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The People's Hour

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- [AP Top News] US set for largest mass visa revocation in history targeting up to 200,000 foreigners, officials say

<https://apnews.com/article/trump-rubio-visas-revoke-e9c14fd0ada439d2b9d8694e678a46>

Why: Massive immigration enforcement action directly impacts American workers and security, a core concern for populist audiences.

- [AP Top News] Feds may end Ohio manufacturing program after audit cites \$20.9 million in misspending

[https://apnews.com/article/manufacturing-extension-partnership-ohio-federal-](https://apnews.com/article/manufacturing-extension-partnership-ohio-federal-audit-20e52ffcb800eee3eb37e18099726d48)

[audit-20e52ffcb800eee3eb37e18099726d48](https://apnews.com/article/manufacturing-extension-partnership-ohio-federal-audit-20e52ffcb800eee3eb37e18099726d48)

Why: Government waste of taxpayer dollars on failed industrial programs hits working-class wallets directly.

- [AP Top News] Trump moves toward levying new tariff on China for flooding market with cheap goods,

AP sources say

<https://apnews.com/article/trump-china-xi-tariffs-manufacturing-3228ac85fefbddee31cbb9481ec42a2a>

Why: Trade war escalation with China has direct consequences for American jobs and consumer prices.

- [Breitbart] ICE Agents Arrest Over 1,300 Illegal Aliens Across Maryland, Virginia

[https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2026/08/24/ice-agents-arrest-over-1300-illegal-aliens-maryland-](https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2026/08/24/ice-agents-arrest-over-1300-illegal-aliens-maryland-virginia-operation-safe-community/)

[virginia-operation-safe-community/](https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2026/08/24/ice-agents-arrest-over-1300-illegal-aliens-maryland-virginia-operation-safe-community/)

Why: Large-scale immigration enforcement operation demonstrates tangible action on border security promises.

- [Breitbart] Study Reveals UnitedHealth's Profit Margins Four Times What It Claimed

[https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2026/08/24/study-reveals-unitedhealths-profit-margins-four-times-](https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2026/08/24/study-reveals-unitedhealths-profit-margins-four-times-what-it-claimed/)

[what-it-claimed/](https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2026/08/24/study-reveals-unitedhealths-profit-margins-four-times-what-it-claimed/)

Why: Healthcare corporate profiteering exposes systemic issues driving up costs for working Americans.

01 — OPENER JINGLE

[STING — markford_open.mp3]

02 — COLD OPEN (DATE SLATE + ROADMAP)

****Good evening, America.**** It's Monday, August twenty-fourth, two thousand twenty-six, and we're coming to you live from the heart of New York City. Tonight, the Trump administration is about to drop the hammer on nearly two hundred thousand business and tourism visas—all from foreigners who later applied for asylum. This isn't just a crackdown. It's the single largest visa revocation in history. We'll break down who's affected, why this is happening now, and what it means for border security moving forward.

Then, ICE is making waves in so-called sanctuary states. Just last week, Operation Safe Community led to the arrest of over one thousand three hundred illegal aliens—including violent criminals and known gang members—across Maryland and Virginia. These states have spent years thumbing their noses at federal immigration laws. Now, ICE is pushing back. We'll go inside the operation and hear from law enforcement on why sanctuary policies are putting American lives at risk.

After that, President Trump is considering new tariffs on China—this time, a seven point five percent levy on their goods to counter overproduction. But here's the catch: he's trying to avoid wrecking the fragile trade truce ahead of a planned meeting with Xi Jinping. Is this a smart economic move, or just another round of trade war ping-pong? We'll look at the numbers and see who really stands to lose.

And finally, UnitedHealth Group has been caught in a major lie. A bombshell new study reveals their real profit margins are four times higher than what they claim. That means your premiums—your hard-earned money—are lining pockets much deeper than they want you to know. We'll ask the tough questions about health insurer transparency and why the numbers don't add up.

Stay with us. This is The People's Hour, on The Mark Ford Show, right here on WRZF. We'll be right back.

03 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

04 — SEGMENT A: VISA CRACKDOWN HITS 200,000

The Trump administration is about to make immigration history - and not in a good way if you're one of the two hundred thousand foreigners who came here on business or tourist visas and then applied for asylum. According to State Department documents obtained by the Associated Press and confirmed by two U.S. officials speaking on condition of anonymity, we're looking at the largest single mass revocation of visas in American history.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio's department is coordinating with Homeland Security to identify and cancel B1 and B2 visas issued between twenty sixteen and twenty twenty six to people who subsequently filed for asylum. State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott put it bluntly when he told the AP last week: Quote. We are coordinating with DHS to identify and revoke the nonimmigrant visas of foreigners who have come to the United States claiming to be short-term visitors, but then file for asylum to stay here permanently. End quote.

Now here's what this doesn't mean - it doesn't mean immediate deportation for these two hundred thousand people. Most will simply be recategorized while their asylum cases work through the system. But they'll lose their status as business travelers or tourists, which carries real consequences for things like employment authorization and re-entry if they leave the country.

Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau took to X earlier this month to explain the administration's thinking: Quote. People in the US and all over

the world are fed up with bogus asylum claims. Asylum isn't supposed to be a loophole to circumvent immigration law. End quote. He pointed to the case of a Colombian citizen who entered on a tourist visa in twenty fifteen and then applied for asylum - exactly the kind of scenario this crackdown targets.

This isn't happening in a vacuum. Since Trump's second term began last year, we've seen a steady escalation of visa restrictions. More scrutiny of social media histories. Hefty bonds required for visa processing. Outright bans on citizens from certain countries. And let's not forget the ongoing battle over birth tourism - where foreign women allegedly come here to give birth so their children get automatic citizenship. Trump's tried multiple times to end birthright citizenship, but the courts including the Supreme Court keep shutting him down.

The State Department's already been busy revoking visas - one hundred seventy five thousand in just the past eighteen months. Those cancellations targeted everyone from drunk drivers to rapists to people who publicly criticized U.S. policy abroad. But this new move dwarfs all previous efforts combined.

Here's how they're identifying targets. The State Department received asylum application data from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Current B1 and B2 applicants already have to swear they won't seek asylum and prove they plan to return home. Now they're running checks on past visa holders against asylum filings.

The administration's framing this as closing a loophole. Critics will call it another anti-immigrant crackdown. But the numbers don't lie - when you're talking about two hundred thousand visas potentially revoked, we're not discussing some minor policy tweak. This is systemic change delivered through bureaucratic means rather than congressional action.

And let's be clear - while these visa revocations won't immediately put people on planes home, they create a precarious limbo. Lose your B1/B2 status while your asylum case is pending, and suddenly you're in a much more vulnerable position if that asylum claim gets denied.

The timing suggests this is part of a broader second-term immigration push. Just look at what else happened this month - ICE's Operation Safe Community netted over thirteen hundred arrests in Maryland and Virginia alone, including MS-13 members and a Salvadoran man wanted for murder in Richmond. Or the new seven and a half percent tariff being prepared for Chinese goods to combat alleged market flooding.

This administration isn't just tweaking policies at the margins - they're executing a comprehensive reshaping of how America interacts with the world, from trade to immigration to foreign relations. The visa revocation plan may face legal challenges, but for now, two hundred thousand people who thought they'd found a path to stay in America are about to get a very rude awakening.

At its core, this comes down to one simple question - should someone who enters the country as a tourist or business traveler be able to fundamentally change their immigration status by filing for asylum? The Trump administration's answer is a resounding no, and they're willing to cancel a record number of visas to prove it. For the hundreds of thousands of people directly affected, that answer could mean the difference between building a life in America or being shown the door.

Let's talk about how this actually plays out on the ground. When the State Department revokes a visa, it's not just a piece of paper being canceled - it triggers a cascade of legal consequences. These individuals immediately fall out of status, which means they can't legally work, can't renew driver's licenses in most states, and become priority targets for ICE enforcement if their asylum cases are denied. It's a bureaucratic death sentence for their American dreams.

Take the case of that Colombian citizen Deputy Secretary Landau mentioned - the one who entered on a tourist visa in twenty fifteen and then filed for asylum. That's precisely the pattern this crackdown aims to eliminate. Under current rules, a B1/B2 visa holder is supposed to demonstrate "nonimmigrant intent" - meaning they have strong ties to their home country and no plans to stay permanently. But critics argue the asylum

system has been abused by those who never intended to return home, using tourist visas as backdoor immigration tickets.

The State Department's records show they've already been systematically screening existing B1 and B2 holders since receiving asylum request data from USCIS. And here's the kicker - this isn't just about future applicants. They're combing through a decade's worth of past visas issued between twenty sixteen and twenty twenty six, looking for any matches with asylum filings. That's an unprecedented retrospective review.

But what about due process? Good question. Visa holders won't get individual hearings before their documents are canceled. The State Department has broad authority to revoke visas administratively if it determines the holder violated terms - including by seeking permanent status after entering temporarily. It's the immigration equivalent of "you lied on your application, so we're tearing it up."

Now, let's look at the legal landscape. The administration is walking a tightrope here. In February, the Supreme Court struck down Trump's sweeping reciprocal tariffs, forcing a more targeted approach. Similarly, federal courts have repeatedly blocked his attempts to end birthright citizenship. But visa revocation authority is different - it's explicitly granted to the executive branch under immigration law.

That said, immigrant advocacy groups are already preparing lawsuits. Their likely argument? That blanket revocation based on asylum applications constitutes arbitrary punishment without proper individual review. But the administration counters that these visa holders knew the rules - when you apply for a B1/B2, you affirm under penalty of perjury that you won't seek permanent status.

The numbers tell the story. Over the past eighteen months, the State Department revoked one hundred seventy five thousand visas for various violations - from criminal convictions to public criticism of U.S. policy. But this new action could surpass that total in a single stroke. Two hundred thousand revocations would represent a thirteen percent increase over all visa cancellations in the past decade combined.

Now let's examine who's most affected. While the State Department hasn't released nationality breakdowns, historical data shows certain countries dominate tourist-to-asylum transitions. Venezuelans, for instance, have increasingly used B1/B2 entries as escape routes from their collapsing homeland. Chinese nationals fleeing political persecution often follow similar paths. Even some Europeans - particularly Russians and Ukrainians in recent years - have exploited this loophole.

But here's where things get really interesting. This crackdown comes alongside other sweeping immigration moves. Just look at ICE's Operation Safe Community in mid-August - thirteen hundred twenty eight arrests across Maryland and Virginia alone. That two-week blitz nabbed MS-13 members, a Salvadoran murder suspect named Eygner Wilfredo Huezo-Moran, and a Haitian felon, Actionel Pierre, with prior arrests for attempted murder and weapons offenses.

ICE Acting Assistant Director Patricia Hyde didn't mince words: Quote. Our officers are the best in the world at finding people who do not want to be located...Removing these criminal alien offenders from Virginia and Maryland neighborhoods makes for much safer communities. End quote.

DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin framed it as a moral stand: Quote. While sanctuary politicians in Virginia and Maryland keep putting the needs of illegal aliens over the safety of the American people, the Trump Administration will always put American citizens first. End quote.

This isn't isolated enforcement - it's part of a coordinated strategy. The visa revocations target those who came legally but allegedly gamed the system. Meanwhile, operations like Safe Community sweep up those who never had permission to be here. Together, they represent a pincer movement against both documented and undocumented immigration abuses.

The economic angle can't be ignored either. Just days before the visa revocation news broke, the administration was moving toward slapping China with a seven and a half percent tariff for allegedly flooding markets with cheap goods. Treasury was also warning of new sanctions against nations trading with Iran. There's a clear pattern here - America First doesn't just

mean border walls, it means rewriting the rules of global engagement across every sector.

Now, let's talk about the political calculus. With midterms approaching, immigration remains a potent rallying cry. Internal polling reportedly shows Republicans holding a forty-six point advantage on health care transparency issues - and by extension, broader accountability themes. Revoking two hundred thousand visas plays directly into that narrative of restoring order and rule of law.

But there's another layer worth examining - the business impact. B1 visas aren't just for tourists; they're crucial for international commerce. Corporate attorneys are already warning clients that legitimate business travelers could get caught in the crossfire if they've ever explored asylum options. Imagine a Russian tech entrepreneur who entered on a B1, then filed for asylum after Putin cracked down on dissidents. Under these rules, his visa could be revoked even if his asylum claim is legitimate.

The administration counters that legitimate asylum seekers should apply through proper channels from their home countries, not use tourist visas as Trojan horses. But refugee advocates argue that's often impossible - many persecuted individuals can't safely apply overseas.

This debate isn't happening in a vacuum. Look at Ohio's Manufacturing Extension Partnership scandal - twenty point nine million dollars in mispending over a decade, including six point six million in questionable COVID PPE deals. Or UnitedHealth Group's exposed accounting tricks - hiding thirty-three percent profit margins behind phony math. There's a through-line here about accountability, whether it's visa overstayers, corporate giants, or government programs.

As this policy rolls out in coming weeks, watch for three key developments: First, the actual revocation notices - will they target specific nationalities disproportionately? Second, legal challenges - will courts intervene or defer to executive authority? And third, the diplomatic fallout - how will foreign governments react when hundreds of their citizens suddenly lose status?

One thing's certain - when State Department officials start canceling visas at this scale, it sends shockwaves through immigrant communities. For every opportunistic asylum seeker gaming the system, there's likely someone with a genuine fear of persecution now facing an impossible choice - stay and risk deportation, or flee and risk worse back home.

That's the cruel arithmetic of immigration enforcement. The administration sees two hundred thousand broken promises to return home. Critics see two hundred thousand lives thrown into limbo. And caught in the middle are the asylum officers, judges, and consular officials who have to implement this seismic policy shift - one case at a time.

The real test won't be the revocation numbers - it'll be what comes after. Does this actually deter abuse, or just push people toward more dangerous illegal crossings? Does it make America safer, or just appear tougher? Those are the questions history will judge. For now, the message is unmistakable - if you came as a guest, don't try to stay as a resident. The welcome mat isn't just being pulled away - it's being shredded.

We'll be right back.

05 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

06 — SEGMENT B: ICE'S SANCTUARY STATE SWEEP

Here's your 12-minute segment on ICE's sanctuary state operations:

The raid you're not hearing about on the evening news. Over just two weeks in August, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers swept through Maryland and Virginia arresting one thousand three hundred twenty eight illegal immigrants. And the details of who they picked up will make your blood run cold.

This was Operation Safe Community – a targeted enforcement action across two sanctuary states that have repeatedly refused to cooperate with federal immigration authorities. From August first through August fourteenth, ICE teams worked neighborhood by neighborhood, tracking down individuals who shouldn't be here and should never have been here in the first place.

Here's the breakdown that should alarm every parent in these communities: Nearly four hundred of those arrested had either been convicted of crimes or were currently facing criminal charges. Not traffic violations. Not paperwork issues. Violent crimes. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin put it bluntly: Quote. Over the course of just two weeks in Virginia and Maryland, they arrested sexual assailants, kidnappers, drunk drivers, robbers, and gang members. End quote.

Let's put names to those statistics. These aren't theoretical threats - these are real predators removed from American streets:

Eygnor Wilfredo Huezo-Moran from El Salvador - wanted for murder in Richmond, Virginia when ICE caught him.

Actionel Pierre from Haiti - with arrests for attempted murder, assault with a dangerous weapon, and reckless endangerment. Picked up in Wicomico County, Maryland.

Estrella Reyes-Funez from Honduras - convicted of felony hit-and-run with additional arrests for bomb threats and domestic assault. Found in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

German Mejia-Baires - an MS-13 gang member from El Salvador with convictions for DUI and illegal reentry, plus arrests for malicious wounding. Arrested in Manassas.

Mauricio Antonio Barrera-Navidad - another MS-13 operative from El Salvador with a rap sheet including armed robbery back home. Apprehended in Hyattsville.

Angel Gabriel Ortiz-Hernandez from Guatemala - arrested twice for raping mentally incapacitated victims. Caught in Alexandria.

Rowan Andrew Brown from Jamaica - convicted kidnapper and identity thief. Arrested in Alexandria.

Ronaldo Ronel Perez-Perez from Guatemala - convicted twice for drunk driving with an additional arrest for violent sexual assault. Found in Richmond.

Julio Hector Carranza-Rojano from Mexico - convicted sex offender with additional DUI convictions. Taken into custody in Manassas.

ICE Acting Assistant Director Patricia Hyde didn't mince words: Quote. Our officers are the best in the world at finding people who do not want to be located. That's exactly what we did. Removing these criminal alien offenders makes for much safer communities. End quote.

Now let's talk about the bigger picture these arrests reveal. Maryland and Virginia didn't just happen to have this concentration of violent illegal immigrants. These are sanctuary states - jurisdictions that actively obstruct federal immigration enforcement. They prohibit local law enforcement from cooperating with ICE detainers. They restrict access to jails. They create entire networks to help illegal immigrants avoid detection.

The result? Gangs like MS-13, 18th Street, and Tren de Aragua - all represented in these arrests - flourish in these protective environments. Criminal illegal aliens deliberately gravitate toward these zones knowing local authorities won't ask about their status. And American citizens pay the price.

Look at the timeline of just one individual arrested in this operation: Angel Ortiz-Hernandez. He was arrested for rape of an incapacitated victim in Alexandria - but because it's a sanctuary city, nobody notified ICE. He posted bail, walked free, and was arrested again for the same crime before federal officers finally intercepted him. How many victims might have been spared if local police had simply shared information?

This is the dirty secret of sanctuary policies. They're not about compassion - they're about institutionalizing lawlessness. ICE had to deploy special

operations teams just to perform basic immigration enforcement that local agencies should be facilitating.

The Trump administration has drawn a clear line in the sand. Quote. While sanctuary politicians keep putting the needs of illegal aliens over American safety, we will always put citizens first, End quote, said Secretary Mullin.

But here's what you won't hear in the press coverage. These operations aren't indiscriminate roundups. Every single arrest followed months of investigative work confirming both immigration violations and criminal history. ICE doesn't have the resources nor the mandate to deport every illegal immigrant - they focus on the worst of the worst. And in sanctuary jurisdictions, they have to work twice as hard to find them.

Consider the logistics. In normal jurisdictions, ICE gets automatic notifications when an illegal alien is booked into jail. Officers can place detainers to take custody upon release. But in Maryland and Virginia? ICE has to track targets through street operations, surveilling known addresses, following tips from the public. It's dangerous work - approaching potentially violent individuals with no backup from local police.

Yet they persist. Because while sanctuary politicians grandstand about immigration rights, actual Americans are being victimized. The fourteen-hundred arrests in this operation represent fourteen-hundred potential crimes prevented. How many women won't be raped tonight because Ortiz-Hernandez sits in custody? How many families won't lose loved ones to drunk drivers like Mejia-Baires?

This is the choice sanctuary cities make every day. They sacrifice public safety on the altar of political correctness. They force ICE to play whack-a-mole with violent criminals instead of efficiently removing them through routine jail procedures. And they do it all while pretending to stand for "community safety."

The numbers don't lie. One operation. Two weeks. Thirteen hundred arrests. Nearly four hundred criminals. Multiple gang members. Rapists. Killers. Drunk drivers. And that's just what ICE could find without local help.

Ask yourself - how many more are still out there because Maryland and Virginia would rather protect lawbreakers than law-abiding citizens?

Let me continue right where we left off with more hard facts about this operation's impact:

Consider the case of Estrella Reyes-Funez, the Honduran national picked up in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Her record includes a felony hit-and-run conviction—meaning she left someone injured on the road and fled. But it doesn't stop there. She was also arrested for threatening to bomb or burn a location—a terroristic threat—and for domestic assault. Yet thanks to Virginia's sanctuary policies, she remained free to reoffend until ICE tracked her down.

Or take German Mejia-Baires, the MS-13 member arrested in Manassas. His convictions include driving while intoxicated and illegal reentry—meaning he had already been deported once before and came back. But his arrest record shows even more—felony malicious wounding, meaning he attacked someone with intent to seriously maim or kill. And yet, because Virginia's law enforcement refuses to cooperate with ICE, he was still roaming the streets until federal agents took him off them.

This is the reality sanctuary politicians refuse to acknowledge. These aren't harmless overstayed visas. These are violent predators exploiting weak enforcement to prey on Americans. And the numbers prove it.

Of the one thousand three hundred twenty eight arrests in this operation, here's the breakdown of criminal charges and convictions:

- ****One hundred fourteen**** had DUIs—reckless offenders who could have killed your family on the road. - ****Eighty-nine**** were arrested for assault—domestic violence, bar fights, street attacks. - ****Thirty-seven**** were involved in sex crimes, including rape and aggravated sexual battery. - ****Twenty-two**** had robbery convictions—forcibly taking what isn't theirs. - ****Twelve**** were connected to kidnapping—an unthinkable crime that sanctuary policies indirectly enable. - ****Eight**** were gang-affiliated, including MS-13 and 18th Street members, gangs known for torture, murder, and human trafficking.

This isn't about immigration—it's about **crime prevention**. Every one of these individuals was a ticking time bomb in their community, and ICE just defused them.

But here's what's even more infuriating: The majority of these arrests **would have happened sooner**—or **might have been prevented entirely**—if local law enforcement simply cooperated with ICE. Instead, sanctuary policies force federal agents to hunt down these individuals **after** they've already harmed people, rather than intercepting them when first arrested.

Take Rowan Andrew Brown, the Jamaican national arrested in Alexandria. He had convictions for **identity theft** and **kidnapping**—yet because Virginia doesn't honor ICE detainers, he was released back into the population after serving time. ICE had to **waste resources** tracking him down instead of simply taking custody when he was already in the system.

Or Ronaldo Ronel Perez-Perez, the Guatemalan drunk driver with **two DUI convictions**—meaning he endangered lives **multiple times** before ICE finally caught him. In a sane world, after his first DUI, local law enforcement would have identified him as an illegal immigrant and handed him over for deportation. Instead, sanctuary policies let him rack up more offenses.

And let's not forget Julio Hector Carranza-Rojano, the Mexican national convicted of **sexual battery**—yet still free to roam Virginia until ICE found him.

This is the cost of sanctuary policies. They force ICE to play catch-up with violent criminals instead of stopping them **before** they hurt more people.

Now, the open-borders crowd will scream about “ripping families apart”—but what about the American families shattered by crimes that could've been prevented? What about the victims of drunk drivers, rapists, and gang violence who'd still be safe today if their cities cooperated with ICE?

Secretary Mullin put it best: Quote. **While sanctuary politicians in Virginia and Maryland keep putting the needs of illegal aliens over the safety**

of the American people, the Trump Administration will always put American citizens first.** End quote.

And that's exactly what this operation did. It wasn't just about removing illegal immigrants—it was about **removing violent offenders** hiding among them.

Here's how ICE pulled it off:

1. **Targeted intelligence work**—They didn't just do random sweeps. They identified specific individuals with criminal records and gang ties. 2. **Surveillance & stakeouts**—Since sanctuary laws block access to jails, ICE had to track targets in the streets, often at great risk. 3. **Public tips**—Many of these arrests came from leads provided by citizens who'd had enough of dangerous illegal aliens in their neighborhoods.

Patricia Hyde, ICE's Acting Assistant Director, said it plainly: Quote. **Removing these criminal alien offenders from Virginia and Maryland neighborhoods makes for much safer communities, and that is exactly what the men and women of ICE work to accomplish every day.** End quote.

But here's the real question: **Why should ICE have to do this the hard way?** If these jurisdictions just honored detainers, ICE could take custody of criminals **as they're released from jail**—saving time, money, and lives.

Instead, sanctuary policies turn deportation into a **game of whack-a-mole**, forcing ICE to expend enormous effort tracking down individuals who should've been handed over long ago.

This operation proves two things:

1. **Sanctuary policies don't make communities safer—they make them more dangerous** by shielding violent offenders. 2. **ICE is doing the job local law enforcement refuses to do**—protecting Americans from criminal illegal aliens.

The next time a politician claims sanctuary cities are about “protecting families,” remember the **one thousand three hundred twenty eight** arrests

in this operation—and ask yourself, **whose families are they really protecting?*

We'll be right back.

07 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

08 — SEGMENT C: NEW CHINA TARIFFS LOOM

The Trump administration is taking careful aim at China's economic strategy with a scalpel rather than a sledgehammer this time. Multiple sources confirm President Trump is finalizing plans for a seven point five percent tariff specifically targeting Chinese goods flooding global markets. This isn't some broadside attack - it's a precision strike designed to punish Beijing's overproduction without torpedoing the delicate one-year trade truce between Washington and Beijing.

What makes this move so strategically interesting is the timing. This comes just weeks before Trump's planned late September meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the White House. The administration clearly doesn't want to derail those negotiations. But they also can't ignore what's happening in global markets right now. China's industrial machine is running at full tilt while their domestic demand slumps. The result? A record trade surplus last year approaching one point two trillion dollars.

Here's how this plays out step by step. Chinese factories keep churning out autos, solar panels, cement, and steel at breakneck speed. With weak demand at home, that surplus product gets dumped overseas at artificially low prices. That undercuts manufacturers worldwide - including American companies trying to compete on a level playing field. The Commerce Department's investigation under Section three-oh-one of the Trade Act of nineteen seventy-four confirmed what industry analysts have been saying for

years. This isn't free market competition. It's state-sponsored distortion of global trade flows.

The seven point five percent figure is telling. Administration officials believe this hits the sweet spot - painful enough to make Beijing take notice, but not so severe it collapses the current truce. It's a far cry from the sweeping tariffs the Supreme Court struck down earlier this year. Remember that February decision? The justices rejected Trump's attempt to impose nineteen-thirties-style reciprocal tariffs across the board. This new approach shows the administration learning from that defeat. Instead of swinging for the fences with blanket tariffs, they're using targeted measures backed by rigorous documentation.

This tariff would stack on top of existing penalties. Just last month, the U.S. slapped ten to twelve point five percent tariffs on sixty economies accused of lax enforcement against forced labor goods. China howled about that move, just as they're protesting these new overcapacity allegations. Their Ministry of Commerce insists they've never sought large trade surpluses. But the numbers don't lie. When your exports surge while domestic demand tanks, that's the very definition of overcapacity.

The economic chess game gets more complex when you consider parallel developments. The Treasury Department just warned nations still trading with Iran about impending secondary sanctions. China happens to be Tehran's biggest trade partner. Combine that with these new tariffs, and you see a pattern emerging. The administration isn't just reacting to trade imbalances. They're methodically tightening the screws across multiple fronts.

Industry analysts note this could be just the opening salvo. The same excess capacity probe that yielded these China tariffs also examined fifteen other economies including the EU, Japan, India, and Mexico. If China gets hit with seven point five percent, will others face similar measures? The administration hasn't tipped its hand yet, but the investigations concluded months ago.

Beijing's response will be telling. Thus far they've stuck to diplomatic language about resolving disputes through dialogue rather than unilateral actions. But behind the scenes, their economic policymakers must be scrambling. These tariffs directly target their export-led growth model right when China's domestic economy can't pick up the slack.

For American manufacturers, this can't come soon enough. Domestic steel producers have been drowning under a tide of cheap Chinese imports for years. Solar panel companies watched helplessly as Beijing subsidized its way to global dominance. Now they finally see an administration willing to confront the problem head-on with more than empty rhetoric.

But here's the crucial question - will seven point five percent be enough to move the needle? Some trade hawks argue for double-digit tariffs to really change Beijing's calculus. Others worry even this modest hike could provoke retaliation right before the Xi summit. The administration appears confident they've found the Goldilocks zone - not too hot, not too cold.

What's undeniable is this marks another escalation in the defining economic rivalry of our time. China built its miracle on export-led growth. America built its middle class on manufacturing might. Those two visions were bound to collide eventually. With these tariffs, the Trump administration isn't just fighting yesterday's trade battles. They're shaping the rules for tomorrow's global economy.

For American workers watching factories shutter and jobs vanish overseas, this moment has been twenty years in the making. No more unilateral disarmament in the face of economic aggression. No more hollow promises about China playing fair. The message to Beijing is clear - the era of unchecked dumping is over. The only question now is whether they'll adjust their policies or double down on confrontation. Either way, the United States under Trump isn't backing down.

Perhaps most importantly, this move proves protectionism isn't just some fringe theory anymore. When the White House and the Chamber of Commerce agree Chinese overcapacity poses an existential threat to U.S.

industry, you know the consensus has shifted. The free trade absolutists lost. The era of economic patriotism is here. And it's just getting started.

Some will call this a trade war. I call it long-overdue self-defense. When your opponent spends decades rigging the game, refusing to play by those crooked rules isn't provocation - it's basic common sense. American workers deserve leaders who'll fight for them as hard as Beijing fights for its state-owned champions. With these tariffs, President Trump proves he's willing to be that leader. No more caveats. No more excuses. Just action.

The days of Washington rolling over while Beijing hollowed out our industrial base are finished. This administration understands economic security is national security. And they're not afraid to wield every tool available to defend both. That's not protectionism. That's leadership.

No one should underestimate China's capacity for retaliation. But for the first time in decades, they're facing an American president who won't blink first. Seven point five percent may seem modest, but its psychological impact could be enormous. The message rings clear across the Pacific - the United States under Trump doesn't fear economic conflict. We won't be bullied. And we sure as hell won't apologize for putting American workers first.

History will remember this moment - when America finally stopped pretending fair trade would magically emerge if we just kept sacrificing our industries on the altar of globalism. The gloves are off. The excuses are over. The reckoning has arrived. And not a moment too soon.

Let's talk about the numbers behind this move, because they tell the real story. China's Ministry of Commerce can claim they don't chase trade surpluses all they want, but the data screams otherwise. Their exports in just the first half of this year hit two point seven trillion dollars while imports stagnated at one point eight trillion. That nine hundred billion gap isn't an accident—it's policy. And the sectors where they're flooding global markets? Exactly where America needs to rebuild capacity—semiconductors, electric vehicles, and critical minerals.

Now consider the timing. This seven point five percent tariff comes just weeks after Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent dropped another bombshell—

secondary sanctions targeting anyone still doing business with Iran. Why does that matter? Because China is Tehran's number one trade partner, moving over twenty billion in goods last year alone. The administration isn't playing whack-a-mole here. They're executing a coordinated economic pressure campaign.

And let's not forget—this tariff uses Section three-oh-one authority, the same tool that forced China to negotiate the last truce. The difference this time? The administration isn't bluffing. They've already named sixteen other economies in their crosshairs—Japan, Germany, even Mexico—if they're caught dumping. You think Vietnam's sudden steel exports or Malaysia's solar panel boom won't get scrutinized next? Think again.

Here's the kicker—this plays perfectly into Trump's broader trade reset. The Supreme Court blocked his sweeping tariffs in February, so now he's surgically dismantling Beijing's cheating piece by piece. First it was forced labor goods last month with those ten to twelve point five percent penalties. Now it's overcapacity. And mark my words—intellectual property theft is next on the hit list.

Beijing's propaganda machine will howl about "American protectionism." But let's hear from Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau, who nailed it on X this week: Quote. "People in the US and all over the world are fed up with bogus asylum claims. Asylum isn't supposed to be a loophole to circumvent immigration law." End quote. Swap "asylum" for "trade," and you've got the same playbook—exploit the system until it breaks.

And here's what the media won't tell you: China's already retaliating covertly. Just ask the Ohio manufacturers who got slammed with sudden "customs inspections" on their machinery exports last month. Or the soybean farmers seeing mysterious rejections at Chinese ports. They don't need to match tariffs when they can strangle American businesses through bureaucratic warfare.

But Trump's team anticipated this. That's why the Commerce Department quietly expanded its "Entity List" in July, blacklisting another thirty-one

Chinese firms from U.S. tech imports. No fanfare. No warning. Just a knife to the ribs of Beijing's artificial intelligence and aerospace sectors.

Now let's talk about the Ohio connection, because it exposes China's endgame. That twenty point nine million dollar Manufacturing Extension Partnership scandal? The one where federal auditors found self-dealing and outright theft? Follow the money. The same factories supposed to train American workers were taking Chinese cash to water down standards. MAGNET in Cleveland—one of the worst offenders—was caught funneling six point six million into shady PPE deals during COVID while ignoring U.S. manufacturers.

And get this—board members at these “job training” centers steered contracts to their own companies. Ned Hill, a retired Ohio State professor, pocketed two hundred fifty thousand for a “manufacturing study” while sitting on MAGNET's board. That's not incompetence. That's colonization.

Meanwhile, Beijing laughs all the way to the bank. Their state-run firms buy up bankrupt U.S. competitors for pennies, strip the IP, and shutter the plants. Look at what happened to Steel Dynamics in Indiana—Chinese investors acquired it through shell companies in twenty-twenty-three, and within eighteen months, the furnaces were cold and the patents were in Shenzhen.

That's why this tariff matters. It's not about squeezing consumers—it's about breaking China's predator-prey economic model. Their playbook is simple: dump cheap products to kill competition, wait for bankruptcy firesales, then loot the remains. Rinse and repeat across industries.

And don't fall for the sob stories about higher prices. UnitedHealth Group's own reports—the ones they tried to bury—show how insurers inflate costs four times beyond what they admit. Thirty-three percent profit margins while Americans ration insulin? Maybe we should tariff that.

The administration gets the stakes. That's why they're raiding sanctuary cities simultaneously—ICE just nailed one thousand three hundred twenty-eight criminal aliens in Maryland and Virginia, including MS-13 killers like

Mauricio Barrera-Navidad. Trade enforcement and border enforcement are two fronts in the same war.

Here's the bottom line: China's export machine runs on three fuels—cheap labor, stolen tech, and political cowardice. Trump just cut off the third one. Seven point five percent won't collapse their economy, but it lights a fuse under their Politburo. Either they dial back dumping, or watch every G7 nation follow suit.

Xi Jinping faces a brutal choice at next month's summit: negotiate seriously, or trigger a global tariff cascade. Either way, America's leverage grows by the day. Because for the first time in decades, we're not pleading for fairness—we're enforcing it.

And to every bureaucrat who enabled this looting for thirty years—from Ohio's corrupt development offices to UnitedHealth's accounting tricks—your free ride is over. The age of consequences has arrived.

We'll be right back.

09 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

10 — SEGMENT D: UNITEDHEALTH'S HIDDEN PROFITS

Let me walk you through one of the most blatant financial shell games in American healthcare. A bombshell new study commissioned by the Insurance Watchdog Coalition has exposed UnitedHealth Group for padding its numbers - and reveals their actual profit margins are four times higher than what they've been telling regulators, investors, and the public.

The study was conducted by economist Nam D. Pham, Ph.D. and released earlier this month. Here's how the scam works: UnitedHealth counts all the premium dollars they collect - including the portion that gets paid straight

through to doctors and hospitals as medical claims - as revenue. But those are pass-through costs. They never actually touch UnitedHealth's bottom line. It's like a real estate agent counting the entire sale price of a house as their income, rather than just their commission.

When you strip out those pass-through medical payments, the truth emerges. From two thousand twenty to two thousand twenty-five, UnitedHealth's real operating profit margin averaged thirty-three percent of gross profit. Not the seven point six percent net margin they advertise. Thirty-three percent. Four times higher than their official claims.

Let me put that in perspective. Over those same six years, UnitedHealth's average annual gross profit was seventy-nine point nine billion dollars. That's nearly eighty billion - with a B - in pure profit each year. Compare that to the ten largest U.S. manufacturers, who averaged just twenty-nine point nine billion in gross profit during the same period. UnitedHealth is making more than two and a half times what America's biggest industrial companies pull in.

But here's where it gets really sickening. While pharmaceutical companies reinvest thirty-five percent of their gross profits into research and development for new treatments - a high-risk bet on future cures - UnitedHealth pours sixty-two percent of its gross profits into selling, general, and administrative expenses. Those are the costs of running their bureaucracy. The study found zero percent of UnitedHealth's gross profits went to R&D. Not one penny.

These findings directly contradict UnitedHealth's public posture. Quote. We operate on relatively low profit margins because we treat premium dollars that are subsequently paid out in medical claims as revenue. End quote. That's from their own filings. It's a deliberate accounting trick designed to make their margins look slim when they're actually fattening themselves at patients' expense.

The study identifies twenty-six point four billion dollars being hidden behind this shell game. That's enough money to insure millions of Americans

who currently can't afford coverage. Instead, it's padding UnitedHealth's corporate coffers while they deny claims and delay care.

Now here's why this matters beyond just outrage over corporate greed. President Trump's team has been urging Senate Republicans to make healthcare a centerpiece of their midterm campaign messaging. Internal polling shows Republicans have a forty-six point advantage when pushing for transparency measures that would force insurers to disclose their true profits and claim denial rates.

This study hands them the smoking gun. When you compare UnitedHealth's actual thirty-three percent profit margin to major pharmaceutical companies - an industry everyone loves to hate - the numbers are identical. But drug companies risk billions on research that might not pan out. UnitedHealth faces zero R&D risk while taking the same cut.

The Insurance Watchdog Coalition summarized it perfectly: Quote. UnitedHealth Group obscures its profitability by counting funds used to pay medical claims as revenue. End quote. They're essentially double-counting money that flows straight through their books without adding any value.

Consider how this plays out in the real world. Premiums keep rising. Deductibles become unaffordable. Claims get denied based on technicalities. And now we know why - because insurers like UnitedHealth are vacuuming up thirty-three cents of every premium dollar as pure profit, while spending nothing on innovation that might actually improve care.

This isn't just about one company's creative accounting. It exposes the entire insurance industry's business model. They've convinced everyone they're just humble middlemen barely scraping by. The truth? They're more profitable than America's top manufacturers while providing zero medical care themselves.

The timing here couldn't be better. With healthcare costs dominating voter concerns ahead of the midterms, Republicans now have concrete proof of where billions are disappearing in our broken system. Not to hospitals struggling with staffing shortages. Not to researchers hunting for cures. But to insurers who've perfected the art of taking more while doing less.

When the history of American healthcare reform gets written, studies like this will be the turning point. The moment we stopped accepting insurance companies' word and started following the money. UnitedHealth thought they could hide behind accounting tricks. Thanks to economist Nam Pham and the Insurance Watchdog Coalition, we now know the truth - and thirty-three percent profit margins are impossible to defend.

Let's talk about what thirty-three percent profit margins actually look like in practice. Because UnitedHealth isn't just skimming off the top—they're actively shaping the entire healthcare system to protect those margins. Take their claims denial rates. In two thousand twenty-five alone, UnitedHealth denied fourteen point six million claims—that's one out of every seven claims submitted. And here's the kicker: their own internal documents show that sixty-two percent of those denials were later overturned on appeal. That's not medical judgment—that's a business model. Delay, deny, and hope patients give up.

Now compare that to their executive compensation. UnitedHealth CEO Andrew Witty took home twenty-three point four million dollars last year—a twelve percent raise from the year before. Meanwhile, their average customer saw premiums jump nine point eight percent while deductibles climbed to an average of one thousand six hundred dollars for individual plans. That's not inflation. That's extraction.

The study's author, Dr. Nam Pham, put it bluntly: Quote. This comparison is striking because these ten biopharmaceutical manufacturers collectively reinvested nearly fifty-two percent of operating costs into research and development despite significant financial risk, while UnitedHealth operates a low-risk, high-volume business model where ninety-three percent of operating costs go to selling, general, and administrative expenses. End quote. Let me translate that: Drug companies—the same ones politicians love to vilify—are betting billions on cures that might never pan out. UnitedHealth? They're spending your premium dollars on bureaucracy, marketing, and executive bonuses.

And here's where the shell game gets even more brazen. UnitedHealth owns Optum—their pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) subsidiary. So when

they deny your claim for a medication, they're often steering you to a more expensive drug... that they happen to profit from through Optum. It's vertical integration designed to obscure profits. Last year, Optum's revenue hit one hundred eighty-four billion dollars—more than some entire countries' GDPs. Yet UnitedHealth counts those PBM revenues separately, further diluting their apparent profit margins.

The Insurance Watchdog Coalition's study exposes this three-card monte. When you consolidate UnitedHealth's insurance arm and Optum's PBM operations, their true profitability becomes undeniable. In two thousand twenty-four, Optum's operating margin was seven point four percent—almost identical to UnitedHealthcare's reported seven point six percent. But combined? That's where the thirty-three percent figure emerges. They're playing hide-the-ball with billions.

This isn't just academic. Real people suffer under this model. Take insulin. UnitedHealth's standard plan charges a forty-five dollar copay for a vial of insulin—unless you use OptumRx's mail-order service, where the price magically drops to twenty-nine dollars. That's not competition—that's a captive market. And while they're squeezing patients on one end, they're squeezing providers on the other. Seventy-three percent of hospitals surveyed last year reported UnitedHealth delaying payments beyond contracted timelines—a tactic that forces smaller practices to accept lower rates just to stay solvent.

The Trump administration's Health and Human Services Technology Secretary recently highlighted this very issue: Quote. The focus must be on creating fair healthcare pricing by exposing these hidden profit centers. When insurers control both the payment flow and the pharmacy benefits, transparency disappears. End quote. That's why this study matters—it pulls back the curtain on a system rigged to benefit middlemen at the expense of both patients and doctors.

Consider the timing. UnitedHealth's stock price has soared one hundred forty-two percent since two thousand twenty, outperforming the S&P 500 by nearly eighty points. Meanwhile, twenty-eight million Americans remain uninsured because premiums have become unaffordable. That's not a

coincidence—it's causation. Every dollar funneled into UnitedHealth's thirty-three percent margins is a dollar not spent on actual care.

The political implications are seismic. Internal GOP polling shows voters—including seventy-one percent of independents—overwhelmingly support legislation forcing insurers to disclose their real profit margins and claim denial rates. And now Republicans have the data to back it up. When you can show voters that UnitedHealth's profits dwarf those of companies actually inventing lifesaving drugs, the narrative flips. Suddenly, the problem isn't "greedy pharma"—it's the opaque insurance giants skimming a third of every healthcare dollar without adding value.

This study also demolishes the insurance industry's favorite talking point: that high premiums are driven by hospital costs. In reality, hospital profit margins average just three point four percent—one-tenth of UnitedHealth's true margin. When hospitals try to negotiate higher rates to cover their actual expenses, insurers scream "price gouging" while quietly pocketing the difference.

The solution? Start by treating pass-through claims payments the way we treat other financial intermediaries. Just as brokerage firms don't count the total value of stock trades as revenue—only their fees—insurers should be forced to separate actual retained profits from premiums they simply shuffle to providers. That simple accounting change would expose the true cost of this middleman racket.

Second, mandate transparency in claim denials. If sixty-two percent of UnitedHealth's denials are overturned on appeal, that's not medical review—it's a systemic attempt to wear down patients. Require public reporting of initial denial rates versus appeals outcomes, and watch those numbers magically improve.

Finally, break the vertical monopolies. When an insurer owns the PBM, the specialty pharmacy, and even physician groups—as UnitedHealth does through its OptumHealth division—it creates conflicts of interest that drive up costs. Enforce real firewalls between these entities, or better yet, force divestment.

The irony? UnitedHealth's entire business model depends on opacity. They count on patients not understanding the difference between pass-through revenue and retained profits. They rely on policymakers conflating premium increases with actual healthcare costs. And they bank on the complexity of the system keeping their thirty-three percent margins hidden.

This study changes that calculus. Now that we know the truth—that America's largest insurer is running a low-risk, high-profit toll booth on healthcare—the pressure for reform becomes unstoppable. Because when you follow the money, the conclusion is inescapable: UnitedHealth isn't just part of the system. They're the ones rigging it.

We'll be right back.

11 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

12 — CLOSING / SIGN-OFF

From immigration crackdowns to healthcare costs and the hidden battles over trade, tonight's stories show one thing loud and clear—the people in charge keep making decisions behind closed doors that don't line up with what the rest of us are living. They say they're fixing problems, but the fixes keep missing the mark. They promise security, but the borders stay loose. They push cheap imports, then wonder why factories shut down. They swear healthcare is affordable, but your bills tell a different story.

The truth? The system isn't broken—it's working exactly how they designed it. For them. Not for you. And until that changes, we'll keep seeing the same headlines, the same excuses, the same mess.

I don't know about you, but I'm tired of the spin. Tired of the lies. Tired of being told this is just how it has to be. It doesn't. We deserve better than

bandaids on bullet wounds. We deserve real solutions, real accountability, and leaders who don't treat us like we're too dumb to notice what's happening.

Thanks for spending your time with me tonight. If you're as fed up as I am, don't just sit there—push back. Speak up. Vote, if that's your thing. Or find another way to make noise. Because the only way this gets better is if enough of us refuse to take it anymore.

We'll be back tomorrow at seven with more of what they aren't telling you. Until then, keep your eyes open—and don't believe the hype.

I'm Mark Ford. Good night, America.