

Hillary Clinton: fighting for what's right is worth it

[Oscar Bentley](#) looks back on Hillary Clinton's election loss and Donald Trump's ascension

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Image: Gage Skidmore

Do you know what? It's no fun to be a young left-winger. Having spent the last few years learning of my political identity, I've been dealt blow after blow. First Cameron won that unexpected majority (you are joking me), then the UK voted Brexit (you are seriously joking now), and to top it all off, Emperor Palpatine – sorry – Donald J. Trump is now the President of the United States of America (you really are fucking kidding now).

But what exactly does the ascension of Trump to commander-in-chief mean? Well, combined with the other two aforementioned results, pollsters are soon to be out of a job. Labour and Conservatives were neck and neck in the polls, yet Cameron got enough for a majority; Remain was comfortably ahead of Leave in the polls, yet Leave won a slim majority; Hillary Clinton's election as America's first female leader seemed all but a given.

I think anyone could be forgiven for assuming Hillary would win. Trump was such an outsider, never having held political office, building a campaign on divisiveness. America had elected its first Black president in Obama, and it seemed that they were finally willing to accept their first female president. Hillary was politically to Obama's right anyway, so it's not like socialism-plus was on the ballot. Instead, just like Brexit, right-wing nationalism and the fear of others won out. And we all know what happens when right-wing nationalism gains control of government.

As much as I hate to agree with Nigel Farage on anything, he is right when he says that both Brexit and

Trump were as a result of the "ordinary person" rising up and hitting back against the establishment. And unfortunately for Hillary, she is the personification of the Washington establishment for many voters.

It is hard not to feel depressed at the political-nightmare-cum-Dante's-Inferno 2016 was. A man who epitomises everything I despise – bigotry, racism, sexism, xenophobia, preying on that which makes us different, environmental destruction – you name it, is supreme leader. But the scarier thing is knowing that millions of people in the US, and here in the UK, also agree with and embody these regressive ideologies: the so-called "basket of deplorables". Now, I know that not every Trump or Leave voter is a racist or a bigot, I'm not that naïve or blind sighted, but one only has to look at the rise in hate crime (or at least reporting of hate crime) post June 23rd to see that something is wrong.

The fact that Hillary won more physical votes than Trump and yet did not win the presidency is an affront to democracy, in the same way that first-past-the-post and a Tory government elected on just 36.8% of the vote is. Right-wing Republicans now hold power of the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary soon enough now Trump has selected his Supreme Court nomination, and is going about undoing Obama's legacy. So long, Obamacare. The fear of what will happen to LGBTQ+, women's, and minority rights; abortion; gun control; immigration (#MuslimBan) is immense and all too real.

Ever the stateswoman though, what remains with me is how Hillary conceded with respect and grace. I found her concession speech even more moving than Obama's now infamous "Change has come to America" acceptance speech. It's about looking to the future, striding on, not holding back, and has genuinely inspired me to want to make a change and a difference more than anything I've seen in the world of politics for a long time: "To the young people in particular, I hope you will hear this ... this loss hurts, but please never stop believing that fighting for what's right is worth it. It is, it is worth it!"

Hillary, I won't.



3 comments

Daniel Gronow

22 Feb '17 at 5:01 pm

You're certainly right to point to policies which may deteriorate under Trump (with the exception of gun control, which Obama failed to change in any appreciable way), but it is naïve to imagine that Obama's legacy does not, in some instances, require undoing. Obamacare is a bureaucratic nightmare, for a start. It forces companies to insure people with pre-existing conditions, which is not how insurance works. This raises premiums, which means that healthy people have, in many cases, chosen to pay the fine for being uninsured, rather than pay through the roof for healthcare. Obama also attempted to foist more regulations on the banks through the Dodd-Frank reforms, without considering the role that regulation played in causing the 2008 financial crisis. Dodd-Frank has strangled smaller community banks all across America, who haven't been able to deal with the burden of new terms and conditions. I mention countless other things on another of your articles. You have to acknowledge the possibility that Obama's failures (and Hillary's role as secretary of state), pushed people towards the Republicans. Support for Trump did not emerge from a vacuum.

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Oscar Bentley

22 Feb '17 at 9:47 pm

The other article you refer to is about acknowledging Obama's failures, and talks about how some of these lead to support for Trump. On the matter of healthcare, I fundamentally disagree with you that insurance companies should be able to discriminate against those with pre-existing health problems; this is about people's lives and health, it shouldn't be focused on as a business where companies can

pick and choose which people will make them the most profit while not allowing those with conditions the healthcare they require. Also, I don't think I explicitly said that Obama's legacy is perfect and needs no changes (again, refer to the previous article). I would also argue that a lack of financial sector regulation and allowing free market capitalism to run havoc is what caused the financial crisis. To address some of your points on the previous article, when using the world scandal I was referring to a personal Monica Lewinsky or "I just start kissing them"-esque scandal, perhaps clarification of that term in the article would have been useful.

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Daniel Gronow

23 Feb '17 at 10:27 am

There is a general consensus, at this point in time, that Obamacare does not work. It's all well and good to suggest that everyone should be able to get healthcare, but by forcing companies to insure people with pre-existing conditions, the companies have to pay out for those conditions, and premiums rise. The entire point of Obamacare was that everyone paid for healthcare, and that would drive down prices. In theory, fine. But when healthier people start avoiding high premiums and paying the fine instead, you're left with companies having to pay out for the majority of their clients. Economically, that doesn't work. In terms of the banks, I wasn't making a flippant comment. Plenty of research has shown that the regulation that was in place in 2008 actively encouraged banks to lend to bad risks. There is no clear evidence that more regulation would prevent another crash. All it has done is suffocate smaller community banks.

Your other article does nothing to acknowledge Obama's failures in any meaningful way. You write "Hello to regulation" as though this has worked. You mention his obstacles as President, without acknowledging the countless times he has taken action without congressional approval (the war in Libya, to name a rather important example). I'll concede that you didn't say Obama's legacy is perfect, but, in your own words, you looked at him "through rose-tinted glasses". On the point of scandal, I care very little about his personal life, and a great deal about political wrongdoing.

If you're willing, could you perhaps present me with the good things to come out of Obama's administration? I apologise if my comments here come across as hostile. I enjoy political discussion perhaps a little too much.

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