

by [Stephen Zunes](#) August 22, 2018 in [The Progressive](#) and [Common Dreams](#)

[Impeach Away! Thoughts on a Possible President Pence](#)

Progressives should not hesitate to mobilize in support of the impeachment and conviction of Donald Trump. Here's why

With the [latest evidence](#) of Donald Trump's involvement in illegal activities and even more damaging revelations likely to come, there is now [serious talk](#) about impeachment, which would pave the way for Mike Pence to become President. Some pundits [dismiss](#) the possibility, noting Republican majorities in both houses and the need for a two-thirds Senate majority to convict and remove a President from office. Others have [expressed concern](#) over Pence, a Christian supremacist with more consistently hard right wing views than Trump, in charge of the White House. I would argue that Trump will likely be forced from office and that this would be a positive development.

Most Republicans are holding off on calling for impeachment, likely out of fear of retaliation from the White House or their constituents. This was true during Watergate as well. The vast majority of Republicans [opposed impeachment](#) until the "smoking gun" tape was released in August 1974, leaving absolutely no doubt that Nixon engaged in obstruction of justice. He resigned a few days later.

While he may not be the brightest porch light on the block, Pence is a more predictable and conventional ultra-conservative.

Impeachment is a real possibility as more information about Trump's connection to criminality unfolds, particularly since most Congressional Republicans would actually prefer their former colleague Mike Pence to Trump. Not only did Pence serve six terms in the House of Representatives, he was popular enough to be elected chair of the House Republican Conference in 2009. While he may not be the brightest porch light on the block, Pence is a more predictable and conventional ultra-conservative.

In terms of his positions on major political issues, Mike Pence is perhaps more of an extremist than Trump, as illustrated by his outspoken social conservatism and his pro-interventionist foreign policy. [Fivethirtyeight.com](#) rated him the most conservative vice-presidential candidate since they started keeping such measurements. As a result, many are wondering if it might be better to stick with Trump.

But here's why President Pence would be a good thing.

First of all, it is important to defend democracy and the Constitution. Sure, Russian collusion and payoffs to mistresses are perhaps not Trump's worst crimes. But let's recall that while Watergate was far from the worst manifestations of Nixon criminality--carpet bombing Vietnam, orchestrating the coup in Chile, engaging in secret wars on Laos and Cambodia, supporting death squads and torturers--it remained important for the integrity of our democratic institutions that he be forced from office.

Secondly, Pence is less impulsive and therefore probably less dangerous than Trump in terms of starting a war or engaging in other really disastrous actions. Yes, Pence's ideological agenda is very dangerous. Unlike Trump, however, it's more about advancing that agenda than it is about him or his ego, making him a more calculated and less reactive president, thereby less likely to create a crisis that could spiral out of control.

Ironically, that agenda may be easier to fight. For example, Pence's Christian supremacism would alienate a lot of the more libertarian-oriented Trump supporters and just about anybody else who doesn't identify with right-wing Christian fundamentalism. As Indiana governor, he promoted and signed into law the notorious Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 2015, essentially allowing discrimination against the LGBTQ community. It [created](#) a huge national backlash, including a widely supported boycott of the state, leading the state's business community to successfully pressure the Republican-controlled legislature to reverse course.

Unlike Trump, Pence is more about advancing an agenda than his ego. And ironically, that agenda may be easier to fight.

Without the constant crises and palace intrigues, a more low-key Pence White House would give the country a greater opportunity to focus on the *issues* rather than the man. Instead of giving attention to the latest outrageous tweet, the media might focus more on the administration's disastrous policies, thereby making it easier to mobilize impacted constituencies.

And frankly, Pence just isn't intelligent or charismatic enough to build a following beyond his narrow right wing base. At the time he was tapped as Trump's running mate, [polls](#) showed him with only a 40 percent approval rate in solidly Republican Indiana and facing a tight re-election campaign, which surely says something about his failure to inspire his constituency.

Though more familiar with the ways of Washington, without the cult of personality that has kept close to 40 percent of the U.S. population in Trump's thrall, Pence's ability to get anything accomplished, and his likelihood of re-election, would be even less. As a result, progressives should not hesitate to mobilize in support of the impeachment and conviction of Donald Trump.