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Rep. Al Green, D-Texas, gestures as U.S. President Donald Trump addresses a joint session of Congress at the U.S. Capitol in Washington March 4, 2025. (OSV News/Reuters/Win McNamee)

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President Donald Trump touted the "swift and unrelenting action" taken by his second administration in its first six weeks, telling lawmakers March 4 in an address to a joint session of Congress he was "just getting started."

He also repeated his previous statement that he believes he was "saved by God to make America great again" after a failed assassination attempt.

In his address, Trump promoted the signing of an executive order seeking to prohibit certain types of medical or surgical gender reassignment procedures for minors who identify as transgender. Trump called on Congress to codify that order, arguing it would end "the lie that any child is trapped in the wrong body."

"This is a big lie, and our message to every child in America is that you are perfect, exactly the way God made you," he said.

Despite Republican control of both chambers, it is not clear if such legislation has a path to Trump's desk, as it would need to clear the Senate's 60-vote filibuster threshold.

He also touted, and was applauded, for a similar executive order directing that athletes should compete only on men's or women's sports teams that correspond to their biological sex.

In the same address, Trump told lawmakers that his administration "has launched the most sweeping border and immigration crackdown in American history," adding that "there still is much work to be done."

"No step is more crucial than securing America's borders," he argued.

These issues exemplify what the U.S. bishops have alternately praised and criticized among Trump's early actions. In the past six weeks, the bishops have expressed particular concern about the rescinding of a long-standing policy generally

preventing immigration arrests at houses of worship, schools and other sensitive locations; revoking refugee resettlement contracts; and efforts to expand in vitro fertilization. They also have praised other actions, including some executive orders on education and gender policy.

The address to members of Congress marked Trump's first such speech since he was sworn in for a second term. New presidents typically address a joint session of Congress soon after they take office as an opportunity to pitch their agenda.

"I return to this chamber tonight to report that America's momentum is back, our spirit is back, our pride is back, our confidence is back, and the American Dream is surging bigger and better than ever before," Trump said.

The speech came just days after a tense Feb. 28 White House meeting between Trump, Vice President JD Vance and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy about the future of U.S. aid in that country's effort to fend off Russia's invasion.

While Trump spoke critically of U.S. spending on that front, he also read from what he said was a letter from Zelenskyy saying, "Nobody wants peace more than the Ukrainians."

"Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible to bring lasting peace closer," Trump said the Ukrainian president wrote.

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In his speech, Trump embraced billionaire and Tesla CEO Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency, a task force with the stated intent of curbing federal spending, despite recent polls showing more Americans disapprove of Musk. Targets of that office — known as DOGE — thus far include the U.S. Agency for International Development and more than 1,000 contracts across the federal government.

Though Trump touted what he called a mandate from the American people, partisan divides were evident in the chamber as he spoke.

Rep. Al Green, D-Texas, began yelling during Trump's speech, and Republican members began chanting "USA" to drown him out. House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., directed the Sergeant at Arms to remove Green from the chamber.

Others protested the president's remarks with signs bearing slogans including "False," "Save Medicaid" or "Musk Steals."

"I look at the Democrats in front of me, and I realize there is absolutely nothing I can say to make them happy or to make them stand or smile or applaud," Trump said.

But in one moment of bipartisanship, the majority of the chamber applauded when Trump directed that DJ Daniel, a 13-year-old boy battling terminal cancer whom he said dreams of being a police officer, be made an honorary Secret Service agent.

Elsewhere in the speech, Trump highlighted first lady Melania Trump's advocacy for the "TAKE IT DOWN Act," legislation that would criminalize "non-consensual intimate content," sometimes called "revenge porn," including "deepfake" material generated by AI.

In a rebuttal speech, Sen. Elissa Slotkin, D-Mich., said after a "fraught election season," Americans "made it clear that prices are too high and that the government needs to be more responsive to their needs."

"America wants change, but there's a responsible way to make change, and a reckless way, and we can make that change without forgetting who we are as a country and as a democracy," she said, calling for policies to lower cost of living and foster well-paying jobs.

Those in attendance included lawmakers from both chambers of Congress, their guests and officials including Trump's Cabinet and Supreme Court justices. Guests of lawmakers included Bishop Robert Barron of Winona-Rochester in Minnesota, who was invited by Rep. Riley Moore, R-W.Va.

This story appears in the **Trump's Second Term** feature series. View the full series.