

# Why Americans Need to Give Trump a Shot

Donald J. Trump was sworn in as America's 45th president on Friday. Tens of millions of people watched the ceremony, which took place on the National Mall amid a sprinkling rain.

Many no doubt watched the event with excitement, others with fear. I'll admit that I felt both of these emotions as I watched Trump place his hand on the Bible and swear the oath of office. That fear deepened when I listened to his campaign-like speech, which was heavy on nationalism and populism.

It's fair to say that Trump is the most populist man to serve as president since FDR, and possibly the most populist to ever serve. While some see this as his great virtue, there is danger in a president who channels "the people," a phrase Trump used five times in his Inaugural Address.

While all democratically-elected governments must be subject to the will of their citizens, we should be suspicious of love affairs between the people and a powerful executive. From ancient Athens to Revolutionary France, history is filled with demagogues who have used "the people" to trample the rights of those who impeded them—political rivals, wealthy landowners, etc.—in their quest to seize power.

Oftentimes they did this only to find they could not control the forces they had unleashed. Hence the old adage, sometimes attributed (apocryphally) to the French revolutionary Robespierre, "There go my people, I must find out where they are going so I can lead them." (Robespierre, of course, found his own head in a basket a year after unleashing the terror of the guillotine.)

Few have understood the potential danger of a democratic mob better than America's Founding Fathers.

“Of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics,” Alexander Hamilton wrote in Federalist No.1, “the greatest number have begun their career by paying an obsequious court to the people, commencing demagogues and ending tyrants.”

For this reason, the architects of America’s democratic system created a constitutional government with clearly defined and limited powers. The checks on government they created, however, have waned over time.

In light of this, we should not begrudge citizens’ reasonable suspicions of a new president, particularly in an age in which the executive wields [more unilateral power](#) than at any time in our history.

However, Americans must leave behind the vitriol of the 2016 campaign. As I wrote on the morning of Nov. 8, the United States and the next president [face a monumental task](#) (no matter which candidate won the election).

The federal debt—approaching \$20 trillion—is reaching a dangerous level, Social Security spending is about to go in the red, economic growth is sluggish, and 95 million Americans are out of the work force.

These are serious problems that would not be fatal if not for this: we are deeply divided. Our politics are broken, and we

no longer seem capable of fixing the structural problems that beset our nation.

For these reasons, Americans need to give the businessman from Queens, N.Y., a shot.

America desperately needs a leader who can bridge the partisan divide. And while Donald Trump might seem like the last person in the world who could unify us, one has to admit: he has shown a knack for exceeding expectations.

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