



# OPINION: HAS TRUMP 2.0 LEARNED FROM TRUMP 1.0? - JOSH HAMMER

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It's hard to believe, but we're finally here. Four years after all the Sturm und Drang that followed Donald Trump's 2020 electoral loss to Joe Biden, the maestro of Mar-a-Lago is set to be inaugurated once more on Monday as president of the United States.

And what an absolutely wild ride it has been. In the interim four years, Trump has completed nothing less than the single most remarkable comeback -- political or otherwise -- in American history.

Trump has been prosecuted -- four separate times, by three different prosecutors. He was "convicted" of a "crime" -- the precise legal theory of which we actually still do not know -- in a quintessential show trial in bright-blue New York City. One would-be assassin nicked his ear, coming within millimeters of murdering him on national television. A second would-be assassin was nearly able to fire a clear shot at him on his own Florida golf course. Two opposition party presidential candidates, working in tandem with an ever-supine propaganda media, tarred and feathered him as a historical threat to the Constitution -- as a crypto-Nazi who, if once again given the reins of power, might really burn it all down.

Yet the American people saw right through it all. Trump prevailed -- and not exactly in a squeaker either. Trump swept every single swing state, crushing Kamala Harris in the Electoral College tally and becoming the first Republican to win the national popular vote in two decades.

Trump, as many have observed, earned a "mandate" from the American electorate. And now, with his sundry foes all vanquished, Trump is once again set to place his hand on the Bible and take that solemn oath of office. America has been spared four more years of a prolonged Biden/Harris-induced national nightmare. Hallelujah!

But despite all the revelry in the nation's capital this Monday, it is important to be clear-eyed about the task ahead.

In making history as the first man in over 130 years to earn a second nonconsecutive presidential term, Trump has been given an opportunity not merely to lead the nation he so clearly loves. He has also been given an opportunity -- a four-year-long opportunity, as the case may be -- to study and learn from what went wrong, or at least didn't exactly go as planned, the first time around.

So: Has Trump 2.0 learned from Trump 1.0? And will this 47th presidential administration be an improvement over the (already quite good!) 45th presidential administration?

Has Trump learned that he cannot squander the massive political capital that comes with winning a presidential election? Has he learned

that, in the aftermath of such a tremendous victory and with a likeminded congressional majority in tow, (SET ITAL) now (END ITAL) is the time to strike with an aggressive, full-throttle legislative agenda? More to the point: Has Trump learned to lead out of the gate on his most important and signature issue, immigration, rather than be sidetracked by such relative distractions as health care or tax cuts (as he was last time)?



Has Trump finally learned to trust his own instincts over the questionable instincts of those who try to flatter him? In the aftermath of the destructive "1619 Riots" of 2020 and historically high crime in major urban corridors such as New York City and Los Angeles, has Trump finally abandoned once and for all the misguided pursuit of "criminal justice reform" -- which, last time, took the form of the Kim Kardashian-peddled First Step Act jailbreak law? Will he finally prove to be the pro-"back the blue," pro-"law and order" stalwart he campaigned as back in 2016?

Has Trump learned the indispensable imperative of having true loyalists in power up and down the entirety of the administrative state? Will he, unlike last time, be willing and able to fire each and every single subversive executive branch bureaucrat -- no matter what any flawed regulation or erroneous court precedent says about a purported inability to do so? Will he be able to end the calamitous weaponization of the Department of Justice by any means necessary -- and clean out the Augean stables at the fetid Federal Bureau of Investigation?

Has Trump, especially in the aftermath of Justice Amy Coney Barrett's latest defection that permitted Trump's criminal "conviction" to proceed, learned the right lessons about how to pick Supreme Court justices who will be more like Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito -- and less like Chief Justice John Roberts? Will Trump exclusively select jurists who have flawless judicial records, are genuine full-spectrum conservatives, demonstrate an eagerness to overrule bad precedent, and have a conservative spouse and attend a theologically conservative house of worship?

These are just some of the questions I have about the new Trump presidency. I certainly hope the answer to each and every question is "yes."

Godspeed to you, President Trump.