

White House Press Secretary Holds First Briefing

Auto-transcribed by <https://aliceapp.ai> on Tuesday, 28 Jan 2025.

Synced media and text playback available on this page:

https://aliceapp.ai/recordings/kq3Uj70_BdLPMFHyw8xuAi62RtJmnVhc.

Words	8,516
Duration	00:46:46
Recorded on	Unknown date
Uploaded on	2025-01-28 19:34:31 UTC
At	Unknown location
Using	Uploaded to aliceapp.ai

Speakers:

Karoline Leavitt - 72.32%

Mike Allen - 4.6%

Axios reporter

Matt Boyle - 2.97%

Breitbart reporter

Zeke Miller - 4.67%

Reporter E - 5.16%

Reporter F - 3.22%

Peter Alexander - 3.86%

NBC reporter

Reporter H - 1.83%

Reporter I - 1.36%

Notes:

No notes.

Karoline Leavitt

00:00:00

Good afternoon, everybody. How are we? Good to see all of you. It's an honor to be here with all of you. A lot of familiar faces in the room, a lot of new faces. And President Trump is back and the golden age of America has most definitely begun. The Senate has already confirmed five of President Trump's exceptional cabinet nominees.

Karoline Leavitt

00:00:23

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, CIA Director John Ratcliffe, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, and Treasury Secretary Scott Besant. It is imperative that the Senate continues to confirm the remainder of the President's well qualified nominees as quickly as possible. As you have seen during the past week, President Trump is hard at work fulfilling the promises that he made to the American people on the campaign trail.

Karoline Leavitt

00:00:50

Since taking the oath of office, President Trump has taken more than 300 executive actions, secured nearly \$1 trillion U.S. in investments, deported illegal alien rapists, gang members and suspected terrorists from our homeland, and restored common sense to the federal government. I want to take a moment to go through some of these extraordinary actions.

Karoline Leavitt

00:01:15

On day one, President Trump declared a national emergency at our southern border to end the four year long invasion of illegal aliens under the previous administration. Additionally, President Trump signed an executive order to end, catch and release and finish construction of his effective border wall. By using every lever of his federal power, President Trump has sent a loud and clear message to the entire America will no longer tolerate illegal immigration and this president expects that every nation on this planet will cooperate with the repatriation of their citizens as proven by this weekend when President Trump swiftly directed his team to issue harsh and effective sanctions and tariffs on the Colombian government upon hearing they were denied a US Military aircraft full of their own citizens who were deported by this administration.

Karoline Leavitt

00:02:12

Within hours, the Colombian government agreed to all of President Trump's demands,

proving America is once again respected on the world stage. So to foreign nationals who are thinking about trying to illegally enter the United States, think again. Under this president, you will be detained and you will be deported Every day. Americans are safer because of the violent criminals that President Trump's administration is removing from our communities.

Karoline Leavitt

00:02:43

On January 23, ICE New York arrested a Turkish national for entry without inspection who is a known or suspected terrorist. On January 23rd, ICE San Francisco arrested a citizen of Mexico unlawfully present in the United States who has been convicted of continuous sexual abuse of a child aged 14 years or younger. ICE St Paul has arrested a citizen of Honduras who was convicted of fourth degree criminal sexual conduct with a minor.

Karoline Leavitt

00:03:16

ICE Buffalo arrested a citizen of Ecuador who has been convicted of rape. ICE Boston arrested a citizen of the Dominican Republic who has a criminal conviction for second degree murder. This criminal was convicted of murder for beating his pregnant wife to death front of her 5 year old son and Ice St. Paul also arrested a citizen of Mexico who was convicted of possessing pornographic material of a minor on a work computer.

Karoline Leavitt

00:03:45

These are the heinous individuals that this administration is removing from American communities every single day and to the brave state and local law enforcement officers, CBP and ICE agents who are helping in the facilitation of this deportation operation. President Trump has your back and he is grateful for your hard work. On the economic front, President Trump took immediate action to lower costs for families who are suffering from four long years of the Biden administration's destructive and inflationary policies.

Karoline Leavitt

00:04:18

President Trump ordered the heads of all executive departments and agencies to help deliver emergency price relief to the American people, untangle our economy from Biden's regulatory constraints and end the reckless war on American energy. President Trump also signed sweeping executive orders to end the weaponization of government and restore common sense to the federal bureaucracy.

Karoline Leavitt

00:04:43

He directed all federal agencies to terminate illegal diversity, equity and inclusion programs to help return America to a merit based society. President Trump also signed an executive order declaring it is now the policy of the federal government that there are only two sexes, male and female. Sanity has been restored. Before I take your questions, I

would like to point out to all of you once again have access to the most transparent and accessible president in American history.

Karoline Leavitt

00:05:16

There has never been a President who communicates with the American people and the American press corps as openly and authentically as the 45th and now 47th President of the United States. This past week, President Trump has held multiple news conferences, gaggled on Air Force One multiple times, and sat down for a two part interview on Fox News, which aired last week.

Karoline Leavitt

00:05:41

As Politico summed it up best, Trump is everywhere again. And that's because President Trump has a great story to tell about the legendary American revival that is well underway. And in keeping with this revolutionary media approach that President Trump deployed during the campaign, the Trump White House will speak to all media outlets and personalities, not just the legacy media who are seated in this room because according to recent polling from Gallup, Americans trust in mass media has fallen to a record low.

Karoline Leavitt

00:06:16

Millions of Americans, especially young people, have turned from traditional television outlets and newspapers to consume their news from podcasts, blogs, social media and other independent outlets. It's essential to our team that we share President Trump's message everywhere and adapt this White House to the new media landscape in 2025. To do this, I am excited to announce the following changes will be made to this historic James S.

Karoline Leavitt

00:06:44

Brady briefing room where Mr. Brady's legacy will endure. This White House believes strongly in the First Amendment, so it's why our team will work diligently to restore the press passes of the 440 journalists whose passes were wrongly revoked by the previous administration. We're also opening up this briefing room to new media voices who produce news related content and whose outlet is not already represented by one of the seats in this room.

Karoline Leavitt

00:07:12

We welcome independent journalists, podcasters, social media influencers and content creators to apply for credentials to cover this White House. And you can apply now on our new website, whitehouse.gov/newmedia starting today, this seat in the front of the room will which is usually occupied by the Press Secretary's staff will be called the New Media seat.

My team will review the applications and give credentials to new media applicants who meet our criteria and pass United States Secret Service requirements to enter the White House complex. So in light of these announcements, our first questions for today's briefing will go to these new media members whose outlets, despite being some of the most viewed news websites in the country, have not been given seats in this room.

Karoline Leavitt

00:08:03

And before I turn to questions, I do have news directly from the President of the United States that was just shared with me in the Oval Office. From President Trump directly, an update on the New Jersey drones. After research and study the drones that were flying over New Jersey in large numbers were authorized to be flown by the FAA for research and various other reasons.

Karoline Leavitt

00:08:27

Many of these drones were also hobbyists, recreational and private individuals that enjoy flying drones. In time it got worse due to curiosity. This was not the enemy. A statement from the President of the United States to start this briefing with some news and with that I will turn it over to questions and we will begin with our new media members.

Karoline Leavitt

00:08:50

Mike Allen from Axios, Matt Boyle from Breitbart. Mike, why don't you go ahead?

Mike Allen

00:08:54

Thank you very much, Caroline. Does the President see anything fishy about deepsea, either its origins or its cost? And could China's ability to make these models quicker, cheaper, affect our thinking about expanding generation data Centers? Trip Manufacturing?

Karoline Leavitt

00:09:11

Ms. Sure. The President was asked about Deep Sea last night on Air Force One when he gaggled for I think the third or fourth time throughout the weekend with members of the traveling press corps. The the President said that he believes that this is a wake up call to the American AI industry.

Karoline Leavitt

00:09:27

The last administration sat on their hands and allowed China to rapidly develop this AI program. And so President Trump believes in restoring American AI dominance. And that's why he took very strong executive action this past week to sign executive orders to roll back some of the onerous regulations on the AI industry. And, and President Trump has

also proudly appointed the first AI and crypto czar at this White House, David Sacks, whom I spoke with yesterday, very knowledgeable on this subject.

Karoline Leavitt

00:09:56

And his team is here working every single day to ensure American AI dominance. As for the national security implications, I spoke with NSC this morning. They are looking into what those may be. And when I have an update, I will share it with you. Mike.

Mike Allen

00:10:09

Carolyn, you say restore US Dominance. Is there a fear that the US either is fallen or has fallen behind? And how would the president make sure the US Stays ahead?

Karoline Leavitt

00:10:19

No, the president is confident that we will restore American dominance in air.

Matt Boyle

00:10:23

So, Caroline, first off, thank you to you and President Trump for actually giving voices to media outlets that represent millions and millions of Americans. The thing I would add, I've got a two part question for you. The first is can you expand upon what steps the White House is going to take to bring more voices, not less, which is what our founder Andrew Breitbart believed in, into this room where they rightly belong?

Karoline Leavitt

00:10:48

Yeah, absolutely. And as I said in my opening statement, Matt, it is a priority of this White House to honor the First Amendment. And it is a fact that Americans are consuming their news media from various different platforms, especially young people. And as the youngest press secretary in history, thanks to President Trump, I take great pride in opening up this room to new media voices to share the President's message with as many Americans as possible.

Karoline Leavitt

00:11:14

In doing so, number one, we will ensure that outlets like yours, Axios and Breitbart, which are widely respected and viewed outlets, have an actual seat in this room every day. We also again, encourage anybody in this country, whether you are a TikTok content creator, a blogger, a podcaster, if you are producing legitimate news content, no matter the medium, you will be allowed to apply for press credentials to this White House.

Karoline Leavitt

00:11:41

And as I said earlier, our new media website is [whitehouse.gov/newmedia](https://www.whitehouse.gov/newmedia). And so we

encourage people to apply again as long as you are creating news related content of the day and you're a legitimate independent journalist, you're welcome to cover this White House.

Matt Boyle

00:11:59

And secondly, Caroline, you laid out several of the actions that President Trump has taken. Obviously, stark contrast to the previous administration. A break that speed from President Trump. Can we expect that pace to continue as the first hundred days moves along.

Karoline Leavitt

00:12:14

Here and beyond that, Absolutely. There's no doubt President Trump has always been the hardest working man in politics. I think that's been proven. Over the past week. This president has again signed more than 300 executive orders. He's taken historic action. I gaggled aboard Air Force One to mark the first 100 days of this administration, 4pm last Friday, our first hundred hours rather.

Karoline Leavitt

00:12:36

And this president did more in the first hundred hours than the previous president did in the first 100 days. So President Trump, I think you can all expect for him to continue to work at this breakneck speed. So I hope you're all ready to work very hard. I know that we are. Zeke Miller, Thanks, Caroline.

Zeke Miller

00:12:52

A question that we've asked your predecessors of both parties in this job. When you're up here in this briefing room speaking to the American public, do you view yourself and your role as speaking on advocating on behalf of the president or providing the unvarnished truth that is not to lie, not to obfuscate to the American people?

Karoline Leavitt

00:13:09

Ms. I commit to telling the truth from this podium every single day. I commit to speaking on behalf of the president of the United States. That is my job. And I will say it's very easy to speak truth from this podium when you have a president who is implementing policies that are wildly popular with the American people.

Karoline Leavitt

00:13:26

And that's exactly what this administration is doing. It's correcting the lies and the wrongs of the past four years, many of the lies that have been told to your faces in this very briefing room. I will not do that. But since you brought up truth seek, I would like to point

out, while I vow to provide the truth from this podium, we ask that all of you in this room hold yourselves to that same standard.

Karoline Leavitt

00:13:47

We know for a fact there have been lies that have been pushed by many legacy media outlets in this country about this president, about his family, and we will not accept that. We will call you out when we feel that your reporting is wrong or there is misinformation about this White House. So, yes, I will hold myself to the truth and I expect everyone in this room to do the same.

Zeke Miller

00:14:09

And Carol, I just had a substantive question yesterday. The White House Office of Management and Budget directed across the board freeze some exceptions for individual assistance we understand, to federal grants. It's caused a lot of confusion around the country, Head Start providers among providers, services to homeless veterans, Medicaid providers, states saying they're having trouble accessing the portal.

Zeke Miller

00:14:33

Could you help us clear up some confusion, give some certainty to folks and Also, is that uncertainty, how does that uncertainty service the president's voters?

Karoline Leavitt

00:14:42

Well, I think there's only uncertainty in this room amongst the media. There's no uncertainty in this building. So let me provide the certainty and the clarity that all of you need. This is not a blanket pause on federal assistance and grant programs from the Trump administration. Individual assistance that includes. I'm not naming everything that's included, but just to give you a few examples, Social Security benefits, Medicare benefits, food stamps, welfare benefits, assistance that is going directly to individuals will not be impacted by this pause.

Karoline Leavitt

00:15:14

And I want to make that very clear to any Americans who are watching at home who may be a little bit confused about some of the media reporting this administration. If you are receiving individual assistance from the federal government, you will still continue to receive that. However, it is the responsibility of this president and this administration to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

Karoline Leavitt

00:15:34

That is something that President Trump campaigned on. That's why he has launched doge,

the Department of Government Efficiency, who is working alongside omb, and that's why OMB sent out this memo last night, because the president signed an executive order directing OMB to do just this. And the reason for this is to ensure that every penny that is going out the door is not conflicting with the executive orders and actions that this president has taken.

Karoline Leavitt

00:15:59

So what does this pause mean? It means no more funding for illegal DEI programs. It means no more funding for the Green New scam that has cost American taxpayers tens of billions of dollars. It means no more funding for transgenderism and wokeness across our federal bureaucracy and agencies. No more funding for Green New Deal social engineering policies.

Karoline Leavitt

00:16:21

Again, people who are receiving individual assistance, you will continue to receive that. And President Trump is looking out for you by issuing this pause because he is being good steward of your taxpayer dollars. Thanks, Caroline. Sure. How long is this pause going to last? And how is the Trump administration recommending that organizations that rely on federal funding make payroll, pay their rent in the meantime?

Karoline Leavitt

00:16:46

It is a temporary pause. And the Office of Management and Budget is reviewing the federal funding that has been going out the door. Again, not for individual assistance, but for all of these other programs that I mentioned. I also spoke with the incoming director of OMB this morning, and he told me to tell all of you that the line to his office is open for other federal government agencies across the board.

Karoline Leavitt

00:17:08

And if they feel that programs are necessary and in line with the president's agenda, then the Office of Management and Budget will review those policies. I think this is a very responsible measure. Again, the Past four years, we've seen the Biden administration spend money like drunken sailors. It's a big reason we've had inflation crisis in this country.

Karoline Leavitt

00:17:26

And it's incumbent upon this administration to make sure again, that every penny is being accounted for. Honestly, why impose this pause with so little notice? Why not give organizations more time to plan for the fact that they are about to lose, in some cases, really crucial federal funding, at least for a period of time?

There was notice. It was the executive order that the President signed. There's also a freeze on hiring, as you know, regulatory freeze, and there's also a freeze on foreign aid. And this is, again, incredibly important to ensure that this administration is taking into consideration how hard the American people are working and their tax dollars actually matter to this administration.

Karoline Leavitt

00:18:08

You know, just during this pause, Doge and OMB have actually found that there was \$37 million that was about to go out the door to the World Health Organization, which is an organization, as you all know, that President Trump, with the swipe of his pen and that executive order is, no longer wants the United States to be a part of.

Karoline Leavitt

00:18:26

So that wouldn't be in line with the president's agenda. Doge and OMB also found that there was about to be 50 million taxpayer dollars that went out the door to fund condoms in Gaza. That is a preposterous waste of taxpayer money. So that's what this pause is focused on, being good stewards of tax dollars.

Karoline Leavitt

00:18:43

And so this doesn't affect Meals on Wheels or Head Start or disaster aid. Again, it does not affect individual assistance that's going to Americans to follow up on. Nancy, do you think there will be a list of who is affected and how much money is affected?

Reporter E

00:18:57

How will these contractors and organizations know.

Karoline Leavitt

00:19:00

If they are actually having their funding frozen? And then secondly, if you're willing, can you just clarify, is the end goal of this to essentially challenge Congress or to prove that the president can withhold federal funding? In other words, is this an attempt to pick a fight to prove that he can do this?

Karoline Leavitt

00:19:19

No, absolutely not. As it says right here in the memo, which I have, and I'd encourage all of you to read it, it says the American people elected President Trump to be the President of the United States and gave him a mandate to increase the impact of every federal dollar. This memo requires federal agencies to identify and review all federal financial assistance programs in supporting activities consistent with the president's policies and requirements.

The American people gave President Trump an overwhelming mandate on November 5th, and he's just trying to ensure that the tax money going out the door in this very bankrupt city actually aligns with the will and the priorities of the American people. So will there be a lot of money?

Mike Allen

00:19:56

Yes. Welcome.

Reporter F

00:19:58

You look great.

Mike Allen

00:19:59

You're doing a great job. You talked about transparency, and some of us in this room know how just transparent President Trump has been the last five or six years. I think you'll be the same. My question is, do you think this latest incident with the president of Colombia is indicative of the global powerful respect they have for President Trump moving forward, not only to engage in economic diplomacy with these countries, but also world peace?

Karoline Leavitt

00:20:29

Absolutely. I'll echo the answer that the president gave on Air Force One last night when he was asked a very similar question by one of your colleagues in the media. This signifies peace through strength is back. And this president will not tolerate illegal immigration into America's interior. And he expects every nation on this planet again to cooperate with the repatriation of their citizens who illegally entered into our country and broke America's laws.

Karoline Leavitt

00:20:57

Won't be tolerated. And as you saw, the Colombian government quickly folded and agreed to all of President Trump's demands. Flights are underway. Once again.

Reporter E

00:21:06

Two questions on deportations, if I may. President Trump had said on the campaign trail that he would deport pro Hamas students who are here on visas. And on his first day in office, he signed an executive order that said the US Must ensure that admitted aliens and aliens otherwise already present in the US do not bear hostile attitudes towards the citizens, culture, government, institutions, or founding principles.

Reporter E

00:21:31

So should we take this executive order as Trump saying he would be open to deporting those students who are here on visas but hold pro Hamas sympathies.

Zeke Miller

00:21:40

Ms.

Karoline Leavitt

00:21:40

The President is open to deporting individuals who have broken our nation's immigration laws. So if they are here illegally, then certainly he is open to deporting them. And that's what this administration is hard at work at doing. We receive data from DHS and from ICE every single day. From what we hear on the ground, ICE agents are feeling incredibly empowered right now because they actually have a leader in this building who is supporting them in doing their jobs that they were hired to do, which is to detain, arrest and deport illegal criminals who have invaded our nation's borders over the past four years.

Karoline Leavitt

00:22:15

That's what the president is committed to seeing. Peter Carol, very quickly, just following up.

Peter Alexander

00:22:19

On the question on immigration. President Trump, during the course of the campaign in 2024, said the following about illegal immigration. He said, they're going back home where they belong. And we start with the criminals. There are many, many criminals. NBC News has learned that ICE arrested 1179 undocumented immigrants on Sunday. But nearly half of them, 566 of the migrants, appear to have no prior criminal record besides entering the country illegally.

Peter Alexander

00:22:43

Is the president still focused exclusively which is a civil crime? It's not criminal, it's a federal crime. So I'm asking though he said he was going to focus on those violent offenders first, so his violent offenders no longer the predicate for these people to be deported.

Karoline Leavitt

00:22:58

The President has said countless times on the campaign trail, I've been with him at the rallies, I know you've been there covering them too, Peter. That he is focused on launching the largest mass deportation operation in American history of illegal criminals. And if you are an individual, a force foreign national who illegally enters the United States of America, you are by definition a criminal.

And so therefore you are subject deportation.

Peter Alexander

00:23:20

I apologize for interrupting. So to be clear, it's not violent criminals do not receive precedence in terms of the deportations taking place.

Karoline Leavitt

00:23:26

The President has also said two things can be true at the same time. We want to deport illegal criminals, illegal immigrants from this country. But the President has said that of course, the illegal criminal drug dealers, the rapists, the murderers, the individuals who have committed heinous acts on the interior of our country and who have terrorized law abiding American citizens, absolutely those should be the priority of ice.

Karoline Leavitt

00:23:49

But that doesn't mean that the other illegal criminals who entered our nation's borders are off the table.

Peter Alexander

00:23:54

Understood. Then let me ask you a separate question about the confusion that still exists across the country right now as it relates to the freeze or the pause as it's described. President Trump, of course, ran. One of the key policy items was that he was going to lower prices, lower the cost of everything from groceries, as he often said.

Peter Alexander

00:24:09

But in many of the cases, it would seem that some of these moves could raise prices for real Americans on everything from low income heating. That program, childcare programs. Will nothing that the President is doing here in terms of the freeze in these programs raise prices on ordinary Americans.

Karoline Leavitt

00:24:25

What particular actions are you referring to that would.

Peter Alexander

00:24:27

I'm referring to LIHEAP right now. That's the low income heating program, for example, we can talk about. There's no clarity. So I could refer to a lot of them. We don't know what they are specifically. Can you tell us that LIHEAP is not one of those affected?

Karoline Leavitt

00:24:38

So you're asking a hypothetical Based on programs that you can't even identify. What I can tell you, just to.

Peter Alexander

00:24:44

Be clear, since you guys haven't identified, let's do it together, just for Americans at home. Medicaid, is that affected?

Karoline Leavitt

00:24:50

I gave you a list of examples. Social Security, Medicare, welfare benefits, food stamps that will not be impacted by this federal pause. I can get you the full list after this briefing from the Office of Management and Budget. But I do want to address the cost cutting, because that's certainly very important and cutting the cost of living in this country.

Karoline Leavitt

00:25:11

President Trump has taken historic action over the past week to do that. He actually signed a memorandum to deliver emergency price relief for American families, which took a number of actions. I can walk you through those. He also repealed many onerous Biden administration regulations. We know over the past four years, American households has been essentially taxed \$55,000 in regulations from the previous administration.

Karoline Leavitt

00:25:36

President Trump, with the swipe of his pen, rescinded those, which will ultimately put more money back in the pockets of the American people. So deregulation is a big deal. And then when it comes to energy, I mean, the president signed an executive order to declare a national energy emergency here at home, which is going to make America energy dominant.

Karoline Leavitt

00:25:53

We know that energy is one of the number one drivers of inflation. And so that's why the president wants to increase our energy supply to bring down costs for Americans. The Trump energy boom is incoming, and Americans can expect that.

Reporter H

00:26:07

Caroline, I think some of the confusion, I think, may be here with this pause on federal funding. You've made it clear you're not stopping funds that go directly to individuals. But there certainly are lots of organizations that receive funding and then may pass along a benefit. Meals on wheels for one. They provide meals for over 2.2 million seniors.

Reporter H

00:26:23

What is the president's message to Americans out there, many of whom supported him and voted for him, who are concerned that this is going to impact them directly, even if, as you said, the funding isn't coming directly to their wall.

Karoline Leavitt

00:26:34

I have now been asked and answered this question four times to individuals at home who receive direct assistance from the federal government. You will not be impacted by this federal freeze. In fact, OMB just sent out a memo to Capitol Hill with Q and A to clarify some of the questions and the answers that all of you are asking me right now.

Karoline Leavitt

00:26:56

Again, direct assistance will not be impacted. I've been asked and answered about this OMB memo. There's many other topics of the day. Jackie Heiner, going to another organization and then trickling down direct assistance that is in the hands of the American people will not be impacted. Again, as I said to Peter, we will continue to provide that list as it comes to fruition.

Karoline Leavitt

00:27:15

But OMB right now is focused on analyzing the federal government's spending, which is exactly what the American people elected President Trump to do.

Reporter H

00:27:22

And one question that you raised from Carolina on immigration, of the 3,500 arrests ICE has made so far since President Trump came back into office, can you just tell us the numbers? How many have a criminal record versus those who are just in the country illegally?

Karoline Leavitt

00:27:34

All of them, because they illegally broke our nation's laws and therefore they are criminals. As far as this administration goes, I know the last administration didn't see it that way. So it's a big culture shift in our nation to view someone who breaks our immigration laws as a criminal. But that's exactly what they are.

Reporter H

00:27:49

They all have criminal record.

Karoline Leavitt

00:27:50

And welcome to the if they broke our nation's laws, yes, they are criminal, yes.

Thank you.

Reporter I

00:27:55

On stripping security details for figures like John Bolton Pompeo, Brian Hook, Senator Tom Cotton said that he's seen the intelligence and the threat from Iran is real for anyone who played a role in the Soleimani strike. He voiced concern it wouldn't just impact those individuals, but potentially their family, innocent bystanders, friends, anyone who's near them when they're out in public.

Reporter I

00:28:20

Is the president open to reconsidering his decision?

Karoline Leavitt

00:28:25

The president was asked and answered this yesterday, and he was firm in his decision, despite some of the comments that you had referenced. And he's made it very clear that he does not believe American taxpayers should fund security details for individuals who have served in the government for the rest of their lives.

Karoline Leavitt

00:28:39

And there's nothing stopping these individuals that you mentioned from obtaining private security. That's where the president stands on it. I have no updates on that.

Reporter I

00:28:46

Is there any concern that this decision might jeopardize the administration's ability to hire the best advisers for these kinds of positions in the future?

Karoline Leavitt

00:28:56

Ms. No. In fact, I've talked to the presidential personnel office, who has told me directly that there is such an influx of resumes for this administration that it's incredibly overwhelming. There is no lack of talent for the Trump administration. Reagan, Reagan, Ron, would he take any.

Reporter I

00:29:09

Responsibility if anything happened to these people? Would he feel at all that his decision was a factor in that?

Karoline Leavitt

00:29:15

The president was asked and answered this yesterday. I defer you to Caroline Reagan,

since you're in the back row. I hear the back row hasn't gotten much attention in the last four years. So I'm happy to answer your question.

Reporter E

00:29:24

Now I can project does the president intend to permanently cut off funding to NGOs that are bringing illegal foreign nationals to the country, such as Catholic Charities?

Karoline Leavitt

00:29:33

Ms. I am actually quite certain that the president signed an executive order that did just that. And I can point you to that one more, Caroline.

Reporter E

00:29:41

President Trump issued an executive order on increased vetting for Republicans refugees in visa applications. Part of that order was considering an outbreak ban for countries that have deficient screening processes. Has the president considered yet which countries might fall into this category? Are countries like Afghanistan or Syria under consideration for a full ban?

Karoline Leavitt

00:30:00

Yeah. So the president signed an executive order to streamline the vetting for visa applicants and for illegal immigrants in this country who are coming, of course, from other nations. It also directed the secretary, secretary of state to review the process and make sure that other countries around the world are being completely transparent with our nation and the individuals that they are sending here.

Karoline Leavitt

00:30:21

And so the secretary of state has been directed to report back to the president. I haven't seen that report yet. We've only been here for a few days.

Reporter E

00:30:30

One on the freeze in federal funding. Who advised the president on the legality of telling government agencies that they don't have to spend money that was already appropriated by Congress?

Karoline Leavitt

00:30:40

Ms. Well, as the OMB memo states, this is certainly within the confines of the law. So White House counsel's office believes that this is within the president's power to do it and therefore he's doing it.

Okay, so they disagree with lawmakers who say that they don't have the power to freeze this funding.

Karoline Leavitt

00:30:55

Ms. Again, I would point you to the language in the memo that clearly states this is within the law.

Reporter E

00:30:59

And on what happened on Friday night, the administration fired several inspectors general without giving Congress the 30 day legally required notification that they were being fired. I think only two were left at DHS and the DOJ. And then yesterday we saw several prosecutors, I believe 12 fired from the Justice Department who worked on the investigations into the president.

Reporter E

00:31:19

As you know, they are career prosecutors, therefore they are afforded civil service protections. How is the administration deciding which laws to follow and which ones to ignore?

Karoline Leavitt

00:31:30

So it is the belief of this White House in the White House counsel's office that the president was within his executive authority to do that. He is the executive of the executive branch, and therefore he has the power to fire anyone within the executive branch that he wishes to. There's also a case that went before the Supreme Court in 2020 Scala Law, LLC versus the Customs, the bureau protection.

Karoline Leavitt

00:31:54

I would advise you to look at that case, and that's the legality that this White House was wrestling.

Reporter E

00:31:58

So you're confident that if they bring lawsuits against you, those prosecutors who were fired, that they will succeed, we will win in court? Yes. And did he personally direct this, given they worked on the classified documents investigation in the election interference investigation?

Karoline Leavitt

00:32:10

This was a memo that went out by the presidential personnel office and the president is the leader of this White House. So yes, yes.

Carolyn, Carolina, Carolina, Caroline, thank you. Congrats on your first day. Guy on the podium.

Karoline Leavitt

00:32:22

Thank you.

Mike Allen

00:32:24

President Trump ended funding for UNRWA and also designated the Houthis a foreign terrorist organization. Both were decisions that the previous administration had reversed. So here's my question. Will there be an investigation into who gave the previous administration this terrible advice?

Karoline Leavitt

00:32:42

Well, that's a very good point. I haven't heard discussions about such an investigation, but it wouldn't be a bad idea considering that the Houthis certainly are terrorists. They have launched attacks on US Naval ships across this world. And so I think it was a very wise move by this administration to redesignate them as a terrorist group, because they are, and I think it was a foolish decision by the previous administration to do so.

Karoline Leavitt

00:33:05

As for an investigation, I'm not sure about that, but it's not a bad idea.

Reporter F

00:33:08

Josh, thank you for the question. I appreciate it. Can you give us an update on the president's plan for his tariff agenda? He spoke a lot about this yesterday and there's a couple of dates coming up that he's spoken to. Number one, February 1st, he's alluded to both the potential for tariffs for Canada and Mexico, but also China to take effect on those days.

Reporter F

00:33:26

What's he thinking about that? Should those countries expect that on those days?

Karoline Leavitt

00:33:29

Ms. Again, he was asked and answered this question this past weekend when he took a lot of questions from the press, and he said that the Feb. 1 date for Canada and Mexico still holds.

Reporter F

00:33:37

What about the China 10% tariff that he also had mused about last Tuesday going into effect on the same date?

Karoline Leavitt

00:33:43

Ms. Yes, the President has said that he is very much still considering that for February 1st.

Reporter F

00:33:47

Yesterday he talked also about sectoral tariffs on, for instance, pharmaceuticals as well as semiconductor computer chips. He talked about steel, aluminum and copper. What's the timeline on those? Is that a similar sort of coming days thing?

Karoline Leavitt

00:33:59

Yeah. So when the president talked about that in his speech yesterday, that actually wasn't a new announcement. That was within a presidential memorandum that he signed in one of the first days here in the White House on his America first trade agenda. So there's more details on those tariffs in there. As far as a date, I don't have a specific date to read out to you, but the president is committed to implementing tariffs, effectively just like he did in his first term.

Reporter F

00:34:21

And finally, he also was asked on the plane when he gaggled about the potential for a universal tariff. He was asked maybe about 2.5%. There was a report about that. He said he wanted much bigger than that. Should we understand that these tariffs would add up? In other words, you might have country specific tariffs like Canada, Mexico, China.

Reporter F

00:34:36

You might have sectoral tariffs like on pharmaceuticals, as well as a potential universal tariff on top of that. Do these stack on one or the other or would one sort of take precedence over another?

Karoline Leavitt

00:34:47

Ms. All I can point you to is what the President has said on this front, the February 1st date for Canada in Mexico, also the China tariff that he has discussed. He rejected the 2.5% tariff. He said that was a little bit too low. He wants it to be higher. I'll leave it to him to make any decisions on that front.

Reporter F

00:35:02

We don't like minimum what the Mexicans and Canadians have done so far. Do you have any comment on whether that has met the bar and what he wants to see on fentanyl?

Thank you.

Reporter E

00:35:08

Ms.

Karoline Leavitt

00:35:08

I won't get ahead of the President again on advocating to foreign nations on what they should or shouldn't do to get away from these tariffs. The President has made it very clear again that he expects every nation around this world to cooperate with the repatriation of their citizens. And the president has also put out specific statements in terms of Canada and Mexico when it comes to what he expects in terms of border security.

Karoline Leavitt

00:35:32

We have seen a historic level of cooperation from Mexico. But again, as far as I'm still tracking and that was last night, talking to the President directly, February 1st is still on the books. Phil. Thank you.

Zeke Miller

00:35:41

Caroline. Quick programming note and then a question on taxes. Well, in terms of programming, should we expect to see you here every day? How frequently will these press briefings be?

Karoline Leavitt

00:35:51

It is a good question, April. So look, the President, as you know, is incredibly accessible. First day here, he wanted all of you in the Oval Office. You got a 60 minute press conference with the leader of the free world while he was simultaneously signing executive orders, I may add. That's pretty impressive.

Karoline Leavitt

00:36:06

I don't think the previous office holder would be able to pull such a thing off. So look, the president is the best spokesperson that this White House has. And I can assure you that you will be hearing from both him and me as much as possible.

Zeke Miller

00:36:20

And then a question about tax cuts. You know the president has promised to extend the tax cuts from the previous term. I'm keeping curious. Does the president support corresponding spending cuts as some Republicans have called for in Congress? And will the new treasury secretary be leading those negotiations with the Hill, as Mnuchin did during the first administration?

Ms.

Karoline Leavitt

00:36:40

The president is committed to both tax cuts and spending cuts and he has a great team negotiating on his behalf. But there's no better negotiator than Donald Trump and I'm sure he'll be involved in this reconciliation process as it moves forward.

Mike Allen

00:36:54

Caroline, in the announcement that you made last night on the Iron Dome, it said the president had directed that the United States will build this iron Dome.

Reporter E

00:37:04

Yeah.

Mike Allen

00:37:05

When you read into the executive order, it seemed short of that. It asked for a series of studies and reports back to him. Can you tell us whether the president has directed this and if he is as concerned on this issue, why the suspensions that we saw listed by OMB included so many different nuclear programs, non proliferation programs, programs to blend down nuclear weapons and so forth.

Karoline Leavitt

00:37:33

First of all, when it comes to the Iron Dome, the executive order directed the implementation of an iron dome. It also, as you said, kind of directed research and studies to see or how the United States can go about doing this, particularly the Department of Defense. When it comes to the other question that you asked about those specific programs, again I would say this is not a ban.

Karoline Leavitt

00:37:58

This is a temporary pause and a freeze to ensure that all of the money going out from Washington, D.C. is in aligned with the president's agenda. And as the Office of Management and Budget has updates on what will be kick started, once again, I will provide those to you.

Mike Allen

00:38:13

Can I just clarify for a sec what you were saying before on Medicaid? It wasn't clear to me whether you were saying that no Medicaid would be cut off. Obviously a lot of this goes to states before it goes to individuals and so forth. So are you guaranteeing here that no individual now on Medicaid would see a cutoff because of the pause?

I'll check back on that and get back to you. John.

Zeke Miller

00:38:35

Thanks a lot, Caroline. As you know, in the first week that the president was in office signed an executive order as it relates to birthright citizenship, trying to eliminate that. 22 state attorney generals have said that this is unconstitutional. A federal judge has just agreed with their argument. What's the administration's argument for doing away with birthright citizenship.

Karoline Leavitt

00:39:01

The folks that you mentioned have a right to have that legal opinion, but it is in disagreement with the legal opinion of this administration. This administration believes that birthright citizenship is unconstitutional, and that is why President Trump signed that executive order. Illegal immigrants who come to this country and have a child are not subject to the laws of this jurisdiction.

Karoline Leavitt

00:39:23

That's the opinion of this administration. We have already appealed the lawsuit that was filed against this administration, and we are prepared to fight this all the way to the Supreme Court if we have to, because President Trump believes that this is a necessary step to secure our nation's borders and protect our homeland.

Zeke Miller

00:39:41

On foreign policy, Caroline, on foreign policy, if I may, the president's commitment to the NATO defense alliance, is it as strong as the prior administration? Is it the same as when he served as president in his first term in office?

Karoline Leavitt

00:39:57

Ms. As long as NATO pays their fair share. And President Trump has called on NATO allies to increase their defense spending to 5%. You actually saw the head of NATO at Davos last week on Bloomberg Television saying that President Trump is right and if Europe wants to keep itself safe, they should increase their defense spending.

Karoline Leavitt

00:40:15

I would just add that there was no greater ally to our European allies than President Trump in his first term. The world for all nations, Europe and of course, here at home, was much safer because of President Trump's peace through strength, diplomatic approach.

Reporter E

00:40:32

Thank you.

Karoline Leavitt

00:40:32

Thank you, Caroline.

Reporter E

00:40:33

And it's great to finally be called on as well in the briefing room. I appreciate that.

Karoline Leavitt

00:40:37

You're welcome.

Reporter E

00:40:37

Of course, we know President Trump just.

Karoline Leavitt

00:40:38

Got back from North Carolina and California.

Reporter E

00:40:41

Meeting with victims of natural disasters. There's the two year anniversary of the East Palestine, Ohio, toxic train derailment. Does the president have any plans to go visit the victims of that toxic spill or just visit in general?

Karoline Leavitt

00:40:53

Ms. No plans that I can read out for you here. If that changes, I will certainly keep you posted. What I can tell you is that President Trump still talks about his visit to East Palestine, Ohio. That was one of the turning points, I would say, in the previous election campaign where Americans were reminded that President Trump is a man of the people and he as a candidate visited that town that was just derailed by the train derailment, no pun intended, and he offered support and hope, just like I saw the president do this past week.

Karoline Leavitt

00:41:22

It was a purposeful decision by this president on his first domestic trip to go to North Carolina, into California to visit with Americans who were impacted by Hurricane Helene and also by the deadly fires, a red state and a blue state, both of which feel forgotten by the previous administration and the federal government that is now ended under President Trump.

He will continue to put Americans first, whether they're in East Palestine, in Pacific Palisades or in North Carolina.

Zeke Miller

00:41:51

Thank you, Caroline. On California, could you please clarify what the military did with the water last night as referenced in the president's truth social post?

Karoline Leavitt

00:41:59

Ms. The water has been turned back on in California and this comes just days after President Trump visited Pacific Palisades and as you all saw, applied tremendous pressure on state and local officials in Pacific Palisades, including Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, to turn on the water and to direct that water to places in the south and in the middle of the state that have been incredibly dry, which has led to the expansion, the rapid expansion of these fires.

Zeke Miller

00:42:28

So could you clarify what the military's role was, where the water came, came from, and how it got there?

Karoline Leavitt

00:42:33

Again, the Army Corps of Engineers has been on the ground in California to respond to the devastation from these wildfires. And I would point out that just days after President Trump visited the devastation from these fires, the water was turned on. That is because of the pressure campaign he put on state and local officials there who clearly lack all common sense.

Karoline Leavitt

00:42:54

And I will never forget being at that roundtable with the president last week and hearing the frustration in the voices of Pacific Palisades residents who feel as though their government has just gone insane. Before President Trump showed up on the scene, Karen Bass was telling private property owners that they would have to wait 18 months to access their private property.

Karoline Leavitt

00:43:14

So this administration, the president and his team that's on the ground in California, Rick Grinnell, who he has designated to oversee this great crisis, will continue to put pressure, pressure on Karen Bass and state and local officials to allow residents to access their properties. This is a huge part of it. These residents want to take part in their own clearing out of their properties.

They should be able to do that. It's the United States of America. What happened to our freedom? Clearly, it's gone in California, but not anymore under President Trump.

Matt Boyle

00:43:41

April, Caroline, welcome to the briefing room.

Karoline Leavitt

00:43:44

Thank you.

Matt Boyle

00:43:44

Several questions, One on the pause, will minority serving institutions, institutions, preferably colleges and universities, have those monies held back temporarily at this moment?

Karoline Leavitt

00:43:56

Again, I have not seen the entire list because this memo was just sent out. So I will provide you all with updates as we receive them. Okay.

Matt Boyle

00:44:05

Also secondly, when it comes to immigration, there is this southern border focus what happens to those who overstayed their visas that is part of the broken immigration system. In 2023, there was a report by the Biden administration Homeland Security Department that said overstays of visas for three times more than usual. Will there be a focus on the overstays for visas as well?

Karoline Leavitt

00:44:29

If an individual is overstaying their visa, they are therefore an illegal immigrant residing in this country and they are subject to deportation.

Matt Boyle

00:44:36

And also lastly, as we're dealing with anti dei, anti rope efforts, we understand this administration could be thinking about celebrating Black History Month. Have you got any word on that, anything that you can offer to us?

Karoline Leavitt

00:44:49

Ms. As far as I know, this White House certainly still intends to celebrate, and we will continue to celebrate American history and the contributions that all Americans, regardless of race, religion or creed, have made to our great country. And America is back.

Christian daytoff thanks, Caroline.

Mike Allen

00:45:03

Just real quick, you mentioned the inflation executive order the president signed, but egg prices have skyrocketed since President Trump took office.

Zeke Miller

00:45:11

So what specifically is he doing to lower those costs for Americans?

Karoline Leavitt

00:45:15

Really glad you brought this up because there is a lot of reporting out there that is putting the onus on this White House for the increased cost of eggs. I would like to point out to each and every one of you that in 2024, when Joe Biden was in the Oval Office or upstairs in the residence sleeping, I'm not so sure egg prices increased 65% in this country.

Karoline Leavitt

00:45:37

We also have seen the cost of everything, not just eggs, bacon, groceries, gasoline have increased because of the inflationary policies of the last administration. As far as the egg shortage, what's also contributing to that is that the Biden administration and the Department of Agriculture directed the mass killing of more than 100 million chickens, which has led to a lack of chicken supply in this country, therefore lack of egg supply, which is leading to the shortage.

Karoline Leavitt

00:46:03

So I will leave you with this point. This is an example of why it's so incredibly important that the Senate moves swiftly to confirm all of President Trump's nominees, including his nominee for the United States Department of Agriculture, Brooke Rollins, who is already speaking with Kevin Hassett, who's leading the economic team here at the White House on how we can address the egg shortage in this country.

Karoline Leavitt

00:46:24

As for costs, I laid out cost costs. I laid out the plethora of ways that President Trump has addressed saving costs for the American people over the past week. He looks forward to continuing to doing that in the days ahead. Are many paid portals down in all 50 states.