

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

Remarks on Commercial Refrigeration Regulations and an Exchange With Reporters

May 21, 2026

The President. Okay. Thank you very much. It's a great honor. We have tremendous people behind me. You'll be hearing about that in a minute.

Today it is my honor to be discussing the taking of a very historic action to substantially lower costs for consumers, protect hundreds of thousands of jobs, and save Americans well over \$2 billion a year by officially terminating the Biden administration's ridiculous regulations imposing costly requirements on refrigerators and air conditioners. It's ridiculous, unnecessary, and costly, and actually makes the machinery worse.

I want to thank EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin, Senators Jon Husted—Jon, thank you. I heard you're doing very well in your race.

Senator Jon Husted. Thank you.

The President. I hear that's what the word is. [*Laughter*] And, Ashley, I know you're doing very well also. Ashley Moody, Florida. Great.

Senator Ashley Moody. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. As well as Representatives Stephanie Bice, Zach Nunn, and Craig Goldman. Thank you all. Thank you.

Representative Zachary Nunn. Iowa loves you, boss. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you all.

Participant. Thank you.

The President. You look good.

We're joined by Kroger CEO—that's a big one, Kroger. That's a big—I see those stores all over the place. Greg Foran. Where's Greg?

Sen. Husted. He's right there.

The President. Greg? Very big. You look like central casting. [*Laughter*] Just like you're supposed to look.

Fareway Stores CEO Reynolds Cramer.

Fareway Stores Chief Executive Officer Reynolds W. Cramer. Right here, Mr. President.

The President. Okay. Hello, Reynolds.

Mr. Cramer. Hello there.

The President. Maybe I won't look around every time. [*Laughter*]

Y-Not Stop CEO and co-owner Anne Gauthier. Anne.

Y-Not Stop Chief Executive Officer and Co-owner Annie St. Romain Gauthier. Yes. Here, Mr. President.

The President. Going to look—I'm going to look—because it's Anne I'm going to.

Columbiana Foods co-owner Ron Graff Sr.

Columbiana Foods co-owner Ron Graff, Sr. Right here.

Sen. Husted. Right behind you.

Mr. Graff. Right behind you.

The President. Hello, Ron. [Laughter]

Niemann Foods President Richard Niemann.

Niemann Foods President Richard Niemann, Jr. Right here, sir.

The President. Hi, Richard.

Piggly—oh, that's a nice—[inaudible]—Piggly Wiggly franchise owner. And that's a big company too. It's got a cute name. Kevin McDaniel. Where's Kevin?

Piggly Wiggly franchise owner Kevin McDaniel. Right here.

The President. How is that name playing? Good?

Mr. McDaniel. Piggly Wiggly. It's doing great. [Laughter]

The President. Piggly Wiggly. I've heard that, actually. That's great. Franchise owner Kevin. So you met Kevin.

And Food Fresh owner Michael Gay.

Food Fresh owner Michael Gay. Right here, Mr. President.

The President. Food Fresh. Hi, Michael. How are you, Michael?

And this is a representative group of very large-scale retailers. Under the Biden administration, the so-called Technology Transition Rule—which was crazy—forced companies to adopt specific high-cost refrigerants, massively driving up the price of transporting and strong—and storing refrigerants and various goods.

Many grocery stores and restaurants had no choice but to replace their refrigerators entirely. They went out of business, half of them. And these costs rose, Americans faced higher grocery prices and reduced access to critical medical supplies. It was a very catastrophic thing that they did.

At the same time, this rule also drove up the cost of living by forcing consumers to purchase higher cost residential air conditioning units. They cost—they went up very substantially in cost. And also, they were going to be obsolete very quickly.

It created national security risks by adding additional hurdles to the already complicated process of manufacturing semiconductors. So it was a mess.

Likewise, the so-called "Emissions Rule" imposed crippling leak repair requirements on virtually all existing large-scale refrigeration systems, hurting consumers and small businesses, making it almost impossible for many small businesses to even buy inferior—before it—inferior equipment. And this is all across the country.

The higher costs threatened thousands of jobs and was passed on in the form of higher prices and higher taxes.

Today's reforms will deliver significant financial relief, saving American families and businesses more than \$2.4 billion—think of that—each year. Thanks to today's reforms, the American people have lower grocery prices, cheaper transportation of goods, lower cost of air-conditioning, at no detriment at all to our country. Zero. My—including environmental detriment.

My administration's historic deregulatory agendas already saved our country an estimated \$1.2 trillion—that's been done over a relatively short period of time—\$1.2 trillion with a "t."

We're committed to fixing the—and really completely ending Biden's disastrous regulatory policies and delivering financial relief to each and every American, which is what we're doing. This was a tremendous burden, a tremendous cost. These people had to live with it. Not only refrigerants, but a lot more. And it was making the equipment unaffordable, and the actual benefit was nothing. It just made it worse. It made life worse, and it made it worse and it drove up costs tremendously.

So now I'd like to ask Administrator Lee Zeldin, who's absolutely fantastic. He's doing an incredible job. We're proud of you, Lee. Really, the job you're doing is incredible. Followed by Greg, Kevin, and Michael. Is that okay?

Lee, go ahead, please.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee M. Zeldin. Well, thank you, Mr. President. As you know, many Americans were expressing a lot of frustration and anger of this rushed, frantic, reckless sprint by the Biden administration to phase out reliable equipment for grocery stores, for restaurants, and for homes. And the consequences—well, they've been devastating.

And once again, the Trump administration is answering the call, which will lower the cost of living for hard-working American families.

Now, look at this chart to your far right. Today's actions are saving over \$2.4 billion for American families. It's safeguarding 350,000 jobs. Just at supermarkets alone, we are going to see a savings of \$800 million, which Americans will be able to see when they go and buy their food.

The Biden EPA face-planted when trying to jam through their restrictions. Americans who wanted to be able to fix their equipment were instead being required to buy far more costly new equipment, and that just doesn't make any sense. Refrigeration trucks were being handed impossible restrictions to meet.

And, once again, here we are in the Oval Office. President Trump is righting another wrong. At the Trump EPA, we are proudly implementing President Trump's agenda every single day and delivering for the American people.

The President. Thank you, Lee, very much. Thank you.

Please.

Kroger Chief Executive Officer Gregory S. Foran. Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you, Lee. Look, on behalf of the Kroger Company—and we operate about 2,700 supermarkets—an orderly transition of equipment reduces both capital costs and operating costs. And at the end of the day, that's good for consumers because we're able to take that and put that into lowering prices, which is the key objective that we have in our business. So thank you very much.

The President. And you were able to save a lot of money and put it elsewhere by not having to do this ridiculous——

Mr. Foran. Exactly.

So it allows us—instead of having to outlay more capital at a faster rate and more operating cost to change that equipment——

The President. Or to replace a refrigerator that's working perfectly, right?

Mr. Foran. Yes. So that allows us—you know, obviously these things have a lifespan, but an orderly transition allows us to move through that in a way which keeps the price of groceries down, and that's something——

The President. Right.

Mr. Foran. ——that we're, you know, desperately focusing on, Mr. President.

The President. That's great. Thank you very much.

Next.

Mr. McDaniel. My name is Kevin McDaniel. We operate 14 Piggly Wiggly stores in North Florida, Alabama, and Georgia.

On behalf of NGA, the Piggly Wiggly family, which operates—has about 250 stores in the Southeast, we want to thank President Trump for rolling this terrible Biden legislation back, because without it there have been a lot of independents out of business.

And what people don't realize is, it's just not a refrigerant change, it was a equipment change. And those equipment per store—you take a store—our stores run from 25- to 50,000 square feet. You could look for 800,000 to a million and a half dollars per store to do a change-out. That would have done——

The President. And the new equipment would not be as good as the old equipment.

Mr. McDaniel. No, absolutely not.

The President. It would be inferior equipment, because you weren't able to use a refrigerant. Okay?

Mr. McDaniel. It was thrown together too fast. The technology is not there yet. It's just way too fast. That's the problem. Good idea, but the—it's terrible. [*Laughter*]

So you would have had all these independents go out of business. You'd had independents out of business, and you would have seen grocery prices soar. That's what would have happened if this would have went through.

President Trump, thank you very much. On behalf of all—every independent in the United States, we cannot thank you enough for what you've done for us.

The President. Thank you very much.

Mr. McDaniel. Thank you so much.

The President. I mean, just the bottom line is: So you have great equipment that works incredibly, takes care of your meats and foods and everything else. Beautiful refrigeration systems. Take it out, and replace it with stuff that barely works, costs a fortune, and it's no good. Think of it. And everyone is going to go bankrupt, because the equipment is much more expensive on top of everything else.

So the big thing now, we're got to get rid of the law that was signed quite a while ago. We have to get rid of that because, ultimately, we want to make it permanent.

There's no negative impact by having a good system, but there's a tremendous impact—I think it's going to be bad, because a lot of people said the other stuff doesn't even—it doesn't cool your product.

Mr. McDaniel. No, that's the problem with it.

The President. It's so crazy.

Please.

Mr. Gay. Michael Gay. I have a single store, Food Fresh, in Claxton, Georgia. And exactly—I mean to echo everyone that's up here, the—these refrigeration costs—I'm the only store in a county of 10,000. I—literally, 2 years ago, put in equipment that should have about 20 more years of useful life, and to replace literally every single piece of equipment in our store would have been unbelievably cost prohibitive, driving up costs as we fight every day to try to keep them as low as we can.

And you know, if that cost gets too high, especially attached to a regulation, do you have independent stores close in neighborhoods that—once I go away, you've created a food desert.

So it's very beneficial that this happened today. It's much more complicated than anyone thinks, and to try to rush this through was just the wrong way to go. So we are very appreciative of you today, Mr.——

The President. Thank you. I have one grocer who's a friend of mine. He's pretty big, and he said, "I'm going to go ahead of the schedule." And he actually replaced a lot of his equipment. He called me up. He said: "This crap doesn't work. It doesn't cool the food." So you know about that, right? *[Laughter]* What a shame.

Okay, would anybody—Kevin, would you like to say something?

National Economic Council Director Kevin A. Hassett. Yes, I'd just like to say, sir, that this is part of your overall deregulatory agenda, and the big number—\$1.2 trillion—is the savings so far, but we're going to be hitting that every year.

And we're rolling back stuff that everywhere we look, there's stuff that's as awful as this. And I think that, really, one of the leaders has been Lee, because EPA has been a holdup for so many years. But Lee is just out there saving Americans money right now.

Again, if you look at that number——

The President. Yes.

Director Hassett. ——it's \$14,000 per family has been saved in reduced costs because of your deregulatory efforts.

The President. Do we agree that Lee is an MVP candidate? *[Laughter]* MVP!

No, he's done a great job, and he sees what's good. And he's a big environmentalist. I mean, he wants it—make sure everything is good, but he also sees stupid things like this.

Senator, would you like to each speak on this?

Sen. Husted. Sure. Well, Mr. President, I'd like to thank you for this, because this hits our goal of trying to keep prices low for working families in America. The cost of food.

I have the Graff family here, right behind you. They operate three grocery stores in Columbiana County.

They had already upgraded their refrigeration systems a few years ago. This was going to cost them millions of more dollars in Columbiana County, which is not an affluent county. It has a grocery store in East Liverpool, Ohio, which is the hometown of the late, great Lou Holtz.

The President. Yes.

Sen. Husted. And these people, not only would it raise food costs, but it might force them to shut a grocery store down so that the town didn't even have a grocery store.

So you're saving money for working families and their grocery prices. You're also saving grocery stores so that we don't have food deserts in rural places——

The President. Yes.

Sen. Husted. ——across our country.

The President. Yes. That's what we're about.

Sen. Moody. Mr. President, I think it is so important that the people see what you choose to hang right by your desk, which is the Declaration of Independence, which is a reminder that government at its core is supposed to function in a way that allows people the opportunity to pursue happiness and not work against them by coming up with regulations that just make it harder to live, more expensive to live.

And from day one—I remember standing with you with the same crew of folks. From day one, you have been digging into all of these regulations that are issued with no thought to how they affect real people and real small businesses and businesses trying to——

Participant. That's right.

Sen. Moody. ——step up and provide jobs and lift up their communities. Thank you for that. Thank you for getting back to the core of what Government is supposed to be, and that is working in the interests of the people.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Niemann. Amen.

The President. Thank you very much.

Good job.

Participant. Yes. Amen.

The President. Thank you, everybody.

So any questions, please?

Q. Yes.

The President. Yes, please. Go ahead.

Grocery Prices

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. How much do you expect that this will save the average American family every week on groceries? And do you expect this change to help Republicans during midterms?

The President. Okay. Very, very substantially. They're going to be a big saving. I could——we're breaking it down. In fact, numbers are coming out this afternoon sometime. But the average family will save a lot of money, and you're going to have stores—you know, nobody actually thought of it until it was mentioned this morning—you will have stores closing down in areas where they're not going to have a store anymore.

Participant. That's right, sir.

The President. And you really are being forced to spend money—much more money on much more expensive equipment that really doesn't work.

This friend of mine is a very savvy guy and, you know, big-league stuff, and he put some in because he wanted to see. And he said the stuff doesn't work. It doesn't cool the food properly.

That's why they call the thing that we're talking about a refrigerant for a reason. It's a refrigerant. So that's it.

Please. Thank you very much.

Food Markets and Prices

Q. Yes. Thanks, Mr.—President Trump. Are there any assurances from the grocery chains that they'll pass these savings down to consumers?

The President. Well, let's ask Kroger about that. Come on. That's a very good question. You have the biggest right here.

Mr. Foran. Yes. We're actually right in the middle of doing that at the moment. So, we're concerned about the cost of living. It makes a big difference when you get your pricing right. And we certainly are interested in ensuring that all our customers, right across the country, are paying the right price.

The President. You know, if the—if it were the right thing to do, it would be, you know, bad for the environment, what they had or any—and I'm all for it. I'm all for that stuff. But when you're forced to put in very inferior equipment that's not going to work, it's not—you're going to be wasting a lot of food product because it doesn't cool the food properly, and it's actually a bad thing. And it's—the bad thing is more expensive than what they already have.

And in many cases, they just put it in. You know, they just put in the other apparatus that—and a lot of people have said they've spent money recently to do it, and then this rule came up out of nowhere——

Participant. Yes.

Participant. Yes, sir.

The President. ——and the stuff they just put in, they have to change.

I'd be all for changing if it—you know, if it was good, even if it was a little bit good, but this is actually bad. Okay.

Participant. That's right.

Environmental Impact of Regulation Changes

Q. Yes, do you not have any environmental concerns, though, with this sector?

The President. No, there is no environmental concern. And Lee covered that really well. There's no environmental concern. It's not going to have any impact on the environment.

Republican Party/White House Ballroom Construction Project

Q. Mr. President, with many Americans concerned about affordability ahead of the midterms, there is some backlash among Senate Republicans to some of your other priorities—the ballroom and that antiweaponization fund. You clearly still have a stronghold on the Republican Party. Your candidates did very well this week during the primaries, but are you losing control of the Senate?

The President. My candidates did well.

Q. Yes, well——

The President. Not all candidates did well.

Q. But are you losing control of the Senate, sir? Are you losing control of the Senate—Senate Republicans?

The President. I don't know. I really don't know. I can tell you I only do what's right.

I don't need money for the ballroom. You know, I'm making a gift of the ballroom. This is the biggest misreporting that I've ever seen. The ballroom is being built. It will cost—we've done—it was going to be \$200 million. I've doubled the size of it because we need it. And it's being done in conjunction with the military and with the—very much in conjunction with the military and Secret Service.

We're on time, on budget. It's going beautifully. I have all the money I need.

We're making a gift to the United States. They came along, and they said, "We want to make it"—the house; the White House overall—"more secure." And I understand that.

Not for me, because I'll be gone. You know, I'll be gone, and you'll have somebody else in for, hopefully, hundreds of years. But that's what they're doing it for.

The ballroom is paid for. It's a gift. I mean, I want to make it clear because so many people say, "I thought you were giving this away," and all of a sudden the money that they're spending is for security having to do maybe around the ballroom and other parts of the house, but this is not for the ballroom.

The ballroom is being—a tremendous amount of what's being done with respect to the ballroom is for national security, including, as an example, a drone port on top of—which was top secret until litigation made it less than top secret.

But we have a drone port. We had all—we have also—we have the glass that's four inches thick—bulletproof glass. We have bulletproof walls. We have thick—you need a place like this. But this is being made as a gift from me and other people that are great patriots that spend a lot of money. We're building what will be the finest ballroom anywhere in the world.

If they want to spend money on securing the White House, I think it would be very, very much a good expenditure. But the ballroom is being built.

Q. But what if Congress doesn't sign off on the security money, sir?

The President. Then the White House won't be a very secure place.

Cuba

Q. But—and then, regarding Cuba. There was an aircraft carrier that just arrived there just this week—the Nimitz aircraft carrier. Are you sending that there to intimidate the Cuban Government?

The President. No, not at all. The Cuba—look, it's a failed country. Everybody knows it. They don't have electricity. They don't have money. They don't have really anything. They don't have food.

And we're going to help them along, and we're going to help them because the people—because, number one, I want to help them. You know, on a—on humanitarian basis. But we have the Cuban American population—much of it living in Miami, in Florida—that's a great group of people. Amazing group of people. Industrious. Just—they're great Americans.

They've wanted this to happen. They want to go back to their country. They want to help their country. I hope they're going to stay here, but they want to go back. They want to invest in their country and, you know, see if they can bring it back.

Other Presidents have looked at this for 50, 60 years, doing something, and it looks like I'll be the one that does it. So we'd be happy to do it. We want to open it up to Cuban Americans, where they can go back and help.

Election Reform

Q. The DNC released a report this morning—their report—on the last election on why you won and Democrats lost.

One thing that it mentions is how they failed to reach middle America, southern Americans. Do you think they've learned lessons from that election? And have you seen that report?

The President. I think the elections are so rigged, and we have to do something about it. And we're going to do something about it.

But we cannot continue to have—and, frankly, the Senate and the House, they ought to get together, and they ought to pass the SAVE America Act so that you have a voter ID.

Participant. That's right. That's right.

The President. And it's so important you have proof of citizenship—little thing like proof of citizenship. And, also, mail-in voting, which is so crooked.

So, in Maryland, as you probably saw, they had 500—500,000 mail-in votes that were corrupt. They were corrupt. They said the printer made a mistake. Don't believe that. And they got caught with 500,000 mail-in ballots that were corrupt.

We've got to stop it. We have a country that has a very corrupt—we have more corrupt elections than third world countries have. And we ought to get smart.

Pass the SAVE America Act. That will be a long way. You have voter ID: voter identification.

The Democrats don't want to pass. Now, I'll tell you what, the Democrat voters do want to pass—87 percent. But the Democrat politicians don't want to pass. And the reason is, they'd never be elected again—[laughter]—because, with their policy of open borders, transgender for everyone—I call it "transgender mutilization" of your children for everybody—men playing in women's sports—all of the stuff that they do.

High taxes—they want a tax hike. They voted in favor of high taxes. They voted against a tax cut.

They voted in favor of men playing in women's sports. I don't know what these people are thinking.

The only way they can win is to cheat, and that's what they want to do. And we ought to pass the SAVE America Act.

Yes, please.

White House Ballroom Construction Project

Q. Yes, Mr. President. I have two questions for you. One of which you'll love. First, about the ballroom, and the second about Iran.

First, I'm curious: What is the stone that you're going to be using? And I ask that for a reason, because I live in Stafford County. And you know a lot about history and stuff like that.

The President. Yes.

Q. So, you know, the stone that was quarried for the Capitol——

The President. Yes, I——

Q. ——and the White House is from Stafford County.

The President. Right.

Q. They still have quarries. So, hint, hint.

The President. Yes.

Q. ——down there. Just curious——

The President. We're using marbles and granites.

Q. Okay. And——

The President. Mostly marbles and granites.

Q. All right. Excellent.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

And then, my second question is: The Vice President mentioned the other day there would be a comp—accommodations—that we're willing to make accommodations with the Iranian deal. Could you, kind of, expand on those possible accommodations? Does that include——

The President. When you say "accommodation"—of what?

Q. Accommodations—he was talking about accommodations as far as making a deal—making a deal going.

Is that—would that include the proxies?

The President. I don't know. I can't tell you. Right now we're negotiating, and we'll see. But either—we're going to get it one way or the other. They're not going to have a nuclear weapon.

You know, when people hear it—because oftentimes they won't put up the second part of the—sentence, having to do with—I'll say, "This is more important than anything that we have to talk about," and usually they'll cut it off—the fake news. I said—because this is the nuclearization of a country that some people would say is somewhat crazy. And we cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon. That's all there is. We can't let it.

You will have a nuclear war in the Middle East, and that war will come here. That war will go to Europe. We cannot let that happen, and it won't happen. It's not going to happen.

That's more important than anything else, that we can't—I can think of nothing that's more important than the fact that we cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon, and we won't.

Yes, Jeff [Jeff Mason, Bloomberg News].

Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. Following up on that, sir. Iran is negotiating with Oman to set up a formalization of charging tolls in the Strait of Hormuz. Is that acceptable to you?

The President. Well, we're looking at it. We hear about it. They've negotiated. They've had a relationship with them before, and we'll see.

We have total control of the Strait of Hormuz, as you know, with our blockade. The blockade has been a hundred percent effective. Nobody's been able to get through. It's like a steel wall. It's our navy.

We have the greatest military anywhere in the world. We wiped out their navy. We knocked—wiped out their air—I think they're down to about—I would say we knocked out 85 percent of their missile capacity. We—it's very hard for them now to build missiles, to build drones.

We have great drone technology, ant drone technology now that, frankly, we didn't have even 2 months ago. We have unbelievable drone technology, both for making them and also for knocking them down.

But look, we're going to either make sure they don't have a nuclear weapon or we're going to have to do something very drastic. And the people of the country—I believe when it's put to the people of our country, they will all agree that we cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon.

Yes.

Q. How do you want things to end up——

The President. Daniel [Daniel Baldwin, One America News Network].

U.S. Naval Blockade of Sanctioned Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. Just let me—just one follow-up on that. How do you want things to end up with the Strait of Hormuz, though? Would you like them to have control of that?

The President. Well, we want it open. We want it free. We don't want tolls. It's international. It's an international waterway. They're not charging tolls.

Right now they are losing \$500 million a day is what it's projected. I don't know. It sounds like a lot of money, but whether it's 500 or 200 or 300, they're losing a lot of money. There hasn't been a ship that's been able to get through without our approval. And the Navy has done an amazing job.

And no ship is going to Iran, as you know. No ship is going to or out of Iran without our approval.

Iran/Disposition of Nuclear Material

Q. Can they keep their highly enriched uranium?

The President. No. No. We get the highly enriched. We will get it. We don't need it. We don't want it. We'll probably destroy it after we get it. But we're not going to let them have it.

Okay?

Federal Deregulation Efforts/Oil Markets and Prices

Q. Mr. President, I have two questions. First on deregulation. The second on the Supreme Court. You—coming from business, you've seen the effects of what unnecessary redtape can do to business. Do you believe that given the amount of deregulatory actions you've taken along with this—the rolling back the Endangerment Finding, the CAFE standards——

The President. Right.

Q. —tax cuts and tariffs—do you believe that you've made the United States the most pro-business, pro-investment country in the world?

The President. Yes. Thank you very much for that question, because we are. We are. For every 1 new regulation that we had, we're getting rid of 20 to 30 to 40. And now it's actually at even a number. My first term, for every regulation that was added, we've got rid of a minimum of 10.

And I understand, Lee, that it was up—it's up to 43 or 44 right now. So, if we add a regulation, we get rid of 43, 44.

We're making it a much more pro-business, pro-people. You know, regulations are very costly for the people. They're bad for everybody. They're bad for jobs, bad for every—and we have—as of today, we have more people working in the United States than at any time in the history of our country. It's a—to me, it's one of my favorite stats. But we have more people today working in the United States than at any time in the history.

And this is with the Iran conflict. That will end soon. Very soon. And when it ends, your gasoline prices will go down lower than they were before. You know, I left Iowa a few months ago, and gasoline was at \$1.85 a gallon.

Participant. That's right. *[Laughter.]*

The President. And we'll be hitting numbers like that again soon.

Q. Mr. President—and on the Supreme Court, sir——

The President. But we'll be hitting them in a much nicer way, by the way. We'll—we will be hitting them, and we will have a country that will not have a nuclear weapon.

Yes, Daniel.

Q. And on the Supreme Court, sir, the——

Q. So why has today's Executive——

The President. Yes, let me just finish with him.

Q. Oh, sorry.

Tariffs/Citizenship/14th Amendment/College Sports

Q. Yes. On the Supreme Court, sir. We're still waiting for the decision on birthright citizenship.

The President. Yes, birthright citizenship.

Q. You attended the oral arguments of that. Can you just explain what's at stake with that decision, sir?

The President. It's a big decision that we're waiting for from the Supreme Court. We had a terrible tariff decision. I mean, they cost our country a fortune. They said, "Do it a different way." We're doing it a different way, but we're going to most likely have to pay back \$149 billion.

All they had to do is put a little sentence in there—half a sentence—saying that any monies paid don't have to be paid back. You know, you're talking about the people, in many cases, that hate our country. Give them back money. It was a terrible decision.

And it's not going to affect because we do the tariffs a different way. The tariffs are what's bringing in all of this money. It's really made our country rich, modernly rich.

Now we have another one coming up, which is birthright citizenship. And we're the only country in the world that has it. You step into our country and you're all of a sudden a citizen; you come in a certain way. This was not meant for Chinese billionaires to have their children become citizens of our country. This was meant—or other rich people, poor people.

This was meant for the babies of slaves. This was signed during—right after the Civil War. You look at the dates, the dates alone—immediately after. This was having to do with the babies of slaves. And people have used it.

And if this is allowed to stand, it will be a disaster, economically, for our country. And you'll have 25 percent of the people coming into our country coming in through birthright citizenship. And we won't have any control.

This decision by the Supreme Court is a very big one. They'll probably rule against me because they seem to like doing that.

You know, frankly, I'm not happy with some of the decisions. Look at NIL. Look what they've done. Look what the courts have done to college sports. They're destroying college sports. They're destroying universities.

But birthright citizen's a big deal. And literally, if that's allowed to stand—and, again, this was a Civil War—this was right after the Civil War, and it has to do with the babies of slaves. It doesn't have to do with the babies of very rich people coming into the country. One of them came in with 57 children, okay? Fifty-seven children.

They're using the system, and it's usually people that hate our country, if you want to know the truth. Birthright citizenship is done by no other country. No other country in the world, the way we are doing it. It's—we're a laughingstock. And if the Supreme Court approves that decision, they have done a great disservice to the United States of America, just like they did a great disservice by costing us \$149 billion on tariffs by saying, "Do it a different way." Get the same result; do it a different way.

We should have won that decision. We had a very strong, very powerful dissent. We had three dissents, so it wasn't like a unanimous decision by any means. We had very powerful dissents. When you read that dissent—people that read that dissent say, "You really should have won this case." We should have won that case on tariffs. That case cost our country \$149 million. It goes to people that hate our country.

So now we have another one coming up: birthright citizenship. It would be a disgrace—it would be a disgrace if the Supreme Court of the United States allows that to happen.

Remember what I said: 20 to 25 percent of the people coming into our country will come in through birthright citizenship. They'll become citizens through birthright citizenship, and it will cost us numbers that are—I don't even think they're doable. And it's all up to a couple of people. And I hope they do what's right. Birthright citizenship is a disgrace. The fact that—look at the people that are bringing the suit. Study the people that are bringing the suit. These are not people that love our country. I can tell you that.

Artificial Intelligence

Q. And why has today's Executive order on AI been postponed? And——

The President. Because I didn't like certain aspects of it, I postponed it. I think it gets in the way of—you know, we're leading China. We're leading everybody, and I don't want to do anything that's going to get in the way of that lead. We have a very substantial—on AI, it's causing—it's causing tremendous good, and it's also bringing in a lot of jobs, tremendous numbers of jobs. Again, we have more people working right now than we've ever had.

I really thought that could have been a blocker, and I want to make sure that it's not.

Artificial Intelligence/China

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Did you discuss AI safeguards with China, with President Xi last week, did you discuss AI safeguards?

The President. Who? What?

Q. In China, last week with President Xi——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——did you discuss AI safeguards?

The President. I did.

I did. No, I discussed it. And he acknowledges how well we're doing. We're doing well. He's doing—it was the two of us. The two countries are fighting for it. Other countries are way behind—way, way behind. They're fighting for it. They want it. Everybody wants it, but they're way behind.

But I didn't want to do it. I postponed that meeting—it was press—it was a signing, actually—because I didn't like what I was seeing.

Plans for Construction of a Triumphal Arch

Q. Mr. President, a few moments ago, the Commission of Fine Arts approved your design—the design for your arch. Do you think you need congressional approval?

The President. Oh, that's good news. It—I finally get good news for a—[laughter]——

Q. Do you think you need congressional——

The President. What was the vote?

Q. ——approval for it, sir?

The President. Do you know what the vote was?

What was the vote?

Q. I'm just seeing the headline here. I don't have——

The President. Wow.

Q. ——the exact vote, but it was approved.

The President. So we're building what's called the triumphal arc, right opposite the Arlington Memorial Bridge, right by Arlington Cemetery. It's beautiful. It's—the Arc de Triomphe would be the one that you would probably know in Paris. It's one of the most beautiful. It's a very similar size—slightly larger. We're doing—we have to do slightly larger. It doesn't have to be a lot larger, just—[laughter]—otherwise, you'd all be disappointed in me. [Laughter]

But it's even far more beautiful, and I think that the Arc de Triomphe is beautiful. It's, you know, a couple of hundred years old, but I think it's beautiful. And some arcs go back over a thousand years, and it's called a triumphal arc. It's usually done for victories in war and things. There are 59 of them in the world, and some are really beautiful. And we're the only major—Washington, DC, which should be number one—we're the only important and major city that doesn't have one. We don't have a triumphal arc.

So it was meant to be built for many years. The circle going up to the bridge. It was—people pass that circle. They say, "Why isn't something built here?" And so, that's very good. We just got approval from Fine Arts. That's fantastic.

Q. But do you need Congress to sign off on it?

The President. No, we don't. No, no, we're doing it. It's—the land is owned by Secretary—by the Interior Department. We don't need anything from Congress.

Wedding of the President's Son Donald J. Trump, Jr.

Q. Are you attending your son's wedding this weekend? Are you attending your son's wedding, by the way? [*Laughter.*]

The President. He'd like me to go, but it's going to be just a small, little, private affair, and I'm going to try and make it. I'm in the midst—I said, "You know, this is not good timing for me." [*Laughter*] I have a thing called Iran and other things.

That's one I can't win on. If I do attend, I get killed. If I don't attend, I get killed—by the fake news, of course, I'm talking about.

No, but he's got a very—a person who I've known for a long time, and hopefully, they're going to have a great marriage.

Plans for Triumphal Arch Construction/District of Columbia Beautification Efforts/Reflecting Pool

Q. Mr. President, actually, to add to the arc. I just, actually, passed by it on my way here.

The President. Right.

Q. Saw that the pink flags.

The President. Right.

Q. And there's just geese that are there all time.

The President. Right.

Q. So it's perfect. How long will that take?

And also, I have to say—I have to pass along something from my mother, because she drove in with me. She was amazed by all the people she was seeing on the streets here in DC. She doesn't get in here as much. But——

The President. DC is hot again.

Q. ——she was noticing how clean and beautiful it was, so——

The President. It's clean.

Q. ——I'm passing that along, sir.

The President. That's right. Well, that's what I do. Clean. It—take a look outside. We had a broken path. It was so terrible coming into the White House. It was slate. Slate is a roofing material. It's not a walking material. But the slate was all broken and chipped and terrible. And I put down a new granite floor, and paid for it myself, by the way.

But I put down a nice new granite floor. It looks beautiful. It's actually getting rave reviews. It's beautiful. It was a—terrible having people walking up to the White House and they're walking over broken tiles and broken floors. So now we just finished. It's going to be finished when the moldings are put on. But we just—it—you might take a look at it. I don't know if you've seen it, but it's beautiful.

Q. Oh, I thought—it's very beautiful.

The President. Of—other things we're doing, while you're at it, we've fixed—we have 31 fountains in Washington. Of the 31, not 1 worked. [*Laughter*] Now we have 21 working, and the others are going to be fixed. And people are calling and saying, "It's amazing what's happened, the fountains." And they're working top level.

And my most exciting is the Reflecting Pool between the Washington Monument and the— the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial—it's a—it's 200—2,500 feet long by almost 200 feet wide. It's a massive structure, if you think of it. It's taller than the tallest building in the world. If you sat the building down, the tallest building in the world would not reach the end of it. It's a very big thing.

It hasn't worked properly since it was built in 1922. President Obama and Biden spent hundreds of millions of dollars trying to fix it. They didn't—of course, they couldn't do that. They didn't fix it. It was a mess. And so, mostly, they turned it off, collecting garbage. It looked horrible.

And we are very close to getting it finished. And when it's finished, it will be beautiful. It will be blue water—dark blue. We call it American Flag Blue—[laughter]—because that's the name of the color that we chose. American Flag Blue. Can't do better than that. It's a rich, dark blue, and it will be, I think, very reflective, very, very good. Big project.

I decided to do a much bigger job. I was going to just get it open, but I said: "Let's do it right. Let's get it open, and let's have it be good." Because President Obama, President Biden spent hundreds of millions of dollars—much more than a hundred million, but hundreds of millions. It never worked.

In fact, when they finished it, it was much worse than it was before. It leaked at a higher level. They would have to fill it up every single day with water, with—the whole thing was ridiculous. So they ended up turning it off, and it became like a garbage dump.

Well, it's pretty close to finished. So they were going to—they had estimates of \$350 million to fix it. I'll be doing it for a tiny fraction of that. A bigger job than I've—I originally thought I'd do it for \$2- or \$3 million, just do a base. But now we're fixing up the exterior of it. We're doing—so we'll probably be in there for less than \$20 million.

And the estimate was going to be, using a different method, 350—it was going to take 4 years, \$350 million. I'll be doing it in, basically, a couple of months for less than \$20 million. That includes all of the exterior base, which I never included in my original numbers.

When I went there last week, I saw the exterior was in very bad shape, as well as the interior. So I said we're going to fix that too, the stone. It's going to be beautiful.

When that's done—you might see it. It's probably three-quarters done. We have rain delays. We get a lot of delays. But it—that will be—that will be something special. The Reflecting Pool in front of the Lincoln and Washington Monuments. I think it's going to be incredible.

It's largely done. If you want to go see it, you can see it before we put the water in. We'll—the key is to have it done before July 4. We want to see if we can have it done before July 4.

But we have about 20 or 21 of the water features in Washington open. And I can say, we—top of the line. They are—they look better than they did than the day they were built. Some of them have been closed for 25, 30 years. There's been no water for 25 or 30 years. And they're really beautiful. Some of the fountains are as beautiful as I've ever seen, and you probably see them.

And in addition to that, you brought up something. Washington, DC, is now a safe city. We had a city that was one of the most unsafe cities anywhere in the country, and now it's considered a very safe city.

Restaurants are opening. Restaurants were closing. You couldn't go to a restaurant. The restaurants were closing all over because of the danger from—during the Biden administration. Now you have restaurants opening. It's thriving. And it was very nice that you said that.

I like this reporter. I—[*laughter*—no, it's nice. It's—we have a vibrant city again. People are going out. I have a lot of people in the White House. Every time I see somebody, they thank me, and I know immediately what. They thank me for making the city safe.

They walk to work now. Before that, they would—they'd take Uber or something, and they were—they felt unsafe even in Uber.

You know, we moved over 5,000 people out of the city—career criminals that came in through the open borders and other reasons. And we moved over 5,000.

And an interesting statistic is that 2 percent of the population creates 91 percent of the crime. And the reason I like that is that you can handle 2 percent of the population, Mr. Kroger. I see—do you have stores in Washington?

Mr. Foran. We do.

The President. You see a big difference?

Mr. Foran. We do.

The President. Boy, you said the right thing. Could you imagine—[*laughter*]—

That would have been the end of Kroger. [*Laughter*]

Alright. Okay. We'll do one or two more.

Please.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

In the back. Yes, please.

Inflation/Food Markets and Prices/Stock Market

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Do you think Democrats are genuine in their focus on affordability, especially after they delivered 40-year-high inflation last time—

The President. Yes.

Q. —they were in power? And then—or do you think they're using it—or focusing on it as a means to try and win midterms and begin the impeachment process?

The President. Yes, the second.

Look, the Democrats had the highest inflation in the history of our country—48 years, they say, but the history of our country. They had the highest inflation that we've ever had.

When I inherited it, I inherited very high prices. And from day one, they said, "Affordability." "Affordability" is their word, because they're good at that. They're good at words, but I'm good at words too.

But they hit me with "affordability." I'd just gotten there. They hit me with eggs. We had a news conference on my third day, and they said, "Egg prices are through the roof." I said: "I just got here. Tell me about eggs." [*Laughter*] And we've got the prices down—way down. Actually, lower than it was 4 years before.

But we've gotten everything. The thing that we have now—the only thing that's really of great concern—two things. Beef is coming down, and the reason is they put restrictions on beef under the Biden administration, and it takes a while to settle that. But prices are down.

But the big thing is, of course, energy. We had the energy way down. But I had to do a journey to Iran. I had to say—you know, we just hit the best markets. By the way, the stock

market today is at the highest it's ever been. And we've had 59 of them—59 days out of a very short period of time where the stock market hit alltime highs. So we have a alltime high stock market.

We have alltime high job numbers.

We have—401(k)s just hit the highest number they've ever been. So many of you have 401(k)s. You—that means you're richer than you've ever been.

And we're doing really well. But they came up with this word, "affordability," but it's them that caused the problem.

And they use that word—Senator, Senator, they used that word right from the beginning. I was in one day, and I heard somebody on television say, "Affordability."

And I inherited this mess from them, but we've got it in great shape. The country's doing well. We're respected all over the world. This country is respected. We're the hottest country. We were a dead country 2 years ago, and now we're the hottest country anywhere in the world.

So I think most of you appreciate that. Some of you don't.

Yes, please.

Citizenship/Tariffs

Q. Mr. President. Kerry Picket, Washington Times. If the Supreme Court doesn't rule in your favor on birthright citizenship, are there any other avenues that your administration has explored to remedy this?

And did you talked with President Xi about Chinese foreign nationals taking advantage of birth tourism here in this country and how he could perhaps——

The President. Well, that's a great question.

No, if the Supreme Court hurts our country by ruling against us on birthright citizenship, that would be just—between that and tariffs, what damage they've done. What damage they've done.

Again, they could have said—which they said, "Do the tariffs a different way." But they could have said, "The money taken in"—hundreds of billions of dollars—\$149 billion dollars we have to pay back. Kevin understands that better than anybody.

All they had to do is say, "Any money taken in"—because they agree, you could do it a different way. Any money—this is a better way, but the other way is a very secure way. And maybe, in many ways, it's a stronger way. They could have said, "Any money taken in thus far does not have to be paid back"—to, in many cases, the enemy. People that don't like our country. All—it was a half a sentence.

The Supreme Court could have saved us \$149 billion with a half a sentence, but they chose not to do that.

Now they have a ruling, which is a much bigger ruling, actually: birthright citizenship. The cost—forgetting about the fact that it's wrong, the cost of birthright citizenship is barely not affordable by our country. It's going to cost hundreds of billions of dollars, and it's in their hands.

What can I tell you? It's a commonsense ruling. It's common sense. It was about—it was exact timing, and it's about the babies of slaves.

Thank you for that question.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead. You. Go ahead.

Midterm Elections/Senate Filibuster Use/Illegal Immigration

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. So do you think if Democrats were to take control of Congress again they would immediately begin the impeachment process?

The President. I think if Democrats took control of the Congress—I think that—and let's say took control of the country—I think that this country's finished.

These people are sick. They suffer from Trump derangement syndrome, but really, they—they have bad policy. They have horrible policy. They cheat on elections. They get elected by cheating on elections.

But you would have two States added. They'll terminate the filibuster immediately; Republicans should do that.

They'll terminate the filibuster. You'll have Washington, DC, and you'll have Puerto Rico as a State, which will be a disaster, which would be four Senate seats; tremendous numbers of electoral college votes.

You will have the—that's really bad, but you'll have the destruction of our country.

They want to go to 21 Supreme Court judges. That's their perfect number. They talk about 13, but they want to go to 21—21 Supreme Court judges.

If they get in power, I think this country would be—may be finished.

If I didn't win the election—I'll say this. We've become the hottest country anywhere in the world. We were a dead country 2 years ago. If I didn't win this election, we would have been a country that was—essentially would have been—I don't even know that we would have been a country any longer.

They were destroying our country. They were letting hundreds of thousands—millions of people pour through our southern border: criminals, people from jails, people from mental institutions, drug dealers, and drug addicts. They were sending everybody. Countries were sending everybody that they didn't want by the millions—25 million people.

If I didn't win this election, I believe our country would have been finished.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to S. 1383. Sen. Husted referred to Ron and Jennifer Graff, co-owners, Columbiana Foods, Inc.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Commercial refrigeration regulations; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Anderson, Bettina; Bice, Stephanie I.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Cramer, Reynolds W.; Foran, Gregory S.; Gauthier, Annie St. Romain; Gay, Michael; Goldman, Craig; Graff, Ron, Sr.; Hassett, Kevin A.; Husted, Jon; McDaniel, Kevin; Moody, Ashley; Niemann, Richard, Jr.; Nunn, Zachary; Obama, Barack; Trump, Donald J., Jr.; Xi Jinping; Zeldin, Lee M.

Subjects: 2026 midterm elections; Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies; China, President; Citizenship; Commercial refrigeration regulations; Cuba, political and economic stability; District of Columbia, beautification efforts; District of Columbia, law enforcement

improvement efforts; District of Columbia, planned triumphal arch construction; Election security and integrity, strengthening efforts; Environmental Protection Agency; Federal regulations, reduction efforts; Food markets and prices; Grocery costs; Inflation; Iran, commercial transit through Strait of Hormuz; Iran, diplomatic engagement with U.S.; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Iran, U.S. military operations; Job creation and growth; Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, renovation work; National Economic Council; Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act; Stock market; Tariffs; U.S. Secret Service; White House Ballroom construction project.

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