

How Vice President-Elect Pence's Presence Is Paying Off for President-Elect Trump

Last summer, a few weeks before the Republican convention was set to begin in Cleveland, speculation was rampant in political circles as to who the always unpredictable Donald Trump would name as his running mate. Some argued he should choose Ted Cruz or Marco Rubio for the job simply because it would serve as an olive branch to conservatives and help to unite the party at the same time.

Others suggested Trump should go with John Kasich as a nod to the GOP establishment whose help the "experts" swore he'd need in order to not only unite the party but also win the election (because Kasich was governor of the key state of Ohio).

Still others believed Trump should select a complete outsider "dark horse" candidate like an army general or even another business aficionado, reasoning it would solidify his credentials as someone who could come in and drain the D.C. swamp.

Then there were those who pushed for Mike Pence. As governor of Indiana and a fairly soft supporter of Cruz during the primaries, Pence was the right fit ideologically, had an impressive resume and perhaps most importantly of all, the right mild temperament to contrast with the bombastic Trump.

History will likely see the selection of Pence as a crucial final piece of the puzzle for the successful Trump ticket. And the vice-president elect will continue to be vital to Trump's efforts to get things done as president. Pence's role has already been partially defined.

Susan Ferrechio of the *Washington Examiner* reports:

Vice-president elect Mike Pence is preparing to become the top liaison between President-elect Trump and Congress, a role that many lawmakers see as critical, and one that will require Pence to do everything from negotiating his directives in the House and Senate to interpreting Trump's tweets...

With a little more than two weeks to go until he's sworn in as vice president, Pence is already serving as chief Trump translator. During a closed-door meeting with House GOP lawmakers on Wednesday, Pence explained to lawmakers a series of cryptic healthcare policy tweets Trump posted to Twitter, softening the president-elect's seemingly out-of-the-blue warning that the GOP repeal the healthcare law in a "careful" manner that does not leave people stranded.

I'll admit, the news that Mike Pence will be a day-to-day presence on Capitol Hill eases many of my remaining concerns about Trump as president. As the ultimate populist, Trump has been known to sway back and forth on a number of topics, often throwing out ideas and solutions that on their face would seem to be contradictory in search of the right popular fit.

Take, for example, Trump's evolved position on Planned Parenthood. As a relatively recent convert to the pro-life cause, Trump has said many times he would do everything possible to severely restrict if not ban legal abortion, even suggesting at one time that women who opt for the procedure should be "punished." (Note: Trump almost immediately took it back after he said it.)

But then there have been other occasions where Trump complimented Planned Parenthood and said the nation's top abortion provider "does good things" for women's health.

Where there appear to be gaps in Trump's stated positions, it seems clear Pence will be there to fill them in with sound conservative principles and a limited government worldview. It

was reported last summer, for instance, that Trump was initially seeking a vice president to handle domestic and foreign policy—basically everything—while he himself would take charge of “making America great again.”

Well, it appears Trump has found his man. Mike Pence has proven to be the perfect choice for the vice-presidential spot.

That’s not to say Trump’s other nominees for his administration have been a notch below in quality. Far from it. In fact, Trump is filling the White House with seasoned professionals who will help him fulfill his promise to “make America great again.”

Alexis Simendinger of Real Clear Politics reports, “Donald Trump made it official Wednesday: The incoming senior White House staff will have a deep bench of aides steeped in politics, including staff members pulled from the Republican National Committee and Trump’s campaign.

“In 14 days, the businessman-turned-president will rely on a mix of mostly young political operatives and communicators whose focus will be on the agenda, messaging and business style he favored last year and in the weeks since his November victory.

“Trump also added former aides who served President George W. Bush to help manage the operations of the executive office of the president, as well as presidential travel, security and event planning. ...”

In other words, there’s a mixture of new blood and experienced political operators, all gathered together to advance the new president’s outsider “drain the swamp” mission. There appear to be just enough establishment folks to keep the GOP blue bloods happy, and with Steve Bannon and Kellyanne Conway working closely with the president on a regular, if not daily, basis, conservatives are generously represented as well.

With Mike Pence keeping a close watch on Congress, everything seems to be in place for a very successful run at “making America great again.”

The weeks and months ahead are going to be filled with exhilarating change and some intense public relations battles with the Washington establishment and Democrats. For many of us, it’s a fight we’ve been waiting years to wage. {eo}

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