

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IMPEACHING DONALD JOHN
TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES, FOR HIGH
CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS

SPEECH OF

HON. JUAN VARGAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Mr. VARGAS. Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on the impeachment articles introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives to impeach Donald John Trump. Earlier this week over 750 historians published a statement condemning Donald Trump for his flagrant abuses of power and urged the House to impeach him. In just a couple of days that number has quickly doubled, with a total of 1,507 signatures.

These historians highlighted that one of our Founding Fathers, Alexander Hamilton, wrote impeachment was created to deal with the “misconduct of public men” which involves “the abuse or violation of some public trust”. This exactly what Donald Trump has done, time and time again.

Our Constitution was written to ensure there are checks on our power as elected officials. It ensures that we cannot become kings; that we remain public men and women. That is the foundation upon which our country was built. In a democracy, our rulers are the people, the citizens, our constituents, and we were chosen to stand in public office to serve them.

The Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution, but it is our actions in high office that give those great words meaning and power. As public servants we are trusted to abide by the law and to only use our positions in office to protect and support our country.

Donald Trump has used the power of the presidential office for his own personal gain, violating the trust of the American people.

He has withheld from our ally, Ukraine, \$391 million in military and security assistance. That \$391 million was approved for Ukrainian assistance by Republican and Democratic members in legislation that passed the House and the Senate. Congress, finding common ground in our American values that compel us to support our ally, provided this money. But Donald Trump put it on hold.

To leave our ally's civilians and soldiers to struggle as they fight against our shared adversary and dangle this congressionally-approved aid in front of them, is alone bad leadership. It is the behavior that stains our country, tarnishing our name in the eyes of countries who look to us as leaders of the free world. But leaving our allies without support is an offense Trump tends to repeat, and it alone is not the impeachable offense.

Trump used his trusted power over congressionally-approved money, our constituents' money, not to protect our ally or our constituents, but to bolster his chances in winning our next presidential election. The United States Ambassador to the European Union testified that Donald Trump would release this aid and meet with the Ukrainian president in person only if Ukraine publicly announced an investigation into Trump's political rival, Former Vice President Joe Biden. He abused his trusted power. That is the first impeachable offense.

Congress moved to seek out the truth for the American people, but Donald Trump continued to block this co-equal branch of government. Following the orders of Donald Trump, nine witnesses from the White House have defied congressional subpoenas, included in twelve White House officials who have refused to testify. Despite congressional requests and legal subpoenas, no documents have been released from the White House for the congressional inquiry. The single transcript that was released prior to the inquiry has been defined as a “rough” transcript, its omissions flagged by a trusted national security official who lis-

tened in to the call that the transcript describes. Finally, Congress has invited Donald Trump to engage in the inquiry, yet he has rejected that invitation. Donald Trump is keeping the American public in the dark, knowing that if light were fully shed on his actions, he would hold much less influence and power over their judgement.

There has been no president before Donald Trump who has so completely defied congressional oversight or sought to impede it. When he wholly blocks the availability of information to a duly elected co-equal branch of government responsible for oversight and investigations into the executive branch, he holds an unprecedented amount of control.

That is the second impeachable offense.

Since the founding of our great nation we have celebrated public servants who put their country before themselves, and rejected kings and tyrants, who put themselves before their country. The great women and men in our past that stood on this floor upheld the words of the Constitution and shielded our democracy from those who attempted to exploit it.

Few times in history have we had such a historic vote.

We ask ourselves today, will we stand with the man that believes Article II of the Constitution allows him to, quote, “Do anything I want”?

Will we stand with the man who said nothing would happen to him if he shot someone of Fifth Avenue in New York City?

Will we stand with the man who abuses the same laws our constituents abide by, the laws we have pledged to protect, and the laws he swore under oath to faithfully execute?

Or will we stand up as protectors of our Constitution, and of our nation?

Our names will be tied to our votes.

I urge my colleagues to support both articles of impeachment and hold Donald Trump accountable for his flagrant abuses of power.

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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