

Endorsement: Hillary Clinton is the only choice to move America ahead

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Since The Arizona Republic began publication in 1890, ***we have never endorsed a Democrat over a Republican*** for president. Never. This reflects a deep philosophical appreciation for conservative ideals and Republican principles.

This year is different. The 2016 Republican candidate is not conservative and he is not qualified.

That's why, for the first time in our history, *The Arizona Republic* will support a Democrat for president.

What Clinton has (and Trump doesn't)

The challenges the United States faces domestically and internationally demand a steady hand, a cool head and the ability to think carefully before acting.

Hillary Clinton understands this. Donald Trump does not.

- Clinton has the temperament and experience to be president. Donald Trump does not.
- Clinton knows how to compromise and to lead with intelligence, decorum and perspective. She has a record of public service as First Lady, senator and secretary of state.
- She has withstood decades of scrutiny so intense it would wither most politicians. The vehemence of some of the anti-Clinton attacks strains credulity.
- Trump hasn't even let the American people scrutinize his tax returns, which could help the nation judge his claims of business acumen.

Her flaws pale in comparison

Make no mistake: Hillary Clinton has flaws. She has made serious missteps.

Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of State was a mistake, as she has acknowledged. Donations to the Clinton Foundation while she was secretary of State raise concerns that donors were hoping to buy access. Though there is no evidence of wrongdoing, she should have put up a firewall.

Yet despite her flaws, Clinton is the superior choice.

- She does not casually say things that embolden our adversaries and frighten our allies. Her approach to governance is mature, confident and rational. That cannot be said of her opponent.
- Clinton retains her composure under pressure. She's tough. She doesn't back down.

- Trump responds to criticism with the petulance of verbal spit wads. That's beneath our national dignity.

When the president of the United States speaks, the world expects substance. Not a blistering tweet.

Whose hand do you want on the nuclear button?

Hillary Clinton knows the issues, history and facts.

Clinton has argued America's case before friendly and unfriendly foreign leaders with tenacity, diplomacy and skill. She earned respect by knowing the issues, the history and the facts.

She is intimately familiar with the challenges we face in our relations with Russia, China, the Middle East, North Korea and elsewhere. She'll stand by our friends and she's not afraid to confront our enemies.

Contrast Clinton's tenacity and professionalism with Trump, who began his campaign with gross generalities about Mexico and Mexicans as criminals and rapists. These were careless slaps at a valued trading partner and Arizona's neighbor. They were thoughtless insults about people whose labor and energy enrich our country.

Trump demonstrated his clumsiness on the world stage by making nice with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto only a few hours before appearing in Phoenix to deliver yet another rant about Mexican immigrants and border walls.

Arizona's been there on immigration (it doesn't work)

Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton have said radically different things about immigration.

What's more, Arizona went down the hardline immigration road Trump travels. It led our state to SB 1070, the 2010 "show me your papers" law that earned Arizona international condemnation and did nothing to resolve real problems with undocumented immigration.

Arizona understands that we don't need a repeat of that divisive, unproductive fiasco on the national level. A recent poll shows Arizonans oppose both more walls and the mass deportations Trump endorses.

We need a president who can broker solutions.

Clinton calls for comprehensive immigration reform, a goal that business, faith and law enforcement leaders have sought for years. Her support for a pathway to citizenship and her call for compassion for families torn apart by deportation are consistent with her longtime support for human rights.

Clinton's equality vs. Trump's lack of respect

Hillary Clinton has made a career fighting for gender equality. As secretary of state, Clinton made gender equality a priority for U.S. foreign policy. This is an extension of Clinton's bold "women's rights are human rights" speech in 1995.

It reflects an understanding that America's commitment to human rights is a critically needed beacon in today's troubled world.

Trump's long history of objectifying women and his demeaning comments about women during the campaign are not just good-old-boy gaffes.

They are evidence of deep character flaws. They are part of a pattern.

Trump mocked a reporter's physical handicap. Picked a fight with a Gold Star family. Insulted POWs. Suggested a Latino judge can't be fair because of his heritage. Proposed banning Muslim immigration.

Each of those comments show a stunning lack of human decency, empathy and respect. Taken together they reveal a candidate who doesn't grasp our national ideals.

A centrist or a wild card?

Many Republicans understand this. But they shudder at the thought of Hillary Clinton naming Supreme Court justices. So they stick with Trump. We get that. But we ask them to see Trump for what he is — and what he is not.

Trump's conversion to conservatism is recent and unconvincing. There is no guarantee he will name solid conservatives to the Supreme Court.

Hillary Clinton has long been a centrist. Despite her tack left to woo Bernie Sanders supporters, Clinton retains her centrist roots. Her justices might not be in the mold of Antonin Scalia, but they will be accomplished individuals with the experience, education and intelligence to handle the job.

They will be competent. Just as she is competent.

If a candidate can't control his words

Trump's inability to control himself or be controlled by others represents a real threat to our national security. His recent efforts to stay on script are not reassuring. They are phony.

The president commands our nuclear arsenal. Trump can't command his own rhetoric. Were he to become president, his casual remarks — such as saying he wouldn't defend NATO partners from invasion — could have devastating consequences.

Trump has praised Russian President Vladimir Putin, a thug who has made it clear he wants to expand Russia's international footprint.

Trump suggested Russia engage in espionage against Hillary Clinton — an outrageous statement that he later insisted was meant in jest.

Trump said President Obama and Hillary Clinton were “co-founders” of ISIS, then walked that back by saying it was sarcasm.

It was reckless.

Being the leader of the free world requires a sense of propriety that Trump lacks.

Clinton’s opportunity to heal this nation

This is Hillary Clinton’s moment to reach those who feel left behind. We understand that Trump’s candidacy tapped a deep discontent among those who feel left behind by a changed economy and shifting demographics. Their concerns deserve to be discussed with respect.

Ironically, Trump hasn’t done that. He has merely pandered. Instead of offering solutions, he hangs scapegoats like piñatas and invites people to take a swing.

In a nation with an increasingly diverse population, Trump offers a recipe for permanent civil discord.

In a global economy, he offers protectionism and a false promise to bring back jobs that no longer exist. America needs to look ahead and build a new era of prosperity for the working class.

This is Hillary Clinton’s opportunity. She can reach out to those who feel left behind. She can make it clear that America sees them and will address their concerns.

She can move us beyond rancor and incivility.

The Arizona Republic endorses Hillary Clinton for president.

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/opinion/editorial/2016/09/27/hillary-clinton-endorsement/91198668/>