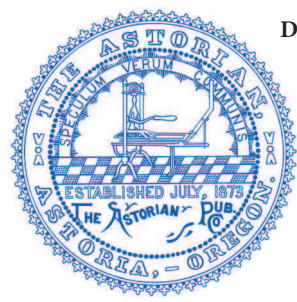


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OUR VIEW

Port of Astoria Commission is now poised for progress

Voters sent a clear message Tuesday of what they expect from the Port of Astoria's commissioners — civility, professionalism and progress.

In electing incumbent James Campbell, Dirk Rohne and Frank Spence by overwhelming margins over incumbent Stephen Fulton, Dick Hellberg and Pat O'Grady, the results also registered a vote of confidence in the Port's professional staff and executive director, Jim Knight. More than 34 percent of registered voters cast ballots, with turnout surpassing the past two off-year special district elections in 2015 and 2013.

While the election was nonpartisan, Campbell, Rohne and Spence had similar platforms, pledging to bring civility to the commission, supporting Knight and the Port's staff and favoring the Port's \$1.96 million bond measure to develop infrastructure at the Astoria Regional Airport. Fulton, Hellberg and O'Grady were closely aligned and highly critical of Port management. They each opposed the bond measure, which failed by 145 votes.

Fulton, an incumbent who chose to run against fellow commissioner Campbell rather than to try and retain his own seat, was the most vocal of the trio, and he often clashed with Campbell and others during stressful commission meetings filled with tension that he helped create. He and Commissioner Bill Hunsinger have been highly critical of Knight and have been on the losing end of 3-2 votes at the hands of Campbell and Commissioners Robert Mushen and John Raichl.

Campbell, who earned a fifth term as a commissioner, captured more than 70 percent of the votes. He said voters took notice of how disruptive and uncivil Fulton has been. "I'm glad I won," he said. "Maybe we're getting one step closer to getting something done."

In defeating Hellberg for Fulton's former seat, Rohne captured more than 69 percent of the votes. Rohne, a former Clatsop County commissioner and Clatsop Community College Board member, said the election helped showcase the community's confidence in the Port's management. "It basically became people who want to see the current administration succeed, and those who want to replace the current administration," Rohne said. "It seems like there's a mandate for supporting the management and trying to move the Port forward in a positive direction."

For the Port to move forward as voters want, it will take hard work, innovation and leadership. It's now up to the commission to provide that.

Spence, a former longtime city and county administrator elsewhere, was opposed by O'Grady and won with more than 60 percent of the votes. He will replace Raichl, who chose not to run for re-election. He also saw the tally as a message from voters. "I think it definitely is a repudiation of our opponents' position and what they've been a part of in not moving the Port forward," he said.

Rohne and Spence will join the commission in July and it will now be up to commissioners to follow through with Knight and his staff to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

The Port needs to generate more revenue to cope with rising costs and aging infrastructure, and the airport needs improvements if it is to grow and reach its potential. Knight said he believes the bond measure failed because voters are simply tired of being taxed.

For the Port to move forward as voters want, it will take hard work, innovation and leadership. It's now up to the commission to provide that.



James Campbell



Dirk Rohne



Frank Spence



The 25th Amendment solution

By ROSS DOUTHAT
New York Times News Service

It was just three days and a lifetime ago that I wrote a column about Donald Trump's unfitness for the presidency that affected a world-weary tone. Nothing about this White House's chaos was surprising given the style of Trump's campaign, I argued.

None of the breaking scandals necessarily suggested high crimes as opposed to simple omni-incompetence. And given that Republicans made their peace with Trump's unfitness many months ago, it seemed pointless to expect their leaders to move against him unless something far, far worse came out.

As I said, three days and a lifetime. If the GOP's surrender to candidate Trump made exhortations about Republican politicians' duty to their country seem like so much pointless verbiage, now President Trump has managed to make exhortation seem unavoidable again.

He has done so, if several days' worth of entirely credible leaks and revelations are to be believed, by demonstrating in a particularly egregious fashion why the question of "fitness" matters in the first place.

The presidency is not just another office. It has become, for good reasons and bad ones, a seat of semi-monarchical political power, a fixed place on which unimaginable pressures are daily brought to bear, and the final stopping point for decisions that can lead very swiftly to life or death for people the world over.

One does not need to be a Marvel superhero or Nietzschean Übermensch to rise to this responsibility. But one needs some basic attributes: a reasonable level of intellectual curiosity, a certain seriousness of purpose, a basic level of managerial competence, a decent attention span, a functional moral compass, a measure of restraint and self-control. And if a president is deficient in one or more of them, you can be sure it will be exposed.

Trump is seemingly deficient in them all. Some he perhaps never had, others have presumably atrophied with age. He certainly has political talent — charisma, a raw cunning, an instinct for the jugular, a form of the common touch, a certain creativity that normal politicians lack. He would not have been elected without these qualities. But they are not enough, they cannot fill the void where other, very normal human gifts should be.

There is, as my colleague David Brooks wrote Tuesday, a basic childishness to the man who now occupies the presidency. That is the simplest way of understanding what has come tumbling into light in the last few days: The presidency now has kingly qualities, and we have a child upon the throne.

It is a child who blurts out classified information in order to impress distinguished visitors. It is a child who asks the head of the FBI why the rules cannot be suspended for his friend and ally. It is a child who does not understand the obvious consequences of his more vindictive



AP Photo/Steven Senne
President Donald Trump speaks with Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly during commencement exercises for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Wednesday in New London, Conn.

actions — like firing the very same man whom you had asked to potentially obstruct justice on your say-so.

A child cannot be president. I love my children; they cannot have the nuclear codes.

But a child also cannot really commit "high crimes and misdemeanors" in any usual meaning of the term. There will be more talk of impeachment now, more talk of a special prosecutor for the Russia business; well and good. But ultimately I do not believe that our president sufficiently understands the nature of the office that he holds, the nature of the legal constraints that are supposed to bind him, perhaps even the nature of normal human interactions, to be guilty of obstruction of justice in the Nixonian or even Clintonian sense of the phrase. I do not believe he is really capable of the behind-the-scenes conspiring that the darker Russia theories envision. And it is hard to betray an oath of office whose obligations you evince no sign of really understanding or respecting.

The presidency now has kingly qualities, and we have a child upon the throne.

Which is not an argument for allowing him to occupy that office. It is an argument, instead, for using a constitutional mechanism more appropriate to this strange situation than impeachment: the 25th Amendment to the Constitution, which allows for the removal of the president if a majority of the Cabinet informs the Congress that he is "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office" and (should the president contest his own removal) a two-thirds vote by Congress confirms the Cabinet's judgment.

The Trump situation is not exactly the sort that the amendment's Cold War-era designers were envisioning. He has not endured an assassination attempt or suffered a stroke or fallen prey to Alzheimer's. But his incapacity to really govern, to truly execute the serious duties that fall to him to carry out, is nevertheless testified to daily — not by his enemies

or external critics, but by precisely the men and women whom the Constitution asks to stand in judgment on him, the men and women who serve around him in the White House and the Cabinet.

Read the things that these people, members of his inner circle, his personally selected appointees, say daily through anonymous quotations to the press. (And I assure you they say worse off the record.) They have no respect for him, indeed they seem to palpate with contempt for him, and to regard their mission as equivalent to being stewards for a syphilitic emperor.

It is not squishy New York Times conservatives who regard the president as a child, an intellectual void, a hopeless case, a threat to national security; it is people who are self-selected loyalists, who supported him in the campaign, who daily go to work for him. And all this, in the third month of his administration.

This will not get better. It could easily get worse. And as hard and controversial as a 25th Amendment remedy would be, there are ways in which Trump's removal today should be less painful for conservatives than abandoning him in the campaign would have been — since Hillary Clinton will not be retroactively elected if Trump is removed, nor will Neil Gorsuch be unseated. Any cost to Republicans will be counted in internal divisions and future primary challenges, not in immediate policy defeats.

Meanwhile, from the perspective of the Republican leadership's duty to their country, and indeed to the world that our imperium bestrides, leaving a man this witless and unmastered in an office with these powers and responsibilities is an act of gross negligence, which no objective on the near-term political horizon seems remotely significant enough to justify.

There will be time to return again to world-weariness and cynicism as this agony drags on. Right now, though, I will be boring in my sincerity: I respectfully ask Mike Pence and Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell to reconsider their support for a man who never should have had his party's nomination, never should have been elevated to this office, never should have been endorsed and propped up and defended by people who understood his unfitness all along.

Now is a day for redemption. Now is an acceptable time.

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ful manner.

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