



### Nationwide "No Kings" Protests Across the U.S. Highlight the Massive Scale of Anger and Backlash Towards Trump's Policies

The nationwide “No Kings” protests which took place throughout the United States last weekend illustrated the massive scale of anger and backlash towards the policies of the second Trump administration. The demonstrations saw record numbers of participants, drawing an estimated 8 to 9 million Americans across more than 3,300 sites in all 50 states, in what has been deemed the largest single-day protest in U.S. history. While airing an array of grievances, one of the primary catalysts for this latest “No Kings” mobilization was the now more than a month-long conflict with Iran, with protesters voicing fierce opposition to what many Americans view as an unwarranted and senseless war. Furthermore, one of the most significant developments surrounding the protest movement is its reach and expansion into traditionally conservative strongholds as opposed to merely being a phenomenon among major cities. In fact, organizers have indicated that an estimated two-thirds of the recent late March events occurred outside of major urban centers – representing a 40% uptick in participation from smaller towns since the first iteration last summer. Republican-leaning states such as Texas, Florida, and Ohio each held more than 100 events, while typically conservative regions in others like Utah and Idaho witnessed double-digit numbers of demonstrations. As analysts have sought to point out, the inclusion of residents in these types of areas suggests that the administration’s policies and actions are alienating segments of the electorate that normally gravitate towards the Republican Party.

For many observers, the scale of the protests speak to the growing and undeniable frustration felt across the United States. The unpopular Iran war, Trump’s enforcement of immigration policy, and the rising costs of housing, healthcare, and other daily necessities have fueled the far-reaching anger. Recent polling data shows that upwards of 60% of Americans disapprove of Trump’s military actions in Iran. While one would expect this among Democratic-leaning citizens, there is increasing evidence that within Trump’s own base, there is growing dissent regarding this as well. All of this is due to the belief that the administration’s decision to initiate the war sidelines serious domestic areas of concern like the state of the economy and the rising cost of living. Instead, the war has exacerbated these already existing issues, draining U.S. resources, sparking an increase in the price of oil, gas, and other amenities, risking the lives of American service members, and shifting focus away from concerns that should be addressed at home.

The anger and backlash also come at a consequential time, with midterm elections that will likely determine the nature of the remaining Trump presidency only seven months away. Thus, many feel that should the Iran war and other areas of voter dissatisfaction drag on, Trump risks suffering major electoral setbacks in November. The eye-opening number of seats that Democrats have already flipped from Republicans in recent elections serves as another warning and indicates that the president has lost a substantial amount of support from among his own base. Trump's own district in Florida where his Mar-a-Lago estate is now has a Democratic state representative following a recent special election. Additionally, figures like Joe Kent and Tucker Carlson – who have in the past largely been supportive of the president – have begun to voice opposition to what they see as a clear betrayal to the “America First” ethos. Both have also been critical of the factors driving Trump's foreign policy decisions, expressing concern with how external forces outside of the United States such as Israel have played a destructive role. Kent, Carlson, and others are among the growing number of Republicans who are weary of protracted and drawn-out U.S. military entanglements – the main issue that has been propelling the ongoing rift among those within Trump's base.

For all of these reasons, many view the “No Kings” protest movement as more than just a momentary surge of dissent and instead as proof of the increasingly widespread anger towards the Trump administration. With momentous elections on the horizon, the backlash serves as a fundamental challenge to the remainder of the Trump administration's second-term agenda. If these trends persist, they pose a serious threat that Republicans will lose control over both houses of U.S. Congress. Whether this anger and backlash translate into electoral consequences in the upcoming midterms remains to be seen, but for now at least, it serves as a major warning ahead of them.