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It couldn't happen here?

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Dilma Rousseff was never as popular as the president who anointed her as his successor. Despite her intelligence and diligence in numerous official posts, she lacked his warm personality and flair for campaigning.

But she ran a very professional presidential campaign, with lots of celebrity supporters, and the vigorous support of her predecessor, and she won the election and became Brazil's first female president. In office she pursued policies of easy money, subsidized energy, and infrastructure construction, which initially boosted her popularity.

As is so often the case, though, those populist programs eventually brought inflation and a slide into economic contraction. Simultaneously, allegations of corruption and cronyism hurt her reputation. Impeachment proceedings were brought against her, focused on her mismanagement of the federal budget, particularly employing budgetary tricks to conceal yawning deficits.

“Experts say Ms. Rousseff's administration effectively borrowed some \$11 billion from state banks, an amount equal to almost 1 percent of the economy, to fund popular social programs that have been a hallmark of the Workers Party's 13 years in power.” Some said that such fiscal mismanagement and dishonesty were common in presidential administrations and should not result in impeachment.

But the Senate convicted her and removed her from office, making her bland vice president the new president.

Thank goodness nothing like that could happen in our own country.

David Boaz is the executive vice president of the Cato Institute and has played a key role in the development of the Cato Institute and the libertarian movement.