

Amnesty for President Nixon?

With Wilbur Mills having broken the ice, the proposal to legislate amnesty for President Nixon, if he will resign, is bound to spread. To many Americans almost anything is preferable to the lengthy process of impeachment and conviction. However, it is a dangerous proposal and Congress will be extremely short-sighted if it rushes through such a bill as an easy way out of its voting dilemma.

It is, of course, plea bargaining of the rankest sort. And inevitably, as the Agnew case again demonstrated, the bargain is no sooner settled than the pleader reasserts his innocence, charges the use of "trial by headline," secret threats, family pressure, and the rest—anything to taint the settlement. What could divide the country more

than the presence of an ex-president campaigning as Mr. Nixon would, for vindication, honor, and future presidents. What possibilities for a demagogue!

All history reflects the dangers inherent in allowing open political access to ousted rulers. Even exile didn't block Napoleon and Peron.

The other great disadvantage would be the terrible precedent set, that the law is blind to the highest political crimes. What an attractive invitation to future conspirators!

No, Congress should not be allowed to run away from its responsibilities this way. Let's follow the Constitution; the country will be stronger for it.

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