Policy Impact Detail - Trump Administration (Second Term) — INTERIM SNAPSHOT, TERM IN PROGRESS (2025–2026 (partial term; term runs through Jan. 2029))

15 Important Policies / Decisions and their relevance to inequality

Query used to generate the 15-item list

What were the most important decisions, policy changes, or legislation undertaken by the Trump Administration, Second Term, in its first 18 months (January 2025 - mid-2026)? [INTERIM — term in progress through January 2029]

1. One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA, July 2025) - permanently extended the 2017 tax cuts, added new deductions, and reduced Medicaid and SNAP spending.

2. 'Liberation Day' tariffs under emergency authority (April 2025) and successor Section 122 tariffs after the Supreme Court invalidated the original tariffs (February 2026).

3. Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) federal workforce reduction (2025) - eliminated an estimated 200,000-300,000 federal positions.

4. 2025 federal government shutdown, linked in part to disputes over the OBBBA's health-spending reductions.

5. Expanded immigration enforcement and mass deportation operations (2025).

6. H-1B visa fee increased to $100,000 (September 2025).

7. 'Trump Gold Card' visa program (September 2025) - permanent residency pathway for a $1 million investment.

8. Elimination of the de minimis tariff exemption for low-value imported goods.

9. Curtailment of Consumer Financial Protection Bureau operations (2025).

10. Department of Education workforce reduction and restructuring (2025).

11. School choice tax-credit scholarship program (2025, via the OBBBA) - dollar-for-dollar tax credit for contributions funding private-school scholarships.

12. Child Tax Credit made permanent at $2,200 per child (2025, via the OBBBA).

13. Restoration of full bonus depreciation and R&D; expensing for businesses (2025, via the OBBBA).

14. Supreme Court ruling striking down the 2025 IEEPA tariffs as exceeding presidential authority (Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump, February 2026).

15. Termination of federal diversity, equity, and inclusion programs across agencies (2025).

Relevance to Inequality (evaluation of the 15 Important Policies)

#	Policy / Decision	Meaningful impact?	Direction (Favorable To)	Impact
1	One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA, July 2025) - permanently extended the 2017 tax cuts, added new deductions, and reduced Medicaid and SNAP spending.	Yes	Wealthy (independent analysts describe it as sharply regressive; ~10 million more uninsured projected)	High
2	'Liberation Day' tariffs under emergency authority (April 2025) and successor Section 122 tariffs after the Supreme Court invalidated the original tariffs (February 2026).	Yes	Wealthy (regressive consumption-tax-like effect; research finds costs outweigh OBBBA benefits for all but the top decile)	High

#	Policy / Decision	Meaningful impact?	Direction (Favorable To)	Impact
3	Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) federal workforce reduction (2025) - eliminated an estimated 200,000-300,000 federal positions.	Yes	Mixed / Wealthy-leaning (disrupted services many lower- and middle-income households rely on; also displaced federal workers)	Moderate-High
4	2025 federal government shutdown, linked in part to disputes over the OBBBA's health-spending reductions.	No		
5	Expanded immigration enforcement and mass deportation operations (2025).	Yes	Mixed (research found it reduced rather than increased job opportunities for U.S.-born workers in affected sectors)	Low-Moderate
6	H-1B visa fee increased to $100,000 (September 2025).	Yes	Mixed (intended to protect domestic workers; raised costs and disruption for employers and skilled-immigration pipelines)	Low-Moderate
7	'Trump Gold Card' visa program (September 2025) - permanent residency pathway for a $1 million investment.	Yes	Wealthy (a residency pathway priced at $1 million by definition favors wealthy applicants)	Low
8	Elimination of the de minimis tariff exemption for low-value imported goods.	Yes	Wealthy (regressive cost increase concentrated on low-value consumer goods purchases)	Low-Moderate
9	Curtailment of Consumer Financial Protection Bureau operations (2025).	Yes	Wealthy (reduced consumer financial protection enforcement)	Moderate
10	Department of Education workforce reduction and restructuring (2025).	Yes	Mixed / Wealthy-leaning (disrupted federal education funding and oversight capacity)	Moderate
11	School choice tax-credit scholarship program (2025, via the OBBBA) - dollar-for-dollar tax credit for contributions funding private-school scholarships.	Yes	Wealthy (research on comparable state programs finds benefits concentrated among already-private-school families)	Moderate
12	Child Tax Credit made permanent at $2,200 per child (2025, via the OBBBA).	Yes	Mixed (helps middle-income families; limited benefit for the lowest-income families due to refundability structure)	Moderate
13	Restoration of full bonus depreciation and R&D; expensing for businesses (2025, via the OBBBA).	Yes	Wealthy (favors capital investment and business income)	Moderate
14	Supreme Court ruling striking down the 2025 IEEPA tariffs as exceeding presidential authority (Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump, February 2026).	Yes	Common Man (invalidated a regressive tariff regime, though a narrower successor tariff remains in place)	Moderate
15	Termination of federal diversity, equity, and inclusion programs across agencies (2025).	No		

Narrative Analysis - Items with Meaningful Inequality Impact

Only a subset is expanded here to keep this as a true companion report.

One Big Beautiful Bill Act (2025) - inequality impact [INTERIM]

Signed July 4, 2025, the OBBBA permanently extended the 2017 individual tax cuts that were set to expire, added new temporary deductions (for tips, overtime pay, and seniors), raised the SALT deduction cap to $40,000 for five years, and made the Child Tax Credit's $2,200 level permanent. It financed part of this through reduced Medicaid spending, new SNAP work requirements extending to ages 55-64, and cuts to federal nutrition funding of roughly $186 billion through 2034.

Independent analysts across several organizations reached similar conclusions about its distributional design: the Center for American Progress described it as the largest transfer of wealth from lower- to higher-income households in a single U.S. law, citing a projected 10 million additional uninsured Americans and reduced food assistance for millions, financed alongside tax reductions concentrated at the top of the income distribution. As with the 2001 and 2017 tax cuts scored earlier in this treatise, several of the law's individual provisions are temporary while its corporate- and business-favorable provisions are permanent, a structural pattern this treatise has found consistently correlates with top-concentrated long-run benefit.

Impact rating: High (interim). Consistently characterized by independent analysts as sharply regressive; the assessment may be refined as implementation data accumulates over the remainder of the term.

2025 tariffs (IEEPA and successor authority) - inequality impact [INTERIM]

Beginning in April 2025, the administration imposed tariffs of at least 10% on goods from nearly all countries under emergency economic powers, later raising rates further on specific trading partners. In February 2026, the Supreme Court ruled in Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump that this use of emergency authority exceeded presidential power, requiring roughly $166 billion in collected tariffs to be refunded; the administration subsequently imposed a narrower tariff under different statutory authority.

Tariffs function economically as a consumption tax, since research consistently finds that most of the added cost is passed through to American businesses and consumers rather than absorbed by foreign exporters. Because lower-income households spend a larger share of their income on goods (including many imported consumer products), tariffs of this kind are inherently regressive. The Yale Budget Lab's combined analysis of the OBBBA and the tariffs found that for all but the top decile of the income distribution, the tariffs' costs outweigh the tax law's benefits — a rare instance in this treatise of two major policies from the same term working against each other's stated goals for the same population.

Impact rating: High (interim). A well-documented regressive cost across most of the income distribution, though its legal status remains partially unsettled as of this writing.

DOGE federal workforce reduction (2025) - inequality impact [INTERIM]

The Department of Government Efficiency initiative, launched by executive order in February 2025, aimed to sharply reduce federal employment and spending. Estimates of the resulting workforce reduction range from roughly 200,000 to 300,000 positions eliminated, with some of the largest cuts at the IRS (a quarter of its workforce), the Department of Education, and the Department of Health and Human Services; several agencies subsequently rehired portions of the staff they had cut after operational disruptions.

The inequality relevance runs through both service delivery and employment. Agencies serving lower- and middle-income populations directly (Social Security administration, IRS taxpayer services, veterans' benefits processing) experienced documented disruptions, including delays and the temporary loss of specialized staff later deemed essential enough to rehire. Separately, the displaced federal workers themselves, including many in solidly middle-class positions, experienced sudden income loss. Claimed savings figures from the initiative have been disputed by independent reporting, which found the federal deficit continued to grow over the same period.

Impact rating: Moderate-High (interim). Documented disruption to public services relied upon by lower- and middle-income populations, with disputed net fiscal savings.

Curtailment of Consumer Financial Protection Bureau operations (2025) - inequality impact [INTERIM]

The CFPB, created by the Dodd-Frank Act in 2010 specifically to police predatory lending and financial-product abuses that fell disproportionately on lower- and middle-income borrowers, had its operations substantially halted in 2025 alongside broader deregulatory executive actions.

The inequality relevance mirrors, in reverse, the CFPB's original creation: reduced enforcement capacity for an agency specifically designed to protect financially vulnerable consumers from predatory practices in mortgage servicing, debt collection, and consumer lending removes a protective mechanism that this treatise identified as a meaningful common-household benefit when the agency was created. As with several other items in this interim document, the durable effect will depend on how long this curtailment persists and whether it is reversed by courts, Congress, or a future administration.

Impact rating: Moderate (interim). A direct rollback of a consumer-protection mechanism this treatise scored favorably at its creation.

Sources

- Wikipedia - One Big Beautiful Bill Act (legislative summary and provisions)
- Wikipedia - Tariffs in the second Trump administration
- Center for American Progress - President Trump's 'Big Beautiful Bill' Raises the Fiscal Gap
- Yale Budget Lab - Combined Distributional Effects of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act and of Tariffs
- Tax Foundation - Trump Tariffs Threaten to Offset Much of the 'Big Beautiful Bill' Tax Cuts
- NPR / CNN / Washington Post - reporting on DOGE federal workforce reductions, 2025-2026
- NAACP Legal Defense Fund - President Trump's 'One Big Beautiful Bill Act,' Explained
- Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump (Supreme Court, February 2026) - ruling on IEEPA tariff authority

- Note: this document is an interim snapshot of a term in progress and should be revised upon the term's conclusion in January 2029.