



President Veto Remembered

March 21, 2025

This week, here at Common Sense, we did not celebrate the birthday of Stephen Grover Cleveland (1837–1908), whom some of my friends regard as the last great president of these United States. It wasn't even mentioned in Tuesday's [Today](#) feature.

Is there any reason to devote a column to him?

Sure:

- He was the only president, prior to Trump, to serve two non-consecutive terms, designated as the 22nd and 24th president in the history books.
- Like Trump, and like presidents Martin Van Buren, Millard Fillmore, Theodore Roosevelt, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, he was born in New York; like Van Buren and the Roosevelts, he had, before his presidency, served as governor of that state.
- Also like Trump, he weathered a major sex scandal. Accused

of fathering a child out of wedlock, he admitted to it. And still got elected.

- Grover Cleveland also made history by being the first president to get married in the White House. He married his former ward—itself something of a scandal—in the Blue Room during his first administration.*

The main truth about Grover Cleveland, though, was that he was a great believer and practitioner of [honesty](#) in [government](#), and was the [last real limited government man](#) in the office—though, like all presidents, he was hardly consistent on this issue. He supported [sound money](#), and opposed (but could not stop) the imperialist move of annexing Hawaii. He could be called President Veto, for his 584 vetoes held the record until the first four-term president stretched out enough years in office to beat it.

He also [knew](#) his place: “Officeholders are the agents of the people, not their masters.”

He was the only Democrat President in the half-century following the Civil War, when the Republican Party dominated, and was—consequently—super-[corrupt](#).

Today we have a Democrat-turned-Republican fighting an ultra-corrupt Democrat-dominated federal government.

Donald Trump could learn a lot from Grover.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

* This made his bride, Frances Folsom, the youngest First Lady in history—at the age of 21. There was a 27-year difference between them.