H12115

December 18, 2019

Congressional Record — House

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. HOYER moves to lay the resolution on the table.

The Speaker pro tempore. The question is on the motion to table. The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes have it appearing to have it.

ReCORDED vOtE

Mr. MCCARTHY, Madam Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 226, noes 191, not voting 13, as follows: (Roll No. 692)

AYES—226

Abraham

Aderholt

Allen

Amodei

Armstrong

Arrington

Bahnsen

Bacon

Baird

Barr

Begich

Biggs

Bilirakis

Bishop (NC)

Bost

Brady

Brooks (AL)

Brooks (IN)

Budd

Burchett

Burgess

Calvert

Carter (GA)

Carter (TX)

Cole

Collin (GA)

Comer

Conaway

Crenshaw

Curts

Davidson (OH)

Davis, Rodney

Desjardins

Diaz-Balart

Duncan

Dunn

Emmer

Ezra

Fattah

Fitzpatrick

Flischfass

Flores

Fortenberry

Fouz (NC)

Gibberd

Gohmert

Gonzales (TX)

Gooden

NOT VOTING—13

Bishop (UT)

Clay

Gabbard

Holding

Hunter

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the hour) There are 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio changed his vote from “aye” to “no.”

So the motion to table was agreed to. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded. A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 755, IMPEACHING DONALD JOHN TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, FOR HIGH CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS

Mr. McGovern. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 767 and ask for an expedient consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 767

Resolved. That immediately upon adoption of this resolution, without intervention of any point of order, the House shall proceed to the consideration in the House of the resolution (H. Res. 755) impeaching Donald John Trump, President of the United States, for high crimes and misdeemeanors. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary or its respective Designees. The amendment to adopt the resolution, as amended, shall be divided between the two articles.

(a) Members of Congress.

(b) The Delegates and the Resident Commissioner.

(c) The President and Vice President of the United States.

(d) Other persons as designated by the Speaker.

Susc. 3. After adoption of House Resolution 755, it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House a resolution appointing and authorizing managers for the impeachment trial of Donald John Trump, President of the United States, if offered by the chair of the Committee on the Judiciary or his designee. The previous question shall be considered as or as to division of the question except 10 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. No other resolution incidental to impeachment relating to House Resolution 755 shall be privileged during the remainder of the One Hundred Sixteenth Congress.

Susc. 4. The chair of the Committee on the Judiciary may insert in the Congressional Record such material as he may deem necessary to—

(a) House Resolution 755, not later than the date that is 5 legislative days after adoption thereof; and

(b) The resolution specified in section 3 of this resolution, not later than the date that is 5 legislative days after adoption thereof.
Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, I raise a point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Louisiana will state his point of order.

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, I raise this point of order for failure to disclose the waiver of clause 2(j)(1) of rule XI, pursuant to clause 6(g) of rule XIII, which requires the Rules Committee to specify in their report any waiver of a point of order against a measure under consideration.

Madam Speaker, this underlying resolution violates clause 2(j)(1) of rule XI, which entitles the minority of the committee to have the ability to call witnesses to testify during at least one day of a hearing on any given measure. This was not afforded to the Committee on the Judiciary minority members during consideration of the Articles of Impeachment, despite numerous requests by a majority of the minority members.

Therefore, I raise a point of order against consideration of the rule and the underlying resolution for the violation of minority rights and the denial of this evidence to be put into the RECORD for this hearing, which the House rules require, which was not complied with and was denied.

Madam Speaker, I urge the enforcement of this rule.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts seeks to raise a point of order against House Resolution 755, which provides that the report accompanying the resolution fails to specify a waiver of a particular point of order and is thus in violation of clause 6(g) of rule XIII.

The gentleman is stating a matter for debate rather than a proper point of order. Clause 6(g) of rule XIII is merely informational on any specified waivers "to the maximum extent possible."

As elucidated by Chairman Solomon in the legislative history accompanying the adoption of this rule in the 116th Congress, any "failure of the Rules Committee to specify waivers in a rule would not give rise to a point of order against a special rule that waives all points of order."

The Chair would therefore advise the gentleman that he is not stating a proper point of order.

The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days to revise their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, the Rules Committee met and reported a closed rule for House Resolution 767, providing for consideration of H. Res. 755, impeaching Donald John Trump, President of the United States, for high crimes and misdemeanors.

The rule provides 6 hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary or the sergeant at arms. It provides that the question of adoption of the resolution shall be divided between two articles. The rule limits access to the House floor. It provides, at any time after adoption of H. Res. 755, for consideration of a resolution appointing and authorizing managers for the impeachment trial, if offered by the chair of the Committee on the Judiciary, debatable for 10 minutes.

No resolution incidental to impeachment relating to H. Res. 755 shall beprivileged during the remainder of the 116th Congress. Finally, the rule provides that the chair of the Committee on the Judiciary may insert explanatory material in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The gentleman is stating a matter for debate rather than a proper point of order. Clause 2(j)(1) of rule XIII is merely informational on any specified waivers "to the maximum extent possible."

As elucidated by Chairman Solomon in the legislative history accompanying the adoption of this rule in the 104th Congress, any "failure of the Rules Committee to specify waivers in a rule would not give rise to a point of order against a special rule that waives all points of order."

The Chair would therefore advise the gentleman that he is not stating a proper point of order.

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No resolution incidental to impeachment relating to H. Res. 755 shall be privileged during the remainder of the 116th Congress. Finally, the rule provides that the chair of the Committee on the Judiciary may insert explanatory material in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The evidence is as clear as it is overwhelming. If a President undermining our national security and using the resources of the Federal Government for his own selfish, personal gain is not impeachable conduct, then, Madam Speaker, I don't know what is.

I have heard some on the other side suggest this process is about overturning an election. That is absurd. This is about protecting our democracy.

These facts are beyond dispute. The only question now is whether we are willing to tolerate such conduct, not whether by President Trump but, furthermore, by any President of either party. To not act would set a dangerous precedent, not just for this President, but for every future President.

Yes, Madam Speaker, this really is that serious.

Over the past several months, the House of Representatives has been conducting an impeachment inquiry into the 45th President of the United States, Donald John Trump.

Our inquiry is simply to answer the following question: Did President Trump and his top advisers corruptly withhold official government actions to obtain an improper advantage in the next election?

We now know, through the hard work of our investigative committees, and because of the President's own admission, that the answer is no. This is not a question of impeachments. The President withheld congressionally approved military aid to Ukraine, a country under siege, not to fight corruption but to extract a personal political favor. President Trump refused to meet with Ukraine's President in the White House until he completed this scheme.

All the while, leaders in Russia, the very nation holding a large part of Ukraine hostage, the very nation that interfered with our elections, had another meeting in the Oval Office just last week.

The President of the United States endangered our national security. The President undermined our democracy.

And the President, a successor to the same office as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, betrayed his oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.

These aren't opinions. These are uncontested facts.

Now, I have read the details of the July 25 phone call with President Zelensky, where President Trump said: "I would like you to do us a favor, though." I have seen the televised press conference where his Chief of Staff openly admitted to this deal and told the Nation to "just get over it."

Hours and hours of depositions by the Committee on Intelligence, Committee on Oversight and Reform, and Committee on Foreign Affairs have been conducted where witnesses outlined the President's direct involvement in this scheme.

The evidence is as clear as it is overwhelming. If a President undermining our national security and using the resources of the Federal Government for his own selfish, personal gain is not impeachable conduct, then, Madam Speaker, I don't know what is.

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and obstruction of Congress with the oath of office that we took.

Madam Speaker, we are being tested on something greater than our ability to toe a party line, something more than our ability to score the next great television sound bite. This is a democracy-defining moment.

History will judge us by whether we keep intact that fragile republic handed down to us by our forebears more than 200 years ago or whether we allow it to be changed forever. For the sake of our country's future, I hope, and I pray, that my colleagues will make the right decision.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGovern), my good friend, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, today is a very sad day for all of us—for me personally, for the Rules Committee, for the entire House of Representatives, and, most importantly, for the American people.

For the second time in my life, the House of Representatives will be voting to impeach the President of the United States. But unlike in 1998, the decision to have this vote is not the result of a bipartisan process nor an open or fair process. Instead, it is going to be a deeply partisan vote, coming at the end of an unfair and rushed process prescribed solely by Democrats to ensure a predetermined result.

Impeachment of a President is one of the most consequential acts the House of Representatives can undertake, and it should only be done after the fullest and most careful consideration.

Yet, today, after a truncated investigation of the President, the process and cherry-picked evidence and witness testimony to fit their narrative and trampled on Republicans' minority rights, Democrats in the House are pressing forward with a partisan impeachment vote.

Doing so contradicts Speaker Pelosi's own words back in March of this year when she said that an "impeachment is so divisive to the country that unless there's something so compelling and overwhelming and bipartisan, I don't think we should go down that path, because it divides the country."

But if we are really being honest, Democrats have been searching for a reason to impeach President Trump since the day he was elected. In December of 2017, a current member of the majority forced a vote to impeach the President; and even then, long before there was even an impeachment investigation, 58 Democrats voted to impeach the President.

Those democrats have only grown since then, to the point where the majority is now pushing forward with a final vote on impeachment, heedless of where it takes the country and regardless of whether or not they have proven their case.

If my colleagues in the majority believe they have proven their case, let me be clear: They have not. The entire premise of these Articles of Impeachment rests on unsubstantiated allegations of Ukrainian interference in our elections, a pause of 55 days.

The majority has spun creative narratives as to the meaning and the motive of this pause, alleging the President acted "improperly" or "impropriety," but without no factual evidence to back it up. Security aid to Ukraine was released. The administration did so without Ukraine ever initiating an investigation into anyone or anything.

It is even more startling to me that the majority wants to move forward with this resolution given how substantially flawed and procedurally defective the entire process has been.

The Judiciary Committee, which drafted these Articles of Impeachment, engaged in an abbreviated process, hearing from no witnesses with firsthand knowledge of the events in question. They did not conduct their own investigation and only held two hearings on this topic before drafting the articles, one with staff and one with constitutional law scholars. That is hardly the type of lengthy and serious consideration a topic as grave as impeachment demands.

The committee actually charged with an impeachment investigation was the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, not the Judiciary Committee, but that committee, too, followed a primarily closed process. Republicans were denied the right to call witnesses or subpoena documents, and the President denied the right to representation in the committee's hearings.

Without respecting minority rights and without due process rights of the accused, can anyone consider this a fair process?

Madam Speaker, it gets worse. The Articles of Impeachment we are considering today are based on the Schiff report, the final document produced by the Intelligence Committee and transmitted to the Judiciary Committee.

But the Schiff report includes unsubstantiated allegations. It includes, in some cases, news reports as the only evidence supporting so-called factual assertions. It includes at least 54 different hearsay statements as assertions of evidence without any firsthand information from witnesses to corroborate those statements.

The author of the report, Chairman Schiff, was never questioned by the Judiciary Committee, and he refused to sit for questions or to explain how his committee conducted its investigation. In fact, during the staff presentation of evidence at the Judiciary Committee, Ranking Member Cicilline asked how the committee arrived at the conclusion that resulted in the drafting of the Schiff report, but he never received an answer.

During the Rules Committee consideration of H. Res. 755, there were numerous times when the members on both sides of the aisle posed questions to our witnesses, questions they could not answer because they sat on the Judiciary Committee and were not the author of the report that brought about H. Res. 755.

The author has never appeared before members of the minority to explain a single thing in the report or to provide factual information supporting the majority's claims. The minority was excluded.

Madam Speaker, this is no way to go about impeaching the President of the United States. The articles before us are based on very limited information. They are based on hearsay, on news reports, and on other unsupported allegations. They are based on a report written by a Member of Congress who refused to answer questions about it; and I do not believe the allegations, which are subject to interpretation, actually rise to the level of an impeachable offense.

To make matters worse, when Republicans attempted to exercise one of their rights under House rules, they were shut down by Chairman Nadler. Under clause 2(j)(1) of rule XI, the minority is allowed to demand a minority hearing day.

Chairman Nadler declined to allow a minority hearing day. On December 4, the Republicans on the Judiciary Committee properly exercised that right and transmitted a demand to Chairman Nadler for a hearing day at which the minority could call their own witnesses.

To be clear, Madam Speaker, a minority hearing day is not subject to the chair's discretion. It is a right, and Republicans on the Judiciary Committee properly demanded the exercise of that right; yet, Chairman Nadler declined to allow a minority hearing day to be held before the voting of these articles.

I think we can all agree that it would have been better for the country and for the American people to allow all voices to be heard and all witnesses to be questioned before proceeding to a vote on something this consequential; yet, the majority trampled on that right.

But I suppose I should not be surprised by any of this. When the House passed H. Res. 660, the resolution setting up the official impeachment inquiry less than 2 months ago, I warned the House that what the majority was doing was setting up a closed, unfair process that could only have one outcome. Today, we are seeing the end result of this closed and unfair process: a quick rush to judgment forced through not one, but two committees in short order, with minority rights trampled, witnesses left unquestioned, and due process ignored.

It is also disappointing that Members are not being given more time to debate this issue on the floor.

Last night at the Rules Committee, I offered an amendment to double the amount of floor time debate from 6 to 12 hours. This would have allowed for
Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself an additional 15 seconds.

President Trump was given the opportunity to participate in the Judiciary Committee’s review of the evidence presented against him. And President Trump, to date, has not provided any exculpatory evidence but, instead, has blocked numerous witnesses from testifying about his actions.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), the majority whip.

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today feeling the full weight of my duty, as a Member of this august body, reflecting upon our oath of office to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. It is my sincere belief that, under the circumstances that bring us here today, there is only one path for us to take to fulfill that oath.

Thomas Paine, in the first of his series of pamphlets entitled "The American Crisis," published on Dec. 23, 1776, wrote the following, two days later, intoned that "these are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman, Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered."

These words were written at a time when our Founders were rebelling against the tyrannical rule of the British monarchy. Today, we have a President who seems to believe he is a king over his own country, or of the law that informs his actions.

Madam Speaker, 3 days ago, I joined with a bipartisan delegation of our colleagues celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. We laid
wreaths at the memorials of Generals George Patton and Anthony McAuliffe. We visited foxholes that were occupied by some brave soldiers who fought in some of the worst winter weather ever visited upon a battlefield, and we visited the Luxembourg American Cemetery, the final resting place of thousands of them and General George Patton.

They were not summer soldiers in their efforts 75 years ago to preserve the Republic, and we must not be sunshiners today in our efforts to protect the Constitution upon which this great Republic stands. While our fight is not in the trenches or battlefields but in the Hallowed Halls of this Congress, our duty is no less patriotic.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds just to respond to my friend.

President Trump, for the Record, was not provided the opportunity to challenge the facts and still has not received materials from the Judici- ary Committee, as required by H. Res. 660, another example of why this isn’t a fair process.

Madam Speaker. I yield to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. CHENEY), the distinguished chairman of the Repu- blican Conference, for the purpose of a unanimous consent request.

Ms. CHENEY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to amend House Resolution 767 to provide for voting by a manual call of the roll so the Amer- ican people can see precisely who is supporting the impeachment of a duly-elected President.

Members should be required to stand and identify themselves openly and on camera on the question of adoption of these Articles of Impeachment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time has been yielded for the purpose of de- bate only by the gentleman from Mass- achusetts.

Does the gentleman from Massachu- setts yield for this unanimous consent request?

Mr. McGOVERN. I do not.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentle- man from Massachusetts does not yield; therefore, the unanimous con- sent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH), my good friend and the distin- guished secretary of the Republican Conference for the purpose of a unani- mous consent request.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to amend House Resolution 767 to provide for 12 hours of debate equally divided by the majority and the minority, which would allow each Member of the House at least 1% minutes of debate, as opposed to currently 50 seconds. The people’s representatives deserve the right to debate 50 seconds to be heard in this important matter.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time has been yielded for the purpose of de- bate by the gentleman from Massachu- setts.

Does the gentleman from Massachu- setts yield for this unanimous consent request?

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I do not.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Therefore, this unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS), a distinguished member of both the Energy and Commerce Committee and the House Rules Committee.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, yesterday the Rules Committee spent 8 hours considering whether to bring H. Res. 755, the Articles of Impeachment, to the House floor. Given the four-to-nine ratio of Republicans to Democrats on the committee, it is clear that we are now considering the articles before us.

Despite robust debate on the so- called facts derived from the impeach- ment investigation and the process by which they were obtained, Democrats and Republicans are in opposition to each other on our conclusions.

As outlined yesterday by Ranking Member COLLINS and several members of the Rules Committee through direct quotes, some Democrats have been suggesting President Trump’s impeach- ment since his inauguration. The rush to impeach first and solidify the case second threatens the credibility of the process and threatens the credibility of the body engaged, this very House of Representa- tives.

In fact, it has been quoted before and it will be quoted again today. I suspect, Chairman NADLER recognized the grav- ity of impeachment when he stated in December of 1998, “The effect of impeach- ment is to overturn the popular will of the voters as expressed in a na- tional election. There must never be a narrowly voted impeachment or an impeach- ment substantially supported by one of our major political parties and largely opposed by the other. Such an impeachment would lack legitimacy, would produce divisiveness and bitter- ness in our politics for years to come. And will call into question the very legiti- macy of our political institutions.”

On October 31, this House voted to authorize impeachment investigations in H. Res. 660. The process outlined in H. Res. 660 did not include the robust minority protections af- forded the minority party in previous impeachment investigations. Even more concerning, Chairman NADLER and Chairman SCHIFF’s refusal to comply with the very rules of the House in granting access to committee records for members in scheduling a minority hearing in a reasonable amount of time, thus preventing the American people from being equally represented in the process.

Refusing to allow members to access their own records, these are records of the Members of the House of Rep- resentatives, and we were not allowed to access these records obtained in secret under armed guard in the Intellig- ence Committee, but it is re- quired under section 2(e) of rule XI, and they have denied members the ability to do their job.

The Judiciary Committee did not hear testimony from even one fact wit- ness, not even one, after they received a deluge of materials from the Intel- ligence Committee. This reversal of re- sponsibility is incomprehensible.

But turning to the case upon which the argument is based, we had a whistle- blower, not a fact witness, a whistle- blower who never appeared before any Member of Congress that we know of, a whistleblower complaint concerning a congratulatory call between President Trump and President Zelensky of Ukraine.

The whistleblower is known to have had contact with Chairman SCHIFF’s staff while Republicans were denied any contact. The whistleblower com- plaint is not based on first-hand knowl- edge, and the call transcript that was support impeachment reveals noth- ing more than a congratulatory phone call.

A request for investigations as to how American foreign aid will be spent does not equal soliciting election inter- ference. The evidence brought before us does not amount to a high crime; in- deed, it does not amount to any crime.

Democrats claim that we must pro- tect the integrity of our election. If you really cared, then I have to ask, what are we missing while we have been focused on impeachment? We tied up the Intelligence Committee. We tied up the Judiciary Committee. And, oh, by the way, the Ways and Means Committee had to give up their room. They couldn’t even meet while you were doing all of this.

This impeachment investigation is being painted as a protection against future interference, when in reality President Trump’s request looks back at the 2016 election. Russia is the win- ner in this exchange because they have disrupted the process.

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, the gentleman is passionate about records. I should remind him that we have gotten no records from this White House, not a single document.

At this time I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. SHALALA), a distinguished member of the Rules Committee.

Ms. SHALALA. Madam Speaker, I come to impeachment with deep sad- ness. The facts of this case are painful and indisputable. We know that the President illegally held up congression- ally appropriated aid to Ukraine. We know that he conditioned the release of that aid on an Ukrainian President Zelensky’s opening an investigation based on a debunked conspiracy theory about his political rival and foreign inter- ference in the 2016 election.
We also know that the President has actively blocked congressional attempts to determine the extent of his misconduct by ordering executive branch officials to defy subpoenas and withhold information. Despite this unprecedented obstruction from the President, the evidence in this case is powerful enough that to delay this vote any further would risk interference in the 2020 election and the permanent erosion of our system of checks and balances.

Madam Speaker, this is not a matter of politics. This is a matter of protecting the integrity of our democracy for the next generation. As we labor to pass on to future generations many of the great hallmarks of our society, we must also work with active stewardship and vigilance to pass on a vibrant and functional democracy.

If we don’t do our duty to protect the Constitution, the republic that we hand to our children will be less vibrant. If we do not do our duty to protect the Constitution, the republic that we hand to our children will be less resilient and less effective than the system that we were so fortunate to inherit.

Democracy is fragile. Its survival depends on the strength and courage we display in maintaining it.

But this fragility is also a strength. It requires our public servants to put our nation’s interests ahead of their own and to hold each other accountable to the high standards democracy demands.

That’s why we take an oath to defend the Constitution. If protecting the Constitution were trivial, we wouldn’t have to take an oath.

For over 200 years, honesty and vigilance have won out as generations of public servants have adhered to their oaths of office and met the standards of service that our democracy demands.

We cannot let this legacy die on our watch. Mr. COLE, Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mrs. LESKO), my very good friend and fellow member of the Rules Committee and member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. COLE for yielding me the time.

Madam Speaker, God takes us on journeys in our life, and about 30 years ago I was married to an abusive ex-husband. I fully left him, there were times in my life when I had no money and no place to live.

And I tell you what, I never dreamed in a million years that I would be standing here today as a Congresswoman in the United States House of Representatives.

And I tell you what, I never would have believed that I would be standing here talking about impeachment of a President of the United States.

I serve on the Judiciary Committee. I also serve on the Rules Committee. I have spent hours and hours reading transcripts, looking at documents, hearing testimony, and I can tell you one thing: I believe this is the most unfair, politically biased, rigged process that I have seen in my entire life.

Here are the facts: There is no proof, none, that the President has committed an impeachable offense. Not one of the Democrat witnesses was able to establish that the President committed bribery, treason, or high crimes and misdemeanors as required in the U.S. Constitution.

And as I have said before, the Democrats are really undermining their own argument here because 17 out of the 24 Democrat members on the Judiciary Committee voted here on this floor to put forward, move forward Articles of Impeachment on July 17 of this year before President Trump’s call even took place. And five out of the nine Rules Committee members that are Democrats did the same thing.

So if your argument is that this phone call is the impeachable offense, why did you vote for impeachment, moving impeachment forward before the call even took place?

The process has been rigged from the start. Other Members have told you. Never in the history of the United States have we had an impeachment that has gone through the Intelligence Committee in closed-door hearings where a Member of the Judiciary Committee, myself, wasn’t even able to ask one single question of a fact witness. The whole thing has been rigged, been unfair.

In the process that you had set forth you made sure that the President didn’t have any right to have his counsel there until Judiciary, but by then it was too late. It was too late because there were no fact witnesses allowed in Judiciary. So I couldn’t even ask a question, nor did the President.

This is the most partisan impeachment in the history of the United States. Not one Republican voted for it in the Judiciary Committee, not one Republican voted for it in the Rules Committee, and not one Republican. I don’t think, is going to vote for it here today.

Madam Speaker, this is a sad day. I believe the Democrats are tearing this country apart. They are tearing families apart.

May God continue to bless all of you.

May God continue to bless the President of the United States. And may God continue to bless our great Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, if Republicans want to defend the President’s indefensible behavior, they can do worse than to stand up for the Constitution and to stand up for this country and our democracy.

I now yield ½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DESAULNIER), a distinguished member of the Rules Committee.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank the leadership of the Rules Committee, Mr. MCGOVERN and Mr. COLE, for our civility last night. Although it was a long hearing and we are very much in disagreement, I felt proud to be part of that hearing, and I really want to recognize both the ranking member and the chair.

The previous speaker is part of that Rules Committee, and I would just say that the passion that she demonstrated in her comments, I can’t say how much I completely disagree with her, which is a statement on the environment we find ourselves in, and I, unfortunately, agree with some of her comments, but where the responsibility is I would put at the White House and the President. He is the divisive one. He is not trying to heal our wounds.

The reality and urgency of this moment cannot be more consequential to the American democracy. This is not a hypothetical. President Trump violated the law and solicited foreign interference in our election. At the same time, objective experts have overwhelming evidence that Russia interfered in the 2016 elections and is actively engaged in undermining the 2020 elections.

Our vote today and the Senate’s actions on impeachment have very real long-term consequences for American democracy. Where do we go from here if the Senate does not remove him? The President has a pattern of escalating behavior. The day before the special counsel testified to Congress that the Russian Government interfered in our election in sweeping and systemic fashion, President Trump made this call.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 15 seconds to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Two days before that, the President says that Article II of the Constitution says that he can do whatever he wants. As Washington warned in his farewell address, foreign interference tamper with domestic facts and misleads public opinion. We must honor the Nations that our Founding Fathers put forward and impeach this president for violating the law and betraying the American people.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BYRNE), my very good friend, a distinguished member of the Armed Services Committee and a former member of the Rules Committee.

Mr. BYRNE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the rule and the underlying resolution to impeach President Trump.

When the Framers granted the House the power to impeach, they feared that it would be abused.

Today, those fears are realized. In record speed, this majority has assembled hearsay, speculation, and presumptions for the purpose of overturning the 2016 election.
We are not here today, days before Christmas, because the majority has assembled a case against President Trump. No. We are here today because the Democrat majority believes getting impeachment done now will provide the vulnerable Members time to distance themselves from their vote.

But I assure you, Madam Speaker, the American people are watching. Many of my colleagues have, from day one, rejected the people’s choice of President Trump, but another President is more to the majority’s liking. Our actions here today will be remembered and will set the standard.

The second Article of Impeachment seeks to remove President Trump for failure to produce certain requested witnesses and documents, but as the majority knows, every President in history has asserted executive privilege.

The House has a legal avenue to challenge the President: the courts. But the majority has skipped this step, showing that this is about impeachment as fast as possible, however possible.

Most of my friends on the other side of the aisle had no problem backing President Obama when he stonewalled the House for years to block our quest to find out the truth in the Fast and Furious investigation. That is why I filed an amendment to the resolution, rejecting the Rules Committee, saying, based upon the Democratic majority standard, they should have written Articles of Impeachment against President Obama and Eric Holder.

I wish my colleagues would think about the standard being set. I predict that they will very soon regret it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES), a distinguished member of the Rules Committee.

Mrs. TORRES of California, Madam Speaker, the facts are clear. To quote the USA Today editorial board: "Trump used your tax dollars to shake down a vulnerable foreign government to interfere in a U.S. election for his personal benefit."

The rule of law is what gives our great country its strength.

The rule of law is what separates us from Third World countries, where dictators reign for decades on end. The rule of law is what makes us the envy of the world, the place that other countries look to as they grow their own democracies.

It is the rule of law that brings us here today.

We never want to see the rule of law deteriorate or rampant corruption take hold.

We never want to see the day when future generations flee for refuge in another country, the way that others are seeking refuge on our southern border right now.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes.” American values and our Constitution are worth fighting for.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI), my very good friend, also a distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today in direct opposition to this rule and in opposition to the divisive partisanship that is on display right now in this House of Representatives.

It is no secret Democrats have wanted to impeach President Trump from day one, regardless of any fact.

They knew the result they wanted; they just needed time to figure out how to get there.

So they began their impeachment inquiry behind closed doors, selective leaks instead of transparency, no due process.

On they crafted their perfect narrative, they moved on to public hearings.

They hoped the American people wouldn’t notice that they failed to uncover one piece of evidence to justify impeachment.

They failed to make the case for this drastic action, and yet here we are.

For the first time in history, a President on the brink of being impeached with the votes of one single party.

But let’s be clear about one thing: This impeachment obsession is not about accountability; it is not about justice; it is not even about the Constitution.

It is about pure partisan politics at its worst, and you are watching it right here.

The American people see right through this today. They have seen the rigged process; they have seen the lack of transparency and the complete absence of any supporting evidence.

They know that Washington is broken. That is why they sent us here to fix it.

But instead, House Democrats are dividing the country and further shaking the people’s trust in this Congress.

It is a sham impeachment. It has been carried out at the expense of hardworking Americans who just want us to move forward.

Madam Speaker, this charade should go no farther. We should stop wasting time and focus on what keeps our Nation moving forward: helping workers and families thrive, protecting the safety and security of our country.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote against the rule so we can get back to work for the American people.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. LUJAN), the Assistant Speaker.

Mr. LUJAN. Madam Speaker, no one came to Congress to impeach a President.

We came here to solve the mighty issues that impact the lives of the constituents we pledged to serve.

I am here because too many families in my district still rely on water trucked in from dozens of miles away.

I am here because too many women in New Mexico drive for hours to find a doctor able to care for them.

I am here because we have reached a point in time where our love of country compels action, where our duty to this republic mandates that we do what is right.

The President’s behavior is so blatantly wrong to ignoring his abuses of power would be abdicating the oath we made to protect this country and uphold our Constitution.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment on the rule that the House shall not proceed to consideration of the underlying resolution until six conditions are met: all evidence in the possession of Chairman Schiff has been made available to the Judiciary Committee; that Chairman SCHIFF appear before the Judiciary Committee to testify to the report that he authored; that all underlying unclassified evidence has been made available to the public; majority members of the Judiciary Committee have received their right to a minority hearing day; minority witnesses requested by Ranking Member NUNES and Ranking Member COLLINS are called and allowed to be heard in accordance with House Resolution 660; and subpoenas requested by Ranking Member NUNES in the Intelligence Committee are issued and enforced.

Madam Speaker, to be clear, my amendment ensures that the majority does not proceed without providing a fair, equitable, and transparent process, one that respects minority rights, one that opens up the investigation to all Members of the House, and one that allows Republicans on the Judiciary Committee to examine the most relevant witnesses.

Perhaps most crucially, it will allow all Members to fully consider the information available to the committee that actually conducted the impeachment investigation, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

The process the House has followed has been abysmal. It was a closed, unfair process that did not respect minority rights and did not give the President due process. But we can change that today. If we defeat the previous question, the House will only move forward with a real, thorough, and ultimately fair process that all Members can be proud of. I urge a “no” vote on the previous question.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.
Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. HICE), my good friend.

Mr. HICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

The majority has thrown almost every allegation imaginable against this President, and yet these Articles of Impeachment that have been submitted cannot name a single actual crime.

After all the drama, the majority has not produced a single shred of evidence, only second-, third-, fourth-hand information, but the facts have remained the same. The transcript speaks for itself.

There was no quid pro quo. The Ukrainian Government said multiple times they felt no pressure whatsoever. The aid ultimately came. And even Speaker PELOSI said that this whole thing would have compelling, overwhelming, bipartisan support.

Now, if you want to ignore the Chaly op-ed; Chalupa worked with the Ukrainian Embassy to dig up dirt; the Steele dossier—these all tell us that President Zelensky didn’t know that there was a hold on aid on July 25. He didn’t find out until after he read it in Politico on July 29.

The aid got released shortly thereafter, and Ukraine didn’t have to do absolutely anything in order to get the hold released.

When our colleagues on the other side of the aisle say that the July 25 call transcript said, “do me a favor,” we have to correct that erroneous thing and actually that says, “do us a favor.” And if you look at that paragraph, it is only about Ukrainians interfering in the 2016 election.

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So, just to, maybe, recap a few for everyone watching at home, as well as my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, and hopefully they will listen:

President Zelensky says there was no demand, no pressure, no quid pro quo. And in the Dec. 10 that their whole story with regard to the December 1 meeting with Ambassador Sondland is completely refuted. We heard from Ambassador Sondland himself, who admitted that he heard from President Trump that he didn’t want any quid pro quo and that he was guessing when he stated otherwise. Ambassador Sondland, that is, said he was guessing and that no one on the planet had told him otherwise.

Mr. HICE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK).

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, to paraphrase one of our founding mothers, Abigail Adams: A people may let a President fall, yet still remain a people, but if a President lets his people slip from him, he is no longer a President.

Just as Abigail Adams warned, Donald Trump has let the people slip from him. He works for himself, not us.

He tried to extort a foreign government into investigating a political rival, and he has unlawfully withheld witnesses and evidence.

If we want a democracy, today we must stand for the rule of law.

A vote to impeach is a vote to remain a government that is of, for, and by the people.

It is a vote born of great fear for our future, but also rooted in optimism: that if we stand for the truth, for our Constitution, we can continue to create a country of liberty, justice, and equality for all.

Mr. COLE. Might I inquire, Madam Speaker, how much time we have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma has 5¼ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 13¾ minutes remaining.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDKIN), my good friend.

Mr. ZELDKIN of New York. Madam Speaker, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle throughout this whole process, their allies in the media, they like to say that Republicans only want to talk about process, not substance, even though we continue to talk about substance as well.

They declare their facts are uncontested. They just did it again.

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They declare their facts are uncontested. They just did it again.
He abused the highest, most sacred office in our land.

"I want you to know that it does not feel good. I can't stop thinking about the cost to our country. Not just the impeachable offenses, but the collateral damage of a President who uses power like a weapon against his own people, erodes our decency, degrades our dignity.

"I don't yet know how they will tell the story of this era, but I want to tell you the story of this day. Let the record show that today won, that we did our job, that we kept our word, that we stood our sacred ground. Let the record show that we did not let you down.

"I love you. Listen to Mom. Be home soon."

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, first of all, let me just say, I taught my children that there are consequences for law.

I am saddened, but I am not shocked, that we are here today considering Articles of Impeachment against President Trump. I am saddened, but I am not shocked because of the pattern of corruption we have seen from this President.

Yes, I am saddened, but I am not shocked because this President has routinely shown his disregard of Congress and the rule of law.

The facts are not in dispute. The President abused his power, defied the public's trust, and betrayed his oath of office. He undermined our elections by corruptly soliciting foreign interference in our elections to benefit his own future reelection efforts. Then he obstructed our searches of the way in an effort to cover it all up.

Donald Trump has been and remains a threat to our national security, a clear danger to our democracy, and wholly unfit to serve as President of the United States.

We have an obligation to act today to uphold the Constitution, but also to show our children and grandchildren that no one is above the law, and that includes the President of the United States.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TRAHA)."
The communications did not explicitly link the assistance freeze to the push by Mr. Trump and Mr. Giuliani for the investigations. But in the communications, officials from the United States and Ukraine indicated the need to bring in the same senior aide to Mr. Zelensky who had been dealing with Mr. Giuliani about Ukraine's demands for the investigations, signaling a possible link between the matters.

The text messages between Mr. Volker, Mr. Sondland, and the top Zelensky aide did not mention the holdup of the aid. The communications did not explicitly link the assistance freeze directly with a Ukrainian government official, according to records and interviews. The Pentagon official suggested that Mr. Mulvaney had been pushing for the assistance to be withheld, and urged the Ukrainians to reach out to him.

"There was no blackmail," Mr. Zelensky said at a news conference this month. He cited as evidence that he "had no idea the military aid was held up" at the time of his July 25 call with Mr. Trump, when Mr. Trump pressed him for investigations into the Bidens and a debunked conspiracy theory about Ukraine involvement in the hacking of the Democratic National Committee in 2016.

Mr. Zelensky has said he knew about the holdup of the military aid before his meeting with Mr. Pence, but has been vague about exactly when he learned about it. "When I did find out, I raised it with Pence at a meeting in Warsaw," he said this month.

In conversations over several days in early August, a Pentagon official discussed the assistance freeze with a Ukrainian government official, according to records and interviews. The Pentagon official suggested that Mr. Mulvaney had been pushing for the assistance to be withheld, and urged the Ukrainians to reach out to him.

The Pentagon official described Mr. Mulvaney’s motivations in broad terms to the official but made clear that the same Ukrainian official, Andriy Yermak, who had been negotiating with Mr. Giuliani over the investigations and a White House visit being sought by Mr. Zelensky should also reach out to Mr. Mulvaney over the hold on military aid.

A senior administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity to speak publicly about the July text messages said that Mr. Mulvaney “had absolutely no communication with the Ukrainians about this issue.”

The communications did not explicitly link the assistance freeze to the push by Mr. Trump and Mr. Giuliani for the investigations. But Mr. Sondland was still pressing for a commitment from Mr. Zelensky, and was pressing him to do a CNN interview in which he would talk about pursuing the investigations sought by Mr. Trump.

Mr. Zelensky never did the interview and no one from the White House, although a Ukrainian prosecutor later said he would “audit” a case involving the owner of the company that paid Hunter Biden as a board member.

Mr. Giuliani has said he had nothing to do with the assistance freeze and did not talk to Mr. Trump or “anybody in the government” about it. "I didn’t know about it until I read about it in the newspaper,” he said in an interview last week.

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Voting to impeach the President is a weighty decision. It is not something you reach for; it is something you are brought to reluctantly when the evidence presented can no longer be denied.

In this sober and historic moment, Members of Congress are called upon to uphold our oath of office and our duty to the Constitution. Today, we answer that call.

The President’s actions compromised the national security of the United States, undermined the integrity of our democratic process, and betrayed the trust of the American people. In soliciting for foreign interference, President Trump took direct aim at the heart of our democracy. The American people should decide our elections, not a foreign country. As long as the President continues to invite foreign interference into our democracy, the integrity of the 2020 election remains at risk.

The question is: Will Congress allow the President to place his personal interests above those of his country?
President Donald Trump insists there’s an innocent explanation for the July 25 phone call in which he pressed Ukraine’s president to investigate political rival Joe Biden. “I don’t care about Biden’s campaign,” he told reporters on Friday, “but I do care about corruption.” Professional Republicans seem to be bolstering that defense. Sen. Lindsey Graham said on Tuesday that he will invite Rudy Giuliani, a key player in Trump’s dealings with Ukraine, to testify on corruption in the country—an odd choice when Graham could have asked, for example, a U.S. government official who is an authorized work with their foreign diplomatic counterparts—some willing and some less so—as well as non-governmental organizations and law enforcement agencies at the local, national and international levels to support foreign governments’ efforts to build sound institutions by sharing best practices, training and giving grants. In Ukraine, that work Coordination with the U.S. International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Assistance Agreement (MLAA) with China, which contained anti-corruption experts there could review evidence in another country for a criminal investigation. There is no shortage of official options—many professional Republicans who have limits. Indeed, the Founders would have written an impeachment clause in the Constitution if they did not foresee scenarios where their descendents might not remove a president before the end of his term in order to protect the American people and the nation. The question before the country now is whether President Trump’s misconduct is severe enough that Congress should exercise that impeachment power, less than a year before the 2020 election. The results of the House Intelligence Committee inquiry, released to the public on Tuesday, make clear that the answer is an urgent yes. Not only has the president abused his power by trying to extort a foreign country to meddle in U.S. politics, but he also has endangered the integrity of the election itself. He has also obstructed the congressional investigation into his conduct, a precedent that will lead to a permanent diminution of congressional power if allowed to stand. The evidence that Trump is a threat to the constitutional system is more than sufficient, and a slate of legal scholars who testified on Wednesday made clear that Trump’s actions are just the sort of presidential behavior the Founders had in mind when they wrote impeachment into the Constitution.
Immaterial: The act of withholding taxpayer money to support a personal political goal was an impermissible abuse of the president’s power.

Witholding the money also sabotaged American foreign policy. The United States provides military aid to Ukraine to protect the country from Russian aggression. Ensuring that aid is spent on things the United States supports is critical. The law provides money to help Ukraine fight Russian aggression, to help it build a democratic state, and to help its economy. The Trump administration was willing to sacrifice these vital foreign policy goals to get political advantage.

The Constitution entrusts Congress with the impeachment power in order to protect Americans from a president who is betraying their interests. And it is very much in Americans’ interests to maintain checks and balances in government; to ensure that a foreign policy that the world can trust is based on our national interest instead of the president’s personal needs; to vote in fair elections untainted by foreign interference. For generations, Americans have enjoyed those privileges. What’s at stake now is whether we will keep them. The facts show that the president has threatened this country’s core values and the integrity of our democracy. Congress now has a duty to future generations to impeach him.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD the December 11, 2019, USA Today editorial entitled “Impeach President Trump: The President’s Ukraine shakedown and stonewalling are too serious for the House to ignore.”

(From USA Today, Dec. 12, 2019)

USA TODAY’S EDITORIAL BOARD: IMPEACH PRESIDENT TRUMP

(The Editorial Board)

“Put your own narrow interests ahead of the nation’s, flout the law, violate the trust given to you by the American people and recklessly disregard the oath of office, and you risk losing your job.”

USA TODAY’S Editorial Board wrote those words two decades ago when it endorsed the impeachment of President Bill Clinton, a Democrat. Now, in graver circumstances with America’s system of checks and balances to another president facing impeachment, Republican Donald Trump.

The current board has made no secret of our low regard for Trump’s character and conduct. Yet, as fellow passengers on the ship of state, we had hoped the captain would succeed. And, until recently, we believed the proceeding would be unhealthier for an already polarized nation than simply leaving Trump’s fate up to voters next November.

TWO CRIMES, LITTLE CHOICE

Unless public sentiment shifts sharply in the days and weeks ahead, that is the likely outcome of this process—impeachment by the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives followed by acquittal in the GOP-controlled Senate. So why bother? Because Trump’s egregious transgressions and continued public revelations make little sense, save to emphasize his choice to but press ahead with the most severe sanction at its disposal.

Clinton was impeached by the House (but not removed by the Senate) after he tried to cover up an affair with a White House intern. Trump used your tax dollars to shake down a vulnerable foreign government to interfere in a U.S. election for his private benefit.

GOP leader on House Judiciary Committee: Articles establish nothing impeachable and allege no crime.

In his thuggish effort to trade American arms for foreign dirt on former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter, Trump resembles not so much Clinton as he does Richard Nixon, another corrupt president who tried to cheat his way to reelection.

This isn’t partisan politics as usual. It is precisely the type of misconduct the framers had in mind when they wrote impeachment into the Constitution. Alexander Hamilton supported a robust presidency but worried that it must be checked by Congress. The Ukraine scandal involves a president who tried to cheat his way to reelection.

To former national security adviser John Bolton, the months-long scheme was the equivalent of a “drug deal.” To Bolton’s former aide Fiona Hill, it was a “domestic political errand” that “is all going to blow up.” To Bill Taylor, the top U.S. diplomat in Ukraine, “it’s crazy to withhold security assistance for help with a political campaign.”

And to Ukrainian soldiers, fighting to fend off Russian aggression in the eastern part of their country, the money was a matter of life and death.

Obstruction of Congress. Trump has met the impeachment investigation with outright and unprecedented defiance. The White House has withheld documents, ordered executive branch agencies not to comply with subpoenas and directed administration officials not to testify.

Allowing this obstruction to stand unchallenged would put the president above the law. With his suggested ability to investigate misconduct by presidents of either party, the GOP enrols to place power and party ahead of truth and country.

Had any Democratic president behaved the way Trump has—paying hush money to a porn star, slandering dictators and spewing an unending stream of falsehoods—there’s no doubt congressional Republicans would have tried to run him out of the White House in minutes.

Twenty-seven Republicans who voted to impeach or convict Clinton remain in Congress. If they continue to defend Trump, history will record their hypocrisy.

Our support for Trump’s impeachment by the House—we’ll wait for the Senate trial to render a verdict on removal from office—has nothing to do with policy differences. We have had profound disagreements with the president on a host of issues, led by his recklessness and intemperance. Far from change, both of which will burden generations to come.

Policy differences are not, however, grounds for impeachment. Constitutional violations are.

Bill Clinton should be impeached and stand trial because the charges are too serious and the evidence amassed too compelling” to ignore, the Editorial Board wrote in December 1998.

Some can say this December about the allegations facing Donald Trump. Only much more so.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, throughout this process, I listened, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, to career diplomats testify in depositions and found myself contemplating the gravity of this decision.

One of my daughters asked then how I would make my decision about impeachment. I told her that future children learn about President Trump’s impeachment, they may ask: “Mommy, what did Grandma do?” I want my daughter to be able to tell her children Grandma did the right thing because, in America, no one is above the law.

With his conduct around Ukraine, President Trump corruptly abused his power for his own interests, at direct odds with our national security and our Constitution. This President put his interests before those of this Nation. Left unchecked, he would do it again and has said so.

The actions and ongoing schemes that led us to this moment are severe threats to our national security and democracy that we cannot defend or dismiss.

With history watching, I must fulfill my constitutional duty and vote to impeach this President. His corrupt conduct and assault on our Constitution leave no other choice.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA).

Mr. KHANNA. Madam Speaker, today, the House is voting to affirm a constitutional duty while we seek to ensure that America remains the strongest and most prosperous nation in the world is our reverence for the rule of law. It is our love of the law that protects our freedoms, our private property, and our families from the ever-exacting tyranny of power.

The real threat to American leadership in the 21st century is internal decline. We choose not to stand idly by while we see the corrupting of our body politic with an attitude that might makes right, that winners don’t have to follow the rules.

In voting to impeach, we remember Lincoln’s Lyceum Address: “Let every...
American, every lover of liberty, every well-wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution never to violate in the least particular the laws of the country and never to tolerate their violation by others. . . . Let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges, to every child and youth of every age, in the ordinary course of instruction, in primer, spelling books, and in almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in the courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of this country.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Just to advise, through the Chair, my friend, I am waiting for one additional speaker, but I reserve my time at this time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD a December 17 CNN article entitled "Fact check: Trump's wild letter to Pelosi is filled with false and misleading claims."

[From CNN, December 17, 2019]

FACT CHECK: TRUMP'S WILD LETTER TO PELOSI IS FILLED WITH FALSE AND MISLEADING CLAIMS

(Daniel Dale and Tara Subramaniam, CNN)

Washington (CNN)—It was on White House letterhead. It read like a string of President Donald Trump's tweets.

And it was just as dishonest.

On Tuesday afternoon, Trump released a six-page letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in which—employing his distinctive vocabulary and punctuation—he blasted Democrats’ push to impeach him, defended his dealings with Ukraine and touted his accomplishments in office.

Like much of his previous rhetoric about Ukraine and impeachment, much of the letter was false or misleading.

Trump repeated multiple false claims that have been debunked on numerous occasions. He also delivered some new claims that were false, misleading or lacking in context.

We're not finished going through all of Trump's claims in this letter, but here are some early fact checks.

DEALINGS WITH UKRAINE

Trump decried the "so-called whistleblower who started this entire hoax with a false report of the phone call that bears no relationship to the actual phone call that was made."

Facts First: The whistleblower's account of Trump's July call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has been proven highly accurate. In fact, the rough transcript released by Trump himself showed that the whistleblower's three primary allegations about the call were correct or very close to correct. You can read a full fact check here.

Trump claimed the whistleblower "disappeared," but "they got caught, their report was a fraud."

Facts First: There is no evidence the whistleblower has disappeared, let alone that they engineered their own problem to be inaccurate. Whistleblowers do not have an obligation to speak publicly after filing their anonymous complaints.

Trump's ambassador to Ukraine, Gordon Sondland testified that I told him: "No quid pro quo. I want nothing. I want nothing. I want President Zelensky to do the right thing, do what he ran on."

Facts First: Sondland, Trump's ambassador to the European Union, did testify that Trump told him this—but Sondland nonetheless said that, in his own opinion, there was indeed a quid pro quo.

Trump wrote that the rough transcript of his call with Zelensky "was immediately made available."

Facts First: The call occurred in July. Trump released the rough transcript in September, but it did not appear because "they got caught, their accounts have been made less effective."

Trump wrote, "President Zelensky has repeatedly declared that I did nothing wrong, and that there was No Pressure. He further emphasized that it was a 'good phone call,' that 'I don't feel pressure,' and explicitly stressed that 'nothing happened.'"

Facts First: Zelensky did say there had been "no pressure" from Trump and made other statements to that effect, but he has not gone so far as to say Trump did nothing wrong.

In an interview published by Time magazine in early December, Zelensky did say, "Look, I never talked to the President from the position of a quid pro quo. That's not my thing." But Zelensky continued: "I don't want to use the word blackmail but I don't see any reason to use this word."

Facts First: The whistleblower complaint about the call.

Trump wrote, "President Zelensky has repeatedly declared that I did nothing wrong, and that there was No Pressure. He further emphasized that it was a 'good phone call,' that 'I don't feel pressure,' and explicitly stressed that 'nothing happened.'"

Trump wrote, "I said to President Zelensky: 'I would like you to do us a favor, though, Mr. President. Ukraine has been through a lot and Ukraine knows a lot about it.' I said do us a favor, not me, and our country, not a campaign. I then mentioned the Attorney General of the United States."

Facts First: It's worth noting that Trump only adopted this explanation for his "favor" comments more than two months after he released the rough transcript of the July call.

Trump quoted himself accurately here—"but in between his 'favor' sentence to Zelensky and his mention of the attorney general, he had asked Zelensky to look into a debunked conspiracy theory about Democratic computer servers."

In his next series of comments to Zelensky, after Zelensky spoke, Trump asked Zelensky to look into former vice president and current Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

JOE BIDEN AND UKRAINE

Trump wrote that Biden "used his office and $1 billion in foreign aid money to coerce Ukraine into firing the prosecutor who was digging into the company paying his son millions of dollars."

Facts First: There is a lot wrong with this claim. The $1 billion in question was a loan guarantee, not aid payment. The prosecutor, Viktor Shokin, was widely viewed by American diplomats and in the international community as corrupt; Biden was pursuing official policy in pushing for Shokin's ouster. And the prosecutor's former deputy has released a statement refuting this.

Trump wrote, "Biden openly stated: 'I said, with $1 billion, I can get the dirt on my political opponent.' That is not true. That is not true. That is not true. That is not true. That is not true."

Facts First: While Pelosi wants a more liberal immigration policy than he does, she does not support completely unrestricted migration. She has repeatedly endorsed funding for border security measures aside from the President's proposed wall.

Trump said that Biden had said "the dirtiest cops our Nation has ever seen" had handed out to people charged by Mueller. According to a CNN analysis of the sentences handed out to people charged by Mueller, a former FBI Director James Comey is "one of the dirtiest cops our Nation has ever seen."
Facts First: We give Trump wide latitude to express opinions about public figures, but the December report from Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz presented new grounds that Comey was corrupt in any way. Horowitz found significant errors in FBI work connected to the Russia investigation, and rejected Comey’s claim of vindication. This act made any finding accusing Comey of deliberate malfeasance.

**SUPPOSED ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Trump claimed “a colossal reduction in illegal border crossings.”

Facts First: While there has been a reduction since May, it is only a reduction from the high point of the Trump era; the total number of people apprehended at the southwest border, a proxy measure for the number of actual crossings, has been higher under Trump than in the late Obama era. “Trump boasted of the US “becoming the world’s top energy producer.”

Facts First: The US became the world’s top energy producer in 2012, according to the government’s Energy Information Administration—under Obama, whom Trump has repeatedly accused of perpetrating a “war on American energy.”

Trump touted “a completely reformed VA with Choice and Accountability for our great veterans.”

Facts First: The Veterans Choice program was signed into law by Obama in 2014. Trump signed a law in 2018 to expand and modify the Choice program, the VA MISSION Act, but he did not call it Choice.

Trump touted “the building of the Southern Border Wall.”

Facts First: As of December 6, the date of the latest official update from Customs and Border Protection, no miles of border wall had been constructed where barriers did not previously exist. (Construction had started on some of the ground already under Obama.) Trump has argued that the replacement of old barriers with newer barriers should count as the building of his wall; as of December 6, 90 miles of replacement barriers had been erected.

Jamie Ehrlich contributed to this article.

Mr. McGovern. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Butterfield).

Mr. Butterfield. Madam Speaker, I rise on this solemn occasion as we, the House of Representatives, exercise the power given us by the United States Constitution.

The original Constitution was flawed in some respects, but with respect to Presidential misconduct, it was unmissable. The Framers knew that Presidents could be corrupt or abusive with their power so impeachment was written into our organic law.

Since taking office nearly 3 years ago, President Trump has consistently and intentionally divided this country. He has consistently encouraged foreign actors to interfere in our elections. He has thumbed his nose, Madam Speaker, at the legislative branch.

Enough is enough. We must protect our Constitution, our democracy. I will vote today to prefer serious charges against President Trump and deliver the charges to the Senate for trial, a place where President Trump can defend himself and attempt, if he chooses, to convince the Senate and the American people that his conduct does not violate the Constitution.

Mr. Cole. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. Baird), my good friend, a distinguished combat veteran for our country.

Mr. Baird. Madam Speaker, today marks a sad day for America. Instead of getting to work to solve the issues of our time, the House Democrats have decided to try to discredit President Trump and undo the results of the 2016 election.

The facts here are clear. The President did not commit any crimes. He did not break any laws. And there was no quid pro quo.

This has been a secretive, misdirected process from the very beginning, and the American people see right through it.

I look forward to voting against this impeachment charade and getting back to work to support the efforts of President Trump to continue growing our economy, creating jobs, and improving the lives of all Americans.

Mr. McGovern. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Brendan F. Boyle).

Mr. Brendan F. Boyle of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, this is the fourth impeachment proceeding against an American President and the most reckless.

The President committed numerous crimes, threatening the national security.

Ultimately, the matter before us today is not a question of fact, for the evidence is undisputed, nor is it a question of law, as the Constitution is clear.

The heart of the matter is this: Will Members of this House have the courage to choose fidelity to the Constitution over loyalty to their political party?

For the sake of our Constitution and our country, for Americans today and tomorrow, I urge all Members to summon the courage to uphold the rule of law and vote yes.

Mr. Cole. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McGovern. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. Clay).

Mr. Clay. Madam Speaker, I rise today to hold Donald John Trump accountable for his repeated abuse of power, his deliberate obstruction of the House’s constitutionally mandated oversight responsibilities, and his unprecedented misuse of the Presidency to weaken the separation of powers and subvert our Constitution by dangling $391 million in congressionally appropriated tax dollars over the head of an embattled ally in order to coerce a fraudulent investigation into a potential political opponent.

Our Founders feared a lawless, amoral President would willfully put national security at risk for his own personal gain.

In 1974, Republicans made it clear that their ultimate loyalty was not to one man, but to upholding the Constitution. Today, the uncontroverted evidence shows Donald Trump violated his oath of office. My friends on both sides of the aisle can either defend him or defend the Constitution. History will not permit you to do otherwise.

Mr. Cole. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, before I begin my formal remarks in closing, I want to say one thing for the record. I have great respect for all of my friends on the other side of the aisle, and I am sure they are voting their convictions; so when I vote mine, please don’t imply I am doing it for my political party. I am doing it because it is what I believe is right. I do believe I can defend both the President and the Constitution of the United States, and I think that is exactly what I am doing.

Madam Speaker, I cannot oppose this rule strongly enough. The process we have engaged in has been nothing short of a complete charade. It was a closed process, an unfair process, and a rushed process, and it could only have ever had one logical, predetermined ending.

Throughout it all, the majority treatedimplying minoritv's rights or due process to the accused. It cannot come at the expense of anything more than fantasy.

Madam Speaker, we deserve better than this. Impeachment is the most consequential act the House of Representatives can undertake. It must not and cannot be based on a flawed process. It cannot come at the expense of minority rights or due process to the accused. It cannot be based on a vendetta against the President that the majority has pursued since the day he was elected, and it cannot be based on nothing more than spin and hearsay. I support this rule, this process, even the flawed and unfair process.

Madam Speaker, it is a very solemn vote that all of us will cast.

I want to end by, number one, thanking my good friend, the chairman of the Rules Committee for conducting the kind of hearing he conducted yesterday; but I also want to underscore, again, that we are very violently opposed to the process and very strongly opposed to the rule. We think this is a charade and has been very unfair.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on the previous question, “no” on the rule, “no” on the
underlying measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, let me thank my friend, Mr. COLE, for his kind words, and I applaud his leadership on the Rules Committee and the fact that he respects this institution.

But, Madam Speaker, let me say again what happened here: The President withheld congressionally approved military aid to a country under siege to extract a personal, political favor. That is a cold, hard fact.

The question before us comes down to this: Should a President be allowed to ask people to support him, to stand up for our Constitution.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yes 229, nays 197, not voting 4, as follows:

[Roll No. 693]

YEAS—229

Abraham
Adams
Aguiar
Aguilar
Allred
Amaro
Amaro, Sean
Amaya
Anderson
Andrade
Angel
Angel, Joaquin
Andrews
Andrews, Mark
Angel, Adam
Armstrong
Arrington
Arthur
Ashby
Assefa
Askren
Atkins
August
Austin
Austin, Justin
Axne
Ayotte
Ayotte, Kelly
Babb
Baker
Baker, Kathleen
Bakema
Baker, Morris
Balow
Baldridge
Ballenger
Balser
Balducci
Baldwin
Baldwin, Josh
Baltschulte
Bancroft
Banks
Banks, Luci
Banks, Megan
Barber
Barker
Barrett
Barrett, Glenn
Bartello
Bartlett
Barth
Barto
Bartow
Barth, Peter
Bartow, Robert
Bates
Baylen
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Bayer
Bayer, Walter
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Bebko
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Becker, Marlin
Becker, Walter
Becker, Walter, Jr.
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Beck, Jeff
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Becky
Beckworth
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Behrens, Gail
Behrens, Peter
Bennett
Bennett, Dave
Bennett, Patrick
Bennett, Tom
Bennett, Vision
Benjamin
Bennett, William
Bennett, William, Jr.
Bennett, William, Sr.
Bennett, William, V.
Bernstein
Bershad
Bernier
Berry
Bertinetti
Bertinetti, Joe
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Bertucci
Bertucci, John
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Bettendorf
Bhandari
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Bhatch
The Speaker pro tempore. The question was taken; and the previous question was ordered to be reconsidered.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

Mr. TONY GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted “YEA” on rollcall No. 694.

The Clerk will report the resolution. The Clerk read the resolution as follows:

H. RES. 755
Resolved, That Donald John Trump, President of the United States, is impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors and that the following articles of impeachment be exhibited to the United States Senate:

ARTICLE I: ABUSE OF POWER

The Constitution provides that the House of Representatives “shall have the sole Power of Impeachment” and that the President “shall have the sole Power of Conviction.” In our deliberations, we have considered and rejected the course of conduct that included soliciting the Government of Ukraine to publicly announce investigations that would benefit his reelection. We have considered and rejected the course of conduct that included soliciting the Government of Ukraine to publicly announce investigations that would benefit his reelection.

Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted “YEA” on rollcall No. 694. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted “YEA” on rollcall No. 694.