



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

No. 81

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. SHALALA).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 15, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DONNA E. SHALALA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES IS AT RISK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, and still I rise because I love my country. And still I rise because there is a crisis that has to be addressed.

Madam Speaker, the system of checks and balances that we have instilled within our government, a system that the Framers of the Constitution devised such that there would not be a concentration of power in the

hands of the chief executive officer of the government, in fact, is to prevent a concentration of power in any aspect. There is power that is spread across the government.

There are three branches of the government. I want to focus this morning, if I may, on two—the executive and the legislative—because, Madam Speaker, this morning, as I stand before you, a proud American, I must inform all that the system of checks and balances is at risk.

It is at risk because we now have a President who does not believe that he can or will be impeached. We have a President who refuses to allow Congress to perform its constitutionally accorded oversight responsibilities.

When you have a President who does this, Madam Speaker, you lose the power of Congress. It becomes concentrated in the President. The Presidency becomes a place where power is concentrated because the President has no fear:

He doesn't believe that there are consequences for his going beyond what the Constitution allows;

He will engage in conduct that Article II, Section 4 of the Constitution would prohibit; and

He will engage in impeachable offenses because he knows that the Congress will not impeach him.

It is impeachment that is the ultimate guard against a reckless, ruthless, lawless President; and if we do not exert our authority, this President, knowing that we won't, is capable of doing things that we cannot imagine.

Madam Speaker, it is up to us, the Members of this Congress, to assure that this government continues to have the checks and balances that the Framers of the Constitution intended. If we do not, if Congress does not fulfill its responsibility, we won't have a Presidency. The power will be so concentrated that we will have a monarchy.

The Framers of the Constitution never intended for a President to just totally disregard the Congress. And notwithstanding all that might happen in the courts, notwithstanding all of the subpoenas that may be taken to court and have them litigated properly, the ultimate check on a President is Article II, Section 4 of the Constitution, and that is impeachment when he commits impeachable acts.

We have the Mueller report. It speaks for itself. And there are many constitutional scholars who have said there has been an obstruction to take place.

There are many lawyers who have worked in the Justice Department. They number hundreds now, the lawyers who have signed on, indicating that the President should be beneath the law just as everyone else is, or the law should apply to him. He shouldn't be above the law.

They are indicating that, if we don't act, we are showing the President that he is above the law. He then becomes a monarch, and we then become a weaker form of government.

So I call upon this Congress: Let us do what is expected of us. The Framers of the Constitution gave us the way. They have shown the way. We but only have to have the will, and it is worth it for us to do this because the country is at stake in the sense that the government is at risk.

Madam Speaker, I love my country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

RECOGNIZING LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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