

Ignoring duplicity isn't easy

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If you believe President Donald J. Trump, you buy into his unrelenting depiction of horror approaching from our southern border, thousands of murderers, drug dealers, rapists and terrorists determined to wreak havoc in our country. I'm surprised we are not all shaking with fear and preparing to hunker down in our cellars with a year's supply of canned goods and water.

It can't be easy to have unwavering belief in someone whose self-proclaimed bona fides for a job calling for so much more consist of understanding real estate and being a deal maker. It can't be easy to believe someone who constantly contradicts facts and disparages his own experts. But if you believe him and believe in him, I hope you do so because you've done extensive research from every angle and found some merit in him, not just because he is a Republican.

It can't be easy to believe in someone who thinks rolling back environmental regulations is an accomplishment. But if the water you drink is still safe and you live far from factories and manufacturers that are once again polluting the air and our water, then I can understand it. If you're not immediately affected by something, if you don't have lead poisoning, asthma or cancer that is aggravated by or was caused by environmental factors, then you might see deregulation as a win for business and employment.

The president's focus on his border wall has distracted him from dealing with his other promises. Health care is in limbo because Trump has done everything possible to undermine "Obamacare." He had promised to give us something even better. Because of the uncertainty of health care, you may have to put your early retirement on hold.

It must be difficult to believe in someone who promised but failed to drain the swamp. Trump was going to rid Washington of corrupt and wasteful types, so he filled his Cabinet and surrounds himself with dishonest, scandal-prone or clueless types.

Trump blasts illegal immigrants for taking our jobs when he hired illegal immigrants to work at his own properties. It must be difficult to believe in someone who takes hypocrisy to a new level.

In that same vein, what is happening with ever more frequency is Trump accusing others of transgressions leveled at him. It began with Hillary Clinton telling the nation during a debate that Trump was Putin's puppet. "You're the puppet," he struck back. It has now become, to paraphrase the man, "No collusion. They should be investigating Hillary, she colluded" and "It's all lies, it's fake news, believe me."

Some congressional Republicans have picked up the habit and from what I've read, many Trump supporters have as well.

One year ago, on Feb. 14, 2018, 17 people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, were shot to death. According to NPR, in the immediate aftermath, 71 percent

of Americans believed laws covering gun sales should be stricter. To me, that constituted an emergency.

The president has spent a good portion of his presidency to date demonizing illegal immigrants trying for a better, safer life. Yet we have more to fear from domestic terrorism than from illegal immigration.

Alex Nowrasteh, an analyst of immigration policy at The Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank headquartered in Washington, D.C., wrote in August that the illegal immigrant conviction rate for homicide in Texas, which borders Mexico, was 44 percent below that of native-born Americans in 2016.

Yet President Trump, except for saying “our thoughts and prayers are with you” or “arm the teachers,” did not address the Parkland shootings with the same focused intensity that he has demonstrated on illegal immigration and his wall. Unbelievable.

If Donald Trump were a Democrat, I’d be writing these same opinions. You don’t judge people’s character by their political affiliation. You judge them on integrity, honesty, and commitment to their fellow citizens. First, though, you have to actually care about all your fellow citizens. Unfortunately, with Trump, too many Republicans have mastered the art, for whatever reasons, of looking the other way.

No one likes to lose face, to be wrong or to lose. You just have to care enough and be strong enough to take the hit, to acknowledge this administration’s duplicity and to stand up for the rule of law and democracy if you wish to be on the right side of history.