

NATIONAL



# President Trump: Year 1

“With your help, we can rebuild our country’s bridges, airports, seaports, and water systems,” President Donald Trump said April 4 at a Washington, DC, meeting of the National Legislative Conference of North America’s Building Trades Unions (NABTU). A year after inauguration, there’s still no infrastructure proposal.

By Don McIntosh

In the end, it’s not what presidents say or fail to say that matters most; it’s what they do or fail to do.

Over 3 million union members may have voted for Donald John Trump in November 2016, 37 percent of union member voters. In that vote, they defied their unions’ recommendations, but the labor-endorsed candidate wasn’t popular among the rank-and-file of many unions, particularly those that remembered

her husband’s role in passing NAFTA.

Trump offered those voters the first chance since 1996 to vote against so-called “free trade” at the polls in a presidential general election campaign. Trump said American workers got a raw deal, and he promised to terminate NAFTA — or negotiate a better deal.

Trump also spoke often and with gusto about a plan to spend \$1 trillion on infrastructure. He was a business man, a developer. He courted the support of

working people.

But one year in, there’s little to report on NAFTA or infrastructure investment. Instead, the president’s biggest achievements are a tax cut that goes mostly to corporations, and the appointment of a Supreme Court justice who appears likely to deal major damage to public sector unions. Meanwhile, his below-the-radar appointees threaten to unravel worker protections at OSHA, the Department of Labor, and the National Labor Relations Board.

### WHAT HE’S DONE

- **A truly massive tax cut to corporations**, so massive that even CEOs are embarrassed, and are giving out \$1,000 checks to their workers. The new law cuts the nominal corporate income tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent at a cost of \$1 trillion to the U.S. treasury over the next 10 years.

- **The confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch**, the fifth vote needed to make America a right-to-work nation for public employees.

Both those achievements came courtesy (exclusively) of Republicans in the House and Senate, including (in the case of the tax bill) Oregon’s Greg Walden and Southwest Washington Congresswoman Jamie Herrera Beutler, both of whom will be up for reelection sooner than the president.

- **Green light to national right-to-work** In the pending Janus case, Trump’s solicitor general asked the Supreme Court to ban union dues requirements for public sector workers

- **Executive appointees: corporate execs and anti-union attorneys** To run OSHA, Trump appointed FedEx executive Scott Mugno, who led the Chamber of Commerce in opposing numerous new OSHA rules. At the NLRB — the agency you go to for help when you’re fired for talking about a union — Trump appointed as top prosecutor Peter Robb, the lawyer who wrote the memo that allowed Reagan to fire striking air traffic controllers in 1981. And to the Board that decides cases, he appointed Marvin Kaplan, who drafted legislation to overturn Obama-era NLRB rulings, and William Emanuel, a former partner at one of the nation’s premier antiunion law firms, Littler Mendelson.

### WHAT HE’S FAILED TO DO (SO FAR)

- **NAFTA rewrite** Talks on a revision of NAFTA didn’t get started until August. And the author of The Art of a Deal has no deal to show for it so far.

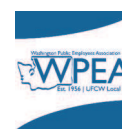
- **\$1 trillion on infrastructure** During his campaign Trump promised to introduce a \$1 trillion infrastructure proposal in his first 100 days in office. Fifty-one weeks in, no such proposal has been seen. Nor was there any mention of infrastructure on Twitter — until Dec. 18, when he tweeted that the Amtrak derailment near Olympia “shows more than ever why our soon to be submitted infrastructure plan must be approved quickly.” [This was after the White House proposed earlier in the year to cut Amtrak’s fiscal 2018 budget by \$630 million.] To be sure, America’s infrastructure badly needs reinvestment. Infrastructure includes things like flood control levees, electricity transmission lines, ship channels, highways, bridges, rail lines, pipelines, and water systems. The American Society of Civil Engineers gives America’s infrastructure a D grade, and says deteriorating infrastructure is impeding the nation’s ability to compete in the thriving global economy. Now there are whispers that Trump’s \$1 trillion infrastructure proposal won’t be \$1 trillion after all, but \$200 billion. It would take the form of competitive grants to states and local governments that promise to raise new, infrastructure-dedicated revenue on their own. In other words, the buck is being passed. The federal government that once built the interstate highway system and put a man on the moon now wants local government to pay four-fifths of the tab, increasing local taxes to pay for it.

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