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Dr. Norman Ornstein

Political Scientist and Resident Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI)

Norman Ornstein is a long-time observer of Congress and politics. He is a contributing editor and columnist for National Journal and The Atlantic and is an election eve analyst for BBC News.

He served as co-director of the AEI-Brookings Election Reform Project and participates in AEI's Election Watch series. Dr. Ornstein led a working group of scholars and practitioners that helped shape the law, known as McCain-Feingold, that reformed the campaign financing system.

Among his numerous articles and books, his most recent book, a New York Times bestseller, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided With the New Politics of Extremism*, written with Tom Mann, published in May 2012 by Basic Books. It was named as one of 2012's best books on politics by The New Yorker.

Subject Area/Topic: Political Commentary

Highlights: "I'm not going to sugarcoat," said Norman Ornstein, COFFE speaker for January. And he didn't. Author, influential American Enterprise Institution scholar, a columnist for National Journal and The Atlantic and election analyst for BBC News, Ornstein presented a bleak view of President Trump and the incoming Trump Administration.

The following are quotes and paraphrases of Ornstein's comments on President Trump and the incoming Trump Administration:

- "I have known several Presidents— some quite well. All changed rapidly [when faced with their responsibilities as President.] ...Donald Trump wants the Presidency to fit him."
- Based on information from those around him, "Trump has no knowledge base and no desire to acquire one. He has a deep-seated belief that his gut reaction is best."
- Trump's ownership of a worldwide business invites conflicts of interest. "Governments will find ways to bribe him."
- The Republican Congress "...will fully support strengthening defense [and is] ...ready to slash domestic programs;"
- Expect ".... a war on Federal employees [and a] ...move to eviscerate the IRS."
- Regarding the ACA, the argument is "...the states could do it better with less money. That's a lot of nonsense." If you allow the purchase of insurance across state lines, "...everyone will go to the state with the least control." Ornstein would prefer the creation of a national exchange.
- Governors will have a hard time as current Federal activities are assigned to the states with inadequate funding. Block grants will cut Medicare by 20%.
- While manufacturing jobs are disappearing, most are not going overseas but are being lost to automation. In spite of promises to restore jobs for coal miners, coal is not competitive in today's energy market. However, infrastructure jobs should boost employment for a couple of years.
- Foreign policy may be driven by Michael Flynn who recently said, "Islam is cancer."

And finally, the only hope is 12 somewhat moderate Republican Senators.