New Englanders stressed the corruption issue heavily. The Concord New Hampshire Statesman argued that Lincoln’s lack of national political experience was “an element of strength,” for it meant that he had not succumbed “to the gross corruptions so prevalent in Washington.” The nation “is suffering for want of an incorruptible Chief Magistrate; a man who will indignantly crush out . . . and drive into perpetual exile the inexorable army of blood-suckers that hang around the democratic camp at Washington. This troop is Legion, and hover over the Treasury like Cossacks in the rear of the French army on its retreat from Moscow. . . . A change cannot be for the worse, and may be for the better; then let us have a change. Abraham Lincoln is ‘honest, capable and friendly to the constitution.’ Let us put him in [as] president, and drive all the treasury rats away.”

In Connecticut, the Hartford Courant declared that “[o]ne of the strongest arguments in favor of the election of Lincoln to the Presidency is his HONESTY” and “old-fashioned integrity and firmness.” The people “all want the government administered with integrity and economy. We have tried two dishonest Administrations of the Democratic party. Let us try them no longer, but place the government in the hands of uncorrupted and uncorruptible men.”

After winning the presidency, Lincoln told a visitor: “All through the campaign my friends have been calling me ‘Honest Old Abe,’ and I have been elected mainly on that cry.” His reputation as an honest man was as important as his reputation as a foe of slavery.