



PODCAST

## Early Trump policies spark workforce concerns for hotel industry

Next Gen in Lodging hosts weigh in on how 2025 is going so far



Davonne Reaves and Omari Head are co-hosts of the Next Gen in Lodging podcast.

By **Natalie Harms**

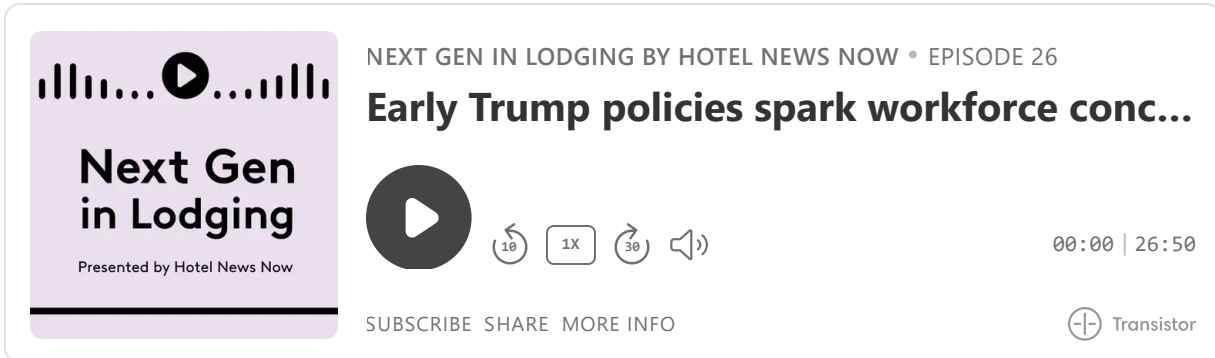
**Hotel News Now**

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It's still early in the second Trump administration, but new policies implementing tariffs, cracking down on illegal immigration and ending diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives have notable potential to affect the hospitality industry.

As Black History Month comes to a close, Davonne Reaves and Omari Head, co-hosts of the Next Gen in Lodging podcast, reflected on how the year is going. Reaves said she's heard "mixed reviews" on the Trump administration's impact so far.



"We're not even 60 days in yet, and there's been a lot of turmoil with traveling when it comes to aviation and with the boycotts," she said. "There's been something new every day."

Ultimately, whether it's from the president's policy strategy or a series of plane crashes, travelers might be increasingly concerned about finances and hesitant to travel, Head said.

"What we need is a confident consumer — we always need that in every industry. When consumer confidence gets shaken, specifically as it relates to travel, it can be devastating," Head said, adding that the pandemic as a recent albeit extreme example.

Both Head and Reaves agreed that Trump's implementation of tariffs and executive orders against illegal immigration are going to affect hoteliers in various ways, including prices of supplies for lobby breakfasts and hotel restaurants. However, the administration's opposition to DEI might have a more nuanced impact.

For Reaves, who reflected on her own personal career experience, she said a lack of DEI can affect morale across all levels of the company.

“Even though we don't have a lot of executives or hotel owners who are Black, we have a lot of entry level folks who are Black,” she said. “We have a lot of middle employees who are Black, and that is literally the heartbeat of every hotel.”

Head said he’s not sure the new administration will have an adverse impact on the hospitality industry’s DEI initiatives.

“As sad as it is to say, we didn't have them in place long enough or an aggressive enough approach [to DEI] until the last four or five years,” he said. “And that's not really a good, solid pipeline.”

For Head, increased diversity in the workplace is going to be led by people of color themselves through mentoring and supporting each other.

“I still have faith in humanity, whether or not it's faith in the government,” he said. “ I have faith in the talents of those underrepresented populations because what a lot of these folks have shown you is that they come in here, they show up, they show out and they perform.”

For more from Head and Reaves, listen to the full podcast at the link above.

The Next Gen in Lodging podcast is also available to download on [Apple](#) or [Spotify](#), where you can also subscribe to future podcast content.

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