

# Opinion Exchange

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## THE TRUMP PRESIDENCY

# We're not welcome in Mpls. We're coming anyway

Minnesota Democrats refuse to see progress made under President Donald Trump.

By TOMMY HICKS

We've known it all along. Like their colleagues in Washington, D.C., and around the country, Minnesota Democrats are unable to cope with the 2016 election results.

While Reps. Angie Craig, Dean Phillips and Colin Peterson have continued to take their cues from Speaker Nancy Pelosi, local Twin Cities Democrats have also fallen in line, mimicking the rhetoric of their national counterparts to stay in line with their party's messaging against the president.

As Democrats like Mayor Jacob Frey continue to obstruct and ignore the wishes of Minnesotans by announcing that President Donald Trump is not welcome in the city, and as Democrats statewide pondered on social media whether they could stop the president's visit altogether, Republicans have been reminded that in this city and this state — their views and beliefs are not welcome and will not be acknowledged.

Yet the explanation for why local, state and national Democrats continue to show anger and hostility toward President Trump and his supporters is quite simple. His visit highlights the very failures of their decadeslong policies. President Trump has accomplished more in three years than Minnesota Democrats have in decades of their failed leadership.

While Democrats have continually raised taxes for projects that do little for their communities, the perception of crime in Minneapolis continues to worsen. Folks are scared to travel downtown by themselves and business owners worry for the safety of employees and customers.

The achievement gap in Minneapolis continues to be one of the highest in the nation — and it continues to grow larger.

Not to mention the fact that Minneapolis liberals continue to attempt to dictate policy for rural Minnesotans — no matter the economic costs.

However, under President Trump's administration, Minnesotans of all backgrounds have seen an increase in prosperity and economic opportunities.

In three years since President Trump's election, Minnesota has seen more than 57,000 jobs added across the state and the unemployment rate has declined from 4% to 3.3%. As a melting pot of different cultures from across the globe, President Trump's economy has worked and continues to work for people of all communities.

This week, the unemployment rate for women hit 3.1% — the lowest it's been since 1953, the first year of President Dwight Eisenhower's term. Meanwhile, the unemployment rates for African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans have hit 5.5% and 3.9% respectively. There's no denying the Trump economy is benefiting all Americans.

Meanwhile, Minnesota Democrats across the board continue to fight to reverse the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act — a law that put an average \$1,429 in tax reduction back into the pockets of working Minnesotans and doubled the Child Tax Credit — a huge benefit for working mothers and fathers. House Democrats also refuse to bring the USMCA trade agreement to the floor — even though it would raise wages for hard working Americans, create thousands of new jobs in Minnesota, and add \$68.2 billion to the U.S. economy.

In seeing the accomplishments — or lack thereof — of Minnesota Democrats over the last 60 years and President Trump's accomplishments over the last three, it's no surprise that Democrats have looked for any excuse to try to obstruct this president and take him out of office. But Minnesotans see the proof and Democrats are losing any chance they had of keeping this state blue in 2020.

This week, Minnesota Democrats will see that no matter what they do, Minnesotans see past their partisan double-talk. From across the state, supporters will flock to Minneapolis to hear firsthand how their president is changing their state and country for the better.

Tommy Hicks is co-chair of the Republican National Committee.

# Fanatical centrists are being ousted

Trump's impeachment is forcing people to see where the GOP has been headed for years.

By PAUL KRUGMAN • New York Times

It's hard to believe that barely three weeks have passed since Adam Schiff, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, issued a mysterious subpoena to the acting director of national intelligence, demanding that he produce a whistleblower complaint filed by someone in the intelligence community.

Since that subpoena was issued, the impeachment of Donald Trump has gone from implausibility to near certainty; I at least find it hard to see how the House can fail to impeach given what we already know about Trump's actions. Conviction in the Senate remains a long shot, but not as long as it once seemed.

And the whole tenor of our national conversation has changed. It looks to me as if we're witnessing the rapid collapse of a powerful faction in U.S. public life, one whose refusal to accept facts at odds with its prejudices has long been a major source of political dysfunction.

But I'm not talking about the right-wing extremists who dominate the Republican Party. Sorry, but they're not going anywhere. Most of Trump's base is sticking with him, while the list of prominent Republican politicians willing to call out Trump's malfeasance in clear language consists so far of Mitt Romney and, well, Mitt Romney.

No, I'm talking about fanatical centrists, who aren't a large slice of the electorate, but have played an outsized role in elite opinion and media coverage. These are people who may have been willing to concede that Trump was a bad guy, but otherwise maintained, in the teeth of the evidence, that our two major parties were basically equivalent: Each party had its extremists, but each also had its moderates, and everything would be fine if these moderates could work together.

Who am I talking about? Well, among other people, Joe Biden, who has repeatedly insisted that Trump is an aberration, not representative of the Republican Party as a whole.

(Biden's refusal to admit what he was facing may be one reason his response to the Ukraine smear has seemed so wobbly.)

Some of us have been pushing back against that worldview for many years, arguing that today's Republican Party is a radical force increasingly opposed to democracy. Way back in 2003 I wrote that modern conservatism is "a movement whose leaders do not accept the legitimacy of our current political system." In 2012, Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein declared that the central problem of U.S. politics was a GOP that was not just extreme but "dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition."

For a long time, however, making that case — pointing out that Republicans were sounding ever more author-

itarian and violating more and more democratic norms — got you dismissed as shrill if not deranged. Even Trump's rise, and the obvious parallels between Trumpism and the authoritarian movements that have gutted democracy in places like Hungary and Poland, barely dented centrist complacency. Remember, just a few months ago most of the news media treated Attorney General William Barr's highly misleading summary of the Mueller report as credible.

**It's now crystal clear that the GOP is not a normal political party; it's ... an authoritarian regime in waiting.**

But my sense, although it's impossible to quantify, is that the events of the past several weeks have finally broken through the wall of centrist denial.

At this point, things that previously were merely obvious have become undeniable. Yes, Trump has invited foreign powers to intervene in U.S. politics on his behalf; he's even done it on camera. Yes, he has claimed that his domestic political opponents are committing treason by exercising

their constitutional rights of oversight, and he is clearly itching to use the justice system to criminalize criticism.

Politicians who believed in American values would denounce this behavior, even if it came from their own leader. Republicans have been silent at best, and many are expressing approval. So it's now crystal clear that the GOP is not a normal political party; it is an American equivalent of Hungary's Fidesz or Poland's Law and Justice, an authoritarian regime in waiting.

And I think — I hope — that those who have spent years denying this reality are finally coming around.

It's important to understand that the GOP hasn't suddenly changed, that Trump hasn't somehow managed to corrupt a party that was basically OK until he came along. Anyone startled by Republican embrace of wild conspiracy theories about the deep state must have slept through the Clinton years, and wasn't paying attention when most of the GOP decided that climate change was a hoax perpetrated by a vast global scientific cabal.

And anyone shocked by Republican acceptance of the idea that it's fine to seek domestic political aid from foreign regimes has forgotten (like all too many people) that the Bush administration took us to war on false pretenses — not the same sin, but an equally serious betrayal of American political norms.

No, Trump isn't an aberration. He's unusually blatant and gaudily corrupt, but at a basic level he's the culmination of where his party has been going for decades. And U.S. political life won't begin to recover until centrists face up to that uncomfortable reality.

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