

We demand due process.

LAW AND ORDER IMPEACHMENT

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, this is a somber and solemn time.

I rise in support of H. Res. 660, a resolution establishing procedures for the impeachment of the President. I do it with a heavy heart.

But today we choose our beloved Nation over individual self-interest and political party. We choose due process, regular order, and fairness. We choose this little document called the Constitution, lasting for over 200 years.

We are reminded of the words of James Madison who argued in favor of impeachment, stating that some provision was indispensable to defend the community against the incapacity or negligence of the chief magistrate.

We do not do this in a rush, and we do not do it eagerly.

We are reminded of Lieutenant Colonel Vindman who came here at 3 years old. He said he had dedicated his entire professional life to the United States of America. And he said about the call that he was on: I realized that this was troubling, that if Ukraine pursued an investigation into the Bidens, it would be heavy and wrong. I do not think it is proper to demand that a foreign government investigate a U.S. citizen.

Again, we stand on the Constitution. We must do it right and do it fairly.

This is a somber and solemn time.

Today we choose our beloved nation over individual self-interest and a political party.

We choose due process, regular order and fairness.

And as the founding fathers crafted a document, which 230 years later, from 1789 to 2019, we can abide by, we choose the Constitution.

When the Framers of our Constitution designed our government, they bifurcated power between the federal and state governments, and divided power among the branches.

Indeed as the Framers debated ratification of the Constitution, they knew of the need to remove an individual who breached the public trust.

James Madison of Virginia argued in favor of impeachment stating that some provision was "indispensable" to defend the community against "the incapacity, negligence or perfidy of the chief Magistrate."

With a single executive, Madison argued, unlike a legislature whose collective nature provided security, "loss of capacity or corruption was more within the compass of probable events, and either of them might be fatal to the Republic."

They wrote Article I and vested in the Congress the capacity to make the laws.

They wrote Article II, and in the Executive vested the power to faithfully execute those laws.

Because the House enjoyed a natural superiority, as most representative of the passions of the populace, the Framers vested in the House of Representatives the sole power of

impeachment, and made the Senate the judges.

In Article II, they specified the standard by which a president or any constitutional officer is to be removed from office: for High Crimes and Misdemeanors.

It is against that backdrop that we debate this resolution.

I support this resolution because it protects our interests, holds us responsible, protects the American people and gives the president ample opportunity to try to justify his conduct.

In September, members of the House of Representatives learned of a complaint filed by a whistleblower within the Intelligence Community.

The whistleblower alleged that on July 25, 2019, in a telephone conversation with the President of Ukraine, the American President sought to withhold foreign military aid from the besieged and beleaguered nation of Ukraine unless and until the Government of Ukraine produced or manufactured produced political dirt against a person he deemed his most formidable political rival.

The allegation suggests an effort and intent to extort the assistance of a foreign power to help the current president retain his office.

This is similar to the allegations surrounding his 2016 election victory, which were at the heart of the Special Counsel's Report regarding Russian election interference.

After the whistleblower's details were made public, the White House engaged in a series of untenable defenses, all designed to discredit the courageous whistleblower's account, which the Intelligence Community Inspector General found credible.

First, the White House indicated that the whistleblower should not be trusted because it referenced secondhand information, forgetting that much of the information in the Whistleblower's complaint was corroborated by the White House itself.

Next, the White House claimed, without proof, that the whistleblower was a liar.

Then, the White House spread a lie that it was a "perfect" call between the two leaders.

Outrageously, the White House then claimed that Chairman Adam Schiff is lying and had helped the Whistleblower draft his complaint.

That was before the President said that the whistleblower's complaint is a lie made up by the "Deep State."

And that was before the President said that he made the call at Rick Perry's urging and that the phone conversations with the Vice President are more problematic than his.

The President and his last defenders are now trying to denigrate the life and accomplishments of Ambassador Bill Taylor, a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, and decorated soldier, and dismissing him as a Never Trumper, as if that is a demerit.

This past Tuesday, Lt. Colonel Alexander Vindman, a member of the National Security Council who immigrated from Ukraine when he was three-years old and was dismissed by the President as insufficiently loyal to him, before one of the President's acolytes suggested Lt. Col. Vindman held a greater loyalty for Ukraine over the United States.

Lt. Col. Vindman has loyally served our country and our Constitution. He was injured in the war in Iraq, for which he was awarded the Purple Heart.

It is thus fitting that when Lt. Col. Vindman appeared to testify in this impeachment inquiry, he did so wearing his Army class A uniform, and had inside his leg shrapnel from the attack that wounded him, and won him the commendation of his superior officers in the Army.

And when he began his testimony, he indicated just what service to this nation meant.

He stated:

I have dedicated my entire professional life to the United States of America. For more than two decades, it has been my honor to serve as an officer in the United States Army. As an infantry officer, I served multiple overseas tours, including South Korea and Germany, and a deployment to Iraq for combat operations. In Iraq, I was wounded in an IED attack and awarded a Purple Heart.

And immigrant to this country, Lt. Col. Vindman stated:

The privilege of serving my country is not only rooted in my military service, but also in my personal history. I sit here, as a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army, an immigrant. My family fled the Soviet Union when I was three and a half years old. Upon arriving in New York City in 1979, my father worked multiple jobs to support us, all the while learning English at night. He stressed to us the importance of fully integrating into our adopted country. For many years, life was quite difficult. In spite of our challenging beginnings, my family worked to build its own American dream. I have a deep appreciation for American values and ideals and the power of freedom. I am a patriot, and it is my sacred duty and honor to advance and defend OUR country, irrespective of party or politics.

When Lt. Col. Vindman testified, he spoke of the horror he felt when he realized that our country's national security apparatus was being manipulated for the president's personal and political gain.

He stated in his testimony:

On July 21, 2019, President Zelenskyy's party won Parliamentary elections in a landslide victory. The NSC proposed that President Trump call President Zelenskyy to congratulate him. On July 25, 2019, the call occurred. I listened in on the call in the Situation Room with colleagues from the NSC and the office of the Vice President. As the transcript is in the public record, we are all aware of what was said. I was concerned by the call. I did not think it was proper to demand that a foreign government investigate a U.S. citizen, and I was worried about the implications for the U.S. government's support of Ukraine. I realized that if Ukraine pursued an investigation into the Bidens and Burisma, it would likely be interpreted as a partisan play which would undoubtedly result in Ukraine losing the bipartisan support it has thus far maintained. This would all undermine U.S. national security. Following the call, I again reported my concerns to NSC's lead counsel.

Throughout the last five weeks, Congressional Republicans have presented a series of strawman arguments designed to deflect but not delve into the very serious charges against the President.

Congressional Republicans' claims that the whistleblower complaint was hearsay are specious because its contents have been independently and repeatedly confirmed.

Similarly, there is no merit to the claim that there was no quid pro quo when the evidence adduced to date confirms there was.

In their perverse logic, Congressional Republicans decried the lack of due process for

a man who once suggested that the Central Park Five should be summarily executed for a crime for which they were later exonerated, and could shoot someone in broad daylight with impunity.

Despite these specious arguments, it is likely that these process arguments are only made because the substance of the president's allegations are utterly indefensible.

The American people and their elected representatives cannot be distracted; they are paying close attention to the substantial wrongdoing emanating from this White House.

They know what the President, which is why a clear majority support impeachment and removal of this President.

As the House of Representatives continues its impeachment inquiry, H. Res. 660 is an especially timely piece of legislation, which squarely addresses the concerns of the President's most fervent supporters.

Specifically, this legislation reaffirms that the six investigating committees—including the House Judiciary Committee, of which I am a senior member and which has exclusive jurisdiction to draft Articles of Impeachment—announced by Speaker NANCY PELOSI have been engaged in an impeachment inquiry and directs them to continue their vital work.

That we have been engaged in an ongoing impeachment inquiry was ratified by the Article III branch when Judge Beryl Howell, the Chief Judge for the United States District court for the District of Columbia, recently held that the House is conducting an impeachment inquiry, which does not require a formal floor vote.

Second, H. Res. 660 authorizes the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) to make public transcripts of recent depositions with appropriate redactions made for classified or other sensitive information.

This legislation, too, establishes procedures for all investigating committees to transmit their evidence to the Committee on the Judiciary for use in their proceedings.

The resolution is also prospective, as it relates to these hearings moving from secure intelligence facilities to public view. H. Res. 660 also serves to enable effective public hearings as it permits staff counsels to question witnesses for up to 45 minutes.

This is consistent with precedent established in 1998 of having staff counsel conduct initial questioning, followed by Member questions, by Republicans used to question Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr in 1998.

The resolution also continues the precedent of giving the minority the same rights to question witnesses that was afforded the majority. This has been true at every step of the inquiry.

Additionally, H. Res. 660 also permits the President opportunities to participate in this inquiry, in a manner consistent with past participation by Presidents.

The resolution establishes opportunities for the President or his counsel to participate in impeachment proceedings held by the Committee on the Judiciary, including to present his case and respond to evidence.

The President can submit written requests for additional testimony or other evidence.

The President can attend hearings, including those held in executive session, raise an objection to testimony given and cross-examine witnesses.

But, if the President unlawfully refuses to cooperate with Congressional requests, the

Chair shall have the discretion to impose sanctions to enforce appropriate remedies, including by denying specific requests by the President or his counsel.

H. Res. 660 explicates the procedure that applies after testimony is adduced in the HPSCI.

H. Res. 660 directs the Committee on the Judiciary to review the evidence and, if necessary, to report Articles of Impeachment to the House.

Following the precedent of every modern impeachment inquiry, the Committee on the Judiciary will decide whether Articles shall be reported to the House.

H. Res. 660 is important legislation that specifies the parameters and the terms this body will follow as it undergoes its solemn and constitutional task.

It affords equal time to the Chairman and Ranking Member to question witnesses and it treats the President and his counsel fairly.

And, importantly, it lays out for the American people the manner in which this inquiry will proceed to the House Judiciary Committee—the committee of jurisdiction for impeachment—and where I will bring to bear my decades of experience on Capitol Hill, including the lessons learned in the impeachment of 1998.

Unlike that occasion, the allegations at the heart of this matter are serious, and damning of the president's conduct and fitness to serve and his ability to safeguard our national security.

These allegations represent a violation of his oath, a betrayal of our national interests, a repudiation of Americans' cherished Democratic Values, and a violation of federal campaign finance laws.

When the President stated that Article II permits him to do whatever he wants, he was invoking a fear of Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence.

As the author of one of our nation's enduring documents, Jefferson was well-versed with what troubles would merit the erosion of public trust in its leaders.

After all, the Declaration of Independence was a list of grievances of a lawless King, who felt impunity.

But, almost 50 years after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote to another of our nation's founders: Nathaniel Macon.

In 1821, Jefferson wrote: "Our government is now taking so steady a course, as to shew by what road it will pass to destruction, to wit, by consolidation first; and then corruption, it's necessary consequence."

It is clear that the consolidation that Jefferson feared—and the corruption which he said would be its necessary consequence—has now been realized in the actions of this President.

We will not permit this to continue and we will put a stop to it.

The President will be held to account.

H. Res. 660 is the first step towards that accountability.

Madam Speaker, as a senior member of the House Judiciary Committee and one of only 5 members and one of three Democrats to serve on that House Judiciary Committee during the impeachment of 1998, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 660, a resolution directing committees to continue their ongoing investigations as part of the existing House of Rep-

resentatives inquiry into whether sufficient grounds exist for the House of Representatives to exercise the constitutional power, solely vested in the House of Representatives, to impeach Donald John Trump, the current President of the United States of America.

USMCA

(Mr. COMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COMER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to reiterate my support for the United States-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement, a commonsense deal that supports farmers and workers.

However, USMCA sits unratified even as President Trump, Mexico, and Canada signed the agreement over a year ago. Each day that the USMCA is not ratified, we are losing out on valuable jobs and opportunities. Speaker PELOSI must get serious about bringing this legislation to a vote in Congress.

My Republican colleagues and I are ready to vote on the deal, but House Democrats setting their sights on the baseless impeachment of the President choose to neglect important opportunities like this.

I just voted against an impeachment resolution against the President when I should be voting on issues like USMCA.

I implore Speaker PELOSI to bring USMCA for a vote so we can finally deliver for American farmers and manufacturers. Let's get back to what we promised the American people we would do.

I hope that my colleagues across the aisle can agree that expanding access to markets, remaining competitive, and growing our economy is what is best for Americans instead of engaging in political shams that do nothing to move this country forward.

SAN PEDRO PACKAGES FOR PATRIOTS

(Ms. BARRAGÁN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Madam Speaker, currently military families who send all-important care packages to their loved ones overseas have to pay some postage. These families are already paying a lot just by enduring the absence of their loved one. That is why I am reintroducing the Military Care Package Program Act which would waive these postal fees for family-sent care packages.

In this spirit, I would like to take a moment to recognize an organization in my district called San Pedro's Packages for Patriots. Packages for Patriots have been sending care packages, letters, and comfort items to our Armed Forces members overseas since 2008.

These packages symbolize love and hope. For some soldiers, it truly means the world. This amazing organization was started by San Pedro residents