

# The Federalist Capers

*Okay, nobody break the country, we worked really hard on it.*

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FREE

## Welcome!

You're reading the first issue of TFC, a monthly paper (literally a sheet of paper) highlighting important news about the Trump administration, offering ~~biased~~ insightful commentary, and suggesting actions you can take to cause positive change.

Why read this ~~trash~~ paper when there's so much good actual journalism out there?

- Takes less time due to fewer words
- Delightful pun on "The Federalist Papers"
- Ennui

Seriously though: We hope to offer a concise summary of the past month's Trumpian news, offer you ways to fight injustices as they arise, and generally remind you once a month that this state of affairs isn't normal or okay.

Thanks for your support!

## Trump's conflicts of interest

Our President-elect will enter office with a vast, global array of properties and businesses, and he's made no effort yet to separate his private business from his public office. So far:

- Trump says he "might" have asked a British politician for a favor that would benefit his Scottish golf course.
- Foreign diplomats said they stayed at a Trump hotel near the White House, to please the President-elect.
- Trump's daughter Ivanka, who has no official role in his administration, has been in meetings with foreign leaders.

Beyond ethics, there are Constitutional concerns as well. Article I forbids him accepting "any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State."

## Quote of the month

"So I don't give a damn what the president of the United States wants to do or anybody else wants to do, we will not waterboard, we will not torture. **We will not torture people.**"—Sen. John McCain, 11/19/2016

## Highlights on Trump's administration so far

*Those requiring Senate confirmation are in italics.*

- **Vice President**—Mike Pence—As recently as 2006, voted to amend Constitution to ban gay marriage. Will not rule out use of torture by U.S. government.
- **White House Chief of Staff**—Reince Priebus—Former head of Republican National Committee.
- **Chief Strategist**—Stephen Bannon—Former head of Breitbart News, which churns out articles such as "Birth Control Makes Women Unattractive and Crazy" (actual verbatim title).
- **Attorney General**—*Sen. Jeff Sessions*—Was rejected as a federal judge in the '80s for being too racist.
- **Defense Secretary**—*Gen. James Mattis*—Seems like one of the better picks. Disagrees with Trump's conciliatory tone toward Russia, and says torture doesn't work.
- **Treasury Secretary**—*Steven Mnuchin*—Former Goldman Sachs partner, worked for Trump's campaign.
- **Health Secretary**—*Rep. Tom Price*—A leading proponent of dismantling Obamacare.
- **Education Secretary**—*Betsy DeVos*—Controversial for her forceful backing of private school vouchers.
- **National Security Adviser**—Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn—An experienced and respected officer (retired) who has gained a reputation for being unstable. In February, tweeted: "Fear of Muslims is RATIONAL."
- **CIA Director**—*Rep. Mike Pompeo*—Stated in 2014 that U.S. use of torture (waterboarding) is acceptable.
- **Ambassador to UN**—*Gov. Nikki Haley*—Actually has a history of criticizing Trump on several occasions. But no significant foreign policy experience.

## The bigger picture

Trump's election was not an isolated incident. Europe, too, has increasingly turned in recent years to nationalist right-wing parties that rise to power by stoking popular fears of immigrants and dissatisfaction with "elites."

- British voters recently chose to leave the European Union—"Brexit." One-third of pro-Brexit voters said their main reason was a desire "for the UK to regain control over immigration and its own borders."
- Hungary's far-right Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who hailed Trump's win, has greatly restricted freedom of the press in his own country.
- French politician Marine Le Pen, who is head of the far-right National Front party and shares many of Trump's views, is a serious contender to become President next year.
- In last year's Greek election, the Neo-Nazi "Golden Dawn" party won an alarming 7% of the vote. Greece's economic woes are reminiscent of Germany's post-WWI troubles, which Hitler exploited to gain power.

Other examples abound. And although politicians and proposals should of course be evaluated on their own merits, it's important to understand that a larger shift is happening here, and no one knows how far it will go.



## What can I do?

**Read the news.** NPR, CNN, CBS, etc., are all free and all pretty decent. The *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* are great—but they do require a subscription once your free trial runs out.

**Read the Constitution**, including the Bill of Rights and other Amendments. Know your rights, and know how government is supposed to work. You can go to [AnnenbergClassroom.org](http://AnnenbergClassroom.org) and click "Constitution Guide" at the bottom.

**Write a letter of encouragement** to someone who needs it. If there's a nonprofit or journalist you admire, let them know. If there's a local institution (such as a mosque) that might be worried right now, give some moral support. If friends or family are scared for any reason, they might like to hear from you.

Even government leaders, who are routinely barraged with complaints and petitions, might be encouraged by a "Thank you!" when they do the right thing.

**Donate.** The ACLU is a good choice, with the potential dangers that civil liberties are facing. There's also ProPublica (which does independent investigative journalism), the NRDC (which works to protect the environment), and a million other places.

Recurring donations are great, if you can. Also check if your employer will match your contributions.

**Shop** at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and a small percentage of every purchase goes to a nonprofit of your choice (such as ProPublica). There's no cost to you!

**Vote.** Register (if you haven't already) at [vote.gov](http://vote.gov). Remember there are elections in 2017 too. Mostly local stuff, but local stuff matters too!

**For more ideas**, go to [BrianDBuckley.com](http://BrianDBuckley.com) and click "What can I do?" at the top of the page.

Comments, questions, suggestions, ideas, hateful diatribes? Email: <mailto:buckley.d.brian@gmail.com>

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