



FACE THE MOMENT

Executive Orders of the Trump Administration

Introduction

The president signed over 100 executive orders covering various policies, some of which faced legal challenges. Executive orders allow the president to direct government actions but cannot override laws passed by Congress. They take effect immediately or require additional steps by government agencies.

Trump's use of executive orders has raised concerns, especially when they undermine civil rights, health equity, and social justice. While executive orders can be useful, they can also cause harm. Courts, Congress, and future presidents can overturn them if they are unconstitutional or against federal law.

What Is an Executive Order? How Is It Different from a Law?

An executive order is a directive from the president telling the government how to enforce existing laws. It can set priorities, guide federal agencies, and shape policies, but it cannot create new laws or override Congress.

In contrast, laws must be passed by Congress and signed by the president (or passed over a veto). Congress also controls taxation, spending, and major decisions like declaring war.

Think of it this way: Congress sets the rules, and executive orders help determine how those rules are carried out.

How Can Executive Orders Be Stopped?

Executive orders are powerful tools, but they're not unstoppable. There are three main ways they can be overturned:

- **Congressional Action** – If Congress has the authority, it can pass a law that reverses an executive order.
- **Court Challenges** – If an executive order violates the Constitution or federal law, courts can strike it down.
- **Future Presidents** – A new president can undo or change an existing executive order.

These checks and balances help ensure executive orders align with our laws and democratic principles.

be well Health and Wellness Initiative
The Foundation for Sustainable Urban Communities
7350 East 29th Avenue, 300
Denver, CO 80238
Staff contact: Samuel Valeriano, Health Policy Manager
Svaleriano@FSUCommunities.org



Executive Order 14164: Restoring the Death Penalty and Protecting Public Safety

**January 20
2025**

The executive order reinstates and expands federal support for the death penalty, reversing previous policies that limited executions. It asserts that capital punishment is necessary for justice and public safety and seeks to remove legal and political obstacles to its enforcement. The order instructs the Attorney General to pursue capital punishment in all eligible cases, especially for crimes involving law enforcement murders and undocumented immigrants. It declares that the federal government will help states obtain lethal injection drugs and encourage them to seek capital charges more often. The order aims to reverse Supreme Court decisions that limit how and when the death penalty can be applied. It states that formerly condemned prisoners whose sentences were reduced in 2024 should face harsher prison conditions and instructs officials to explore state-level charges against them. The order prioritizes violent crime prosecution and encourages coordination between federal, state, and local agencies.

Community Impact

- **The focus on undocumented immigrants and cases involving police killings may raise civil rights and fairness issues.**
- **Expanding capital punishment increases the chance of executing innocent individuals, given past wrongful convictions. Historically, the death penalty has been disproportionately applied to Black Americans and defendants with poor legal representation, raising fairness concerns.**
- **While it prioritizes cases involving violent crime, broader enforcement may affect trust in law enforcement, especially in marginalized communities.**