

Should We Just Trust Trump?

Sometimes, it's just a matter of trust.

It's safe to say Donald Trump hit a home run with conservatives upon naming Senator Jeff Sessions to be his administration's attorney general and Stephen Bannon for his senior advisor and co-right-hand-man along with chief of staff designee Reince Priebus.

From what I can gather, most conservatives were willing to tolerate Priebus as long as the anti-Washington establishment Bannon was there to balance his presence with Trump in the White House. Fair enough.

Then there was relatively positive feedback for Trump's naming of teacher's union-busting school choice advocate Betsy DeVos to lead the Department of Education. Some conservatives weren't overly enthused about Trump's selection of South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley for U.N. Ambassador because of her tepid support for the Republican ticket during the campaign, but no one loudly objected.

And all the rumors circulating around Mitt Romney and the Secretary of State's post ... well, let's just say we'll wait until someone is named before the universe explodes on that one.

But Trump's latest picks for the Secretaries of Commerce and Treasury are leaving many conservatives aghast. On Wednesday, Trump's team announced they'd decided on Wilbur Ross for the Commerce job and Steven Mnuchin to lead the Treasury department.

In reaction, Erick Erickson wrote at The Resurgent, "Wilbur Ross is a Democrat. He worked with Bill Clinton. He has funded Democrats. He has been on the New York Democratic Committee. He is a Democrat filled with Democrat ideas. And Trump wants

him to be Secretary of Commerce.

“Steven Mnuchin is a George Soros-loving leftist who forced poor people into foreclosures that were unnecessary. He is as insider as you can get on Wall Street.”

Not quite content to stop there, Erickson continued, “As much as Tom Price is a friend and good man, he has also been in Congress since 2002 and Elaine Chao, as much as she is a nightmare to union activists, is Mitch McConnell’s wife and a career cabinet member.”

Price and Chao were named to Trump’s Cabinet on Tuesday. Erickson’s reaction was typical of what I read about them, though there were a number of principled conservatives (such as FRC’s Tony Perkins) who praised Price especially.

Erickson’s basic beef is that with Trump’s latest moves, the “swamp” isn’t being drained, which is by implication a slap at the president-elect himself since it appears as though Trump’s breaking his campaign promise to completely scrub and sanitize the bilges of Washington. Throughout his presidential run Trump swore that Washington was going to be a changed place if he were elected—and at least by appearance, it doesn’t seem to be happening.

Erickson makes a reasonable point, though as one of the leading and enduring members of #NeverTrump, it’s hard to tell if he’s actually offering constructive criticism or just trying to add emphasis to yet another claim of “See, I told you Trump would be awful!”

I think in the case of Trump’s Cabinet, some perspective is in order. First, by naming people he views as the best person for each job, Trump is in essence keeping a campaign promise rather than breaking one.

Many times during debates, Trump talked about bringing people into government who know business and can sit across the table

from world leaders and not be taken advantage of. If, in fact, Ross and Mnuchin truly are “swamp creatures,” at least they’ll know as much about the environment of the bog as the people with whom they’re conversing.

That’s not true when it comes to most politicians who’ve spent their entire careers swimming next to lobbyists in the malodorous oozing quagmire that is Washington.

Next, though on the surface men like Ross and Mnuchin would appear to be the same types of swamp creatures Trump swore he would cast out of his administration, they both come from successful professional backgrounds.

According to Wikipedia, “Wilbur Louis Ross, Jr. (born Nov. 28, 1937) is an American investor and former banker known for restructuring failed companies in industries such as steel, coal, telecommunications, foreign investment and textiles. He specializes in leveraged buyouts and distressed businesses. As of August 2014, *Forbes* magazine lists Ross as one of the world’s billionaires, with a net worth of \$2.9 billion.”

Also according to Wikipedia, “Steven Terner Mnuchin (born Dec. 21, 1962) is an American banker, film producer and political fundraiser. He is a former partner for Goldman Sachs for 17 years, where he accrued a net worth estimated at about \$40 million. He then founded the motion picture firm RatPac-Dune Entertainment.”

He also served as finance chair for Trump’s campaign.

Like Trump, Mnuchin and Ross have never been officeholders. Many of the criticisms leveled at them are nearly identical to #NeverTrump’s contentions against Trump himself during the campaign. True, Trump claimed for years to be a Democrat, and we all know for most of his life, he championed just about every Democrat cause under the sun.

Trump’s public lifestyle was also much more conducive to the

“anything goes” mentality of the Democrats. Why do you think he fit in so well for so long with the New York and Hollywood elite?

In fairness to Ross, at least, he seems to have made a late-in-life conversion to the GOP, having supported Mitt Romney in 2012 and Trump from early on in this cycle.

Like most Americans probably feel, it’s hard to form an opinion on the appointments of Ross and Mnuchin because they’re not well-known figures outside the elite financial circles of the country. The fact that they appear to be swamp creatures is alarming, but at some point we have to accept that Trump is going to bring on board the people he trusts most to “Make America Great Again.”

And the odds are Trump will get what he wants from the Senate in terms of confirmations, too.

Anna Giaritelli of the *Washington Examiner* reports, “Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fl., said on Tuesday evening he expects the Republican-led Senate to approve President-elect Trump’s Cabinet appointments, thanks to the low grade ‘nuclear option’ Senate Democrats enabled three years ago when they controlled the upper chamber.

“‘If you look at the nominations, they changed the rules. And now by 51 votes we can get anybody confirmed except for the Supreme Court and so that’s why I fully anticipate that by and large, unless it’s someone—something troubling comes out, you’re going to see the president-elect get his nominees,’ the recently reelected senator told Fox News host Sean Hannity on Tuesday evening.”

In essence, there’s not much anyone from either side of the ideological spectrum can do to stop these appointments. Unless there’s widespread Republican opposition (and by widespread, I’m guessing more than four or five GOP senators) on virtually any nomination, Trump will get his way.

The prospect brings with it some apprehension, but at some point we have to allow Trump leeway to make the choices. We elected him to do just that. {eo}

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