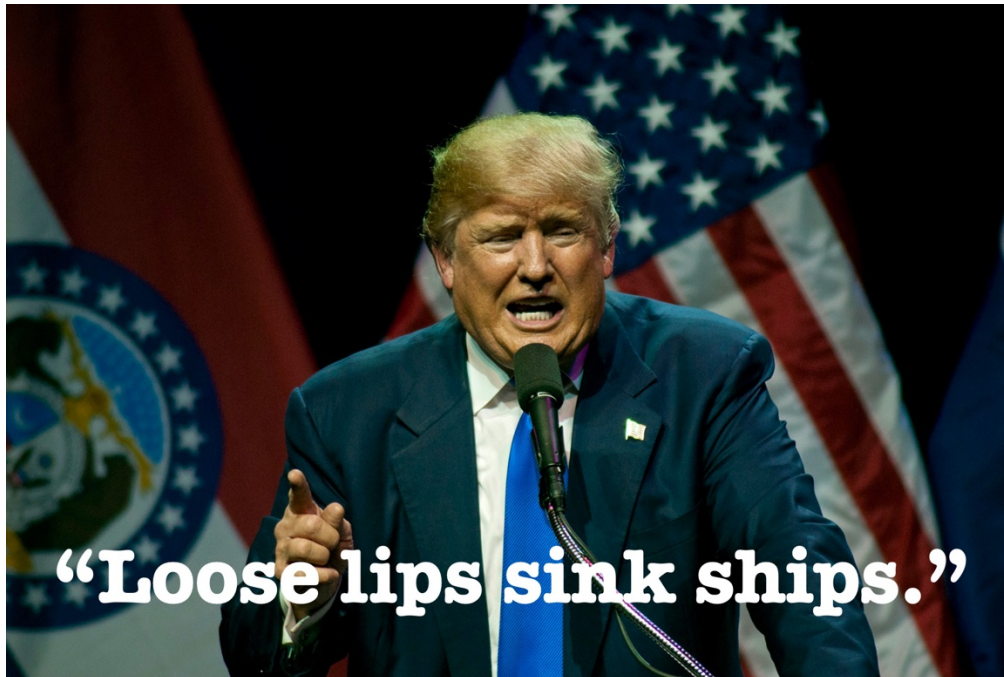


Missing the Point – Flaw in the system. Easy to fix.

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Famous quote from the WWII era War Advertising Council superimposed over a Shutterstock image of Donald Trump.

Our federal government has [four levels of security clearances](#). In ascending order of severity, they are confidential, secret, top secret and TS/SCI which stands for “top secret/sensitive compartmented information.” The people who qualify for TS/SCI have access to everything, albeit on a need to know basis.

Oh, and there’s a fifth level, even higher than TS/SCI. It’s called, “POTUS” which stands for President of the United States.

To obtain a TS/SCI clearance, ordinary employees of the of the federal government need to survive an exhaustive review of everything about them. To qualify, there can’t be any financial, criminal, psychological or other behavioral issues, the nature of which might affect the security of the United States, including you and me and our families. Unfortunately, to these arduous conditions for access to our most important secrets, there is one notable exception.

There is no qualifying process for people elected President. You could have had [multiple bankruptcies](#). You could have been involved in [illegal misrepresentations of financial information](#). Maybe lost a [civil suit for rape](#). Indicted for [attempting to overturn the results](#) of a perfectly valid Presidential election. And for the post-

Presidency [mishandling of classified documents](#) which, not incidentally, automatically disqualifies you from having a TC/SCI security clearance. And/or, you could have [serious psychological disorders](#) that would instantly disqualify applicants who were to be hired or appointed, but not elected to their positions. You could have any, maybe even all of these problems and nothing would stop you from getting your TS/SCI-equivalent clearance because you've been elected President of these United States.

With the exception of his groupies who are his most dedicated followers, there is no way Donald Trump would pass the review given to government employees who need the same TS/SCI clearance to do their jobs.

According to the Constitution, there are only [three requirements to be President](#). You have to be a natural-born citizen of the United States, have resided in the country for at least fourteen years and be at least thirty-five years old. That's it. You can be as dumb as you are nuts, no problem. You could have been convicted of crimes that have direct bearing on your handling of the nation's most profound secrets, dissemination of which could jeopardize the welfare and lives of millions of your countrymen and women – not to mention world peace and people in other countries. No problem. Welcome to the White House.

So, you want to make sure Donald Trump doesn't get re-elected? The solution is remarkably simple. All Congress needs to do is pass a law that requires that general election Presidential candidates qualify for a TS/SCI security clearance.

"Is that possible?"

Well, the Democrats control the Senate, barely, but they have a majority. And the Republicans barely control the House where only a handful of crossover votes would be necessary for the new law to pass. More to the point, other than Trump-devotees who don't need a legitimate excuse to protect him, what argument are bona fide Republican conservatives in either the House or Senate going to make to oppose such a reasonable law? Are they afraid their hero won't qualify and be deemed a risk to our national security?

Are Republicans going to argue, en masse, that the President, whatever his or her party affiliation, doesn't need a TS/SCI clearance? While everyone who works for the President at the very top of his Administration does? If the President doesn't need one, why does anyone else? ...Are they going to argue that there is some mystical power in the popular vote, like the King's sword touching each shoulder of the newest knight kneeling before him, that makes security clearances unnecessary?

Admittedly, some might argue that the law is unconstitutional which is every Republican's go to excuse when nothing else, no other cockamamie point works. Unfortunately for people falling into to this group for the desperate opposition party, there's nothing in the Constitution, directly or indirectly, that prohibits adding common

sense requirements for the Presidency. It's not as if we were requiring that the President be a male or white or a property owner. That would be discrimination which other components of the Constitution rule out.

Just between you and me, I've always thought that all three of the Constitutional requirements – being natural-born, lived here for fourteen years and at least thirty-five years old – were themselves discriminatory and unconstitutional. Maybe we should ask the Supreme Court about that.

Keep in mind that it's one thing to argue that something the Constitution says is applicable to this or that. It's another thing altogether to argue that, just because the Constitution makes no mention of something, you can't do it. Suppose, as an extreme example, that the Constitution fails, as it does, to make any stipulation to the effect that you can't be President if you've been convicted of trying to overthrow the government and effectively tear up the Constitution itself. Hard to believe you couldn't legislate that rule without worrying about it being overturned as unconstitutional.

And so, it all comes down to this... We can't hire someone for a position that requires access to our most important secrets without a security clearance, but that same person wouldn't need one if he or she were elected. It makes no sense. You want to stop Donald Trump from being re-elected? There's plenty of time to pass a law requiring general election candidates for the Presidency to qualify for TS/SCI security clearances, or not. And that would put an end, once and for all, to Donald Trump's political career because he doesn't qualify for being President on national security grounds. His groupies will scream foul play, because that's who they are, but most of us, almost all of us, would know better – and that throwing him to the curb is the right and necessary thing to do.

By the way, are Members of the House and Senate required to have security clearances – even on intelligence oversight committees? No. They're not. Because they too were elected to the offices they hold.

-Les Cohen

Les Cohen is a long-term Marylander, having grown up in Annapolis. Professionally, he writes materials for business and political clients from his base of operations in Columbia, Maryland. He has a Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Economics. Leave a comment or feel free to send him an email to Les@Writeaway.us.

