

TRUMP A THREAT TO OUR CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY

Donald Trump represents a threat to the constitutional democracy of the United States. Throughout his presidency he has shown a disregard for the systems of law, the conditions of debate, decision-making, and public accountability that are the foundations of a free and democratic society. He rules through executive orders and tweets without any concern for respecting the balance of power between the three branches of the government, the executive, the legislative, and the judicial. The Constitution sets parameters with limitations for each branch of government which Trump ignores when it serves his own self-interest.

Mr. Trump claims to be a law and order president, but he refuses to follow the Supreme Court decision which left DACA in place by refusing to allow new eligible applicants to sign up. Trump has subverted the rule of law by politicizing the Justice Department and interfering in its investigations and decisions. He instigated the Justice Department's attempt to drop the case against Michael Flynn who actually pleaded guilty to his alleged crime. He granted clemency to his longtime adviser and friend Roger Stone who was convicted of lying to Congress in the Mueller Investigation. He has flouted the Constitution's requirement that cabinet members and other executive officials require Senate approval by appointing acting department heads on the grounds that it gives him greater flexibility. When any of these cabinet members or officials disagree with him, as we have seen happen so often, he immediately fires them. He fired numerous inspector generals because they were beginning to investigate members of his own administration. He has concocted innovative ways to interfere with the directives and guidelines of the CDC when they do not reach the political conclusions that he supports. Contrary to federal law, Trump used the White House and other government facilities as props and staging locations for the 2020 Republican National Convention, a partisan event.

Perhaps Mr. Trump's greatest threat to our constitutional democracy is his attempt to interfere in the 2020 presidential election. Without any evidence, he has done everything to

discredit mail-in voting, bringing law-suits against democratic states to prevent them from using mail-in ballots, while approving mail-in voting in states that support him. He appointed a friend and Republican donor as Post Master General whose first act was to issue orders to slow down the post office, putting the process of mail-in voting in jeopardy. Trump has downplayed the overwhelming evidence that Russia is interfering in the 2020 election in support of his re-election. Without any evidence, he has claimed that the only way he can lose is if the election is rigged. On numerous occasions he has refused to say the he would abide by the results of the judgment of the people in the 2020 election. He will not even guarantee that, if he loses, he will accept a peaceful transfer of power. On September 24, 2020 he even went so far as to threaten the possibility of violence when he stated, “If I win, there will be peace. If I lose, there won’t be.”

All of these actions clearly indicate that he has no respect for the will of the people or for the democratic principles upon which this country is based. To question the legitimacy of the voice of the people in a democratic election is perhaps the greatest betrayal of the constitutional democracy upon which this country is based. In the words of Mitt Romney, “Fundamental to democracy is the peaceful transfer of power. Any suggestion that a president might not respect this Constitutional guarantee is both unthinkable and unacceptable.” An editorial in *America Magazine* called Mr. Trump’s disregard for the Constitution as “unique in American history.” The article points out that there is a difference between Trump’s violations of the Constitution and that of other presidents, of both parties, who have from time to time tested or bent the boundaries of the Constitution. Mr. Trump has demonstrated time after time “that his framework for decisions is merely transactional and that he has little regard for constitutional norms or the common good.” (The Editors,” Donald Trump is a Unique Threat to the Constitution,” *America Magazine*, September 16, 2020).

John R. Connolly, September 25, 2020