

TOP TEN REASONS TO

D U M P
T R U M P
IN 2020

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#1: THE LIES

WHY WOULD IT BE disastrous if Trump wins in 2020? Let's start with the lies. The constant, brazen, bald-faced lies he lets fly day in and day out, to the point where we can hardly believe a single word of what he says or tweets. As of August 5, 2019, Donald Trump has managed to lie an average of thirteen times per day since he took office.¹ That's 12,019 false statements. Trump lies. About everything from President Barack Obama not being born in the United States to supposedly wiretapping his phones in Trump Tower, to losing the popular vote due to voter fraud, to fake praise from the Boy Scouts—the lies keep coming. Objective facts don't seem to matter to Trump at all. He makes up the world as he goes along, citing facts that aren't facts. It doesn't matter as long as they meet his agenda of always being the hero, of always winning, of always being right.

Many have been simply ludicrous and ridiculously transparent. At his energy speech in Monaca, Pennsylvania, he proudly stated: "And we have the cleanest air and water we've ever had in our country right now. The cleanest we've ever had."² This is totally false. In 2018, three of the six pollutants identified by the Clean Air Act as toxic to human health were in fact higher than they were before Trump took office.³

And Sharpie-gate! To cover his blunder of including Alabama in the states threatened by Hurricane Dorian (Alabama was *not* at risk, according to both the National Weather Service and National Hurricane Center), he held up his Sharpie-altered weather map to show how correct he'd been about the storm's path. He also insisted on the weather bureau retracting their statement that Alabama was not at risk. As if that's not frightening enough, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued a statement disavowing the comment. Where are our checkpoints if federal agencies can be bullied into swearing that the emperor's wearing new clothes (made in the US)? What—and whom—can we believe?

The lies get more dangerous. One of the things Trump misleads his followers about the most is immigration and our need to keep rapists,

gangs, criminals, and rapists outside our borders (when very few of those are attributed to immigrants) and the border wall he promised his voters during his 2016 campaign. The most common falsehood he's told was that the border wall was already being built by the government (first Mexico's, then ours), when only maintenance and minimal additions had been done. Yet now that lie will become a reality. He's taking nearly \$4 billion to build 175 miles of his wall by gutting Pentagon funds previously designated for military construction projects, including military base schools, "to boost his own ego," as Senator Chuck Schumer said.⁴

What about the economy being "the best it's ever been"? Wrong. Growth since 2009 is 25 percent, which doesn't come close to the best. In the 1980s, growth was 38 percent, and in the 1990s, it was 43 percent. Sure, unemployment is way down. But that's not because everyone's happily digging coal, drilling oil, and building cars to meet EPA emissions rollbacks. It's because people are dropping out of the workforce, either giving up or become card-carrying members of the gig economy.⁵

Trump has also lied about the Mueller "witch hunt." He claimed the cost to citizens was \$40 million during the two years of the inquiry, when the cost was closer to \$12 million.⁶ He tweeted that "Robert Mueller would have brought charges, if he had ANYTHING, but there were no charges to bring!" Again, not true. Mueller's hands were tied by longstanding Justice Department guidelines stating that a sitting president can't be indicted. (More about the Russia investigation in #10.)

Now, from the Democratic perspective, it's very clear how often Trump makes false claims. The real problem lies within the fact that most of his supporters seem to believe the majority of his lies (and this from a base dominated by evangelical Christians, who are taught that lying is a sin). This has a lot to do with where people get their news and information, and whether those sources are actually credible, something not always considered. People tend to get their news from sources they agree with.⁷

Trump has coined the term "Fake News" to combat reports on his falsehoods, instead accusing credible news sources of telling falsehoods about his falsehoods. This tangled mess of accusations has only made the situation more difficult.

We also have to consider that his base knows he's lying but doesn't care. This in turn can be due to the following reasons:

- the lies confirm their beliefs about issues such as immigration and the need to do something about it;
- the truth of what he says doesn't matter to them nearly as much as the indication that he believes as they do;
- he is achieving the policies they've wanted for so long in social and policy issues; and
- the belief that "we're winning."

Researchers have found that Republicans are more likely than Democrats or Independents to consider outright lying morally acceptable for politicians, a belief primarily driven by Trump right-wing supporters' endorsement of his authoritarianism. In one study, participants were given three scenarios. In all three, a politician lied about an upcoming increase in the unemployment rate. In one scenario, the lie was overt. In another, the lie was by omission. Another used a truthful statement to mislead. Participants then rated each statement from ethical to unethical, dishonest to honest, and immoral to moral. They then indicated their party affiliation. The results were as stated above. When it comes to Trump's base, he can get away with lying and still retain their support.⁸

Democratic discourse is only possibly if everyone agrees on the basic facts of the world around them. Opinions can vary, but not facts. But with each of Trump's lies, the foundation teeters. There has been conjecture about why Trump lies—everything from being a pathological liar, to being just plain deceitful and dishonest, to not even knowing the difference between facts and the world he wants to see. No matter the reason, he's dangerous. He has the power to spread misinformation and convince vulnerable people that it's all true. And he does spread misinformation, largely through Twitter. Never before in our country's history has a president had such direct, unfiltered, and immediate access to the public.

What can we do? As good citizens, we cannot swallow all that's fed us. We must investigate, research, and discuss ideas, leaders, and actions. We need to read, listen, think, speak out. We don't have to get Trump to admit the truth. That won't happen. But we can't stay quiet. We can't let it go. The presidency has been revered and respected throughout history, and we cannot allow a man like Donald Trump to continue defacing the reputation of this great nation.

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