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OUR VIEW

Conservative questions for the new president

Forgive those of us still reeling in the aftermath of inauguration day, unsure what to make of the beginning of Donald J. Trump's presidency.

I don't mean Democrats, understandably shaken by the turn of events in which an ideological hero was replaced by his near exact opposite in the White House.

What I mean is those of us who generally find common ground between our values and the Republican Party platform, but who feel the party has been duped and co-opted to a point where a candidate like Trump can go from dismissed to tolerated to celebrated to staunchly defended in less than eight months.

If you squint, 2017 is a banner year for conservative-minded people — the voting base that Trump courted effectively enough to add to his more extreme backers and win the election. The Oval Office and both chambers of Congress are controlled by Republicans, and Tuesday's announcement of Neil Gorsuch's nomination to the Supreme Court is evidence that the new president is willing to follow through with his promise to keep a conservative majority on America's highest court.

But if you stop squinting, the clearer picture is a deeply troubling — a selling out of real conservative values in exchange for a few scraps of policy. And the cost is handing over our country's leadership to a man unfit for the task.

There has been ample opportunity since Election Day for Trump to prove otherwise to those of us uneasy about his administration. The only honest defense of his tactics is to admit we like to see eye-poking and grandstanding, and to defend his policy is to embrace the chaos of a man who has no patience for sifting through his own thoughts, much less the advice of experts and certainly not the views of dissenters.

Some applaud his unwillingness to temper his approach — and it is, admittedly, a break from politics as usual — but his impulsive and ego-driven style of leadership is creating a disconcerting amount of disarray that should give us all pause.

As a quick example, take the travel ban issued at the end of last week. White House spokesman Sean Spicer did his best to pitch the executive order as simply a measure to better evaluate the potential threat of people coming into our country. But Trump himself has continued to call it a ban, and specifically a Muslim ban, which would make it clearly unconstitutional. Meanwhile, the implementation of the order created mass confusion as it was (ironically) rolled out

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DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Comment

with little vetting itself and with no better articulation from the president. Even high-ranking Republicans like Paul Ryan were not apprised of the order before Trump put his pen to paper.

Taken alone, the ban could be held up for scrutiny, giving those of us not predisposed to take any president at his word a chance to consider the implications. But the fast and

furious first dozen days in office have given no chance for luxuries like careful consideration. And forget talking about the order to build a border wall at a cost of \$12-\$15 billion and possibly kick off a trade war with Mexico, because that was so last week. Or Cabinet picks, many of whom should raise red flags for all Americans, regardless of political affiliation. Or the claims of massive, democracy-shattering voter fraud he has yet to factually support in any real way.

It's felt like a shock and awe campaign, much like Trump's bid for the White House, designed to keep opponents guessing, critics preoccupied and everyone else unsure what to believe. It has invigorated the fan base but hasn't grown the support of people who reluctantly voted for him, and especially those who lean conservative but couldn't find the stomach to support him on the ballot.

Those in the latter categories are desperately hanging on, wondering why a president with an amenable Congress would force such chaotic policy instead of letting the government work the way it's supposed to when one party is ruling — with debated and proactive lawmaking. We're certainly embarrassed by the Twitter tirades and petty misinformation coming out of the White House.

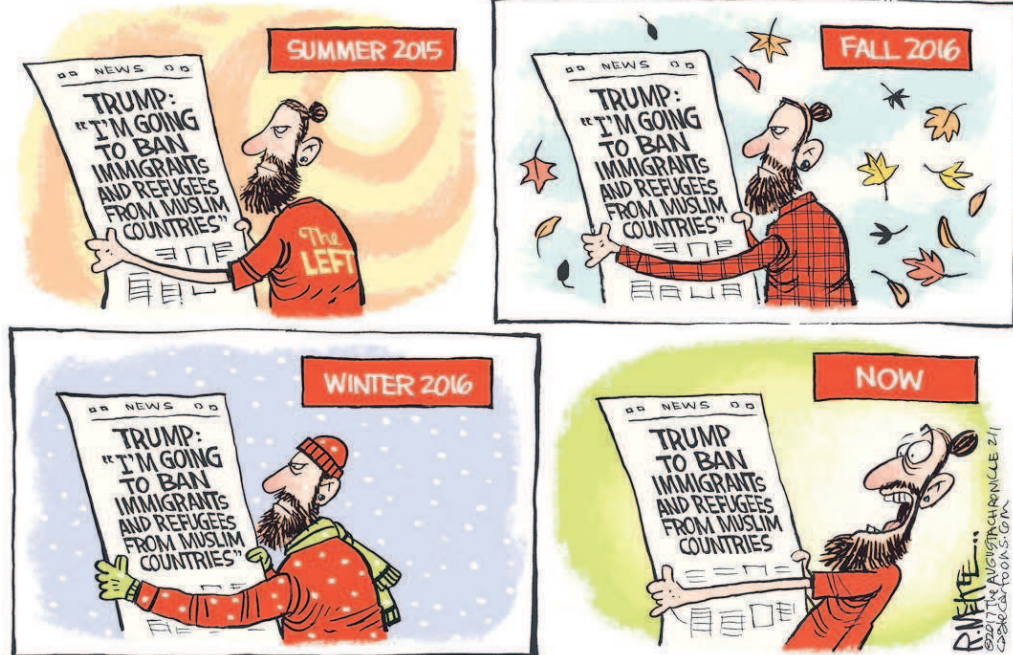
And we're concerned about the ability of this administration to effectively handle an actual crisis, which certainly will arise one way or another in the next four years.

Trump's assertion that he alone can fix this country seems to be the only steadfast pillar of his belief system. And of all the principles that draw me toward conservative ideology, it is the belief that government is responsible to the people instead of the people being reliant on the government. Trump may present himself as the restorer of conservative American values, but has yet to exhibit he grasps that basic principle.

All conservatives should have trouble swallowing that pill, even if it cures a few of the ailments that have bothered them over the past eight years.

Daniel Wattenburger is the managing editor of the East Oregonian.

OTHER VIEWS



Trump's radical approach to immigration: Enforce the law

There's one fundamental difference between the new White House and the old when it comes to immigration: Barack Obama ordered his administration not to enforce a number of immigration laws. Donald Trump has ordered his administration to enforce them.

Trump's two immigration executive orders, issued last Wednesday, are long, far-reaching, and complicated. But perhaps the most consequential passage in the two combined orders is a single sentence: "The purpose of this order is to direct executive departments and agencies to employ all lawful means to enforce the immigration laws of the United States."

That is the heart of Trump's immigration strategy. "We do not need new laws," the president said at the Department of Homeland Security Wednesday. "We will work within the existing system and framework."

Trump's proposal to build a wall on the Mexican border dominated coverage of the two executive orders. But the orders do much, much more than that — or at least they start the process of doing much, much more. For those who follow immigration closely, the Trump orders contain several critical provisions. Among them:

1) End "catch and release." In the Obama years, as thousands of people, mostly from Central America, crossed the Mexican border illegally — and made no effort to escape apprehension, asking for a "permiso" to stay — the border authorities would briefly detain them, give them a date to show up in court, and let them go. The practice was known as "catch and release."

It did not take a rocket scientist to predict that most, now safely inside the U.S., would not show up for court. With family units who arrived in that fashion, immigration court statistics gathered by the Center for Immigration Studies (a group which favors tighter immigration restrictions), reveal that 84 percent do not show up in court.

Under Trump's new directive, the Department of Homeland Security will now detain those illegal crossers and handle their cases on the spot. "The Secretary (of DHS) shall immediately take all appropriate actions to ensure the detention of aliens apprehended for violations of immigration law," the order on border enforcement says, "pending the outcome of their removal proceedings or their removal from the country to the extent permitted by law."

2) Put pressure on "sanctuary cities." "Sanctuary jurisdictions across the United States willfully violate Federal law in an attempt to shield aliens from removal from the United States," the Trump order on interior enforcement says. The order would give the Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security the authority to determine "that jurisdictions that willfully refuse to comply with (federal law) are not eligible to receive federal grants, except as deemed necessary for law enforcement purposes by the Attorney General or the (DHS) Secretary."

Some leaders of sanctuary cities are already promising to fight the federal government. But some will likely yield to federal pressure — a remarkable change from the Obama years.

3) Speed deportations. Both the Obama administration and now Trump said they want to remove illegal immigrants who have committed serious crimes. But Obama waited until the immigrant in question had been convicted before even beginning what

could be a lengthy removal process. The Trump interior enforcement order allows removal paperwork to begin at the time an illegal immigrant is charged, on the reasonable assumption that a person who is in the United States illegally to begin with, and is then charged with at least one additional crime, does not have a right to stay in the country indefinitely.

4) Follow the law in deporting "removable" illegal immigrants.

"We cannot faithfully execute the immigration laws of the United States if we exempt classes or categories of removable aliens from potential enforcement," the order

on interior enforcement says, referring to illegal immigrants who have been convicted of crimes, and in some cases deported multiple times, only to return to commit more crimes and endanger local communities. "I hereby direct agencies to employ all lawful means to ensure the faithful execution of the immigration laws of the United States against all removable aliens."

5) Stop automatically allowing asylum seekers to stay while their cases are considered. Thousands of people come to U.S. ports of entry along

the Mexican border from places like Haiti, India, China, and elsewhere — all claiming asylum. The Obama administration allowed them to stay in the country while their cases were adjudicated. Many simply skipped out on the process and stayed permanently. The new executive order would require those asylum seekers to apply for asylum and then wait for a decision not in the U.S., but in Mexico or Canada. Then, if they are allowed in, they're in. But if asylum is not granted, they won't have been permitted to disappear into the United States.

6) Inform the public. In the Obama years it was sometimes hard to find good statistics about illegal immigrants who were accused of crimes. Trump seeks to change that. From the interior enforcement order: "To promote the transparency and situational awareness of criminal aliens in the United States, the Secretary (of DHS) and the Attorney General are hereby directed to collect relevant data and provide quarterly reports on the following: (a) the immigration status of all aliens incarcerated under the supervision of the Federal Bureau of Prisons; (b) the immigration status of all aliens incarcerated as federal pretrial detainees under the supervision of the United States Marshals Service; and (c) the immigration status of all convicted aliens incarcerated in state prisons and local detention centers throughout the United States."

The new statistics could give researchers, and the general public, a much better idea of the extent of crimes involving suspects in the country illegally.

Trump's orders stop short of measures that would require the approval of Congress, such as resetting the numbers of immigrants allowed to enter the country each year. But they still go a long way. And the early response among Republicans on Capitol Hill was encouraging for the new administration.

Trump will undoubtedly have proposals for Congress on immigration. But his two executive orders go a long way toward undoing the practices that Barack Obama unilaterally set in place. If Trump makes sure his orders are enforced, he will have kept a major promise to those who elected him.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.



BYRON YORK
Comment

President Obama ordered his administration not to enforce a number of immigration laws. President Trump has ordered his administration to enforce them.

OTHER VIEWS

State is \$1.8 billion short

The (Salem) Statesman Journal

Baseball, football and basketball fans should be familiar with the game "You Make the Call."

It's where armchair athletes second-guess rulings made by umpires, officials and referees.

In February, Oregon's Democratic lawmakers will offer residents their own version of the game as they host six or seven town halls around the state. The Legislative Assembly members plan to crisscross the state, informing the public about a \$1.8 billion budget shortfall, and getting public opinion on ways to cut spending and increase revenue.

Required by the state constitution to balance a 2-year budget by the time the session adjourns, Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney and Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek hope the public sessions will give them ideas for spreading the pain. Courtney warned the *Statesman Journal* editorial board that special sessions will be required because painful cuts are inevitable and no one wants to talk about them.

"This is going to be a very tough job," Courtney said. "We try to get it done early so the more than 190 school districts across the state know how much they have to spend, but there's no avoiding this starting point."

Passing out copies of a summary of the Joint Ways & Means Committee co-chairs' "Existing Resources Budget Framework" for the 2017-2019 biennium, Kotek and Courtney used it to illustrate how the budget currently

shapes up using general and lottery funds. It also shows proposed cuts. They emphasized that in some cases, cutting state support for critical programs triggers a reduction in federal funding.

The end result is that losses to Oregonians could add up.

On the chopping block are education at all levels, health care, Department of Human Services and public safety. Also subject to the swing of the state knife are the judicial, natural resources and transportation departments, to name a few. Deficits ranged from 1.4 percent to 27.5 percent.

No department was spared. Sen. Ted Ferrioli, the Senate's minority leader, agreed there would need to be a reduction in spending and an increase in revenue, but he said Gov. Kate Brown's budget was flawed. "I found the governor's budget exceptionally cynical when it calls for cuts in services to veterans and seniors and yet comes up with a \$145 million pay raise for state employees," Ferrioli said.

He also said Republicans can support a transportation package and PERS reform, but both come with caveats. He believes the new session offers the opportunity for decisive action.

That's where Oregonians come in. Instead of sitting in an armchair and carping about the lazy legislature, inefficient state leadership and overpaid lobbyists, attend a town hall and bring suggestions for reducing spending. Consider options you refused to entertain previously.

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to managing editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

Coming Saturday: The East Oregonian will roll out a new series of community columnists — talented writers from Athena, Echo, Helix and Pendleton.

Get their view from atop the tractor, from the headwaters of Dry Creek, from the head of the classroom and from behind the lectern.

Their work will appear in each and every weekend edition of the *EO*.