

It Didn't Need to Be This Bad: Trump's Attack on Science and the Facts Foiled America's Response to the Pandemic

QUICK LOOK

- President Trump has downplayed the crisis since the beginning, and continues to insist that it will "disappear."
- President Trump has politicized agencies like the CDC and the FDA that were meant to keep Americans safe.
- President Trump has silenced and attacked the experts – while pushing junk science and miracle cures (that often have dangerous side effects).
- President Trump's failure to control the virus allowed it to get out of control – resulting in massive unemployment and the worst GDP drop in American history.
- President Trump forced states to reopen before it was safe to do so, and now he's pressuring schools into making the same mistake.
- President Trump failed to ramp up testing and shore up supplies of protective equipment, allowing the virus to spread uninhibited throughout the country.
- President Trump ignored multiple warnings about the severity of the pandemic, and took action that left Americans vulnerable.
- Thanks to President Trump's failures, the United States currently has more than 5.8 million cases and 180,000 deaths.

President Trump Has Downplayed the Crisis Since the Beginning.

- On August 5, Trump [claimed](#): "This thing's going away. It will go away like things go away."
- Trump on August 4 when asked about 150,000 Americans dying from the virus: "[It is what it is.](#)"
- On July 1, Trump [claimed](#) that the virus would "just disappear."
- On [June 17](#), Trump stated that, "The numbers are very minuscule compared to what it was. It's dying out."
- On May 15, Trump [claimed](#) that the virus would "go away at some point" while downplaying the need for a vaccine.
- Trump on [April 28](#): "This is going to go away."
- Through March 10, Trump [insisted](#) "Just stay calm. It will go away."
- On February 28, Trump [insisted](#) that "One day – it's like a miracle – it will disappear" and suggested that coronavirus was Democrats' "[new hoax.](#)"
- On February 26, Trump [wrongly claimed](#) that coronavirus was like the regular flu and "we'll essentially have a flu shot for this in a fairly quick manner."

- On February 10, Trump [insisted](#) that the U.S. only had 11 cases of coronavirus and “most of them are getting better very rapidly.”
- On January 22, Trump [described](#) the coronavirus as “one person coming in from China.”

President Trump Has Politicized Agencies Meant to Keep Americans Safe.

- Trump [ordered](#) the CDC to adjust testing guidelines to exclude people without symptoms – [despite the fact](#) that almost half of transmission events may come from asymptomatic or presymptomatic individuals.
- Trump [strong-armed](#) the FDA into approving an Emergency Use Authorization for an unproven therapy, against the advice of experts.
- The CDC changed its school reopening recommendations just days after Trump [bashed](#) them as “very tough” and “expensive.”
- On July 15, the Trump administration [ordered](#) hospitals no longer send data to the C.D.C., a move that has alarmed health experts who fear the data will be politicized or withheld from the public.
- As Trump championed the drug, in March the FDA [issued](#) an Emergency Use Authorization for hydroxychloroquine, which it was later [forced](#) to revoke.

Trump Attacked & Silenced Experts While Pushing Misinformation, Junk Science

- Trump has [repeatedly](#) pushed for using hydroxychloroquine to treat covid patients despite warnings from experts that it is ineffective and at times deadly.
- On July 28, Trump [shared](#) a video from and later [praised](#) a doctor who has made bizarre claims about alien DNA, sex with demons and vaccinations that cause people not to be religious.
- Trump [retweeted](#) a post alleging a conspiracy “by Fauci & the Democrats to perpetuate Covid deaths to hurt Trump.”
- The White House [released](#) a statement attacking Dr. Anthony Fauci that resembled opposition research on a political opponent.”
- In May, the White House’s Coronavirus Task Force meetings were [scaled back](#) to once a week and the task force became mostly idle.
- In April, Trump [suggested](#) that injecting disinfectants like bleach could be a treatment for covid.

President’s Trump Failure to Control the Virus Led to Massive Unemployment and Economic Recession

- [More than 58 million](#) Americans have filed for unemployment since March.

- Under Trump's tenure, the United States has experienced its [worst economic downturn on record](#) with GDP contracting by 32.9% during the second quarter of 2020.
- Trump's inability to combat the virus caused more than 1.4 million small businesses [to close](#) since the pandemic began, and as many as 4 million could close forever by the end of 2020.
- Trump's economic response to the pandemic has benefitted [billionaires](#), [banks](#), [corporations](#), his [donors](#) and even [Chinese owned companies](#) – while shutting out Americans desperate for a lifeline.

President Trump Dropped the Ball on Social Distancing – And Urged States to Open When They Were Not Ready

- Trump has pushed schools to reopen [despite](#) evidence pointing to the dangers to children and their families, and despite the fact that the United States has not yet controlled the virus. Clusters of cases have [already](#) rocked campuses that reopened at the President's urging.
 - In pushing schools to reopen, Trump has falsely [claimed](#) children don't spread the virus despite [evidence](#) that children over 10 spread the virus just as much as adults.
- States that [were among](#) the first to reopen at Trump's urging experienced deadly summer surges, in stark contrast with those that were slow to lift restrictions.
- Trump let social distancing guidelines [expire](#) on April 30, as more than half of states moved to reopen despite no state [meeting](#) the administration's guidelines for reopening.
- The White House [waited until](#) March 16 to issue social distancing guidelines, nearly two months after the first confirmed case of coronavirus in the United States.
- Epidemiologists estimate that [90 percent](#) of cumulative deaths in the U.S. during the first wave of Covid-19 could have been avoided if social distancing guidelines had been implemented just two

President Trump Refused to Shore Up Supplies of Protective Equipment

- Trump's [sparing use](#) of the Defense Production act left frontline workers struggling to protect themselves throughout the pandemic.
- A July 10 administration briefing noted that states had [only received](#) a fraction of the PPE requested to fight the pandemic.
- The Trump administration and FEMA routinely sent damaged, [expired](#), or otherwise [useless](#) PPE to states struggling to get the virus under control.
- [In June](#), a National Nurses United survey found that 87% of 23,000 respondents were forced to reuse single use N95 respirators.
- Trump [waited](#) until mid-March – after hospitals were already out of N95 masks and ventilators – to start bulk ordering crucial medical supplies.

- Trump [allowed](#) US medical supplies to be exported to other countries as the national stockpile [became](#) depleted.
- In February, after the virus was circulating and despite warnings about its severity, President Trump tried to [slash](#) the budget request to buy respirator masks and other supplies for the national stockpile by 75%.
- On February 7, Trump's State Department allowed [17.8 tons](#) of medical supplies to be sent to China on the same day that the World Health Organization was [warning](#) of global shortage.

President Trump Failed to Scale Up Testing

- In mid-August, the average number of daily tests conducted in the United States [dropped](#) by 20,000 from just two weeks early, and by late August the country was only [testing](#) at 52% of levels recommended by experts.
- In July, as cases surged, people were forced to [wait](#) weeks for test results – rendering them useless.
- In July, when cases were surging across the south, labs were [rationing](#) tests and [vying](#) for critical testing materials that were in short supply.
- Trump refused to invoke the Defense Production Act to increase supplies of testing materials like swabs [until](#) April 19th, weeks after shortages were first reported.
- Trump's promise of drive-through testing centers [never materialized](#) — the administration ultimately only set up 78 sites instead of the thousands promised.
- Eight weeks after its first infection, South Korea [tested](#) nearly 300,000 people. The United States only reported testing [56,000](#) people in the same time frame.
- When the CDC finally [began](#) its own testing regimen, the tests didn't work and were restricted only to those who had been to China or who had had known exposure to the virus.
- The Trump administration [declined](#) to use the diagnostic tests offered by the World Health Organization, allowing cases to spread unidentified across the country.

President Trump Took Action That Exposed Americans and the World to the Risk of a Pandemic

- Two months before the coronavirus struck Wuhan, China, President Trump [ended](#) a pandemic early-warning program specifically designed to detect and respond to coronaviruses.
- Months before the first infections, President Trump eliminated a key CDC position [focused](#) on detecting disease outbreaks in China and cut the staff at the Beijing office of the CDC by two thirds.
- Trump [downsized](#) the CDC's epidemic prevention activities in 39 countries – reducing efforts to prevent global disease outbreaks by 80%.
- Trump [disbanded](#) a National Security Council pandemic response unit in 2018.

President Trump Ignored Several Warnings About the Virus' Severity

- Trump [ignored](#) a 69-page pandemic playbook that encouraged the government to undertake a federal-wide effort to procure supplies and detect outbreaks before things worsened.
- Trump [ignored](#) warnings from US Intelligence agencies in January and February about the global danger posed by the novel coronavirus.
- Trump [ignored](#) warnings from White House economists in 2019 that a pandemic could kill hundreds of thousands of Americans and devastate the economy.
- Trump [ignored](#) an October 2019 report that “drove home just how underfunded, underprepared and uncoordinated the federal government would be for a life-or-death battle with a virus for which no treatment existed.”
- Trump [ignored](#) Pentagon warnings about the threat of a new virus — and how unprepared the country was to face one — since 2017.