

# The Delray Democrat

## Why Trump Must Be Investigated\*

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I feel an unhealthy nostalgia for George W. Bush, a congenial guy who lied us into a war that has had devastating consequences for the world. When Obama took office and said that we were looking forward not backwards, I was outraged that someone lying about the need to go to war and authorizing illegal torture was going to get away with it.

Biden seems to be taking the same path; in fact, the mess he has to deal with is even worse than the one that confronted Obama. However the similarity ends there. Bush didn't fire inspectors general, didn't fill positions without Senate approval, didn't hinder Obama's transition, didn't obstruct justice, didn't refuse congressional subpoenas, didn't commit treason by inviting other countries to interfere in our election, didn't send federal agents to break up legal demonstrations, and didn't shred the constitution. Each day was another outrage and you can find all the horror stories online, some with day-by-day chronology.

We need to know which actions were illegal, and which should be illegal. If we don't investigate, we won't find out. Can the executive branch simply refuse a Congressional subpoena and stonewall for years? Can the president fire inspectors general one after another? Many of our laws were written without considering a completely rogue president. We need to know what he did in order to prevent others from doing the same.

Another big difference between Bush and Trump was that Bush was gone after his defeat. Trump will stay as a malignant actor in our country for a long time if he isn't stopped. For those of us who fear that he is a fascist and wants to be dictator, we need to take serious steps to expose him. If he had won or stolen another term, he would never have left that office.

We need laws to require presidential candidates to release their tax returns. We need to ensure that Congress has the power to investigate the president, we need to know whether a president can be indicted and by whom. We need to know if a president's investments (at home or abroad) present a conflict of interest. It is clear that the impeachment process is not enough, that political parties, which are never mentioned in the Constitution, make impeachment almost impossible. We need other weapons against a rogue president; we need to make it illegal to pardon family members or administration officials, much less him/herself. And we need to take the infamous DOJ memo that suggested a sitting president could not be indicted and consign it to the dustbin of history. Without that memo, Robert Mueller would have indicted Donald Trump and we might have been rid of him before Amy Coney Barrett was shoved down the collective throats of the American electorate.

I just watched someone on TV explaining that prosecuting Trump sets a bad precedent, but we're dealing with a President for whom breaking precedent and norms was a daily occurrence, cheered by his adoring fans. There is the more important issue of having critical work that needs to be done

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by the Congress, but surely there is time to investigate the actions of the most malignant president in the history of our nation.

How we study this is another question. Clearly Biden has no direct dealing with New York prosecutors and the New York Attorney General, so their investigations go forward. But it will not touch on much of the main damage done by Trump. It's up to the Justice Department and Congress and that will be affected by Biden's desires, but not bound by them. I recall the outrage from Republicans when Bill Clinton met on a tarmac with the Attorney General, supposedly a non-political position. But we have Trump ordering the Attorney General to do his bidding and in fact becoming his virtual personal attack attorney.

Biden's Justice Department will go back to being independent from the president, but surely will be influenced by him. The Congress will be more independent but will take its cue from the Speaker, although again, some voices will not be silenced. The bottom line is, I'm not so much interested in Trump ending up in jail; but I am very interested in saving our country from a repeat performance.

And on a different note, I've written before about how the Trump years have forced me to have an accommodation and even defend people and institutions that I've long despised such as the CIA and FBI, Voice of America, George W Bush, even John \*\*\*\* Bolton. Incredibly we have to add to that list Fox News, now being attacked for not being insane enough. Hopefully anyone capable of rational thought is learning that the real enemy is fascism.