

CBS Mornings

02/24/26

7:00:13 a.m. [TEASE]

6 seconds

GAYLE KING: Plus, a look at President Trump's State of the Union address from both sides of the aisle. It's scheduled for tonight.

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7:00:39 a.m. [TEASE]

10 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: State of the Union]

NATE BURLESON: President Trump is set to give his State of the Union address tonight. We will tell you what to expect.

SENATOR RICHARD BLUMENTHAL (D-CT): What I expect is a good deal of confrontation.

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7:10:38 a.m.

7 minutes and 40 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: CBS News; State of the Union]

NORAH O'DONNELL: Now let's go to Washington and tonight's State of the Union address from President Trump. The state of the U.S. economy is expected to be a major focus of his speech. Nancy Cordes is at the White House. And, Nancy, good morning. So, what do we know so far about the President's message tonight?

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Trump to Give Crucial State of the Union Tonight]

NANCY CORDES: Good morning, Norah. Well, about 35 million Americans watch the State of the Union every year, so this one speech might be President Trump's biggest chance to shape the Republican message ahead of this year's midterm elections where control of the House is going to be up for grabs, so you're going to hear a lot tonight about the economy, about the stock market going up, gas prices going down, and you'll hear about some of the President's favorite economic initiatives, including Trump RX, aimed at lowering drug prices and Trump Accounts, investment accounts for babies. A recent CBS News poll shows that Trump does have work to do to change public perception when it comes to the number one issue of the economy. 74 percent of Americans said that Trump hasn't been focused enough on lowering prices and only 23 percent say he's spending the right amount of time on it. Some new American sports heroes could be in attendance tonight. The President invited the U.S. men's gold medal winning hockey team during

a post-game locker room phone call. Now, there was a bit of controversy during that call when the President seemed to joke that he would “have to invite the USA women’s gold medal team as well,” saying, “I do believe I probably would be impeached if I didn’t invite them.” Well, we have now heard from the women who say they are “sincerely grateful,” but cannot attend “[d]ue to the timing and previously scheduled academic and professional commitments.” The House speaker says he’s trying to figure out how to accommodate the men’s players if they attend because it’s a tight squeeze in there on State of the Union night, Gayle.

KING: All right, Nancy, thank you very much. Joining us from Capitol Hill is the House Majority Leader. That’s Republican Congressman Steve Scalise of Louisiana. Congressman Scalise, always good to have you on the program. Thank you so much. You just heard the poll that said 74 percent of Americans say that the President has not been focused enough on lowering the prices. So, what do you think he needs to say tonight to address the issue of affordability?

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Rep. Steve Scalise on Tonight’s State of the Union]

HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER STEVE SCALISE (R-LA): Well, Gayle, I think it’s going to be two things, first of all, it’s going to be a real sharp focus on exactly what the President has been doing work with Congress to make life more affordable for working families and that work also has to remind people just where they started during the Biden years because, you know, I think people forget real easily, inflation was in double digits. You saw inflation well, well higher than it is today during the Biden years. You saw interest rates much higher during the Biden years. You saw gas prices, they’ve come down half under Donald Trump because of real specific things that President Trump has done and just gas prices alone means about \$600 more in the pockets of working families and so, there’s a lot more work to do and I think that’s one of the things I think you’ll hear the President talking about is that, yes, we had a lot of mess to mop up during those four years of high costs and they’re coming down in it the right direction, but they’re not where we want them to be and we’ll keep working to bring more job creation, to bring more wage growth. Remember, during the four years of Joe Biden, average working families lost \$3,000 of wages, they’ve made up about 1,200 of that in the first year of Donald Trump. There’s more to go, so we have more work to do and I think you’re going to see the President talk about those things that he wants to do, not only what he has done, what he’s going to do.

KING: Congressman, but — congressman, people still don’t feel that. I think a lot of people wonder at what point do we stop talking about the Biden years and just focus on the Trump years, but you’re saying he has work to do and he’s aware of that and I know he’ll talk about tariffs. We know that.

SCALISE: You’ll see both. I think you’ll see both tonight.

KING: Okay.

SCALISE: Where we started, where we are, and where we need to go so it’s going to be a three-part series. You got to remind people where we got to. How in the last year we’ve done a lot with a very small majority working with this President to start getting things back on track but

the work is not done. There is more to do.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Rep. Steve Scalise on Tariffs, Shutdown & Iran]

KING: Well, we know he was unhappy with the Supreme Court ruling that struck down his tariffs and he, right away, imposed a 15 percent tariff on the imports and now, they're saying it could translate to higher taxes. Do you agree with his strategy on this?

SCALISE: Well, the President's been clear long before he ran for office that there are countries all around the world, friends and foes alike, who take advantage of the United States, who don't open markets to us. One of the things President Trump used tariffs to do is to leverage those tariffs to get fair trade. I think everybody wants free trade, but they know not all countries treat us fairly including, you know, European friends, Asian friends that were not allowing us to sell our products into their countries. That's finally starting to change and when you see more American products that we can sell into foreign countries, that's one benefit of this. Look, this is the first few months of this policy, but it's already yielding some dividends for the American worker and, by the way, we're seeing trillions of dollars of investment in America. People building manufacturing plants, those are jobs for Americans that are coming to our country because of president trump's work.

O'DONNELL: Congressman, not only will the President talk about the economy, he will also talk about foreign policy. We have just learned this morning that congressional leaders are expected at the White House this afternoon for a briefing on Iran. I want to ask you, one, are you invite righted? What are your questions and concern what is about the news that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is warning the President of a high risk of American casualties if the U.S. Attacks Iran?

SCALISE: Well, I've been in some briefings on Iran. You can see what's happening right now and, look, the people of Iran are rising up against their own failed leaders. But President Trump's made it clear we cannot have a nuclear armed Iran. It's not just bad for America, they want to destroy America and they say just that, they want to destroy other parts of the world. The Middle East is very appreciative of what President Trump has done. I mean, they want to eviscerate Israel, but the other Middle Eastern countries —

O'DONNELL: I'm confused because the President said we had obliterated their clear capabilities, so what would be, in your mind, the goal of this strike?

SCALISE: — well, the President's going to lay more of that out, but they want to continue rebuilding their nuclear program. They're not done, you know, they built it up over a long period of time. They're not done trying to create a nuclear weapon and so, you know, you got to look at the threats that are going on in Iran and how they fund terrorist proxies around the world, Hezbollah, the Houthis all killing Americans. They're still killing American troops around the world. Not just allies like Israel, they kill Americans too.

KING: All right, Congressman Steve Scalise, we thank you for your time and I know we'll talk

again. Thanks so much.

SCALISE: And excited to see the U.S. hockey team.

KING: Alright, yes, us too, us too. Ahead, we will talk to Senator Elissa Slotkin who delivered the Democratic response last year. We invite you to stay with CBS tonight for live coverage of President Trump's State of the Union address and the Democrats' response. *CBS Evening News* anchor Tony Dokoupil leads our coverage. It starts at nine o'clock here on CBS and then streaming, of course, on Paramount+. Then you can watch The Free Press post-State of the Union wrap-up on our streaming channel, CBS News 24/7.

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7:34:28 a.m. [TEASE]
10 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Coming Up; Senator Elissa Slotkin]

O'DONNELL: All right, coming up, we continue our look ahead to the State of the Union. We'll ask Democratic Senator Elissa Slotkin what she thinks Americans should hear tonight.

(....)

7:39:05 a.m.
5 minutes and 1 second

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Sen. Elissa Slotkin on State of the Union Address]

O'DONNELL: Tonight's State of the Union address will be President Trump's first since he returned to the White House a year ago. He is due to outline his administration's accomplishments and policy agenda and he's likely to get a cold response from Democrats. Democratic Senator Elissa Slotkin of Michigan joins us now. Senator, good to see you. Thanks for joining us.

SENATOR ELISSA SLOTKIN (D-MI): Thanks for having me.

O'DONNELL: You know the President is expected to tout the administration's record on the economy and it is true that inflation is cooling, the stock market hit its highest level. How do you see the state of the economy?

SLOTKIN: I mean, look, the State of the Union is a perfect time to reset and just take stock and a year ago, the President, you know, came in on the heels of running on lowering costs on big things and a year later, even if inflation is cooled a little, the average person understands they're paying more for food, more for healthcare, more for housing, and more energy, like, the big four corners of the kitchen table. Those are the things he ran on, those are the things he hasn't

attacked, and then, meanwhile, he's literally declared an emergency, you know, a dozen times on things like Canada or Brazil, but he hasn't declared a housing emergency or things that actually affect the average American. And then, in the meantime, has spent a lot of time making money for himself, so, you know, a year later objectively, you know, if he can wave his hands and try to make you believe what he wants you to believe, the American people aren't stupid. They know that they are spending more this year than they did last year.

O'DONNELL: So, what's the Democrats' plan?

SLOTKIN: Well, look, I think the Democrats are in the wilderness right now. We don't have the House, the Senate, or the White House. And this is part of it. Like, you can criticize Donald Trump and you can go after him, but until we have our own affirmative, like, economic war plan then I understand why people are saying, well, what would you do? For me, declare an emergency. The President has been bold on those things, but do it on the things people care about. Declare a housing emergency, make it so the average person doesn't have to be 42 years old before they can buy a house. There are things that's can do with executive power that he has just not done because he doesn't want to offend kind of big players in this field, so focus that same bold energy on things that actually affect costs.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Sen. Elissa Slotkin on Gov't Shutdown & Iran Talks]

O'DONNELL: Senator, I also want to ask you about Iran. You served as a CIA analyst in the Middle East. There are reports this morning that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is telling the President there is a high risk of American casualties if the U.S. strikes Iran. I know you're also a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. What do you know about the possible timing of a strike and do you expect a briefing any time soon?

SLOTKIN: Yeah, we certainly heard that Secretary Rubio is briefing the Gang of Eight, I think as early as today which is an important sign. I was just in the Middle East last week and there's definitely movement of a ton of military assets into the theater, a lot of jittery people. I think the most important thing is, like, what exactly are we trying to do in Iran? What's the strategic objective and how are we going to achieve it? Because it's true if we take out the leader of another country as much as that leader has frustrated many of us for my — for our entire lives, you know, what's the goal for the United States? How do we keep our people safe and how do we know we won't be sucked into yet another forever war, so the average person I know, including myself, who does national security stuff, can't articulate the goals of President Trump in attacking Iran. What is your goal and then how are you going to make sure you're going to achieve it without boots on the ground?

O'DONNELL: Well, the President says that this conflict could be easily won, in his words.

SLOTKIN: Great, you know, nothing stronger than the U.S. military, I understand that. But if you go after the head of this country, right, the Iranians have ballistic missiles, they have terrorist agents all over the Middle East and beyond. You just should understand and be able to articulate how you're going to keep our troops safe in the Middle East. Again, lots of military assets being

brought into theater. What's the goal? Just decapitation or are we going to go in if something falls apart? That's what I think we're wondering.

O'DONNELL: The President will speak tonight. The Democrats get a response and tonight, it's Governor Abigail Spanberger of Virginia. You did the Democratic response last time. What advice do you have for the governor?

SLOTKIN: Yeah, we've been in touch. She's a good friend of mine. I think it's a great person to have giving the response. Look, just be straight with the American people. Tell them to keep book on Donald Trump. He's doing plenty to make their lives harder, flag that, and don't let him get away with what we know will be a lot of hand waving and distraction, trying to feed the American people something that they — that just isn't true, so highlight what he hasn't done and what we are going to do instead.

O'DONNELL: Senator Elissa Slotkin, good to see you. Thanks for joining us.

SLOTKIN: Thank you.

O'DONNELL: CBS News will have live coverage tonight of President Trump's State of the Union address and the Democrats' response. *CBS Evening News* anchor Tony Dokoupil will lead our coverage, starting at 9:00 p.m. here on CBS and streaming on Paramount+. Then, you can watch The Free Press post-State of the Union wrap-up on our streaming channel, CBS News 24/7.

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8:00:43 a.m.

2 minutes and 27 seconds

O'DONNELL: We begin this hour with a look at President Trump's key supporters ahead of tonight's State of the Union address. We wanted to know how they rate his performance after one year of his second term. And whether the aggressive immigration crackdown in Minneapolis has had an effect. So, Caitlin Huey-Burns went to Gastonia, North Carolina, which is in a county where 62% of the vote went to President Trump in 2024 to ask trump voters how they're feeling.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Trump Supporters Rate President on Immigration]

CAITLIN HUEY-BURNS: Over burgers and beers here at Whiskey Mill in Gastonia, North Carolina, Trump supporters told us they feel better off than before but see room for improvement. [TO UNIDENTIFIED MALE PATRON] If you could give a grade, what would you give?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE PATRON: I'd say 70.

HUEY-BURNS [TO HUNT]: Do you feel like you have been getting what you voted for?

DIANE HUNT: Not really, but, you know, as many problems there are in this country, it takes a long time.

HUEY-BURNS: On immigration, Diane Hunt said what happened in Minnesota went too far.

HUNT: I'd like to see them stick with what they originally said they would do and just go after the ones that were illegal and had records.

HUEY-BURNS: Across the bar, Jerry Smith said he also has concerns.

JERRY SMITH: I like closing of the borders, but I don't like ICE doing things that they shouldn't do. I don't like seeing an innocent person getting treated bad, you know? I don't like to see somebody that's here illegally getting treated bad. Just send them back. Don't abuse them or shoot them or split them up from the kids.

HUEY-BURNS: To work off lunch, we laced up at Kate's Skating Rink and took a lap with Amy McElwain.

AMY MCELWAIN: I was for, like, the administration policy and then, like, ICE, but when I saw the episode happen in Minnesota, it totally changed my perspective on how they came and killed an innocent woman. People are scared. Innocent people are scared and they shouldn't be. If they're innocent and they're citizens, it's harassment to me.

HUEY-BURNS: Skating nearby, we met Jack Wells, who had a different view.

JACK WELLS: Any time you get to the enforcement part of the law, it's get — it can get ugly.

HUEY-BURNS [TO WELLS]: If you were to give the President a grade, what would you give him?

WELLS: I would give him a B+ to an A. As far as his policies. I don't have a problem with them. To me, they seem to be working. I mean, we needed a change.

HUEY-BURNS: For *CBS Mornings*, I'm Caitlin Huey-Burns.