



Why National Review is attacking Donald Trump

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National Review published more than 20 essays from conservative writers on Friday arguing that the Republican Party should not nominate Donald Trump for president.

The columns all reach the same conclusion, but the reasoning behind them varies considerably from piece to piece.

Understanding why the country's leading conservative thinkers are taking a stand against Trumpism has far-reaching consequences — not only for this election but also for the long-term trajectory of conservative thought.

We read through the issue, and the accusations against Trump can be more or less boiled down — in no particular order — to the following five crimes against conservatism.

Case 1: Donald Trump supported liberal policies, Barack Obama, other Democrats

In 14 words: Trump is on record as having supported a wide array of policies conservatives detest.

Some of the main issues on which the writers say Trump is not trustworthy: abortion, defense spending, tariffs, and health care. As part of this argument, many of the writers also point to Trump's donations to Hillary Clinton, Chuck Schumer, and Nancy Pelosi.

Who is making this case most strongly: Glenn Beck, L. Brent Bozell III, Erick Erickson, Dana Loesch, and Katie Pavlich.

The most convincing line making this case: "Conservatives have a serious decision. Do we truly believe in our long-held principles and insist that politicians have records demonstrating fealty to them? Or are we willing to throw these principles away because an entertainer who has been a liberal Democrat for decades simply says some of the right things?" —Katie Pavlich, editor of Townhall

Case 2: Trump believes in an authoritarianism fundamentally at odds with conservatism

In 29 words: Trump promises to concentrate power further in the hands of the presidency — a rejection of many conservatives' desire to both scale back and decentralize the reach of government.

This argument is often tied to the idea that President Obama has overstepped the limits of his authority.

Who is making this case most strongly: David Boaz, Ben Domenech, Steven Hayward, William Kristol, Yuval Levin, David McIntosh, R.R. Reno, and Glenn Beck.

The most convincing lines making this case: "He's effectively vowing to be an American Mussolini, concentrating power in the Trump White House and governing by fiat." —David Boaz, executive vice president of the Cato Institute

"He presents himself as a Strong Man who promises to knock heads and make things right again. In this, he has a lot more in common with South American populist demagogues than with our tradition of political leaders." —R.R. Reno, editor of First Things

Case 3: Trump has engaged in racial demagoguery and xenophobia

In 14 words: Several of the conservatives criticized Trump for exploiting the electorate's fear of minority groups.

This is probably the argument liberals would find most persuasive. In some cases, the writers call Trump's controversial proposals on Mexican and Muslim immigration unrealistic and counterproductive.

Who is making this case most strongly: David Boaz, Michael Medved, and Russell Moore.

The most convincing lines making this case: "Trump's vitriolic — and often racist and sexist — language about immigrants, women, the disabled, and others ought to concern anyone who believes that all persons, not just the 'winners' of the moment, are created in God's image." — Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

"Not since George Wallace has there been a presidential candidate who made racial and religious scapegoating so central to his campaign." —David Boaz, executive vice president of the Cato Institute

Case 4: Trump is way too woefully ignorant to be president

In 36 words: Trump has demonstrated no mastery or even basic comprehension of the many complex issues facing the American presidency. That level of ignorance alone is a national security risk that should disqualify him from the Oval Office.

Who is making this case most strongly: Andrew McCarthy and Mark Helprin.

The most convincing lines making this case: "Even the casual fan who does not know the players without a scorecard at least knows who the teams are and why they are competing." —Andrew McCarthy, contributing editor of National Review, on Trump's ignorance on foreign policy

"He doesn't know the Constitution, history, political philosophy, nuclear strategy, diplomacy, defense, economics beyond real estate, or even, despite his low-level-mafioso comportment, how ordinary people live." —Mark Helprin, novelist

Case 5: Trump is just a really bad, evil dude

In 19 words: Trump's temperament — rather than his support for any particular policy — is what should scare conservatives as much as anything.

Who is making this case most strongly: John Podhoretz, Mona Charen, Michael Medved, Thomas Sowell, William Kristol, Cal Thomas, and R.R. Reno.

The most convincing lines making this case: "Worst of all, Trump's brawling, blustery, mean-spirited public persona serves to associate conservatives with all the negative stereotypes that liberals have for decades attached to their opponents on the right." —Michael Medved, radio talk show host

"In any integrated personality, the id is supposed to be balanced by an ego and a superego—by a sense of self that gravitates toward behaving in a mature and responsible way when it comes to serious matters ... Trump is an unbalanced force. He is the politicized American id." —John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary

"The man has demonstrated an emotional immaturity bordering on personality disorder, and it ought to disqualify him from being a mayor, to say nothing of a commander-in-chief." —Mona Charen, senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center