

Title: **Trump's biggest headache could be the 33 Republican governors**
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POLITICS

Trump's biggest headache could be the 33 Republican governors

BY DAVID LIGHTMAN

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ORLANDO, FLA.

The nation's Republican governors could be Donald Trump's biggest headache.

Politically, they are so much that Trump is not. They represent broad, diverse constituencies that demand results they can see in their daily lives. They have usually worked their way up, starting with local offices or running small local businesses.

So as the GOP governors meet this week with each other, donors and corporate officials at the lush Waldorf Astoria resort in the shadow of Disney World, many are very careful when discussing the president-elect. They're keeping enough distance so that if he proves to be a political liability, they'll be fine.

"Governors need the White House, but they're pragmatic," said Henry Barbour, Republican Party committeeman from Mississippi.

Trump needs the governors. Republicans will occupy at least 33 state houses next year, their best showing since 1922, and they have vast political networks in their states.

Some were measured in their comments on Trump.

"I very much respect the office of the president as I would the office of governor," said Gov.-elect Phil Scott of Vermont. "I will respect the position and do whatever I can for Vermont. I will do whatever I can to

protect Vermont but also unite us as a nation."

Gov.-elect Doug Burgum of

North Dakota turned the conversation to economics.

"I'm encouraged because we'll have people who are pro-business and pro-growth in the White House," he said.

Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina tangled with Trump earlier this year. When she gave the GOP response to the State of the Union address in January, she criticized those in her party, urging people to resist "the siren call of the angriest voices."

Haley endorsed Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., for president, and after it became apparent Trump was the nominee, she said she would back him.

Haley voted for Trump, but said last month, "The election has turned my stomach upside down."

Tuesday, Haley said, Trump is "talking about inclusion so far he's done well." Haley hoped "he continues to be disciplined in his comments."

The governors were more circumspect when asked about Trump chief strategist Steve Bannon, who many civil rights groups are protesting because of his ties to white supremacists.

Haley said she didn't know Bannon. Burgum said, "I'm not close enough. I'm not a political insider."

"I don't know anything about him. Is he on the

staff?" asked Gov. Paul LePage of Maine.

Also creating a more solemn mood: Trump's victory means many of the governors who had White House ambitions will now have to wait at least eight and maybe 12 years. Nine current or former governors sought the 2016 Republican nomination.

"A lot of political ambitions and opportunities whose bubbles burst with the Trump victory," said Saul Anuzis, a veteran Michigan Republican strategist.

Some of the governors never supported Trump in the first place. Gov. John Kasich of Ohio, who ran against Trump for the GOP nomination, and Larry Hogan of Maryland said they didn't vote for him.

They are now judicious. "They're off to a good start," Hogan said.

Others saw two encouraging signs from a Trump White House. One was the selection of Mike Pence, the vice president-elect who's still governor of Indiana.

Pence, who's heading the Trump transition team, spoke privately to the governors Monday night and offered assurances their agenda would be heard.

Gov. Sam Brownback of Kansas found Pence's remarks "exciting." Brownback particularly appreciated how "he showed us how we could do some things in

the short term." Haley raved: "He stands by his word. He's going to give good advice when needed."

The governors also see a chance to achieve a long-standing goal: Get Washington off their backs.

"There's no doubt that this administration is going to look to push a lot of authority back to the states where it belongs," said Gov.-elect Chris Sununu of New Hampshire, a Trump supporter. "Any president that's going to push those

kinds of initiatives, that's a great thing for New Hampshire and the country."

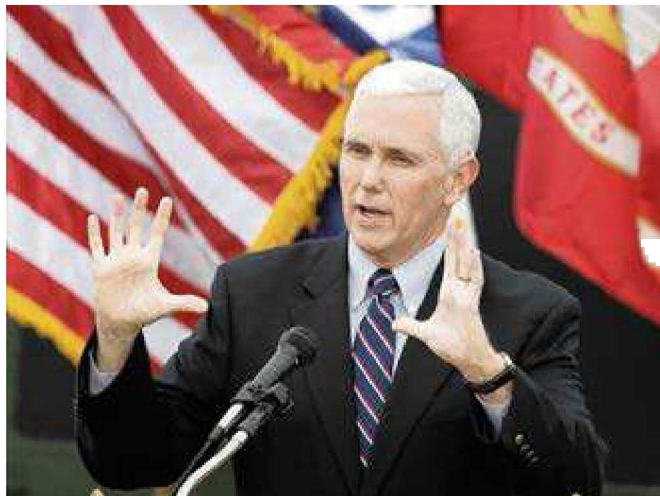
Gov. Rick Scott of Florida, who endorsed Trump, echoed that theme. Trump "does not fear disruptive change. That is exactly what we need at the federal level," Scott said.

That means the best opportunity yet for repealing Obamacare. "The elites in D.C. have created a myth that we cannot repeal Obamacare," Scott told the governors. "It's a complete myth created by the elite insiders and many Republicans went along with it."

Trump has said he wants to retain protections for pre-existing conditions, and the requirement that children can remain on their parents policies until age 26.

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DARRON CUMMINGS AP

Vice President-elect Mike Pence, shown here at a Veterans Day ceremony, spoke to Republican governors Monday night in Orlando, Fla., as someone who knows their agenda.

Title: **One of 7 Rec Commissionboard membersresigns**

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One of 7 Rec Commission board members resigns

One of the seven Richland County Recreation Commission board members that Gov. Nikki Haley intends to fire has walked away on his own.

Wilbert Lewis resigned Tuesday, becoming the only board member to step down after turmoil at the troubled commission.

Lewis was not one of the five board members that a group of Richland County legislators had accused of allowing unwarranted pay raises and widespread nepotism at the commission.

After those lawmakers requested Haley remove the five board members, the Republican governor moved to fire all seven.

"... I respect his decision to allow the commission to move forward with a new board in a new direction," said state Sen. Joel Lourie, D-Richland.

Board chair J. Marie Green has said she will leave the board when her term ends in February. Board members can request a Nov. 30 hearing to defend themselves.

— AVERY G. WILKS

Title: **A triumphant GOP, mired in crisis**
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A triumphant GOP, mired in crisis

MICHAEL GERSON
COLUMNIST

WASHINGTON - The Republican Party is triumphant — and yet faces a series of crises.

There is a crisis of identity. Trump now leads a coalition including the Republican establishment — and people who despise the Republican establishment. The insurgent president-elect — lacking relevant experience, adequate personnel and actual policy proposals — cannot exercise power without the help of those he ridiculed.

Trump has chosen to incorporate this conflict into the structure of the West Wing. His chief of staff, Reince Priebus, was the sponsor of the 2013 Republican autopsy report, which called on the party to accommodate America's multicultural future. Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon, has made a career out of resisting that future.

For the Republican Party, this is also a governing crisis. Trump won office promising to undo globalization, bring back manufacturing jobs and fulfill "every dream you ever dreamed." So expectations are pretty high. But Trumpism, for the most part, consists of cultural signals and symbolic goals, not a set of developed proposals.

Many Republican members of Congress are frankly confused. Are they supposed to follow Trump's lead or supply his agenda? He has embraced massive infrastructure investment, but there is no favored bill or detailed plan. Obamacare must go, but what approach to "replace" does Trump prefer? The biggest frustration reported by Republicans who have met with Trump is his inability to focus for any period of time.

One area where the agenda is uni-

fying and well developed concerns the reversal of Obama-era executive orders. Republican lawyers have spent the last year and a half working in study groups on reversal language, in order to be ready on the first day of a GOP presidency. The action most likely to cause controversy would overturn President Obama's limited amnesty for students brought illegally to America as children. Most Republicans think that executive order was illegal; but most Americans will probably find the victims to be sympathetic.

This hints at the long-term political crisis faced by the triumphant GOP. Trump won the presidency in a manner that undermines the GOP's electoral future. He demonstrated that the "coalition of the ascendant" — including minorities, millennials and the college-educated — is not yet ascendant. But in a nation where over half of babies under 5 years old are racial and ethnic minorities, it eventually will be.

We should hope that the president-elect will be sobered by the responsibilities of high office and discovers hidden resources of charity. But Republicans may end up depending on a younger generation of leaders — Paul Ryan, Ben Sasse, Nikki Haley, Tim Scott, Jeff Flake, Marco Rubio — to demonstrate the possibility of unifying aspiration and civil disagreement. And that would lay the foundation for a lasting and honorable victory.

