ballots are going to be sent all over New Jersey?

And if you look at some of the things they say, like in—take the State of Nevada, take that little scam that's going on over there with the clubhouse politician Governor. Take that, where the votes don't even have to be in until 7—they get counted 7 days after November 3. That means if—Nevada is a very important State. I think we have a great chance of winning that State. If the votes don't have to be in for 7—and they're not counting the votes—7 days later, that means how are they going to predict a winner on November 3?

Q. Mr. President, the inspector general announced that they are——

U.S. Postal Service/Economic Stimulus Legislation

Q. Mr. President, whether a ballot was automatically sent to somebody or if it was requested——

The President. No, absentee is okay.

Q. Okay, but once a ballot gets into the mail, it doesn't matter—the workers have to sort it. So the bottom line is, there must be more resources for post offices across the country to deal with——

The President. But the Democrats are not—they are not approving the resources. You're right, there has to be more resources, I agree, because all of a sudden——

Q. So are you doing anything to provide that?

The President. ——the Post Office is tripling up instead.

The problem is the Democrats are not approving the funds necessary. It's in there. Now, they have \$25 billion. I've seen \$15 billion. I've seen a lot of money. I don't know how you're going to spend that much, but that's what they're saying. They're saying.

So not only do they want a trillion dollars to hand out as welfare to all these States that are run by Democrats doing badly, they want \$25 billion for the Post Office. But they're not approving it.

Now, what I want is a lot of money—thousands of dollars—to go to people because they need money. They really—despite the good numbers, despite numbers like that, they need money to live. And I want that to happen. The Democrats don't care about that. They just want to give bailout money to their friends running big States poorly.

Q. A question on vaccines.

Q. Mr. President, should you be looking in the camera, sir, and ensuring the United States, the people of the United States, that mailing——

The President. Go ahead.

Former National Security Agency Contractor Edward J. Snowden

Q. Do you want to give Edward Snowden a pardon and bring him back? You once suggested that he was a traitor and should be executed.

The President. Well, I'm going to look at it. I mean, I'm not that aware of the Snowden situation, but I'm going to start looking at it. There are many, many people—it seems to be a split decision that many people think that he should be somehow treated differently, and other people think he did very bad things. And I'm going to take a very good look at it. Okay?

I mean, I've seen people that are very conservative and very liberal, and they agree on the same issue; they agree both ways. I'm going to take a look at that very strongly, Edward Snowden.

Yes, please.

Coronavirus Prevalence and Mortality Rates/Protective Face Masks/Economic Recovery Efforts

Q. Do you believe with Dr. Robert Redfield who, earlier this week, said if America doesn't follow public health guidelines, we could be in store for one of the worst falls we've ever faced, from a public health perspective?

The President. No, I mean, you can't compare it to 1917. That was incredible. That was—that was the worst ever by far. That was—you look at—they lost possibly 100 million people. No, I don't agree with that.

But if you look at these numbers, they're coming down very substantially. And I do believe that Americans—many are wearing masks, which is a good thing. Again, some people thought that you shouldn't wear a mask. You know, when this whole thing started, Dr. Fauci, who I like and respect, said "don't wear masks," okay? And so did Dr. Redfield. And then, all of a sudden, it was like everybody should wear masks. And that's okay. People can change their mind.

But wash your hands, good hygiene—all of those things—I think people are really doing it to a level that they've never done before.

And when you look at the numbers, the way the numbers are coming out, I mean, it's very impressive when you see what's happening.

By the way, Florida doing well. You see that. And hospitalizations and all—you know, normally you would have had to build more—like we did for the first surge. We've done it right. We closed it up. We had the greatest economy in history. We closed it up. We understand the disease now. Nobody knew. Nobody knew what was hitting us, right? Nobody knew that old

people would be very, very susceptible, especially if they have heart and diabetes problems and other problems; that old people would be very susceptible and young people would be extremely good with it. If you look at the percentages, there are a tiny percentage that have problems, especially the big problem.

So, no, I think that we're doing very well. We're on our way. And we're also opening up our economy, and our economy is going to set records. And if stupid people aren't elected next year, we're going to have one of the greatest years that we've ever had.

Jennifer [Jennifer Jacobs, Bloomberg News], go ahead, please.

Huawei Technologies Company, Ltd.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You've already taken action on TikTok and WeChat.

The President. Yes.

Q. Which other Chinese tech companies are you looking at banning from operating in the United States?

The President. Well, the big thing is Huawei, right? Huawei is not here. And Huawei, I'm not allowing. And I've told European countries and others—Australia has been fantastic, as an example. But Huawei is not coming here.

And we told certain countries that were thinking about Huawei: "That's okay, you can use them, but we're not going to be sharing intelligence." And they've all backed away. You look at the U.K., it looked like they were going that way, and now they backed out—Scotland Yard.

Q. Are there other particular companies—say, Alibaba?

The President. There are most—well, yes.

Q. Baidu.

The President. We're looking at other things. Yes, we are. We are.

U.S. Postal Service

Q. Mr. President, you say that you want the mail to be processed as quickly as it can, but why is your Postal Service dismantling these mail-sorting machines across the country at this time?

The President. Well, you'll have to ask him. I know this: He's a very efficient operator, a very good operator, but again, he needs money to operate if you're going to hit him with millions of ballots.

Q. Did he brief you on his plans?

The President. And if you ask him, he will tell you, and he'll tell you very nicely: You have the money, it's sitting there, it's ready to go. The Democrats don't want to approve it, but I want money for other things too. I want money to go to people so they can live very nicely, because China caused the problem; they didn't.

Go ahead.

Senator Kamala D. Harris

Q. On the campaign: Will you say now that Kamala Harris is eligible to run and be Vice President or President, based on being born in Oakland, California?

The President. So, I have nothing to do with that. I read something about it. And I will say that he is a brilliant lawyer that—I guess he wrote an article about it. So I know nothing about it, but it's not something that bothers me.

Q. But, sir, when you do that, it creates doubt.

The President. Why do you say that? I just don't know about it, but it's not something that we will be pursuing.

Q. But you do know it, sir. You do——

The President. Let me put it differently.

Q. Mr. President, you know.

The President. Let me be——

Q. You can simply clear this up.

The President. Let me put it differently. Don't tell me what I know. *[Laughter]* Let me put it differently. Let me put it differently: To me, it doesn't bother me at all. I don't know about it. I read one quick article. The lawyer happens to be a brilliant lawyer, as you probably know. He wrote an article saying there could be a problem. It's not something that I'm going to be pursuing.

Q. Is she eligible, sir?

The President. I just told you, I have not gone into it in great detail. If she's got a problem, you would have thought that she would——

Q. It's not that hard, sir.

The President. ——have been vetted.

Q. It's not that hard.

The President. You would have thought that she would have been vetted by Sleepy Joe.

Yes, go ahead.

Economic Stimulus Legislation

Q. Mr. President, sir, I just want to ask you: After 3 weeks of absolutely no deal, you have been ragging on Democrats constantly. Why not come to the table, personally, and sit with them? I mean, I know that Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Schumer were in the Oval Office in December 2018. That did not go so well. Everybody in the world saw that. Why not invite them? If they don't want to come, that's on them.

The President. So I think we've done very well. We've had three phases. We're into phase four. We've gotten everything we wanted. And we've also gotten a great economy. All you have to do is take a look at these charts. Our economy is doing good. But we want different things than them. I want money for the people; they want money to bail out Democrat Governors and Democrat mayors.

Q. But shouldn't you, as the President, meet with them in person?

The President. Listen to me. Listen to me. My people are doing very good. And my people call me. They're in the office; they call me. They call me. When it's right—nobody knows the deal better than I do. When it's right, I'll meet. But right now it's not right. They want a trillion dollars to bail out badly run States—they're Democrat. They're all—I mean, they're Democrat States.

Will something happen? Possibly. But I want to tell you, the country is doing very well right now. We can live very happily with it, without it. But I'd like to do it, because I want to give money to the people. I want to put money into the people's hands. They want to put money into politicians' hands so that the politicians don't look stupid.

Okay. Steve [Steve A. Holland, Reuters], please?

Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper

Q. You've had some differences with your Defense Secretary, Mark Esper. Do you have confidence in his leadership there?

The President. Mark "Yesper"? Did you call him "Yesper"?

Q. Esper.

The President. Oh, okay. Some people call him "Yesper." No, I get along with him. I get along with him fine. He's fine.

Q. Okay.

The President. Yes. No problem.

Q. Are you considering firing him, Mr. President?

The President. I consider firing everybody. [Laughter] At some point, that's what happens.

Jennifer [Jennifer Jacobs, Bloomberg News], do you have something, Jennifer? You're working so hard.

2020 Presidential Election/The President's Cabinet

Q. Do you think that there will be anyone else who leaves your Cabinet after the election, sir?

The President. So, if we have the success—I think we have a silent majority, the likes of which has never been seen before—I think you read about it—where 62 percent of the people say they're not even telling the truth on polling and where the polling is fake; you know, where they do registered voters and where they do many more Democrats than they do Republicans. Same as happened last time.

But this year, I think we have much more enthusiasm. Maybe those people back there would understand it better than anybody. But I think there's more enthusiasm for 2020 than there was even for 2016. And 2016 was a record. You found that out. And I believe there's much more enthusiasm now than there was even in 2016.

We have a silent majority, the likes of which nobody has seen. I just looked—there are thousands of boats in lakes, rivers, and oceans. Thousands and thousands of boats. It's called "Boaters for Trump," "Boaters for Trump-Pence." There's signs all over. Some of the boats have 10 flags on them. They're incredible. There are thousands. We did nothing to do this. This is just generic. It just happened.

Let me just tell you, I think the level of enthusiasm for what we're doing—we want law and order. We want low taxes. They want to raise your taxes. They want to get rid of—they want to have open borders. And they want to defund the police. How do you win on that? They want to go to Texas, and they want to go to Pennsylvania, and they want to stop fracking. And Ohio, they want to stop fracking. They're against steel, they're against anything with petroleum, the word petroleum in it. You won't have a country. These people are crazy.

Q. But as far as your Cabinet?

The President. Say it? Go ahead.

Q. As far as your Cabinet goes, do you think you'll see more turnover in your Cabinet?

The President. Well, I don't know. I think for next year—I mean, generally speaking, a lot of times I understand when, if we win, a President will ask for the resignation of everybody and then bring back the people he wants. That's happened before, Steve. And I could see something like that happening. I think that makes sense.

No, I have a very good Cabinet—I mean, with few exception. I wouldn't say I'm thrilled with everybody, frankly. [*Laughter*]. But I have—overall, I think we have a very good Cabinet.

Q. Sir, could you——

The President. I think this—I will say this: No administration—none—no administration, first 3½ years, has done anywhere near what we've done. Three hundred—we will have, at the end of the first term, 300, maybe more, Federal judges including Court of Appeals, two Supreme Court Justices. Nobody has done this.

Take a look at—take a look at what we've done: the biggest tax cuts in history; the biggest regulation cuts in history; rebuilt our military; took care of our vets. We have a 91 percent approval rating from the vets. Nobody has ever had a 91 percent approval rating before. We—I guarded the Second Amendment. They want to destroy the Second Amendment. Take a look at Kamala. They want to destroy the Second Amendment.

And, as you know, Joe is—has no control over anybody. He has no control over himself.

Okay, thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 5:26 p.m. at the Trump National Golf Club. In his remarks, the President referred to 2020 Democratic Presidential candidate former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.; Center of the World, OH, resident, Dennis Kuchta; Edward J. Orgeron, Jr., head coach, Louisiana State University football team; Nicholas L. Saban, Jr., head coach, University of Alabama football team; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney; New York Democratic congressional candidate Suraj Patel; Gov. Stephen F. Sisolak of Nevada; National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony S. Fauci; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Robert R. Redfield, Jr.; John C. Eastman, Henry Salvatori Professor of Law and community service director, Chapman University; and Supreme Court Associate Justices Neil M. Gorsuch and Brett M. Kavanaugh. A reporter referred to U.S. Postal Service Inspector General Tammy L. Whitcomb. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 16.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : News conferences :: August 15.

Locations: Bedminster, NJ.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; DeJoy, Louis; Eastman, John C.; Esper, Mark T.; Fauci, Anthony S.; Gorsuch, Neil M.; Harris, Kamala D.; Kavanaugh, Brett M.; Kuchta, Dennis; Lawrence, Trevor; Maloney, Carolyn B.; Orgeron, Edward J., Jr.; Patel, Suraj; Pelosi, Nancy; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Redfield, Robert R., Jr.; Saban, Nicholas L., Jr.; Sisolak, Stephen F.; Snowden, Edward J.

Subjects: Armed Forces, U.S. : Funding; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Strengthening efforts; China : Trade with U.S.; Civil rights : Firearm rights; Communications : News media :: Presidential interviews; Congress : House of Representatives :: Speaker; Defense, Department of : Secretary; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic mortality rates; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic

prevention efforts; Economy, national : Improvement; Elections : 2020 Presidential and congressional elections; Elections : Absentee ballot policies; Elections : Voter participation; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Government organization and employees : Federal regulations, review; Health and Human Services, Department of : Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Health and Human Services, Department of : National Institutes of Health; Health and medical care : Medical equipment and supplies; Health and medical care : Nursing homes and senior care facilities; Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.; Iran : International diplomatic efforts; Iran : U.S. seizure of oil tankers bound for Venezuela; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: Associate Justice; Minnesota : Civil unrest and violence in Minneapolis; Nevada : Governor; New Jersey : President's visits; Oregon : Civil unrest and violence in Portland; Postal Service, U.S.; Russia : President; Sports : Basketball; Sports : Football; Taxation : Tax relief.

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