

Opinion: “Chain Saw” Elon

Many of those who voted for Donald Trump did not expect to have “chain saw” Elon run amok throughout the federal government indiscriminately cutting federal jobs and funding that has already cost lives throughout the world as U.S. hunger relief has halted. Many of those that vote for the current president probably initially agreed with the goals of the Department of Government Efficiency. What is being done has very little to do with improving government efficiency but is rather about saving revenue for continuing and possibly expanding the first term Trump tax cut, which will greatly benefit Elon Musk. Please note that during his first term as president, thanks to a huge tax cut for the very wealthy, added approximately \$7 trillion to our cumulative national debt, more than any other 4-year term for any president in history. During his heyday as a real estate developer in New York, Donald Trump was often referred to as the “king of debt.”

For more than 50% of the people that did not vote for our wannabe King and a sizeable number of Republican voters with buyer’s remorse, the hope is that the mid-term election in 2026, Congress will shift from Republican to Democratic control. This could provide some, however feeble after two years of wanton corruption, check on our lawless president and “chain saw” Elon. For the past few decades, the Republican party has strategically done a good job through voter suppression, gerrymandering, state legislative shenanigans and anything they can think of limiting the number of voters. In the 1960s, Paul Weyrich, one of the founders of the extreme conservative wing of the Republican party, made the following statement: “Now many of our Christians ... want everybody to vote. I don’t want everybody to vote. Elections are not won by a majority of the people; they never have been from the beginning of our country, and they are not now. As a matter of fact, our leverage in the elections quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down.” So, as you can see the Republican party has been working for decades to realize the vision of Paul Weyrich.

It is very possible, particularly if the approval rating of the current president hovers around 40% or lower, that through some underhanded (and likely illegal) means the current president will attempt, whether he succeeds or not is questionable, to eliminate at least the federal component of the 2026 election. A Democratic House and/or Senate, I would prefer both, is something the current president does not want. A Democratic Congress elected in 2026 would represent a repudiation for the bogus mandate that the current president has claimed and some level of accountability might be imposed on a lawless and



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corrupt president. Not holding federal elections for the House and Senate in 2026 would truly mean our democracy has ended. Our mob boss president and his henchman Elon Musk will be able to do as they will with the country with no checks, legal or otherwise, as a despicable president self-indulging himself into a lifelong presidency with no election in 2028.

President Trump, as the principal arsonist, has set the federal government on fire. He has been aided by his favorite oligarch “chain saw” Elon Musk. Sometimes when a fire is set, if not managed properly, it can quickly get out of control because fire tends to have a mind of its own if those managing the fire have no real idea how to control it. We have either reached or are coming quickly to the point where the fire might simply run wild and destroy much more than anyone ever thought was possible. Incompetence and hubris are a very dangerous combination and the two primary suspects or arsonists that started this out-of-control fire exemplify both personal qualities. Destroying something is easy, particularly if there is no concern about the outcome being good or bad. The current president and “chain saw” Elon seek an outcome that is only good for a relatively small percentage of population and any outcomes impacting most of the population are irrelevant given that their ultimate outcome (tax cut for the wealthy) is achieved.

Watching the fire consume the country will not be pleasant and will cost lives and destroy the economic wellbeing of many Americans. Living in a very dysfunctional country ruled by a fascist dictator (King) and his cadre of billionaire oligarchs will not be a fun experience. A country that no longer seeks to provide for all fails to achieve those lofty goals found in the U.S. Constitution including the quest to provide a more perfect union. The people will at some point realize they have lost many of their freedoms and general liberty to exist as independent and self-determining human beings. When, and if, that day comes, hopefully the level of destruction will not be so great that it will be possible to restore and revitalize our once great country. President Trump is even mentioning a possible recession that inflicts great pain on the citizenry while benefiting the very wealthy and corporations. I don’t recall that being mentioned during the campaign.

Useful Thinking: A Dictator’s Peace

by Bill Patrie

“In times like these it is immature — and incidentally, untrue - for anybody to brag that an unprepared America, single-handed, and with one hand tied behind its back, can hold off the whole world. No realistic American can expect from a dictator’s peace international generosity, or return of true independence, or world disarmament, or freedom of expression, or freedom of religion - or even good business.” Franklin D. Roosevelt’s state of the Union Address (January



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6, 1941). “They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all

of them” Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty (1949). “Down the long lane of the history yet to be written America knows that this world of ours, ever growing smaller, must avoid becoming a community of dreadful fear and hate, and be, instead, a proud confederation of mutual trust and respect. Such a confederation must be one of equals. The weakest must come to the conference table with the same confidence as do we, protected as we are by our moral, economic and military strength.”

Dwight Eisenhower’s Farewell Address (January 17, 1961). “A small story about a big ship, and a refugee, and a sailor. It was back in the early eighties, at the height of the boat people. And the sailor was hard at work on the carrier Midway, which was patrolling the South China Sea. The sailor, like most American servicemen, was young, smart, and fiercely observant. The crew spied on the horizon a leaky little boat. And crammed inside were refugees

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We the People: “In Response to Violations of the Constitution: ‘Legal history still has its claims.’”

by David Adler

The Trump Administration’s encirclement of the Constitution, laid bare in federal court findings that President Trump has usurped the congressional power of the purse, violated the Take Care Clause, the separation of powers and the Impoundment Act of 1974, in addition to executive orders that strike at the heart of freedom of the press, freedom of speech and due process, have led readers of this column, alarmed by changing tides, to ask how “constitutional balance can be restored.” The right questions are prelude to the right answers, most certainly in those instances in which governmental actions stir anxiety, fear and despair. Students of history and citizens of experience have grasped the fundamental

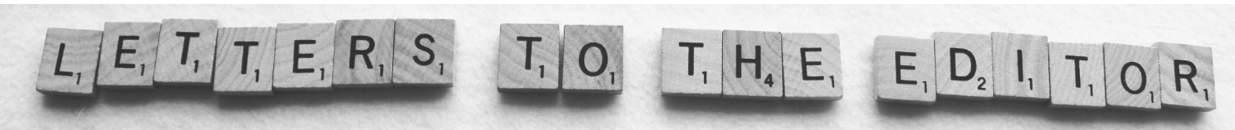


truth of the observation that knowledge is power. Little, meaningful work in a republic, including the restoration of constitutional principles, can be accomplished without it. As Justice Felix Frankfurter justly observed, “Legal history, still has its claims.” The crucial, first step, in righting the Ship of State—assuming the citizenry wishes to be governed by the Constitution—is an accurate recovery and rendition of the

work of the Constitutional Convention—the planks, pillars and principles that the Framers envisioned as forming the republic, a vision that was ratified by the sovereign people. Thus, Thomas Jefferson vowed as president to administer the Constitution “according to the safe and honest meaning contemplated by the plain understanding of the people at the time of its adoption—a meaning to be found in the explanations of those who advocated it.”

An accurate rendition of the work of the Convention assumes vital importance when judges, presidents and political actors adduce the meaning of the Constitution from its history and text. This is particularly true when the sitting president asserts unlimited authority under Article II, including authority invoked on the pretense of emergency to ignore and violate the laws in pursuit of his sense of what is good for America. Executive ascendancy in defiance of republican values and the rule of law assaults the foundations of our system. It cannot be overstated that the Framers did not view the president with awe, but with apprehension. James Wilson spoke for his colleagues in Philadelphia when he observed, “The executive power is better

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Letter writer calls himself a “Broken-Hearted Educator”

Dear Editor, I started my association with schooling as a kindergartner in the 1950s, in a town 60 miles west of Topeka, Kansas. In 1954 in the landmark case, Brown vs the Topeka Board of Education, the Supreme Court declared that “separate but equal” schools segregated by race were inherently unequal. I remember seeing in the news how desegregation played out across the country, with minority children having to be escorted past people shouting hateful slurs at the children. So began my sojourn through seven decades of being inside schools. Twenty of those years I was superintendent in three different districts. What energized and fascinated me and made me proud to be an educator was the way the profession, in service to the original vision of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, incrementally evolved as the consciousness of the nation evolved toward “a more perfect union.” As I became an educator,

the first graduate credits I took toward a master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Kansas State University were in multi-cultural education. In the context of desegregation, it was necessary for educators to become more familiar with the cultures, traditions and history of all learners we taught. Today such training and perspective is derisively labeled, condemned and now virtually outlawed as “woke.” Teaching our history is now seen as a threat to a fragile majority ego, rather than as a means to advance from, rather than repeat, our darker moments as a nation. As I began teaching, Congress passed Public Law 94-142, also known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA). It requires that public schools provide education for all children, regardless of circumstances. When I attended elementary school, children with such needs were typically excluded or secluded, to their detriment and to the detriment of the capac-

ity for empathy and respect from their “typically developing” peers. My heart warmed that first year to see my students argue over who got to wheel cerebral palsied Mayumi’s wheelchair to her next class. Fast forward now, and I have witnessed a President of the United States writhingly mock a similarly affected reporter to laughing and cheering throngs of his supporters. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) provides funding for a wide range of programs and services overseen by the Department of Education such as Title I that help children from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve in school. Now it is the expressed goal of the administration to abolish that department. Relegate these duties to the states? Note the pattern in my journey. It took federal court action or legislation to overcome the biases, prejudices and outright hatred at local and state levels that blocked equal access to education in our past. Now those same judicial and legisla-

tive mechanisms seem poised to undo so much of the progress that invigorated me as an educator. That progress is encapsulated in Martin Luther King’s observation: “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” That hard-won bend in the arc of the moral universe is now under attack. Now retired and in my 70’s, rather than looking back with pride on my small contribution as an educator, I am painfully aware that all of it is unraveling. I am broken-hearted for our current educators and learners, and for the backward steps now being celebrated, cheered and institutionalized from the highest levels of government. I fear it will take a generation or more to regain the progress we have made, and only then if we awaken to what we are losing. David Flowers, Ph.D., Retired Superintendent, Fargo Public Schools 1999-2007, West Fargo Public Schools, 2010-2018 Verified by telephone - LAO

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