

Revise the 25th Amendment *Post* 9-27-74

President Ford's grant of immunity to Mr. Nixon demonstrates the sinister absurdity of the 25th Amendment. Those who drafted and voted for this revised procedure for filling a vice presidential vacancy between elections obviously never dreamed of a situation in which a felonious Vice President would be forced to resign before he would succeed to the presidency if the incumbent were impeached. They did not, therefore, envisage the possibility that a compromised President would be placed in a position to name his own successor before escaping impeachment by resignation.

Because of President Ford's open and dignified manner during his first few days in office, the implications of the ill-conceived succession process still went unsuspected. But now with the sudden and total reversal of his recent pronouncements on immunity for his predecessor, it is impossible not to remember Mr. Ford's moving statement that he was "beholden to no man

and only one woman" with sorrowful cynicism. The gift of the American presidency obviously does create an obligation:

This tragic revelation of our real situation, makes revision of the 25th Amendment the most urgent business confronting the country; but while this is being accomplished, it is absolutely essential that Congress refuse to confirm any Vice President nominated by President Ford. In the most unlikely event of his not completing his present term, he would better be succeeded by the Speaker of the House, who is the elected representative both of his constituents and his fellow members of the House. The presidency of the United States must never again be in the province of one man to bestow upon another.

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