Twitter Thread by David Dayen



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This is a very uninformed article that presumes the dumb way Trump initiated executive orders taints all executive action a president has the authority and mandate to

I can't believe this has to be spelled out:
Congress passes laws, presidents implement them. There are latent authorities in already passed laws that can be employed to give material benefits to people. That's literally the job description of the president in Article II.

Most of Trump's exec orders were BS but some did draw on already passed laws, like the farm funding through the Commodity Credit Corporation. That was billions of dollars that cannot be "rolled back."

It was untargeted and drawn upon disproportionately by rich farmers. But there are more equitable measures, with the authority granted by CONGRESS, which the president can implement.

So far Biden has not really taken this opportunity. There's been a blizzard of paper, most of it rolling back Trump EOs, and some emergency programs. A few of those emergency programs are going to give real benefits (eligibility changes on nutrition assistance for ex.)

Again, this dumb trope that you can "roll back" executive orders makes no sense in the context of a poor family getting another $100 a week in food support from Pandemic EBT (a congressionally passed law now properly implemented).

The move to a $15/hour minimum wage for federal contractors, also, is a tangible benefit based on congressionally designated authority to the executive for procurement. People are going to earn more. It's not a game.

Yes, that can be "rolled back" by the next president but that's 4-8 years from now, and it may not be all that popular to take away money from working people at that point. Plus they'll have gotten 4-8 years of higher wages at that point.

This just scratches the surface of what a president can do by implementing already passed laws. These are not "executive orders snicker snicker." It's the Day One Agenda. https://t.co/fujXXazlKM

I would add that this idiotic way of looking at executive action taints all campaign reporting and the presidency itself. It pushes presidents into what really is not their role in this government, creating a legislative agenda. Their defined role is implementation.

If we saw the president as an implementer and lawmakers as the ones doing the lawmaking, we wouldn't have the myopic "great man of history" view of U.S. government. Also--

We wouldn't have the rotten accountability problem where presidents are held accountable for not getting Congresses with different goals and sometimes a different ideological makeup to do their bidding.

We would orient more toward Congress as a lawmaking body and we wouldn't accept supermajority thresholds to simply get an agenda passed, rather than blaming the executive for not bringing opposition party members in for cocktails enough.

The cult of the presidency is debilitating, and part of it stems from viewing presidents as legislators. They are implementers. And they should implement to the maximum potential allowed by law.
The way mainstream thinking views government is completely wrong.