

Withdrawal of Gaetz will not alter fascist character of Trump's cabinet or impede its installation

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There should be no illusions that the withdrawal of former Congressman Matt Gaetz and his replacement by Pam Bondi as Trump's pick for US attorney general will alter the fascist character of Trump's cabinet or block Trump from obtaining Senate approval and Democratic Party acquiescence in his nominees.

The *New York Times* hastened to encourage just such wishful thinking by publishing a column Thursday headlined, "Gaetz's Withdrawal Means the Senate Passed Its First Test." The piece, by opinion writer Michelle Cottle, argued, "There are still some Republican senators who value the chamber's role as an independent power center." It concluded, "But for now, Gaetz's implosion is cause for a tiny moment of celebration—and for a hat tip to the Senate Republicans who made it happen."

The following day, the *Washington Post* published an editorial headlined, "On Gaetz, the Senate did its job. It has more work to do on Trump's nominees." The editorial stated:

On the most basic level, this shows that President-elect Donald Trump feels constrained by the constitutional order... And it indicates that there is a decisive bloc of GOP senators who still take seriously the chamber's responsibility to advise and consent on presidential nominees.

With the Democrats doing nothing to oppose the installation of a fascist government and, on the contrary, seeking accommodation with the incoming

administration and the "smoothest" possible transition, we are, it seems, to count on disaffected Senate Republicans to save American democracy.

The early demise of the Gaetz nomination might be considered a setback for Trump. But the context in which it took place and the speedy announcement of Trump loyalist and arch-reactionary Bondi to replace him, with indications from the media and the Democrats that her confirmation is virtually assured, suggest that the bump in the road could ease the path for the rest of Trump's nominees.

It was Trump who instructed Gaetz to withdraw, telling him early Thursday that he did not have the votes in the Senate to win confirmation. Trump did not bring forward his previous call for the Senate to go into recess so he could get all of his nominees quickly certified without the Senate's constitutionally mandated "advice and consent."

In announcing his withdrawal, Gaetz said, "There is no time to waste on a needlessly protracted Washington scuffle... Trump's DOJ (Department of Justice) must be in place and ready on Day 1."

This is entirely in line with Trump's threats against any Republicans who hold up his nominations and his stated readiness to resort to recess appointments. That would mean the Congress proroguing itself in order for Trump to bypass the constitutional separation of powers and system of checks and balances, and instead fill top government posts by fiat.

Furthermore, the opposition to Gaetz from the media, the Democrats and recalcitrant Republicans was based not on his fascistic politics, including his support for Trump's January 6 coup and endorsement of Trump's plans for mass deportations and state persecution of

“the enemy within,” but on a sex scandal. His withdrawal does not set a precedent that promoting fascist politics disqualifies one from high office in a second Trump administration.

Within a few hours of Gaetz’s announcement, Trump announced as his replacement Pam Bondi, a Trump loyalist, former legal representative for the incoming president and advocate of mass repression who is not encumbered by sex scandal investigations. A veteran prosecutor and two-term former state attorney general in Florida, Bondi is better positioned than Gaetz to turn the Justice Department into an instrument for the persecution of Trump’s political opponents as well as left-wing protesters and socialists.

Bondi marks the fourth Trump lawyer nominated for high positions in the Trump DOJ. She was on Trump’s legal team in his first impeachment and Senate trial. She supported Trump’s “Stop the Steal” campaign and his attempted coup in January 2021. She went on television following the 2020 election and declared that Trump had won Pennsylvania, which he in fact had lost.

Following the failed coup, she became the head of the legal arm of the Trump-aligned America First Policy Institute, which is headed by Trump nominees Brett Rollins, tapped to head the Department of Agriculture and destroy the food stamp program, and Linda McMahon, the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) billionaire, co-chair of his transition team and nominee to head (and gut) the Department of Education. In that capacity Bondi was involved in lawsuits filed in advance of the 2024 election intended to facilitate another coup in the event that Trump lost the vote.

Bondi has distinguished herself for advocating the prosecution and jailing of Trump’s political opponents. During the 2016 presidential race she led chants at Trump rallies to “Lock her up!”, referring to Hillary Clinton. At the time of the first Trump impeachment, in 2019, she called for the prosecution of Joe Biden and his son Hunter for alleged Ukraine-linked corruption.

A Democrat until 2000, Bondi served as attorney general of Florida from 2011 until 2019. In that capacity, she sought to overturn the Affordable Care Act in the state. She persuaded the governor at the time, Rick Scott, to postpone an execution in 2013 because it conflicted with a fund-raiser for her re-election campaign.

Bondi attended Trump’s trial in New York earlier this year on charges related to hush money payments to a porn star. She publicly criticized prosecutors for bringing the case and the judge for his handling on the trial, in which Trump was convicted.

She is a lobbyist with the pro-Trump firm Ballard Partners. Her clients include the Florida Sheriffs Association and the Major County Sheriffs of America, Inc.

Despite all this, the *New York Times* on Thursday quoted Georgia State College of Law Professor Anthony Michael Kreis as saying, “unlike Gaetz she does not seem hellbent on turning the department into a political weapon.”

No hopes should be placed in any section of the political establishment to oppose Trump. His policies of dictatorship, militarism and social counterrevolution will provoke massive opposition in the working class. That is the force that must be mobilized in opposition to both parties and the capitalist system they uphold.



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