

250 years is not long in the history of a nation. We are still a young country, and it now seems, partly due to failure on all of our parts to understand our system of government, that we may never persist in our democratic experiment long enough to be an old country. When George Washington took office as the first chief executive of this new nation, there was a lot of discussion about how he should be addressed, of what his title should be. Some of the suggestions were: “His Elective Majesty”, His Mightiness”, and even “His Highness, the President of the United States of America and the Protector of their Liberties.” Washington settled on the plain designation adopted by the House of Representatives: “The President of the United States.”

This was a signal that Washington was like the rest of the Americans—a citizen of the United States. For all of that nearly quarter of a millennium since, the President has been subject to the same laws that the rest of the citizens of the country have been required to follow. When we do not, we can expect civil and/or criminal penalties. This dictum has been instrumental in keeping us as a mostly orderly, democratic, self-governing society for all that time.

Until now. The Supreme Court of the United States, a body that is supposed to exemplify the highest ideals of our legal system, has broken down. Two of the members of the court have openly—through their spouses, in particular—supported the insurrection at the Capitol building in January 2021, have accepted millions of dollars worth of gifts, trips, and other benefits from some of the richest people in the country, and have now, along with the other Conservative Justices on the Court, granted the ex-President, the convicted (by a jury of ordinary citizens) felon, and indicted traitor, Donald Trump, the right to be immune from nearly all prosecutions for crimes he committed while in office.

What can we do? Perhaps, some of the citizens of this country want to be ruled by a pseudo-king, a dictator who does not answer to elected representatives of the people of the country. Maybe, there are people who do not worry about military secrets being shepherded by a wolf in the flock. There can be those who have no compassion or concern for our European allies and would instead be happy to hold hands with Putin and others of his ilk.

I don't think this is the attitude that drives most of us. The majority of Americans do not want this change in our system of law, in our democratic way of government. So, we must not let ourselves be duped. Whatever frailties President Biden has due to age, he is a decent person, and he has advisors of high caliber surrounding him, giving him counsel at every turn. He has Kamala Harris, a capable Vice-President, at his side, and any mistakes he may make in diction or any physical infirmities he may suffer, he has no intention of subverting American democracy. The same cannot be said for Donald Trump. Read a little American history—we have had a few outstanding Presidents, a lot of average ones, some who failed at any meaningful tenure at the job. But, we have never, until 2016 when Trump was elected, had a President who had no loyalty to the people of this country, no faithfulness to the Constitution, and no moral or ethical compass. Now, we have to vote in November and reject his attempt to turn our country into his personal fiefdom.