

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