

Political Corruption
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There is nothing new about discovering people with trusted positions abusing that trust, taking bribes from those seeking special privileges. Corruption such as this can be found among such commonly trusted vendors as butchers selling tainted meat for a profit, food and drug inspectors taking bribes to pass foul products, judges taking bribes to overlook criminal behavior, and senators and representatives using their power to benefit bribers.

Lest one think this is only an American problem or only a contemporary one, folklore and religious warnings go back to antiquity, revealing the disgust of ordinary people. Even European folklore tells of priests who chased men leaving for the Crusades to give them the keys to their wives\222 chastity belts!

From antiquity, merchants were constrained by weights and measures not to cheat customers. Violators were jailed or sometimes executed. People cared.

We are seeing a flood of cheaters and corrupt authorities today, taking bribes for favors. Until now, such offenses were uncovered and punished, regardless of political party or fame. Laws attempt to constrain such behavior. Presidents, judges, and congressmen take an oath not to use their office for personal benefit. In the past, such violators were punished under the law, regardless of party. But something changed in recent years.

One corrupt president, Richard Nixon, tried to steal an election by cheating and he corrupted his entire inner circle of cabinet members. He was caught, his inner circle sent to prison, but he himself just stepped down, expecting to face trial too. Unfortunately, his well-meaning Vice President, then President Ford, provided a pardon to spare the country the agony of a trial. Had he not done this, the next crooked president, Donald Trump, might have been constrained.

Trump not only corrupted his inner circle, but managed to corrupt an entire political party, now aiding and abetting his criminal actions of trying to overturn his lost election. Trump not only cheated in refusing to accept his electoral defeat, but conspired to overturn the election by force. His foot soldiers were tried and convicted, but so far, he and his inner circle (including lawyers) are just indicted and trials are beginning.

During Trump\222s presidency, he collected bribes and made money by having benefit seekers and even secret service pay to stay in his hotels. He corrupted his children, permitting them to collect money and benefits by virtue of their name. Trump is the king of corruption, but may be coming to his just deserts soon.

Senators and Congressmen have long spawned the dishonest among them to use their power to accrue bribes and gifts from criminals. But until now, when caught, both Democrats and Republicans have at least stepped down from office before going to prison.

Not today. Following Trump\222s model, Republican corrupted officials are refusing to step down, casting aspersions on prosecutors and judges, trying to intimidate witnesses, and demonstrating shamelessness.

Congressman George Santos (if that is his name) is a shameless liar, has made money from his abuse of power, and his Republican party refuses to force him out of office. They fear the loss of his seat because they have a thin majority.

Now even a Democrat senator, New Jersey\222s Menendez, has been investigated by the FBI and his home was found with four gold bars and envelopes of cash earmarked for him, hidden in the linings of his jackets. He may also be an agent for Egypt now.

The Democrats are demanding his resignation and prosecution, despite the political cost to them. The Republicans are silent about their own villains, showing a lack of decency.

Corrupt judges are not new in history, but the few we have had in our short history have been removed and jailed. We have never had a corrupt Supreme Court Justice, an institution that holds itself as sacrosanct, now has at least three Justices who are shamelessly benefitting from their positions. Justice Clarence Thomas, the worst of them, refuses to step down and the Republicans in Congress refuse to remove him,

although they have the legal right to do so.

Voters must take note.

681 words

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