Trumpism: How Will History Judge It 50 Years From Now?

November 9, 2026 | By Sandeep Sastry

A reflection on immigration, economic policy, artificial intelligence, ethics, foreign policy, and the difference between political victories and lasting national progress.



A friend recently shared Anthony Scaramucci's video, *"These Are the Things That DESTROYED Trumpism."* It prompted me to consider a different question:

If historians were assessing Donald Trump's presidency 50 years from now, what would they identify as his greatest successes and failures, and which of his controversial decisions might ultimately stand the test of time?

I believe we need to separate three things: **policy intent, execution, and long-term consequences.**

A policy can have the right objective but be implemented disastrously. Equally, a deeply unpopular decision today may produce positive outcomes decades later.

With a little over two years remaining in Trump's second term, any historical assessment is necessarily provisional.

Nevertheless, I see six areas that could substantially shape his legacy. I have arranged them broadly in the order of my concerns, while recognizing that their ultimate historical significance may look very different decades from now.

1. Immigration Enforcement — America's Greatest Bipartisan Failure and Trump's Historic Opportunity

I consider immigration enforcement the most damaging aspect of Trump's presidency so far, not because securing the border was wrong, but because of how enforcement has been carried out and the divisions it has created.

I support strong border security. Every sovereign nation has the responsibility to control its borders, and Trump deserves credit for taking this seriously.

But border security and immigration enforcement are different challenges. Aggressive enforcement practices, combined with inflammatory rhetoric, have created fear and resentment in immigrant communities, including among legal residents and American citizens.

The human consequences deserve particular attention. Families who have lived in America for 10 or 20 years, raised children, worked, paid taxes, and contributed to their communities can face separation through immigration enforcement, even without a criminal conviction.

A nationwide analysis by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), covering January 20, 2025, through July 31, 2026, provides important context.

MPI estimated approximately **980,000 deportations and returns**, of which roughly **790,000 (80%) involved individuals without recorded criminal convictions**.

That does not mean 80% were lawful residents, had no pending charges, or were separated from their families. The figures include border turnarounds, not just removals of longtime residents.

Nevertheless, they raise an important question about the priorities and proportionality of immigration enforcement.

Should enforcement concentrate on individuals posing genuine public-safety threats, or should longtime residents without criminal convictions face the same urgency of removal?

I do not necessarily believe Trump himself is racist. However, much of his rhetoric has been racially charged, and some enforcement practices have reinforced that perception.

Pope Leo XIV: The Human Dimension



It is particularly significant that Pope Leo XIV, the first American-born pope, has spoken publicly about the treatment of immigrants in the United States.

In November 2025, he acknowledged that nations have the right to control their borders, while questioning the treatment of people who have lived peacefully in America for 10, 15, or 20 years.

He has emphasized human dignity and supported the concerns of American Catholic bishops about mass deportations, detention conditions, and the fear experienced by immigrant families.

His message deserves attention regardless of religious affiliation.

Enforcing the law and treating people humanely are not contradictory objectives.

A nation can secure its borders while exercising judgment, proportionality, and compassion toward longtime residents, particularly where children and families are involved.

That is not an argument for open borders. It is an argument for responsible governance.

And this is where I believe Trump's administration has created unnecessary social and political damage.

But the bigger issue is that **both political parties have repeatedly failed to deliver comprehensive immigration reform**, even when they had opportunities to act.

Four Decades of Missed Opportunities

Ronald Reagan (1986): Signed bipartisan immigration reform granting legal status to approximately 2.7 million undocumented immigrants while introducing employer sanctions. It was a historic compromise, but it did not permanently resolve unauthorized immigration.

George W. Bush (2007): Attempted comprehensive reform during his second term, combining border security, workplace enforcement, and legalization. The legislation collapsed in the Senate.

Barack Obama (2012–2013): Introduced DACA in 2012. During his second term, the bipartisan Gang of Eight immigration bill, co-authored by Republican Marco Rubio,

passed the Senate 68–32 but never received a vote in the Republican-controlled House.

Donald Trump (2017–2021): Made immigration central to his presidency but did not achieve comprehensive legislative reform, even during the first two years when Republicans controlled Congress.

Joe Biden (2021–2025): Faced serious border-management challenges and failed to deliver comprehensive reform. Bipartisan border-security negotiations in 2024 also collapsed.

The result? Nearly four decades of political battles without a durable national solution.

James Talarico, Texas, and the Political Warning

Following the November 2026 midterms, Texas Senator-elect James Talarico made an observation on ABC's *The View* that resonated with me: both parties have failed Americans on immigration over the past decade.

He called for comprehensive reform combining border security, accountability for immigration enforcement, and a pathway to citizenship for longtime undocumented residents.

My recent analysis of the Texas midterms highlighted an interesting development.

Trump made significant gains in heavily Hispanic Texas border counties in 2024. Yet two years later, Talarico carried nine border counties that Trump had won.

This does not prove immigration enforcement alone caused the shift. Affordability, turnout, and candidate appeal also mattered. But concerns about enforcement practices appear to have become personal for communities affected by raids, deportations, and family separations.

Voters can support strong border security while opposing how immigration enforcement is carried out in their neighborhoods.

The California Lesson and the Texas Dilemma

There is another political reality that makes immigration reform extraordinarily difficult.

Reagan's 1986 immigration reform legalized approximately 2.7 million undocumented immigrants, with more than half of the beneficiaries residing in California.

Over subsequent years, California transformed from a competitive presidential state into a Democratic stronghold.

I do not believe Reagan's amnesty alone caused that transformation. Demographic changes, broader political developments, and Republican Governor Pete Wilson's support for Proposition 187 in 1994, which sought to restrict public services for undocumented immigrants, also contributed to the changing political environment.

Nevertheless, California's experience remains an important concern for Republicans considering another large-scale legalization program.

Could Texas, with its 40 electoral votes, eventually follow California's political trajectory?

If Texas became reliably Democratic, the presidential electoral map would change dramatically. Republicans would face a much more difficult path to the White House.

That political concern may be one of the biggest obstacles to bipartisan immigration reform, particularly when legalization is linked to eventual citizenship and voting rights.

But there is another consideration: the political backlash against aggressive enforcement may itself push immigrant communities and their American-citizen relatives away from Republicans.

There is another demographic reality Republicans cannot afford to ignore. After nearly four decades of unresolved immigration reform, many undocumented immigrants have raised children who are now American citizens and eligible voters. For these young Latino Americans, as well as their friends and classmates from diverse backgrounds, immigration enforcement is not simply a political issue; it is deeply personal. Watching parents, neighbors, or friends' families face separation can influence how they view the Republican Party, even if they

otherwise agree with some of its policies. This does not mean Latino or younger voters will automatically support Democrats. But Republicans risk alienating an entire generation of American citizens if they underestimate the human and emotional consequences of their immigration policies. The longer comprehensive reform remains unresolved, the greater the potential political cost of doing nothing.

Doing nothing is not necessarily the safer electoral strategy.

H-1B Visas: A Necessary Legal Immigration Program That America Failed to Reform

America's H-1B visa program is a good example of how a policy created to address legitimate economic needs can become controversial when governments fail to adapt it to changing circumstances.

First, an important distinction: **H-1B is a legal, employment-based, nonimmigrant visa program, not a form of undocumented immigration.** Foreign professionals obtain authorization to work in the United States through an established legal process, with employers required to file petitions and comply with wage and employment regulations. Many subsequently pursue lawful permanent residence through employment-based green-card sponsorship.

Whatever the legitimate concerns about wage competition, outsourcing, or corporate abuse, these workers have followed the legal immigration system America established. The debate should therefore focus on improving that system, not treating lawful skilled professionals as though they entered the country illegally.

The History of H-1B and the Rise of Outsourcing

The modern H-1B program was established under the Immigration Act of 1990, with an annual cap of 65,000 visas. During the technology boom of the late 1990s, particularly the Y2K transition and growing demand for software professionals, Congress temporarily increased the cap to 115,000 and eventually 195,000 between

2001 and 2003. The cap subsequently returned to 65,000, with an additional 20,000 places for qualifying graduates of American universities holding advanced degrees.

These increases reflected genuine business needs. American corporations required technology expertise, and Indian IT services companies became important partners in meeting that demand.

Over the following two decades, however, two distinct employment models developed within the H-1B system.

The first involved highly skilled professionals, including international graduates of American universities, recruited directly by technology companies, engineering firms, research organizations, and other employers. Many contributed significantly to American innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth.

The second involved IT consulting and outsourcing companies, including American and Indian multinational firms such as Accenture, Capgemini, TCS, Infosys, and Wipro. As technology evolved rapidly, American businesses increasingly outsourced IT functions to specialized providers, allowing them to focus on their core businesses rather than continually rebuilding internal technology capabilities.

This model was not simply about cheap labor. It provided flexibility, specialized expertise, and access to global delivery capabilities. But cost arbitrage was undeniably an important part of its economics.

Consider a simplified example. An American company might pay $120,000 annually for an internal technology employee. An outsourcing provider could offer comparable services for $100,000 while paying its sponsored employee $80,000. The client saved money, the vendor earned a margin before expenses, and the foreign worker obtained employment. But an American employee performing similar work could face displacement or wage pressure.

There were documented cases of American technology workers being replaced by outsourced employees and sometimes required to transfer their knowledge before leaving. Such practices understandably created resentment. Critics were justified

in questioning whether a program intended to address specialized labor needs was sometimes being used primarily to reduce costs.

Employer Dependence, H-4 Spouses, and the Green-Card Backlog

At the same time, H-1B employees were not necessarily the winners in these arrangements. Their legal status was closely tied to employer sponsorship, limiting their bargaining power and making job changes more complicated. Long green-card backlogs further increased that dependence.

H-1B workers can legally change employers, but doing so requires another employer to file the appropriate petition. Losing a job can jeopardize an entire family's immigration status, and workers pursuing green cards may hesitate to change employers for fear of disrupting years of immigration processing. This creates an unhealthy imbalance of power. Some employees may tolerate poor working conditions, limited career advancement, or unfair treatment because their ability to remain in America depends heavily on employer sponsorship.

A system designed to attract highly skilled professionals should not leave them feeling effectively indentured to their employers.

The consequences extend to their families. Many H-1B professionals arrive with highly educated spouses who possess valuable skills but historically had no independent authorization to work. As employment-based green-card backlogs grew, these spouses could spend years unable to pursue careers, even while American employers needed qualified workers.

Recognizing this problem, the Obama administration introduced the H-4 Employment Authorization Document (EAD) program in 2015 through federal regulation. It allowed certain spouses of H-1B workers pursuing permanent residence to obtain work authorization. This was an important reform, providing financial independence, career opportunities, and better utilization of skilled talent already living in America.

However, the program was never permanently codified by Congress. During Trump's first administration, officials considered eliminating H-4 employment authorization, creating additional uncertainty for thousands of families. The irony

is that America was simultaneously debating shortages of skilled professionals while considering preventing qualified spouses already living here from working.

Congress also missed a significant opportunity to address employment-based green-card backlogs in 2019–2020. The Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act (H.R. 1044) passed the Democratic-controlled House in July 2019 with overwhelming bipartisan support, 365–65. The Republican-controlled Senate subsequently passed an amended version in December 2020. However, the Democratic-controlled House, under Speaker Nancy Pelosi, did not approve the revised legislation before Congress adjourned, and the bill never became law.

The technology industry's role also deserves scrutiny. While major technology companies publicly supported high-skilled immigration, resolving green-card backlogs could have increased employees' job mobility and bargaining power, reducing their dependence on sponsoring employers. This created a potential conflict between corporate interests and worker independence, although the extent to which technology-industry lobbying influenced the final legislative outcome remains unclear.

The historical failure was bipartisan. Despite substantial support for reform, Congress failed to resolve its differences, leaving hundreds of thousands of skilled professionals and their families facing continued uncertainty within America's legal immigration system.

The result was a system that could benefit corporations while leaving both American and foreign workers vulnerable, albeit in very different ways.

Economic Success, Political Backlash, and Rising H-1B Costs

These tensions became more pronounced as Indian professionals established successful careers in American technology companies. Many benefited from stock-based compensation and rising technology valuations, contributing to the economic success of Indian-American households. Their achievements deserve recognition. But legitimate criticism of immigration policy must never become an excuse for racial hostility toward Indian Americans or other immigrant communities.

Trump's approach to H-1B reform has become increasingly restrictive. In September 2025, his administration introduced a $100,000 payment requirement for certain new H-1B petitions, subsequently extending the policy through September 2027. However, its implementation has been blocked by a federal court order. In August 2026, the Department of Homeland Security proposed an additional $103,265 fee for cap-subject H-1B petitions, potentially bringing the combined payment to more than $200,000 in cases where both requirements apply. The newer fee remains a proposal, and both measures face important legal or implementation uncertainties.

I support stronger wage protections, preventing the displacement of American workers, and eliminating abuses by outsourcing companies. But imposing potentially prohibitive costs on employers seeking talent through a **legal immigration program** raises serious questions about proportionality. Large corporations may absorb these costs, while startups, smaller businesses, and employers facing genuine talent shortages may struggle. Even international graduates educated at American universities could face reduced employment opportunities. **The objective should be to prevent exploitation and protect American workers, not make lawful skilled immigration economically unviable.**

There is also an uncomfortable contradiction in the technology industry's response. America has benefited enormously from immigrant entrepreneurs and executives, including leaders at some of its largest technology companies. Yet the public response from many influential technology leaders to restrictions affecting the next generation of skilled immigrants has been comparatively muted. As artificial intelligence changes workforce requirements, the industry's long-term commitment to expanding opportunities for skilled workers deserves scrutiny.

The Structural Failure of Employment-Based Immigration

The deeper structural failure, however, lies in America's employment-based immigration system.

The United States generally allocates approximately 140,000 employment-based immigrant visas annually, including visas for spouses and children. A 7% per-country limit, applied within the broader statutory allocation rules, has

contributed to extraordinarily long waits for applicants from heavily represented countries such as India.

Consequently, highly skilled professionals who studied, worked, paid taxes, and built careers in America can spend many years waiting for permanent residence. The uncertainty affects their families, career choices, entrepreneurial ambitions, and willingness to remain in the country.

Both political parties share responsibility. Republicans have emphasized border security and restrictions on immigration, while Democrats have frequently linked high-skilled immigration reforms to broader comprehensive immigration negotiations. Despite repeated opportunities, neither party has delivered a durable solution to the employment-based backlog.

The challenge is not choosing between American workers and foreign talent. It is designing an immigration system that protects wages, prevents exploitation, rewards genuine skills, and gives employers access to talent they cannot readily find domestically.

That requires stronger wage protections and enforcement against abusive outsourcing practices, greater freedom for sponsored employees to change employers, modernization of employment-based green-card allocations, permanent legislative protection for qualifying H-4 spouses' employment authorization, and serious investment in American K–12 STEM education and workforce development.

America cannot depend indefinitely on importing skilled professionals while failing to strengthen its domestic talent pipeline. Nor can it preserve technological leadership by making the country increasingly unattractive to the international talent that helped build its innovation economy.

The historical mistake: Recognizing legitimate problems in the H-1B program but responding with punitive restrictions rather than comprehensive reforms that protect American workers, prevent corporate exploitation, provide employment security for immigrant families, modernize permanent immigration, and strengthen America's long-term competitiveness.

Can America remain the world's leading innovation economy if it simultaneously discourages global talent, fails to develop enough domestic talent, and leaves both American and immigrant workers exposed to an outdated employment system?

Agriculture, Construction, and America's Dependence on Immigrant Labor

The immigration debate extends far beyond technology workers. American agriculture, construction, hospitality, food processing, and other labor-intensive industries have depended on immigrant workers for decades. Many employers struggle to recruit sufficient American workers, particularly for physically demanding, seasonal, or geographically isolated jobs.

Agriculture illustrates the dilemma. According to the Congressional Research Service, approximately 35% of hired agricultural workers lack legal work authorization. The H-2A guest-worker program provides a lawful alternative, with nearly 400,000 positions certified in fiscal year 2025. But the program is primarily designed for temporary or seasonal employment, making it difficult for year-round operations such as dairy farms to use. Employers also face recruitment, housing, transportation, and administrative requirements. The program has expanded significantly, yet it does not fully address the industry's workforce needs.

Construction faces similar pressures. A September 2026 industry survey found that 29% of responding construction firms had experienced some direct or indirect impact from immigration enforcement, while 42% reported project delays caused by workforce shortages. These shortages can affect housing construction, infrastructure development, and ultimately affordability.

Employment verification and stronger enforcement are legitimate responsibilities. But E-Verify and other compliance systems cannot create workers where genuine labor shortages exist. Nor can enforcement alone resolve decades of dependence on immigrant labor. Some longtime workers now face uncertainty about reporting

to jobsites, seeking services, or moving freely within communities where they have lived for years.

The contradiction is difficult to ignore: America depends on immigrant labor in essential industries while maintaining an immigration system that often fails to provide those industries with sufficient legal, dependable pathways to recruit and retain workers.

Recent Arrivals, Public Assistance, and the Question of Fairness

There is another side of the immigration debate that deserves recognition. The large increase in migrant arrivals beginning in 2021 placed considerable financial and administrative pressure on cities and states. New York City, for example, spent substantial public funds on emergency shelter, meals, healthcare, and other services for asylum seekers. Some migrants were accommodated in hotels because existing shelter capacity was insufficient.

For Americans already struggling with housing costs, homelessness, healthcare, and everyday expenses, these expenditures understandably raised questions about government priorities. **How can governments find emergency resources for newly arrived migrants while longtime residents and American citizens continue to struggle to obtain basic services?** That is a legitimate question of public accountability, not necessarily an expression of hostility toward immigrants.

However, the distinctions matter. Refugees, asylum seekers, people granted humanitarian parole, and undocumented immigrants do not have identical legal rights or eligibility for public benefits. Emergency shelter expenditures are not the same as unrestricted cash allowances, and claims that migrants were routinely housed in luxury hotels or received generous benefits require careful verification. Genuine waste, questionable contracts, and misuse of public funds should be investigated without portraying every new arrival as an abuser of the system.

The Biden administration bears responsibility for the consequences of its border-management decisions and for the pressures placed on receiving communities. Trump's emphasis on border control responded to genuine public concerns. But

effective leadership must also distinguish recent arrivals from longtime residents who have worked, raised families, and contributed to America for decades.

The challenge is to protect the integrity of the immigration system while ensuring that neither American citizens nor vulnerable immigrants become casualties of political failure.

Is There a Middle Ground?

I believe there is a practical middle ground in America's immigration debate, but it requires separating three issues that politicians often combine: **the right to live and work in America, the pathway to citizenship, and the right to vote.**

My proposal would begin by recognizing that undocumented immigrants are not one homogeneous population. Someone brought to America as a child, someone who has lived here for 20 or 25 years and paid taxes, and someone who arrived during the recent migration surge should not necessarily be treated identically.

Another unresolved dimension of immigration reform involves Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and humanitarian parole programs. Individuals from countries such as Haiti, Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador have sometimes lived and worked legally in America under temporary protections for many years, even decades. More recent humanitarian parole programs also permitted eligible individuals from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela to enter temporarily through authorized procedures. These programs were never intended to guarantee permanent residence, but repeated extensions created long-term uncertainty for families and employers. I believe Congress must address this contradiction by establishing clearer rules for temporary protection, periodic reassessment, and reasonable options for qualifying longtime residents who have established deep roots in American communities.

I would approach immigration reform in three stages.

First Priority: Children Brought to America — The Dreamers

The first priority should be individuals brought to the United States as children, particularly those covered by DACA or meeting comparable eligibility requirements.

These individuals did not independently decide to enter the country illegally. Many have grown up in America, attended American schools, pursued higher education, worked, and built their lives here. For many, America is the only country they meaningfully know.

Dreamers should receive a clear, legislatively protected pathway to lawful permanent residence and ultimately citizenship, subject to reasonable background checks and other eligibility requirements.

This is both a humanitarian and a practical solution. We should not indefinitely punish individuals for immigration decisions made by their parents when they were children.

Second Priority: Longtime Undocumented Residents and Families

My second priority would be individuals who were already living in the United States before **January 1, 2021**, establishing a clear distinction between established residents and the more recent migration surge.

Many of these individuals have spent years, sometimes decades, working in America, filing tax returns, contributing to Social Security and Medicare, raising families, purchasing homes, and becoming part of their communities.

Qualifying individuals would need to demonstrate continuous residence, satisfactory background checks, compliance with applicable tax obligations, and meaningful employment or community ties. Greater priority could be given to those who have lived here the longest, consistently paid taxes, and raised American-born children.

Rather than continuing to leave these families in legal uncertainty, Congress should provide qualifying individuals with a durable legal status, permission to work, and long-term security.

However, I would distinguish **permanent residence from citizenship**.

My preferred compromise would be to create a special long-term residency category for qualifying adults who originally entered unlawfully. They would be able to live and work legally, change employers, pay taxes, participate in the

economy, and receive benefits for which they qualify under clearly defined rules. Their status would be secure and not dependent on a particular employer.

But unlike ordinary green-card holders, this special category would **not provide a pathway to naturalization or federal voting rights**. Under my proposal, that restriction would remain permanent for adults receiving this particular form of legalization, while Dreamers would have a separate citizenship pathway.

This is where I believe a genuine political compromise may exist.

Democrats would achieve an important objective by protecting longtime residents from deportation and allowing families to live with dignity and economic security. Republicans would achieve an equally important objective by ensuring that legalization does not automatically translate into citizenship and future voting rights.

The compromise would recognize years of contribution to American society without treating unlawful entry as an automatic route to citizenship.

I recognize that creating a permanent noncitizen population raises serious questions about fairness, family unity, and equal treatment. Congress would need to establish strong legal protections, clear benefit-eligibility rules, and safeguards against creating a permanently disadvantaged class of residents.

Third Priority: Recent Arrivals and the Asylum System

The more recent wave of immigration requires a different approach.

Individuals who arrived on or after January 1, 2021, would be considered under existing immigration, asylum, refugee, and humanitarian protection laws rather than automatically qualifying for the proposed longtime-resident legalization program.

Recent arrivals should undergo appropriate individualized screening, including identity verification, background checks, and assessment of their legal claims.

At the same time, **asylum seekers, refugees, and people who entered without authorization are not legally interchangeable categories**. Individuals with legitimate claims to protection under American and international law must receive due process. Refugee admissions and asylum procedures should be reviewed for

capacity, efficiency, consistency, and safeguards against abuse, without undermining protections for people genuinely fleeing persecution.

Those who do not qualify for asylum or another lawful status should be subject to fair and enforceable immigration decisions, including removal where legally appropriate.

This approach would distinguish established community members from recent arrivals while preserving the integrity of America's humanitarian obligations.

A Compromise That Neither Party Completely Wins

The political challenge is obvious.

Democrats may object to providing permanent residency without citizenship. Republicans may object to legalizing individuals who originally entered the country unlawfully. But a meaningful compromise cannot simply give either party everything it wants.

My proposal is not about creating future Democratic or Republican voters. It is about resolving the status of people who have lived in America for years while maintaining a meaningful distinction between lawful immigration, humanitarian protection, and unauthorized entry.

It would also allow America to focus its enforcement resources more effectively on recent unauthorized entries, serious criminal activity, and genuine security threats rather than continually destabilizing established families and communities.

These are my personal ideas, not a fully developed legislative proposal. They would require careful constitutional, legal, economic, and administrative examination.

My underlying principle is simple: America should be able to secure its borders, uphold the rule of law, protect Dreamers, recognize the contributions of longtime residents, and provide economic and social stability without making citizenship and voting rights an automatic consequence of legalization.

The historical opportunity: Instead of continuing a debate in which one party demands mass deportations and the other demands broad pathways to citizenship, could America finally agree on a durable middle ground that protects both its

national interests and the dignity of people who have made this country their home?

Reforming Legal Immigration: Six Practical Measures

Comprehensive immigration reform cannot focus exclusively on undocumented immigrants. America must also address the shortcomings of its legal immigration system, particularly the H-1B program and employment-based green-card backlogs.

I would propose six practical reforms.

1. Eliminate employment-based green-card country caps. Remove the existing per-country limitations for employment-based immigration and move toward a more equitable system based on application priority dates, qualifications, and established eligibility requirements. Appropriate transition provisions would be necessary to protect applicants from other countries who might otherwise face longer waits.

2. Provide employment authorization after I-140 approval. Once an employer has completed the required labor certification process, where applicable, and the employee's I-140 immigrant petition has been approved, the employee should be eligible to apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD), even if a green card is not yet available. This would be a major improvement over the current system, where independent employment authorization is generally limited to specific circumstances.

3. Give skilled workers greater freedom to change employers. An approved I-140 and valid EAD should allow qualified professionals to pursue new employment opportunities without repeatedly depending on employer-sponsored H-1B petitions. This would reduce employer dependence, encourage entrepreneurship, and strengthen workers' bargaining power. Reasonable rules would preserve the integrity of the underlying immigration petition.

4. Protect American workers through stronger wage and labor safeguards. Employers should demonstrate genuine business needs, comply with prevailing-wage requirements, and face meaningful penalties for fraudulent applications, wage violations, or practices designed to replace American workers primarily

through labor-cost arbitrage. The goal should be to attract skills and expertise, not undermine domestic employment.

5. Protect spouses and families. Qualifying H-4 spouses should receive reliable employment authorization through permanent legislation. Families pursuing lawful permanent residence should not face years of uncertainty or lose their ability to remain together simply because of administrative backlogs or an unexpected job loss.

6. Strengthen accountability while developing American talent. Immigration authorities should improve verification, processing transparency, and enforcement against fraudulent employers. At the same time, America must invest more seriously in domestic STEM education, apprenticeships, technical training, and workforce development so that companies are not perpetually dependent on importing talent.

These reforms would address the two fundamental problems of the current system: excessive dependence on employers and extraordinarily long waits for permanent residence.

Removing country caps alone would not eliminate every backlog, because annual visa limits would still apply. Congress would also need to review visa availability and processing capacity.

The objective should be a legal immigration system that rewards genuine skills, protects American workers, gives foreign professionals the freedom to build their careers, and strengthens America's long-term economic competitiveness.

If America expects talented people to study, innovate, pay taxes, and contribute to its economy, it should provide a fair and predictable immigration process rather than leaving them in uncertainty for decades.

Trump's Second-Term Opportunity

There is an interesting historical pattern.

Reagan signed immigration reform in his second term. George W. Bush attempted it in his second term. Obama's bipartisan Senate breakthrough also came during his second term.

Trump is now in his second and final elected term. He does not have to worry about running for president again.

Following the 2026 election, Trump himself expressed openness to working with Democrats on immigration. Talarico has also indicated a willingness to work with him.

The differences are substantial, particularly over legalization and citizenship. But this is where presidential leadership matters.

There is a historical parallel with Lyndon Johnson. When he signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, he understood that doing so could cost Democrats politically in the South. He signed it anyway.

Immigration reform is a different issue, but the leadership principle remains: sometimes doing what is right for the country requires accepting political risk.

My assessment: If Trump continues relying predominantly on aggressive enforcement, historians may regard immigration as one of his greatest failures.

But if he achieves meaningful bipartisan reform, it could become one of his most enduring accomplishments.

It could even benefit Republicans politically by rebuilding trust with communities increasingly alienated by enforcement practices.

That may sound counterintuitive, but I believe comprehensive immigration reform could be better for Republicans than maintaining the status quo.

The historical opportunity: Trump could finally deliver the comprehensive reform that several presidents before him attempted but could not complete.

2. Tax Cuts, Fiscal Responsibility, and Growing Wealth Inequality



This may prove to be Trump's most consequential economic mistake.

The damage began with the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which reduced the federal corporate income tax rate from 35% to 21%. Corporate tax reductions were supposed to stimulate investment, productivity, and job creation.

While they provided some benefits, I question whether enough of the gains translated into productive domestic investment rather than share buybacks and increased shareholder wealth. I believe a more balanced corporate tax rate,

perhaps around 28%, would have better protected federal revenues while preserving American competitiveness.

The subsequent Big Beautiful Bill compounded my concerns by extending tax advantages while reducing federal support for important health and social programs.

The legislation also introduced popular measures, including deductions for tips of up to $25,000 annually and overtime compensation, along with an increase in the Child Tax Credit. These provisions offer meaningful relief to eligible working families.

However, their limitations raise an important question: are these benefits sufficient to offset the broader advantages flowing to wealthy households and asset owners, particularly when reductions in healthcare and other government benefits are considered?

Fraud and waste in Medicaid and other government programs are legitimate concerns, and taxpayers deserve accountability. However, we must distinguish between fraud, administrative errors, and genuine healthcare needs. In 2025, Medicaid's estimated improper payment rate was 6.12%, representing approximately $37.4 billion, with over 77% involving insufficient documentation rather than necessarily indicating fraud. **Eliminating waste is essential, but it should not come at the expense of eligible Americans who depend on healthcare coverage.**

The Big Beautiful Bill raises a larger concern. The Congressional Budget Office projects approximately $1.2 trillion in reduced federal Medicaid spending over the next decade, potentially leaving millions more Americans uninsured.

Medicaid enrollment had already declined by approximately 5.1 million people, or 7%, between July 2025 and July 2026, although this decline cannot be attributed entirely to the legislation. Behind these numbers are families, seniors, people with disabilities, and working Americans who may face delayed medical appointments, skipped medications, or reduced access to essential services.

Healthcare insecurity is also an affordability issue. While much of the 2026 midterm election discussion focused on groceries, housing, and everyday

expenses, the fear of losing health coverage or facing unexpected medical bills deserves equal attention.

Supporters argue that tighter eligibility requirements and spending controls improve accountability, but the real test is whether these measures reduce waste without harming vulnerable Americans. **Affordability is not simply about what families pay today, but also about the financial security they fear losing tomorrow.**

The debate over tax fairness also deserves a broader perspective. We frequently hear that the wealthiest Americans already pay a disproportionate share of federal income taxes.

That is true. Mitt Romney's famous reference to the 47% of Americans who paid no federal income tax during the 2012 election reflects how this debate has often been framed. But **how much tax someone pays is only one measure of fairness. Equally important is the opportunity the economic system provides to create and accumulate wealth.**

A wage earner typically pays taxes as income is earned, while wealthy asset holders can benefit from appreciating stocks, real estate, and business ownership without immediately realizing taxable gains.

Some can even borrow against their investments rather than sell them, accessing liquidity while deferring capital gains taxes. Interest deductions may be available for qualifying investment or business borrowing, although they are not automatic.

Wealthier individuals also have greater access to sophisticated tax planning, financial advisers, and legal structures that can help preserve and compound their wealth.

None of this diminishes the contributions of entrepreneurs, investors, or successful corporations. But it raises a fundamental concern: **Americans who already own substantial assets often have far greater opportunities to build additional wealth than those who depend primarily on wages.** Tax policy should be evaluated not only by how much revenue it collects or how much growth it generates, but also by whether it expands economic opportunity.

Meanwhile, deficits continue to grow, wealth inequality remains a major concern, and large technology companies have accumulated extraordinary economic power.

Democrats also share responsibility for failing to meaningfully revisit the corporate tax structure when they had the opportunity. To their credit, the Biden administration introduced a 1% excise tax on corporate stock buybacks through the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. But I consider that a modest intervention relative to the scale of the problem.

The historical mistake: Prioritizing tax relief without sufficiently addressing fiscal sustainability, healthcare security, wealth inequality, and whether the economic system provides working Americans with a meaningful opportunity to build long-term financial security.

3. Tech Oligarchy, Artificial Intelligence, and the China Argument



This is an issue I believe historians may look back on with particular concern by 2030.

Trump's close alignment with powerful technology executives risk allowing a small number of corporations and individuals to exercise disproportionate influence over America's economic and technological future.

Beyond political influence lies a growing concern about how economic prosperity is distributed. While technology companies have created enormous wealth, driven innovation, and transformed the economy, many ordinary Americans continue to struggle with housing costs, healthcare, groceries, and monthly bills.

For some, the contrast between soaring technology valuations, the extraordinary wealth accumulated by a handful of individuals, and their own financial insecurity creates a perception that the economic system increasingly favors those at the top.

Others rightly point out that technological innovation generates jobs, investment, and opportunities that benefit society more broadly. Both perspectives deserve consideration.

The fundamental question is not whether extraordinary wealth should be created, but whether the prosperity generated by technological progress is reaching enough Americans for them to feel that the economic system is working for them.

Artificial intelligence is not simply another technology cycle. It could fundamentally reshape employment, productivity, national security, energy infrastructure, and the distribution of wealth.

America absolutely needs to lead in AI innovation. But leadership without appropriate oversight is not a sustainable strategy.

One argument frequently used to justify accelerating AI development and relaxing regulations is that **America must move faster because China might otherwise get ahead.**

I understand the importance of maintaining America's technological competitiveness, particularly in areas involving national security. But I question

whether competition with China should become the overriding justification for every policy decision.

We have seen throughout history how national-security arguments can encourage governments to overlook economic costs, weaken oversight, or make decisions whose consequences emerge only years later.

The objective should not simply be to beat China in the AI race. It should be to ensure that America wins in a way that strengthens its economy, protects its workforce, and benefits its people.

That requires transparency, meaningful competition, accountability, workforce preparation, and policies ensuring that AI-generated prosperity benefits society broadly.

It also requires greater scrutiny of the enormous investments being made in data centers, computing infrastructure, and energy capacity. Technological ambition must be accompanied by financial discipline and demonstrable economic value.

The historical mistake: Allowing geopolitical competition and the influence of powerful technology companies to substitute for a coherent national AI strategy that balances innovation, economic sustainability, and societal well-being.

The consequences may not be fully visible today, but I suspect they will become much clearer by 2030.

Are we building an AI economy that makes America stronger, or are we using the fear of falling behind China to justify decisions without adequately examining their long-term consequences?

4. Ethics, Family Business Interests, and the Presidency — Where Do We Draw the Line?



One of my growing concerns about Trump's second administration is the increasingly blurred boundary between government decisions, private investments, and the financial interests of people close to the presidency.

Trump family cryptocurrency ventures, Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump's investments connected to the Kazakhstan mining project, Jared Kushner's Saudi-backed investment fund and luxury resort developments in Albania, and Steve Witkoff's involvement in World Liberty Financial while serving as a senior diplomatic envoy all raise concerns about the intersection of political power and private wealth. Questions surrounding government investments and unusually timed financial-market trades add to these concerns.

Some of these activities may be entirely legal, and allegations of improper conduct should not be confused with proven wrongdoing. But **there is a thin line between legality and ethics. Something can be legally permissible and still be ethically questionable.**

When individuals entrusted with public responsibilities maintain financial relationships with businesses or foreign governments affected by their decisions, transparency and independent oversight become essential.

The controversies surrounding Hunter Biden's foreign business dealings also raised legitimate questions about influence and the boundaries between public responsibilities and private financial interests. The same standards should apply to both parties, with allegations carefully distinguished from established facts.

I recognize that Trump and his family experienced years of investigations, litigation, and business pressures, some of which he and his supporters regard as politically motivated or unjust. But that does not remove the need for strong ethical safeguards.

The historical mistake: Allowing the boundaries between public office, private wealth, and political influence to become increasingly blurred, potentially undermining confidence in the integrity of government itself.

The presidency should be held to a higher standard than merely what the law allows.

5. Iran, Israel, Gaza, and the Middle East — Strategic Intent Versus Human Consequences



This is perhaps the most difficult area of Trump's foreign policy to assess because it involves competing security interests, enormous human suffering, and decisions whose long-term consequences remain uncertain.

Iran's clerical leadership and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps have a long record of domestic repression and support for armed militant organizations, including Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis. Iran's financing, training, and military assistance to these groups have contributed to regional instability and violence.

I believe reducing Iran's ability to support terrorism and destabilize the region is a legitimate strategic objective. A Middle East in which the Iranian people can determine their own political future, free from repression, could ultimately be more stable and prosperous.

But **having a legitimate strategic objective does not automatically justify every military decision made in pursuit of it.**

Gaza: Security, Hostages, and the Human Cost

The October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks on Israel, including the killing of civilians and taking of hostages, were indefensible. Israel had legitimate reasons to seek the release of its hostages and protect its population from further attacks.

But the scale of destruction in Gaza, the deaths of large numbers of civilians, including children, the displacement of families, and the devastation of civilian infrastructure raise profound humanitarian, legal, and moral questions about Israel's military response.

The question is not simply whether Israel had the right to defend itself. It is whether the methods used were proportionate, whether sufficient precautions were taken to protect civilians, and whether alternative strategies could have reduced the human suffering.

There are serious allegations that Israel's actions constituted genocide. Israel disputes that characterization, and the legal questions are contested. I do not intend to make a definitive legal judgment in this article.

Nor do I believe that acknowledging Palestinian suffering diminishes the suffering of Israeli families or the seriousness of Hamas's actions.

The lives of Palestinian children and Israeli children deserve the same moral consideration.

I recognize how difficult these questions are. How should a country respond when hostages are held by an armed organization operating within densely populated civilian areas? What constitutes a proportionate military response? Where does legitimate self-defense cross into unacceptable harm to civilians?

There are no easy answers, but these questions cannot simply be dismissed in the name of national security.

My intention is not to take an unquestioning pro-Israel or pro-Palestinian position. It is to recognize the human cost and encourage thoughtful examination of decisions made by all parties.

The Iran War: Tactical Success, Strategic Miscalculation?

One aspect of the Iran conflict that deserves closer examination is the distinction between intelligence success and strategic success.

The United States and Israel demonstrated considerable intelligence and operational capabilities in targeting Iran's senior leadership, including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and key military commanders.

But eliminating senior leaders does not necessarily dismantle a country's military capabilities, political institutions, or willingness to continue fighting.

My interpretation is that the administration may have overestimated the political impact of removing the top leadership while underestimating Iran's ability to reorganize and sustain resistance through its remaining command structures.

Perhaps the expectation was that eliminating the first and second layers of leadership would create sufficient disruption to trigger a rapid political collapse or facilitate regime change, similar to the relatively swift leadership removal in Venezuela earlier in 2026.

But Iran is not Venezuela.

Iran has spent decades developing military institutions, regional networks, succession arrangements, and asymmetric capabilities designed to withstand external pressure.

The **Strait of Hormuz** illustrates the danger of underestimating these capabilities. Disruptions to this strategically vital shipping route can affect global energy supplies, oil prices, transportation costs, and inflation far beyond the Middle East.

A successful military strike against leadership does not eliminate an adversary's ability to impose enormous economic costs.

Iran's use of relatively inexpensive drones, missiles, and other asymmetric capabilities also illustrates a broader lesson in modern warfare: a technologically superior military can still face prolonged disruption from an adversary capable of imposing costs without matching its conventional strength.

I suspect Iranian planners had anticipated the possibility of leadership strikes and developed contingency arrangements. Whether American and Israeli planners adequately accounted for those preparations is an important question that deserves serious examination.

My concern is that the administration may have confused tactical success with strategic victory.

The intelligence operation may have been impressive. But the assumption that removing senior leaders would quickly produce political collapse, neutralize Iran's remaining capabilities, and avoid prolonged economic disruption appears, in my view, to have been overly optimistic.

This is not a claim that we know the administration's internal assumptions. It is my interpretation of how the conflict unfolded.

The larger lesson extends beyond Iran.

Modern warfare increasingly demonstrates that decapitating a leadership structure does not necessarily defeat a distributed military organization. Drones, missiles, decentralized command networks, and attacks on critical infrastructure can allow a weaker adversary to impose substantial costs on a stronger one.

Was the Timing Justified?

I also question whether this was the right moment for another major military confrontation when Americans were already concerned about affordability, healthcare, immigration, and economic uncertainty.

With the Russia–Ukraine war still unresolved, was it strategically wise for the United States to become engaged in another major conflict, potentially compounding global instability, energy-price pressures, and economic uncertainty?

Did the administration sufficiently assess Iran's ability to sustain a prolonged conflict and the consequences of regional escalation?

I wonder whether Trump anticipated that a swift victory could demonstrate foreign-policy strength ahead of the midterm elections. That is a question about possible political incentives, not an established fact about his intentions.

There is also the question of whose interests American foreign policy is ultimately serving.

The United States has legitimate security interests in the Middle East, and Israel is an important American partner. But I am uncomfortable with the perception that American military and diplomatic decisions may be driven more by Israel's priorities than by a clearly articulated assessment of America's own national interests.

That perception deserves scrutiny, not automatic acceptance as fact.

I do not believe American support for Israel should be unconditional or open-ended. Military assistance should be subject to clear objectives, accountability, civilian-protection standards, and an assessment of whether it advances American security.

How History May Judge These Decisions

I believe a Middle East less threatened by Iranian-backed terrorism could become a meaningful long-term achievement.

But military success is not the same as political success. Weakening an adversary is not the same as establishing lasting regional stability.

History offers enough examples of interventions where initial military victories were followed by prolonged instability, unintended consequences, and enormous human costs.

My assessment: Trump's strategic intentions toward Iran may ultimately prove defensible, but I question whether the timing, execution, and human consequences of the broader Middle East conflict were adequately considered.

The destruction in Gaza, the suffering of civilians, and the risks of a prolonged confrontation with Iran must all be part of that historical assessment.

I am not attempting to resolve the moral and legal controversies surrounding these conflicts. I am asking whether the decisions made were necessary, proportionate, and ultimately beneficial to the people they were supposed to protect.

The historical opportunity: A more stable Middle East, reduced support for terrorism, greater freedom for the Iranian people, and a foreign policy that protects American interests without losing sight of human dignity.

The historical risk: That legitimate security objectives were undermined by flawed execution, strategic overconfidence, and an unacceptable human cost.

Ultimately, history will judge not only what leaders sought to achieve, but what their decisions actually produced.

6. Tariffs, Manufacturing, and NATO Burden-Sharing — Potentially Trump's Most Durable Positive Legacy



This is where I believe Trump may ultimately receive more historical credit than many of his critics anticipate.

For decades, the United States tolerated trade imbalances, manufacturing dependencies, and international security arrangements in which allies did not always contribute proportionately.

Trump challenged those assumptions.

His tariff execution was often chaotic, unpredictable, and economically disruptive.

Tariffs also impose costs on American importers, businesses, and consumers. And the uncertainty surrounding frequent policy changes can make it difficult for companies to plan long-term investments.

Nevertheless, the broader objective of strengthening domestic manufacturing, protecting strategically important industries, diversifying supply chains, and encouraging investment in America is legitimate.

Similarly, pressuring NATO allies to increase defense spending was a reasonable objective, even when Trump's methods were unnecessarily confrontational.

A stronger alliance requires meaningful contributions from its members, not simply American financial and military commitments.

But there is an important distinction between changing the conversation and producing lasting results.

Tariffs alone do not rebuild factories.

Manufacturing competitiveness also requires skilled workers, reliable energy, modern infrastructure, technological innovation, and sustained investment.

The same principle applies to NATO.

Greater European defense spending is valuable, but the ultimate objective should be a stronger and more capable alliance, not merely higher spending figures.

The potential historical achievement: Forcing America and its allies to rethink trade dependence, industrial competitiveness, supply-chain resilience, and security burden-sharing.

If these initiatives translate into durable industrial capacity, productive investment, better-paying jobs, and greater national resilience, historians may judge Trump's strategic direction more favorably than his execution.

My Conclusion: The Final Chapter of Trump's Legacy Has Not Yet Been Written

This is my assessment as of November 2026, not a final judgment on Donald Trump's presidency.

Trump still has a little over two years remaining in his second term.

That is sufficient time to make meaningful policy changes, correct mistakes, and potentially reshape how historians will evaluate his presidency.

I do not believe history will judge Trumpism as an entirely failed or entirely successful movement.

Trump identified several genuine problems: an inadequately controlled border, outdated trade arrangements, manufacturing vulnerabilities, and unequal defense burden-sharing.

But **identifying the right problem does not automatically mean implementing the right solution.**

My greatest concerns are the long-term consequences of immigration enforcement, fiscal policy, and excessive concentration of technological and economic power.

Conversely, industrial revitalization, a more balanced international security framework, and potentially a Middle East less threatened by Iranian-backed terrorism could become enduring achievements.

But the destruction in Gaza and the consequences of the Iran war remind us that strategic success cannot be measured by military objectives alone.

Human costs, political stability, and whether American interests were genuinely served must also be part of that judgment.

Of all the opportunities before Trump in his remaining two years, I believe bipartisan immigration reform could be the single most consequential decision in reshaping his historical legacy.

It would demonstrate that a president known for political confrontation could also deliver lasting national consensus.

He could also restore greater fiscal discipline, establish responsible AI governance, strengthen ethical safeguards, and turn trade and manufacturing initiatives into measurable economic gains.

Democrats Have a Mandate Too — Will They Use It Wisely?

There is another side to this historical equation.

The 2026 midterm elections have given Democrats a significant opportunity to influence America's direction.

With that opportunity comes responsibility.

But **winning an election is not the same as earning a lasting mandate. What matters is what leaders accomplish with the power voters have entrusted to them.**

Democrats face an important choice.

They can spend the next two years primarily investigating Trump, pursuing impeachment, and focusing on allegations of corruption and misconduct.

Some of these concerns are legitimate and deserve appropriate congressional oversight.

No president should be above the law, and Congress has a constitutional responsibility to hold the executive branch accountable.

But oversight cannot become a substitute for governing.

If Democrats allow impeachment battles, investigations, and political confrontation to consume most of their congressional time, they risk repeating the

very mistake they accuse Republicans of making: **putting political battles ahead of solutions for the American people.**

There is also a significant challenge within the Democratic Party itself.

The traditional Democratic establishment and the growing Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)-aligned progressive movement do not necessarily share the same economic priorities, political strategies, or approaches to governing.

Differences within a political party are healthy.

They can produce better ideas and stronger policy debates.

But when ideological competition becomes more important than delivering results, it can undermine the party's ability to govern effectively.

Democrats need to find common ground within their own coalition, just as Republicans need to reconcile their competing factions.

The American people are not asking for endless political warfare.

They want solutions to problems affecting their daily lives: affordability, healthcare, immigration, employment, economic opportunity, and the country's fiscal future.

Democrats have an opportunity to put forward credible bipartisan legislation, particularly on immigration reform, healthcare, and economic security.

They should not squander that opportunity by allowing political retribution or ideological divisions to dominate their agenda.

Accountability matters. But accountability without legislative accomplishment will not improve the lives of ordinary Americans.

What Will History Remember?

Fifty years from now, historians may conclude that Trump's greatest failure was not his inability to recognize America's problems, but his inability to build the durable institutions, bipartisan coalitions, and public trust necessary to solve them.

But that conclusion is not inevitable.

Trump still has time to change the trajectory of his presidency.

And Democrats have an equally important responsibility to demonstrate that their alternative is more than opposition to Trump.

The real test for both parties is whether they can move beyond winning elections, defeating opponents, and controlling the political narrative—and actually solve America's problems.

Ultimately, history will not remember how many congressional hearings were held, how many political opponents were attacked, or how many headlines dominated the news cycle.

It will remember whether America's leaders left the country stronger, more prosperous, more united, and better prepared for the future.

That, to me, is the difference between winning political battles and building a lasting national legacy.

A Personal Note on My Perspective

I am a lawful permanent resident of the United States, with no affiliation to any political party.

I am simply an independent political enthusiast who enjoys following American politics, public policy, and global affairs.

These views are strictly personal, reflect my understanding as of November 2026, and are subject to change as new information and evidence emerge.

My observations are based on publicly available information.

I recognize that political and media coverage can be highly selective and biased, often presenting the same events through very different lenses.

I make a conscious effort to examine arguments, evidence, and perspectives from both sides of the political spectrum before forming my own conclusions.

I do not believe any political party has a monopoly on good ideas, bad decisions, or ethical failures.

My interest is not in defending a political party or attacking one, but in understanding how today's decisions will shape America's future.

Ultimately, history will judge outcomes, not intentions or political slogans.

This reflection was prompted by Anthony Scaramucci's video, "These Are the Things That DESTROYED Trumpism":

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/DXeXOar2g6Y