

Annotation of Trump's Executive Orders and Policies: What do they say, and what do they mean?

Abstract

Drawing on constitutional principles, legal precedent, and historical context, this work exposes how executive action can be weaponized to circumvent legislative oversight and erode fundamental rights through the reformulation of bureaucratic procedure. The project investigates how rhetorical framing within these orders obscures their true intent, using neutral or legalistic language to mask policies that disproportionately target marginalized communities. By breaking down these documents at a granular level, this analysis aims to reveal how executive orders can be used as mechanisms of systemic oppression in policy; by re-embedding these orders in a social context, the effects become more apparent. This analysis examines executive orders and their legal foundations, the implications of their wording, and their impacts on and applications to civil rights, particularly concerning immigration and law enforcement.

The project provides useful information to help Alma College students, staff, and faculty understand the executive orders and their potential ramifications on the daily lives of the broader community. These annotations are not just an academic exercise but an urgent intervention in ongoing discussions about executive power, the rule of law, and human rights. With the inauguration of the new administration, there is an urgent need for a broad understanding of rhetoric, language, and literacy; this project is a manifestation of that necessity.

These annotations are informed by many factors, including exposure and analysis of national and global politics and law as a MUN and Moot Court team member, my work at the Writing Center examining responsible use of rhetoric, which is never apolitical, and the intersection of my Political Science and English majors at Alma College.