

Anti-Trump Republicans Deserve to Be Blacklisted

During the recent presidential campaign, a strangely disparate group of Republicans set themselves apart from the conservative-populist majority to establish what became known by its social media handle as #NeverTrump.

Some questioned Donald Trump's fitness for the highest office in the land from a strict application of their own standards of public decorum and personal rectitude and just couldn't bring themselves to vote for a candidate that did not live by their personal moral code.

Others looked at the evolution of Donald Trump's positions on various issues, such as the right-to-life and the Second Amendment and decided, even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that Trump could not be trusted to pursue a conservative agenda—even when the alternative was the election of Hillary Clinton.

And more than a few revealed that their brand of "conservatism" looked a whole lot more like Hillary Clinton's view of the world and the failed Big Government Republicanism and neo-con policies of George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush than they did the conservatism of Ronald Reagan, Phyllis Schlafly, Barry Goldwater and William F. Buckley Jr.

Among the most prominent and outspoken of the #NeverTrump crowd were neo-con and Bush-era Republicans who had worked in the national security field.

They set themselves outside the conservative-populist wave that swept Trump into office by signing one or both of two public "Never Trump" letters during the campaign, declaring they would not vote for Trump and calling his candidacy a danger to the nation.

One letter, with 122 names, was published by War on the Rocks, a website devoted to national security commentary, during the primary season in March. The other, with 50 names, including some repeat signatories, was published by the New York Times during the general-election campaign in August.

Among those who signed at least one of the letters are Tom Ridge and Michael Chertoff, the first two secretaries of the Department of Homeland Security; two former U.S. trade ambassadors, Carla Hills and Robert Zoellick; two former heads of U.S. intelligence agencies, John Negroponte and retired Air Force Gen. Michael V. Hayden.

In other words, the people who perpetrated the disastrous Bush policies on trade and national security against which Trump campaigned.

And let's be clear, the letters were personal, attacking Trump's character and temperament, asserting that he "lacks self-control and acts impetuously," and had demonstrated "erratic behavior" and is "fundamentally dishonest."

And most importantly, they attacked the policies that won Trump the Republican nomination for President and defeated Hillary Clinton: denouncing Trump's pledge to build a wall along the border with Mexico, his plans to stop the importation of jihad and Muslim terrorism and his professed desire for better relations with Russia.

And now these people want jobs or advisory positions in Donald Trump's administration?

We weren't for Trump during the primaries, and said so. But when the choice was between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, that was no choice at all—we were for Trump and did everything we could to help secure his victory.

However, yesterday, the *Washington Post's* David

Nakamura detailed the complaints of some of the “Never Trump” letters signers who fear they are at the bottom of the pecking order in the new D.C. order Donald Trump and his outsider administration are creating.

The hardest question facing the broader conservative movement in the aftermath of Trump’s victory is what place do those individuals who spoke and worked and acted in ways that advanced the election of Hillary Clinton have in the new conservative world that is slowly evolving from Donald Trump’s victory.

That the millions of voters who elected Donald Trump would want their advice or want them in positions of influence in the government seems unlikely—at least without some acknowledgement that they missed the validity of the reasons for the great tidal wave that swept Trump into office.

What’s more, in some case their conduct was so egregious—for example openly supporting Hillary Clinton by signing the New York Times letter—that it put the future of constitutional liberty in such jeopardy that grass-roots conservatives won’t want them back, no matter how distinguished is their past government service.

Those individuals showed themselves to be political opportunists and elitists, not committed limited-government, constitutional conservatives, and if the Trump team has a blacklist, as far as millions of grass-roots conservatives are concerned, that’s OK, because their exile should be permanent.
{eoa}

This article was originally published at . Used with permission.