

Roaring economy gives Trump bragging rights for State of the Union address

The president has worked to protect employers from an encroaching Washington. He is both pro-jobs and pro-business — and we're all better off for it.

By Alfredo Ortiz

President Trump will deliver his first State of the Union address next week, chronicling the many successes of 2017. You can expect the economy to loom large — and for good reason.

With his pro-growth agenda, Trump has delivered economic prosperity to millions of Americans. Job creators and job-seekers alike are benefiting from lower taxes, fewer regulations, and an unwavering commitment to free-market principles not seen since the Reagan years.

America's unemployment rate stands at just over 4% — the lowest level since 2000. The S&P 500 rose 18% in Trump's first 11 months, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average recently reached a new record of 26,000. The future's even brighter: An International Monetary Fund reported released this week projects the U.S. economy will grow nearly 3% in 2018. It's a far cry from the Obama years that ended at a lowly 1.9% rate in 2016.

But even such glowing economic indicators pale in comparison to public opinion. Consumer confidence remains near a 17-year high, as many Americans plan to increase the spending that propels our free-market economy. In December, the share of Americans planning to buy refrigerators and washing ma-

chines — a key consumer barometer — reached its highest point since the 1970s. More than 60% of Americans plan to take a vacation in the next six months, signaling widespread optimism.

In the words of Conference Board director Lynn Franco: "Consumers' expectations remain at historically strong levels, suggesting economic growth will continue well into 2018."

Even as Democrats and their media allies fan the flames of anti-Trump "resistance," the American people are in love with the Trump economy. A whopping two-thirds of Americans describe the economy as "very or fairly good."

And the recently passed Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will only make it better. Well over 200 U.S. employers have publicly announced pay hikes, 401(k) increases, and generous bonuses because of their new tax savings. Apple now plans to contribute \$350 billion to the U.S. economy over the next five years, opening a new campus and creating 20,000 new jobs. Wal-Mart has already increased the starting wage rate for all of its hourly associates to \$11 an hour, in addition to expanding maternity and parental leave.

Household names like Apple and Wal-Mart join countless small businesses, many of which plan to use their tax savings to reward employees and grow local communities.

To date, the Republican tax bill has already blessed more than 3 million Americans with bonuses.

Its many beneficiaries can thank Trump, whose private-sector experience has given him a unique understanding of pro-growth policymaking. Since his inauguration, the Trump administration has worked diligently to protect employers from an encroaching Washington, knowing that empowering job creators inevitably empowers the working Americans depending on them for financial security.

To that end, Trump's staff calculates his regulatory rollback — which began on his first day in office — has saved businesses large and small an estimated \$8.1 billion over their lifetime, or \$570 million a year. Combined with lower tax rates and increased deductions, that can make the difference between the red and the black — and helping employees or not.

To quote the late senator and Democratic presidential candidate Paul Tsongas: "You can't be pro-jobs and anti-business."

Trump is both pro-jobs and pro-business — and we're all better off for it. We have plenty to celebrate on Tuesday night because of him.

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