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Our New Responsibilities in a Dictatorship

In their June 1 decision, the Supreme Court gave Donald Trump, and all presidents, total immunity from prosecution. In his decision supporting Donald Trump in his appeal about alleged subversion of the 2020 election, Chief Justice Roberts wrote: “Presumptive immunity from criminal prosecution” is constitutional “for a President’s acts within the outer perimeter of his official responsibility,” and “this immunity must be absolute.”

As rationalization for this travesty, Roberts argues, the Court recognizes “that under our constitutional structure of separated powers” the president needs to govern unimpeded by “undue caution” that his “official actions” (even including criminal acts) may be prosecuted in the future. In the concurring opinions by six members of the court all connected to the Federalist Society and appointed by Republican Presidents Bush or Trump, the justices have now proven themselves to be nothing more than dangerous political partisans.

On July 2, 2024, every parent and grandparent in the United States, indeed every citizen, inherited a new responsibility -- to prepare the next generation for life in a dictatorship, by teaching them to resist it. The court’s immunity ruling, greatly increases the risk that our children and grandchildren will live in an autocratic state in the future.

Judge Sonya Sotomayor, Associate Justice, reading aloud her ringing dissent from the bench, declared, “the court has created a “law free zone” around the president, who “is now a king above the law...With fear for our democracy, I dissent.”

How will we as citizens, parents and grandparents respond to this egregious change in our government? We need to resist tyranny by insisting on the truth. We need to be involved in a local political group that is focused on protecting democracy. In November, we need to vote for the Democratic ticket and convince our friends and family to do the same.

Our democracy is in peril and only we can save it. We have lived in a liberal, democratic republic where constitutional checks and balances and individual rights were assured to most citizens. They are no more.

Susan J. Tracy. Amherst, MA.
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