

Socialism vs. Socialism vs. Socialism

November 9, 2026

"Together we will defeat communism, socialism and Marxism in America," said President Trump in a mid-term election spot. "America will never be a communist country."

But what does he mean by those words?

Vice President J. D. Vance was asked to define socialism at a press conference soon after the ad ran.

The word, he said, is "a very hard term to define these days because . . . you know, classically, you would think, socialism is about prioritizing workers. And yet, in reality, I bet most of the self-described socialists running across America are going to howl about this announcement, today, which is prioritizing American workers over foreign workers, so, I don't know what the term means any more.

"I think in reality, what it actually means in the American context, is that you want to replace American workers with foreign workers, and you want boys to play in girls' sports. That's what I see that unites the socialists that I see running across the United States of America today."

Vance focused on the woke nonsense (the boys in girls' sports reference) because that is what he sees. By pointing to socialists' opposition to administration policy against Microsoft replacing American workers with foreign ones, Vance was aiming to note an irony.

Most folks, however — including from *National Review* and the *Orange County Register* — see a bigger irony in his defense of Trumpian policy by recourse to workers' *socialism*.

It's just protectionism, of course, but instead of frankly favoring home-grown businesses, it's framed to favor American over foreign workers.

Yet, many economists insist that protectionism is just socialism in short pants.

"You can't defeat socialism with an alternative form of collectivism," explains Agustina Vergara Cid of the *Register*, "only with its opposite: the principle that the individual is not a means to any group's end."

That's unfortunately not how Trump or Vance approach the issue . . . but that may be of limited relevance, considering that their failures led to a backlash sending actual communists into Congress.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.