

Trump's Lies vs. Obama's

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In his first 10 months, **Trump** told nearly six times as many falsehoods (103) as **Obama** did during his entire presidency (18).

After we published [a list of President Trump's lies](#) this summer, we heard a common response from his supporters. They said, in effect: *Yes, but if you made a similar list for previous presidents, it would be just as bad.*

We've set out to make that list. Here, you will find our attempt at a comprehensive catalog of the falsehoods that Barack Obama told while he was president. (We also discuss George W. Bush below, although the lack of real-time fact-checking during his presidency made a comprehensive list impossible.)

We applied the same conservative standard to Obama and Trump, counting only demonstrably and substantially false statements. The result: Trump is unlike any other modern president. He seems virtually indifferent to reality, often saying whatever helps him make the case he's trying to make.

In his first 10 months in office, he has told 103 separate untruths, many of them repeatedly. Obama told 18 over his entire eight-year tenure. That's an average of about two a year for Obama and about 124 a year for Trump.

Separately, we have updated our [earlier list of Trump's lies](#), which also includes repeated falsehoods. This article counts only distinct falsehoods for both Trump and Obama.

If we had used a less strict standard, Trump would look even worse by comparison. He makes misleading statements and mild exaggerations – about economic statistics, his political opponents and many other subjects – far more often than Obama. We left out any statement that could be plausibly defended even if many people would disagree with the president's interpretation. We also left out modest quantitative errors, such as Trump's frequent imprecision with numbers.

We have used the word “lies” again here, as we did in our original piece. If anything, though, the word is unfair to Obama and Bush. When they became aware that they had been saying something untrue, they stopped doing it. Obama didn't continue to claim that all Americans would be able to keep their existing health insurance under Obamacare, for example, and Bush changed the way he spoke about Iraq's weapons capability.

Trump is different. When he is caught lying, he will often try to discredit people telling the truth, be they judges, scientists, F.B.I. or C.I.A. officials, journalists or members of Congress. Trump is trying to make truth irrelevant. It is extremely damaging to democracy, and it's not an accident. It's core to his political strategy.

As for Obama: His falsehoods tended to be attempts to make his own policies look better or to overstate a problem he was trying to solve. In a few cases, they seemed to be careless exaggerations he avoided repeating.

Over all, Obama rarely told demonstrable untruths as president. And he appears to have become more careful over time. We counted six straight-up falsehoods in his first year in office. Across his entire second four-year term, we counted the same number, six, only one of which came in his final year in office.

In all, we found 18 different bald untruths from Obama during his presidency. Trump told his 18th separate untruth in his third full week in office, and his list keeps growing.

In fact, Trump tells falsehoods about Obama and his administration more often than Obama told falsehoods about all subjects. Since his inauguration, Trump has told 10 separate untruths about Obama, including false allegations of wiretapping and false descriptions of Obamacare. We counted only two falsehoods Obama told about Bush.

Trump

First 10 months

Jan. 21, 2017. "I wasn't a fan of Iraq. I didn't want to go into Iraq." (He was for an invasion before he was against it.)

Jan. 21, 2017. "A reporter for Time magazine — and I have been on their cover 14 or 15 times. I think we have the all-time record in the history of Time magazine." (Trump was on the cover 11 times and Nixon appeared 55 times.)

Jan. 23, 2017. "Between 3 million and 5 million illegal votes caused me to lose the popular vote." (There's no evidence of illegal voting.)

Jan. 25, 2017. "Now, the audience was the biggest ever. But this crowd was massive. Look how far back it goes. This crowd was massive." (Official aerial photos show Obama's 2009 inauguration was much more heavily attended.)

Jan. 25, 2017. "Take a look at the Pew reports (which show voter fraud.)" (The report never mentioned voter fraud.)

Jan. 25, 2017. "You had millions of people that now aren't insured anymore." (The real number is less than 1 million, according to the Urban Institute.)

Jan. 25, 2017. "So, look, when President Obama was there two weeks ago making a speech, very nice speech. Two people were shot and killed during his speech. You can't have that." (There were no gun homicide victims in Chicago that day.)

Jan. 26, 2017. "We've taken in tens of thousands of people. We know nothing about them. They can say they vet them. They didn't vet them. They have no papers. How can you vet somebody when you don't know anything about them and you have no papers? How do you vet them? You can't." (Vetting lasts up to two years.)

Jan. 26, 2017. "I cut off hundreds of millions of dollars off one particular plane, hundreds of millions of dollars in a short period of time. It wasn't like I spent, like, weeks, hours, less than hours, and many, many hundreds of millions of dollars. And the plane's going to be better." (Most of the cuts were already planned.)

Jan. 28, 2017. "The coverage about me in the @nytimes and the @washingtonpost has been so false and angry that the Times actually apologized to its dwindling subscribers and readers." (It never apologized.)

Jan. 29, 2017. "The Cuban-Americans, I got 84 percent of that vote." (There is no support for this.)

Jan. 30, 2017. "Only 109 people out of 325,000 were detained and held for questioning. Big problems at airports were caused by Delta computer outage." (At least 746 people were detained and processed, and the Delta outage happened two days later.)

Feb. 3, 2017. "Professional anarchists, thugs and paid protesters are proving the point of the millions of people who voted to MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!" (There is no evidence of paid protesters.)

Feb. 6, 2017. "It's gotten to a point where it is not even being reported. And in many cases, the very, very dishonest press doesn't want to report it." (Terrorism has been reported on, often in detail.)

Feb. 6, 2017. "And the previous administration allowed it to happen because we shouldn't have been in Iraq, but we shouldn't have gotten out the way we got out. It created a vacuum, ISIS was formed." (The group's origins date to 2004.)

Feb. 7, 2017. "And yet the murder rate in our country is the highest it's been in 47 years, right? Did you know that? Forty-seven years." (It was higher in the 1980s and '90s.)

Feb. 9, 2017. "Chris Cuomo, in his interview with Sen. Blumenthal, never asked him about his long-term lie about his brave 'service' in Vietnam. FAKE NEWS!" (It was part of Cuomo's first question.)

Feb. 9, 2017. "Sen. Richard Blumenthal...now misrepresents what Judge Gorsuch told him?" (The Gorsuch comments were later corroborated.)

Feb. 10, 2017. "I don't know about it. I haven't seen it. What report is that?" (Trump knew about Flynn's actions for weeks.)

Feb. 12, 2017. "Just leaving Florida. Big crowds of enthusiastic supporters lining the road that the FAKE NEWS media refuses to mention. Very dishonest!" (The media did cover it.)

Feb. 16, 2017. "We got 306 because people came out and voted like they've never seen before so that's the way it goes. I guess it was the biggest Electoral College win since Ronald Reagan." (George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama all won bigger margins in the Electoral College.)

Feb. 16, 2017. "Walmart announced it will create 10,000 jobs in the United States just this year because of our various plans and initiatives." (The jobs are a result of its investment plans announced in October 2016.)

Feb. 16, 2017. "When WikiLeaks, which I had nothing to do with, comes out and happens to give, they're not giving classified information." (Not always. They have released classified information in the past.)

Feb. 16, 2017. "We had a very smooth rollout of the travel ban. But we had a bad court. Got a bad decision." (The rollout was chaotic.)

Feb. 16, 2017. "They're giving stuff — what was said at an office about Hillary cheating on the debates. Which, by the way, nobody mentions. Nobody mentions that Hillary received the questions to the debates." (It was widely covered.)

Feb. 18, 2017. "You look at what's happening in Germany, you look at what's happening last night in Sweden. Sweden, who would believe this?" (Trump implied there was a terror attack in Sweden, but there was no such attack.)

Feb. 24, 2017. "By the way, you folks are in here — this place is packed, there are lines that go back six blocks." (There was no evidence of long lines.)

Feb. 24, 2017. "ICE came and endorsed me." (Only its union did.)

Feb. 24, 2017. "Obamacare covers very few people — and remember, deduct from the number all of the people that had great health care that they loved that was taken away from them — it was taken away from them." (Obamacare increased coverage by a net of about 20 million.)

Feb. 27, 2017. "Since Obamacare went into effect, nearly half of the insurers are stopped and have stopped from participating in the Obamacare exchanges." (Many fewer pulled out.)

Feb. 28, 2017. "The E.P.A.'s regulators were putting people out of jobs by the hundreds of thousands." (There's no evidence that the Waters of the United States rule caused severe job losses.)

Feb. 28, 2017. "We have begun to drain the swamp of government corruption by imposing a five-year ban on lobbying by executive branch officials." (They can't lobby their former agency but can still become lobbyists.)

March 3, 2017. "It is so pathetic that the Dems have still not approved my full Cabinet." (Paperwork for the last two candidates was still not submitted to the Senate.)

March 4, 2017. "Terrible! Just found out that Obama had my 'wires tapped' in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthyism!" (There's no evidence of a wiretap.)

March 7, 2017. "122 vicious prisoners, released by the Obama Administration from Gitmo, have returned to the battlefield. Just another terrible decision!" (113 of them were released by President George W. Bush.)

March 17, 2017. "I was in Tennessee — I was just telling the folks — and half of the state has no insurance company, and the other half is going to lose the insurance company." (There's at least one insurer in every Tennessee county.)

March 22, 2017. “I make the statement, everyone goes crazy. The next day they have a massive riot, and death, and problems.” (Riots in Sweden broke out two days later and there were no deaths.)

March 22, 2017. “NATO, obsolete, because it doesn’t cover terrorism. They fixed that.” (It has fought terrorism since the 1980s.)

March 31, 2017. “We have a lot of plants going up now in Michigan that were never going to be there if I — if I didn’t win this election, those plants would never even think about going back. They were gone.” (These investments were already planned.)

April 11, 2017. “I like Steve, but you have to remember he was not involved in my campaign until very late. I had already beaten all the senators and all the governors, and I didn’t know Steve.” (He knew Steve Bannon since 2011.)

April 12, 2017. “You can’t do it faster, because they’re obstructing. They’re obstructionists. So I have people — hundreds of people that we’re trying to get through. I mean you have — you see the backlog. We can’t get them through.” (At this point, he had not nominated anyone for hundreds of positions.)

April 12, 2017. “The New York Times said the word wiretapped in the headline of the first edition. Then they took it out of there fast when they realized.” (There were separate headlines for print and web, but neither were altered.)

April 12, 2017. “Mosul was supposed to last for a week and now they’ve been fighting it for many months and so many more people died.” (The campaign was expected to take months.)

April 16, 2017. “Someone should look into who paid for the small organized rallies yesterday. The election is over!” (There’s no evidence of paid protesters.)

April 18, 2017. “The fake media goes, ‘Donald Trump changed his stance on China.’ I haven’t changed my stance.” (He did.)

April 21, 2017. “When WikiLeaks came out ... never heard of WikiLeaks, never heard of it.” (He criticized it as early as 2010.)

April 27, 2017. “I want to help our miners while the Democrats are blocking their healthcare.” (The bill to extend health benefits for certain coal miners was introduced by a Democrat and was co-sponsored by mostly Democrats.)

April 28, 2017. “The trade deficit with Mexico is close to \$70 billion, even with Canada it’s \$17 billion trade deficit with Canada.” (The U.S. had an \$8.1 billion trade surplus, not deficit, with Canada in 2016.)

April 28, 2017. “She’s running against someone who’s going to raise your taxes to the sky, destroy your health care, and he’s for open borders — lots of crime.” (Those are not Jon Ossoff’s positions.)

April 29, 2017. “As you know, I’ve been a big critic of China, and I’ve been talking about currency manipulation for a long time. But I have to tell you that during the election, number one, they stopped.” (China stopped years ago.)

April 29, 2017. “We’re also getting NATO countries to finally step up and contribute their fair share. They’ve begun to increase their contributions by billions of dollars, but we are

not going to be satisfied until everyone pays what they owe.” (The deal was struck in 2014.)

May 1, 2017. “Well, we are protecting pre-existing conditions. And it'll be every good — bit as good on pre-existing conditions as Obamacare.” (The bill weakens protections for people with pre-existing conditions.)

May 4, 2017. “Nobody cares about my tax return except for the reporters.” (Polls show most Americans do care.)

May 5, 2017. “We pay the highest taxes anywhere in the world.” (We're not.)

May 8, 2017. “But when I did his show, which by the way was very highly rated. It was high — highest rating. The highest rating he's ever had.” (Colbert's Late Show debut had nearly two million more viewers.)

May 8, 2017. “Director Clapper reiterated what everybody, including the fake media already knows — there is ‘no evidence’ of collusion w/ Russia and Trump.” (Clapper only said he wasn't aware of an investigation.)

May 12, 2017. “Again, the story that there was collusion between the Russians & Trump campaign was fabricated by Dems as an excuse for losing the election.” (The F.B.I. was investigating before the election.)

May 26, 2017. “Just arrived in Italy for the G7. Trip has been very successful. We made and saved the USA many billions of dollars and millions of jobs.” (He's referencing an arms deal that's not enacted and other apparent deals that weren't announced on the trip.)

June 1, 2017. “China will be allowed to build hundreds of additional coal plants. So, we can't build the plants, but they can, according to this agreement. India will be allowed to double its coal production by 2020.” (The agreement doesn't allow or disallow building coal plants.)

June 4, 2017. “At least 7 dead and 48 wounded in terror attack and Mayor of London says there is ‘no reason to be alarmed!’” (The mayor was specifically talking about the enlarged police presence on the streets.)

June 5, 2017. “The Justice Dept. should have stayed with the original Travel Ban, not the watered down, politically correct version they submitted to S.C.” (Trump signed this version of the travel ban, not the Justice Department.)

June 21, 2017. “They all say it's 'nonbinding.' Like hell it's nonbinding.” (The Paris climate agreement is nonbinding — and Trump said so in his speech announcing the withdrawal.)

June 21, 2017. “You have a gang called MS-13. ... We are moving them out of the country by the thousands, by the thousands.” (The real number of gang members deported is smaller.)

June 21, 2017. “Your insurance companies have all fled the state of Iowa.” (They haven't)

June 21, 2017. “If [farmers] have a puddle in the middle of their field ... it's considered a lake and you can't touch it. ... We got rid of that one, too, O.K.?” (The Obama

environmental rule to limit pollution in the country's waters explicitly excludes puddles.)

June 21, 2017. "Gary Cohn just paid \$200 million in tax in order to take this job, by the way." Cohn sold Goldman Sachs stock worth \$220 million.)

June 21, 2017. "We're 5 and 0." (Republicans have won four special elections this year, while a Democrat won one.)

June 21, 2017. "Last week a brand-new coal mine just opened in the state of Pennsylvania, first time in decades, decades." (Another coal mine opened in 2014.)

June 22, 2017. "Former Homeland Security Advisor Jeh Johnson is latest top intelligence official to state there was no grand scheme between Trump & Russia" (Johnson, who had a different title, didn't say that.)

June 23, 2017. "Ratings way down!" (CNN's ratings were at a five-year high at the time.)

June 28, 2017. "Democrats purposely misstated Medicaid under new Senate bill — actually goes up." (Senate bill would have cut the program deeply.)

July 17, 2017. "We've signed more bills — and I'm talking about through the legislature — than any president, ever." (Clinton, Carter, Truman, and F.D.R. had signed more at the same point.)

July 19, 2017. "But the F.B.I. person really reports directly to the president of the United States, which is interesting." (He reports directly to the attorney general.)

July 19, 2017. "She did the uranium deal, which is a horrible thing, while she was secretary of state, and got a lot of money." (There's no evidence Hillary Clinton was actively involved or benefited from the deal.)

July 24, 2017. "It looks like about 45,000 people. You set a record today." (Many fewer than 45,000 were there, and the attendance was not a record.)

July 25, 2017. "We have nearly doubled the number of veterans given approvals to see the doctor of their choice." (The increase was 26 percent.)

July 25, 2017. "Since I took office we have cut illegal immigration on our southern border by record numbers. 78 percent." (The decline began before Trump's inauguration.)

July 28, 2017. "The previous administration enacted an open-door policy to illegal migrants from Central America. 'Welcome in. Come in, please, please.'" (Obama deported millions.)

July 28, 2017. "We have trade deficits with almost every country because we had a lot of really bad negotiators making deals with other countries." (The U.S. has a trade surplus with more than 100 countries.)

July 31, 2017. "2.6 is a number that nobody thought they'd see for a long period of time." (Many experts predicted economic growth at least this high.)

July 31, 2017. "And even the President of Mexico called me — they said their southern border, very few people are coming because they know they're not going to get through our border, which is the ultimate compliment." (Mexico's president says he didn't call Trump.)

Aug. 3, 2017. "The Russia story is a total fabrication." (It's not.)

Aug. 15, 2017. "We want products made in the country. Now, I have to tell you, some of the folks that will leave, they're leaving out of embarrassment because they make their products outside." (People resigned from Trump's business councils over his Charlottesville comments.)

Aug. 22, 2017. "As everybody here remembers, this was the scene of my first rally speech, right?" (Trump's first rally was in New Hampshire.)

Aug. 22, 2017. "We have become an energy exporter for the first time ever just recently." (The U.S. isn't projected to become a net energy exporter until 2026.)

Aug. 22, 2017. "Look back there, the live red lights. They're turning those suckers off fast out there. They're turning those lights off fast. Like CNN." (CNN didn't turn off its cameras.)

Sept. 14, 2017. "Also with the fact that I know in the case of FEMA and the case of Coast Guard, the job you've done in saving people, saving lives. As an example, in Harvey in Texas, we talked – over 16,000 lives." (The real number is smaller.)

Sept. 14, 2017. "And in Florida you got hit with the strongest winds ever recorded." (They weren't the strongest ever recorded.)

Sept. 22, 2017. "So he started off here, he was in third or fourth, he went to third, second, and now it's like almost pretty even." (Strange consistently polled first or second in the Alabama Republican primary.)

Sept. 27, 2017. "I'm doing the right thing, and it's not good for me." (All available evidence suggests he would benefit.)

Sept. 27, 2017. "To protect millions of small businesses and the American farmer, we are finally ending the crushing, the horrible, the unfair estate tax." (The real number of small businesses and farmers is vastly smaller.)

Oct. 6, 2017. "They also just said that there has been absolutely no collusion. They just said that. Yesterday. Two days ago. Senate. There has been no collusion." (The Senate didn't say that.)

Oct. 10, 2017. "The Failing @nytimes set Liddle' Bob Corker up by recording his conversation. Was made to sound a fool, and that's what I am dealing with!" (Corker asked the Times reporter to record the call; his aides recorded it too.)

Oct. 11, 2017. "We have missiles that can knock out a missile in the air. Ninety seven per cent of the time. If you send two of them, it's going to get knocked out." (The effectiveness rate is about 60 percent.)

Oct. 16, 2017. "I hear that Ireland is going to be reducing their cooperate rates down to 8 percent from 12." (Ireland has no plans to cut its tax rate.)

Oct. 16, 2017. "If you look at President Obama and other presidents, most of them didn't make calls." (They did call families of soldiers killed in action.)

Oct. 16, 2017. "All I can say is it's totally fake news. It's just fake. It's fake. It's made-up stuff, and it's disgraceful, what happens, but that happens in the world of politics." (Trump himself has bragged about groping women.)

Oct. 18, 2017. “Democrat Congresswoman totally fabricated what I said to the wife of a soldier who died in action (and I have proof).” (The wife confirmed Representative Frederica Wilson's account.)

Oct. 18, 2017. “Nobody has ever heard of a five hitting land.” (Category 5 storms have hit land before.)

Oct. 24, 2017. “Under our plan, more than 30 million Americans who own small businesses will get a 40 per cent cut to their top marginal tax rate.” (The real number is estimated to be less than 1 million.)

Oct. 27, 2017. “Wacky & totally unhinged Tom Steyer, who has been fighting me and my Make America Great Again agenda from beginning, never wins elections!” (Steyer has financially supported many winning candidates.)

Nov. 7, 2017. “When you look at the city with the strongest gun laws in our nation, it's Chicago.” (Several other cities, including New York and Los Angeles, have stronger gun laws.)

Nov. 11, 2017. “I'd rather have him – you know, work with him on the Ukraine than standing and arguing about whether or not – because that whole thing was set up by the Democrats.” (There is no evidence that Democrats "set up" Russian interference in the election.)

PRESIDENT BARACK H. OBAMA

FIRST YEAR

FEB. 24, 2009. “We import more oil today than ever before.” (Oil imports peaked in 2005.)

MAR. 10, 2009. “Our high school dropout rate has tripled in the past thirty years.” (It had actually declined by a third.)

JUNE 1, 2009. “If you actually took the number of Muslims [sic] Americans, we'd be one of the largest Muslim countries in the world.” (Almost 60 other countries were home to more Muslims.)

JUNE 11, 2009. “No matter how we reform health care, I intend to keep this promise: If you like your doctor, you'll be able to keep your doctor; if you like your health care plan, you'll be able to keep your health care plan.” (Some people had to switch plans as a result of the Affordable Care Act)

SEPT. 9, 2009. “One man from Illinois lost his coverage in the middle of chemotherapy because his insurer found that he hadn't reported gallstones that he didn't even know about. They delayed his treatment, and he died because of it.” (Delayed treatment didn't cause his death.)

DEC. 3, 2009. “I mentioned that I was in Asia on this trip, thinking about the economy. When I sat down for a round of interviews, not one of them asked me about Asia. Not one of them asked me about the economy.” (Several journalists did ask.)

SECOND YEAR

APRIL 21, 2010. “The vast majority of the money I got was from small donors all across the country.” (It wasn't.)

SEPT. 20, 2010. “Keep in mind the previous administration had been helping them, giving billions of dollars and just asking nothing in return.” (The Bush administration imposed multiple conditions on auto companies.)

THIRD YEAR

MAY 10, 2011. “Doubled our exports.” (Exports increased by less than half.)

JUN. 29, 2011. “What I have done – and this is unprecedented, by the way, no administration has done this before – is I’ve said to each agency, ‘Don’t just look at current regulations – or don’t just look at future regulations, regulations that we’re proposing. Let’s go backwards and look at regulations that are already on the books, and if they don’t make sense, let’s get rid of them.’” (Several previous administrations did.)

FOURTH YEAR

FEB. 17, 2012. “American manufacturers are hiring for the first time since 1990.” (Manufacturing employment grew at times during the 1990s.)

SEPT. 20, 2012. “I think it’s important for us to understand that the Fast and Furious program was a field-initiated program begun under the previous administration.” (The program began under Obama.)

FIFTH YEAR

MARCH 1, 2013. “The janitor, the security guards, they just got a pay cut and they’ve got to figure out how to manage that.” (Their pay wasn’t cut.)

SEPT. 4, 2013. “First of all, I didn’t set a red line; the world set a red line.” (He did set a red line.)

SIXTH YEAR

MAR. 11, 2014. “Most young Americans right now, they’re not covered.” (Most were.)

MAY 7, 2014. “Since 2007, [Republicans] have filibustered about 500 pieces of legislation that would help the middle class.” (The real number was closer to 50.)

SEPT. 7, 2014. “I wasn’t specifically referring to ISIL” (He was.)

EIGHTH YEAR

JUNE 29, 2016. “I mean, the steel industry is producing as much steel in the United States as it ever was.” (Steel production peaked in 1973.)