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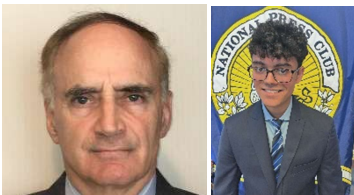
[Commentary](#)

Robert Weiner and Khel Gordhan:

In Illinois and nation, people want to know if and when Trump fatigue will set in



People chant during a rally against the Trump administration in Chicago's Federal Plaza, Feb. 5, 2025.
(Eileen T. Meslar/Chicago Tribune)



By [Robert Weiner](#) and [Khel Gordhan](#)

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To Kamala Harris' supporters, Donald Trump's victory in the 2024 election was a shock. In a state won by Harris 54.8% to 43.8% and in Chicago 70.4% to 28.4%, the excessive coverage of Trump has left many wondering when his dominance over politics will end. In other words, how long could it be until Trump fatigue sets in, or will it?

Trump managed to win over the blue wall states and gained unprecedented ground in traditionally safe blue areas. As reported by Block Club Chicago last year, Trump attracted more than 20% of the vote in Chicago in 2024 compared to [16% in the 2020 election](#) and 12% in 2016. Amidst the flurry of executive actions and provocative statements, many Americans are left wondering when Trump's momentum will

start to slow down. Will Trump's support erode similar to other far-right conservatives such as Joseph McCarthy or the Rev. Charles Coughlin?

There is good reason to believe Trump's popularity is on the decline. According to a [Gallup poll](#), his inauguration approval was already at 47%. Since then, Trump's major policies have proved unpopular. A Feb. 18 [Washington Post-Ipsos poll](#) revealed that 83% of Americans disapprove of Trump's blanket pardons of violent Jan. 6 insurrectionists. The poll also shows that 61% of Americans oppose laying off a large number of government workers. Many federal workers, from the park ranger with the keys to toilets in Yosemite who says he does his work "for the country" to cancer researchers at the National Institutes of Health, are portrayed in the media as sympathetic victims — essential cogs to keep America running. Betraying real-life American hard workers doing good things for others is destined to be unpopular.

Additionally, Elon Musk's presence in government has proven to be an unwelcome one. According to a February [YouGov poll](#), only 13% said Musk should have a lot of influence over the executive branch. The Washington Post-Ipsos Poll also revealed that 52% of Americans disapprove of Musk "shutting down federal government programs that he decides are unnecessary."

These frustrations have culminated in protests in many state capital buildings and passionate disapproval at congressional town hall meetings. Protesters called for an end to Musk's encroachment on federal power as well as Trump's executive actions targeting illegal immigrants and the LGBTQ+ community. In Springfield on Feb. 5 there were signs saying, "Defend our rights. Depose DOGE." Notably, Republican U.S. Rep. Rich McCormick was confronted in a town hall meeting in his Georgia district by citizens frustrated by his support for mass federal layoffs and budget cuts; he said Musk is maybe moving too fast.

Trump's agenda has also faced significant judicial roadblocks. Most recently, the Supreme Court in a 5-4 decision blocked Trump's attempt to freeze USAID payments for work already done. Trump's crusade against immigrants without permanent legal status has likewise faced stiff resistance. A federal court in New Hampshire blocked Trump's [third](#) attempt to strip those born in the U.S. of their 14th Amendment right to American citizenship. Despite this, the president is pursuing an ongoing lawsuit against Chicago and the state of Illinois to remove sanctuary city policies.

Illinois has pushed back, leading a lawsuit with 22 other states to combat the cuts to the Department of Health and Human Services and NIH. Illinois and a coalition of 10 other states also achieved a [major court victory](#) over Musk and DOGE, preventing them from accessing Americans' personal information. This level of legal conflict between the judicial and executive branches has not been seen since the courts ruled against some of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal policies in the 1940s.

Despite these efforts in the legal and public spheres, it's obvious Trump's support won't collapse overnight. A [CBS poll](#) on Feb. 9 revealed 53% approving and 47% disapproving of Trump's handling of the country. Additionally, [another](#) CBS poll after Trump's recent address to a joint session of Congress revealed that 76% of Americans approved of his speech. It's unclear whether this popularity is due to Americans' frustrations with the sluggish Democratic Party response or Trump's unique personality. From T-shirts with his mugshot to the infamous "Make America Great Again" red cap, Trump is arguably a social movement. He successfully tapped frustrations over inflation and housing by appealing to people's emotions. In his State of the Union address, Trump referenced personal stories, such as the murder of Laken Riley and a tribute to a child with brain cancer. These moments cast Trump's actions in a sympathetic light, allowing him to frame the narrative that he is fighting for the common American.

While recent protests and pushback against Trump's policies in Illinois and nationwide could be early signs that Trump fever is breaking, ultimately it will take more substantial action to sway public opinion.

Robert Weiner was chief of staff of the House Aging Committee and Health Subcommittee under U.S. Rep. Claude Pepper (D-Fla.) and was a senior spokesman in the Clinton and Bush White Houses. Khel Gordhan is a senior policy analyst at Robert Weiner Associates and Solutions For Change Foundation and a political science major at Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington.